

RUNNING HEAD: WORLD LANGUAGE TEACHER PREPARATION AND SPECIAL  
EDUCATION

WORLD LANGUAGE TEACHER PREPARATION AND SPECIAL EDUCATION:

A CASE STUDY

By

David G. Greer

A dissertation submitted to the  
Graduate School- New Brunswick  
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey,  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of  
Doctor of Education  
Graduate Program in Language Education

Written under the direction of  
Dr. Ariana Mangual Figueroa

---

and approved by

Dr. Nydia Flores

---

Dr. Matthew Mayer

---

New Brunswick, NJ

May, 2015

©2015

David G. Greer

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

ABSTRACT

World language classrooms in the State of New Jersey are witnessing the enrollment of more students with special needs due to federal regulations requiring public school districts to make all classrooms more inclusive of students with varying levels of physical, cognitive, behavioral, and academic needs. With a push for inclusion in general education classrooms, more students with learning disabilities (LD) are enrolling in courses of world language teachers who have not traditionally had opportunities to work with students with special needs. Research focused on creating methodologies for teaching world languages, specifically for students with LD, has been sparse (Hu 2003; and Reed & Stansfield, 2004).

This study investigated the ways that pre-service teachers were being prepared to work with students with LD in world language classrooms. In addition, the study investigated the policies and practices that shape world language teacher preparation program models as well as the ways that graduates from one specific program believed that they were prepared to work with students with LD. A university that allowed students to enroll in a single or dual-track program leading to endorsement in a world language and/or teacher of students with disabilities was the focal site of this investigation.

Participants in this two-year case study included pre-service teachers and their cooperating teachers, recent graduates, partner school administrators, and multiple administrators, professors, and staff members at the focal university. Data from interviews and observations were analyzed qualitatively to examine the perceived preparation teachers received compared with their experiences in the preparation program.

The study demonstrated that the dual-endorsement program provided teachers with coursework and experiences that helped them to grow in their understanding of teaching students with LD; whereas, pre-service teachers enrolled in the single-endorsement program had little experience in working with students with LD in the classroom upon graduation. This study is significant because it contributes to the field of world language teacher preparation and special education by highlighting some of the practices that led participants to feel more confident in working with students with LD in world language classrooms. The study addresses the existing gap in research on pre-service teachers through a presentation of three findings: first, cooperating teachers help shape pre-service teachers' attitudes towards inclusion; second, the single-track endorsement program is not preparing pre-service world language teachers to work in inclusive settings; and third, personal experiences and relationships foster collaborative efforts between world language and special education teachers.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank all of the people who have played a part in this work coming together that have helped shape it in one form or another. Specifically, I would like to thank the participants who were more than happy to provide input through observations, interviews, and follow up conversations. For without their willingness to allow me into their classrooms and institutions, this work would not exist. I am thankful for the students who continue to strive to grow in their understanding of other languages and cultures, for it is they who determine the future of us all.

I would like to express my most sincere gratitude to Dr. Ariana Mangual Figueroa who was my advisor through this process. Her patience, reassuring statements, critical eye, emotional support, and intellectual input helped me see this work to fruition. I would also like to thank the other members of my dissertation committee, Dr. Nydia Flores and Dr. Matthew Mayer. Dr. Flores worked with me from the first moment I stepped foot at Rutgers and continued to encourage me every step of the way. Dr. Mayer introduced me to the field of special education and helped me grow as a scholar in the larger field of research. Together as a team, they are unparalleled.

My parents George and Linda Greer have been constant sources of support through my entire education leading up to this point. My father and mother in-law Frank and Anne McLaughlin were also sources of support by knowing when to ask how the degree was coming along and knowing when it was best not to approach the subject.

However, my unwavering source of support and encouragement, my sounding board and my venting partner, without whom none of this would be possible, is my wife Brenna. Her steadfast support kept me moving forward to complete this journey, even when I was met with periods of extreme adversity. Finally, even though he was only with us for the end of this journey, our son Felix, kept me encouraged to finish writing according to deadlines so that I could “play blocks me” on the floor.

**Table of Contents**

Abstract ..... iii

Acknowledgements ..... v

List of Tables ..... x

CHAPTER 1 ..... 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY ..... 1

    Purpose of the study ..... 4

    Research questions ..... 6

    Significance of the study ..... 7

    Conclusion ..... 8

CHAPTER 2 ..... 9

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ..... 9

    Introduction ..... 9

        Historical and legal underpinnings ..... 9

        History of inclusive educational practices ..... 12

        Inclusion of students with LD in the WL classroom ..... 14

        Key concepts in terminology and classification of LD ..... 17

        Foreign language learning disability ..... 29

        World language and special education teacher programs ..... 32

    Guiding Framework ..... 42

    Conclusion ..... 48

CHAPTER 3 ..... 50

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY ..... 50

    Introduction ..... 50

    Summary of the pilot study ..... 51

        Description ..... 51

        Site ..... 52

        Participants ..... 54

        Research questions ..... 54

        Data collection and analysis ..... 55

Results and findings of the pilot study.....	56
Conclusion of the pilot study .....	58
Research design and qualitative methodology.....	59
Introduction.....	59
Site .....	60
Participants.....	62
Data collection instruments.....	73
Data analysis .....	82
Trustworthiness.....	84
The practitioner as the researcher .....	86
Limitations of the study .....	87
Conclusion .....	90
CHAPTER 4 .....	92
PRE-SERVICE WORLD LANGUAGE TEACHERS DEVELOPING AN UNDERSTANDING OF PEDAGOGIES AND PRINCIPLES FOR WORKING WITH STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS .....	92
Introduction.....	92
The case of Antoinette .....	94
Classroom methods/strategies.....	96
Summary of Antoinette’s case .....	114
The case of Bernadette.....	115
Classroom methods/strategies.....	116
Summary of Bernadette’s case.....	123
Discussion.....	123
Strategies and methodologies .....	125
Strategies employed by Antoinette .....	127
Strategies employed by Bernadette.....	130
Overall growth .....	132
Overall growth of Antoinette .....	132
Overall growth of Bernadette.....	136
From generalities to specifics .....	139
Antoinette shifting from generalities to specifics .....	140

Bernadette shifting from generalities to specifics.....	142
Conclusion .....	144
CHAPTER 5 .....	146
POLICIES AND PRACTICES THAT SHAPE THE WAYS UNIVERSITY MEMBERS WORK TO PREPARE PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS AND THE WAYS THAT TEACHERS REPORT THAT THEY WERE PREPARED .....	146
Introduction.....	146
Baytown University world language teacher education program.....	148
University coursework and the building of an inclusionary mindset .....	149
Field placements and partnerships for growth and development.....	162
Overall preparedness and suggestions for more concrete experiences....	169
Discussion.....	183
Expectations and realities of coursework .....	184
The role of the site supervisor.....	189
A call for early experiences .....	192
Conclusion .....	196
CHAPTER 6 .....	199
FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH.....	199
Introduction.....	199
Review of the findings.....	200
Finding 1: Cooperating teachers help shape pre-service teachers’ attitudes towards inclusion.....	200
Recommendations for university program administrators and future research.....	203
Finding 2: The single-track endorsement program is not preparing pre-service world language teachers to work in inclusive settings.....	209
Recommendations for university program administrators and future research.....	212
Finding 3: Personal experiences and relationships foster collaborative efforts between world language and special education teachers .....	220

WORLD LANGUAGE TEACHER PREPARATION AND SPECIAL EDUCATION

Recommendations for university program administrators and future research .....	222
Broader implications for the field and future research .....	224
Collaboration between fields of inquiry .....	225
Pedagogy and collaborative education.....	231
Commentary on current trends in teacher education .....	237
Limitations of the study .....	247
Chapter and study conclusion .....	248
References .....	251
List of Appendices .....	266

**LIST OF TABLES**

Table	Page
1. Flowchart of dual certification selection process at Baytown University .....	53
2. Names of focal sites and data collected delineated by participants .....	61
3. Student teachers, cooperating teachers, high schools, world languages taught and instrument used to elicit data delineated by participant .....	65
4. Baytown University administrators, professors, and staff members included in the study delineated by the data collection tool and number of interviews or observations completed .....	68
5. Partner school administrators who participated in the study .....	70
6. Recent graduates of Baytown University who participated in the study delineated by teaching position at the time of the interview .....	71
7. Data collection instruments employed in the study .....	77

## CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

The passage of Federal Public Law 94-142 in 1975 required public school districts to make all elementary and secondary classrooms more inclusive of students with varying levels of physical, cognitive, behavioral, and academic needs. Since the passage of the Handicapped Children Act, known since 1990 as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, students classified with *learning disabilities* (LD) have been granted waivers or course substitutions to fulfill the world language requirements necessary for graduation from K-12 schools (Crombie, 2000; Downey, Snyder, & Hill, 2000; Shaw, 1999; and Sparks, Philips, & Javorsky, 2003). The overarching belief by educational administrators in public schools for granting waivers was that students with LD should not have to study a world language because it would not necessarily be beneficial to them post-graduation (Sparks, 2009). However, more students with LD are enrolling in world language courses as the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA, 2004) has supported and regulated inclusionary practices. In addition, students are enrolling in world language classrooms to meet mandatory high school graduation requirements and in an attempt at gaining admission into colleges and universities that require world language study. A recent survey conducted by the Modern Language Association found that nearly 50% of U.S. colleges require the study of a world language (Scott & Edwards, 2012). Students with LD are then faced with high school graduation requirements to gain admission to universities that either require world language study, offer special sections of world language classes, allow course substitutions, or waive world language graduation requirements (Sparks, Philips, & Javorsky, 2003).

As a result of a system of substitutions and waivers from inclusion in language classrooms, world language teacher preparation programs have not effectively introduced pre-service teacher university students to working with students with special needs. According to Sparks (2009), “perhaps the most important issue masked by the use of course substitutions and waivers is that special educators and foreign language instructors feel no sense of urgency to develop teaching methods that can be used with at-risk learners” (p. 18). In other words, as a result of educational policy that has exempted students with LD from instruction in world languages, there has been neither a reason nor a demand for world language educators and researchers to develop teaching methods that support students with LD or at-risk students enrolled in world language classes.

One year of world language education is required in the State of New Jersey to meet the requirements of graduation (New Jersey Department of Education, 2005). Therefore, all students in New Jersey must be exposed to language learning and their specific needs are to be taken into account in the world language classroom as part of graduation requirements, with the exception of those granted a waiver or course substitute. Inclusionary practices, however, have led to more students with special needs enrolling in world language classrooms; therefore, inclusionary practices must be employed by teachers of world languages.

In the national context, for many years, world language education was restricted to high performing public school students with aspirations of receiving a post-secondary degree (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). As Larsen-Freeman (2000) has shown, historically, foreign language teaching was intended to help students grow intellectually and to assist in gaining a better understanding of the grammar of the native language. In addition, it

was assumed that students would most likely never use the target language, but the mental exercise of learning it would still be beneficial. As the world language teacher training paradigm has shifted from traditional grammar instruction to more communicative methodologies, contemporary teachers have had to realign instructional techniques to include a larger array of methodologies. However, research focused on creating methodologies for teaching world languages specifically for students with LD has been sparse (Hu 2003; and Reed & Stansfield, 2004). This scarcity endures, even as students with LD have begun to enroll in larger numbers in public school world language programs.

Language teacher preparation programs throughout the United States vary depending upon federal and state regulations, local educational needs, and specific program philosophies and mission statements. Traditionally, world language pre-service teachers are provided with coursework and opportunities that expose them to courses such as linguistics, second language acquisition theories, and methodologies for teaching in the language classroom. Fox & Diaz-Greenberg (2006) maintain that training in these areas is generally considered appropriate for the preparation of world language teachers to teach the general population of language learners. However, these researchers also uphold that world language pre-service teachers are not usually provided with coursework that addresses the needs of students with LD. As a result, pre-service teachers tend to be unaware of the specific needs of students with LD in world language classrooms and do not know how to modify instruction accordingly. Only several studies published to date address the intersection between world language education and special education (Sparks & Ganschow, 1997; Sparks, Artzer, Patton, Ganschow, Miller,

Hordubay, & Walsh, 1998; and Sparks, 2009). The absence of relevant research on these issues in language education and special education is alarming given the changing demographics of world language classrooms meeting inclusion mandates.

This dissertation seeks to contribute to the growing area of research on world language education and special education by investigating the ways that one university teacher education program prepares world language teachers to teach students with LD. This research study builds upon Larsen-Freeman's (2000) work by focusing specifically on the case of education programs within the State of New Jersey. In particular, it focuses on one program that offers dual certification in world language teaching and teaching students with disabilities in order to explore the challenges and possibilities that arise when university administration and faculty work to integrate these two areas of study. In doing so, this study hopes to inform the work of educators, administrators, and policymakers working to prepare pre-service world language teachers to understand the needs of students with special needs in their classrooms.

### **Purpose of the study**

This dissertation has four main goals for conducting research into the ways that pre-service world language teachers are prepared to work with students with special needs: filling gaps in the existing research; describing the ways that pre-service world language teachers understand working with students with special needs in their classrooms; investigating the policies and practices that shape the teacher preparation program that those teachers graduated from; and examining the ways that recent graduates report having been prepared to work with students with special needs in their world language classrooms. I will briefly elaborate upon each of these goals in turn.

First, the information gathered from this study can help fill some gaps in the research literature regarding the ways that pre-service teachers learn to meet the diverse needs of their students, particularly students with special needs. There are multiple pathways for pre-service teachers to become certified to teach a world language in public schools - this study examines the world language teacher preparation program model at one focal university site. The site was chosen because it offers pre-service teachers the opportunity to graduate with dual certification in both world languages and teaching students with disabilities. This study can help illuminate the connections that exist, or fail to exist, between programs of world language and special education teacher preparation.

Second, this dissertation study seeks to investigate the ways that pre-service teachers demonstrate an understanding of how to best meet the needs of students with special needs in the world language classroom. Even though there is a five-credit high school graduation requirement for studying a world language in the State of New Jersey (New Jersey Department of Education, 2005), we know little about how pre-service teachers conceptualize the relationship between world languages and special education. This study strives to document novice teachers' beliefs in order to inform the larger educational field on the ways that pre-service teachers understand their role in working to meet the needs of all students enrolled in their courses.

Third, this study seeks to document those policies and practices that shape the development of world language and special education pre-service teacher programs. The mandates from the State Department of Education regarding teacher preparation program credit hours and pre-service teacher experiences are included in this study to help identify

the ways that programs comply with regulations in preparing and granting certifications and endorsements to university pre-service teachers. This is important because policies, practices, and accreditation mandates shape the overall university pre-service teacher education program.

Finally, this dissertation study was designed to document the ways that recent graduates report having been prepared to work with students with special needs in the world language classroom. By interviewing recent graduates who are currently practicing world language teachers, this study aims to describe the ways that these teachers believe they have been prepared to work with students with special needs in their charge. The information gathered from this study helps to fill the gaps that currently exist in the knowledge of the ways that pre-service teacher programs prepare future world language teachers to work with students with varying ability and readiness levels through the target language.

### **Research questions**

This dissertation seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. How do pre-service teachers demonstrate that they are developing an understanding of pedagogies and principles for working with students with special needs in the world language classroom?
2. What policies and practices shape the ways that university administrators, professors, and partner schools work to prepare world language teachers to work with students with special needs?

3. How do recent graduates from a pre-service teacher education program report they have been prepared to work with students with special needs in their current world language classrooms?

### **Significance of the study**

The significance of this study is situated within the larger field of world language teacher preparation program models and special education. A goal of this study is to make a significant impact in the field of world language teacher preparation programs by illuminating the ways that one program prepares university world language pre-service teachers to work with students with special needs in their classrooms. This two-year qualitative case study is significant in the field of world language and special education because it documents the ways that pre-service teachers grew in their conceptualization of the methods and strategies that they employed over time in their student teaching classrooms, and in some cases, in their first classroom post-graduation. This study helps understand the policies and practices that shape the teacher education program at the focal university while analyzing the link between perceptions and practice that exist in the program. Moreover, this research elucidates on the experiences of recent graduates from the university program and the ways that they believe they were prepared to work with students with special needs in their current classrooms. The findings presented highlight and identify practices that assist pre-service teachers in growing in their understanding of teaching students of world languages with varying degrees of experiences and abilities. In doing so, the study hopes to support the efforts of university teacher education faculty, district administrators, and state policymakers working to

prepare pre-service world language teachers in meeting the needs of all students in their classrooms, particularly those with special needs.

### **Conclusion**

The dearth of information available to researchers and teacher educators regarding the ways that pre-service world language teachers are prepared to work with students with special needs is one of the major reasons for the completion of this research. World language teachers are expected to meet the ever-increasing diversity in abilities of their language students. Therefore, researchers in the field of world language teacher preparation should have an understanding of the ways that pre-service teachers are being prepared to work with all of their students in inclusive settings. Now that in-class support for students with LD in the world language classroom is mandated by state law and is therefore becoming more prominent in world language classrooms across the State of New Jersey, faculty members charged with creating and executing teacher preparation programs must understand the ways to properly prepare pre-service world language teachers to meet the needs of all students in world language classrooms.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### **Introduction**

The review of literature presents seven major areas to help situate this dissertation study in the larger context of language education research. First, the historical and legal underpinnings of mandates regarding world language education and special education are presented. Then, a broad overview of inclusion of students with special needs in general education courses is provided. This discussion of general education is then focused specifically on world language teaching and learning. Next, key concepts in the terminology and classification of *learning disabilities (LD)* and an exploration of the classification of the term LD is presented. The term *students with special needs* is used in this dissertation, in addition to the term *learning disabled (LD)* to refer to students classified as LD in addition to those with varying learning difficulties or issues. The review of specific foreign language learning disabilities is then provided, followed by a discussion of the differences in traditional and non-traditional world language and special education teacher program models. Finally, the guiding framework for this dissertation study is presented with a focus on Pugach & Blanton's (2009) model for conducting research on teacher education program models for general and special education.

#### **Historical and legal underpinnings of world languages and special education**

Language learning in New Jersey public schools is no longer considered an ancillary subject; rather, with the creation of educational legislation, world language learning is now mandated from the elementary through high school levels. Language education at the elementary level is required pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A: 8-1.1 (New Jersey

Department of Education, 2005). This policy requires that schools meet Core Curriculum Content Standards in seven content areas, including world languages, and is based on the American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages (ACTFL, 2012) performance guidelines. In addition to elementary school requirements, the study of one year of a world language is now required at the high school level in order to meet graduation requirements.

At the high school level, students must fulfill a minimum of five credits of language study; however, they may fulfill the requirements in various ways (N.J.A.C. 6A: 8-5.1(a) 1i (7) (New Jersey Department of Education, 2005). For example, a student can demonstrate proficiency via an oral proficiency exam, or a school district may elect to create a language assessment of its own that is approved by the State Department of Education. Finally, world language graduation credit requirements may be circumnavigated by the creation of a specialized learning program for individual students with learning disabilities. There are two documents that can be created which offer the possibility of exempting a student from language instruction: an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or a Section 504 document.

Both IEPs and Section 504 plans can specify, as they often have, that a student be exempt from learning a world language in order to graduate from high school. Because classified students with LD have often been exempt from world language classrooms, world language teachers have not necessarily had much exposure to teaching classified students (Sparks & Javorsky, 1999). Even though language learning requirements may be modified or waived by a students' Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 document, parents and students are increasingly opting to include language study in

their program of study (Sparks, 2009). For example, some families want to ensure that college requirements for world languages are met; whereas, other families want their children to study a particular language or culture that is important to them. This is evidenced in the fact that there are more and more students enrolled in language courses and, thus, a higher need for teachers trained in world language inclusion methodologies. An IEP outlines the plan (i.e., outcomes, curriculum, teachers' responsibilities, schedule, and settings) that facilitates individualized instruction for a student that has been classified LD. This document is created in consultation with the Child Study Team (CST), which often includes a school psychologist, a case manager, a guidance counselor, both general and special education teachers, and the student and parent(s) and/or guardian(s). The IEP is updated annually and sets forth the specific courses, modifications, and/or accommodations to the existing curricula that a student will follow throughout his/her education through high school graduation.

In contrast, a Section 504 plan (of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973) is part of a federal civil rights law designed to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities in programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Education (Mercer & Mercer, 2005). Students with a Section 504 plan are not classified in a traditional manner as through a CST, but rather, have a legal document designed that requires teachers to afford the student modifications or accommodations to the general curriculum of the district. Together, both IEPs and Section 504 plans clearly state the expectations that a student shall receive from specific courses and inform teachers as to the needs of individual students. Because each of the documents is a

binding, legal document with which teachers are expected to follow in good faith, it is crucial for teachers, administrators, and school districts to follow the agreed-upon plan.

### **History of inclusive educational practices**

Some of the first schools established in the U.S. for students with special needs, were special schools for deaf and blind students in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, even after mandatory attendance laws were created in the latter part of the century, children with disabilities were still excluded from the public school system (Harr, Parrish, & Chambers, 2008). It was not until the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s that students with disabilities were offered special services in public schools. In a congressional report commissioned in 1966, it was ascertained that only one-third of American children with disabilities was receiving appropriate special education services (Verstegen, 1994). This caused parents of students with disabilities to organize and demand services for their children (Mosher, Hastings, & Wagoner, 1979).

In his groundbreaking research, psychologist Kirk (1962) coined the term *learning disability* (LD) (Lyon et al., 2001). His use of the term LD was originally synonymous with the concept of unexpected underachievement, specifically in students who do not speak, read, listen, write, or develop mathematical skills commensurate with their own potential even though they have been given adequate opportunity to learn. Kirk's use of the term learning disability sparked recognition of the concept of unexpected underachievement in the educational community. Originally, Kirk used the term to refer to many syndromes that affect language, learning and communication. Kirk (1962) defined LD as, "a retardation, disorder, or delayed development in one or more of the processes of speech, language, reading, spelling, writing, or arithmetic resulting from

a possible cerebral dysfunction and not from mental retardation, sensory deprivation, or cultural or instructional factors” (p. 263). Through his definition of LD, Kirk posited that learning disability is not one specific notion, but that LD is often a blending of disabilities all grouped together under one inclusive term.

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the term LD started to gain acceptance in the pedagogical community because it seemed to meet the needs of both teachers and parents (Lyon et al., 2001). There was a need to classify students who did not have a physical disability (visual impairment, hearing impairment, or mental retardation), but who were also being disenfranchised from a public education. The needs of students with LD were not being met by the school districts because there was no available previous research to inform policy and practice in this new area of special education (Harr, Parrish, & Chambers, 2008). It is for this reason that parental and advocacy groups pushed for support of special education services and finally gained recognition through the 1969 Learning Disability Act (Lyon et al., 2001). However, federal law did not previously mandate support services for students with LD until the passage of the Education of the Handicapped Act of 1970, which is often referred to as Public Law 91-230.

Eventually, the same language that was used to frame the original federal mandates of 1969 and 1970 was used in the congressional act entitled the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA) in 1975, which is often referred to as Public Law 94-142. However, this document now included the recognition of *specific learning disability* or SLD. This law, currently named the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), defines SLD as:

...a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia" (Code of Federal Regulations §300.7(c)(10)).

It should be noted, as previously mentioned, that this definition of SLD does not include students who have learning disabilities that are mostly the result of visual impairment, hearing impairment, motor handicaps, or emotional disturbance. The definition of LD used in federal law demonstrates how Kirk's (1962) work informed the defining of SLD to include students with non-visible disabilities. At the time of writing, the reauthorization of IDEA (formerly known as PL94-142) was being discussed in the United States Congress and the federal law and the financial impact of the regulations, specifically, were being reviewed in light of current educational legislation.

#### **Inclusion of students with learning disabilities in the world language classroom**

Even though there are many different classifications of learning disabilities and LD is used as an umbrella term for many different types of learning-related disabilities, there is still widespread disagreement about how best to meet the needs of students with LD. Some districts argue that students with LD would be best served in separate learning environments, whereas the federal government stipulates that the LD learner must be placed in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). LRE is a technical term that means that a student with LD must be educated in as inclusive an environment as possible to best meet the needs of the student. The principle behind the inclusion of students with LD in local school districts is based upon an effort to create schools that meet the needs of all

students by creating learning communities for students with and without disabilities that are educated together in age-appropriate general education classrooms (Ferguson, 1996).

Traditionally, special education courses developed independently from general education courses and attempted to keep students separate. The special classes were often separated physically from the school, for example, they were in a separate hallway or in a separate building. Even today, many parochial schools offer special education courses in trailers off of the school grounds in order to comply with federal funding regulations (Russo, Massucci, Osborne, & Cattaro, 2002). Dunn's (1968) work provided impetus for demanding change to the separate system. Dunn questioned whether separate classes for students with special needs, or who he described as students with mental retardation, were justifiable. He advanced that having self-contained special schools and classes for students with special needs was a way for general education teachers to transfer students they considered to be unruly out of their classrooms. When analyzed historically, MacMillan, Semmes, & Gerber (1994) argue that Dunn's contribution sparked an attitude in special education that favored ideology over empirical evidence to promote change. The debate about the integration of students with LD in mainstream classrooms concluded with the passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (now the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA], 2004). Recall that IDEA sets the definition for SLD and moves to educate students in the LRE. In other words, IDEA mandates that students with disabilities be provided an appropriate education designed to meet their unique needs in the least restrictive environment (Kavale & Forness, 2000; Heller, Holtzman, & Messick, 1982; Weintraub, Abeson, Ballard, & LaVor, 1976).

In addition to stipulating that children must be educated in the LRE, the act requires that students with disabilities be educated to the maximum extent appropriate with peers without disabilities. This notion became what was often referred to as *mainstreaming* in the 1970s and 1980s. Content-area and elementary classroom teachers are responsible for teaching all students in their classrooms, even if they have not had any previous experiences with working with students with LD. Up until the passage of Education for All Handicapped Children Act (currently IDEA), children with disabilities would spend almost the entire day separate from their peers. Some schools did, however, include students with learning disabilities with their peers in physical education and other non-academic courses.

One challenge that educators and administrators face is how these key terms operationalize (Kaufman, Agard, & Semmel, 1986). One difficulty with operationalizing the concept of mainstreaming students was that the legal definition focused on a theoretical definition and did not stipulate how and when students should be mainstreamed in the spirit of the law. That is, the law only maintained that students should be placed separately (in another classroom or school) only when the severity of the disability was such that they could not receive an appropriate education in a general education classroom with aids and services.

A second challenge that results from the aforementioned statutory laws and federal regulations is interpreting and implementing definition of the term inclusion. One difficulty in assessing whether LRE is being implemented is that the legislation for inclusive education is vague in order to allow districts to decide upon the most appropriate placement for students. The LRE requirement expresses a strong preference,

not a mandate, for educating children in classrooms alongside peers with and without LD (National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities, 2010). Many times, school districts are opting to keep students identified as LD within the school district to help relieve costs associated with paying the tuition and transportation for private, specialized schools. Tuition expenditures, coupled with litigation settlements forcing school districts to educate students classified as LD within the district, are forcing schools to keep the LRE within the general education school. Kolbe, McLaughlin, & Mason (2007) put forward:

Returning some students with disabilities to their home district would benefit them programmatically by increasing access to the general education curriculum and providing opportunities for greater interaction with their non-disabled peers. This would also provide funds to help districts build in-district capacity, and eventually could lead to reduced costs while raising expectations and student performance (p. 19).

Therefore, students have been returning to home school districts because of the federal mandates and financial benefits for lowering overall expenditures. For example, a school district might decide that the LRE for a student with LD is in the world language classroom; therefore, the world language teacher needs to understand how to best meet the needs of the student since the responsibility for the education of the student with LD rests with the world language teacher, as opposed to the special educator.

#### **Key concepts in terminology and classification of *learning disabilities***

Lyon et al. (2001) maintain that the federal definition of LD is comprised of four common conceptions:

- a. the heterogeneity of LD;
- b. the intrinsic/neurobiological nature of LD;

- c. a significant discrepancy between learning potential and academic performance; and
- d. the exclusion of cultural, educational, environmental, and economic factors, or other disabilities.

Each of these ideals is explored separately in the following paragraphs and includes an overview and critique of the four categories.

#### *Heterogeneity of learning disability*

The current federal definition of LD poses serious challenges for world language educators, specifically regarding the definition of Specific Learning Disability (SLD). Lyon et al. (2001) posit that the federal definition of LD is not explained separately in terms of linguistic domain; but rather, it groups listening, speaking, reading (word recognition and decoding), reading comprehension, math calculation, math reasoning, and written expression all together under one umbrella definition. In addition, the heterogeneity of the students classified with a learning disability (specifically SLD) reinforces that multifactor explanations exist for SLD and that makes it difficult to separate the domains and clearly define them (Chapman, 2007). Studies performed including students with Autism, semantic-pragmatic disorders, and language delay point to multiple causal factors in the acquisition of communicative skills (Bishop, 1992; Rice, 1996; and Stromswold, 1998). In essence, this lack of precision in definitions poses two major issues for world language educators. First, the conglomeration of all of the domains within the definition of SLD is problematic for educators because remediation becomes more difficult when working across the domains as opposed to remediating a specific domain. Secondly, students may not have just one LD, but rather a combination

of LDs, thus making it difficult for teachers to reach each student without having the proper understanding of special education.

It is not only the responsibility, however, of language teachers to learn how to incorporate the needs of students with LD into the language classroom. Fillmore & Snow (2000) suggest that all teachers need to know more about oral language in informal, formal and academic contexts as well as written language. In addition to stressing the importance of choosing appropriate linguistic materials for educational situations, these researchers assert that teachers need to help children learn and use aspects of language associated with the academic discourse of various school subjects. According to Fillmore & Snow (2000), “[Teachers] need to help students become more aware of how language functions in various modes of communication across the curriculum” (p. 7). These researchers identify items that pre-service teachers should be exposed to before entering the language classroom. For example, they assert that teachers should be prepared according to various roles of the educator, such as: teacher as communicator, educator, evaluator, educated human being, and agent of socialization. Furthermore, while not stipulating a specific curriculum, they put forward that pre-service teachers, both general and special educators, should enroll in coursework focused on language and cultural diversity, sociolinguistics in a linguistically diverse society, language development, and second language acquisition. The courses should introduce pre-service teachers to understanding multiple factors related to language acquisition disabilities and working with diverse learners.

*Neurobiological factors*

The second conceptual element within Learning Disability definitions is that of neurobiological factors. These factors have mostly been studied in the area of reading (Kavale & Forness, 1985). At the time that the concept of LD was beginning to be researched and initially defined, the field of linguistics was also grappling with linguistic theories as to how people acquire language. For instance, Kirk's (1962) work set forth the existence of and definition for LD based upon a cognitive frame. As research in the field progressed, the definitions of LD continued to be attributed to intrinsic causes such as genetics rather than extrinsic causes such as environment. Contemporarily, Lyon et al. (2001) uphold that there is eight times the risk of a child developing a reading problem if the previous generation in the family includes members with a reading disability. Many reading issues are attributed to genetic factors and these factors can be combined with environmental factors to increase the numbers of reading disabilities, in particular.

The term *developmental language disorders* is employed as a general category which encompasses a number of different disorders in which delayed or disordered language acquisition is a salient feature. Williams (2010) explains that within the category of developmental language disorders there are three main terms that can be found throughout neurobiological research: *Specific language impairment* (SLI) which is used to refer to children who have spoken language problems; *language-learning disability* (LLD) refers to school-age children with problems that typically manifest in both spoken and written forms of the language; and *language learning impairment* (LLI) which reflects comorbid conditions such as emotional and behavioral problems.

Williams (2010) also argues that because of the behavioral presentation of SLI/LLI, the underlying neurobiological basis of a disorder is expected to be focal rather than diffuse. In other words, if an area that is affected is focal, meaning in a specific part of the brain, it might be contained in a specific area that processes language and thus, areas of the brain that are associated with linguistic processing may be greatly affected. On the other hand, if a condition is diffuse, such as the apparition of plaques in various areas of the cerebral cortex (affecting other areas), the disorder could affect more than just language processing but also language production. Williams' (2010) research included studies based on first language acquisition; however, there are also connections to second language acquisition, specifically when hypothesizing that focal location in the cerebral cortex impact language production capacities. Williams' research shed light on both first language and second language acquisition and can, in turn, assist in understanding ways to remediate language learning issues. For example, Parkinson (2002) discovered that children with focal epilepsies were 30% more likely to have language disorder than other language disability subtypes. In addition, linguistic deficits classified as subcortical aphasia, a diffuse neurobiological issue, are described with subcortical structures playing a role in phonologic, morphologic, syntactic, and semantic organization of language and speech (Tomic et al., 2009). Pre-service world language teachers should not have to understand the specifics of focal and diffuse neurobiological issues, but the larger field of language teacher preparation and special education can begin to

research and identify strategies that might help teachers who work with students with LD in language classrooms.

Functional imaging studies (fMRI) are starting to present researchers with a more accurate picture of how language is processed in the brain and where certain areas are causing issues, specifically in attempting to determine the existence of an LD. Chapman (2007) maintains that fMRIs can provide images of the brain that show greater metabolic activity, thus confirming the activation associated with production and comprehension in language areas (for example, Broca's & Wernicke's areas) and extending to the areas which include semantic processing. In a specific study, Chapman (2007) espouses that adults with dyslexia carrying out phonological awareness tasks demonstrate an under-activation in posterior regions of the brain. However, Chapman (2007) maintains that a problem with the cognitive neuropsychology approach exists. Namely, that variation in information processing or learning may lead to "trade-offs in performance demands" (p.11). This suggests, therefore, that neuroimaging, fMRIs, and *event-related brain potentials* (ERBs) are just beginning to provide researchers with clues as to the physiological impact on LD. However, there are currently very few links to fMRI research and practical implications for classroom teachers. One example of recent research connecting the use of data collected from fMRI's to inform practice includes an inquiry to the existence of a critical period for optimal language acquisition to take place. Stapleton (2014) maintains that fMRI studies on the brain of the reading child are now revealing insights into whole-word approaches to reading compared with the effectiveness of phonics.

The field is still very new and one that is just emerging; however, it does have potential for language learning and teaching in the future, but at this time, still is a gap in the larger language learning and teaching literature.

*Achievement discrepancy*

An initial critique of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 was that it did not provide sufficient criteria for identifying eligible children under the definition of LD (Williams, 2010). In order to address the concerns of educators and parents regarding the classification of LD, the United States Office of Education developed more specific criteria for eligibility for special services and relied heavily upon the discrepancy between achievement and intellectual ability. Currently, for example, the United States Department of Education (2007) clarifies that “if a student’s score on the IQ test is at least two standard deviations (30 points) higher than his or her scores on an achievement test, the student is described as having a significant discrepancy between IQ and achievement and, therefore, as having a learning disability” (p. 1).

According to Lyon et al. (2001), using an IQ-achievement discrepancy to objectively determine the presence or absence of LD was reasonable during the 1960s when IQ testing was still thought of as being a vigorous predictor of an individual’s ability to learn. Currently, however, researchers critique the achievement discrepancy model because the method does not allow schools to identify children as having learning disabilities while they are still in the primary grades and that the information gathered from the IQ and achievement assessments does not indicate each student’s specific learning needs (Reschly, 2005; Speece, Molloy, & Case, 2003; and Bradley, Danielson, & Hallahan, 2002). Furthermore, the achievement discrepancy model relies on a wait-to-

fail response to identifying students with LD. For example, students are not referred for testing until after they begin demonstrating a pattern of failure, instead of being exposed to interventions to help them before they fall too far behind. Kavale & Forness (2000) question the existence of an empirically valid definition and diagnostic criteria for LD and explain how the concept of LD has been misused to refer to an array of problems. For example, they mention that the operational definition for LD came from the practice of classifying students by using a discrepancy model between aptitude and achievement.

Traditionally, there were also researchers who questioned the authority of using an IQ test as the sole identification method for an LD. For example, Thorndike (1963) argues that IQ scores reflect a measurement of current achievement and not the potential for growth. In addition, Reynolds (1984) maintains that the IQ achievement discrepancy contains psychometric, statistical, and conceptual problems that make many comparisons useless. The main objection with relying on IQ achievement tests to measure achievement discrepancy is the resulting confusion between the classification of low-achieving students who are LD and those who simply underachieve. Lyon et al. (2001) advocate that the use of IQ and achievement discrepancy model moves students away from the education that they need because of the focus on eligibility for services rather than on education. The aforementioned researchers state, “This [use of an IQ achievement discrepancy model] reflects the orientation of special education in public schools toward compliance with federal regulations rather than positive educational outcomes” (p. 267). Therefore, the identification of students with LD relying solely on an achievement discrepancy model is not one that is without critique in educational research.

A data-driven, research-based alternative to traditional classification using an achievement discrepancy model has become what is commonly referred to as *response to intervention* (RTI). The RTI model allows for another way to classify students with LD without having to rely on the wait-to-fail framework. This approach also shifts from identifying a student with a deficit to a continuum of high vs. lower risk. RTI involves tracking data from students and providing evidence-based instruction to help them succeed. More layers of evidence-based instruction are employed when there is a non-response to the instructional techniques on the part of the student, or when learning is expected, but is not evidenced in the outcome. RTI also shifts the primary responsibility of the education for students classified as LD from the special education teacher to the general education teacher. That is, in the past, the responsibility of the education of the student with LD was primarily within the realm of the special education department, namely, the special education teacher. However, current paradigm shifts have helped to employ a more inclusionary aspect to teaching all students and not simply relegating the responsibilities to specific departments within a school building. For example, a world language teacher is now responsible for the education of all students, both those with and without LD, in an in-class support language classroom, not the special education teacher. Therefore, world language teachers need to understand LD, interpret data resulting from the evaluation model used, and know how to best remediate language issues. Thus, world language teacher preparation programs should expose students to understanding the alternatives to classification processes and help pre-service language educators understand why a student is classified LD.

The RTI model is composed of different tiers with outlines for specific types of interventions obtained through recording and monitoring student achievement and improvement for the duration of a set amount of time. Before an assessment at the tier one level, students receive instruction in which the teacher addresses the needs of all learners. Next, tier one includes early identification through an assessment of the entire student/grade population while providing whole-class instruction. For students who are identified as non-responsive or who respond inadequately at the first tier, the application of a specific intervention while monitoring progress for a specific amount of time is recorded. For example, a student can be monitored in reading skills for a period of eight weeks. If a student responds successfully to the second tier interventions at the end of the defined amount of time, they are then placed back into the first tier. The students who are still struggling at the end of the monitored second tier time period are then placed into the third tier. The third tier includes the application of additional interventions while monitoring the students who were non-responsive at tier two. For example, these students are given even more time in a one-on-one setting. If at the end of the third tier a student is still not responding or is not responding appropriately to the intervention, a comprehensive evaluation is conducted. This evaluation could result in a referral to a child study team to rule out other possible disabilities. World language teachers might be involved in the RTI process and, therefore, need to understand what data is appropriate to collect and what types of evidenced-based instruction to provide. However, not all school districts in the State of New Jersey employ an RTI approach, but rather rely upon exclusionary criteria before classifying a student.

*Exclusionary criteria*

The use of an exclusionary criterion refers to the ruling out of all other known causes of an LD before making a classification of SLD. For example, testing might be completed to rule out a specific biological problem that a child might have before stating that the achievement discrepancy is due to SLD. The exclusionary element of LD classification has led to the identification of children as to what they are *not* instead of what they *are* (Ross, 1976). This negative approach to classification is unfortunate for three reasons, according to Lyon et al. (2001). First, identifying students based solely on exclusionary criteria restrains the creation and development of clear inclusionary criteria. Second, an exclusionary definition adds little to no conceptual clarity to the understanding of LD, in general. Third, “many of the conditions excluded as potential influences on LD are themselves factors in impeding the development of cognitive and linguistic skills that lead to...academic deficits” (pp. 267-268). It is clear, then, that there are few, if any, concrete, indisputable definitions of LD. The underlying assumptions of the concepts in the special education field are currently being challenged and create a divide among researchers and policymakers. Many of the ways to identify a child with an LD continue to rely on a *wait-to-fail* approach (Lyon et al., 2001). While trying to classify a student as LD, the student falls further behind because he/she is not given appropriate supports to continue to grow and, therefore, continues to fall further behind affecting the overall spiral of academic failure.

An example of exclusionary criteria being used in special education can be found within the definition of autism. Pervasive Developmental Disorder-Not Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS) is a condition in which some, but not all, features of Autism are

identified. According to the New Jersey Administrative Code (New Jersey Department of Education, 2006):

Autism is a pervasive developmental disability which significantly impacts verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction that adversely affects a child's educational performance. Onset is generally evident before age three. Other characteristics often associated with autism are unusual responses to sensory experiences, engagement in repetitive activities, and stereotypical movements and resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines. Students with autism vary widely in their abilities and behavior. The term does not apply if the student's adverse educational performance is due to emotional disturbance. A child who manifests the characteristics of autism after the age of three may be classified as autistic if all of the aforementioned criteria are met. An assessment by a certified speech-language specialist and an assessment by a physician trained in neurodevelopmental assessment are required (p. 31)

According to Leblanc, Richardson, & Burns (2009), Autism Spectrum disorder (ASD) is a developmental disability with a neurological base. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, fourth edition (DSM-IV) of the American Psychiatric Association (2000) lists five disorders on the autism spectrum, including autistic disorder, Asperger's syndrome (no language or cognitive delays), pervasive developmental disorder-not otherwise specified, Rett's disorder (more physical symptoms), and childhood disintegrative disorder. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, fifth edition (DSM-V) of the American Psychiatric Association (2013) changed the criteria for classifying students ASD; however, shared that individuals with a well-established DSM-IV diagnosis of the aforementioned disorders should be given the diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder. Instead, individuals who have marked deficits in social communication, but whose symptoms do not otherwise meet criteria for autism spectrum disorder, should be evaluated for social pragmatic

communication disorder (DSM-V, 2013). ASD was once thought to be relatively rare; however, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that 1 in 68 children in multiple communities in the United States has been identified with ASD (CDC, 2014). The new estimate is roughly 30% higher than the previous estimates reported in 2012.

One of the key features of students with ASD is difficulty with many aspects of first language acquisition. Students with ASD usually understand the literal meanings of words and grammatical construction, but they can often have difficulty with the pragmatics of language. This can be observed in the difficulties that students with ASD encounter in social situations and most often, when using a second language. In addition, many students with ASD find the mechanical learning of a modern foreign language relatively easy; however, role-playing games and conversations with peers can be extremely anxiety producing. Many times, students with ASD will feel more comfortable with activities once they become part of a classroom routine (North West Special Education Needs Regional Partnership, 2004).

### **Foreign language learning disability**

In recent years, the term Foreign Language Learning Disability (FLLD) has been used by researchers to describe a unique disability, but has not appeared in IDEA requirements (IDEA, 2004). However, there is disagreement among researchers as to whether there exists a unique disability related to foreign language learning. Hu (2003) and Reed & Stansfield (2004) note that current research supports the notion of a specific foreign language learning disability and that assessments such as the Modern Language Aptitude Test (Carroll & Sapon, 1959) can be used to identify language disability.

While Sparks & Ganschow (1996) originally advocated for the existence of FLLD, Sparks (2009) states that the use of the term FLLD was premature and incorrect. Sparks (2009) has now revised his position and proposes that, “(1) there is not a discrete entity that can be identified as a *foreign language learning disability*, and (2) foreign language learning occurs on a continuum of very strong to very weak learners” (p. 8). Sparks (2009) changed position because FLLD can be only operationally defined and diagnosed only arbitrarily. Similar to the challenges in the field of special education, the concern within world language is where a clear distinction can be made between having a learning disability or having trouble learning a language.

Sparks (2009) argues that the notion of a disability for foreign language learning, just like the concept of LD, demonstrates a lack of logically consistent, easily operationalized, and empirically valid definitions in addition to a lack of measurable criteria that are related to the definitions. Since the early 1990s, Sparks has conducted empirical research that challenges the assumption of a link between LD and foreign language learning problems. Sparks (2009) presents the research questions that helped guide his research through the 1990s until now by asking:

1. [Do] students classified as LD enrolled in foreign language classes have significantly lower cognitive ability, native language skills, and foreign language aptitude than low-achieving, non LD foreign language learners?
2. [Do] students classified as LD enrolled in foreign language courses who exhibited different levels of IQ-achievement discrepancy...exhibit lower scores on cognitive, native language achievement, and foreign language aptitude measures than foreign language learners classified as LD without IQ achievement discrepancies?
3. [Do] students classified as LD who withdraw from or do not pass foreign language courses (because they had been granted course substitutions or waivers) exhibit cognitive ability, native language achievement, and demographic differences when compared to LD students who passed foreign language courses? (p. 10)

Sparks (2009) states that *no* is the answer to each of these questions. In addition, researchers have reported that the groups of students with LD exhibited no significant differences on any of the abovementioned questions (Sparks & Javorsky, 1999; Sparks, Philips, Ganschow & Javorsky, 1999; Sparks, Philips & Javorsky, 2003). Again, Sparks (2009) theorizes that language learning problems are more likely to occur on a continuum of very strong to very weak learners and that the only way to demarcate a disability would be to draw an arbitrary line along the continuum.

Additionally, Sparks (2009) explains three major implications for the field regarding the identification and evaluation of students who exhibit foreign language learning issues. First, the IQ-achievement discrepancy cannot appropriately predict whether a student will have foreign language learning problems. Second, the discrepancy between IQ-achievement and Modern Language Aptitude Test scores should not be used as a diagnostic criterion for foreign language disability. Finally, a student's foreign language aptitude score should not be misinterpreted to mean that the student cannot learn a foreign language or should not enroll in a foreign language course. These three implications suggest that students with foreign language difficulties can enroll in language courses and possibly succeed in learning a new language.

The absence of relevant research in language education and special education is alarming. Only a few studies address this intersection: Sparks & Ganschow (1997), Sparks et al. (1998), and Sparks (2009). Teachers must have appropriate preparation if they are to make a difference in the education of language students. The following

section reviews and describes prevalent teacher education program models in world languages and special education.

### **World language and special education teacher preparation program models**

#### *Traditional world language teacher preparation program models*

There are various ways for a person to become certified to teach languages to elementary or secondary school students. Throughout typical traditional world language teacher preparation programs, for example, teacher candidates observe language teachers in the field and are asked to reflect on the various practices that they witness. Furthermore, the pre-service candidates typically enroll in coursework including learning about second language acquisition, linguistics, and second language teaching methodologies. Towards the end of the teacher preparation program, the teacher candidates work with a cooperating teacher to gain experience in planning lessons and executing them through a student teaching process.

Bott-VanHouten, Hoyt-Oukada, & Scow (2003) suggest that three common traditional program designs currently exist: (1) a traditional four-year BA/BS degree program with field observations and practicum that take place early in the program and that culminates in a semester-long student teaching experience; (2) a four year- bachelor degree with a language major, followed by a one-year education MA/MS degree with a student teaching experience; and (3) a six-year BA(S)/MA(S) degree with a paid year-long school internship. Regulations for graduation requirements and experiences are set by state department of educations which also align to federal mandates for teacher preparation.

However, Levine (2006) advances that it is clear that there is no such thing as a typical teacher preparation program, not just world language teacher preparation programs, but teacher education programs in general. Schools of education, depending upon locality and state regulations, vary greatly regarding types of requirements necessary for teacher certification. Given the diversity of current approaches to world language teacher education, state governments have tried to establish standardization and uniformity. However, Levine (2006) puts forward that states have created a more regulated environment in an effort to improve overall teacher quality while demanding greater accountability from the programs that prepare pre-service teachers. The shift away from allowing for diverse program models to more standard ones has come from a more regulated environment in the field of education and demands for higher standards in schools of education.

One way that states try to standardize teacher preparation is through creating licensing regulations. The *New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers and School Leaders* (New Jersey Department of Education, 2004) are an example of this approach to uniformity through standards. The standards assist in clarifying the unified vision that the state requires of the knowledge, performances, and dispositions that teachers need to possess to be effective in classrooms. The following ten standards are quoted in the NJDOE (2004) *Standards for Teachers and School Leaders* and span across the areas of *knowledge, dispositions, and performances* that need to be included in all teacher training programs:

1. Subject matter knowledge;
2. Human growth and development;
3. Diverse learners;

4. Instructional planning and strategies;
5. Assessment;
6. Learning environment;
7. Special needs;
8. Communication;
9. Collaboration and partnerships; and
10. Professional development (p. 9-18).

In addition to the *New Jersey Professional Standards for Teacher and School Leaders* (New Jersey Department of Education, 2004), world language teachers, specifically, are exposed to the *New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards for World Languages 7.1* (New Jersey Department of Education, 2009). The standard states:

All students will be able to use a world language in addition to English to engage in meaningful conversation, to understand and interpret spoken and written language, and to present information, concepts, and ideas, while also gaining an understanding of the perspectives of other cultures. Through language study, they will make connections with other content areas, compare the language and culture studied with their own, and participate in home and global communities (p. 1).

Teachers should be exposed to coursework that presents each of these standards across various contexts and should foster discussions that help pre-service teachers understand the implications of each of these areas in each of their classrooms. The extent to which each university program will address these standards will vary from university to university. For example, Standard 7: Special Needs, might be an area which is treated superficially in certain departments because of the prevailing thought that only special education teachers are responsible for the education of special needs students. In addition, these standards were all adopted in various years and then adopted in various iterations of the documents in other years as well; therefore, teachers who received certification before 2003 might not have been introduced to topics across the standards.

Even though pre-service world language teachers graduate from traditional

program models, they often cite concerns of being underprepared for beginning in their own classrooms. Cooper (2004) and Lange & Sims (1990), through their study on new teachers, report that beginning teachers are found to be dissatisfied with their programmatic preparations, citing a need for more effective instruction on classroom management and improved mentoring during field experience. Pearson & Chambers (2005) put forward that pre-service language teachers have positive views of inclusive education, but they are challenged by the implementation. These researchers support that world language teacher preparation and special education is a complex area with no simple, ready-made solutions.

*Traditional special education teacher preparation program models*

Just as general education teacher preparation programs are extremely diverse, special education teacher preparation programs are also diverse (Connelly & Graham, 2009). It is difficult to find empirical research that espouses a specific model for special education teacher training. For example, Brownell, Ross, Colón & McCallum (2003) report that special education teacher education is not an established area of inquiry while researching critical features of special education teacher preparation programs. The researchers, however, identify frequently described program features that are included in traditional special education teacher preparation program models. The common features include, but are not limited to: crafting extensive field experiences, creating links between theory and practice, collaborating among members of universities and site schools, evaluating the impact of teacher education programs, and focusing on inclusion and cultural diversity. These features were identified in exemplary programs offering certification in traditional university programs.

In addition to identifying critical features of special education teacher program models, Ingersoll's (2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004) research reports on the ways that teachers felt that they were prepared in their teacher education program by using the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) and the Teacher Follow-Up Survey (TFS). The study focused on pre-service teacher experiences with student teaching and used recently graduated students from teacher education programs as the participants. Surprisingly, Ingersoll's (2001) research demonstrates that one-third of the participants surveyed had less than ten weeks of student teaching. It would be informative to see which universities are preparing special education teachers and not presenting them with student teaching opportunities. Additionally, one-third of the participants from Ingersoll's (2001) survey mentioned that they did not feel well prepared to handle management and teaching issues. One can only speculate as to the correlation of teachers who had less than ten weeks of student teaching and those who felt underprepared to handle management and teaching issues.

As a result of teacher shortages, universities and districts are creating alternate route programs that are different from traditional models. The case of teacher shortage often forces the creation of fast-track traditional programs for teacher preparation. This can be evidenced in the Intervention Specialist program at Wright State University in Ohio (Keener & Bargerhuff, 2006). Due to large numbers of teacher shortages across Ohio, teachers are often granted permission to work with temporary certificate or are hired as long-term substitutes. Once the individual teacher accepts a teaching position, it is his/her responsibility to work towards certification as quickly as possible. Keener & Bargerhuff (2006) state that the candidates are under tremendous pressure to complete

licensure in the shortest amount of time possible. Even though the teachers enroll in the traditional program at the local university, their requirement of student teaching is removed and their teaching experience is counted as the requirement. Therefore, even though the program that the teachers are enrolled in is a traditional program, they are actually more like their alternate route counterparts than traditional route teachers. These types of programs can make data collection for traditional special education programs extremely problematic (Keener & Bargerhuff, 2006).

There is a similar trend in the field of special education teacher preparation and general education teacher preparation: namely, the shift toward standardization in the face of incredible variability. For example, Bain, Lancaster, Zundans, & Parkes (2009) maintain that recent reforms in pre-service teacher education program designs have focused on having the pre-service teachers build a more profound and coherent understanding of teaching practice. For example, the National Council for Accreditation of Colleges of Education (NCATE) has maintained that pre-service teacher programs must provide a framework for allowing teachers to gain a more profound understanding of content and pedagogical knowledge. University programs that adhere to the NCATE (2006) standards are bound to a framework that allows for more integrated content knowledge. This could be advantageous for world language teacher preparation programs moving forward.

The legal responsibility of the education of students classified as LD has been moving from the special educator to the general educator. As previously stated in this dissertation, according to N.J.A.C. 6A:14-4.6 (i) (New Jersey Department of Education, 2006) the general education teacher is responsible for the education of students with LD

in the general education classroom. This shift simply signifies that there must be more collaboration between the general educator and the special educator. Special education teachers that are prepared in traditional education programs should have some exposure to various models of collaborative teaching (McKenzie, 2009). Some of those models, for example, should include team teaching (Salend, 2008), cooperative teaching (Idol, 2006), and co-teaching (Scruggs, Mastropieri, & McDuffie, 2007). All three of these models position the special educator and the general educator in equal positions of power in the classroom. McKenzie (2009) advances that even though most special education program models include discussions of collaborative teaching, the execution of such coursework is often less than desirable. Two models that have proven to not work very well, *one teach-one help* (Salend, 2008) and *one teach-one assist* (Friend, Reising, & Cook, 1993), position the teacher and the special education teacher in differing positions of power.

McKenzie (2009) advocates for the strict teaching of collaborative methods. He states:

A contributing factor to role ambiguity, and hence a significant obstacle to collaboration, is the paucity of structured training that teachers receive (Kamens, 2007; Otis-Wilborn et al., 2005). This may be due in large part to the faulty assumptions that collaboration comes naturally (Friend, 2000) and that implementing instructional modifications requires minimal adjustments by teachers (Gersten, Vaughn, Deshler, & Schiller, 1997). Inasmuch as effective collaborative partnerships are most appropriately viewed as developmental in nature...training designed to enhance and sustain their viability must be judged by the extent to which the developmental elements that are key to sustained reform, a shared collaborative vision and culture (Arthaud, Aram, Breck, Doelling, & Bushrow, 2007; Sindelar, Shearer, Yendol-Hoppey, & Liebert, 2006; Wiener & Murawski, 2005), are addressed and nurtured (p.381).

McKenzie (2009) states that a dearth of structured training exists in teacher collaboration methods. Oftentimes, people believe that teachers working together would be an easy task; however, there are many different issues that arise in collaborative work (McKenzie, 2009). For example, teachers do not always understand the role of each member in the classroom. Some more examples of various co-teaching paradigms include: one-teacher, one-support teacher; parallel teaching; two teachers teaching different content; and one-teacher, one-monitor (Abdallah, 2009; Bahamonde, 1999; McHatton & Daniel, 2008; Portocarrero & Bergin, 1997; and Dove & Honingsfield, 2008). Therefore, more blended programs could help both world language and special education teachers understand various ways to work together to teach all students in world language classrooms.

*Strategies and methodologies taught in teacher preparation program models*

Both World Language teacher preparation programs and Special Education teacher preparation program models include coursework to introduce pre-service teachers to strategies and methodologies for teaching content in general education and, sometimes, inclusive classrooms. Strategies and methodologies that are employed in world language classrooms often depend upon the tradition of theory from which the larger school of education is guided. Historically, for example, pre-service programs that subscribed to the principles of grammar translation introduced pre-service world language teachers to employing strategies for translating texts from the target language to English focusing on accuracy of the translation. However, the field of second language teaching has shifted drastically through the past several decades to rely less on grammar translation methodologies to ones that are more focused on the use of language for daily interactions

and communication with speakers of the target language (Griffiths & Parr, 2001). One major shift in the language teaching paradigm came from Krashen's (1977) Monitor and Acquisition / Learning Hypothesis which state that language cannot be consciously learned but only acquired through natural communication, and therefore, that conscious learning strategies are not useful in the development of language.

However, since Krashen's work was first introduced in the 1970s, language learning strategies have evolved out of an opposing tradition, namely sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1986), to easily fit within a wide variety of methods and approaches to second language teaching and learning. For example, strategies to aid memory and cognitive strategies have been employed to aid the development of vocabulary and grammar knowledge (Florian, 2006). In addition, learning from making errors involves cognitive and metacognitive strategies that teachers can teach students to use to help grow in their understanding of the target language. Social strategies, for example, can also easily be assimilated into a communicative language-teaching approach to assist students in overall linguistic growth (Griffiths & Parr, 2001). Oxford (1990) defines language learning strategies as, "specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations" (p.8). The importance of language learning strategies in the teaching and learning process has been divided into groups by Oxford (2003) who advocates for the inclusion of specific strategies in the world language classroom. The strategy groups are divided into six main categories: memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social (Oxford, 2003). Together, the six categories include strategies that world language teachers can employ with second language students and that they can directly teach to

students, both those with LD and those without, to grow in their knowledge of the target language.

Furthermore, there has been very little research in the field of world language teacher preparation focusing on how to assist teachers better understand the difference between conceptual learning difficulties from language-specific learning difficulties. In terms of helping pre-service world language teachers understand inclusionary practices, for example, researchers maintain that inclusive education theory has outpaced its practice (Artiles, Kozleski, Dorn, & Christensen, 2006). Although the conceptualization of inclusive education has become increasingly sophisticated, the focus has been on students with disabilities rather than on the complete composition of what is theorized to be an inclusive school (Artiles, Kozleski, Dorn, & Christensen, 2006). In other words, pre-service teachers are only being introduced to working in inclusive settings with students with LD and are not necessarily being introduced to working with students with LD in their own concentration. For example, there is little research demonstrating that pre-service teachers gain an understanding of language specific difficulties in the world language that they are studying, such as French, Spanish, or Mandarin Chinese.

Finally, literature in the field of world language teacher preparation fails to adequately define what a world language teacher needs to know about second language acquisition and students with learning disabilities. Case & Taylor (2005) explore the extant gap in the literature pertaining to pre-service language teacher preparation in the areas of pronunciation, syntax, and semantics. These researchers maintain that pre-service world language teachers rarely are provided with preparation in understanding articulation disorders in English or the language in which they are majoring (Case &

Taylor, 2005). Pronunciation patterns often are considered as part of the normal development of any second language. However, a focus on pronunciation practices to help students who omit, substitute, distort or add to linguistic elements is rarely entertained in the pre-service coursework for world language teachers (Piper, 2003). Similarly, pre-service teachers are not often provided opportunities to learn how to assist students with LD who have difficulty in understanding negation, word order, and syntactic mood in a second language. Certain syntactic and semantic features of a second language can take years to develop for learners without disabilities (Kuder, 2003). The process, then, can take more time for learners with LD. It is evident that a gap in the literature exists regarding the ways that pre-service world language teachers are prepared to work with students with LD in language classrooms.

### **Guiding framework**

This dissertation adopts Pugach & Blanton's (2009) framework for conducting research in university pre-service teacher preparation programs for general and special education. The framework is based upon three collaborative program models and five program dimensions. Pugach & Blanton (2009) developed their typology of teacher education program models in order to identify the range of practices evident in teacher education programs, and to consider the degree to which collaboration represents a systematic integration of content areas and special education across the curriculum. The models representing varying states of collaboration include discrete, integrated, and merged models. The five dimensions include: curricular coherence, faculty collaboration, depth of knowledge, performance/portfolio assessments, and PK-12 partnerships. This framework is useful for examining the diverse approaches to teacher

preparation and determining relationships between world language and special education preparation within a particular university.

The first model is a *discrete model*. The discrete model is one in which there is little to no interaction between general education and special education faculty members. In addition, the pre-service experiences are mostly unrelated between the special education and general education programs. In a discrete model, a pre-service teacher seeking certification in a subject area, such as world languages, might be encouraged, or required, to take a course offered by the special education department. In turn, a pre-service teacher seeking certification in special education might be encouraged to take a course in a general content area. One key aspect of a discrete model is that there is little to no expectation for faculty members in content area and special education to collaborate.

Typically, universities that exemplify the discrete model tend to have general education (content area) and special education departments that exist independently of one another. For example, discrete model programs offer very few, if any, collaborative meetings between departments. According to Pugach & Blanton (2009), faculty members might identify a sense of mutual exclusion. The authors state that, furthermore, the sense of mutual exclusion places the pre-service teachers at risk for devaluing the expertise of one another. Discrete programs also represent an additive curriculum structure in which new courses and topics are added to the overall program as needed rather than a planned integration of the curriculum for the pre-service teachers. This model is the least collaborative on the continuum of the three models.

A more collaborative model on the continuum is the *integrated model*. Integrated programs are ones in which there is a coordination of some general and special education programs. In the integrated model, certain sections of the curriculum for pre-service teachers are intentionally redesigned to complement one another. Integration attempts to move away from single-standing courses and towards a collaborative redesign of components in both general education and special education. The decision for integration is made with a programmatic perspective and not haphazardly. The faculties from both departments collaborate for the benefit of the entire program.

Faculty members working in an integrated model understand the need to prepare both sets of pre-service teachers for the wide array of student abilities that will be present in their future classrooms. This model draws upon an inclusive style of teaching and draws broadly from an ideal notion of collaboration. Integrated programs can be identified by an intentionally redesigned curriculum that keeps in mind the needs of both certification areas. In contrast to the discrete model, the faculty and pre-service teachers value and acknowledge the skills and expertise of each other.

Integrated programs can be identified by the regular meetings of departments to discuss the collaborative approach and to brainstorm ways to improve communication between the departments. Many of the discussions revolve around the curriculum and fieldwork experiences that the pre-service teachers will experience. The ultimate goal is to create changes to the core curriculum to promote better preparation of general educators while ensuring that special educators gain access to a strong foundation in core curricular content areas. A hallmark of an integrated program is that pre-service teachers may earn one endorsement or two endorsements. For example, a pre-service teacher

could earn certification in French or certifications in both French and special education. The pre-service general education teacher candidates are exposed to understanding the intricacies of working with students with learning disabilities. Typically, a candidate will choose to earn a general education endorsement and then decide to continue to obtain a special education endorsement that, according to Pugach & Blanton (2009), “deliberately builds on and complements the general education license” (p. 578).

The most collaborative model on Pugach & Blanton’s (2009) continuum is the *merged model*. This model can be clearly identified because it contains a single pre-service curriculum that is designed for both general education and special education teachers. Therefore, all teachers receive both general education and special education endorsements at the end of their experiences in the university program. The goal of this program is to blur the heavily demarcated line between content-area teacher and special education teacher. Theoretically, a pre-service teacher that gains endorsements through this type of program would feel comfortable teaching in either of the areas.

Merged program models are difficult to create because they demand widespread and routine collaboration across faculty in general education and special education. In contrast to integrated programs, merged programs must account for the fact that all pre-service teachers must meet the requirements for both general education and special education endorsements by the completion of the program. These types of collaboration require a lot of support from university administrators because both the general education and special education faculty members need time to collaborate.

Pugach & Blanton (2009) note that one important characteristic of a merged program is that the special education endorsement is typically restricted to mild and

moderate disabilities and does not usually include work with students with severe and profound disabilities or students with sensory disabilities. Since both programs have limited time to work with pre-service teachers before they graduate from the programs, there might not be enough time available to work with all populations of students with varying disabilities. Merged programs that prepare teachers to work with students with both mild to moderate and profound disabilities, in addition to general education students, have not yet been identified by Pugach & Blanton (2009).

In light of Pugach & Blanton's (2009) definition of the three aforementioned program models, there are concerns regarding resources, federal and state policies, and guiding institutional philosophies that should be mentioned. In other words, for programs looking to move from one model to another, university administrators and professors need to work with the limited resources that are often available for making programmatic change while also keeping aligned to federal and state mandates for teacher education program designs. Furthermore, such program redesigns necessitate buy in from various stakeholders at the university and need to fit within the overall philosophical beliefs of the larger university. Pugach & Blanton's (2009) program models are also guided by larger dimensions of program characteristics that further add to considerations that must be made by university administrators when deciding to create or revise teacher preparation programs.

There are five dimensions of program characteristics used to examine programs that fall along this three-tiered typology. The first program dimension described by Pugach & Blanton (2009) includes curricular coherence. Ideally, curricular coherence applies not only to the types of partnerships that are created between the special

education and the general education classroom but also to all pre-service curricular components. Some of the components include multicultural education and philosophical and theoretical foundations of education. Curricular coherence should be driven by a shared view of what is important for pre-service teachers to know and be able to do by the end of their teacher education program (Pugach & Blanton, 2009).

The next program dimension espoused by Pugach & Blanton (2009) is faculty collaboration. This dimension not only refers to the frequency of faculties meeting in joint spaces to work together, but also to what happens when the faculty works together during a specific amount of time. Maintaining curricular coherence is very difficult without a strong commitment to faculty collaboration. Depth of knowledge is the third program dimension described by Pugach & Blanton (2009) and refers to how much knowledge graduates are expected to acquire during their pre-service training and to use in their practice. The degree of knowledge that a university program deems acceptable for graduation could vary amongst institutions and programs.

The fourth dimension of program design refers to how performance and portfolio assessments and standards are used to gather information on the knowledge, skills, and disposition candidates possess. The requirements that a candidate must address regarding teacher standards differs from program to program and state to state. The final program dimension put forward by Pugach & Blanton (2009) is PK-12 partnerships. This dimension focuses on how clinical experiences are conceptualized in collaborative programs and how colleges and universities build and maintain relationships with partner schools. One indicator of the quality of PK-12 partnerships is whether the field placements match what the pre-service teachers are learning and experiencing in their

coursework. These five dimensions form the foundation for Pugach & Blanton's (2009) framework for researching pre-service teacher education programs that focus on collaboration between the special education and general education departments. These dimensions can be used to analyze teacher preparation programs and determine whether they fall along the discreet, integrated, or merged continuum.

### **Conclusion**

The research on world language teacher preparation and special education indicates that few empirical studies have been completed to date investigating the intersection of the two disciplines. As more students with special needs enroll in world language classrooms, it is the role of the world language teacher to learn to understand the diverse needs of students with LD to create appropriate accommodations and modifications. Inclusionary practices are encouraged in all disciplines in New Jersey public schools; therefore, world language and special education teachers alike need to know how to collaborate to best meet the needs of all students enrolled in world language classrooms.

World language teachers not only need to know how to make accommodations and modifications to their lessons and assessments for students, they also need to be able to understand the many different disabilities of students that are in their classrooms. To assist in reaching the needs of larger enrollments of students with LD in world language classrooms, school districts are employing in-class support techniques which pair a language teacher with a special education teacher to co-teach lessons. This, coupled with McKenzie's (2009) research demonstrating that a dearth of structured training exists in teacher collaboration methods and leads to two teachers working in a world language

classroom that might not understand how to work with one another to help students with LD.

Since in-class support methods have just recently begun to appear in world language classrooms, both world language and special education teachers need to have an understanding of second language acquisition methodologies employed in world language classrooms and ways to make accommodations and modifications based on the specific needs of students with LD in their classrooms. Ultimately, the needs of all students in the classroom are the responsibility of the general education teacher and pre-service teachers need to understand this as they embark on their professional teaching careers upon graduation. Thus, this study sheds light on the conditions needed in university-level coursework, practica, and student teaching to best support pre-service world language teachers as they learn to meet the needs of the students with LD in their classrooms.

In the next chapter of this study, I discuss the research methodologies and analyses that were employed to help answer the guiding research questions. After a brief presentation of a pilot study that was conducted, I present information on each of the participants, delineating their role in the research study and commenting on the ways that their participation assisted me in answering the research questions set forth from the outset of this study.

## CHAPTER 3

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

**Introduction**

In my work as a world language teacher and world language department supervisor, I wanted to undertake this study since I encounter students with a wide range of abilities enrolled in world language courses at the primary and secondary levels. As an undergraduate student majoring in secondary education and French, I was never introduced to working with students with special needs in my classroom. Upon receiving my first job out of college as a high school French teacher, I had no idea what IEPs or 504 plans were, nor did I realize the legality of properly implementing them. Above all, however, I did not know how to share my love of the French language and Francophone culture with all of the students in my classroom. Differentiation of instruction was touched upon in my own teacher preparation program; nonetheless, I was not prepared to understand various learning styles of students with specific disabilities, specifically those based in language.

As I continued to grow in my understanding of teaching a wide range of students, I noticed that in my school district, most middle school students with special needs were excluded from enrolling in a world language classroom. This was to provide them with an additional period for extra support in other academic subject areas. This left them at a disadvantage when they attempted to enroll in world language courses at the high school in order to complete their one-year, or five credits, graduation requirement of studying a language. Once I was promoted to the department supervisor of World Languages and English Language Learners (ELL), I was tasked with creating inclusive classrooms to

assist newly enrolled students with special needs in Spanish classrooms. Through conversations with the department supervisor of Special Services and discussions with the Board of Education, we decided to phase in Spanish classes with in-class support for grades six, seven, and eight over three years. The largest difficulty with creating in-class teacher partnerships was that the WL teachers had not been trained in working with students with special needs and, conversely, the special education teachers had not been trained in second language acquisition methodology and theory. This dissertation study, therefore, is a practitioner-directed investigation into the ways that current pre-service teachers are being prepared to work with students with special needs in world language classrooms. It is also an investigation into the regulatory underpinnings that are in place at the university in which the pre-service teachers are being trained.

This chapter begins with a brief description of a pilot study that was undertaken in the Fall 2011 semester at Baytown University.<sup>1</sup> I describe the site, participants, and the results of the pilot study. In the next section, I provide a brief introduction to the research methodology that I employed in the dissertation study, followed by a description the site(s) of investigation and participants. In the third section of this chapter, I give a brief summary of my methods of data collection and data analysis and I conclude with a discussion on my role as a practitioner-researcher.

### **Summary of the pilot study**

**Description.** Baytown University, a moderate-sized private university in Central New Jersey, has an average class size of 21.8 students and the student to faculty ratio is 15:1. The university prides itself on offering small classes, thus allowing for individual

---

<sup>1</sup> Names of institutions and participants have been changed to preserve confidentiality.

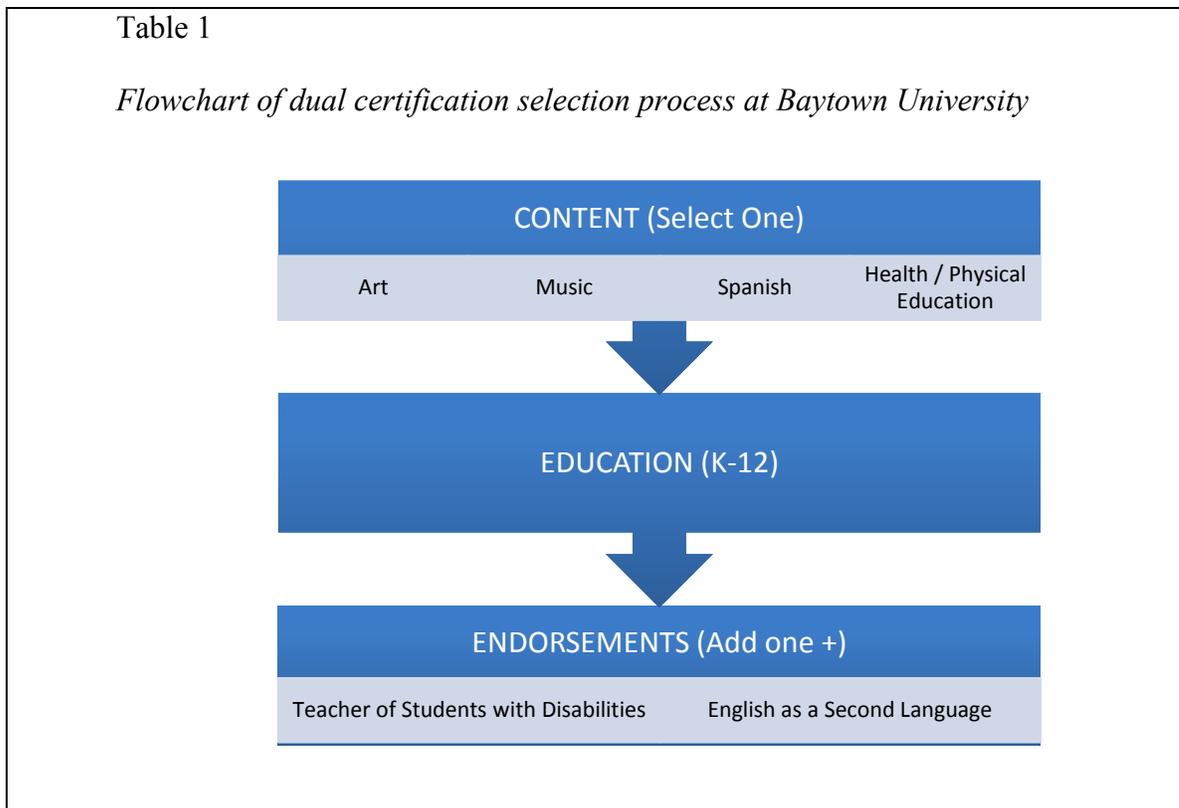
attention and student-faculty dialogue. The student body of the university is diverse with a population of more than 4,000 undergraduate and 1,800 graduate students. The school of education is one of the largest programs at the university. Students are offered a choice of over 25 areas of concentration in addition to twelve specific endorsements.

Baytown University, the site of both the pilot study and the dissertation study, offers world language pre-service teachers the possibility of also graduating with an endorsement in Teaching Students with Disabilities. World language pre-service teachers who opt to enroll in the dual endorsement program, teaching world languages and students with special needs, follow a sequence of courses to ensure that they meet all state requirements for both endorsements upon graduation. This university was chosen for the pilot study because it was one of the only universities in New Jersey offering a program that allows for endorsements in both of these combined areas upon graduation.

I conducted my pilot study in the Fall 2011 semester at the university by working solely with university administrators and professors. I focused on interviewing the university administrator (dean) of education and a professor in the department of World Languages and a professor in the department of Special Education. The purpose of the pilot study was to investigate the ways that the overall university program introduced pre-service world language teachers to work with students of varying ability levels, including those classified with special needs.

**Site.** One of the main reasons for choosing this site is that the university offers students the possibility of graduating with an endorsement in world language (Spanish and Chinese) and Teaching Students with Disabilities. Typically, a pre-service teacher seeking endorsements in both a general content area and special education would need to

meet the requirements of one program and then begin meeting the requirements of the other program, thus completing the coursework and requirements of two separate endorsement programs. The flowchart in Table 1 demonstrates the pathway for dual endorsements available to Baytown University students.



Baytown University publishes a version of the flowchart in Table 1 on their webpage for the school of education. First, Baytown students choose a content area to begin working towards a K-12 endorsement in teaching and then they can choose to add an endorsement in either working with students with special needs or English language learners. The pre-service students choose to major in one subject area (i.e., Spanish) and then add an endorsement in English as a Second Language or Teacher of Students with Disabilities. From first glance at this chart, it seemed as if the university was implementing an

integrated model (Pugach & Blanton, 2009) to language education and special education; however, as I will discuss in the findings section of this chapter, I found that there were considerable discrepancies between the actual program and the one presented in the flow chart.

**Participants.** Participants in this project included three university faculty members: one administrator, one foreign language department professor, and one special education professor. Dr. Harris, the foreign language department professor, oversaw the foreign language department in conjunction with education. She was the advisor for any student that wished to gain an endorsement in language education. Dr. Brown, the special education professor, was the head of the special education department and advised over 30 students every semester. Finally, Dr. Philips, the administrator of numerous programs at the university, oversaw both the language education and special education departments in addition to over fifteen other programs and departments. These participants were chosen because they represented a cross-section of members from the world language and special education departments and administration.

**Research questions.** There were three main research questions that guided the pilot study:

1. How does a university world language teacher education program prepare pre-service teachers to work with students with LD?;
2. In what ways do the administration and professors from the world language and special education program/departments collaborate to prepare pre-service world language teachers to work with students with LD and how are the programs promoted to pre-service teachers?; and

3. How does policy (i.e. local, state, and federal) shape university program design?

**Data collection and analysis.** Each university faculty member was interviewed one time, with the exception of the foreign language department professor, who was interviewed two times. Dr. Harris requested a follow up meeting to share some more ideas and thoughts. Each of the participants shared relevant information about the university teacher preparation program. The interviews were transcribed and included in the analysis, along with field notes from each of the encounters. In order to facilitate a more relaxed atmosphere, the interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner. Interviewees were not discouraged from straying from the original interview questions but were reminded of the original question if they needed it.

The *Text Analysis Markup System* (TAMS) Analyzer was used to aid in the analysis of the data for the pilot study. TAMS Analyzer is a qualitative coding and data analysis software program that assisted in the organization of initial coding and category creation. Data were coded and analyzed from the interviews and ancillary documents, regardless of the format of the information, and included interview transcripts, flow charts, and state statutes.

Through multiple readings of the data, I began to form categories and develop a hypothesis, while examining examples for patterns and developing an understanding of where regularity was not apparent. These hypotheses then became the foundation for the larger dissertation research study, which will be explained in a subsequent section of this chapter.

**Results and findings of the pilot study.** Upon analyzing the data, a clear disconnect between the presentation of the university world language teacher preparation program displayed on the university website and the implementation of the program emerged. This discrepancy between the pathway to preparation displayed in the public (promoted) versus the actual training teachers received (actual) is further developed in chapter five of this dissertation by drawing on university administrator, pre-service teacher candidates, and graduates reports of their experiences at Baytown. Here, I will report the findings of the pilot study which focused on the disconnect between presentation and actual program design.

Two overall themes emerged in this study and frame the findings presented below. First, I found that the administration, the language education, and special education departments presented distinct views of collaboration across world language and special education programs. Even though pre-service candidates could graduate with endorsements in both World Language and Teacher of Students with Disabilities, there was not much collaboration between the departments that run the programs. Second, the amount of time that was available to train pre-service teachers by university participants emerged as a key factor in providing dual certification in world language and special education. The instructional personnel mentioned that with more time, they would be more willing to participate in collaborative endeavors. These two themes, ideal versus actual types of collaboration and the role of time, are woven throughout three findings of the pilot study.

The first finding of the pilot study was that NJDOE required teacher preparation programs to comply with strict limitations on the number of credit hours that pre-service

teachers spent studying a particular topic. For example, the university administrators had to comply with a 30-credit hour cap on exposing pre-service teachers to working with students throughout the content-area endorsements offered at Baytown. The university offered state-compliant courses by introducing students to general topics at the 100-course level and then merging courses from the special education and language education departments at the 300-course level under the umbrella term of working with *diverse* learners. The 300-level course was then in compliance with the 30-credit hour cap but only by offering an overview of working with diverse learners, those with learning disabilities and those learning a second language. The course sequence was also in compliance with National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) guidelines since Baytown was undergoing an NCATE review process at the time the pilot research was conducted. In order to remain compliant, Baytown had to fold the study of diverse learners into one brief survey course. While it was important to meet state requirements, this study found that this approach to distributing credit hours did not offer sufficient opportunity to study issues affecting diverse K-12 learners.

The second finding from the pilot study was that three major types of collaboration existed at the university when planning for courses and these collaborations were shaped by the ideologies and policies of university professors and administrators directing the learning experiences of pre-service teachers. The three types of collaboration that existed included: university administrators and the special education and world language departments, the world languages and special education departments, and the university and K-12 partner schools. The collaboration between and amongst these groups shaped the overall experiences of pre-service teachers. In order to ensure

that the pre-service teachers were exposed to working with students with diverse needs, the study found that collaboration was facilitated by the needs of each participating department, rather than woven into the overall program design at Baytown.

The third finding of the pilot study was that all participants mentioned that they constantly felt pressure to include as many topics and experiences as possible for pre-service teachers, including an introduction to diverse learners in classrooms. However, the reality of time constraints meant that a vast amount of information needed to be presented to students in their coursework in a short amount of time. Therefore, the notion of diversity was used as an umbrella term to include students with special needs and English Language Learners. The 300-level course that was created to introduce pre-service teachers to working with diverse learners is more fully explicated in chapters four and five of this dissertation from the view of both university administrators and professors and pre-service teachers. The study found that the term diversity was used to ensure that all students were introduced to working with students with varying abilities and that courses were kept within State guidelines, but that the pre-service teachers were only provided with a cursory understanding of working with students with special needs and at-risk learners.

### **Conclusion of pilot study**

While I learned much from the pilot study, an analysis of only university administrators and professors as well as published information could not give a complete picture of the complex nature of the university teacher preparation program. The pilot study was limited by the small number of participants and the limited scope of the research questions. In order to expand on the findings from the pilot study, the research

questions for this dissertation study were extended to focus more on the experiences of the pre-service teachers in the actual program and included more administrators, professors, and staff members from the overall university community. Specifically, the research questions proposed in this dissertation study also focused on the ways that recent graduates describe the ways that they feel they were prepared to work with students with special needs in their own World Language classroom upon graduation from Baytown University. In addition, the research questions that guide this dissertation research focused on the ways that pre-service teachers share that they were prepared to work with students with special needs through the program at Baytown University. The dissertation built on the pilot study to provide insight into the experiences of Baytown teachers before, during, and after their work with students with special needs in the world language classroom.

### **Research design and qualitative methodology**

**Introduction.** This two-year dissertation study employed a qualitative case study approach from a practitioner's perspective. The main focus of this dissertation research was on the ways that pre-service world language teachers are prepared to work with students with special needs in the classroom. Through the collection and analysis of data, I was able to interpret the meaning of the information I collected while drawing on personal reflections and past research. The bounded system (Cresswell, 1998), or case, for this study was one university teacher preparation program. The data that was collected came from multiple sources including documents, archival records, interviews and observations. These data collection and analysis methods are described more fully later in this chapter.

Baytown University's school of education, charged with preparing pre-service world language teachers, was the focal site for data collection; however, this study also included on-site observations of pre-service teachers in their student teaching placement schools. Cresswell (1998) maintains that multiple sources of information supporting research include observations, interviews, audio-visual material, and documents and reports. Data collected from multiple sources and sites allows for triangulation during the data analysis of the research. This dissertation study is grounded in the data obtained from multiple observations and interviews of participants, while also including audio recordings from actual classrooms that documented teaching practices along with reports from participants at the university and state level.

This dissertation seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. How do pre-service teachers demonstrate that they are developing an understanding of pedagogies and principles for working with students with special needs in the world language classroom?
2. What policies and practices shape the ways that university administrators, professors, and partner schools work to prepare world language teachers to work with students with special needs?
3. How do recent graduates from a pre-service teacher education program report they have been prepared to work with students with special needs in their current world language classrooms?

**Site.** The study was conducted at Baytown University, a mid-sized private university in central New Jersey. The site is the same one that was identified and examined in the aforementioned pilot study. However, since the research questions

expanded to include the experiences of current pre-service teachers in their student teaching experiences, the overall research collection took place at multiple sites all related to the university pre-service teacher preparation program. For example, the study documented the experiences of four pre-service world language teachers with observations in their field placement sites. Therefore, school districts allowed me to observe the pre-service teachers in their classrooms with their cooperating teachers. Table 2 demonstrates the various focal sites for this dissertation research study.

**Table 2**

*Names of focal sites and data collected delineated by participants*

<b>Name</b>	<b>Data Collected</b>	<b>Participants</b>
Baytown University	Interviews, observations of university courses, and collection of program promotion materials	University administrators, professors (world languages and special education), staff members charged with student teaching placements and supervision
Lafayette High School	Interviews and observations	Pre-service and cooperating teacher
Chambly High School	Interviews and observations	Pre-service and cooperating teacher
Brossard High School	Interviews and Observations	Pre-service and cooperating teacher
Roberval High School	Interviews	Pre-service and cooperating teacher
Faubourg Middle and High School	Interviews	Principals of middle and high school

The first school, Lafayette High School, is a public school located in Southern New Jersey, near the Atlantic Ocean beach communities. The population of the school was approximately 1,400 students, all of whom were required to take five credits of a

World Language as part of their graduation requirements. The average class size was approximately fourteen students. The second school, Chambly High School, is a public school located in Northern New Jersey, in close proximity to New York City. The population of the school was approximately 900 students, all of whom were required to also take five credits of a World Language as part of their graduation requirements. The average class size was approximately nineteen students. The third high school, Brossard High School, was a private school located in central New Jersey. The population of the K-12 school was approximately 700 students, all of whom were required to take only three credits of a World Language as part of their graduation requirement in grades 9-12. The average class size was about seven students. The Faubourg public school district is one that typically works with placing student teachers from Baytown University. It is located in close proximity to Baytown University. The district is comprised of approximately 11,000 students who are educated in seventeen schools. The Faubourg public schools require one year of world language study as part of graduation requirements.

**Participants.** The participants in this study consisted nine members from the university administration and faculty, four pre-service teachers in the teacher education program at Baytown and their cooperating teachers, four recent graduates from Baytown University (including two of the original pre-service student teachers) and two principals from the university's partner school district. This dissertation research study consisted of distinct participants for each of the research questions recruited through purposive sampling, including participants involved with the teacher preparation program at Baytown University. The research used a convenience sample because the population of

pre-service teachers was so small at Baytown University. I wanted to include as many pre-service teachers as possible for both semesters and only one of the five did not agree to participate in the study. This study employed a convenience sampling because these were the only pre-service teachers that were able to participate in this study. I originally gained access to Baytown University through Dr. Philips, Associate Dean in the School of Education. After meeting with him, Dr. Philips placed me in contact with various members of the university community who he believed would be useful in providing data for this dissertation research study: world language professors, special education professors, partner school administrators, student teaching site supervisors, and the person charged with field placements. The person charged with field placements then introduced me to two pre-service student teachers for the fall semester and three pre-service student teachers for the spring semester.

The four participating student teachers were recruited after an interview with the director of student teaching field placements at Baytown University, Mrs. Dubois. A more in-depth explanation of Mrs. Dubois' role at Baytown is provided later in this section; however, she was the gatekeeper to names and placements of World Language pre-service teachers enrolled at Baytown University that were about to embark on their student teaching experiences. Since my interview of Mrs. Dubois occurred in August of 2012, she placed me in contact with two students, Antoinette and Élodie, who would be student teaching in the Fall 2012 semester. Next, I reached out to Mrs. Dubois again in December 2012 and she supplied me with a list of three more students who would be student teaching in the Spring 2013 semester. Of the three names that she provided to

me, two students agreed to take part in the dissertation research study during the second semester of the 2012-2013 school year.

Before being able to interview and observe these student teachers, I needed to gain permission from the cooperating school districts. Once the pre-service teachers consented to participate in this dissertation research study, I then contacted the individual schools to seek permission. For some schools, permission from the principal was acceptable for me to then contact the cooperating teachers. However, some school districts required prior Board of Education permission before I could reach out to cooperating teachers and audio record observations. The decision to audio record, rather than video record, was made because of my profound knowledge of public school districts. The school district in which I work would not allow a researcher to videotape students and teachers without obtaining permission from each parent and student. After considering the feasibility of the consent process, I decided that audio recordings would allow for more student anonymity while still allowing me to gather pertinent data. Finally, I reached out to the four cooperating teachers of the pre-service teachers and they all agreed to participate in the study.

Table 3 demonstrates the pre-service teachers and their cooperating teacher, the high school at which they were located, and the target language and semester of student teaching. The interview protocols can be found in Appendices I, II, and III.

**Table 3**

*Student teachers, cooperating teachers, high schools, world language taught and instrument used to elicit data delineated by participant*

<b>Student Teacher</b>	<b>Cooperating Teacher</b>	<b>High School</b>	<b>Language</b>	<b>Semester of Student Teaching</b>	<b>Data Instrument(s)</b>
Antoinette	Jeannine	Lafayette HS	Spanish	Fall 2012	Interviews and observations
Bernadette	Laurence	Chambly HS	Spanish	Spring 2013	Interviews and observations
Colette	Marie	Brossard HS	Chinese	Spring 2013	Interviews and observations
Élodie	Nicole	Roberval HS	Spanish	Fall 2012	Interviews only

In total, four pre-service teachers agreed to participate in this study. Three of the participants agreed to have me observe their classrooms two times during their student teaching experience. One observation took place at the beginning of their student teaching and the other observation took place towards the end of their student teaching experience. In addition, all participants agreed to participate in three interviews: one before the student teaching experience; one during the student teaching experience; and one after the student teaching experience. Furthermore, their cooperating teachers agreed to two interviews: one at the beginning of the student teaching experience and one after the student teaching experience. Bernadette's cooperating teacher was unavailable for a

second interview. It is important to note that not all four participants were enrolled in the dual certification program at Baytown. However, their participation in this dissertation study assisted in responding to my first research question, namely, how pre-service world language teachers are demonstrating an understanding of working with students with special needs in the world language classroom. Regardless of certification upon graduation, all of the participants will teach in classrooms with students with special needs at some point in their teaching careers.

#### *Pre-service teachers*

*Antoinette.* Antoinette was enrolled in the program for Spanish education and Teacher of Students with Disabilities endorsements. Therefore, she was assigned two cooperating teachers - one in Spanish, and one in Special Education. Since the scope of this dissertation research study attended to also investigate the ways that pre-service world language teachers were prepared to work with students with special needs in general education classrooms, observations and interviews only took place in Spanish classrooms and with the Spanish cooperating teacher. Jeannine, Antoinette's cooperating teacher, had been teaching at Lafayette High School for over 20 years and developed special Spanish courses for students with special needs. The courses that were created were Spanish 1A and Spanish 1B, which expanded the curriculum of the first-year Spanish 1 course over the course of two years. The pace of the course - which was similar to many first year, beginner level world language courses - was modified to address the needs of students with special needs and incorporated strategies for language learning that focused more on spoken communication rather than on writing. Antoinette taught both levels 1A and 1B as part of her pre-service student teaching experience.

*Bernadette.* Bernadette was enrolled in the K-12 endorsement in Spanish program, but she did not realize that it was possible to add an endorsement in Special Education until I had mentioned it to her at the beginning of her final semester at the university. Laurence, Bernadette's cooperating teacher, had been teaching at Chambly High School for approximately seven years after she had completed her alternate route program for certification in teaching Spanish. Bernadette taught Spanish levels 1 and 2 at Chambly High School.

*Colette.* Colette was enrolled in the K-12 endorsement in Chinese program and consciously decided not to enroll in the program that led to an endorsement in Special Education. She explained that she was only interested in gaining certification in one area since she was an international student and was under specific time constraints for finishing her program. Colette was charged with teaching students Chinese in levels 1, 2, and 3, and included a mixture of middle-school-aged and high-school-aged students. Both Marie and Colette stated that no students with special needs were enrolled in their Chinese courses.

*Élodie.* Élodie was enrolled in Baytown University's endorsement program in Spanish. Élodie decided that she did not want to participate in classroom observations as part of this study because she was uncomfortable with the pressure of having more people watching her teach. Nicole, Élodie's cooperating teacher, had been teaching Spanish at Roberval High School for approximately 10 years in levels 1 to 4 Spanish.

*University administrators, professors, and staff members*

The original three university participants from the pilot study provided me with the introductions to additional participants included in this larger dissertation study.

Table 4 describes the university administrators, professors, and staff members and their role at Baytown University, along with the type of data collected from them. The participants all had different roles at the university and interacted in different ways with the pre-service teachers. Some university members, such as administrators, had more influence on the overall programming while other participants dealt directly with pre-service teachers in their classrooms or provided feedback during their field placements. Since the education department at Baytown University is so small, data collected from the one administrator of the program, the one world language department chair/professor, and the one special education department chair/professor from the pilot were included in the larger study to help answer the second research question put forward in this dissertation. Questions for each of the interviews conducted with the participants can be found in Appendices VI, VII, VIII, IX, and X.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position at Baytown</b>	<b>Data Collection Tool</b>	<b>Number of Interviews or Observations</b>
Dr. Philips (pilot study participant)	Dean of School of Education	Interview	One
Dr. Harris (pilot study participant)	Professor of World Languages	Interviews	Two
Dr. Brown (pilot study participant)	Professor of Special Education	Interview	One
Dr. Williams	Professor of Special Education	Interview	One
Dr. Lansing	Professor of World Languages and Field Supervisor for Student Teachers	Interviews	Two

	Professor Davis	Adjunct Professor of Education Course	Observation	One
	Professor King	Adjunct Professor of Education Course	Observation	One
	Mrs. Dubois	Field Placement Coordinator	Interview	Two
	Mr. Francis	Field Supervisor for Student Teachers	Interview	One

The university administrators and professors, with the exception of Professor Davis and Professor King, were interviewed one time. Each interview lasted approximately one hour and was conducted in a semi-structured manner. This allowed for the university members to be able to share other information that they felt they would like to discuss, while still keeping to the interview protocols created for this dissertation study. Dr. Harris requested a second interview to be able to explain some thoughts and ideas that she had after our initial interview session. Observations were completed during one class session for Professor Davis and one class session for Professor King. Both Professor Davis and Professor King were teaching a section of Gen Ed101 and I chose a specific session on working with students with special needs and at-risk learners to observe.

#### *Partner school principals*

In order to gather more information about the ways that the university worked with partner schools to place student teachers, two principals in a partner school district were interviewed. The names of Principal Monroe and Principal Danton were shared with me by Mrs. Dubois as ones with whom Baytown usually works while placing student teachers. I attempted to recruit principals from the same schools in which the pre-service teachers were placed; however, due to time constraints, none of the principals

were willing to participate in this study. Table 5 describes the roles of each of the participants from the partner district.

**Table 5**

*Partner school administrators who participated in the study*

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Data Collection Tool</b>	<b>Number of interviews</b>
Principal Monroe	Principal of Faubourg Middle School	Interview	One
Principal Danton	Principal of Faubourg High School	Interview	One

These participants described instances of working in the past with student teachers from Baytown University. Because of the limited availability of both of the principals, the interviews were conducted via telephone. The topics that were discussed included the types of involvement each principal has had in the past in placing student teachers from Baytown University. Each principal also shared what they believed would be ideal student teacher placement protocols based on their past experiences. Questions for each of the interviews can be found in Appendix XI.

*Recent university program graduates*

Since the world language program at Baytown had been recently changed to include the possibility of graduating with dual endorsements in teaching Spanish and Teaching Students with Disabilities, the pool of participants who had graduated from the program was small. Two participants out of three who had recently graduated in the Spring 2011 semester agreed to participate in this study. Since this study took place over a two-year period, I was able to then include two pre-service teacher participants who

completed their student teaching in the Fall 2012 semester (Antoinette and Élodie) as recent graduates by collecting data from them during the Spring 2013 semester. All four of the participants reported having students with special needs in their classrooms during their first teaching assignments after graduation. Some of the sections were even taught as in-class support sections with a teacher from the department of special services. Table 6 describes the four participants and their graduation dates. Questions for the interviews of current practitioners and recent graduates can be found in Appendix XII.

**Table 6**

*Recent graduates of Baytown University who participated in the study delineated by teaching position at time of the interview*

<b>Name</b>	<b>Semester of Graduation</b>	<b>Position at Time of Study</b>	<b>Number of interviews</b>
Phyllis (current teacher)	Spring 2011	High School Spanish teaching levels 1 and 2 (with in-class support teacher)	One
Renée (current teacher)	Spring 2011	High School Spanish teaching levels 3, 4, and 5 Honors	One
Antoinette (also student teacher participant)	Fall 2012	High School Spanish teaching levels 1 and 3	One
Élodie (also student teacher participant)	Fall 2012	High School Spanish teaching levels 1 and 2 (one section with an in-class support)	One

Since both Antoinette and Élodie were described in detail as pre-service teacher participants, I only offer here descriptive information about Phyllis and Renée in addition to a brief comment on Antoinette and Élodie's first teaching positions after graduation.

Antoinette graduated at the end of the Fall 2012 semester and accepted a maternity-leave replacement position teaching Spanish in a small district in New Jersey. Likewise, Élodie graduated at the end of the Fall 2012 semester and accepted a long-term substitute position in a midsized school district in New Jersey. Therefore, there were four recent graduates who were currently teaching in New Jersey public schools that participated in this study.

*Phyllis.* Phyllis graduated from Baytown University in May 2011 with a certification in teaching Spanish, K-12. Upon graduation and beginning the 2011-2012 school year, she began teaching Spanish levels 1 and 2 in a midsized high school in a public school district in New Jersey. Two of her five courses that she was teaching included an in-class support teacher. Her student teaching placement did not include in-class support teachers and only included a few students with IEPs. Her teaching assignment post-graduation included many students with IEPs and section 504 plans.

*Renée.* Renée graduated from Baytown University in May 2011 with a certification in teaching Spanish, K-12. Upon graduation and beginning the 2011-2012 school year, she began teaching Spanish level 2 in a small high school in a public school district in New Jersey. However, during the 2012-2013 school year, she had accepted a teaching position in a large high school in a different school district in New Jersey. One of the reasons that she cited as a difficulty in the first school district she worked in was the amount of students with special needs in her Spanish courses and her lack of preparation. The courses in her second school district did not include as many students with special needs.

**Data collection instruments.** In selecting data collection and analysis strategies, I was informed by Marshall & Rossman's (2006) and Cresswell's (1998) research on creating and executing case studies. For example, Marshall & Rossman's (2006) work on designing qualitative research helped me form the research questions for this study and then create the appropriate instruments for gathering relevant data. In addition, Cresswell's (1998) explanations of case study, dimension for focus, data collection, and data analysis assisted me in understanding and creating a case study rooted in the theoretical traditions of the field.

While creating my data collection instruments, specifically the interviews, I relied upon the use of a peer debriefer (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and bracketing techniques (Tufford & Newman, 2010). For example, by employing the use of a peer debriefer, I was able to engage in analytical sessions where the peer (distant from the study) helped me to identify aspects of the inquiry that I may have taken for granted. Some of the aspects included my own personal biases in educational research as included in wording of interview questions. For example, during one session, my peer debriefer asked me questions about the inquiries I created for the interview protocols and highlighted language that was only used in the world language field and that special education members might not be familiar with or understand. The conversations with my peer debriefer helped me to uncover instances in which I took information for granted or relied solely on my own personal assumptions based upon my role as a former teacher of world languages.

Peer debriefing was one way for me to provide for reflexivity about my own positions and interests. Griffiths (1998) maintains that, "Reflexivity provides a way of

acting on that knowledge that knowledge is perspectival and that...all knowledge claims to knowledge are reflexive of the process, assumptions, locations, history, and context of knowing the knower” (p.141). In other words, I worked with my peer debriefer to help me recognize the assumptions that I was making from responses to interview questions based on my own roles as researcher, practitioner, and observer. Reflexivity is a difficult and continuing process with a constant likelihood of making wrong assumptions based on the researchers’ own situation within the overall research project. However, it is also understood that perfection is not to be found in educational research and that all good research still leaves possibility for improvement (Griffiths, 1998). The use of a peer debriefer helped to provide reflexivity throughout the research process as one way to mitigate for bias because of my simultaneous identity as both an insider and an outsider in the educational fields.

Likewise, through conversations with the peer debriefer, I used bracketing as a way to help me suspend my own presuppositions, biases, assumptions, and previous experiences. As a researcher with experience teaching students with special needs in a world language class and as a district-level administrator charged with providing feedback to current world language teachers and practitioners, bracketing my own preconceived ideas about the case became crucial to my understanding of it through the voices and actions of the participants (Field & Morse, 1985). Bracketing was an important part of this research process to assist in reducing the effects of my own preconceived notions as being a member of the language education field as a teacher, administrator, and part-time lecturer. Tufford & Newman (2010) and Gearing (2010) explain that bracketing is a scientific process in which a researcher suspends or holds in

abeyance his or her presuppositions, biases, assumptions, theories, or previous experiences to see and describe the phenomenon.

One approach to bracketing that I used was to write memos throughout data collection and analysis as a way to examine and reflect upon my engagement with the data. The memos were methodological notes that explicated the procedural facets of the research and included observational comments that allowed me to explore my feelings about the research endeavor. Another method I employed to allow for bracketing was by sharing interviews with my peer debriefer to uncover and bring into awareness any preconceptions or biases I held. For example, during one session, my peer debriefer shared that he believed my thought process on an observation was clouded by my role as a supervisor of world language teachers in a public school system. Therefore, I was able to continue the conversation with him regarding the techniques that I observed while not comparing them to the observations of some teachers who had been teaching in my school district for many years. Moving forward, I kept notes of times when I was possibly casting judgment on the teaching I observed by demonstrating my own biases based on my experiences in teaching and critiquing world language teaching.

My peer debriefer was an administrative colleague and current Ed.D. student from a similar program from the university at which I was pursuing a doctoral degree. The colleague was one that is familiar with research methodologies, but was neither my senior nor junior, thus ruling out bias based on power or position. The member was a peer in the truest sense of the word. We sat together and refined the interview questions for each of the interviews. We then held regular conversations to discuss the ideas and patterns that I began to notice emerging from the data gathered from interviews and observations.

My peer debriefer also asked me poignant questions and consistently asked me to clarify why I thought something was emerging from the data and encouraged me to think of other possible explanations. For example, during one session, the role of teacher personal experience working with students with special needs began to emerge from the data and my peer debriefer suggested that I look back at the interview protocol to see if my questions led the participants to reflect in this way or to determine whether the topic emerged organically from the conversations. This helped to strengthen my interview protocols and ensure that I was eliciting key participant perspectives during data collection.

This case study developed primarily out of the data collection of the following: in-depth, semi-structured interviews; observations of specific university courses and student teachers with accompanying field notes and memos; and the analysis of written documents (Cresswell, 1998). Table 7 describes the data collection instruments created and employed in this dissertation research study; it also includes the length of the interview or observation and the strategies used to assure trustworthiness.

**Table 7***Data collection instruments employed in the study*

<b>Instrument</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Length</b>	<b>Trustworthiness</b>
Pre-service teacher interviews	Three interviews throughout the semester (pre, during, and after student teaching)	Approximately 60 minutes each	Member checks, peer debriefer, bracketing
Cooperating teacher interviews	Two interviews (one at the beginning of working with the student teacher and one after)	Approximately 45 minutes each	Member checks, peer debriefer, bracketing
University administrators, professors, and staff member interviews	One or two interviews prior to meeting the student teachers	Approximately 30 minutes each	Member checks, peer debriefer, bracketing
Pre-service teacher observations	Two (one at the beginning of student teaching; one at the end of student teaching)	43 minutes per observation	Prolonged time in the field, peer debriefer, bracketing
University Professor observation	One course session	2.5 hours each	Peer debriefer and bracketing

Each of the interviews was audio-recorded and transcribed by me to ensure for accuracy. Each transcription was reviewed two times with the audio recording to ensure that the statements that were made were accurate before coding began. I will now describe the interview and observation protocols in detail.

*Pre-service Teacher Interviews.* The interview question protocols were designed to be part of a three-interview process. The questions that were created were then discussed with my peer debriefer. I decided that a three-part interview occurring at different stages of the student teaching experience would elicit the most appropriate

information to help answer my research questions. The format of a three-interview process to elicit data from the student teachers was developed based on Seidman's (1998) work. For example, the first interview focused on past experience in working with students with special needs in world language classrooms, the second focused on present experiences; and the third joined the two narratives to describe the individual's experiences. The interviews were separated over the course of the semester with the purpose of documenting the progress or growth that the pre-service teachers reported in their understanding of working with students with special needs.

The first interview (see Appendix I) was conducted before the pre-service teachers began their student teaching experience and focused on what they thought the experience was going to be like and elicited information about the ways that they were prepared to begin the student teaching experience. The second interview (see Appendix II) was conducted at approximately the mid-point during the student teaching experience and elicited information regarding the participants' beliefs about what student teaching would be like and what they encountered once they began their student teaching. The third interview (see Appendix III) was conducted after the student teaching experience had been completed and asked participants to describe their overall experiences in working with students with special needs in their classrooms and to describe how prepared they felt to begin working in the own classrooms.

*Cooperating Teacher Interviews.* Each of the cooperating teachers was interviewed two times to learn about their role during the student teaching experience. The first interview took place towards the beginning of the student teaching experience to investigate the ways that the cooperating teacher would work with student teachers in

understanding world language instruction for students with special needs. The second interview took place after the student teacher had finished the student teaching experience to examine the ways that the experience helped the pre-service teachers grow in working with students with special needs in the world languages classroom. The interview protocols are listed in Appendices IV and V of this dissertation.

*University Administrators, Professors, and Staff Member Interviews.* The interviews that were conducted with university personnel, cooperating school members, and current teachers did not follow the three-part format. These participants were considered *elites* according to Marshall & Rossman's (2006) definition of participants. According to these researchers, it is often difficult to gain access to elites because they are typically busy people operating under demanding time constraints. These interviews were shorter in length and fewer in number and had to be adapted to the preferences and constraints of the participants. Exact number of interviews can be found in Table 7.

*Observations.* Two different forms of observations were conducted during this dissertation research study: observations of pre-service teachers in university courses and observations of pre-service teachers in their student teaching classrooms.

In order to gain a deeper understanding of the ways that pre-service teachers were being introduced to working with students with special needs in world language classrooms, I observed one class meeting (in two different course sections) of a general education class that all pre-service teachers enrolled in as part of their coursework before beginning their student teaching. In other words, I observed two different meetings of two different sections of General Education 101 (Gen Ed101) in the Fall 2012 semester. I chose two specific meetings to observe because the course content being presented was

specific to working with students with learning disabilities. During my time in the classroom, I sat in the back of the class while digitally recording the interactions taking place and taking field notes.

The second set of observations that took place focused on the pre-service teachers themselves in their field placements. I decided to observe the student teachers two times over the course of their 15-week student teaching experience in order to examine whether they had changed in their understanding of working with students with special needs in the world language classroom. The first observation was conducted towards the beginning of the student teaching experience when the pre-service teachers were beginning to teach the courses on their own, moving from observers in the back of the classroom to classroom teachers. The second observation was situated towards the end of the semester in order to be able to document growth in the participants' understanding the needs of students with special needs. Directly following each observation, I transcribed my handwritten field notes into electronic form to check for accuracy, add missing data, and make minor corrections while the observation was still clear in my mind.

According to Marshall & Rossman (2006), observation demands firsthand involvement in the social world chosen for study. In this study, the involvement was in the experiences of the pre-service teachers at the university and during the student teaching experience. The immersion in these two visits to the classrooms allowed me to hear, see, and begin experiencing reality as the participants do. By observing pre-service teachers in their coursework, and hearing the lectures that they heard, I was able to gain a more accurate understanding of what types of experiences they were having before starting their student teaching experience. Then, I was able to see how they applied those

learning moments into the reality of their classroom experiences. As I observed, in addition to digitally audio recording the encounters, I took copious notes on what I was seeing and then created field notes to help me reflect on the observations and what the participants had shared with me.

I also kept notes with my personal reflections about the observations of both university classrooms and student teaching classrooms. Glesne (1999) maintains that personal reflections are integral to the emerging analysis of a group or context, because they provide the researcher with new vantage points and with opportunities to make the “strange familiar and the familiar strange” (p.117). Before each of the observations, I had a few moments to speak with the student teachers and their cooperating teachers to discuss the goals for the day. After each of the observations, I had time to debrief with each of the student teachers to have them share any thoughts they had with me about the lesson or to have them ask me any questions that they may have had. Each of the observations of pre-service teacher classrooms were digitally audio recorded and tape logs of participant interactions were created.

*Informational text review, documents and content analysis.* Marshall & Rossman (2006) maintain that for every qualitative study, data on the background and historical context must be gathered. For this case study, data was first collected from Baytown University’s website, and includes a description of the program and courses of study that lead to endorsements in teaching Spanish and Teaching Students with Disabilities. Next, I gathered syllabi from specific courses that mentioned working with students with disabilities that pre-service world language teachers would have taken. In addition, I examined two required textbooks that all students needed to have for the Gen Ed 101

course that introduced them to working with language learners and students with special needs. Finally, I collected New Jersey State Department of Education documents that outlined standards for teachers and school leaders. For example, the New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers and School Leaders (2004) was included in the data in order to analyze ways that the document informs university administrator decisions on program design. Marshall & Rossman (2006) suggest that content analysis has historically been viewed as an objective and neutral way of obtaining a description of the content of various forms of communication. All of these materials, in addition to the transcripts and tape logs created from interviews and observations consisted of the raw materials for content analysis.

**Data analysis.** The data analysis for this dissertation fell within a continuum of phases as put forward by Marshall & Rossman (2006). Marshall & Rossman (2006) explain that typical analytic procedures fall into seven phases: organizing the data; immersion in the data; generating categories and themes; coding the data; offering interpretations through analytic memos; searching for alternative understandings; and writing the report or format for presenting the study. Building upon the data collected during the pilot study, TAMS analyzer was used to aid in the analysis of the expanded data collected from participant interviews and observations.

As a way to begin organizing the data, all of the interviews and observations of student teachers were transcribed or turned into tape logs. The tape logs consisted of three points of information from observations: a notation of the time in the audio file; a notation of who the interlocutors were; and a notation of code(s) that were induced from the generated categories and themes. By doing all of the transcriptions and tape logs

myself, I was able to re-familiarize myself with the data and the information that the participants had shared with me. The transcriptions were turned into tape logs within one to two days of the initial observation. In addition, I incorporated the use of memos throughout the data collection and analysis portion of this research. Corbin & Strauss (1990) maintain that memoing constitutes a system for keeping track of all the categories, properties, hypothesis and questions that evolve during the analytical process. Therefore, the process of memoing for this dissertation continued throughout the data analysis, even during the writing stages, to provide a firm base for reporting on the research and its implications.

Next, I continued creating categories and themes, narrowing them into codes, and then applying these codes to all of the documents in the qualitative data analysis program. By revising and reflecting on the conceptual framework for this dissertation study, I elaborated upon the ideas that emerged through working with the data. That is, I looked for patterns that adhered to several dimensions of teacher preparation program models posited by Pugach & Blanton (2009) such as curricular coherence and pre-service teacher depth of knowledge. As categories of meaning began to emerge, I searched for patterns such as strategies employed or interactions with students with special needs that had internal convergence and external divergence (Guba, 1978). In other words, I attempted to ensure that the categories were internally consistent, but distinct from one another. This helped me to identify the salient, grounded categories of meaning held by the participants and shared with me in the setting. Patton (2002) calls this a process of inductive analysis, and it involves discovering patterns, themes, and categories in one's data.

The initial coding scheme for this research project was based upon the pilot study and followed a scheme of an abbreviation of key words (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Throughout the data collection and data analysis processes, I continued to write notes, reflective memos, and thoughts that were pertinent to the overall study. Marshall & Rossman (2006) maintain that these writings are invaluable for generating the unusual insights that move the analysis from the mundane and obvious to the creative. Next, I began the process of noting integrative interpretations of what I was uncovering through data analysis. Interpretation for this study, as proffered by Patton (2002), meant attaching significance to what was found, making sense of the findings, offering clarifications, creating interpretations, extrapolating lessons, making inferences, considering denotations, and otherwise imposing order. As the data analysis continued, the categories were continually scrutinized as the writing process began. For example, the category that began as “teacher talking in generalities about teaching” was then refined to “teachers talking in generalities to specifics over time.” This change shows how I refined codes as put forward by Corbin & Strauss’s (1990) statement that, “a single incident is not a sufficient basis to discard or verify a hypothesis” (p.13). Therefore, I looked through the data for multiple occurrences of specific hypotheses.

**Trustworthiness.** Trustworthiness and credibility, defined as having confidence in the validity of the findings, was established in several ways. Lincoln & Guba (1985) state that credibility can be established through prolonged engagement in the field and triangulation. Therefore, for this study, prolonged engagement was established by working in the same site for two years. Data collection for this study began in June 2011 and continued over the Fall 2011, Spring 2012, Fall 2012, and Spring 2013 semesters.

Triangulation of sources occurred by gathering information from various participants during specific points over the two-year period of data collection. Gathering data from multiple sources was important for this study because it helped provide multiple perspectives to be examined, while still allowing for constant comparisons as Corbin & Strauss (1990) have suggested. For example, first, documentation was gathered about the program and State regulations for teacher certification. Next, interviews were conducted with university personnel. Then, observations of both pre-service teachers during their coursework at the university and in their student teaching placements were included into the data set. Finally, data was collected from recent graduates who were currently teaching to help demonstrate a continuum of the program from university entrance, to student teaching, and then teaching after graduation. The continuum of the program included information from: pre-service teachers as they completed their coursework and began to grow in their knowledge of language learning and teaching; pre-service teachers in their student teaching placements; and recent graduates of the program in their own classrooms.

In addition, member checks were an integral part of establishing trustworthiness for this dissertation research. A summary of the transcribed interviews was given to participants and they were asked if there was anything that they wanted to clarify or add to their responses. This allowed the respondents to assess the overall accuracy of the data collected from them. After all of the interviews were completed, I had one final brief discussion to ensure that they felt that I had properly captured their true beliefs and responses to interview questions. The student teachers, in particular, were even open to responding to follow up questions as I began to analyze the data and requested more

information about their pre-service training or something that had been captured in one of their classroom observations. For example, after having some time to analyze data, I noticed that *strategies* became an integral code in my schema; therefore, I asked follow up questions about specific textbooks that were used in coursework at the university and how the text, if at all, assisted pre-service teachers in their understanding of strategies for providing accommodations and modification for students with special needs. In another instance, I provided Mrs. Dubois, the university member charged with making field placements, with a section of my analysis regarding the role of standards in the overall teacher preparation program and she verified that my analysis was an accurate representation of the information she shared with me in interviews. Thus, member checks were obtained by key individuals to ensure that the goals of reliability and trustworthiness were being achieved.

**The practitioner as the researcher.** One characteristic of this study is my role as practitioner and researcher. As a district supervisor of world languages in a public school system in New Jersey, I am charged with recruiting the best world language teachers and ensuring that they grow to enable all students to learn to their fullest potential. This study provided me with the opportunity to investigate the ways that teachers are prepared to work with students with special needs in world language classrooms. My role as a supervisor in a school district reported to be a model in the State of New Jersey did help me gain access to sites that I would not necessarily have been able to visit had I not been a member of the education field. Therefore, it was crucial for me to be able to demonstrate that my personal interest in the study did not bias the results.

In order to guard against bias, I was guided by systematic considerations such as existing theory and empirical research. Marshall & Rossman (2006) state, “tacit theory (one’s personal understanding) together with formal theory (from the literature) helps bring a question, a curious phenomenon, or a problematic issue into focus and raise it to a level at which one might generalize about it” (p.31). By integrating my personal understanding of the phenomenon and Pugach & Blanton’s (2009) framework for investigating pre-service programs, I was able to design theoretically rich research questions and ground the results in the relevant literature. My own understanding, based on teaching and my pilot study, in addition to established research in the field of world language education research, informed the creation of this dissertation research study.

#### **Limitations of the study**

There are several limitations to this case study. First, since Baytown University is a mid-sized private university in central New Jersey, there were only a small number of pre-service teachers that were available to participate in this study. Of the four pre-service teachers, only one was enrolled in the dual endorsement program for Spanish and Teaching Students with Disabilities. While there is strength in providing a detailed description of one case, there is also a limitation in generalizing the results to larger programs or the experiences of other pre-service teachers. The small number of participants, especially those placed in classrooms with students with special needs, cannot be viewed as representative of all pre-service teachers at the university. While this study provides details of the world language teacher preparation program at Baytown University, the portrayal of the program should not be generalized to portray pre-service teacher programs at other universities. Pugach & Blanton (2009) maintain that there are

three main categories of pre-service collaborative teacher preparation programs and that university programs can fall anywhere on the continuum of discrete to merged programs. Baytown University represents only one program of many teacher preparation programs, both traditional and alternate route, available to pre-service teachers.

Second, this study is limited in terms of the number of observations completed in both pre-service teacher field placement classrooms and the Gen Ed 101 course offered at the university. Since I was unable to attend every session of the Gen Ed 101 course over the course of a semester, I chose two different sessions taught by two different professors that focused on presenting pre-service teachers with information regarding working with students with special needs in the general education classroom. Both of the sections were observed directly after the university had been closed for one full week due to damage sustained by Hurricane Sandy. The courses began with the professors explaining the changes that would need to be made to the syllabus to make up for lost time. In addition, the power intermittently went on and off during both observations as power was being restored to the region. It was clear that these sessions were not typical of regular class sessions in the amount of distractions sustained throughout the observation.

With regards to the observations conducted at the pre-service teacher field placements, I was only able to attend two sessions, one at the beginning of the student teaching experience and one towards the end. As a full-time employee of a school district, I was unable to gain release time to complete observations of more courses over the course of the semester. Video recording the sessions was not an option available to me as it was not allowed by local school district regulations enforced to protect the students in the classroom. The alternative to video recording was to digitally audio

record the conversations and then create tape logs and transcripts of the interactions that took place during the class sessions. Labov (1972) refers to an *observer's paradox* in terms of linguistic research and defines it in his own research by stating, "the aim of linguistic research in the community must be to find out how people talk when they are not being systematically observed; yet we can only obtain these data by systematic observation (p. 209)." The two times that I was present in the classroom could have led to the students acting differently because another adult was in the classroom.

Third, one of the two focal cooperating teachers was pregnant during the student teaching experience and was not able to work with her student teacher during the entire fifteen-week student teaching placement. In addition, Laurence was unavailable for an interview at the end of Bernadette's student teaching experience at Chambly High School. Therefore, I was unable to fully compare and contrast the statements that Laurence would have made discussing the growth that Bernadette made over the course of the fifteen-week experience.

Finally, interview data elicited from the pre-service teachers did not yield results as to the ways that they worked to assess student needs and develop approaches matched to those students' needs nor did the results yield data as to the ways that pre-service teachers learn to understand the difference between differentiating between conceptual learning difficulties from more language-specific learning difficulties. The pre-service teachers spoke in generalities about the students with special needs in their classrooms and, in some cases, used the IEPs and 504s to provide the accommodations and modifications that were listed in the documents. No data elicited from the interviews described the ways that the pre-service teachers assessed the student needs in their

classrooms, but rather described how they relied on their cooperating teachers and the IEPs and 504s to guide them in working with their students with special needs.

### **Conclusion**

This case study was designed to gain insight into the ways that the teachers were being prepared to work with students with special needs in their world language classrooms. Data collection occurred over a two-year period and included pre-service teachers, the administrators, professors, and staff members of their pre-service teacher preparation program, and recent graduates who were currently teaching. As Fox & Diaz-Greenberg (2006) maintain, training in the area of special education and world languages rarely includes coursework that addresses the needs of students with LD. This research was conducted to investigate the ways that pre-service teachers were being prepared to understand making accommodations and creating modifications for their students with special needs in the world language classroom. Furthermore, an analysis of the program creation and execution was conducted in order to gather input from university members charged with the administration or conducting of the program. To further allow for triangulation, data was collected from recent graduates to have them report on their overall experiences and the ways that they were prepared to work with students with LD in their world language classroom.

This study is important to the overall field of world language teacher preparation and those charged with program creation and administration because it offers insight into the way that one teacher preparation program prepares pre-service teachers to work with students with special needs. Baytown University was chosen because of the opportunity for students to add on an endorsement in Teaching Students with Disabilities to an

endorsement in teaching a world language. Data was collected from pre-service teachers in both the singular endorsement program (i.e. Spanish education) and a pre-service teacher in the dual endorsement program (i.e. Spanish education and Teacher of Students with Disabilities). This dissertation presents information on the overall preparation of world language pre-service teachers at Baytown University by investigating the ways that they are prepared to work with students with special needs. This is an important area of study because, regardless of the singular or dual endorsement program, the pre-service teachers will be seeking employment in classrooms in which students with special needs are enrolled.

The next chapter of this dissertation focuses mainly on the experiences of two pre-service world language teachers enrolled in the teacher preparation program at Baytown University. The chapter provides data that was analyzed to help answer the research questions put forward in this study. It also includes a discussion of findings.

## CHAPTER 4

## PRE-SERVICE WORLD LANGUAGE TEACHERS DEVELOPING AN UNDERSTANDING OF PEDAGOGIES AND PRINCIPLES FOR WORKING WITH STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

**Introduction**

This chapter describes the ways that pre-service teachers at Baytown University discuss and demonstrate that they were prepared to work with students with special needs in the world language classroom. Through an analysis of data collected from interviews, observations, and field notes before, during, and after the student teaching experience, I present the ways that the pre-service teachers demonstrate growth over time in working with students with special needs. I provide evidence from interviews to demonstrate the ways that the pre-service teachers talk about working with students with special needs in the world language classroom and I compare excerpts with material provided from classroom observations and field notes to demonstrate what the pre-service teachers are doing in working with students during their student teaching experiences. The chapter seeks to answer the first research question: How do pre-service teachers demonstrate that they are developing an understanding of pedagogies and principles for working with students with special needs in the world language classroom?

The information in this chapter is presented in chronological order to demonstrate the growth that was evidenced on the part of the pre-service world language teachers over the course of the fifteen-week student teaching experience, demonstrating an understanding in working with students with special needs. Furthermore, this chapter provides excerpts from interview and observation transcripts from two pre-service world language teachers, Antoinette and Bernadette, because these two teachers had the

opportunity to work with students with special needs in their student teaching placements. Antoinette was enrolled in the dual certification program that would lead to endorsements in teaching both Spanish and Students with Disabilities. Bernadette was enrolled in the program that would lead to an endorsement in teaching Spanish only. Even though one pre-service teacher was enrolled in the dual endorsement program and another in the single endorsement program, the experiences of both of these pre-service teachers are presented in this chapter because eventually, both teachers would seek employment teaching Spanish and both eventually would have students with special needs enrolled in their classrooms over the course of their teaching careers in public schools.

All pre-service teachers at Baytown University, regardless of being enrolled in the singular or dual endorsement program, are expected to gain experience in understanding students with diverse needs. For example, both Antoinette and Bernadette were enrolled in a Gen Ed 101 course at Baytown that presented pre-service teachers with information explaining how to work with students with diverse needs, focusing on those with learning disabilities and English Language Learners (ELLs). In addition, Antoinette enrolled in additional coursework focusing on understanding working with students with special needs as part of her dual certification program. Even though all pre-service world language teachers in New Jersey are expected to graduate with knowledge in working with students with special needs, Baytown was one of the only universities in New Jersey to allow students to enroll in the dual certification program.

In this chapter, I first present data based on the strategies and methodologies that Antoinette shared and employed in her classroom based on interviews and observations.

Then, in a similar manner, I present data from interviews and observations of Bernadette focusing on the strategies and methods that she employed in her field placement classroom in working with students with special needs. The chapter concludes with a discussion comparing and contrasting the overall growth of the two pre-service teachers with the goal of elaborating on the role of Baytown University in their preparation. The discussion demonstrates the ways in which pre-service teachers initially spoke in generalities about students with special needs but then moved to offering specific strategies by the end of their student teaching experience. I then briefly include implications of these findings for the larger overall topic of world language teacher preparation and special education. The implications foreshadowed in the conclusion of this chapter are presented and expanded upon in chapter six.

#### **The case of Antoinette**

Antoinette was enrolled in the Baytown University teacher preparation program that would lead to endorsements in Teacher of Students with Disabilities and Spanish Education upon graduation. Therefore, she was assigned two cooperating teachers- one in Spanish, and one in Special Education. Jeannine, Antoinette's cooperating teacher in Spanish, had been teaching at LaFayette High School for over 20 years and had developed special Spanish courses for students with LD called Spanish 1A and Spanish 1B. The courses followed the curriculum of a typical first-year Spanish course and distributed the material over the course of two years. The pace of the course was modified and strategies for language learning focused more on spoken communication rather than on writing. Antoinette taught both levels 1A and 1B as part of her pre-service

student teaching experience as well as one first-year and two second-year Spanish courses.

Antoinette decided to pursue endorsements in teaching both Spanish and Students with Disabilities based in part on own experiences in high school. During our first and second interviews, Antoinette mentioned that she herself had a section 504 plan in high school and knew what it was like to be a student with special needs in a world language classroom. Her own experiences in special education helped her understand the difference between IEPs and 504 plans. As she explained in her first interview:

When I was in high school, I actually had a 504, so I'm a former special education student. I'm very familiar with 504s. A 504 is really...that the student may have a specific learning disability but doesn't necessarily need specific accommodations. Whereas an Individualized Education Plan is more specific and where the accommodation is absolutely necessary for the student who has accommodations...You can't create an IEP without the parent. It has to include all different types of people: the parent, the family, the general education teacher, the special education teachers deserve to be there. A case manager, a psychologist, a social worker, maybe an administrator, maybe the nurse. Anyone who is necessary.

(Antoinette, first interview, September 18, 2012)

This excerpt demonstrates that Antoinette was already familiar with the process of creating an IEP or section 504 plan; in fact, she even noted the stakeholders involved in creating the document. Antoinette's familiarity with IEPs and 504 plans from her own high school experience and from her enrollment in the dual certification program in Spanish and Teaching Students with Disabilities at Baytown University demonstrate that she began her student-teaching experience with a foundation in understanding the creation of IEPs and 504s and the impact the documents could have in the language classroom.

**Classroom methods/strategies**

The methods and strategies that pre-service world language teachers use in the classroom, specifically for students with special needs, is the main focus of this chapter. It is important to note, though, that many of the strategies presented are ones that are not only good for students with LD, but good for all second language learners. In addition, I present the ways that Antoinette reported being prepared to work with students with special needs in the classroom regarding specific methods or strategies and I compare those self-reports to my firsthand observations of her classroom instruction. All of the excerpts presented from classroom observations come from the Spanish 1B course in which all of the students were classified as LD or were considered very weak language learners based on input from classroom teachers and guidance counselors.

In our first interview, I asked Antoinette specifically, “Have your courses discussed ways to work with students with special needs?” Antoinette responded:

Absolutely! We learned, first we were educated about the thirteen different classifications of special education and then we went into what each of them was. We went into all those and I learned about methods and methodologies for differentiation and pacing and taking it slower and working towards the needs. More working one-on-one with the students rather than being in a special education classroom.

(Antoinette, first interview, September 18, 2012)

As will be further developed in the discussion section of this chapter, Antoinette initially spoke in generalities regarding the different methods and strategies that she had learned about for working with students with special needs in the world language classroom. She was confident in her training that she understood working with students who were classified under the thirteen different categories; however, she did not yet offer any specific methodologies that she would employ or with which she was familiar. It is also

noteworthy that the courses that Antoinette believed prepared her for working with students with special needs were taken as part of her coursework towards an endorsement in Teaching Students with Disabilities, and not necessarily the courses that fulfilled her endorsement in teaching Spanish.

One strategy that Antoinette mentioned as being important can be situated both within and outside of the classroom walls. Antoinette stated that communication with students and their family members is an important way to help them in the world language classroom. She mentioned, “[Constant communication] with the parents and family is important because parents are the biggest influence in a child’s life. So, if you get the parents on your side, then the students will succeed” (Antoinette, first interview, September 18, 2012). Before even beginning to work with her students during her student teaching experience, Antoinette was demonstrating that she realized that education is a collaborative endeavor. Brandes (2005) maintains that true family involvement in the education of a child cannot occur without good communication. Furthermore, Smith, Polloway, Patton and Dowdy (2011) suggest that problems between parents and school personnel can be avoided with proper communication and that parents and teacher must work together to help students succeed. Antoinette realized the importance of reaching out to family members and believed that students would succeed if there strong communication existed amongst all members.

Since I was able to interview Antoinette before she began her student teaching experience, I asked her specifically about the training that she had undertaken and ways that she was able to connect research to practice in terms of helping the students with special needs in her own classroom. The interaction elicited the following response:

**David Greer:** In what ways do you think the training and coursework that you have undertaken connected research to practice in ways that you believe are helpful to you in working with students with special needs?

**Antoinette:** Definitely everything that I learned in the classroom I had to carry out in my experiences in the school that I was placed in [for observations]. I definitely think that it is important that even now, as I am about to graduate, even just from reminding myself and work with another teacher and practicing and working through the routine in what I have to do is really important. Because if you don't do it, you may forget it. It has been the case where if you forget to accommodate a student for a specific learning disability, that student is going to struggle and that can be impacted in a negative way.

(Antoinette, first interview, September 18, 2012)

In this instance, Antoinette again offered a set of general claims about how her own experiences at Baytown have helped her to connect research to practice in working with students with special needs. However, she did mention the importance of not forgetting to accommodate for a student with special needs. She believed that as the teacher, she ultimately would be charged with creating the accommodations for the students. The students would be negatively impacted and might struggle if she forgets to make the accommodations. Antoinette understood the importance of making accommodations for her students with special needs in her Spanish classroom before she even began working with them during her student teaching experience.

Drawing on the information that Antoinette shared during her first interview, I was able to gather data about the ways that she actually provided accommodations and modifications during the first observation that I completed of her Spanish 1B course at the beginning of her student teaching experience. Recall, all of the students in the Spanish 1B class were identified as LD and, therefore, all of the excerpts presented in this chapter reflect Antoinette's interactions with students with special needs in the world language classroom. During the observation, Antoinette employed four specific strategies to assist

her students with special needs in her Spanish 1B course. First, Antoinette used a color coding scheme to assist the students in organizing their notes and memorizing information. During the lesson, she gave the students a worksheet with sentence starters to assist them in framing the new vocabulary in context. After going over the first set of questions, she stated, “Now we can add different places. I’ve printed these in color for you. Put these in your green vocabulary section” (Antoinette, first observation, September 26, 2012). Antoinette was attempting to add the color-coding of notes into the routine of the class to help students organize and recall information.

Second, Antoinette restated a device to aid memory that one student offered during the lesson. During this part of the lesson, Antoinette was reviewing new vocabulary terms for places in town. She would state the new term, call the attention of the students to the place she was stating on their individual maps, and then state the term again. This was followed up with her calling on a volunteer to state the place in English. One student with special needs offered that *pan* means bread in Spanish, so *panadería* must mean a place where you can get bread, otherwise known as a bakery. The interaction included the following statements:

**Student:** *Señorita*, *pan* means ‘bread’ so *panadería* must mean a place where you can buy bread. Like a bakery.

**Antoinette:** ¡Muy bien, Juan! [Well done, Juan] Did everyone just hear what Juan said? He said *pan* is bread, so *panadería* means bakery.

(Antoinette, first observation, September 26, 2012)

By restating the device to aid memory for the students, Antoinette was able to clarify the new term that the students were learning and provide positive reinforcement for the student who offered the way to remember the new term. Antoinette was sure to first compliment Juan for sharing this helpful advice and then shared with the rest of the class

what Juan had stated. She was attempting to share that the way that Juan was thinking about the new vocabulary was helpful and that other students could try to come up with similar devices on their own. In other words, Antoinette was employing a system in which she followed a pattern to assist students with LD. She first reinforced the student that shared the information, shared the information with the larger group, and then asked questions to help clarify any confusion on the part of the other students.

The third way that Antoinette used a strategy to assist her students was when she asked for feedback on how well they understood the activity they had just completed. Instead of simply asking, “Are there any questions?” Antoinette specifically stated, “How do you feel about this? Thumbs up, thumbs middle, thumbs down?” (Antoinette, first observation, September 26, 2012). By employing this strategy, she was able to survey the students informally to see who felt comfortable with the material, who was less secure, and who truly did not feel comfortable with the material. She was reaching out and asking more than, “Does everyone understand?” As a way to continue to help the students grow in their comfort in the classroom, she asked the students to share how they felt about the material when putting up their thumbs. After the observation, Antoinette shared in her interview that she believed that the students were being truthful with her when they put their thumbs up, middle, or down. She shared that in another lesson, she helped one student after school when they had a thumb down after a specific activity. She was able to provide a bit more time and allowed for one-on-one time with the student who gave a thumbs down to help answer questions until the student shared that he was more comfortable with the material.

The final strategy that Antoinette employed was to offer closure to the lesson in which the students all had to share one thing they learned during the lesson. With four minutes remaining in the class period, Antoinette posed the following question to her students, “¿*Qué aprendiste hoy?* [What did you learn today?]” She then told the students that they would have one minute to think of a response to the question. After one minute, the following ensued:

**Antoinette:** Ok. Sam. ¿*Qué aprendiste hoy?* [What did you learn today?]  
Tell me one thing.

**Sam:** I learned what *ir* [to go] means.

**Antoinette:** ¡*Muy bien!* [Well done!] Anita?

**Anita:** I learned how to say and spell places.

**Antoinette:** Ok. *Gracias* [thanks], Anita. Pablo?

**Pablo:** I learned how to say bakery.

**Antoinette:** ¡*Muy bien!* ¿*Cómo se dice bakery?* [Well done! How does one say bakery?]

**Pablo:** *Panadería*. Because *pan* means bread.

**Antoinette:** ¡*Sí!* ¡*Muy bien hecho!* [Yes! Very well done]

(Antoinette, first observation, September 26, 2012)

Here, Antoinette was able to call individually on students to see what they understood to assess informally their understanding of the materials presented in the class that day.

One student even offered the device that Antoinette had shared with the students to remember the word for bakery. After the observation, Antoinette shared with me that she called on the students that she knew had difficulty in Spanish class so that she could determine what they understood.

During the second interview, about halfway through her student teaching experience, Antoinette shared six key points describing ways that she believed that she was growing over the course of her student teaching experience. It is important to note that she was more specific in her responses to questions about situations as compared to

the generalities that she offered in her first observation. The six key instances that she shared described lesson and unit planning, parent outreach, researching for new methods/strategies/activities, modeling activities as a strategy, incorporating partner work in lessons, and differentiated assessments. During each of the interviews, I asked Antoinette to describe the ways that she felt that her coursework had prepared her for her student teaching experience and ways that she was making connections to her student teaching experience based on the coursework she had completed. She responded:

As far as my coursework, all we have to do is create our teacher work sample (TWS) in our five focus groups. I think that creating the TWS gives me a good sense of how I should be teaching in the future. For example, we should be using units instead of just focusing on one certain topic. So you can incorporate a unit, especially in the world language realm, you focus on the airport. You can look at all different types of grammar with that. And by teaching those themes, the students can connect it back to their real lives. So I think they are more willing to understand and learn it... I know the processes that I should use. Like you shouldn't teach it through rote style, it should be more communicative.

(Antoinette, second interview, November 12, 2012)

Antoinette was describing here how she incorporated grammar into units based on themes to help the students make connections to their lives. She understood that the students would be more willing to learn should she be able to make connections to their lives and have them become more motivated to learn the language. In addition, Antoinette knew that rote-style activities were not ones that her students, especially those with LD, would find helpful in the language classroom. She knew that it was important to contextualize her units and help students make connections to their own lives. Antoinette was beginning to think about the larger impact of her teaching and shared that this came from the TWS that Baytown University required students to complete as part of coursework.

Since Antoinette shared in her first interview that she believed parent contact was so important, I followed up with her on the theme during our second interview. For example, in the following excerpt, she reported giving a student the accommodation of extended time for his first assessment. In response to the question, “Can you describe for me some of the ways that you communicate with parents?” she responded:

**Antoinette:** That’s actually pretty ironic because just today I had to call a parent. I called her and left a message. This is the second time that I’m trying to get in touch with her. Unfortunately, her son is failing for the first marking period because he didn’t turn in his work then he bombed his test after I gave him extended time. He is in the Spanish 2 class. It is a general education class to prepare them for college and I’ve seen through this class is that the students aren’t on top of things if they’re out of school or absent, they do not come and get their work. Which is part of the reason why he’s not doing well. I have their work but I think it is their responsibility to come and get the work from me. I can only help them as much as I can, which I did, some of the students come up to me and say, ‘I’m not going to be here tomorrow, what are we doing?’ and I tell them. Some will get caught up, but there are some that certainly won’t. I plan on having another heart to heart with him, telling him, I’m not your secretary and professors are not coming to chase after you...I promise you that. You can choose not to go to class and you’ll not go and the professor doesn’t care.

(Antoinette, second interview, November 12, 2012)

Here, Antoinette expanded upon the importance of reaching out to parents to help students take responsibility for their actions. Antoinette believed that it was her responsibility to prepare the students for college and to teach them to take responsibility for their own actions. She was starting to understand the role of working with parents in assisting her language students. In this case, she thought that there needed to be a partnership; however, she was not yet enlisting the parent as a partner, but just reaching out to enlist assistance in having the student turn in work. As in her first interview, she believed that there needed to be a partnership with parents/families in order for students

to attain success. However, she needed assistance from the family for him to turn in his work so that he did not fail for the first marking period. Antoinette believed that turning work in is a skill that her students would need once they are enrolled in a college course. From her own university experiences, the professors did not care if the students showed up and turned in their work in their college courses. The university students needed to be responsible for completing and turning in the work themselves.

Also responding to the question about parent involvement, Antoinette shared the case of another student for whom she needed to contact the parents. This student, in particular, also was a student with special needs in her one Spanish course. Antoinette stated:

I talked to another parent about grades. [The student] was failing at the time, but we talked. He's a student with a low reading level and we worked together. He stayed after school and he's not failing for the marking period. He was able to pick up his grade by five points.

(Antoinette, second interview, November 12, 2012)

By reaching out to the parent of this student, Antoinette was able to arrange to work with him individually after school to help him improve his grade so that he was no longer failing for the marking period. Again, Antoinette had only been working with students and families for approximately seven weeks by this second interview. She was still developing an understanding of working with parents to assist students in the language classroom. Here, Antoinette was able to share a specific instance of reaching out to a parent to help a student attain success; whereas, in the first interview prior to student teaching she was only able to speak in the abstract about the importance of working with family members as part of a team to help student with succeed in the world language classroom.

In addition to discussing the importance of reaching out to family members to help students come for extra help and turn in work, Antoinette also discussed the importance of conducting research to find new methodologies and strategies for working with students with special needs in the world language classroom. She offered:

Trying to find different activities and assessments for my students has made me do a lot of research. I've found a lot of helpful websites that I can use as resources for my classes. I know the processes that I should use. Like, you shouldn't teach it rote style, it should be more communicative.

(Antoinette, second interview, November 12, 2012)

In this instance, Antoinette mentioned that she had to conduct independent research to find different activities for her students based on their needs, particularly since the Spanish 1A and 1B courses that she was teaching were created to include modified strategies based on the needs of her students with LD. She knew that she did not want to have her students complete rote-style activities in her language classroom because the course was created to help students with LD in a different manner from some of the typical language courses taught at LaFayette High School. She mentioned that she would like to incorporate activities that were more communicative in nature. However, at that point in her student teaching experience, she did not offer any specifics about communicative activities that she has found that she believed were helpful.

One strategy that she did mention during the second interview that she believed was helpful in working with students with special needs in her classroom was modeling. Eggen & Kauchak (2001) define modeling as the processes involved by observing others and gradually acquiring control over their own behavior. Modeling was a strategy that Antoinette used to help the students understand what was expected from them in a

particular activity. She modeled the language or actions that she wanted the students to complete during an activity. Regarding modeling, she shared:

I make sure that all of my students understand. Especially for the lower-level classes, we do everything together before they even attempt anything on their own. For example, one of my classes is working with [the verbs] *ser* [to be] and *tener* [to have] and they have learned how to describe themselves with adjectives like how to say their hair and eye color. We've moved from talking about somebody else. So it's a little bit different grammar. So every time we expect them to write about somebody else, we then have the entire class stick together. I am sure to call on different students based on the difficulty of the ten problems and questions.

(Antoinette, second interview, November 12, 2012).

It is important to note that Antoinette mentioned that modeling was a strategy that she used particularly for her lower-level students and students with special needs. She would give an example of what she expected and then they would work together through the example as a group so that she knew the students understood what was expected. This is what Antoinette meant when she noted that the class does everything together before they attempt to do anything on their own. She believed that by modeling, her students could feel more comfortable to understand what was expected of them. They did not have to guess what they were supposed to do if they did not understand the directions and they did not have to wait to see what the other students in the class were doing. She often had the students share what the activity was about in small groups; however, they did not always enjoy working together.

In our second interview, Antoinette discussed the role of partner work and cooperative learning in her classroom. Antoinette mentioned that working collaboratively was one way to have students learn Spanish while working with partners.

However, she was surprised with the way that collaborative learning was perceived in the class by her students. She shared:

We have students work in partners which has actually gotten, like the students see that as a negative because the special education students like structure. So this year, with the change for more cooperative learning, they actually don't prefer it. They prefer to sit in rows and work individually rather than in groups. That surprised me.

(Antoinette, second interview, November 12, 2012)

Antoinette found it surprising that the students with special needs in her Spanish 1B course did not prefer to work in partnerships and that they would rather work individually in rows. At this point, she did not know why the students preferred to work this way, but she shared that her goal was to have the students feel more comfortable working together and with her. She stated that she wanted to expose her students to more cooperative learning activities to help them understand which ways they learn best. She shared that she truly believed in differentiating her activities to help reach different types of learners.

In addition to differentiating her lessons, Antoinette also mentioned the importance of differentiating her assessments to meet the needs of her students. She shared her belief that individual students need to be assessed in different ways to help demonstrate their strengths and the areas in which they need to improve. She shared:

A lot of our assessments, some of our assessments, are paper and pencil assessments; however, we do oral assessments based on teacher observation. Also, we have types of assessments for when we use the whiteboards. Personal whiteboards with markers. Let's say that we're looking at vocabulary. They have to write the vocabulary word in Spanish correctly. The whole nine yards. At that point I can see who knows what, check marks in my head or even on a piece of paper, where everybody is, without actually, formally having a paper in front of them. Also, we've done the weather for our conversation class instead of having a formal test on it they created a weather booklet that included the months, seasons and weather. They had to list the three months in the fall, for example. What is the weather like in November. Give a weather statement, for example.

Same thing with other months. We had them include all of that. They got to use the computer for that. It's not always paper and pencil.

(Antoinette, second interview, November 12, 2012)

In this excerpt, Antoinette specifically mentioned various types of assessments: formal written; informal written with whiteboards; and formal projects with the use of technology. These were all certain assessments that she had already used with her students in order to understand what they were able to do with the Spanish language. Whereas she used more general terms when describing assessments in her first interview, at the second interview she was able to offer information about specific assessments that she had included in her Spanish courses during her student teaching experience.

The second observation of Antoinette's Spanish 1B class took place towards the very end of her student teaching experience. Throughout the observation, Antoinette employed four strategies that were aimed at helping her students with special needs. The four strategies included: asking for specific feedback; sharing a visual map; modeling; and using color coded notes. In the first instance, Antoinette was going over an activity with the class towards the beginning of the period. She was sharing a review of vocabulary terms that she had presented to the class earlier in the week and asked them specifically, "How do we feel about these?" (Antoinette, second observation, December 12, 2012). Instead of asking, "Do you all understand?" Antoinette asked for specific feedback from the students about how they felt. She called on a few students specifically to ensure that they felt comfortable with the vocabulary terms before moving on to the next activity.

The next activity was one in which Antoinette shared a visual map with each student. First, she displayed an image of a layout of house on the white screen in the

front of the classroom. Next, she gave each student an exact copy of the layout of the house. As she handed out the visuals, she stated:

**Antoinette:** Ok. Today I'm handing out a little house. We're going to look at it quickly. See what rooms are in this house, but don't write anything yet. (Pauses 1.5 minutes)

**Antoinette:** What rooms *en español* do you see?

**Student:** *El baño* [the bathroom]

**Antoinette:** *Muy bien.* [Very good]

**Student:** *El salón.* [the living room]

**Antoinette:** *Muy bien. ¿Es la casa grande en general? ¿Cómo es?* [Very good. Is the house generally big? What is it like?]

**Student:** *Es muy grande.* [It's very big]

**Antoinette:** *Muy bien. ¿De qué color es el apartamento?* [Very good. What color is the apartment?]

**Student:** *Es azul.* [It's blue]

**Antoinette:** *Sí. ¡Magnífico!* [Yes. Wonderful!]

(Antoinette, second observation, December 12, 2012)

Using the visuals that Antoinette had given them, the students were able to answer her questions about the layout of the house in general. Antoinette asked specific questions to the students focusing on the vocabulary for describing houses since that was the goal for the lesson. The students needed to use the visual in order to answer the questions that Antoinette posed to them.

The visuals of the layouts of the house and the abovementioned interactions acted as a way for Antoinette to model what she was asking the students to do with questions that she was going to pose to them. After the students had been introduced to the visual and had the opportunity to respond to Antoinette's questions, the following interactions were observed:

**Antoinette:** Let's look at these questions together using the house.

**Student:** Would it be *la apartamento* or *el apartamento* [the apartment]?

**Antoinette:** Does *apartamento* end with *o* or *a*?

**Student:** *O.* So it would be *el apartamento*.

**Antoinette:** (Writing response on the board), *Sí, muy bien.* [Yes, very good]

**Antoinette:** I'm going to hand you another house. You're going to be doing the same exact thing that we just did, but this time you'll do it with a partner.

(Antoinette, second observation, December 12, 2012)

Through this interaction, Antoinette had the students transition from a modeling activity to one in which they would be completing the same type of activity; however, this time, they would be working with a partner. Therefore, Antoinette presented the students with a visual aid, modeled for them what was expected of them for the activity, and then had the students work in partnership to complete the activity.

Once the students had the opportunity to work on the house activity with partners, Antoinette called for the collective attention of the class so that she could share a few new vocabulary terms. She stated, "Take out your green sheets." (Antoinette, second observation, December 12, 2012). Again, Antoinette was using a color coding scheme to help the students organize their notes and match vocabulary with the green sheets. She had stated that she wanted the students to be able to be organized and be used to routines; therefore, she continued to have them use green sheets for new vocabulary throughout her time in her students teaching experience. As she wrote new vocabulary terms on the board, the students wrote them down on their green sheets in their notebooks. The use of color-coding is a strategy that Antoinette mentioned in her first and second interviews and that she was observed using in the first and second observations of her course.

Antoinette exhibited more than a novice understanding of strategies for working with students with special needs in the world language classroom before she began her student teaching experience and she continued to exhibit more than a novice

understanding through the end of her student teaching experience. In our final interview that took place after she had completed her student teaching experience, Antoinette shared different ways that she believed that she grew during her time at LaFayette High School. First, she mentioned that she had the opportunity to reflect on the strategies that she was using and that she found that to be important. For example, she stated:

In my future classroom, I may or may not be the only teacher depending on if I'm in a co-teaching placement. However, in my student teaching, I always went back to my cooperating teacher to make sure that she liked the way I [taught] something or would compare how she [would teach] something or the way that she completed a lesson or unit in the past. I feel like in my student teaching I've been going back and checking to make sure the way that I wanted to do something was good or not, rather than just the way that I know she used it and was successful.

(Antoinette, third interview, December 14, 2012)

This statement is one that demonstrated that Antoinette had grown to be a reflective practitioner over the course of her time in her student teaching placement. She showed how she has moved from copying what her cooperating teacher would do to teach or introduce new topics to wondering about how effective it was for her when she taught or introduced a new topic. She was able to reflect on her own specific experiences and draw conclusions from them as opposed to reflecting on general situations that teachers may face.

Second, Antoinette shifted from being a novice at the beginning of her student teaching experience to a teacher who had specific opportunities from which to draw when reflecting on her practice of incorporating strategies in her world language classroom. She moved from using the strategies that her cooperating teacher had used to incorporating her own strategies. She mentioned:

I would go back to the book that [my cooperating teacher] kept for lesson plans and see what was taught last year. So I went back to the book and I thought this is the scene that she taught and these are the worksheets used and this is how she taught it. I would then see if I thought in my own mind as to how I would teach it because I didn't want to use the same exact things as she did. As I thought of the way that I thought it would be effective to teach, I would go back to her and we would discuss it. She looked over the lesson plan and we decided together what we thought would be the most effective way to teach the class.

(Antoinette, third interview, December 14, 2012)

Here, Antoinette used her cooperating teacher to collaborate ways to effectively present material as opposed to using what was done in the past. Antoinette would work with Jeannine to discuss the different ways to expose students to new topics in a way that would be meaningful and effective for them. She collaborated in her reflection of strategies that worked and ones that were not as effective after teaching the class.

Third, since Antoinette had mentioned in her first interview how important it was for the teacher to follow the accommodations and modifications for students with special needs, I asked her how she did so in her student teaching experience. She shared with me:

In all of my classes, what we do is that we review all of the IEPs to make sure that each student is going to receive their accommodations. As a whole, especially in the special education class, those students- the whole class- basically has very similar modifications that need to be met. So as a whole we will modify the curriculum that way. However, if it's one certain student, we'll modify part of it. Maybe they need a word bank on a test. Or if they have a hearing deficiency or can't do the oral part, we accommodate based on the needs of the student in that class. Working or doing partner work, taking it home, giving extra time if there is a word bank, making spelling not count.

(Antoinette, third interview, December 14, 2012)

Antoinette gave specific examples of ways that she made accommodations and modifications for students with IEPs in her classroom. In her first interview, Antoinette

was unable to share specific strategies for working with students with special needs. She spoke generally of the ways that she learned about the thirteen different classifications. However, by the final interview after her student teaching experience, Antoinette managed to specifically state ways that she did offer specific strategies and could make accommodations and modifications for students in her classroom.

Finally, I asked Antoinette to share the ways that she was able to communicate with parents. It is important to remember that parent communication was a strategy that Antoinette felt was important even before she began her student teaching experience. In her first interview, she spoke generally about the importance of reaching out to parents and families to ensure for success for learners. By the end of the student teaching experience, she shared specifically:

I actually had to call a parent because their child was slacking on his homework. A policy at LaFayette is that if a student continues a pattern of not doing their homework or a pattern of turning work in late, the teacher has the right to implement ‘academic detention’ where the student has to come and do their work with the teacher. I didn’t want to implement that policy, so what I did, I notified the parent and spoke to parents saying that I’m concerned because the student has this many assignments missing as of right now it is affecting their grade, but I want to work with them to make sure that they pick up their grade in my class.

(Antoinette, third interview, December 14, 2012)

Instead of following a policy at the school with which Antoinette did not necessarily agree, she reached out to a parent to help with having a student complete his work. She did not want to assign an “academic detention” because she did not necessarily believe that it would help this particular student with special needs. Rather, she enlisted the cooperation of the parent to have the student complete the necessary assignment to help improve the grade in the class. This interaction underscored Antoinette’s commitment to

working with students, specifically those with special needs, to help them succeed in her Spanish courses.

In another instance, Antoinette reached out to a parent to share how proud she was of the work that a student was completing in her class and the progress he was making. She demonstrated growth by calling parents for positive concerns, not only negative ones. She mentioned:

There was a student last marking period that was having a really hard time in my class, but this marking period he seemed to be doing so much better after I talked to his mom. We worked together. He's doing so much better in class. He was going to be out school for four days and he asked me for his work beforehand. He got all of his work to me by the first day that he was absent. He has about an 85 in my class right now and I called the mom and told her how proud I am of him and how well he's doing. It was a beautiful conversation. She was really happy to hear that.

(Antoinette, third interview, December 14, 2012).

Antoinette stated that she worked together with the mother to ensure that the student would attain success in her world language classroom. The aforementioned student with special needs that she mentioned in the excerpt became responsible for the work that he was turning in. He even improved his grade and Antoinette was sure to share this with his mother. Antoinette mentioned that the parents needed to be part of difficult conversations and part of the successes that the students attain throughout the time in her course. Just as she had mentioned the importance of working with family members throughout her interviews with me, she had opportunities to do so throughout her student teaching experience.

### **Summary of Antoinette's case**

Through her own personal experience in being a student with a 504 plan, coursework at Baytown specifically in working with students with disabilities, and her

field placement in a Spanish 1B course specifically created for students with special needs, Antoinette was able to grow in her understanding of providing accommodations and methods/strategies for her students. Before she began her student teaching experience, Antoinette spoke about her training in working with students with special needs in very general terms. Then, over the course of her fifteen-week student teaching experience, she was observed employing certain strategies to help her students with special needs and shared certain methods that she began to learn that worked with her students. Antoinette had first-hand experience in working with students with special needs because of her placement at LaFayette High School in the Spanish 1B course. Similar placements were not the same for the other pre-service teachers that participated in this study, particularly the case of Bernadette.

#### **The case of Bernadette**

Bernadette was enrolled in the program at Baytown University that would lead to a K-12 endorsement in teaching Spanish after graduation. Bernadette shared with me that she did not know that it was possible for her to add any other endorsements to her program of studies, especially the ability to add Teacher of Students with Disabilities. This may account for her choice to enroll in a single endorsement program instead of pursuing the dual certification option. For her student teaching experience, Bernadette was placed at Chambly High school in central New Jersey and assigned to work with Laurence, her cooperating teacher. Bernadette taught Spanish levels one and two at Chambly High School and was very frank when she shared with me that she had very few experiences in working with students with special needs throughout any of her coursework or experiences at Baytown University. She shared that she did not have a

strong understanding at all of ways to work with students with special needs and that the topic was only discussed a few times in her courses that led up to the student teaching experience. In her classes at Chambly only three students were classified as LD and had IEPs.

Bernadette's inclusion in this research as a counter case to Antoinette is important because both pre-service teachers would graduate from Baytown University's teacher education program with degrees in Education and certifications in teaching Spanish with the expectation that both would gain employment in public school systems in New Jersey and, therefore, be exposed to working with students with special needs in the world language classroom. Even though Antoinette was enrolled in the dual certification program, Bernadette would also be expected to have a foundational knowledge of working with students with special needs and following their IEPs or 504 plans.

### **Classroom methods/strategies**

Bernadette was enrolled in the program that led to certification in teaching Spanish only, and not in the endorsement program that would lead to certification in Teaching Students with Disabilities. She was more limited in her knowledge of working with students with LD because she did not follow coursework that specifically described working with students with special needs.

During the first interview, when asked specifically about the experiences she had regarding working with students with special needs, she stated:

I mean, I learned a lot about them and the different accommodations and modifications that you may need to do, but I really didn't have any experiences with that until I actually began my student teaching...other than what I did in the [Gen Ed 101] class. In all of my education classes, we did focus on students with special needs, but I mean, unless you are

really having first-hand experiences, you're not going to really know what to expect.

(Bernadette, first interview, February 7, 2013)

Even though Bernadette had mentioned that she learned about working with students with special needs, she did not feel that she was well prepared to begin her student teaching experience working with the specialized population because she had not had any prior exposure to working with them. She believed that in order to truly understand working with students with special needs, one must have first-hand experiences. When asked specifically about IEPs and 504 plans, again, Bernadette was not able to expound upon her knowledge and how these documents could influence her teaching. She mentioned:

I'm actually, really not familiar with [IEPs or 504 plans] at all. Other than I've seen a couple of samples of them in some of my textbooks...other than before this year, I've never really been exposed to them at all. Prior to this, I had no prior knowledge. I knew what an IEP was and what a 504 is essentially. But, going into my student teaching, I had no familiarity with them.

(Bernadette, first interview, February 7, 2013)

Bernadette noted that the only exposure she had to understanding IEPs and 504 plans came from a few samples that she saw in some of her textbooks for courses at Baytown University.

During the first observation of Bernadette's Spanish 1 class, she was observed employing three different strategies that can be attributed to working with students with special needs in the world language classroom. The three strategies included: repetition, Total Physical Response, and attending to anxiety. As a reminder, Bernadette was placed in Spanish classrooms with only three classified students and the excerpts presented here during classroom observations all contain interactions with those students. Therefore, the strategies that are presented were employed specifically for students with LD. Although

Bernadette did not identify these as strategies for students with LD, my analysis shows that she in fact was employing teaching methods that could potentially support the three classified students in her class. First, Bernadette employed a strategy in which all students would repeat after her when learning a new vocabulary term. As the students repeated the terms, Bernadette looked specifically at their mouths to see if they were approximating the pronunciation of the new term. After the observation, Bernadette shared that she listened to her students with special needs intently and assisted them with pronunciation, as they needed. Next, Bernadette included an activity similar to Total Physical Response (TPR) so that she could informally assess the understanding on behalf of her students regarding the new vocabulary terms. Asher (1977) espouses that TPR is based on the coordination of language and physical movement in which teachers give commands to students in the target language, and students respond with whole-body actions.

The third strategy that was particularly poignant that Bernadette used in this first observation regarded student anxiety in her classroom. The interaction was one in which all of the students were going to the front of the class to act out some of the new vocabulary terms as part of a charades-like activity. The following interaction was observed:

**Student:** But Meghan needs to go!

**Bernadette:** (Quietly and individually to Meghan) Do you want to go?

**Meghan:** (Shakes her head no)

**Bernadette:** I'll do the last one, ok?

(Bernadette, first observation, March 1, 2013)

In this instance, Bernadette was offering a face-saver to Meghan, a student with special needs. The student clearly did not want to stand up in front of the class to act out the

vocabulary term; therefore, Bernadette took it upon herself to act out the term for her so that the student would not lose self-esteem or dignity. Bernadette quickly turned the attention from Meghan onto herself as the rest of the class completed the activity. Offering face-savers was one way that Bernadette included during this particular lesson as a strategy for working with her students with special needs.

During the second interview that took place approximately halfway through Bernadette's student teaching experience, she was able to discuss a few strategies that she employed in her classroom to help students with special needs. Some of the strategies included: preferential seating, modified assessments, and collaborative work. Bernadette, during her first interview, was not able to share many strategies because she stated that she had not had enough experience in working with students with special needs. After working in her student teaching placement at Chambly High School for approximately seven weeks, she offered:

[Student with special needs] have preferential seating. Those that need to be in the front, sit in the front. The assessments are modified based on their IEPs and their needs. Sometimes they get a more simplified quiz with more simplified directions. It basically covers the same material, but sometimes they'll be given a word box where the other students have to fill in the blanks. Then, throughout the lessons, I try and incorporate a lot of collaborative work. In my lessons, I try and usually pair somebody who maybe needs a little help, someone with special needs, with a student that is really competent in the subject and usually I find that works well.

(Bernadette, second interview, April 15, 2013)

In this excerpt, Bernadette demonstrated that she was learning more about working with her students with special needs from the experiences that she had been having with them. First, she mentioned that students received preferential seating. Next, she spoke specifically about the modifications that were listed in the IEPs of her students. Whereas,

before student teaching she only had a cursory understanding of IEPs, here she had shared that she had read the documents for her students and offered modified assessments as set forth in the plans. She noted that the material was the same; however, she also shared that she might include a word bank for students who could benefit from that depending upon their LD. Finally, she mentioned how she used collaborative pairing for students to complete tasks in her classroom. All of these strategies that she employed were attributed to her experiences in working with students during her field placement at Chambly High School.

During the second observation of Bernadette's Spanish class that took place towards the end of her student teaching experience, I was looking to observe specifically the ways that Bernadette incorporated methods or strategies for her students with special needs that she discussed in her second interview. I noticed first that one student in particular was seated in the front of the classroom closest to the board and monitor. After the observation, Bernadette mentioned how this student was afforded preferential seating as part of the IEP. During the observation, three strategies were observed: TPR, repetition of dialogues, and the use of wait time.

During the first activity, Bernadette had the students stand up and play a game similar to Simon Says. She stated, "Everyone get up. ¡Levantanse! Vamos a jugar al *Simón dice*. [Get up! We're going to play Simon says]" (Bernadette, second observation, April 24, 2013). After the observation, Bernadette mentioned that she liked to incorporate activities into her classroom in which students could get up and be active physically in the classroom. A TPR activity, she shared, was one that helped break up

the monotony of lectures and notes in her classroom. She noted that she liked to employ this type of activity to help with students who had difficulty focusing for an entire period.

Next, Bernadette incorporated a reading activity in which students would repeat parts of a dialogue. For example, she had two students stand up and read a dialogue aloud. She then asked questions to the class about the conversation to check for comprehension. The following interaction was observed:

**Bernadette:** Tyler and Lauren, can you please stand and read the dialogue on page 254?

**Tyler and Lauren:** (read the conversation about making a doctor's appointment from the book)

**Bernadette:** *¿Qué dice Tyler?* [What does Tyler say?] (calls on a student to respond). *¿Qué quiere Lauren?* [What does Lauren want?] (calls on a student to respond). *¿Cómo se dice la pierna en inglés?* [How do you say leg in English?]

(Bernadette, second observation, April 24, 2014)

In this interaction, Bernadette was asking follow up comprehension questions about a dialogue that the students had just heard. She asked basic questions and more pointed questions about specific vocabulary terms. After the observation, Bernadette shared that she believed that students – specifically those with special needs- learn better when she is able to help guide them through a dialogue by asking them specific questions. She wanted them to begin asking themselves similar questions when they were confronted with a similar situation in other contexts.

The final strategy that was observed during the second observation was the use of wait time during an activity. Rowe (1986) defines wait time as pausing after posing a question to students to allow for processing of the query. During the activity, Bernadette would ask a question and then allow students to write down their responses to each question. Next, she stated that she would ask volunteers to come up to the board at the

end of the activity to write their responses to the questions. In this instance, the students were able to write down their own responses and review them before deciding to volunteer to come to the board to write their responses. Bernadette mentioned after the observation that she liked to give the students time to think about the question before giving an answer. She stated that the strategy of wait time allowed for students to process the information before having to give a response, specifically for her students with special needs.

After Bernadette had completed her student teaching experience, she shared with me some ways that she believed that she grew in her knowledge of working with students with special needs in the world language classroom. When asked how she envisioned her future classroom in working with students with special needs, she shared:

I will definitely use a lot of collaborative learning. I can pair certain students with special needs or students who are of different levels with students who have mastered the subject matter and they can help each other. I will do modified quizzes and give extra time and modified rubrics and things like that. Also for presentations and things in class too. I'll use a lot of visuals and TPR in order to have students constantly be involved and give them as many visual aids as possible. Also, I think what helps is breaking the lesson up into various activities rather than doing on long activity, where maybe certain students could focus and stay on task the whole time, but other students can't. I think it just helps all students to break things up. Instead of working on something for 35 minutes, break that up into different short activities. This helps the class move along.

(Bernadette, third interview, May 13, 2013)

In this excerpt, Bernadette shared some of the strategies that she would like to employ in her future classroom. Her response at the final interview was markedly different from the one that she gave before she started her student teaching in both the depth and breadth of knowledge of working with students with special needs. That is, Bernadette was unable to share much during her first interview regarding strategies for working with students

with special needs; however, after student teaching, she mentioned the need to break up her lessons into smaller bits to help move the class along. She also mentioned specifically offering modified assessments and differentiated pairing. The notion of moving from speaking in generalities to specifics is presented in the discussion section below.

### **Summary of Bernadette's case**

Over the course of the fifteen-week student teaching experience, Bernadette grew in her understanding of working with students with special needs in her Spanish classroom as evidenced by the ways she described methods and strategies for working with students with LD. At the outset of her field placement, Bernadette was unclear of how to use IEPs or 504 plans to aid in providing accommodations or making modifications for her students with special needs. She knew that she had learned about IEPs and 504 plans but, because of her lack of experience in working with students with special needs, she was unable to make connections to the coursework she had completed for the students in her field placement. Over time, Bernadette was able to identify strategies that she believed benefitted her students with special needs in her Spanish classrooms. By the end of the student teaching experience, Bernadette was able to share specific strategies that she employed to help her students with special needs in the world language classroom.

### **Discussion**

The first research question of this dissertation study sought to investigate the ways that the pre-service teachers grew in their understanding of working with students with special needs in the world language classroom. I believe that through the cases of both

Antoinette and Bernadette, growth was observed based on data obtained from multiple interviews and observations. In order to present the ways that each pre-service teacher grew, I present information from field notes and commentary on the observations that took place during the student teaching experience. I also present information from interviews before, during, and after student teaching from both Antoinette and Bernadette in addition to information from the cooperating teachers, as appropriate.

This section begins with a discussion on the types of strategies and methods that the pre-service teachers employed during their student teaching experience. An analysis of data gathered from interviews and observations is presented to support the growth in use of strategies and methodologies that was witnessed over the course of the student teaching experience. Next, I present information about the overall growth of Antoinette and Bernadette individually. Again, analyzed data from interviews and observations is presented to demonstrate the ways that the pre-service teachers grew in their understanding of working with students with LD in their world language classrooms. Finally, I demonstrate how both Antoinette and Bernadette moved from speaking initially in generalities about working with students with special needs to sharing more specific accommodations or modifications that they learned during their student teaching experience. Analyzed data from information shared during interviews is presented to support the growth that was witnessed in both pre-service teachers citing the examples they shared about working with students with LD during their student teaching experience. The chapter ends with a conclusion based on the overall findings regarding the first research question posed in this dissertation.

### **Strategies and methodologies**

One focus of the interviews and observations that took place before, during and after the student teaching experience for both Antoinette and Bernadette was their use of strategies employed in the world language classroom, particularly strategies for students with special needs in the world language classroom. Oxford (1990) maintains that six different groups of techniques exist that can be employed in the world language classroom. The six different groups of techniques that Oxford (1990) puts forward are important to use as a framework because they help delineate the strategies and methodologies that the teachers shared that they employed in their classrooms during out interviews together. The data collected from interviews and observations is discussed later in this section using Oxford's (1990) framework by looking at the pedagogical practices of both Antoinette and Bernadette. Before discussing the strategies that Antoinette and Bernadette were observed employing during the student teaching experience, or the ones that they discussed in the interviews as part of data collection for this dissertation, I present Oxford's (1990) six categories and define them with examples.

First, memory strategies relate to how students remember language, such as recalling information by using mnemonic devices or creating flashcards from categories of new vocabulary. Examples of memory strategies include teaching students to create mental linkages, to apply image and sound to assist memory, and to review material in an in-depth manner. Second, cognitive strategies relate to how students think about their learning such as sharing that they like to read for pleasure or sharing that they try to find patterns in the new language. Examples of cognitive strategies include teaching ways to practice and create structure for linguistic input and output. Third, compensation

strategies enable students to make up for limited target language knowledge such as making guesses or using context clues to gather meaning of new terms. Compensation strategies include examples like teaching students how to guess intelligently and help them overcome limitations in speaking and writing. Fourth, metacognitive strategies relate to how students manage their own learning such as noticing and learning from mistakes made or risks taken with using the target language. An example of a metacognitive strategy is a teacher helping students think back to previous knowledge or concepts learned. Fifth, affective strategies refer to the ways that students relate feelings to language learning such as giving themselves a treat when they do particularly well with a new concept. Examples of affective strategies include the teacher assisting the student to lower anxiety or help them manage emotions and motivations. Finally, social strategies relate to the ways that students learn from interacting with other students learning the language or with the target language teacher. Examples of social strategies include teachers fostering cooperative learning and positive interactions with others.

Furthermore, Oxford (2003) maintains that the six groups of strategies can be further classified as either direct strategies or indirect strategies. Direct strategies are one that involve new language directly and that require mental processing of the language. For example, the direct strategies mentioned above are the ones related to memory, cognition, and compensation. Indirect strategies, on the other hand, are ones that provide indirect support for language learning by using different strategies such as focusing, arranging, evaluating, and lowering anxiety (Zare, 2012). For example, the indirect strategies listed above are the ones related to metacognition, affect, and social interactions. The aforementioned six categories are not ones to which Antoinette or

Bernadette were explicitly exposed in their language teacher preparation methodology courses; however, they are ones that I believe can be applied in the analysis of some of the strategies that Antoinette and Bernadette were observed employing in their classrooms to assist students with special needs.

By offering a discussion on the role of the cooperating teacher and the overall growth of the candidates above, and by presenting a discussion of the strategies that were observed being employed in the pre-service teacher student teaching classrooms below, I am commenting on the overall pedagogical competencies of both Bernadette and Antoinette. Suciu & Mata (2011) define pedagogical competence as, “An ensemble of potential behaviors or capacities allowing for efficient manifestation of an activity or a minimal professional standard that all professionals should reach” (p.415). In other words, pedagogical competence refers to the ability of a teacher to use a coordinated combination of resources or materials and knowledge or skills to achieve effectiveness in pedagogy. My discussion is not intended to include an evaluative aspect to the practices of the pre-service teachers, but rather, I use Oxford’s (1990; 2003) frame for strategies to demonstrate the growth that was made by both Antoinette and Bernadette in their use of particular strategies. I offer below a discussion of the strategies that each pre-service teacher was observed employing during my observations of their classrooms.

#### *Strategies employed by Antoinette*

During the two observations that were completed in Antoinette’s classes, I was able to note the various strategies that she was employing in her Spanish 1B classroom. In this chapter, I described four different strategies and included the interactions between Antoinette and her students during the observations that I completed of her classes.

Looking at the strategies that she employed through a frame of Oxford's (2003) work, I believe that Antoinette used more direct strategies with her students than indirect ones. Three of the four strategies were ones in which she was commenting on ways for her students to memorize the new material being learned by helping them make links to prior knowledge and reviewing well.

For example, in one instance, Antoinette drew attention to a device that a student had shared as a way to understand that a *panadería* is a bakery. The student offered that since *pan* is the Spanish word for bread, a *panadería* must be a place where one can purchase bread or bread products. Antoinette praised the student for sharing this knowledge and reminded the rest of the class that this was a good way to remember the new vocabulary term related to the overall unit of places in town. Her use of sharing the strategy was one that she found helpful for helping all of the students with LD in her Spanish classroom. Antoinette shared that she tried to present material in many different ways to help the students remember the new concepts. By sharing one strategy that a student used with the rest of her students, Antoinette was exposing the rest of her students to a strategy that they might find helpful in memorizing new vocabulary terms.

A second example of Antoinette employing a direct strategy to assist with memory was when she provided her students with an image of the blueprint of a house as a way to help them remember places in a home. Oxford (2003) maintains that employing the use of visuals or sounds to aid memory is a direct strategy to help students remember new vocabulary terms. This is important and relevant to students with LD because the strategy offers one more way for students to learn the new material to which they are being introduced. Antoinette used the image as one way to help the students visualize the

various rooms of the house and then tied to help them make connections to the new vocabulary by using the blueprint. Antoinette mentioned how she believed that the use of visuals was helpful for her students, particularly those with LD.

Antoinette shared her belief in modeling for students in her interviews and was observed modeling activities for her students before allowing them to begin working independently. She felt that she would not want to let students begin an activity that she had planned for them unless they all understood the expectations of what they were supposed to do. She provided an example from a class session in which she modeled for the students various sentences employing the verbs *ser* [to be] and *tener* [to have]. She wanted to make sure that the entire class worked together through the examples she was modeling for them before moving on. Her use of modeling as a strategy was a way to review the materials and ensure that the students were comfortable with the content as they began to commit them to memory.

One strategy that Antoinette employed in her classroom was the use of partner work activities. According to Oxford (2003), partner work is a social strategy that teachers can employ in the classroom as an indirect learning strategy. By providing a classroom environment that was conducive to partner learning, Antoinette was fostering social interactions between her students as she helped them grow in their understanding and use of the Spanish language. During her interviews, Antoinette shared that she was surprised that the students were not necessarily receptive to wanting to work in pairs and that they would rather work independently. However, she shared that she thought that it was important for them to work together using Spanish.

It is possible that Antoinette used more direct strategies for helping her students learn Spanish in her classroom because of her beliefs in the importance of modeling and providing students with images and color coding to help them make connections to the language being learned. Antoinette was teaching the students strategies to help manage their own learning by praising them for sharing language learning strategies including sharing devices to help remember new vocabulary terms, such as *panadería*. Over the course of the fifteen-week student teaching experience, Antoinette grew in her sharing of strategies in the ways that she talked about them in interviews with me and in the ways that she employed them during classroom observations. Antoinette expressed a belief in varying the strategies to help the students in her Spanish classroom to give students opportunities to learn the new material in various ways. In comparison to Bernadette, Antoinette used more direct strategies to help her Spanish 1B students with LD.

*Strategies employed by Bernadette*

During the two observations that were completed in Bernadette's classes, I was able to note the use of distinct strategies that she used with her students and present a discussion of three of them here. Looking at the strategies that she employed through a frame of Oxford's (2003) work, I believe that Bernadette used more indirect strategies with her students than direct ones. Two of the strategies were ones in which she was attempting to manipulate the classroom environment to help lower the anxiety or help a student manage emotions.

For example, in the interaction presented earlier in the chapter between Bernadette and one student with special needs, Meghan, Bernadette was careful to think of the impact that a charades activity would have on her student. Bernadette knew that

Meghan would be nervous to get up in front of the class to act out the new vocabulary terms they were learning, so she quietly and individually asked if she wanted to partake in the activity. After Meghan shook her head no, Bernadette took it upon herself to act out the final word as part of the charades activity. In the interactions, Bernadette was looking solely to reduce the amount of anxiety on the part of the student. Meghan had been participating in guessing the terms when the other students were acting them out; however, she did not want to act out a term in front of the class and Bernadette allowed her to not do so.

In her second interview, Bernadette mentioned that she allows for preferential seating on the part of her students with special needs, as stipulated in their IEPs. This is one way that she also used a strategy aimed at creating a low-anxiety classroom. The students with IEPs were able to sit either near the front of the room to see the board, or away from a window/door to help lessen distractions according to their individual needs. In contrast, Bernadette had not mentioned this strategy in our first interview although she did develop this technique during the student teaching experience upon reviewing the IEPs of the three students with LD in her Spanish classroom.

An example of a direct strategy to assist students in building a cognitive frame for learning new vocabulary terms was the inclusion of a *Simón dice* [“Simon says”] activity. The students were able to practice using the new vocabulary related to body terms by participating in the activity. They had to listen to the teacher and then follow the directions in a Total Physical Response (TPR)-like activity. By incorporating this activity into her classroom, Bernadette was able to share with students one strategy to help them remember terms for parts of the body. In a post interview, Bernadette shared

that in her future classroom, she would like to include a lot of TPR activities and visuals to constantly have students be involved in the lessons. This demonstrated that she was growing in her understanding of strategies to help students participate in the lessons to grow in their overall development of the Spanish language.

### **Overall growth**

The way to describe growth over the course of the student teaching experience in this study is derived from data collected and analyzed from both interviews of the pre-service teachers and their cooperating teachers in addition to observations of their lessons. Growth can be measured in many different ways; however, in this research, growth was observed on the part of both pre-service teachers in the ways that they worked with and talked about working with their students, particularly those with LD. Because both Antoinette and Bernadette were not enrolled in the same dual-endorsement program at Baytown, it would not be appropriate to compare their growth to one another. Therefore, I present below a discussion on the overall growth that was witnessed individually by each of the pre-service teachers rather than by a comparison of their growth.

#### *Overall growth of Antoinette*

Antoinette began her student teaching experience with a somewhat strong understanding of working with students with special needs. There are two main reasons why I believe that her knowledge base was strong from the outset of the experience. First, Antoinette herself was a student with a 504 plan in high school. She shared with me that she was learning disabled and that helped her understand what learning is like for other students with LD. Her own experiences in high school prompted her to become a

teacher so that she could make a difference. Second, Antoinette was enrolled in the dual endorsement program at Baytown. She was able to describe the ways that she learned about thirteen different classifications in her coursework and transfer that knowledge to her experiences with students. She was also able to describe what is included in an IEP or how to use a 504 plan when planning lessons for students even before she began student teaching. At the beginning of her student teaching experience, Jeannine – the cooperating teacher – shared with me:

[Antoinette] is a smart young lady. It is really good that she was placed at our school because I don't think that, I don't know for sure, but from what I've heard other schools have not treated their special education students the way we have. We have a special course for some of them and for some of those that want to go on to college we just came up with these two Spanish 1A and 1B courses.

(Jeannine, first interview, October 1, 2012)

Jeannine believed that Antoinette was an intelligent woman who possessed the knowledge necessary to work with students in both inclusive classrooms and special courses. Even though they had only been working together for a short time, Jeannine shared that the placement at LaFayette High School was a good one because the teachers there were willing to help Antoinette grow as part of the school community. Since Jeannine herself taught courses with in-class support teachers, she was able to help introduce Antoinette to collaborative teaching methods and strategies. Antoinette's preparation was in line with McKenzie's (2009) call for all pre-service teachers to have exposure to working collaboratively in the general education classroom. Antoinette's experiences at Baytown in the dual endorsement program, in addition to her placement at LaFayette High School with Jeannine in inclusive classrooms, led to her overall growth

in understanding working with students with special needs in the world language classroom.

During the interview that took place in the middle of student teaching, Antoinette was able to describe how she believed she was growing over the course of time that she had with her students. She shared:

I find myself wanting to be at school more than be anywhere else. I want to be with my students and I want to be with my cooperating teacher and learn from my cooperating teacher and the other teachers about “What if?” They have been so helpful to me and answered all of my questions. In my one class, I thought that they knew more than what they did. So when I created a test, not many of them did well, a few students got A’s and the rest did poorly. I took the test that I created and I went to my special ed colleague and I asked to her to look at my test and give feedback. She said that there was too much. So, we work together in creating assessments that are appropriate for my students.

(Antoinette, second interview, November 12, 2012)

Antoinette was using the knowledge that she was gaining from her experiences in working with her students to grow in her understanding of assessments and creating appropriate assessments for students with special needs. Only approximately seven weeks into the student teaching experience, she was reaching out to colleagues for feedback on her assessments and ways to improve them. She realized that there were resources in the school and that she should use these resources to help her own growth. Antoinette offered, “I’m actually learning more from student teaching than actually creating the assessment for [Baytown]” (Antoinette, second interview, November 12, 2012). In this instance, Antoinette shared that her own growth was mitigated by the experiences that she had working with community members in her student teaching placement.

After the student teaching experience had ended, I had the opportunity to interview both Antoinette and Jeannine regarding the overall experiences of their time together. When asked if she felt prepared to begin working in her own classroom with students with special needs, Antoinette offered:

I absolutely feel comfortable to begin working in my own classroom. My coursework, I think it actually helped me to learn the methodology of teaching a world language as well as teaching special education students. I was well prepared for the methodologies that I should be using in the classroom. I feel that in my experience I had four different levels that I taught, four different preps that I had to create lessons for, four completely different types of students that I had to deal with. So I feel like I'm very educated on the 'not so ideal situation' as well as the methodologies that I need to implement in my classroom.

(Antoinette, third interview, December 14, 2012)

Here, Antoinette shared that the combination of coursework and her multiple courses at LaFayette High School had helped her to grow in her understanding of the realities of teaching. She did not believe that she had the easiest assignment having taught four different levels; however, she viewed her schedule as an asset for future positions. Even if she again were given four different sections of Spanish, she would have the confidence that she would be able to surmount the obstacles because she had done so during her student teaching experience, as she expressed in the abovementioned excerpt.

Jeannine also took the opportunity to comment on the way that Antoinette was prepared to work with students with special needs in the classroom through the difficult teaching load that she had. She stated:

She's been working with them - four of the five classes that she taught were special needs. She's very prepared [to work with students with special needs]. It's always going to be a learning situation because we have students with different needs. Each student is an individual. But I think that she's as prepared as she's going to be.

(Jeannine, second interview, December 19, 2012)

Jeannine knew that it was not possible for Antoinette to be prepared for working with every single student with special needs based on one fifteen-week student teaching experience; however, she was cognizant that Antoinette was as prepared as possible at that point in her career. Having had the opportunity to teach the Spanish 1A and 1B sections was one way that Antoinette was able to grow in her understanding of working with students with special needs because the courses were created specifically for students with LD. She began the student teaching experience with more than a novice level of understanding special populations of students and added to that high level of understanding through her student teaching experience in working with the overall school community, but with her cooperating teacher specifically.

*Overall growth of Bernadette*

Bernadette began her student teaching experience with a novice understanding of working with students with special needs in the world language classroom, as shared by her own admission during the interview that took place prior to the student teaching experience. She shared that the topic had been discussed in a few of her courses as part of her coursework toward teacher certification; however, the topic was never presented in depth, nor were opportunities for working with students with special needs presented to the pre-service teachers. Just before beginning her student teaching experience, Bernadette was unable to describe what an IEP or 504 plan was or how those documents might impact her teaching. Again, she had a very general idea of what the documents were; however, she was unable to elaborate on how she could use the information in the

documents to help make modifications or accommodations for her students with special needs.

By the second interview that took place during Bernadette's student teaching experience, she demonstrated that she did grow in her understanding of working with students with special needs. The following excerpt describes how Bernadette created assessments keeping in mind her students with special needs. She stated:

I give four quizzes per unit. Then, I basically implemented some oral presentation to do and some group projects that the students have to do where it's a bit more hands on and they get some class time to work on it and they can use their notes to accommodate different kinds of learners. Then, we also do a notebook check at the end of the marking period just to make sure the students are keeping up with their notes and that they have all of their class work.

(Bernadette, second interview, April 15, 2013)

Even though Bernadette was unable to share any strategies in working with students with special needs in her first interview, by the second interview she shared how she allowed some students to use their notes based on their specific learning needs. In addition, she assessed students using group projects so that they could work in a 'hands on' manner with materials.

By our final interview, Bernadette reported that she did grow because of the student teaching experience, but that she did not feel sufficiently prepared before entering her student teaching placement. She shared:

I think [the coursework] helped to a certain extent but I definitely think I could have been way more prepared. I think the best way to get prepared for something like that is to get put into the classroom and do, not so much observation hours, but actually teach lessons. Throughout my time at Baytown, I only taught one lesson. I think that every teacher needs to have first-hand experience. You can't just go by the book. You have to see what works for you and do the research about your own specific students.

(Bernadette, third interview, May 13, 2013)

Bernadette believed that the growth she made came from her experiences in working with students with special needs in her own student teaching placement as opposed to what she learned in her coursework. For her, the most growth came from the research she completed in working with her own students and learning about their specific needs to help them succeed in her classroom and not from her coursework at Baytown, even though she was required to take the Gen Ed 101 course that covered the topic of working with students with LD.

Even though that Bernadette did show some growth in understanding how to work with students with special needs over the fifteen-week student teaching experience, she shared that she was not as confident in her own preparation as she could have been. The case of Bernadette is similar to the findings of Cooper (2004) and Lange & Sims (1990) in which the researchers maintain that new teachers are dissatisfied with their programmatic preparations and cite that they would like more effective instruction on classroom management and working with specific populations of students. For example, Bernadette stated:

I definitely think that the theory and the practice is good. They taught us theory and about certain things that you're supposed to do. Then I think it's completely different when you get to the classroom and then there are tons of students with different IEPs and different modifications and things like that. But, I think that there could be better ways for them to prepare us. I don't know if it's better textbooks or a better course focusing on special education. Even though we're not special education majors, it's still every single teacher is going to deal with students with special needs in their class. I think it's something that maybe coming out of college you should be more trained in.

(Bernadette, third interview, May 13, 2013)

Bernadette, therefore, believed that she could have been more prepared in working with students with special needs in the Spanish classroom. She did not feel that her

coursework prepared her, but rather, she gained experience and knowledge in working with students during her student teaching experience.

In comparing the cases of both Antoinette and Bernadette, it is clear that both pre-service teachers grew in their understanding of working with students with special needs in the world language classroom. The difference between the two pre-service teachers is that Antoinette was equipped with the knowledge and understanding of how to create modifications and allow for accommodations even before her student teaching experience. She was then able to apply and assess the modifications that she was making and work with colleagues to evaluate the effectiveness of the modifications. For example, the one assessment that Antoinette administered in which the students did not do very well and then realized after speaking with a colleague that the assessment contained too much material. On the other hand, Bernadette did not have the opportunity to assess the modifications and accommodations that she was administering because she was simultaneously learning them. She would have to wait until her first classroom teaching assignment after graduation to assess the appropriateness and effectiveness of the different types of modifications that she will provide. She might then be surrounded with colleagues who would be willing to discuss the strategies that she will employ that she learned during her student teaching experience and assist her in understanding the effectiveness of her practices in working with students with special needs in her Spanish classroom.

### **From generalities to specifics**

Both Antoinette and Bernadette grew over their student teaching experiences in terms of speaking in generalities to offering specific strategies that they employed with

their students. In this section, I offer examples of ways that both pre-service teachers spoke about working with students with special needs in a very abstract manner before they started student teaching. By the second interview, however, a shift in language was noted so that the pre-service teachers were able to share specific strategies of working with students with special needs. Finally, by the interview that was conducted after the student teaching experience, both pre-service teachers were able to give concrete examples of ways that they modified their instruction to work with students with special needs in their classrooms.

*Antoinette shifting from generalities to specifics*

Even though Antoinette was enrolled in the dual endorsement program and was exposed to various opportunities for working with students with special needs before her student teaching experience, in addition to having her own 504 plan in high school, she spoke in general terms during her first interview about the ways that she would work with students with special needs. Antoinette spoke in general terms about how she learned about the thirteen different classifications, but did not specifically offer any strategies that were mentioned during her coursework. Antoinette had more of an abstract understanding of a student with special needs, but was unable to share how she would modify or accommodate the needs of a specific student. She also did not share any strategies that she herself had employed with students in her past interactions with them.

During the second interview conducted halfway through the student teaching experience, Antoinette offered:

In the 1B class, because this is the first class that LaFayette High School has ever had of it, me and my cooperating teacher are creating the curriculum as we teach it. We're picking themes that we think the

students need for Spanish 2 come the fall. We're working off their needs. Some of our assessments are paper and pencil; however, we do oral assessments based on teacher observation. We have assessments for when we use personal white boards with markers where they have to write the vocabulary word in Spanish correctly. At that point, I can see who knows what, check marks in my head or even on a piece of paper, where everybody is, without actually, formally having a paper in front of them.

(Antoinette, second interview, November 21, 2012)

In this instance, Antoinette was able to move from speaking in general terms about the importance of differentiating assessments to describing specific ways that she allows for various assessments of units or topics. Her knowledge base was beginning to grow based on the needs of the students with whom she was working and in consultation with her cooperating teacher.

By the final interview that took place after the student teaching experience, Antoinette understood different strategies for working with students with special needs and shared them with me. For example, she stated:

As a whole, especially in the special education class, those students- the whole class- basically has very similar modifications that need to be met. So as a whole we will modify the curriculum that way. However, if it's one certain student, we'll modify part of it. Maybe they need a word bank on a test. Or if they have a hearing deficiency or can't do the oral part, we accommodate based on the needs of the student in that class. Working or doing partner work, taking it home, giving extra time if there is a word bank, making spelling not count... I got to try and implement each of them and then I decided which ones were effective in my classroom with my students. If one methodology worked for one student, that's something I would continue to work on with that student. If I saw that a methodology didn't work for that student, maybe it would work for another student and not just this one.

(Antoinette, third interview, December 14, 2012)

In this excerpt, Antoinette discussed how she included word banks on assessments, should certain students need that accommodation. She also shared that she gave extra time for assignments or would not count spelling, should that be an accommodation from

which a specific student could benefit. After working with a student using a specific methodology and not seeing results, Antoinette would then try to employ a different strategy to help that student learn.

*Bernadette shifting from generalities to specifics*

Bernadette also grew in the way that she spoke during the initial interview about strategies in working with students with special needs from before she began her student teaching experience to after she had completed working at her placement in Chambly High School. Bernadette was unable to discuss any specific strategies that she had learned for working with students with special needs in her Spanish courses. She briefly mentioned that she had learned about students with special needs and different accommodations and modifications; however, she was unable to share any specific strategies. She, again, spoke in general terms about the abstract possible student with special needs in future classrooms.

During the second interview that was conducted approximately halfway through the student teaching experience, Bernadette was able to share an experience about how she followed directives as set forth in the IEPs of some of her students. Bernadette shared:

As for notebook checks, there were a few students in their IEPs that says that they are not allowed to be penalized for notebook grades, so then those obviously don't have that counted.

(Bernadette, second interview, April 15, 2013)

In this excerpt, Bernadette was sharing a specific accommodation that had to be made for some of her students with special needs in her Spanish classes. She was no longer talking about students with special needs in general, but rather, referencing information from

specific IEPs. It is important to remember that at the beginning of the student teaching experience, Bernadette only had a very basic understanding of IEPs and 504 plans and the impact on the lessons she would create. After approximately seven weeks in her field placement, Bernadette was beginning to speak about the ways that she was using the IEPs of her students to make accommodations for them.

By the final interview that was conducted after the student teaching experience, Bernadette spoke about how she shared with one parent ways that she was making accommodations and modifications for a student in her class. She mentioned:

I have communicated with parents through e-mail. My cooperating teacher would show me the e-mail and then, to prepare me for what I'm going to do when I have my own classroom, she would have me answer it. One parent wanted clarification on an assignment regarding her son's Spanish project, and I was able to share how I was following the accommodations and modifications in his IEP to help him with the project.  
(Bernadette, third interview, May 13, 2013)

In this excerpt, Bernadette had a personal communication with a parent and clarified what she was doing exactly to assist the student according to the accommodations and modifications set forth in his IEP. Before student teaching, she did not have much knowledge of what an IEP was, but now, she was using the document and sharing with a parent how exactly she was accommodating and modifying for a particular student in her class. She had developed knowledge of working with students with special needs through her experiences at Chambly High School student teaching. She transitioned from having a very vague idea of working with students with special needs to consulting IEP documents and employing the accommodations and modifications listed therein.

### **Conclusion**

By comparing and contrasting the cases of both Antoinette and Bernadette in this chapter, it became evident that both of the pre-service teachers did grow in their understanding of working with students with special needs during their time in the pre-service world language teacher preparation program at Baytown University. For Antoinette, much of her growth was founded on her own personal experiences as a student with special needs in high school, in addition to her enrollment in the dual endorsement program in Teaching Students with Disabilities and Spanish education at Baytown. Furthermore, her cooperating teacher for Spanish was one who held strong beliefs in inclusive education and helped her district create special courses – Spanish 1A and Spanish 1B – to assist students with special needs in the world language classroom. The role of the cooperating teacher is one that cannot be understated and one that will be described more in-depth in the implications section of chapter 6 of this dissertation.

In comparison, Bernadette also grew in her understanding of working with students with special needs in the world language classroom. In contrast, however, her growth was based upon her learning to work with the three classified students in her Spanish classes at Chambly High School. She began her student teaching experience with a very limited knowledge of understanding the needs of students with LD in the Spanish classroom. In time, though, she learned to incorporate strategies and methods from the IEPs of her students to aid them in their growth in her Spanish courses. Bernadette did grow in her understanding of working with students with special needs in her Spanish classroom, even though she felt that she could have been more prepared upon graduation.

University teacher preparation programs are only able to prepare pre-service teachers within a finite amount of time while adhering to graduation requirements set by the State Department of Education. The two cases presented in this chapter represent experiences from two students enrolled in either the dual endorsement or single endorsement program at one university in New Jersey. These cases can be compared and contrasted to the experiences of other pre-service teachers graduating from teacher preparation programs by focusing on the ways that they grow in their understanding of working with students with special needs. These cases of both Antoinette and Bernadette can also be viewed in the larger context of the university program and compared to the experiences of recent graduates from the program. The next chapter of this dissertation offers insight into the larger context of these two cases.

## CHAPTER 5

POLICIES AND PRACTICES THAT SHAPE THE WAYS UNIVERSITY MEMBERS  
WORK TO PREPARE PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS AND THE WAYS THAT  
TEACHERS REPORT THAT THEY WERE PREPARED**Introduction**

This chapter describes the policies and practices that shape the ways that university members work to prepare pre-service world language teachers to work with students with special needs. In addition, this chapter describes the ways that pre-service teachers and recent graduates from the teacher education program at Baytown University report that they feel they were prepared to work with students with special needs in the world language classroom. Through an analysis of data collected from interviews, observations, field notes, and university course syllabi, I examine the ways that the university members state that pre-service teachers are prepared, juxtaposed with how the pre-service teachers and recent graduates believe that they were prepared to work with students with special needs in the world languages classroom. The focus of the chapter addresses the second two research questions put forward in this dissertation: “What policies and practices shape the ways that university administrators, professors, and partner schools work to prepare world language teachers to work with students with special needs?”; and “How do recent graduates from a pre-service teacher education program report that they have been prepared to work with students with special needs in their current world language classrooms?” The work that is presented in this chapter is important for teacher educators and university programs that train pre-service world language teachers because it describes the continuities and disconnects that exist between how the university members believe the pre-service teacher program prepares teachers

with the ways that pre-service teachers and recent graduates report that they were prepared.

By comparing and contrasting data collected and analyzed from university administrators, professors, and staff members, with the data collected and analyzed from pre-service teachers and recent graduates from the Baytown University teacher preparation program, I am able to present the findings from two different viewpoints. Whereas chapter four of this dissertation focused on the comparison of two pre-service teachers, this chapter focuses on data collected from all four of the pre-service teachers included in this study supported by information from their cooperating teachers to describe their overall understanding of preparedness as they began teaching. Two of the four pre-service teacher participants - Colette and Élodie - were placed in classrooms with no classified students; therefore, an analysis of their data was not presented earlier in this dissertation. However, data collected from them forms an integral part of the findings of this dissertation because they also, in addition to Antoinette and Bernadette, graduated from Baytown with endorsements in teaching a world language and sought employment in public schools in New Jersey in which they would eventually have students with special needs enrolled in their classrooms.

This chapter focuses on a discussion of three overarching themes that were extrapolated from analysis of the data. The three themes focus on: university coursework and the building of an inclusionary mindset; field placements and partnerships for growth and development of pre-service teachers, and overall preparedness at the end of student teaching with suggestions for more concrete teaching experiences. Each theme is detailed and explained according to the ways that the university members believed they

were preparing pre-service world language teachers to work with students with special needs, juxtaposed with the statements that the pre-service teachers and recent graduates, themselves, made. I then present a discussion considering the expectation and realities of coursework, the role of the site supervisor, and a call for earlier field experiences by the pre-service teachers. The chapter ends with concluding remarks about the overall pre-service teacher preparation program at Baytown University regarding world language teachers and working with students with special needs.

#### **Baytown University world language teacher preparation program**

The university teacher preparation program at Baytown University was led by a Dean and an Associate Dean. As part of the data collection to inquire the ways in which the university administrators, professors, and staff members collaborated, I had the opportunity to interview the Associate Dean of the Baytown University School of Education, Dr. Philips. Furthermore, I also had the opportunity to interview the chairperson of the Department of World Languages, Dr. Harris, and the chairperson of the Department of Social Services, Professor Brown. Finally, I was fortunate to interview the director of field placements, Mrs. Dubois in addition to field supervisors, Dr. Lansing and Mr. Francis. Table 4 (p. 62) provides condensed information regarding the university administrators, professors, and staff members who participated in this research.

Over the course of the two-year data collection for this dissertation, there were four pre-service teachers from whom I collected data through interviews and observations. Table 3 (p. 59) presents information about the pre-service teachers, their language of concentration, field placement school, cooperating teacher, and semester of

student teaching. Finally, this chapter includes information gathered from four recent graduates and current practitioners from Baytown University's teacher preparation program. Table 6 (p. 64) lists the names of the four current practitioners and their date of graduation. It is important to mention that Antoinette and Élodie, both pre-service teachers who provided data from student teaching, also provided data from a fourth interview after graduation and during their first teaching assignments. This chapter draws on data analyzed from each of the aforementioned administrators, professors, staff members, pre-service teachers, cooperating teachers, and recent graduates who are current teachers to answer the research questions put forth in this dissertation.

*University coursework and the building of an inclusionary mindset*

Through an analysis of the data collected from interviews at Baytown University, I recognized that the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) credit requirements shaped the ways that pre-service teachers were prepared to work with students with special needs in the world language classroom. State requirements can prompt local collaboration at the university level as faculty work to meet new requirements. However, those requirements may also limit collaboration by providing maximum credit caps. As a result, state policy meant to prompt curricular integration may also hinder interdisciplinary collaboration. In one instance, the course Gen Ed 101 was created at Baytown to introduce pre-service teachers to working with both students with special needs and English Language Learners (ELLs) because of a limit of education course requirement that any student could have before graduating from a university education program. For example, Dr. Harris reported:

[Gen Ed 101] was created for both areas in one course because the State didn't allow the education program to exceed 30 credits. It's very problematic for us and we can only afford to squeeze out three credits to cover both ESL issues and Special Education issues. 80% of the course covers special education issues and 20% of the course covers ESL. Oh my goodness, we are squeezing the stuff into that course because you can imagine how much we have to put.

(Dr. Harris, first interview, April 12, 2011)

In this instance, Dr. Harris felt that the university had to "squeeze" three credits into the program for students to be introduced to working with diverse learners. Therefore, because the education program could not exceed 30 credits, the university decided to create the Gen Ed 101 course to introduce all pre-service teachers to working with both students with special needs and ELLs. The NJDOE credit requirement was one reason for the creation of the course and a policy that was guiding the collaboration between the world languages and special education departments.

Professor Brown shared in the sentiment that a reason for the creation of the Gen Ed 101 course under the umbrella term "diversity" was because of the credit requirements. She offered:

Two people from special education and two people from regular education got together and they made a decision that they would focus on [Gen Ed 101] and the point of it was to lower the number of credits required for the degree.

(Professor Brown, interview, June 2, 2011)

In this instance, Professor Brown was cognizant of the overall number of credits for the education program at Baytown and described that four department members gathered to decide how to balance the requirements but still touch upon each area required by the NJDOE. The outcome was to focus on discussing diverse learners in the Gen Ed 101

course while having the professors still feel confident that pre-service teachers were being exposed to methods for working with students with special needs and ELLs.

The university administrators and professors realized that pre-service teachers needed to be introduced to working with students with a multitude of abilities in general education classrooms. Through conversations with Dr. Harris, she explained the overall goals that guided the creation of the course. She stated:

That course was created five or six years ago when we were revising the program. I developed the course by the request of our dean. I knew nothing about special education. That was not my training, but I thought that this task was good, so I worked with a professor from special education. It's supposed to be an introductory-level course; because that's the first time the students encountered the topic of Special Education within the mainstream classroom. We're not talking about Special Education teachers in [special education]. We're talking about general education teachers who are going to deal with the students that they are given. So that's the purpose of the course, so it's really at the introductory level.

(Dr. Harris, first interview, April 12, 2011)

The introductory-level course was one in which students were to be given an overview of working with students with special needs and ELLs. Since Dr. Harris had no formal previous training in understanding ways to work with students with special needs, she collaborated with a colleague from the special education department. The course was to focus on pre-service teachers' understanding how to work with students with special needs and on creating an inclusionary mindset for working in general education classrooms. The overall goal of the course was to make pre-service teachers comfortable with understanding how to work with students with LD and English Language Learners, even though that might not necessarily be the end result that the pre-service teachers shared when asked about their overall preparation in terms of coursework.

When Dr. Harris collaborated with a member from the department of special education, they both needed to agree upon learner outcomes for the course. The learner outcomes would include the overall goals for the course and describe what the pre-service teachers would be able to understand and do in working with students with special needs by the end of the course. Dr. Harris mentioned:

At the time, the special education professor gave me the learner outcomes that she would like the students to be able to get out of this course. Of course, I have my list of learner outcomes for the ESL part. So I basically put two sets of learner outcomes together and then she gave me the textbook that she would like our students to use.

(Dr. Harris, first interview, April 12, 2011)

Dr. Harris was charged with combining the two sets of learner outcomes so that they would be explained in an appropriate manner throughout the course of the semester.

Furthermore, Dr. Harris created the assessments to demonstrate that the pre-service teachers had an appropriate understanding of each individual learner outcome.

By the end of Gen Ed 101, pre-service teachers were expected to have an understanding of the particular needs of working with students with special needs and ELLs. The syllabus from the course described, more specifically that pre-service teachers would be able to:

a. Explain the purpose of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) in the provision of special education services, the process by which it is formulated, and the personnel involved in its development and enactment. **To be assessed as follows:** class and focused discussion.

b. Analyze disabilities from multi-disciplinary [i.e. world language], cultural and family perspectives and explore the impact of family involvement (parent roles and rights) on special education services). **To be assessed as follows:** class discussion and research article review.

c. Discuss the impact of disability and limited English proficiency on instruction and explore effective instructional practices in inclusive

classrooms. **To be assessed as follows:** small group discussion, student led forum, discussion notes, research paper.

d. Design and develop instructional plans that a) integrate language and content learning in a chosen content area and grade level; b) identify pre-instructional status of the learners so as to address the needs of ESL/LEP, special education, and all other students in the same classroom; c) embrace New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards; d) emphasize academic literacy skills development. **To be assessed as follows:** lesson plan project.

(Gen Ed 101 course syllabus, Fall 2012)

The four aforementioned learner outcomes focused specifically on understanding the purpose and creation of IEPs, working with students with special needs in specific content areas, discussing the impact of disability on ELLs by designing and developing instructional plans for teaching students with special needs in the world languages classroom. From the point of view of the university professors and administrators, these were the important issues that pre-service teachers needed to understand first, before continuing coursework and eventually beginning the student teaching experience. However, as will be presented later in this chapter, the learner outcomes put forward in the syllabus did not always match the learner outcomes as described by the pre-service teachers.

Another goal of the Gen Ed 101 course was for pre-service teachers to build an inclusionary mindset for working in general education classroom settings. Since this course was situated early in the sequence of coursework for pre-service teachers, Dr. Harris wanted to be very clear that university students understood that learners come to the classroom with a wide range of abilities. She shared:

Basically we are telling our candidates, if you want to be a picky teacher and say I don't want students [with special needs] because I'm not prepared to work with them, or I don't want that student because I am not

trained, then this is not the profession for them. We tell the students at the beginning of the program. Student population is a given, you don't argue or negotiate there. So you have to understand the reality. If that is what you are ok with, then let's continue. If not, you have to rethink [your placement in this education program].

(Dr. Harris, first interview, April 12, 2011)

Dr. Harris spoke frankly when she shared that there was no room for negotiation in teaching the students that are given to teachers in any particular course. She was very clear that teachers were expected to work with all of their students and if they were not prepared to do so that they should rethink their careers in the field of education. Her sentiments lay the groundwork for helping pre-service teachers understand that students come to the classroom with a wide array of abilities and backgrounds, and that the teacher must work to meet all of their needs, whether they are based in English language acquisition or in a learning disability. She was stating that teachers need to be mindful of all students included in their classrooms.

Again, Dr. Harris was responsible for creating the learner outcomes and assessments to demonstrate the understanding of the learner outcomes on the part of the pre-service teachers by the end of the semester. The following four learner outcomes were specified directly in the course syllabus for Gen Ed 101 from the Fall 2012 semester at Baytown University relating to developing an inclusionary mindset in the classroom.

By the end of the course, the pre-service teachers would be able to:

- a. Explore the broad meaning and instructional implications of multicultural education in an inclusive educational setting. **To be assessed as follows:** analysis of cultural knowledge assignment, class discussion.
- b. Identify mandated components of federal and state legislation specific to ELL support and disabilities and special education services. **To be assessed as follows:** class and focused discussion.

c. Describe the continuum of services available as placement options for individuals with disabilities. **To be assessed as follows:** class and focused discussion, and research article review.

d. Identify characteristics and causes of exceptionalities (e.g. mental retardation, learning disability, sensory impairments, multiple disabilities, etc.). **To be assessed as follows:** class discussion and research article review.

(Gen Ed 101 course syllabus, Fall 2012)

The four aforementioned learner outcomes focused specifically on exploring the meaning and impact of multiculturalism in the classroom, understanding federal and state mandates for supporting students with special needs and ELLs in mainstream classrooms, describing continuum of services for students in mainstream classrooms, and identifying characteristics and causes of exceptionalities. Again, However, as will be presented later in this chapter, the learner outcomes put forward in the syllabus did not always match the learner outcomes as described by the pre-service teachers.

Dr. Harris shared that the Gen Ed 101 course overall was one to help students learn general strategies for working with students with special needs. The pre-service teachers would be able to gain experience in specific strategies once they began their student teaching experience. She wanted them to be equipped with knowing which resources to turn to when students with special needs enrolled in their future classrooms.

She shared:

We don't require students to memorize the characteristics. That's not realistic. But we want the students to be able to reference, to be able to find information once they get students with this kind of special need. They know where to look for information. I think the students reasonably, most of the candidates, can do that, you know, when they get into their methods courses. They go into the classroom; they identify the few kids they would like to focus on for their projects. They could go back to their textbooks, to all the references and materials to think about what this kind of kid, what kind of issues, you know. So this is at the more theoretical

level. Some generic strategies, ok, and then they try to use some of the generic strategies for their description of the accommodation/modification.  
(Dr. Harris, second interview, May 6, 2011)

Here, Dr. Harris – professor of world languages at Baytown – understood that it was not possible to have students memorize the characteristics of all of the learning disabilities, but she did share that she wanted students to be able to use reference materials to work with the students placed in their future classrooms. The stress on knowing where to gather materials was one that was important for her.

According to the data shared by the pre-service teachers, only Antoinette and her cooperating teacher believed that she was prepared to work with students with special needs in the world language classroom based on the coursework that she took at Baytown University. Antoinette was enrolled in the program that led to endorsements in both Teaching Students with Disabilities and teaching Spanish. Antoinette shared:

I do feel that I am prepared to work with students with special needs, especially after my student teaching experience. I feel like this past semester I worked with so many different types of students with all different needs. I got to see who, what, and how I need to meet their needs in the classroom. I have a different outlook on it rather than just reading it out of a book. I got to implement it. Whereas, some other people may not have had such a wide diversity of needs.

(Antoinette, personal communication, December 14, 2012)

Here, Antoinette did feel as if she was exposed to working with a wide range of students and was afforded the flexibility to implement differentiated strategies for working with her students. Likewise, Antoinette's cooperating teacher Jeannine shared:

She's been working with [students with special needs]. Four of the five classes that she taught were special needs. She's very prepared. It's always going to be a learning situation because we have students with different needs. Each student is an individual. But I think that she's as prepared as she's going to be at this point.

(Jeannine, personal communication, December 19, 2012)

Since Antoinette was enrolled in the dual endorsement program and was placed in a classroom with students with special needs, she was able to draw on what she had learned in her coursework and her experiences at LaFayette High School. According to both Jeannine and Antoinette, this helped Antoinette feel prepared to work with specialized groups of students with specific learning needs in her Spanish classroom.

In contrast to Antoinette's focus on working with students with special needs in the general education classroom, the remaining three pre-service teachers did not believe that they were prepared or felt that they could have been better prepared to work with students with special needs in the world language classroom based on their coursework.

First, Bernadette shared:

I think that I could be more prepared. I think that, to a certain extent, I've been introduced to modifications and things like that, but I think that every teacher who hasn't been trained in teaching students with special needs could definitely benefit from getting that specific training. I remember I took a class...they touched on [special education] in classes at Baytown, but I never would really...I never had a class specifically for that.

(Bernadette, third interview, May 13, 2013)

Bernadette felt as if she could have been better prepared and that the one class that she took, Gen Ed 101, slightly exposed her to understanding working with students with special needs, but she did not remember ever taking a class specifically about working with students with special needs. Even though the university placed a large stress on having students understand working with students with special needs according to content-area, Bernadette did not feel as if she was fully prepared and that she could have been more prepared by the time she was ready to graduate from Baytown.

Second, Colette – a pre-service teacher enrolled in the single endorsement program - completed her pre-service student teaching experience in a private school with no students that were classified as having special needs. The interaction that we had about understanding special education just before she started student teaching was one that highlighted her understanding of special education at that point. The interaction included the following statements:

**David Greer:** Do you know what the term IEP means?

**Colette:** I what? IRP?

**David Greer:** IEP. Did you talk about that in your coursework?

**Colette:** No. I don't know that.

**David Greer:** How about a section 504 plan?

**Colette:** 5 or 4?

**David Greer:** 504. Have you talked about either of those terms in your classes?

**Colette:** I think that they probably taught us, but I really don't know many things like that. I think they have talked about it. I can't remember.  
(Colette, first interview, February 1, 2013)

Colette had also taken the Gen Ed 101 course offered by Baytown University as part of graduation requirements; however, it was clear that she was unable to demonstrate the learner outcomes that the university had maintained that students would demonstrate before graduation. Furthermore, at the end of the student teaching experience, I was able to speak with Colette's cooperating teacher, Marie. In response to the question, "How prepared, specifically, do you believe that Colette is for working with students with special needs?" she offered:

**Marie:** I'm not trained in that area, the special needs area. I don't think that she is either. Even though I do have three students who have ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) in my sixth grade and there's a specialist at school who sent over some documents about the students, their behavior, and what I can do to help them.

**David Greer:** Did you share those documents with your cooperating teacher?

**Marie:** No, because they are confidential.

**David Greer:** Did she have those students in her classes?

**Marie:** Yes.

(Marie, second interview, April 30, 2013)

Here, Marie also shared in Colette's sentiment that she did not have more than a novice understanding of working with students with special needs. However, I learned from the cooperating teacher that there were three students who were diagnosed with ADHD that Colette did not know about in her classes because the information was not shared with her due to concerns for confidentiality.

Since Colette did not have any students with special needs in her classroom, according to the information that she had, I asked her to then share her own experiences in coursework and understanding to work with students with special needs in the world language classroom. She offered:

[The professors] didn't really say in foreign language. They would just say, there are some kind of unique learning issues, so we read the textbook and then the professors talked about each one assigned with a chapter to have a better understanding of the issue and then everybody has a lot of different presentations about the issues you learned. That's basically it.

(Colette, third interview, May 13, 2013)

Colette did not have more than a novice understanding of working with students with special needs and did not have exposure to understanding IEPs or 504 plans from either her course work or her field placement. The most poignant statement that she shared when asked if she felt prepared to work with students with special needs in her Chinese classroom was one based on her future classroom. She shared:

I think I'm kind of prepared, yes. Because I took classes and I understand, not all, but most of the special needs things, and also I believe that if I do have them, probably yes, I will collaborate with the specialist and also I will seek help from other teachers. Also, if I can't do that, I can always go

to the internet. It has everything that I need. I can just google online what should I do.

(Colette, third interview, May 13, 2013)

Colette was relying on the use of the internet to gather the information that she would need for working with students with special needs in her future classroom. While the internet does include much information that teachers can draw on for learning to work with students, Colette's response demonstrated that she did not gain an academic understanding of working with students with special needs either from her coursework at Baytown University or in her field placement. Her response stands in stark comparison to when Dr. Harris explicitly stated that students would know where to pull reference materials from after taking the Gen Ed 101 course. Furthermore, Colette's response diminishes the value of finding formalized data and knowledge about teaching students with LD. For her, the internet could provide all of the answers she needed, but the question of the reliability and validity of the information she might find from various sources remains a large question.

Finally, Élodie –a pre-service teacher enrolled in the singular endorsement program- and her cooperating teacher shared in the sentiment of not feeling adequately prepared to work with students with special needs in the world languages classroom.

Élodie revealed:

We went over certain things like autism and different things like that and how to use a paraprofessional and in-class support to help you. And then, the only thing that I didn't really learn too much of was the IEPs...I don't know much about how to read them. We had a sample one from a professor's child, he needed an IEP. But I wasn't really sure where to begin on how to read it and what's important. I don't know much about the differences in autism and ADHD and all those things.

(Élodie, first interview, September 25, 2012)

Here, Élodie referred specifically to Dr. Harris's Gen Ed 101 section in which she shared her son's IEP with the pre-service teachers to have them start to understand the document. Even though she remembered the activity in which Dr. Harris shared the IEP, she was unsure exactly how to read one or incorporate one into her class lessons.

Furthermore, her cooperating teacher offered:

[I feel that she is] not prepared. I don't think that's something that she had any training for in school and she's been working with me and I don't have any. I have maybe two kids and they do well in the class anyway. From my own experience, I don't think she's necessarily prepared for that.  
(Nicole, second interview, December 20, 2012)

Nicole agreed with Élodie's assessment that she did not feel prepared to work with students with special needs and that she also did not gain much experience in working in her classroom since there are only two students with IEPs who did well generally.

Pre-service teachers, specifically those enrolled in the program that led to a singular endorsement like the three described above, shared that they did not feel as if they were learning any specific strategies for working with students with special needs and that the topics were introduced according to more generalities. The claims of the pre-service teachers can be underscored with the data gathered from the two observations that were completed of the Gen Ed 101 course before they began their student teaching experiences. For example, both sections of the course led by Professors Davis and King included information shared in lecture style. Both sections also included student presentations in which the pre-service teachers were responsible for leading a discussion on a chapter that was assigned in the syllabus. None of the presentations observed offered specific strategies for working with students with special needs, but rather offered basic and general statements about what pre-service teachers might be faced with in their

future classrooms (Gen Ed 101 Section 01 observation, field notes, November 7, 2012). It is important to share however, that the pre-service teachers were not all fully engaged in the discussion with the professor and were observed talking to classmates or using their mobile phones as indicated in my field notes. The material was presented, but the pre-service teachers were not paying attention (Gen Ed 101 Section 02 observation, field notes, November 9, 2012).

*Field placements and partnerships for growth and development of pre-service teachers*

A crucial part of any traditional teacher preparation program is the culminating student teaching experience that takes place away from the college campus and in a public or private school. Even though Levine (2006) purports that it is clear that there is no such thing as a typical teacher preparation program, most traditional programs include a student teaching experience in a field placement school. At Baytown University, one person was responsible for placing all pre-service teachers in school districts to help them grow in their understanding of the teaching profession. Pugach & Blanton (2009) maintain in their framework for conducting research on special education and content-area pre-service programs that field placements and preK-12 partnerships play an important role in preparing teachers to work with students. At Baytown, the director of field placements was Mrs. Dubois and she was charged with placing pre-service teachers in local classrooms of school districts so that they could gain experiences and fulfill the credit requirements for graduation.

Through analysis of the data gathered from an interview with Mrs. Dubois, I identified two points that illuminate the ways that the placement policies and practices shape the learning experiences that students have in the pre-service program at Baytown

University – diversity in field placements prior to the student teaching experience and the encouragement of adding multiple endorsements before graduation. The data suggests that a stress was placed on the diversity of experiences that pre-service teachers were exposed to during their time at the university. Mrs. Dubois detailed:

We look for diversity in all things, as much as we possibly can. The NJ certification for our world language graduates will be K-12, so we do look at trying to give our students as many grade levels, for example, elementary, middle, high school, as we possibly can. I do go into the previous database to see where they have been placed and also when we ask our students to put together a resume where we want them to include their early field, so I piece it together from a few places. We're looking at socioeconomically – a range of districts in trying to do that. If they feel that they would like to be in an urban district ultimately, for employment versus suburban or more rural they can make the requests. We would like our students to have as varied a background as possible. We think that prepares them. They're supposed to be being prepared to educate all students in all types of communities. We take that into consideration that they shouldn't be placed in very similar situations over time.

(Mrs. Dubois, interview, September 6, 2012)

In this instance, Mrs. Dubois shared a few points that she attempted to keep in mind regarding diversity when making student teaching placements. One way that she looked to provide diversity was exposing pre-service teachers to working with various ages of students. Next, she attempted to allow for diversity in the socioeconomic realities of the schools in which she placed pre-service teachers. Finally, she endeavored to allow for urban, suburban, and rural placements, often upon the requests of the pre-service teachers. Mrs. Dubois shared that she wanted to allow students to have input into the student teaching assignment, but she also wanted to ensure that they had previous observation or junior field experiences in various school districts through part of their coursework and credit requirements. Working with the department chairpersons, Mrs. Dubois also looked to place students with an appropriate cooperating teacher or teachers

depending upon enrollment in the single or dual endorsement program. However, as will be presented in the discussion of this chapter, the pre-service teachers almost unanimously called for earlier field experiences and opportunities to work with students.

Next, Mrs. Dubois shared that she enjoyed the challenge of finding the appropriate placement for pre-service teachers seeking dual endorsements upon the completion of their program at Baytown. She offered:

We encourage all of students to have as many endorsements as possible....to be better teachers and because it's such a difficult market out there.

(Mrs. Dubois, interview, September 6, 2012)

In this instance, Mrs. Dubois shared that she realized the importance of having more than one endorsement upon graduation to assist candidates in attaining a teaching position in a competitive job market. By helping students gain experience in working in diverse settings, Mrs. Dubois was attempting to have students exposed to many different types of schools as possible to help them in their future careers. This was one practice in which she encouraged pre-service teachers to add on an endorsement in working with students with disabilities in addition to their content area specialization. Likewise, Dr. Harris mentioned the importance of having more than one endorsement. She stated, "In terms of special education, we encourage our students to take an endorsement, it's really to help the candidates to become more marketable" (Dr. Harris, first interview, April 12, 2011). Therefore, while being enrolled in the dual endorsement program was not required, it was highly recommended because of the extra preparation it provided to pre-service teachers before they began their student teaching experiences in addition to the benefit of being more marketable to public schools upon graduation.

Another link between the university and partner schools was identified as the site supervisors who worked in the field observing the students teachers throughout their student teaching experience in partner school classrooms. Baytown University employed two different site supervisors during the two-year period that I was collecting data from pre-service teachers. One supervisor, Dr. Lansing, was also the educational methodologies professor for the Baytown University World Languages department. She shared that she enjoyed being able to do the site observations of pre-service teachers because many of them were her students during the courses that they took at Baytown and she enjoyed seeing the ways that they had grown during their time at the university. The other supervisor, Mr. Francis, was employed during semesters when Dr. Lansing could not complete all of the observations because of other requirements of her position in the Baytown University World Languages department. These two site supervisors provided a vital link between the university and the partner schools because they were able to meet partner school administrators in person.

The site supervisors were responsible for completing five observations of the pre-service teachers during the course of their student teaching assignments and for providing them with feedback. In addition, the site supervisors gathered information about the pre-service teachers regarding teaching practices from surveys and interviews with the cooperating teachers. When I asked Dr. Lansing what she focused on during observation of pre-service world language teachers, she stated:

I look for continuity from my methods course to implementation into the language classroom. I strongly advocate the communicative method of teaching a second language and the ACTFL 5C's. It is very important that the students understand how to utilize this methodology effectively in their language classes. I also think that classroom management is important

and that the student learns strategies to implement into the classroom for behavior and special needs students.

(Dr. Lansing, interview, November 7, 2013)

Dr. Lansing shared that she did not specifically look for the ways that the pre-service teachers worked with students with special needs in the world language classroom. However, her background in second language learning and teaching is one that was beneficial to the pre-service world language teachers and a topic that is discussed in the discussion section of this chapter. Dr. Lansing had been part of the conversations during the creation of the Gen Ed 101 course and was part of the NCATE process at Baytown University; therefore, she was aware of the fact that pre-service teachers needed to work with students with special needs.

Mr. Francis, however, was not part of the NCATE process or creation of the Gen Ed 101 course at Baytown, and he did not mention that he looked for the ways that pre-service teachers met the needs of students with special needs in the world language classroom. He stated:

The first thing I want to see during an observation is good classroom management. Without good classroom management nothing can be done. I want to hear the students communicate in the target language. The cooperating teacher and student teacher must create a fertile atmosphere of risk taking, vulnerability, and intuition.

(Mr. Francis, interview, May 24, 2013)

When prodded specifically about the ways that he provided feedback for pre-service teachers in working with students with special needs, Mr. Francis said that he did not comment on that area during his conversations with student teachers. He shared that it was an area in which he did not feel comfortable sharing feedback and one that he felt should be left to specialists in that area.

The role that the site supervisor plays in the development of pre-service teachers is one that should not be overlooked in the entire teacher preparation paradigm. Kissau & Algozzine (2013) posit that the background of the site supervisor is one that is of utmost importance in training world language teachers. The researchers suggest that the pre-service teachers should be receiving appropriate feedback from their supervisors regarding second language methodology. Regardless of the belief of inclusion on the part of the cooperating teacher, the pre-service teachers and recent graduates will be held accountable for meeting the needs of all students in the classroom. Dr. Lansing shared:

I think that I am very fortunate to teach the world language methods class and to have the opportunity to follow through with my students into the classroom as a supervisor. It becomes difficult at times when the cooperating teacher/administrator is not familiar with our advocated methodology and still pushes translation or mostly English spoken with paradigms stressed in the foreign language classroom. This disconnect is difficult to deal with for all involved, although not insurmountable. It is refreshing to be in districts that embrace communicative teaching and hire trained teachers that can effectively demonstrate knowledge of TPR, TPR Storytelling, visuals, gaming, info-gap exercises, and interactive group activities. More importantly the knowledge of the five C's and their incorporation into the language classroom, especially Culture, which should be integrated into every lesson and not just on Fridays!

(Dr. Lansing, interview, November 7, 2013)

Here, Dr. Lansing stated her belief in the important role that the site supervisor plays in the overall development of the pre-service teacher. She mentioned that role of the supervisor was particularly important if the cooperating teacher was one who did not include contemporary methods for second language teaching and learning, but rather, relied on more traditional methods of language instruction. Dr. Lansing believed that in situations where the cooperating teacher was more traditional in his/her practice, it was the role of the site supervisor to guide the pre-service teacher in using the methods that

were taught in the coursework at Baytown and incorporate them into the classroom. She felt that both inclusionary practices and contemporary language teaching strategies should be observed in the classrooms of the student teacher and when they were not, that it was the role of the site supervisor to provide appropriate feedback.

In the cases of teachers that had either Dr. Lansing or Mr. Francis as their site supervisors, feedback was not necessarily included regarding working with students with special needs because neither of the observers had backgrounds in that particular area. However, it should be noted that, in the case of Baytown, both of the site supervisors did have a background in second language teaching and learning. As Kissau & Algozzine (2013) report, site supervisors having a background in the content area is not always the case in university pre-service teacher programs. For example, supervisors with a background in mathematics or science could be responsible for supervising pre-service world language teachers. The researchers call for more site supervisors to have backgrounds in the content areas that they are observing. In the case of Baytown, all of the pre-service world language teachers were observed by supervisors with a background in second language teaching and learning. Though Baytown's use of site supervisors with a background in second language learning and teaching was an overall strength, my findings suggest that supervisors should be trained in the range of goals they want students to achieve, specifically working with students with LD. If pre-service teachers are exposed to working with students with LD and are provided feedback from site supervisors on the ways that they are using inclusionary practices, the teachers might report a greater sense of ability to work with students with LD in the world language classroom.

*Overall preparedness and suggestions for more concrete teaching experiences*

Dr. Harris, the chair of the Baytown University World Language education department at Baytown University, was very clear in her understanding of how the students in her program were prepared to work with students with special needs and diverse learners. She was the person who initially developed the syllabus for the Gen Ed 101 course at Baytown that all students were required to take, focusing on working with diverse learners. Since she created the course, collaborated with her colleagues in the special education department, and taught the course, her insights into the overall teacher preparation program were very clear. She had access to the surveys that pre-service teachers completed after student teaching and analyzed that data in relation to student preparation. She shared:

For whatever reason, the students according to the survey coming back from student teaching and from the exit survey, the students, they are weak in both areas. Working with linguistically diverse populations and with students with special needs. Somehow they do better with special needs students. According to the survey from the students. I think it has something to do with the fact that most of the faculty members, they are not experts; nevertheless, they know more about special education than they do about ESL.

(Dr. Harris, second interview, May 6, 2011)

The students self-reported that they were weak in working with both students with special needs and ELLs after their coursework and student teaching experiences. Personally, Dr. Harris felt that they were more prepared for working with students with special needs than ELLs and attributed this to the fact that the professors who taught Gen Ed 101 had more of a solid background in teaching special education rather than in English as a Second Language. Nonetheless, the data from student surveys that she had at her disposal demonstrated that students were weak in their understanding of working with

students with special needs, particularly in the world language classroom upon the completion of their student teaching experience.

Dr. Harris continued to explain in which areas, overall, the students were best and least prepared for working with students with special needs.

My students are very good at this generic/basic things that they should be able to provide. But I think the weak area should be at the level of modifying the tasks themselves. It's not the way how to do it, but it's not accommodations. I think our students are good at accommodations, not modifications. I think it has something to do with the professors, including me, because I feel so pressured by time. I don't feel that I have enough time to get into that kind of detail. It has something to do with the program itself.

(Dr. Harris, second interview, May 6, 2011)

Dr. Harris understood the shortcomings of the program because of the timeline set by credit requirements. She knew that because of the short amount of time that the program had before students started student teaching, the professors had to decide what to include in the courses keeping to the learner outcomes set forth in the course syllabi.

In addition to the program being limited by maximum credit requirements by the NJDOE, Dr. Harris was also concerned about the types of field placements that the pre-service teachers would be placed in. She felt that many of the world language candidates would not have the opportunity to be placed in classrooms with in-class support teachers.

I think that the struggle is really our students don't really get the opportunities to see that happen in the field. Quite often in the foreign language classroom, there is no in-class support.

(Dr. Harris, second interview, May 6, 2011)

She shared that she would have liked to see pre-service teachers exposed to working in in-class support settings, but she did not believe that many of them existed. Just as McKenzie (2009) upheld that special education teachers prepared in traditional education

programs should have some exposure to various models of collaborative teaching, Dr. Harris was advocating for world language teachers to have exposure to various models of collaborative teaching in the world language classroom.

Phyllis, a recent graduate from Baytown's single endorsement program who was currently teaching, shared that she did not believe that she was prepared for working with students with special needs in the world languages classroom. She felt that she was prepared more from her experiences as a first-year teacher than she was as a pre-service student teacher. She stated:

Well last year in my first year teaching, four out of my five [classes] were with an in-class support. I feel as if even though student teaching didn't quite prepare me for that, I definitely learned a lot more last year working with that than I did with my student teaching. No... It was more theory that was learned...

(Phyllis, interview, December 28, 2012)

Phyllis did not feel prepared for teaching with an in-class support teacher and the majority of her classes the previous year included an in-class support teacher. Her understanding of teaching and working with an in-class support teacher, therefore, came from her experiences during her first year teaching, and not during her program at Baytown. Whereas, Dr. Harris did not believe that pre-service teachers would need to work in in-class support classrooms, Phyllis' case stood in stark contrast to that belief. During her first position, four of the five classes that she taught were ones with an in-class support teacher.

The ideas of overall preparedness and suggestions for specific strategies or experiences to be included in the program above were all based on data from the view of world language professors and teachers. However, Professor Brown, the

chairperson of the Special Education department also shared her thoughts on the ways that pre-service teachers were prepared and gave suggestions as to what she would have like seen included in the program. She mentioned:

I think a literacy component needs to be integrated a little bit more in the coursework for special education teachers, so that it would be a true understanding of the development of language and then the acquisition of the language as it pertains to each culture. So that would be my emphasis and then added to that the dimension of disability. Because I think communication for the disabled takes many different roads. Whereas communication for the child who is an English Language Learner is a little bit different. So I think it has to be two pronged. Personally, and I don't know if it's even feasible, I would like to see them have more experience with severe disabilities. The difficulty there is that it's very disruptive for that population.

(Professor Brown, interview, June 2, 2011)

Professor Brown's statement about wanting to introduce pre-service teachers to working with students with severe needs was one that Pugach & Blanton (2009) noted. The researchers maintain that important characteristic of a merged program is that the special education endorsement is typically restricted to mild and moderate disabilities and does not usually include work with students with severe and profound disabilities or students with sensory disabilities. Antoinette echoed the suggestion from Professor Brown when she shared her views on working with students with low-frequency disabilities once she had graduated from Baytown and had been teaching in her first job:

I wish I had more experience maybe with different types of students because I do have a lot of...I was able to work with ADHD and SLD, but I think it would have been beneficial for me to work with students maybe who were really on the lower level of the Autism spectrum or maybe students with hearing disabilities or sight disabilities.

(Antoinette, fourth interview, May 7, 2013)

Therefore, both the university professors and Antoinette maintained that they would to have liked to have had more exposure to working with students with low-frequency disabilities, but that having the opportunity to do so was not necessarily possible. Even though Antoinette felt that she was prepared overall to work with students with special needs, she would have liked to have had more exposure to working with certain students with low-incidence disabilities to help prepare her for her teaching career. However, Professor Brown's point about the challenge of providing placements that will help pre-service teachers and not hinder the students with LD was one that would be difficult to work around due to the time constraints of the pre-service program.

The pre-service teachers who participated in this research, in addition to the recent graduates who graduated from Baytown who participated in this research, shared the ways that they felt that they were prepared, or not prepared, to work with students with special needs from their experiences at Baytown. Antoinette drew from her experiences in her special education courses at Baytown to incorporate specific strategies in her classroom for working with students with special needs. She shared:

In my special education classes [at Baytown] I learned a lot about methodologies that need to be implemented. After reading them, deciding, and analyzing them and thinking about which ones I feel would work best in my classroom, I got to try and implement each of them and then I decided which ones were effective in my classroom with my students. If one methodology worked for one student, that's something I would continue to work on with that student. If I saw that a methodology didn't work for that student, maybe it would work for another student and not just this one.

(Antoinette, third interview, December 14, 2012)

Antoinette was able to take the information that she had learned in her special education courses at Baytown and apply the strategies to working with her students at LaFayette

High School, particularly those with special needs in her Spanish 1A and 1B courses. She had the opportunity to choose different strategies based on methodology and apply them to differentiate her instruction based on student needs in her Spanish classes. Her experience in understanding different learning needs of students based on her dual endorsement helped her begin using different methodologies during her student teaching experience, rather than only attempting to do so after graduation in her own classroom.

Bernadette felt that she would have liked to have had more ‘hands-on’ experiences in working with students with special needs in the world languages classroom before beginning her student teaching experience. When asked how she felt that her coursework at Baytown prepared her for her student teaching experience, she described:

I think it helped to a certain extent, but I definitely think that I could have been way more prepared. I think the best way to get prepared for something like that is to get put into the classroom and do, not so much observation hours, but actually teach lessons. Throughout my four years at Baytown, I taught one lesson.

(Bernadette, third interview, May 13, 2013)

Prior to student teaching, Bernadette had only had the opportunity to teach one lesson. She did, however, have the opportunity to observe other classrooms; although, she did not feel that the observations truly prepared her for working with students during her student teaching experience. Even though she was enrolled in Baytown’s teacher education program, she only taught one discreet lesson before beginning her student teaching at Chambly High School.

Colette –a pre-service teacher enrolled in the singular endorsement program- did not have any students with special needs in her Chinese classes as part of her student

teaching experience, so I asked her what she believed her future classroom would look like and the ways that she would differentiate her lessons to include students with special needs in her classroom. She responded:

First of all, I will get to know the students because every student has different abilities and they have different ways of learning. I need to get to them and I need to get to know them. I will have the same expectations, but I will help them to reach it, like in different strategies and different ways. Some faster, some slower, some need visual help and assistance, some probably have behavior issues. I will adjust according to help them learn. I think there will be especially for the school district, I will talk to them more often to have the best accommodation plan for the students. Sometimes I'll have to have IEP...I will collaborate with the specialist also I will seek help from other teachers. Also, if I can't do that, I can always go to the internet. It has everything that I need.

(Colette, third interview, May 13, 2013)

Colette described that she would make use of a special education specialist at her future school and that she would collaborate with other teachers. Collaborating with colleagues would be a helpful way for her to learn about differentiating for her students; however, she would be entering her classroom having had minimal exposure in understanding how to work with students with special needs and no exposure to working with them in her student teaching placement. Her dependence on using the internet to gather sources is a convenient way to find much information; however, the credibility of the sources and appropriateness of the materials that she might find causes reason for concern. By the end of her student teaching experience, Colette was only able to offer very general statements regarding strategies for working with students with special needs.

Élodie – a pre-service teacher enrolled in the singular endorsement program- also had minimal experience in learning to work with students with special needs from her

time at Baytown. Furthermore, she had limited experiences in working with students with LD in her student teaching placement at Roberval High School. She stated:

There was one student who had special needs. I'm not exactly sure what his needs were, but we let him retake tests. We presented it a lot more often and told him that he could have more time outside of the class to take the test. If he needed extra help, he could do that.

(Élodie, third interview, December 21, 2012)

Here, Élodie was able to share two specific strategies that she had learned by the end of her student teaching experience for working with students with special needs. First, she shared that she would give extended time to her students with special needs, even though she did not know what his LD was specifically. Next, she shared that she presented material often to him. Compared to the learner outcomes presented in the syllabus for the Gen Ed 101 course, Élodie did not have more than a novice understanding of working with students with special needs and did not gain that experience during her student teaching either.

When I was able to interview Élodie after she had begun her first teaching position, she shared again that she did not feel very prepared to work with students with special needs in her Spanish classroom. Furthermore, she was again not able to share any specific strategies that she learned while teaching in her first school after graduation. The only strategy that she proffered was, "Sometimes I give them extra dittos. I give them dittos that are very, very similar to the test or quiz" (Élodie, interview, June 6, 2013). The aforementioned strategy was not one that was listed in any of the IEPs for her students, but one that Élodie had crafted as she learned to work with her students in particular. She was truthful in sharing that she did not feel that she was prepared for working with students with special needs and did not understand many strategies for

helping students with LD in her classroom, even after graduating and teaching in a public school for a few months.

Renée – a recent graduate of Baytown University - was very clear in stating that she did not feel prepared to work with students with special needs in the world languages classroom upon her graduation from the teacher education program at Baytown. She explained:

No [I did not feel prepared]. So when I got to my own classroom...I mean there is a heavy emphasis on accommodations and modifications, but I think that in the practice (field work), there wasn't enough emphasis. It's difficult because what can student teachers do? The teacher has to follow the IEPs and stuff, so I felt like we didn't have that big of a preview of what was to come. Last year I was slammed with special education cases.

(Renée, interview, December 6, 2012)

Renée did not feel as if there was enough emphasis placed on working with students with special needs during her courses or fieldwork while she was enrolled in the teacher preparation program at Baytown University. Even though she took the Gen Ed 101 course and completed a student teaching field placement, she did not feel that she was prepared in particular for working with students with special needs in her classroom.

Likewise, Phyllis –another recent graduate from Baytown University- stated that she learned various strategies for working with students with special needs during her first year teaching after graduating from Baytown University, rather than during her coursework or student teaching. When asked specifically what strategies she learned during her first year teaching, she acknowledged:

I try to do very basic modifications that are helpful for all of my students. Therefore, incorporating the special needs students. For example, I use a lot of PowerPoints, and when I do use the PowerPoints, instead of just saying, "ok kids, take notes", I give them graphic organizers to take their notes in. This is a modification in almost all of the IEPs that I have. It not

only benefits the special needs students, it also benefits my actual students that way everybody is getting the information that they need. It's organized, it's neat. I use a lot of visuals. A lot of the modifications say to give the students both written and oral instructions, so I do that when I give out worksheets, when I give out project assignments, a project we work on in class, I give them the written and will explain it orally as well. A lot of modifications that you have besides the extra time on tests and the modifications to tests and things, it's been modifications like that I can use for everyone to cover my whole class.

(Phyllis, interview, December 28, 2012)

For example, Phyllis learned to include more visuals in the classroom and present students with graphic organizers. These strategies were ones that were helpful for all students, but specifically helpful for certain students with special needs. Therefore, she created presentations that relied on the use of visuals to present new vocabulary and grammatical points. Furthermore, she felt that she incorporated the use of giving directions both in written and oral format because most of the IEPs of her students stated to do so. The strategies that she learned came directly from the IEPs for the students from her first year teaching and not from the coursework or student teaching experience she completed as part of her graduation requirements at Baytown.

After asking the pre-service teachers and recent graduates about their overall preparedness from their experiences at Baytown University in understating working with students with special needs, many of them shared with me their thoughts on suggestions for how the program could have been improved to help them. Just as the university administrators shared some suggestions for what they would have liked to have seen included or excluded in the program, the pre-service teachers were able to speak from their own personal experiences in teaching world languages.

Renée was the only current practitioner that mentioned she would have liked to have had more practical information in the coursework that she took at Baytown University. She acknowledged:

I wish that there was more practical information in classes. For example, the first day of school, or parent interaction, more practical things, like how to behave when you're faced with this situation. Smiling and nodding is one of the best things I have learned in my two years so far.

(Renée, interview, December 6, 2012)

In her response to the question, Renée felt as if she was prepared in understanding theories of second language learning and teaching; however, she would have liked to have had more practical information to begin working in the classroom.

Phyllis echoed Renée's sentiment; however, she framed her response as wanting more hands on experience teaching before graduating. Her thought process about during which semester the student teaching experience should take place was mentioned as a major change that she would have liked to have made to the program at Baytown. She explained:

One thing that I've always said and a lot of my friends that teach agree, I student taught in the Spring semester. I think it should be required that all student teachers teach in the fall semester just so you can see how do you exactly begin and how do you present yourself to the students and how do you set up the classroom rules and regulations and the classroom management. I think it would have been really beneficial to see that through my student teaching experience in the fall.

(Phyllis, interview, December 28, 2012)

Phyllis would have liked to have seen what the beginning of the school year was like and be able to experience it under the tutelage of a cooperating teacher. She struggled with the opening of school procedures as a new teacher and would have liked to have had more guidance there. She also shared that it was difficult to begin student teaching in a

classroom in which the teacher had already set the rules and regulations and had enforced them from September. By the time she began student teaching in January, the students were set in their understanding of rules and procedures.

Élodie also echoed that she would have liked to have had more hands on experiences with students before student teaching and graduation. She mentioned:

I think I should have taught more lessons in the classroom a little bit before [student teaching]. My roommate is in education, elementary education, and she said that she taught a couple lessons for the class, but from what I remember I was only assigned one lesson to be taught and that's the only one the entire time I had been there. It would have been nice to try and do a couple just to see what it's like. It would be nice to know more about several different needs, not only ADHD and Hyperactiveness or hyperactivity. I'm not sure what the word is. I wanted to know more about other symptoms and syndromes. I know that maybe I won't be in the resource room as often, but it would have been nice to maybe see what it's like on the other side.

(Élodie, third interview, December 21, 2012)

Just after her student teaching experience, Élodie shared that she would have liked to have had more opportunities to work with students before beginning her student teaching experience. She was interested in learning more about students with special needs, especially those with high-incidence disabilities, but she did not feel as if she received the appropriate training. Even after a few months of teaching in her first classroom, Élodie still shared that she would have liked more opportunities to work with students with special needs. She mentioned:

The hands on piece of it...I would like that more. I felt I wasn't prepared to be in front of a class. Nobody ever really is the first year or the first time you step in front of your class when you're student teaching, but it would have been nice to have maybe a couple of days or hours where I would be working with another teacher to prepare me more for my student teaching. Baby steps.

(Élodie, fourth interview, June 6, 2013)

Even after teaching for a few months, Élodie still shared that she did not feel prepared to begin teaching in her student teaching placement and felt that she lacked the confidence that she should have had to stand in front of the classroom for the first time. She thought that having more opportunities to work with students could have helped her feel more comfortable and prepared to begin teaching, specifically during the student teaching experience.

Finally, Antoinette also felt that she would have liked to have had more opportunities for working with students in a more hands on approach while she was still at Baytown University. While she completed observations as part of course-requirements before her student teaching experience, Antoinette felt as if she was more of a guest than a member of the class. She shared:

I would want to work more with students. I know it's already difficult for the university because we have 30 hours for one class, sometimes, that we need to complete for the class as part of our internship. But I think that I would have liked a bit more time with the students and a little bit more quality time. I felt like I was in there and I was a guest. I didn't know who the students were and I just went in, observed, and then left. I don't think that sitting there and observing really benefitted me. At times, it was just for 10 or 15 hours.

(Antoinette, fourth interview, May 17, 2013)

Antoinette did not feel as if the classroom observations were beneficial to her, specifically because the required timeframe was only for ten to fifteen hours. Antoinette had stated at the end of her student teaching experience, and again at the end of her first semester teaching, that she would have liked more opportunities for hands on experiences with students. The difference amongst the participants regarding preparation for working

with students with special needs in the world language classroom was most marked when compared to Antoinette's experiences or perspectives.

As part of data collection, I had the opportunity to ask the principals of one of Baytown's partner schools what they believed the ideal pre-service candidate would be like to help understand the views of the preK-12 partnerships from the role of the partner school as opposed to that of the university. The question was shaped in such a way to have the principals think of pre-service world language teachers, as opposed to other content-area pre-service teachers to fit within the scope of this research. Principal Danton of Faubourg High School shared:

The student teachers have to learn to differentiate the instruction as well as the assessments. Many teachers often rely solely on the commercially prepared materials which come with a test or a quiz. They need to learn how to modify those materials to meet the needs of those students who are more auditory, visual, or kinesthetic learners. I think sometimes the "one-size-fits-all" really doesn't work. Teachers need to develop a repertoire of strategies and multiple activities to reach the intended outcomes for their students. The teachers should also know how to work with students in smaller group settings to ensure that everyone is engaged in the lesson and actively participating in the classroom activities. Educators must know how to evaluate student performance to determine proficiency in the four skill areas: listening, speaking, reading and writing. They need to know how to effectively group students, how to assign work that is appropriate to the individual skill levels, how to integrate technology, all while maintaining good classroom management. Some students with learning disabilities, for example, have difficulty concentrating on a task for an extended period of time. Being able to read an IEP, or even a 504 plan, and follow it accordingly, is critical. The teacher needs to be familiar with materials and resources to enhance and individualize the delivery of instruction.

(Principal Danton, interview, April 26, 2013)

In this excerpt, Principal Danton mentioned specific strategies and skills that she wanted to see her pre-service teachers come to her school with. It is important to remember that in the case of Antoinette and Bernadette, as identified in Chapter 4 of this dissertation,

Bernadette entered student teaching with only general ideas of working with students with special needs in the world language classroom. Antoinette had more knowledge from the onset and was able to incorporate specific strategies into her lessons. Principal Danton shared that she wanted the candidates to already be able to read an IEP, or even a 504 plan, and implement it properly. For example, though, Bernadette learned to do so only through the student teaching experience.

In contrast to the pre-service teachers' suggestion of having more hands on experience in working with students with special needs in the world language classroom earlier in the teacher preparation program, Principal Monroe of Faubourg Middle School, shared a reason why that might not be feasible. He mentioned:

I would be hard pressed to say that I've had a bad experience with a student teacher, but I have had a few negative experiences with student observers...some of the younger kids that are on the path to student teaching. They would sometimes have a lack of maturity and not understand appropriate dress, things of that nature.

(Principal Monroe, interview, February 19, 2013)

Therefore, perhaps one of the reasons for not being exposed to working with students too early during the pre-service teacher preparation program is based on the maturity level of the university students themselves. The view of Principal Monroe is shared as a counterpoint to many of the statements that the pre-service teachers made and acts to support Professor Brown's claim that sometimes working with particular groups of students can be disruptive for the overall population.

### **Discussion**

Through the analysis of data from university administrators, professors, and staff members such as the field placement director and site supervisors at Baytown, in addition

to pre-service teachers and their cooperating teachers, and recently graduated current practitioners, three themes emerged and are presented in this discussion. First, the role of coursework and where pre-service world language teachers were learning to work with students with special needs is addressed. Next, the role of the site supervisor in providing feedback is presented. Finally, the challenges of field placements and early experiences in working with students with special needs in classrooms are examined. Two overarching implications from this chapter - the ways that personal experiences shape overall growth and a call for more university member collaboration – are presented in the implications section of the next chapter.

### **Expectations and realities of coursework**

Through researching the pre-service world language teacher preparation program at Baytown University, I found that the administrators and professors felt pressure regarding time constraints and restricted credit requirements – or their interpretation of the requirements - for being able to provide specific strategies or methodologies for working with students with special needs in the general education classroom. Because the administrators and professors at Baytown interpreted a maximum 30-credit restriction on coursework for pre-service teachers in traditional education program from the NJDOE code, university officials decided to create the Gen Ed 101 course in which pre-service teachers would be introduced to working with both students with special needs and ELLs under the term *diverse learners*. The course was created to align with federal laws regulating inclusionary practices, such as Public Law 91-230 (IDEA, 2004), and New Jersey Administrative Code regulating credit maximums, such as N.J.A.C. 6A: 9-10.2 (a.4) (NJDOE, 2014). The larger federal and state regulations, including the

interpretation of the regulations on the part of university administrators and professors, assisted in shaping the teacher preparation program and the experiences to which pre-service teachers were introduced in both course work and field placements. For example, the Gen Ed 101 course was created to keep within compliance of larger regulations while still attempting to provide practical information for pre-service world language teachers to work with students with LD.

However, neither the professor from the departments of World Languages nor the professor from the department of Special Education felt that the course was properly introducing pre-service teachers to working with students with special needs. Dr. Harris shared that the course was created to help pre-service teachers understand general strategies for working with students with special needs and thought that the pre-service teachers would then have the opportunity to develop more specific strategies for working in the world language classroom.

However, it became clear to both Dr. Harris and Professor Brown that the course was not working well and that a change needed to be made. Professor Brown shared:

In looking at it in hindsight, now three or four years later, the special education department is going to reintroduce Special Ed 101 [for special education majors] because we went from six courses down to five in our certification area and that doesn't meet the needs of the population. We're going to emphasize in Special Ed 101 just the disabilities. We're going to push very strongly that Gen Ed 101 continue more in the ESL.

(Professor Brown, interview, June 2, 2011)

The Special Ed 101 course was going to be offered to pre-service teachers in the special education track only because the special education department members felt that their pre-service teachers were not being prepared adequately and one reason was because of the reduced course load with the introduction of Gen Ed 101. The question then arises as

to where the pre-service teachers would gain an understanding of working with students with special needs if they were no longer going to be introduced to working with them through the Gen Ed 101 course. The Gen Ed101 course was the major place where pre-service world language teachers not enrolled in the dual endorsement program were being introduced to working with students with special needs. With the removal of that course as a requirement for pre-service special education teachers, the pre-service world language teachers would then have even fewer opportunities for understanding how to work with students with special needs. The removal of the Gen Ed101 course requirement then shifts the overall program at Baytown from one that Pugach & Blanton (2009) would describe as minimally integrated to one that they would describe as discrete.

The removal of the Gen Ed 101 course then brings more concerns regarding where the pre-service world language teachers would receive training in understanding methodologies and strategies for working with students with special needs. Dr. Harris mentioned that the pre-service teachers would gain more experience in working with students with special needs through their student teaching assignments. However, of the four pre-service teachers included in this research study, only two of them were placed in classrooms with students with special needs. Therefore, if the course was removed, and the pre-service teachers were not placed in student teaching classrooms with students with special needs, the teachers would graduate with practically no foundation in working with students with LD in the world languages classroom.

As is, the pre-service teachers were graduating with a basic understanding of IEPs and 504 plans, with the exception of the pre-service teacher enrolled in the dual

endorsement program who graduated with a more than novice understanding of both IEPs and 504s. Farrell (2012) reports in his research on pre-service teacher education that novice teachers often realize that they have not been adequately prepared and believe that they have been set up in their pre-service courses with teaching approaches that do not work in real classrooms. Farrell's (2012) work supports the findings of this dissertation research in which recent graduates of Baytown University's teacher preparation program reported being "slammed" with cases of students with IEPs and 504s and that they had little knowledge of how to use the documents to properly provide accommodations and provide modifications to the content of their world language courses.

In order to help better prepare teachers for working with students with LD in world language classrooms, more procedural knowledge could be implemented in coursework to help bridge the expectations and realities of coursework for pre-service teachers. For example, Keirn & Luhr (2012) provide evidence in their research on teacher preparation that novice teachers with greater procedural knowledge and discipline-specific subject matter preparation perform better in student teaching, and eventually in their first classrooms, than candidates without high levels of rigor and a disciplinary focus in their undergraduate education. The discipline-specific subject matter to which pre-service teachers are introduced could include strategies and methodologies in working specifically with students with LD in the content area. In addition, Farrell (2012) puts forward that pre-service world language teachers can be better prepared for what they will face in their first years of teaching in two ways. First, university administrators and professors should assist pre-service teachers in making clear connections in all of the preparation courses to teaching in the first year by

including the completion of reflective activities and assignments that are related to the subject matter of the course. Second, university teacher preparation programs should aim to include a supplementary course regarding teaching in the first years to provide opportunities for pre-service teachers to develop skills in reflective practice so that they can better manage challenges, conflicts, and problems that they may face in their first years of teaching. Farrell (2012) maintains that by following the two aforementioned suggestions, pre-service teachers will graduate with a better understanding of what is expected of them during their first teaching positions.

Pre-service teachers should be given ample opportunities in courses that they take prior to the student teaching experience to discuss the realities of teaching and be given opportunities to reflect on some of the experiences they are exposed to in classroom observations. In addition, coursework should include opportunities for pre-service teachers to complete service learning connected to a course or courses during the completion of coursework to improve beliefs of self-efficacy for working with students with LD in world language classrooms (Bernadowski, Perry, & DelGreco, 2013). When taken together, opportunities for reflection, specific courses aimed at transitioning into the first year of teaching, and opportunities for service learning tied to coursework could assist pre-service teachers in bridging the gap between the expectations and realities of coursework in their teacher preparation programs. Specific ways to assist pre-service world language teachers grow in their understanding of working with students with LD are presented in the implications section of chapter 6 of this dissertation. The role of the site supervisor in the overall teacher preparation program in helping prepare pre-service teachers work with students with LD is presented below.

**The role of the site supervisor**

Baytown University typically employed two site supervisors per semester that were charged with observing pre-service teachers five times throughout the course of their field placements and providing them with feedback about their classroom teaching techniques. One site supervisor, Dr. Lansing, was very familiar with the preparation that pre-service teachers received at Baytown as part of their coursework because she taught a methods course in which all world language pre-service teachers were enrolled before undertaking the student teaching experience. The other site supervisor, Mr. Francis, was contracted with the university and had a basic understanding of the program but definitely understood methods for second language teaching and learning as he had been a world language teacher for over 25 years. However, when asked about his understanding of the program at Baytown University and the ways in which pre-service teachers were prepared to work with students with special needs, he offered: "I'm not familiar with the special education department or program preparation" (Mr. Francis, interview, May 24, 2013). Mr. Francis mentioned that he stressed the importance of feedback regarding classroom management and atmosphere, in particular.

Dr. Lansing, though, had a more intimate understanding of the way the pre-service teachers were prepared to work with students with special needs in the world languages classrooms. She offered:

When I first came to Baytown in 2002 I was asked to participate in a grant study with the Special Education department so I can say I was very involved. The faculty I worked with has since left Baytown. I would like to focus more on dealing with this area in my Methods course and feel that more interaction with the department of Special Education would be beneficial to the pre-service teachers.

(Dr. Lansing, interview, November 7, 2013)

Dr. Lansing's view on working as the site supervisor was important because she had the opportunity to teach the pre-service world language teachers in their methods courses before they began their student teaching experience. Her extensive knowledge in the content area is one that Kissau & Algozzine (2013) maintain is crucial in the overall development of pre-service teachers. However, with the exception of collaboration in which Dr. Lansing participated with the department of Special Education in 2002 on a grant study, she had not had many opportunities for more collaboration, especially since most of her colleagues in that department had left Baytown.

If the pre-service world language teachers do not gain a strong foundation in understanding working with students with special needs from their coursework, nor do they receive it from their placements in classrooms without students with LD, then it is the role of the site supervisor to provide feedback to them. Since the recent graduates from Baytown who were currently teaching in public schools stated that they were either teaching in in-class support environments (Phyllis, interview, December 28, 2012) or "slammed with special education cases" (Renée, interview, December 6, 2012), then the site supervisors need to expose pre-service teachers to working with students with special needs and provide feedback on particular strategies or methodologies that may be of assistance.

Appropriate feedback regarding ways to work with students with LD for world language candidates can only be possible if the site supervisors are part of collaborative efforts between the departments of world languages and special

education and if they include the use of scaffolding with the pre-service teachers. Scaffolding is defined as the actions taken by an expert to enable a novice to perform at a higher level (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976). Scaffolding serves as the mechanism to move the novice pre-service teacher from his/her current level of achievement in working with students with LD to a new level.

For example, the site supervisor might discuss the ways that the pre-service teacher works specifically with students with LD in each of the post-conference interviews that take place after observations throughout the course of the student teaching experience. The actions observed that a site supervisor points out to his/her pre-service teachers will influence what the pre-service teachers construct as part of their overall growth of understanding ways to work with students with LD according to Bodrova & Leong (2007). If the site supervisor is trained specifically to understand the goal of preparing pre-service world language teachers to work with students with LD, then the supervisor can target questions pertaining to providing accommodations and making modifications for students according to IEPs and 504s during post observation conversations. Strategic prompts, or language that promotes problem-solving processes, provided by site supervisors could help pre-service teachers grow in their understanding of the strategies and methods they employ during their student teaching experience to assist students with LD in their world language classrooms (Kindle & Schmidt, 2013). Rather than simply giving directives or providing a solution, the site supervisors could help promote deeper thinking, inquiry and

problem-solving behaviors of the pre-service teachers during the student teaching experience.

Cooperating teachers could work collaboratively with the university site supervisors to assist the pre-service teachers in understanding the various needs of the students with LD in their student teaching classroom. However, because the student teaching experience as part of Baytown University's teacher preparation program is not situated until the last semester before graduation, the pre-service teachers need to gain early exposure to working with students with special needs in addition to gaining appropriate feedback from site supervisors and cooperating teachers so that they can learn strategies to implement in their student teaching field placements. A call for early field experiences is presented below. However, the role of the cooperating teacher in supporting pre-service teacher growth and is more fully addressed in the implications section of chapter six.

### **A call for early experiences**

One of the major suggestions that many of the pre-service teachers and recent graduates from the program who were currently teaching made was a call for earlier experiences in teaching students prior to the student teaching experience. For example, Bernadette only had the opportunity to teach one lesson as part of her preparation at Baytown University before beginning her student teaching experience. Likewise, Élodie also only taught one lesson before her student teaching experience, as compared to her roommate enrolled in the elementary education program that had the opportunity to teach multiple lessons and receive feedback. Overall, however, the pre-service teachers expressed a desire to have more of an understanding of working with students with

special needs in their world language classroom. This supports the research of Cooper (2004), Lange & Sims, (1990), and Pearson & Chambers (2005) in which teachers expressed a dissatisfaction with their programmatic preparations calling for more improved mentoring during field experiences, yet maintain that they are positive about the principle of inclusion in their classrooms but challenged by implementation. By offering pre-service world language teachers earlier experiences in working with students with special needs, Baytown's program could help reconcile the dissatisfaction and challenge of implementation with the positive views towards implementing inclusive strategies.

Since Dr. Harris felt that the Gen Ed 101 course could only offer pre-service teachers general strategies for understanding working with students with special needs, she hoped that the students would gain those experiences in their field work. However, as uncovered through this research, only two of the pre-service world language teachers at Baytown were placed in classrooms with students with special needs. Therefore, by including earlier experiences in teaching for pre-service teachers, the university could help ensure that the teachers were placed in diverse settings, including world language classrooms with students with LD, as espoused by Mrs. Dubois, the field placement director. Furthermore, the university could collect data from the early experiences, as they do after the student teaching experience, to gather input as to the experiences that pre-service teachers have had in working with students with special needs in the world languages classroom.

The call for earlier field experiences did not only come from the pre-service teachers in this research study, but a call for earlier experiences also comes from research

conducted in the field of teacher preparation. For example, King-Sears, Carran, Dammann, & Arter (2012) report that general education and special education pre-service teachers who rated themselves as more prepared for working with students with LD were offered more time in schools working with students in early field experiences throughout their teacher preparation program. However, the call is not only for earlier field experiences, but for opportunities for more feedback and monitoring throughout the experiences. For instance, Bernadowski, Perry, & DelGreco (2013) suggest that pre-service teachers should be monitored closely during the early experiences to ensure that they are reflective of the experiences and that they are making connections to previous knowledge and/or experiences gained from previous/concurrent coursework. Through monitoring of the pre-service teachers, university professors could help pre-service teachers contextualize the experiences they are having and make connections to the coursework they are undertaking.

Chapter 2 of this dissertation discussed the importance of pre-service teachers understanding the classification and neurobiological factors of LD (Williams, 2010). University professors could also begin to infuse topics based in neuroscience into pre-service teacher coursework to assist the pre-service teachers in making connections to what they are observing in early field experiences. More recently, Dubinsky, Roehrig, & Varma (2013) claim that the neurobiology of learning - the concept of plasticity, in particular - has the potential to directly transform teacher preparation by impacting the ways that pre-service teachers think about their own learning. The concept of bringing the neuroscience of learning to pre-service teachers provides a new perspective on teaching and learning – one where teachers come to see themselves as designers of

experiences that ultimately alter students' brains. By understanding that synapses change and that neural circuits develop and strengthen with experiences including play and practice, pre-service teachers can understand that the neurons are plastic and change with experiences. By understanding synaptic changes and the plasticity of neurons, world language teachers can begin to build growth mindsets for working with students with LD. The pre-service teachers might then be able to frame their earlier field experiences with a neurological-based mindset and begin to understand ways that LD is manifested in neurobiological functions. University professors, however, need to assist the pre-service teachers as they make connections between their coursework and their field experiences.

Education course professors could help incorporate mandatory field experiences into introductory courses to the field of education. Early field experiences in working with students with LD could help pre-service teachers identify a desire to add an endorsement in teaching students with disabilities, as evidenced in teacher preparation research. For instance, one teacher in Conderman, Johnston-Rodriguez, Hartman, & Walker's (2012) research stated, "Being in the classroom early in my program confirmed that I wanted to be a special education teacher. I was able to work with a variety of populations and I feel that I could work any job and feel confident" (p. 70). This pre-service teacher knew from an early stage in her educational career in her teacher preparation program that she wanted to be a special education teacher.

Offering more opportunities for pre-service teachers and gathering input from them would necessitate more collaboration on the part of the administration, professors, and staff of the Baytown University teacher education program. Furthermore, offering pre-service teachers opportunities for earlier field experiences would impact the

coursework provided as part of the overall program and might further impact the information that is already being included within the perceived 30-credit maximum. Finally, the concern of level of maturity of the pre-service teachers gaining earlier experiences, as expressed by Principal Monroe, would create another layer of difficulty in implementing such suggestions. While the pre-service teachers would like to have had more experiences in teaching before they began their student teaching experience, the possibility may not always be feasible because of credit requirement maximums and possible budgetary limitations incurred on the part of personnel for placing student teachers and allowing for diversity in placements. The call for more collaboration and early experiences is more fully developed in the implications section in chapter 6 of this dissertation.

### **Conclusion**

The statements shared by the university administrators and professors as compared to those of the pre-service teachers and recent graduates from the teacher education program at Baytown University offered differing insights into the overall program. The administrators and professors, guided by NJDOE regulations and interpretations of course credit restrictions, attempted to expose pre-service teachers to as many different topics as possible before they begin their student teaching experience. In the case of the Gen Ed 101 course, the pre-service teachers did not feel as if they were properly prepared to understand working with students with special needs or in knowing where to look for appropriate resources once they were in their own classrooms. The only pre-service teacher who felt prepared to work with students with special needs, understandably, was Antoinette because she was enrolled in the dual endorsement

program. Even though Baytown University offered the Gen Ed 101 class as a way to introduce pre-service teachers to working with students with special needs, Fox & Diaz-Greenberg's (2006) assertion that pre-service world language teachers are not provided with any coursework, let alone appropriate coursework, is upheld by the findings of this dissertation. The pre-service teachers were unable to transfer the information that they had been exposed to in the Gen Ed 101 course to their student teaching placements, or first positions teaching after graduation.

The dual endorsement program is one that offers pre-service teachers knowledge through coursework and experience through field experiences to begin to understand working with students with LD. Since Antoinette was also enrolled in the program that led to an endorsement in Spanish, she was able to compare and contrast the information she was learning to think of ways to make accommodations and modifications for her students. Her experiences at Baytown, coupled with her placement working with Jeannine and in courses created specifically for students with special needs, helped her feel comfortable working with students with special needs in the world language classroom.

In contrast, however, the pre-service teachers who were not enrolled in the dual endorsement program did not feel very prepared to work with students with special needs and had various experiences based on their student teaching placements. However, the *New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers and School Leaders* (2004) maintains that pre-service teacher preparation programs must ensure that pre-service teachers display the knowledge, disposition, and performances for teaching according to ten different areas, including working with students with special needs in particular.

Therefore, according to the pre-service teachers and recent graduates who were currently teaching, the program at Baytown University did not adequately prepare them for working with students with special needs in the world language classroom despite its professed goal to prepare them to meet the needs of all of their students. Each of the teachers grew differently depending largely upon their field placement for student teaching and their cooperating teacher. Baytown offered coursework in working with students with special needs for all pre-service teachers; however, the pre-service teachers enrolled in the single certification program were not adequately equipped with the skills necessary to understand working with students with special needs in the world language classroom at the outset of their student teaching classrooms. Furthermore, those pre-service teachers who were placed in classrooms with no students with special needs were unable to gain experience in understanding or working with students with LD over the course of their time at Baytown University.

In the next chapter, I detail four findings that were uncovered through the analysis of data for this research and that were presented in chapters 4 and 5. I offer recommendations for future research in the field of world language teacher preparation and special education in addition to sharing some larger implications that this case study may have on the larger field of world language teacher preparation and special education. The role of the dual endorsement program on overall world language teacher preparation is explored in relation to the larger program offered at Baytown University.

## CHAPTER 6

## FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

**Introduction**

This two year case study of Baytown University examined how one teacher education program worked to provide pre-service world language teachers with the training to teach general education students as well as students with learning disabilities (LD). The participants in this study included four pre-service teachers, as well as university administrators, professors, and staff members, and recent graduates who were currently teaching. The teacher education program at Baytown University offered pre-service world language teachers two options: first, they could become certified to teach world languages; second, they could add an endorsement in teaching students with disabilities to a primary endorsement in world languages. After analyzing the experiences of students and university members responsible for both of these endorsement tracks, this dissertation research found a discrepancy between what university administrators and professors reported and what pre-service teachers believed regarding overall preparation for working with students with LD in world language classrooms.

I present three major findings of this dissertation in this chapter. The three findings include: first, cooperating teachers help shape pre-service teachers' attitudes towards inclusion; second, the single-track endorsement program is not preparing pre-service world language teachers to work in inclusive settings; and third, personal experiences and relationships foster collaborative efforts between world language and

special education teachers. These findings are significant because they underscore the importance of solid mentorship, positive field experiences, and personal experiences in working with students with LD to help pre-service world language teachers grow in their understanding of working with students with special needs. I first present each finding individually and offer practical recommendations and suggestions for future research based on the findings. Then I describe the larger implications for pre-service world language teacher preparation programs and make recommendations for the broader field of teacher preparation based on the data and discussions presented in chapters 4 and 5 of this study. The larger implications for the field and recommendations for future research include a discussion of the importance of collaboration between fields of inquiry related to language teacher preparation, such as bilingual and English as a Second language education, and practical recommendations for pedagogy and collaborative educational opportunities. After a review of limitations to be considered in this study, I close the chapter and larger study with a final section that suggests several goals that administrators and professors charged with teacher preparation program design should consider when preparing pre-service world language teachers to teach in inclusive classrooms.

### **Review of the findings**

#### **Finding 1: Cooperating teachers help shape pre-service teachers' attitudes towards inclusion**

The first finding of this dissertation is that the cooperating teacher plays a crucial role in the overall development and growth of pre-service teachers. Kissau & Algozzine (2013) maintain that the relationship between the student teacher and cooperating teacher

is one that can be beneficial or detrimental to the overall growth of pre-service teachers during the student teaching experience. The role of the cooperating teacher cannot be understated because the cooperating teacher works with pre-service teachers during a formative period as they gain an understanding of working with students with special needs in the world languages classroom during student teaching. The cooperating teacher is charged with assisting the pre-service teacher in developing in his/her understanding of how to maintain classroom management, plan and implement meaningful activities, communicate with members of the larger school community and parents, and differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all of the students in the class. The aforementioned list is not exhaustive, but rather highlights some of the most important responsibilities that cooperating teachers model for pre-service teachers during their student teaching experience.

The interactions that take place between the cooperating teacher and the student teacher are ones that help shape the overall growth of the student teacher during the student teaching experience. Professional daily discourses shared among teachers serve to structure knowledge and practices that are understood as reasonable or doable, as well as unreasonable or impractical. The student teaching experience is one example of a discursive field where student teachers learn how to act as professionals in schools (Sanyal Tudela, 2014). While taking a discourse analysis approach to analyzing interactions between cooperating teacher and student teacher is beyond the scope of this case study, the data presented in chapters 4 and 5 suggest that collaborations between these role groups transformed the ways that the student teachers and cooperating teachers acted and thought.

Through a study that examined the challenges encountered by student teachers during their student teaching experience, Berridge & Goebel (2013) found that the most positive aspect of student teaching is the formation of positive relationships with the mentor teacher and with students. In this case study, both Antoinette and Bernadette pointed to the overall positive experiences that they had in working in their placements during the student teaching experience and noted how difficult, yet positive, the entire experience was. However, only Antoinette shared that she felt prepared to work with students with LD in the world language classroom upon graduation. In addition, as discussed in chapter 5, one recent graduate from Baytown University's teacher preparation program shared that she was "slammed" with cases of students with learning disabilities. In the absence of having strong mentoring, some teachers felt overwhelmed as they entered the field.

The feeling of being underprepared or slammed with cases can also be found in larger studies in the field of teacher preparation. For example, Berridge & Goebel (2013) explain that "this shock, suffered by new teachers in the abrupt transition into the profession, can be attributed to their often idealistic and naïve mental models of teaching, models that are radically different from the reality they are suddenly experiencing" (p.419). Antoinette had opportunities to work with her cooperating teacher to understand and implement strategies for working with students with LD and that, in part, could have led to her feeling of confidence for working with students with diverse needs in her Spanish classroom. Bernadette, on the other hand, did not have similar opportunities and, in fact, had less time to work with her cooperating teacher to build a positive relationship

because the cooperating teacher was only available for twelve of the fifteen weeks for the student teaching experience.

In other words, this dissertation study found that the pre-service teacher who was exposed to coursework understanding how to teach students with LD and who was placed in a student teaching field experience with a mentor experienced in working with students with LD felt more comfortable to begin working with students with LD and shared that her experiences prepared her to begin working in inclusive classrooms. Furthermore, the pre-service teacher who was not exposed to as much coursework in understanding how to work with students with special needs and was placed in a student teaching experience with a cooperating teacher that did not view inclusive practices positively shared that she did not believe that she was prepared to begin teaching students with LD upon graduation from her teacher preparation program.

*Recommendations for university program administrators and future research*

Since the role of the cooperating teacher is important to the overall development of the pre-service teacher, it is crucial that the university make every effort to pair pre-service teachers with appropriate cooperating teachers for the student teaching experience. Based on the data presented in chapters 4 and 5, appropriate cooperating teachers might include those who have experience in working with students with LD in language classrooms and those who seek to create inclusive environments for language learning to take place. In addition, appropriate cooperating teachers might also include those who hold dual certification for teaching a world language and students with disabilities. However, it will take time for language teachers who are currently

graduating with dual endorsements to gain experience in teaching before taking on the role of a mentor to a student teacher.

One way to help with the pairing process might be through a school and university partnership designed to prepare pre-service world language teachers for inclusive classrooms. Such partnerships to foster inclusive education currently exist and focus on general education programs (Grima-Farrell, Long, Bentley-Williams, & Laws, 2014). Inclusive education represents a whole-school concern inasmuch as administrators, content-area teachers, and special educators are involved in decision making and works to align special education with general education in ways that enhance quality education for all students (Lipsky & Gartner, 1997; Winter & O’Raw, 2010). Universities and school districts could look for opportunities to work together to help pre-service teachers understand the importance of inclusionary practices in their own student teaching and eventual classrooms.

The partnerships that might take place between school districts and universities, though, must be crafted in such a way to ensure for a shared vision. Grima-Farrell, Long, Bentley-Williams, & Laws (2014) put forward that the resonating consistent notion shared by participants in their study on collaborative university and school partnerships was that the relationship was effective only if the aims of university were the same as the aims of the school system. For example, school districts and university programs must both support inclusionary practices and share a vision for helping pre-service teachers learn to be more inclusive in the strategies and methods that they employ in the classroom. Only when there is a shared vision can the partnerships begin to attempt to bridge the research to practice gap for pre-service teachers to grow in their understanding

of working with students with LD in the world language classroom. The shared vision could then help the field placement director place pre-service teachers with cooperating teachers who believe in inclusive education and have experience in working with students with LD in world language classrooms.

There are many difficulties in creating appropriate student-cooperating teacher dyads; however, one way to help form better relationships between pre-service teachers and cooperating teachers is to increase the amount of time that they spend together, especially supported through university and school partnerships. The data presented in chapter 4 of this study suggests that earlier partnerships may be beneficial for preparing pre-service teachers to work with students with special needs in the world language classroom. For example, a call for earlier field placement opportunities was mentioned by practically all of the pre-service teacher candidates and recent graduates from Baytown University during our interviews. Since Baytown already had partnerships with local school districts, efforts could be made to pair pre-service teachers with cooperating teachers with experience in teaching students with LD earlier in the teacher preparation program so that they can work together more frequently through the end of the program culminating in the student teaching experience. However, it is critical to realize that the quality of the cooperating teacher partnerships plays an important role, not just the quantity – or amount of time spent working together. Grima-Farrell, Long, Bentley-Williams, & Laws (2014) maintain that collaborative partnerships between schools and universities that provided longitudinal experiences for undergraduate teachers were consistently identified by participants as being paramount to bridging the research to practice gap.

By working together earlier, the cooperating teachers and pre-service teachers can provide feedback to university field placement directors to help better guide the pairing process. The field placement director in this case study shared that the role of pairing cooperating teachers and pre-service teachers is a very important role, and one that depends upon much input from pre-service teachers and cooperating teachers in partner school districts. The field placement director should attempt to pair pre-service teachers with cooperating teachers based on the quality of the working relationships, and not just in the diversity of placements (i.e. urban vs. suburban, socio-economic status, and elementary or secondary) as was shared in chapter 4 of this dissertation. By starting field placements earlier and gathering more information about the cooperating teacher and pre-service teacher relationships, the field placement director can leave fewer of the pairings up to chance and use the information provided to help create and foster strong working relationships between cooperating teachers and pre-service teachers.

Another benefit to offering earlier field experiences to pre-service teachers is to help them create bonds with cooperating teachers and to identify people with whom they believe they will be able to benefit the most from working together. By having pre-service teachers enter classrooms earlier, the field placement director – in consultation with the field supervisors for world languages – can begin to see the ways that world language teachers in the field are, or are not, meeting the needs of students with LD in their classrooms. However, systems of cooperation and collaboration between university field placement directors and placement school districts need to be put into place, or strengthened, to foster communication in choosing the best cooperating teacher for pre-service world language candidates. One sentiment echoed by the pre-service teachers is

that they observed strategies and methodologies that they did not find appropriate or useful in the language classroom and stated that they would not use such techniques in their future classrooms. Therefore, it would be best to not pair pre-service teachers with cooperating teachers who vary drastically in the methodologies that the pre-service teachers are learning in their course work. For example, every effort should be made to not pair pre-service teachers seeking to practice communicative strategies in the language classroom with cooperating teachers who rely solely on grammar-translation methods.

In addition, it is important for cooperating teachers and university site supervisors to engage in collaborative conversations regarding the overall growth of the pre-service world language teachers, specifically on the ways in which they work with students with LD. According to the data gathered from cooperating teachers and university site supervisors, there is very little collaboration between the groups and practically no conversation about the pre-service teacher working with students with LD. Therefore, they are unable to work in a collaborative manner to address specific emerging areas of need for a particular student teacher. Since the student teaching experience only lasted over fifteen weeks, there was not much information shared between the site supervisor and the cooperating teachers. In fact, in most cases the cooperating teacher left the classroom when the site supervisor was in the classroom. Therefore, there was no opportunity for the cooperating teacher and university site supervisor to discuss ways to help the pre-service teacher make connections between the research that was studied in pre-service coursework and the practical nature of the lessons that were being created as part of the student teaching experience.

Through the observations of the Gen Ed 101 course and interviews with professors and students, much of the information that was shared included hypothetical classroom lessons for working with hypothetical students with LD. However, by including more school/university partnerships, pre-service teachers can be given opportunities to observe actual students and the ways that teachers work with them in their language classrooms. Release time can then be given to teachers from their school districts to attend university course sessions to explain why they used certain methodologies or strategies in their classrooms and the impacts that they had on student learning. Pre-service world language teachers would then have the opportunity to act as more of an apprentice to classroom teachers and to recognize the struggles that exist on a daily basis. Professors of second language methods courses should attempt to expose pre-service teachers to understanding a multitude of issues before allowing them to begin the student teaching experience, however, they should capitalize on opportunities to have pre-service teachers working in classrooms, under the guidance of teachers, as early as possible.

A call for more innovations in inclusive education is supported by Wolfberg, LePage & Cook's (2009) redesign of San Francisco State University's teacher preparation program. The program provided extensive field-based experiences in working with both students in general education settings and inclusive settings. More innovation in teacher preparation programs and earlier experiences in working with students with LD would help answer the call for more practical experiences that the pre-service teachers in this study requested. Importantly, the program redesign at San Francisco State University was funded by federal and local grants (Wolfberg, LePage &

Cook, 2009). Administrators and professors in world language teacher preparation programs can look for financial support, as in grants, to assist in program redesign to allow for innovative practices in preparing teachers to work with students with LD in language classrooms. I return to the issue of program design/redesign in a later section of this chapter.

**Finding 2: The single track endorsement program is not preparing pre-service world language teachers to work in inclusive settings**

Drawing on data gathered from interviews and observations, this study found that four of the five graduates from Baytown's teacher preparation program had little to no understanding of working with students with LD upon entering their first classrooms after graduation. Should these graduates accept positions in public classrooms in New Jersey, it would then become the responsibility of the administrators and teachers of those districts to provide professional development regarding accommodations and modifications using the IEPs and 504 plans for the students with special needs in the school districts. Yet, school administrators often expect teachers to come to the classroom with a foundation in understanding how to work with students with a multitude of needs. As I have shown in chapter 4, the only pre-service teacher who reported feeling prepared to teach students with LD in world language classes was the graduate of Baytown's dual endorsement program in Spanish education and Teacher of Students with Disabilities. Her enrollment in the dual-endorsement program introduced her to identifying and understanding the classifications of disabilities in addition to strategies for remediation in the Spanish classroom to assist students with LD succeed; however, the pre-service teachers enrolled in the single-track endorsement program did not believe

that they were prepared to work with students with LD in their future or current world language classrooms.

Pre-service teachers are expected to learn a significant amount of information about working not only in their disciplines, but also in understanding working with diverse learners in inclusionary settings. Since the teacher education program at Baytown University could only offer a limited amount of credits in education courses due to the administration's interpretation of the credit-cap requirements imposed by the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE), program administrators and professors decided to combine courses to expose pre-service teachers to as much information as possible. The administrators and professors at Baytown University were working under their interpretation of N.J.A.C. 6A: 9-10.2 (a.4) that stated, "no more than 30 semester hour credits of instruction devoted to professional preparation will be allowed" (NJDOE, 2005). In 2010, however, the wording of the statute was changed to read, "A sequence of courses", thus effectively removing the former 30-credit cap under which Baytown University was working (NJDOE, 2014). At the time of data collection for this study, Baytown University administrators and professors were continuing to limit the number of credits that pre-service teachers could complete in education courses to a maximum of 30. However, some of the professors began to question the usefulness of the Gen Ed 101 course in light of the regulation change.

Despite the fact that teacher education programs often include required courses in special education for general education teachers, research has shown that pre-service teachers are often unable to understand how to meet all of the needs of the students with LD in their classrooms (Holland, Detgen, & Gutekunst, 2008; Pugach & Blanton, 2012;

and McLaughlin, 2010). The data collected and analyzed for this study confirm these findings. Even after having enrolled in the Gen Ed 101 course – a course designed to expose pre-service teachers to working with diverse learners – the pre-service teachers interviewed and observed in this study shared that they were still not prepared to work with students with LD in their world language classrooms. In the absence of an integrated Gen Ed 101 course - or similar integrated courses since the decision had been made to remove Gen Ed 101 - the only available way to learn how to meet the needs of students with LD is through the dual-endorsement program. The interpretation of the 30-credit cap regulation and the professors' thoughts that the Gen Ed 101 course was not meeting the needs of pre-service teachers in the special education program have left the pre-service world language teachers with little exposure to understanding how to work with students with LD through their coursework at the university.

At the time of the study, then, a double bind existed at the university level. On the one hand, inclusive practices were mandated by federal policies and state department of education requirements. On the other hand, the practices imposed by an interpretation of N.J.A.C. 6A: 9-10.2 (a.4) before 2010 made it difficult for universities to expose pre-service teachers to understanding working with students with LD in content-area classrooms. Because of Baytown's interpretation and adherence to the 30-credit cap for education courses imposed by the NJDOE at the time, Baytown University administrators and professors decided to create the Gen Ed 101 course to introduce pre-service teachers to working with diverse learners. However, I found in this study, the pre-service teachers did not feel prepared to work with students with LD from enrollment in that course alone. The Gen Ed 101 course was created to keep within the Baytown administration's

interpretation of the 30-credit cap to allow for a larger number of credits for learning methodologies and strategies to form a foundation in understanding second language teaching and learning and yet it did not fulfill its intended goals.

While the pre-service teacher enrolled in the dual-endorsement program in this research study felt comfortable in working with students with LD because of her coursework and field experiences, the single-track endorsement pre-service teachers did not feel prepared at all for working with students with LD in their world language classrooms. Therefore, the university administrators are faced with the challenge of both removing the integrated Gen Ed 101 course, while also looking for opportunities to ensure that pre-service teachers are presented with more exposure to learning about and working with students with LD.

*Recommendations for university program administrators and future research*

Since the Gen Ed 101 course was not meeting the needs of the pre-service teachers in either the single-endorsement track or the dual-endorsement track, the university should consider a revision of the course objectives instead of removing the course completely as a requirement for the pre-service teachers in special education. However, a revision of the course objectives is only one piece in the larger dual-endorsement teacher preparation program. One overall problem for world language teacher preparation and special education is that NJDOE policies are not congruent with the field of teacher education – though the NJDOE does seem to be aware of unintended consequences of credit cap requirements as evidenced in the 2010 change of language to remove the cap - and the field of teacher education is not congruent with the mandates and requirements for understanding inclusive education. Therefore, the university should

look for additional ways to integrate more topics about working with students with LD into methods courses that the world language pre-service teachers take prior to the student teaching experience. Or, the university could look to models of programs that have been designed to merge secondary and special education teacher preparation programs.

For example, Fullerton, Ruben, McBride & Bert (2011) addressed the need for a collaborative program for secondary and special education teacher preparation programs by creating a merged program at Portland State University in Portland, Oregon. First, the curriculum and instruction faculty described a need for teacher candidates to be adequately prepared to teach students with a range of needs in secondary classrooms. Next, they underwent a revision of curriculum based on Darling-Hammond & Bransford's (2005) notion that exceptional teacher education programs provide teacher candidates with a coherent curriculum delineating the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to teach effectively. Finally, the Secondary Dual Educator Program (SDEP) was redesigned to become a full-time, two-year graduate program culminating in licensure as a secondary educator in a content area and special education and a Master's in Education (M.Ed.) degree. Collaborative leadership was a focus of the program in which faculty members invested time to understand one another's approaches to teaching and learning. Although the emphasis in the SDEP program was on preparing to teach students with high-incidence or mild disabilities, SDEP candidates completed coursework and field experiences in assessment and instruction for students with significant disabilities (Fullerton, Ruben, McBride & Bert, 2011). The research conducted at Portland State University could act as a model for world language teacher preparation

programs looking to help better prepare pre-service teachers to work with students with LD.

Based on Oregon's model for a merged program, Baytown could attempt to create more collaborative courses and field experiences to help pre-service teachers learn from the experiences of their peers in their own disciplines. For example, pre-service special education and world language teachers could be paired to learn how to collaborate to create lessons for classrooms that provide in-class support. While the chairperson of the World Language department at Baytown University, for example, did not believe that in-class support in World Language classrooms was a strategy being employed in public school districts in New Jersey, two recent graduates of the program and current practitioners shared that they taught world language courses with in-class support teachers in their public school districts. At this time, there is no available NJDOE data to support or counter a growth in co-taught world language classrooms; however, anecdotally, there are school districts in New Jersey that are offering co-taught, in class support world language courses.

The development of world language courses taught by both a certified world language teacher and a certified special education teacher is beginning to gain momentum as one possible reform to assisting students with LD in world language classrooms (Skinner & Smith, 2011). Baytown University's World Language department chair's belief that pre-service world language teachers would not need to learn how to teach in co-taught environments is notable because the pre-service teachers were not exposed to understanding that in-class support courses were options being offered to students with LD in world language classrooms; however, three of them were then faced with the task

of working with in-class support teachers in their first teaching positions after graduation and did not understand the role of each teacher in the course. University administrators and professors should be careful to keep pace with the realities of inclusive practices in public schools in New Jersey.

A dual endorsement program can assist pre-service teachers with understanding the realities of working with students with LD and of various ability levels in their own content areas. Instead of offering a discrete program, Baytown University should consider the benefits of moving towards a more integrated dual endorsement program. Based upon the findings of this study, offering a single endorsement only program seems to lead to the following problems in world language teacher preparation: pre-service, single-track endorsement world language teachers not being exposed to creating accommodations or making modifications for students with LD; pre-service world language teachers not understanding how to work with an in-class support teacher; and pre-service world language teachers becoming overwhelmed in their first teaching positions because of a lack of knowledge and experience in working with students with LD. Since the case of Baytown University is only one small case in a field where a multitude of teacher preparation programs exist, more research should be conducted using Pugach & Blanton's (2009) framework for conducting research into collaborative teacher preparation programs. The results from such research could help provide university program administrators with information to help create more integrated or merged programs, should that be a recommendation of the research.

In the meantime, there is support for this approach to dual-endorsement programs. The development of integrated pre-service programs has been prompted by the teacher

education provisions of federal legislation with the support of direct federal funding by the Office of Special Education Programs in the U.S. Department of Education (National Center for Improving Personnel Preparation in Special Education, 2012). This legislation was crafted, in part, to ensure that teaching personnel have the necessary skills and knowledge to be successful in serving children with LD. In order to accomplish this goal, the policy seeks to provide funding in the form of grants to new and innovative teacher preparation programs. A larger study could compare data collected from pre-service teachers enrolled in discrete, integrated, and merged programs to help the larger field of world language teacher preparation better understand the benefits and drawbacks of each type of program. Then, university administrators and professors could review their own programs and decide on the best way to revise or rework their own course offerings and experiences for pre-service teachers.

University administrators and professors should continue to think of ways to combine teacher preparation programs to help teach both world language and special education pre-service teachers in similar courses. This is important to help prepare pre-service teachers for working with students with LD. For example, pre-service world language and special education teachers should be given ample opportunities to collaborate to teach lessons similar to in-class support sections of world language teachers. Based on data presented in chapter 5, it is clear that school districts are employing the use of in-class support teachers in world language classrooms and that the language teachers are unsure of the role of each teacher – general education teacher and special education teacher – in the classroom. If the special education teacher does not

have a foundation in second language learning and teaching, the pair of teachers might be met with difficulties of understanding the role of one another in the classroom.

Pre-service teacher preparation programs should look for opportunities to pair world language and special education pre-service teachers as part of pre-service teaching projects creating unit and daily lesson during coursework offered at the university. For example, pre-service world language and special education teachers could prepare a lesson in which they have to team teach a lesson to a classroom of world language students. Then, the special education teachers would be able to share ideas for accommodations and modifications for activities that are presented in the language classroom and help the language teachers learn to think about ways to make accommodations and modifications to the lessons that they are creating keeping in mind students with LD and ways to best help them in the classroom. Likewise, world language teachers would be able to help the special educators understand the methods and strategies to help students with second language acquisition. More opportunities for practical ‘hands-on’ experiences should be considered in initial coursework for pre-service teachers. The idea of collaboration is addressed in a subsequent section of this chapter.

Another recommendation to help university administrators and professors understand the ways that pre-service world language teachers are being prepared to work with students with LD could come from data supplied the NJDOE. For example, the NJDOE could survey university teacher preparation education programs to assess the ways that pre-service teachers are being prepared to work with students with LD across content areas. The NJDOE should then gather data from recent graduates about the ways

that they feel that they were prepared to work with students with special needs in their own preparation programs. Gathering the data would not be insurmountable because the NJDOE already collects information about provisional teachers during their first year of teaching through paperwork submitted to the Office of Licensure and Credentials in intervals of ten, twenty, and thirty weeks. The paperwork is submitted to the NJDOE by a school principal or administrative designee, often a content-area supervisor, to describe the ways that the novice teachers working in a provisional role are growing according to topics delineated in the *New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers and School Leaders* (NJDOE, 2004). Such data would be useful because it would help clarify whether the recent graduates feel prepared working with students with LD in their classrooms and help clarify why they do or do not feel so.

For example, administrators are responsible for stating if the teacher is beginning, emerging, or applying, standards in their own classrooms. Three questions are asked specifically about the ways that the pre-service teachers are demonstrating competence in adapting and modifying instruction to accommodate the special learning needs of all students. There is, however, no place for the provisional teachers to respond to the ways that they are growing or to share ways that they feel they were prepared to work with students with special needs. By adding one line to allow for provisional teachers to share information, the NJDOE could collect data about the ways the pre-service teachers were prepared to work with students with LD and related learning needs and then disaggregate the data based on a multitude of factors including, but not limited to, content area, university pre-service teacher training program, and number or name of standard certificate(s) sought.

One question, for example, could ask if pre-service teachers felt that the courses that they took prepared them to work with students with LD. A follow up question could then ask how many courses in their teacher preparation program introduced them to working with students with LD. One policy or regulation that might then be drafted based on the responses could possibly include a requirement for pre-service teachers to observe or teach in field placement classrooms in which students with LD are present. The data analyzed for this dissertation showed that pre-service teachers overwhelmingly did not have opportunities to work with students with LD before graduation, but that they were then expected to provide accommodations and make modifications to their world language lessons once they began teaching in public school districts.

By requiring pre-service teachers to have opportunities to work with or observe teachers working with students with LD in content-area classrooms, pre-service teachers would no longer graduate having had little to no experiences in understanding working students with LD. If pre-service teachers are provided with opportunities to personally witness teachers working with students with LD or have opportunities to work with students with LD, they might then be encouraged to share their findings with classmates in their university courses and help discuss the ways that world language teachers currently in the field are working to assist students with LD in their world language courses. The pre-service teachers might also seek ways to enroll in a dual-endorsement program if they are exposed to experiences in working with students with special needs early in their programs, or add on the endorsement of Teacher of Students with Disabilities because of the positive experiences that they have been exposed to and perhaps a desire to help all students succeed in the world language classroom.

This study was limited to one university in the state of New Jersey with only four pre-service teacher participants, however similar research should be conducted on a broader scale. To extend or challenge the findings identified in this case study, future research should be conducted at more university sites that offer pre-service teachers the possibility of graduation with a dual-endorsement in both world languages and special education. This would help us to understand which types of programs best prepare pre-service world language teachers to work with students with LD in language classrooms. While this study gathered information from world language pre-service teachers before, during, and after their student teaching experience over two years, future research should aim to gather data from students as they enroll in pre-service teacher education programs to identify the factors that guide them in enrolling in singular or dual-endorsement programs.

**Finding 3: Personal experiences and relationships foster collaborative efforts between world language and special education teachers**

University professors and pre-service teachers from this case study reported that their personal experiences in working with students with LD constituted one reason for becoming more open to collaborating with colleagues to work towards the goal of providing a high-quality, world-language education for students with special needs. Personal experiences were reported to be important in three areas of this study: first, they shaped university professors and administrators' motivation to collaborate with other departments to help prepare pre-service teachers to work with students with special needs; second, they guided one pre-service teacher's decision to enroll in a dual endorsement program; and third, they prompted pre-service teachers to initiate

collaborative experiences with colleagues in special education departments in field placement schools during the student teaching experience. In addition, two cooperating teachers from this study shared that they were more inclined to reach out to members of the special education departments of their schools because of positive interactions they had in the past in working with students with LD.

This third finding is supported by cases in other studies (Golmic & Hansen, 2012; Doody & O'Connor, 2012). Golmic & Hansen (2012) maintain that secondary teachers with high levels of experiences in working with students with disabilities held more positive attitudes towards inclusion, intended to seek out additional inclusive practices, and were more willing to be assigned to inclusive classrooms. The researchers concluded that a teacher's attitude towards inclusion is related to the amount of training experience the teachers had in teaching and working with students with disabilities. Doody & O'Connor (2012) recounted that one teacher in their case study did not begin to research the conditions of Down's syndrome and autism or look to collaborate with colleagues until he was told that he would have students with special needs in placed in his classroom. Doody & O'Connor (2012) shared that the teacher stated, "Once I became aware that there would be pupils with a disability in the class I decided to research the conditions of Down's syndrome and autism and talk to other teachers who had experience of teaching pupils with a disability." (p. 114). The teacher noted that moment – being told he would have students with special needs enroll in his classroom – as the impetus for which he began to truly want to learn to help students with LD and continue to grow in his own understanding of strategies and methods for teaching in inclusive classrooms. Through personal experiences in working with students with special needs,

the teacher shared, “[Teaching students with disabilities] has given me a greater awareness of disability and an interest in how pupils with disability engage with others in a classroom” (p.116). The personal interactions in working with students with LD was one way that helped this teacher want to understand teaching students with special needs and left the teacher with a positive outlook and curiosity for learning more to help all students succeed in his classroom.

Even though this finding is not codified in institutional or programmatic policy, its relevance throughout the study has led me to identify personal relationships as an important factor in fostering collaboration between members of general education and special education departments. In the recommendations below, I suggest practical recommendations for university administrators and professors to consider when reforming pre-service world language and special education pre-service teacher education programs.

*Recommendations for university program administrators and future research*

During the two-year period of data collection for this study, Baytown University reorganized its department offices and placed the departments of special education and world languages – and other general content areas – in the same space. By creating physically proximal collaborative spaces, department members from the world language and special education departments might be more inclined to work together. Whereas in a digital age of e-mail and voicemail, communication is easily facilitated, both the chairpersons of the department of World Languages and Special Education noted that they were more inclined to reach out to one another because their offices were located in the same suite. They both mentioned physical working space as an impetus for

collaborative conversations. By having the opportunity to sit together, the colleagues thought of ideas to help better prepare both world language and special education pre-service teachers. Ashby (2012) advanced that at Syracuse University there is no separate department of special education but that the offices are intermingled throughout the building and that there are no separate bulletin boards advertising special education versus general education content. The physical integration, however, was emblematic of Syracuse's inclusive program philosophy which was to allow for integration of special education in content areas rather than the separation of departments. Therefore, there is more to the issue of physical proximity fostering collaboration than just working in the same collaborative physical spaces. However, shared physical spaces are something that can foster conversations to create similar missions, philosophies, and communicative structures between departments and administrators. University administrators, as appropriate, should attempt to build collaborative working spaces for faculty members. Personal interactions and common experiences can help facilitate collaborative efforts, as seen in the case of the creation of the Gen Ed 101 course at Baytown University.

The personal experiences of pre-service teachers having opportunities to work with students with special needs might also help pre-service teachers feel more comfortable in working with students with LD in their future classrooms. For example, Loreman, Sharma, & Forlin (2013) put forward that increased teacher interactions with students with special needs were highly or very highly significant determinants of more positive responses to inclusion, highlighting the value of such experiences in possibly demystifying disability and producing more positive views of one's capacity to include and collaborate with others in doing so. Their claim is supported by Doody &

O'Connor's (2012) finding of a teacher being more inclined to work in inclusive settings after having had personal experiences in working with students with LD. The teacher's disposition on working in inclusive settings changed after he was given opportunities to work with students with LD and research their needs while collaborating with colleagues from the special education department in his school.

Future research focused on personal dispositions for working with students with LD and methods for collaboration could help researchers conducting studies in inclusive education understand the motivation behind particular pre-service teachers making an active decision to enroll in dual endorsement programs versus enrolling in a single endorsement program when both options are available to them. For example, Grskovic & Trzcinka's (2011) study on essential standards for preparing teachers to work in inclusive settings revealed that teachers need to develop positive attitudes toward working with others and a spirit of cooperation for teaming, planning, and co-teaching. The researchers maintain that general education teachers need more knowledge of disabilities, and more pre-service experience interacting with students with disabilities to help them form dispositions that are open to collaborative teaching. The results from future research conducted on teacher dispositions can help guide university professors and administrators in recruiting and retaining world language teachers that have an understanding of working with students with LD in their classrooms and perhaps have them collaborate with pre-service teachers enrolled in the single-endorsement program.

### **Broader implications for the field and future research**

The three discrete aforementioned findings suggest two larger areas in which K-12 educators, university faculty and staff, and state policy makers might address the

dissonance that exists between the ways that university administrators think pre-service world language teachers are being prepared to work with students with LD compared to the ways that the pre-service teachers believe they were prepared. First, the larger field of world language education could benefit from collaborating with the fields of bilingual education and teaching English Language Learners (ELLs) to address the needs of students with LD. Second, the field of world language teacher preparation could be guided by larger research from the field of pedagogy and collaborative education. These two larger areas for research are presented, in turn, below. First I present a discussion on collaboration between fields of inquiry, and then I present a discussion on pedagogy and collaborative education.

#### *Collaboration between fields of inquiry*

Collaboration between departments of world languages and special education is considered a recent occurrence due to more students with special needs enrolling in world language classes (Sparks, 2009). However, students with special needs have been enrolling in language-specific classes for English as a Second Language and Bilingual education on a national level for a much longer time period due to the passage of Federal Public Law 94-142 in 1975. The Federal Public Law required school districts to make all elementary and secondary classrooms more inclusive of students with varying levels of physical, cognitive, behavioral, and academic needs. As the inclusive practices have been expanding to include all course content areas, world language teachers and programs now have the opportunity to work with students with LD. The world language teachers and program directors can look to best practices that have been created in the

fields of bilingual education and English as a Second Language to provide appropriate strategies and methodologies for working with students with LD in language classrooms.

To address the collaboration between fields of inquiry, Ashby (2012) has put forward a disability studies framework to inform and enrich teacher preparation programs. Even though the disability studies framework is not one that can or should be replicated at other universities due to the context-dependent nature of such a program, the framework relies on the notion that asks educators to reconsider disability not as something to be cured or eliminated, but as an inevitable and important part of human diversity. Ruiz's (1984) work on considering 'native language as a resource' fits well within Ashby's (2012) call for a reconsideration of viewing disability as a resource. Both fields of special education and language education can draw on the collective work of inclusionary practices while highlighting the importance of diversity in training pre-service teachers to understand the various needs of all students in inclusive classrooms. This approach would help to prepare pre-service to understand the various needs of students with LD in classrooms and have more positive views of inclusionary practices. This would benefit teachers and students in world language classrooms by encouraging inclusive practices to help both students with LD and those without.

In addition, to help inform the larger field of world language teacher preparation and special education, the field of international education can help researchers understand collaborative efforts that are taking place on a larger scale. For example, Loreman, Sharma, & Forlin (2013) conducted research into the field of pre-service teacher self-efficacy focusing specifically on their feelings of preparedness to teach in inclusive settings. The international study undertaken by Loreman, Sharma, & Forlin (2013)

included information gathered from pre-service teacher preparation programs in Australia, Canada, Honk Kong, and Indonesia and indicated that factors impacting self-efficacy and inclusion include the type of teacher preparation program a pre-service teacher is involved in, levels of knowledge about inclusion law and policy, interactions with people with disabilities, confidence levels, and prior teaching experience and training in working with students with disabilities. The researchers included the use of an instrument to examine teacher self-efficacy specific to inclusive education called the Teacher Self-Efficacy for Inclusive Practice (TEIP) scale. Future research conducted in the United States could employ the use of the TEIP instrument to identify trends in world language teacher self-efficacy upon graduation from various teacher preparation programs to inform the larger field of world language teacher preparation and special education. The programs that graduate pre-service teachers who share strong feelings of self-efficacy can be investigated to understand the larger contextual picture of the overall teacher preparation program.

After conducting this case study and reviewing literature in the larger field, I believe that the overrepresentation of English Language Learners in special education (Losen & Orfield, 2002; Ortiz, 1991; and Artiles, Rueda, Salazar, & Higareda, 2002) and the underrepresentation of students with special needs in world language classrooms (Sparks, 2009) is part of the same educational problem due to lack of research and communication in the larger research fields of both world language and special education. For example, if we look historically at both fields, social struggles for students with LD and ELLs began to appear in the 1960s and were addressed by the United States via public laws or court rulings. The argument against inclusion for

students with disabilities was addressed with the passage of Federal Public Law 94-142 in 1975; however, school districts and teacher education programs still struggle with the best ways to implement inclusive practices in schools and how to best prepare pre-service teachers to work in inclusive settings. Likewise, the landmark 1974 *Lau v. Nichols* case in which Chinese parents sued the San Francisco Board of Education for failing to provide equal education to their children who lacked English proficiency and won was supposed to address the inclusion of ELLs in public school classrooms by offering them instruction in their native language. However, Platt, Harper, & Mendoza's (2003) research demonstrated that the fields of English as a Second Language and Bilingual education continue to struggle with the notion of inclusionary practices for ELLs in mainstream classrooms. Platt, Harper, & Mendoza's (2003) work focused on dueling policies in Florida and highlighted that two philosophies for inclusive or exclusive education were being employed in district schools. One philosophy advocated for inclusive classrooms and the other philosophy advocated for separated classes.

By having the fields of special education, bilingual education, ELL education, and world language education collaborate by focusing on language learning and teaching as social justice, it might be possible to help close the achievement gap that currently exists in the overrepresentation of language learners in special education and the underrepresentation of students with LD enrolled in world language classrooms. For example, Fisher (2007) maintains that the larger fields need to create and embrace a *discourse of difference* to help move both fields forward. Fisher (2007) puts forward that federal policies such as the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) attempted to alleviate achievement gaps in schools; however, two major groups –language learners and/or

learners with disabilities- were still predominately disenfranchised by the federal policy. Fisher's (2007) proposed solution to help close the gap between ELLs and students with learning disabilities included viewing inclusion as a form of social justice by forcing leaders to question their habits of inclusion. Pre-service teachers can then be introduced to social justice studies including historic cases and struggles in both students with disabilities and students learning other languages in the United States. Studying cases of social justice could then help pre-service teachers understand the historical context behind the importance of inclusionary practices that they could then employ in their own world language courses.

Fox & Diaz-Greenberg's (2006) assertion that world language pre-service teachers are not usually provided with coursework that addresses the needs of students with LD in their teacher preparation programs is upheld by the findings of this dissertation. Pre-service world language teachers were only expected to enroll in one course focusing on working with students with LD and ELLs under the umbrella term of working with *diverse learners*. The collaboration that took place to create the Gen Ed 101 course involved conversations about specific topics that the professors and administrators at Baytown believed pre-service teachers should be introduced to. However, as I have shown, the university administration and professors were moving away from offering the collaborative course because they did not feel that the pre-service teachers, particularly those enrolled in the special education pre-service program, were being introduced appropriately to understanding working with students with LD. In addition, pre-service teachers reported that they did not gain an understanding of making

accommodations or providing modifications for working with students with LD after enrolling in the course.

For now, the fields of second language education and special education teacher preparation should find opportunities to collaborate to identify strategies that have been successful with students in the past. Collaboration between and amongst professional organizations for special education and world language teacher preparation could help highlight practices that work well for both populations of students. By analyzing the standards put forward by each of the professional organizations, pre-service teachers could be introduced to commonalities between the language that is used in both fields highlighting ways that special education and world language teachers are prepared to teach students of varying ability levels. For example, one challenge identified in chapter 2 of this study and relevant to the broader field of world language teacher preparation is the lack of formal definitions and consistency in programs across the nation in providing services for students with special needs and ELLs. However, researchers in both fields of Bilingual education and English as a Second Language have been working with students with special needs and can draw from those experiences to inform the larger educational field through completion of practitioner research projects. The overall field of world language teacher preparation could benefit from learning from the teachers who work with students with special needs from diverse linguistic backgrounds to share their experiences of strategies and methods that have worked in their particular cases. Empirical research in both areas of bilingual education or second language education and special education exists, it is now important, however, for the fields to continue to grow to identify strategies and methods that can be implemented in classrooms and of which

teacher preparation programs can begin to expose pre-service teachers. Next, I present implications for pedagogy and collaborative education for future research into the field of pre-service language teacher preparation and special education.

*Pedagogy and collaborative education*

As described in chapters 4 and 5 of this study, pre-service teachers shared that they would have liked more hands on experiences and a better understanding of working with students with learning disabilities in the world language classroom. One way to help pre-service teachers understand ways to provide accommodations and make modifications is through the use of case-based instruction (CBI) during coursework in education at the university-level (Niles & Cohen, 2012). Niles & Cohen (2012) define CBI as a pedagogical option in teacher preparation that aims to help teacher trainees focus on classroom issues embedded in a set of real, not hypothetical, cases. The main strength of CBI is the ability of the case method to approximate real world experiences in which pre-service teachers can observe real events, interact with the language of participants, separate truth from fiction, and experiment with outcomes without having to physically enter a classroom. Greenwood & Fillmer (1999) maintain that CBI is a middle step between coursework and actual teaching in which pre-service teachers can experience, analyze and plan a response, and relate case study outcomes to personal experiences.

For example, pre-service world language teachers could work collaboratively with pre-service special education teachers to develop a summary of a specific case and prepare an individual response for ways to assist a struggling student in a world language classroom. The pre-service teachers could be grouped according to discipline and

convene outside of class time to develop a consensus response to the case with which they are presented. University professors, field supervisors, and cooperating teachers could work collaboratively to create cases based on actual classrooms in partner school districts. The cases, in turn, could then help pre-service teachers make connections to ways to help students that will possibly be enrolled in the courses they teach during the student teaching experience. As described in chapters 4 and 5 of this study, two pre-service teachers mentioned how much they learned when the professor of Gen Ed 101 brought in her own son's IEP and deconstructed the document with the pre-service teachers. CBI can help expose pre-service teachers to cases of real students, confidentially, and encourage collaboration to provide accommodations and make modifications to world language lessons.

Another way to assist pre-service teachers learn to work with students with LD during their university coursework is to include more use of technology in all aspects of courses. For example, general education courses can incorporate the use of *flipped classrooms* as a new approach to teaching and learning in schools and colleges (Maloy, Edwards, & Evans, 2014). Maloy, Edwards, & Evans (2014) put forward that flipping a classroom switches the academic activities students typically worked on in class (i.e. listening to lectures, taking notes, viewing videos or PowerPoint presentations) with those they did as homework assignments (i.e. individual research, group projects, and meeting with teachers for individual assistance. Bergmann & Sams (2012) posit that in flipped classrooms, more active and focused learning takes places amongst individuals, groups, and instructors. The university classrooms that I observed for this case study included more traditional-style lectures and student presentations in which, as indicated

in chapter 5, the pre-service teachers were not paying attention. By allowing for more flipped classrooms through an incorporation of educational technology, world language pre-service teachers would have opportunities to work more collaboratively in class to help learn about ways to work with students with LD.

Even though flipped classrooms and the inclusion of instructional technology is a relatively new concept considering the advent of technological advances, educational researchers are beginning to call for more opportunities for pre-service teachers to work collaboratively online (Kurtts, Hibbard, & Levin, 2005; and Talbert, 2012). For example, Kurtts, Hibbard, and Levin (2005) suggest that teacher educators must provide pre-service teachers with a wide range of opportunities, including online collaboration, to encourage both general and special education pre-service teachers to observe and discuss strategies and practices for working with students with LD in increasingly diverse inclusive classrooms. By offering more collaborative experiences for pre-service teachers, overall programs shift from ones in which the pre-service teachers are passive learners of knowledge to more active co-constructive partners in learning. Just as university programs should begin to think of ways to offer novel and creative ways to help shape pre-service teachers through coursework before student teaching, university programs should begin to think of novel and creative ways to prepare teachers with more hands-on opportunities for working with students in inclusive settings.

One creative way to assist pre-service teachers learn to work with students with LD during field experiences is to help expose them to experiences outside of their comfort zone. Kisko & Richardson (2010) state that educators must move beyond their comfort levels to view their world from a different perspective, discover alternative

solutions to problems they face, and create new approaches to integrate appropriate ideas into their setting. Some university programs have begun an internationalization of student teaching programs as a way to help offer pre-service teachers the opportunity to develop an appreciation for diversity, develop international perspectives, and to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to work effectively with children and their families from diverse backgrounds in US schools. For example, Lu & Soares (2014), posit that international educational experiences can be a journey to transformative learning; learning that permits a world view to emerge in a context that causes one to question their own values and beliefs throughout continual reflection.

While Lu & Soares' (2014) pilot study followed five pre-service teachers completing student teaching experiences in Taiwan, connections from their findings can be made to pre-service world language teachers learning to work with students with LD in language classrooms. First, their findings conclude that the pre-service teachers had an increased awareness of educational differences between Taiwan and the United States, especially the ways in which students with LD were educated. Second, the pre-service teachers reported increased interactions with members both inside and outside of the school context. They had informal and formal conversations with members of other departments and collaborated to develop ways to help students who were not succeeding in their classrooms. Finally, the pre-service teachers reported more risk-taking to include strategies and methods to assist students who were struggling and a larger appreciation for the existence of multiple viewpoints on education. International student teaching experiences could be beneficial for both pre-service world language and special education teachers to help both groups gain an understanding of language teaching and

learning through collaborative student teaching experiences. The pre-service teachers could then take the information that they learned internationally and help make connections to their own local contexts. This could be beneficial for special education teachers who are also working with English Language Learners as part of their professional responsibilities.

Designing effective experiences for pre-service inclusion teachers for co-teaching domestically, as opposed to the aforementioned international experiences, is an area of research that has been probed recently in programs of teacher preparation. For example, Hildenbrand (2009) created opportunities for pre-service general and special education teachers to collaboratively complete their student teaching experiences co-teaching together in her action research study. The goal of her study was to explore how teacher educators could design effective experiences for pre-service student teachers that would support them in a co-teaching student teaching placement experience in an inclusive classroom as a result of collaboration. Her findings concluded that pre-service general education teachers felt prepared to work collaboratively with special education teachers and that they felt more comfortable to provide accommodations and make modifications for students with LD in inclusive classrooms. Building upon her implications for future research and my recommendation for creative solutions to student teaching experiences, more pre-service world language teachers should have opportunities to co-teach, perhaps for part or all of their student teaching experience, with a pre-service teacher seeking an endorsement in special education. However, for such opportunities to be created there needs to be an increase in the collaboration between public school districts that would

place such dyads and university administrators, personnel, and field placement directors that would look to place them in field experiences.

University administrators could look for ways to help foster collaboration between university site supervisors and public school district administrators of world language departments. Together, the site supervisors and school district administrators could identify specific points that they believe to be the most salient to impart to pre-service teachers as they learn to work with students with LD during their pre-service field experiences as they transition to accepting teaching positions in public school districts. The conversations could also include discussions on implementation of in-class support programs in public school districts and the ways that district-level administrators are providing professional development experiences to current teachers about working collaboratively with teachers from departments of special education.

Using the information provided in this dissertation, researchers can begin to cautiously apply the findings to examine state and federal policies guiding inclusionary practices and teacher preparation programs. Given the three findings here, we can look at policy in two ways. First, we can examine the state regulations and various interpretations of the regulations that guide the amount of time or credits that pre-service teachers are exposed to through coursework introducing them to working with students with LD. Second, we can examine the regulations that guide the student teaching experience and the ways that pre-service teachers are paired with cooperating teachers. Taken together, an examination of the policies guiding pre-service teacher preparation could help us understand why pre-service teachers do not feel prepared for working with

students with LD in their world language classrooms upon graduation from teacher preparation programs.

While Baytown University only represents one small teacher preparation program in New Jersey, countless world language teacher preparation programs exist across the nation with varying degrees of collaboration with special education. Each institution is bound by the same federal regulations; however, State departments of education shape the programs at a more local level. The rich data that might be gathered and analyzed from future studies based on findings put forth in this dissertation could possibly help move the field of world language teacher preparation forward so that language students with LD in classrooms can reap the eventual benefits of best practices from their teachers who are well trained to teach them.

#### **Commentary on current trends in teacher education**

At the time of writing of this dissertation, the NJDOE has proposed an amendment to the State Board of Education outlining new policies for enhancing preparation and certification requirements for pre-service teachers to increase novice teacher effectiveness (NJDOE, 2015). Taken together, the recommendations put forward in this dissertation and the proposed amendments to teacher preparation programs in New Jersey could help offer guidance to institutions of higher learning, local school districts, and world language classroom teachers who work with students with LD. The recommendations made in this commentary section might help educators at all levels to support pre-service world language teachers as they prepare to work with students with LD in their future classrooms, regardless of the program in which they seek their initial endorsements. The NJDOE (2015) focuses on four areas to improve teacher preparation:

attracting strong candidates to the profession; updating preparation requirements; demonstrating individual performance; and providing programs with data and support. I will now review each of the NJDOE recommendations in turn, adding my own analysis informed by the findings of this dissertation study.

First, the NJDOE proposes that teacher education programs need to attract the best and brightest teacher candidates into preparation programs by raising entry requirements. Currently, for example, New Jersey schools of education require a grade point average (GPA) that is lower than neighboring states and other professions (NJDOE, 2015). The recommendation is to become more selective in acceptance of candidates into teacher preparation programs by raising the minimum GPA from a 2.75 to a 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) while standardizing basic skills requirements. Data was not collected through this research that focused on GPA results of the candidates; therefore, I cannot offer a formal proposal to raising GPA requirements. However, I do believe that it is necessary for candidates to have experiences in working with diverse populations and diverse learners. For example, instead of just requiring a higher GPA, the NJDOE should require a 3-credit course for world language teachers to work specifically in inclusionary classrooms and with students with LD. Pre-service world language teachers can learn to teach with a cooperating teacher from special education and learn how an IEP and 504 plan are created and enacted. Courses that attempt to expose pre-service teachers to working with both English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with LD under the umbrella term of working with “diverse learners” are not adequately preparing pre-service teachers to work with either ELLs or students with LD. A strong understanding of working with students with LD, or being a candidate with an LD who is familiar with IEPs and 504

plans, can benefit teacher candidates as they learn to differentiate instruction, make accommodations, and provide modifications for future students with LD in their world language classrooms.

Second, the NJDOE has crafted recommendations to update preparation requirements based on the difficulties of retaining teachers within the field who claim hardships working during their initial years after graduation from teacher preparation programs. For example, more than three in five pre-service teachers who graduated with bachelor's degrees in teaching/education report that their school of education did not prepare them for "classroom realities" (Levine, 2006). One way to help pre-service world language teachers gain experience in working with students with LD is to provide the pre-service teachers with richer clinical experiences during student teaching as a way to provide them with high-quality preparation that is grounded in enhanced K-12 classroom experiences (NJDOE, 2015). Rather than having pre-service teachers complete the student teaching experience over the course of one semester, or fifteen weeks, the NJDOE is proposing that pre-service teachers should participate in a student teaching experience over the course of one school year with at least 50 hours of practicum prior to entering the classroom (NJDOE, 2015).

As I have argued, pre-service teachers do not simply need more time student teaching, they need more quality time in working with cooperating teachers who believe in inclusive education and who are able to impart methods and strategies to help students with LD grow in world language classrooms. In addition, pre-service teachers need to be given opportunities to observe language classrooms with students with LD and observe ways that language teachers deftly adapt lessons and units to accommodate the various

needs of all students. Thus, simply increasing the requirement from fifteen weeks to thirty weeks of student teaching will not be enough for pre-service teachers to learn to work with students with LD. A shift must occur in the ways that pre-service teachers are paired with cooperating teachers.

In order to help facilitate improved pre-service teacher and cooperating teacher partnerships, I propose that university field placement directors need to play a larger role in the placement process. The role of the field placement director needs to shift from being one that is more managerial to one in which they act as agents of change. Together, the field placement director, university site supervisors, placement school administrators, and cooperating teachers need to communicate openly and frankly about the strengths and weaknesses that are witnessed in the pre-service teacher candidates from specific university programs. More communication needs to take place amongst the stakeholders to help address specific emerging areas of need for student teachers in particular, whether it is in bridging research to practice in more “hands on” activities to help students with LD in world language classrooms or if it is in building rapport with high-risk students in student teaching placement classrooms. From data collected during this case study, it is clear that the field placement director plays a very large role in the pre-service teacher preparation program at Baytown University and is bound to constantly search for appropriate partnerships. Depending upon the year and the content area of the pre-service teachers, cooperating teachers can be very difficult to find. The NJDOE is proposing improved incentives for school districts and classroom teachers to host student teachers. However, what might be included in improved incentives is not clearly delineated in the recommendations to the State Board of Education (NJDOE,

2015). Through the recommendations set forth in this research study, along with my role as an administrator in a public school district in New Jersey, I understand that school budgets and state resources for incentive programs are very limited. Therefore, program incentives need to be such so that there is minimal or no cost to school districts or teacher preparation programs in universities.

In light my understanding of public school evaluation models, I propose that any cooperating teacher who agrees to work collaboratively with a pre-service world language teacher from a university teacher preparation program should be exempt from having student growth objective percentages factored into their final evaluation for the year in which they work with a student teacher. For example, according to the “Teacher Effectiveness and Accountability for the Children of New Jersey” Act (NJDOE, 2012), all teachers are evaluated on multiple measures of student achievement and teacher practice as measured by new evaluation procedures. The evaluation requirements set forth in the TEACHNJ Act (NJDOE, 2012) do not apply to every teaching staff member in the same manner; however, all teachers are evaluated, in part, on student growth data collected over the course of the year. The percentages of student growth factored into the final evaluation score for a teacher vary depending upon the subject area taught and the year of implementation of the legislation. From the onset, one critique of the TEACHNJ Act (NJDOE, 2012) from teachers and administrators was that teachers would be unwilling to work with student teachers because they would then have less control over the student growth outcomes over the course of the time period of the student teaching experience. Another initial critique, specifically from teachers of special education, was that factoring student growth into teacher evaluations was not a fair assessment because

students with LD often might not make as much growth as their peers without LD within a given year. Then, by increasing the time of the student teaching experience, in addition to waiving student growth percentages in summative teacher evaluation scores, more world language and special education teachers might be willing to work with student teachers.

Novice world language teachers need to learn how to create appropriate assessments to demonstrate student growth through a trial and error process without the pressure of risking university graduation or a final teaching certification based on student growth during the student teaching experience. Likewise, the pressure of possibly harming the final evaluative score for the cooperating teacher should not be factored into the thirty-week student teaching experience. Should the data collected during the course of the year as part of student growth objectives not yield positive results, the scores should not count towards the evaluation of the cooperating teacher. Although, if the results yield positive scores, then the cooperating teacher should have the opportunity to have the scores count towards his/her summative evaluation. I am proposing the system of evaluative exemption for cooperating teachers because it would not cost districts or the NJDOE any money and it would help allay the fears of possible cooperating teachers concerned with low evaluative scores based on the results of a student teacher. The support of NJ State Legislators would be necessary to enact such changes because the TEACHNJ Act (2012) is a New Jersey State Law and any changes to it must be approved by the NJ State Legislature and, finally, by the Governor.

Third, the NJDOE is proposing a requirement in which teacher candidates are to demonstrate mastery of important teaching competencies throughout preparation and

during the initial years of teaching (NJDOE, 2015). One way that the NJDOE is proposing to help pre-service teachers demonstrate rigorous teaching competencies is by allowing for multiple years of experience before gaining a standard certificate, as opposed to the current one year requirement. In addition, a proposal is being made to require the use of multiple measures of performance to earn a standard certificate. I propose that all pre-service and novice teachers, specifically world language teachers, should have to demonstrate an understanding of working with students with LD in inclusive settings before attaining a standard certificate. Since many school districts in New Jersey approach the teaching of world languages differently, multiple measures of performance should be left to the individual district. Still, the NJDOE can provide guidance by creating rubrics, perhaps, to give novice teachers feedback on the ways that they are making accommodations and providing modifications for their students with LD. Or, the NJDOE could possibly allow novice world language teachers to demonstrate an understanding of working with students with LD by creating a portfolio of lessons that they have created following the IEPs and 504 plans of their own students. It is important for pre-service and novice teachers to learn more specific strategies to make accommodations and modifications to their world language lessons, units, and assessments.

Preparing pre-service teachers to work with students with LD should then occur in four different arenas: in pre-service teacher education courses, in experiences in working with or observing classrooms with students with LD prior to the student teaching experience, in experiences working with students with LD in the student teaching classroom, and in the first few years of teaching before earning a standard certificate.

Pre-service world language teachers must first learn through university coursework how to use information included in an IEP or 504 plan to modify lessons to the specific needs of their students. Next, without exposure to working with students with diverse needs, pre-service teachers will not be able to grow in their own understanding of where to turn to in order to gather appropriate resources for assisting them in the world language classroom. Having “hands on” experiences in working with students with LD is one of the best ways for pre-service world language teachers to learn how to differentiate their lessons based on the various needs of students in their classrooms. As pre-service teachers gain more experiences in understanding strategies and methodologies that may assist students with LD in world language classrooms, they may develop a stronger sense of self-efficacy in teaching students with LD. Thus, in turn, they will become novice teachers with a strong understanding of how to work with students with LD.

Since the NJDOE is proposing multiple years of experience and multiple measures of performance before granting a standard certificate, I propose that stronger ties should be built between university schools of education and their alumni. For example, university alumni can help inform university administrators and professors about the difficulties and hardships that they face upon their first years of teaching. The novice teachers can also act as bridges to support veteran teachers in their school districts to share the most current methodologies and strategies for working with students with LD in world language classrooms. If the NJDOE is going to require multiple years of experience before granting a teacher a standard certificate, then I believe that it is the responsibility of the university to help their program graduates attain the standard

certificate. Universities can make this happen by keeping in contact with their young alumni to assist the novice teachers as they embark on their new careers.

The young alumni can act as ambassadors of change to help bridge the research and theory that is being taught at the university with the practical realities of teaching in public schools. This recommendation is not being made thinking that alumni outreach is not taking place, nor is the recommendation being made thinking that universities are not preparing pre-service for attaining a standard certification, but rather, the recommendation is being made to harness the potential of recent graduates to help inform university administrators and professors of the realities of the school districts in which novice teachers are working. Together, the collaboration can help benefit university program administrators, professors, field placement directors, and site supervisors, in addition to local school districts, cooperating teachers, pre-service and novice teachers, and ultimately, the world language learners both with and without LD in NJ classrooms. In other words, the young alumni / novice teachers can help universities and local school districts build stronger ties with one another to continue conversations about the best ways to help teachers work with students with LD.

Finally, the fourth proposal is for the NJDOE to be able to collect and analyze a wealth of data from the three aforementioned proposed amendments to teacher preparation programs in NJ to deeply study teacher preparation practices. The NJDOE is proposing that data can be gleaned from three levels: NJ State level, program level, and candidate-level. The NJDOE will gather information about how raising the standards and requiring more time during the student teaching experience, for example, will impact novice teacher preparation and performance. University programs will be able to identify

trends in placement, performance, and persistence of graduates from a particular program. Candidates will be able to use data to help them identify programs that best meet their needs and provide them with information to help them decide which grade level / content-area to pursue (NJDOE, 2015). I propose that not only should information drive action on three distinct levels, but amongst the levels as well as including the district-level.

For example, in order for novice teachers to attain a standard certificate in New Jersey, they must be evaluated by an administrator in their school district based on information gathered by the New Jersey Office of Licensure and Credentials: Provisional Teacher Program demonstrating that they have mastered topics delineated in N.J.A.C. 6A:9-11.1(e) (NJDOE, 2014). Topics in 6A:9-11.1(e) (NJDOE, 2014) include: curriculum, instruction, and assessment; student learning and development; responsive learning environment; and school and community. School district administrators are charged with providing evidence based on the level of mastery the provisional teacher has attained across the categories.

Therefore, I propose that the provisional teachers should be given the opportunity to respond to each category based on the way that they feel they were prepared to attain mastery from their teacher preparation programs. Then, the information provided by the novice teachers can be included as a way to triangulate data analysis from information gathered from cooperating teachers, school districts, university site supervisors, professors and program administrators, state agencies. The collection of data from novice teachers will help provide a voice to them so that changes being made to teacher preparation programs are being made with them and not to them. In addition, teachers

and school district administrators may be more apt to undertake action research, or research with research questions that impact their own school districts and student populations, if they believe that their results will be given consideration from other agencies outside of their classrooms. Collaboration between departments of world language and special education may then also be fostered by teachers and administrators who believe in inclusive world language education for all students. Information about methods and strategies to help students with specific LDs can then come from the research that is taking place in contemporary language classrooms and can then be shared as best practices with all world language teachers across New Jersey through university teacher preparation programs.

All of the aforementioned recommendations require support and funding in order to be executed properly and to train pre-service teachers to become more effective in their practices. The recommendations should be viewed as a way to open opportunities for more collaboration amongst stakeholders and to help give pre-service teachers the knowledge and tools necessary to make an impact in world language classrooms. Taken together, the recommendations can be applied specifically to assist pre-service world language teachers as they learn to make accommodations and modifications for their students with LD. Ultimately, the goal is to assist pre-service and novice world language teachers learn to best meet the needs of their students, particularly those with LD.

### **Limitations of the study**

A larger discussion of limitations for this overall study is presented in chapter 3; however, it is important to review two larger limitations of this chapter focusing on the study's implications and recommendations for future research. First, this study was

conducted with a small number of pre-service teacher participants. Of the five pre-service teachers who agreed to participate in this study, only two were placed in public school classrooms with students with LD as part of their student teaching field placement. In addition, only one of the pre-service teachers was enrolled in Baytown's dual endorsement teacher education program. The small number of pre-service teacher participants enrolled in this case study make it difficult to generalize the findings of this research to larger university teacher preparation programs.

Second, the questions from the protocols used during the interviews of pre-service teachers did not include prompts to elicit information about the ways that pre-service world language teachers believed they were learning how to assess the needs of their students with LD and the ways that the pre-service teachers worked to respond to those needs. The information that was gathered from the pre-service teachers focused on the ways that they used the information already given in IEPs and 504 plans to help provide accommodations and make modifications to their lessons. Nonetheless, the teacher responses provide insights into the ways that the pre-service teachers grew in their overall understanding of working with students with LD.

### **Chapter and study conclusion**

As more students with special needs are enrolling in world language classrooms in public schools in New Jersey, it is the role of university pre-service teacher preparation programs to expose world language teachers to understanding the various needs of students with LD that will enroll in their courses. As the findings of this case study indicate, the pre-service teachers from one university pre-service teacher education program enrolled in a single-endorsement track were not being adequately prepared to

work with students with special needs in either their coursework or field experiences upon graduation. In contrast, however, the pre-service teacher enrolled in the dual-endorsement program at Baytown University did feel prepared to work with students with special needs based on her coursework experiences and field placement sites before she graduated from the program. Her case is one that could be used as a model for university members charged with creating and administering pre-service world language teacher programs.

University administrators and professors at Baytown University were confined by their interpretation of credit-maximum limits by the State Department of Education in New Jersey and, therefore, created a specific course to help expose pre-service teachers to working with students with diverse needs in general. However, the pre-service teachers who enrolled in the course did not feel that it was adequate for them to learn about strategies and methodologies for working with students with special needs in either their field placements or first positions teaching in public schools. The university should take advantage of opportunities to gather data from their recent graduates to gain insight into the effectiveness of the overall program in terms of preparing pre-service teachers for their first positions teaching.

World Language teachers need to be provided with experiences and opportunities for understanding working with students with special needs in their classrooms as more students with LD are enrolling in their courses. It is the role of the world language teacher to use the IEPs and section 504 plans available to them to provide appropriate accommodations and modifications for the students in their classrooms. They can then work with their colleagues to impact larger-scale change in working with students with

special needs in their classrooms. Together, the pre-service teachers/novice teachers and more seasoned world language teachers can collaborate with special education teachers to provide students with an appropriate world language education. All students should have access to opportunities to learn another language to help understand culture on a larger scale to be able to find success in a multicultural and plurilinguistic 21<sup>st</sup> century. This study then adds to the larger field of world language teacher preparation because it underscores the importance of solid mentorship, positive field experiences, and personal experiences to help pre-service teachers grow in their understanding of working with students with LD.

### References

- Abdallah, J. (2009). Benefits of co-teaching for ESL classrooms. *Academic Leadership*, 7(1). Retrieved March 14, 2010 from: [http://www.academicleadership.org/emprical\\_research/532.shtml](http://www.academicleadership.org/emprical_research/532.shtml)
- American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) (2012). Program Standards for the Preparation of Foreign Language Teachers. Retrieved April 17, 2010 from: <http://www.actfl.org/files/public/ncate2002.pdf>.
- American Psychiatric Association. (2000). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (4<sup>th</sup> ed., text revision). Washington, DC: Author.
- American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (5<sup>th</sup> ed., text revision). Washington, DC: Author.
- Arthaud, T.J., Aram, R.J., Breck, S.E., Doelling, J.E., & Bushrow, K.M. (2007). Developing collaboration skills in pre-service teachers: A partnership between general and special education. *Teacher Education and Special Education*, 30, 1-12.
- Artiles, A.J., Rueda, R., Salazar, J., & Higareda, I. (2002). English-language learner representation in special education in California urban school districts. In D. Losen & G. Orfield (Eds.), *Racial Inequity in Special Education* [pp.117-136]. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.
- Artiles, A.J., Kozleski, E.B., Dorn, S., & Christensen, C. (2006). Learning in inclusive education research: Re-mediating theory and methods with a transformative agenda. *Review of Research in Education*, 30, 65-108.
- Ashby, C. (2012). Disability studies and inclusive teacher preparation: A socially just path for teacher education. *Research & Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities*, 37(2), 89-99.
- Asher, J. (1977). Children learning another language: A developmental hypothesis. *Child Development*, 48, 1040-1048
- Bahamonde, C. (1999). Teaching English language learners: A proposal for effective service and delivery through collaboration and co-teaching. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation*, 10(1), 1-24.
- Bain, A., Lancaster, J., Zundans, L., & Parkes, R.J. (2009). Embedding evidence-based practice in pre-service teacher preparation. *Teacher Education and Special Education*, 32(3), 215-225.

- Bergmann, J., & Sams, A. (2012). *Flip your own classroom. Talk to every student in every class every day.* Eugene, OR: International Society for Technology in Education.
- Bernadowski, C., Perry, R., & DelGreco, R. (2013). Improving pre-service teachers' self-efficacy through service learning: Lessons learned. *International Journal of Instruction, 6*(2), 67-86.
- Berridge, G.G., & Goebel, V. (2013). Student teachers speak out! *Action in Teacher Education, 35*, 418-425.
- Bodrova, E., & Leong, D.J. (2007). *Tools of the mind: The Vygotskian approach to early childhood education.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Bott-VanHouten, J., Hoyt-Oukada, K., & Scow, V. (2003). *New directions in the preparation of foreign language teachers.* Position paper, National Council of State Supervisors of Foreign Languages.
- Bradley, R., Danielson, L., & Hallahan, D.P. (Eds.). (2002). *Identification of learning disabilities: Research to practice.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Brandes, J. A. (2005, March). *Strategies, accommodations, and modifications: Ensuring success for all students.* Purcell, OK: Purcell Public Schools.
- Brownell, M.T., Ross, D.R., Colón, E.P., & McCallum, C.L. (2003). *Critical features of special education teacher preparation: A comparison with exemplary practices in general teacher education. (COPSSE Document Number RS-4).* Gainesville, FL: University of Florida, Center on Personnel Studies in Special Education.
- Carroll, J., & Sapon, S. (1959). *Modern Language Aptitude Test (MLAT): Manual.* San Antonio, TX: Psychological Corp.
- Case, R.E., & Taylor, S.S. (2005). Language difference or learning disability?: Answers from a linguistic perspective. *The Clearing House, January/February*, 127-130.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2014). CDC Estimates 1 in 68 children has been identified with autism spectrum disorder. Retrieved October 10, 2014 from: <http://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2014/p0327-autism-spectrum-disorder.html>
- Chapman, R.S. (2007). Children's language learning: An interactionist perspective. In R. Paul (Ed.). *Language disorders from a developmental perspective* (pp. 1-53). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

- Conderman, G., Johnston-Rodriguez, S., Hartman, P., & Walker, D. (2012). Honoring voices from beginning special educators for making changes in teacher preparation. *Teacher Education and Special Education, 36*(1), 65-76.
- Connelly, V. & Graham, S. (2009). *Student teaching and teacher attrition in special education. Teacher Education and Special Education, 32* (3), 257-269.
- Cooper, T.C. (2004). *How foreign language teachers in Georgia evaluate their professional preparation: A call to action. Foreign Language Annals, 37*, 37-48.
- Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (1990). Grounded theory research: Procedures, canons, and evaluative criteria. *Qualitative Sociology, 13*(1), 3-21.
- Cresswell, J. W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Crombie, M.A. (2000). Dyslexia and the learning of a foreign language in school: Where are we going? *Dyslexia, 6*, 112-123.
- Darling-Hammond, L., & Bransford, J. (Eds.) (2005). *Preparing teachers for a changing world: What teachers should know and be able to do*. San Francisco, CA: Wiley Jossey-Bass.
- Doody, O. & O'Connor, M. (2012). The influence of teacher practice placement on one's beliefs about intellectual disability: A student's reflection. *Support for Learning: British Journal of Learning Support, 27*(3), 113-118.
- Downey, D., Snyder, L., & B. Hill (2000). College students with dyslexia: Persistent linguistic deficits and foreign language learning. *Dyslexia, 6*, 101-111.
- Dubinsky, J.M., Roehrig, G., Varma, S. (2013). Infusing neuroscience into teacher professional development. *Educational Researcher, 42*(6), 317-329.
- Dunn, L.M. (1968). Special education for the mildly retarded: Is much of it justified? *Exceptional Children, 35*, 5-22.
- Eggen, P. D., & Kauchak, D. P. (2001). *Strategies for teachers: Teaching content and thinking skills* (4th ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Farrell, T.S.C. (2012). Novice-service language teacher development: Bridging the gap between pre-service and in-service education and development. *TESOL Quarterly, 46*(3), 435-449.
- Ferguson, D.L. (1996). Is it inclusion yet? Bursting the bubbles. In M.S. Berres, D.L. Ferguson, P. Knoblock, & C. Woods (Eds.). *Creating tomorrow's schools today:*

- Stories of inclusion, change, and renewal* (pp. 16-37). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Field, P.A. & Morse, J.M. (1985). *Nursing research: The application of qualitative approaches*. Rockville, MD: Aspen Systems.
- Fillmore, L.W., & Snow, C.E. (2000). What teachers need to know about language. *ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics*. Retrieved November 07, 2010 from <http://www.cal.org/ericll/teachers/teachers.pdf>
- Fisher, A.C. (2007). Creating a discourse of difference. *Education, Citizenship, and Social Justice*, 2, 159-192.
- Florian, L. (2006). Teaching strategies: For some or for all? *Kairaranga*, 7, 24-27.
- Fox, R.K., & Diaz-Greenberg, R. (2006). Culture, multiculturalism, and foreign/ world language standards in U.S. teacher preparation programs: toward a discourse of dissonance. *European Journal of Teacher Education* 29(3) 401–422.
- Friend, M., Reising, M., & Cook, L. (1993). Co-teaching: An overview of the past, a glimpse at the present, and considerations for the future. *Preventing School Failure*, 37(4), 6-10.
- Friend, M. (2000). Myths and understandings about professional collaboration. *Remedial and Special Education*, 21, 130-132, 160.
- Fullerton, A. Ruben, B.J., McBride, S., & Bert, S. (2011). Development and design of a merged secondary and special education teacher preparation program. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 27-44.
- Gearing, R. (2004). Bracketing in research: A typology. *Qualitative Health Research* 14(10), 1429-1452.
- Gersten, R., Vaughn, S., Deshler, D., & Schiller, E. (1997). What we know about using research findings: Implications for improving special education practice. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 30, 466–476.
- Glesne, C. (1999). *Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction* (2nd ed.). Don Mills, Ontario, Canada: Longman.
- Golmic, B.A., & Hansen, M.A. (2012). Attitudes, sentiments, and concerns of pre-service teachers after their included experience. *International Journal of Special Education*, 27 (1), 27-36.

- Greenwood, G.E., & Fillmer, H.T. (1999). *Educational psychology cases for teacher decision-making*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Griffiths, M. (1998). *Educational research for social justice: Getting off the fence*. Philadelphia, PA: Open University Press.
- Griffiths, C., & Parr, J.M. (2001). Language-learning strategies: Theory and perception. *ELT Journal*, 55(3), 247-254.
- Grima-Farrell, C.R., Long, J., Bentley-Williams, R., & Laws, C. (2014). A school system and university approach to reducing the research to practice gap in teacher education: A collaborative special education immersion project. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 39(5), 89-98.
- Grskovic, J.A. & Trzcinka, S.M. (2011). Essential standards for preparing secondary content teachers to effectively teach students with mild disabilities in included settings. *American Secondary Education*, 39(2), 94-106.
- Guba, E. G. (1978). *Toward a methodology of naturalistic inquiry in educational evaluation. Monograph 8*. Los Angeles: UCLA Center for the Study of Evaluation.
- Harr, J.J., Parrish, T., & Chambers, J. (2008). 32: Special Education. In H.F. Ladd and E.B. Fiske (Eds.), *Handbook of research in education finance and policy* (pp. 573-591), New York, NY: Routledge.
- Hildenbrand, S.M. (2009). *Designing effective experiences for pre-service inclusion teachers for co-teaching: An action research study* (Doctoral dissertation). University of Rochester. Retrieved from UMI Dissertations Publishing. 3367263.
- Heller, K., Holtzman, W., & Messick, S. (1982). *Placing children in special education: A strategy for equity*. Washington, DC: National Academy of Science Press.
- Holland, D., Detgen, A., & Gutekunst, L. (2008). *Preparing elementary school teachers in the southeast region to work with students with disabilities*. Report of the Southeast Regional Educational Laboratory at SERVE Center, Institute of Education Science, U.S. Department of Education.
- Hu, C. (2003). Phonological memory, phonological awareness, and foreign language word learning. *Language Learning*, 53, 429-462.
- Idol, L. (2006). Toward inclusion of special education students in general education. *Remedial and Special Education*, 27, 77-94.

- Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA), Pub.L.No. 108-446, 118 Stat. 2647 (2004) [Amending 20 U.S.C. § § 1400 et seq.]
- Ingersoll, R. (2001). Teacher turnover and teacher shortages: An organizational analysis. *American Educational Research Journal*, 38(3), 499-534.
- Ingersoll, R. (2002). The teacher shortage: A case of wrong diagnosis and wrong prescription. *The NASSP Bulletin*, 86, 16-31.
- Ingersoll, R. (2003). *Is there really a teacher shortage?* (A report co-sponsored by the Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy and the Center for Policy Research in Education). Seattle: University of Washington, Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy.
- Ingersoll, R. (2004). Four myths about America's teacher quality problem. In M.A. Smylie & D. Miretzky (Eds.), *Developing the teacher workforce: The 103<sup>rd</sup> yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education* (pp. 1-33). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Kamens, M.W. (2007). Learning about teaching: A collaborative student teaching experience for pre-service teachers. *Teacher Education and Special Education*, 30, 155-156.
- Kaufman, M.J., Agard, J.A., & Semmel, M.I. (1986). *Mainstreaming learners and their environment*. Cambridge, MA: Brookline.
- Kavale, K., & Forness, S. (1985). *The science of learning disabilities*. San Diego, CA: College Hill Press.
- Kavale, K., & Forness, S. (2000). History, rhetoric, and reality: Analysis of the inclusion debate. *Remedial and Special Education*, 5, 279-296.
- Keener, C.D. & Bargerhuff, M.E. (2006). Graduate intervention specialists' responses to an introductory practicum: Implications for teacher educators. *Education* 127(2), 216-230.
- Keirn, T., & Luhr, E. (2012). Subject matter counts: The pre-service teaching and learning of historical thinking. *The History Teacher*, 45(4), 493-511.
- Kindle, K.J., & Schmidt, C.M. (2013). Developing pre-service teachers: A self-study of instructor scaffolding. *Reading Development*, 50(3), 83-100.
- King-Sears, M.E., Carran, D.T., Dammann, S.N., & Arter, P.S. (2012). Multi-site analyses of special education and general education student teachers' skill rating

- for working with students with disabilities. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, Spring, 131-149.
- Kirk, S. (1962). *Educating exceptional children*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.
- Kissau, S., & Algozzine, B. (2013). Foreign language student-teaching: Do supervisor qualifications really matter? *Foreign Language Annals*, 46 (2), 175-190.
- Kissock, C., & Richardson, P. (2010). Calling for action within the teaching profession: It is time to internationalize teacher education. *Journal of Research in International Education*, 21(1), 89-101.
- Kolbe, T., McLaughlin, M.J., & Mason, L.M. (2007). *Special education funding in New Jersey: A policy analysis*. Retrieved from Education Law Center website: [http://www.edlawcenter.org/ELCPublic/Publications/PDF/Special\\_Education\\_Funding\\_in\\_NewJersey.pdf](http://www.edlawcenter.org/ELCPublic/Publications/PDF/Special_Education_Funding_in_NewJersey.pdf)
- Krashen, S. (1977) Some issues relating to the Monitor Model. In H. D. Brown, C. Yorio and R. Crymes (Eds.) *Teaching and Learning English as a Second Language: Trends in Research and Practice*. Washington: TESOL, 144-158.
- Kuder, S.J. (2003). *Teaching students with language and communication disabilities*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Boston, MA: Pearson Education.
- Kurtts, S., Hibbard, K., & Levin, B. (2005). Collaborative online problem solving with pre-service general education and special education teachers. *Journal of Technology and Teacher Education*, 13 (3), 397-414.
- Labov, W. (1972). *Language in the inner city*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Lange, D.L., & Sims, W.R. (1990). Minnesota foreign language teachers' perceptions of their professional preparedness. *The Modern Language Journal*, 74, 297-310.
- Larsen-Freeman, D. (2000). *Teaching and principles in language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Leblanc, L., Richardson, W., & Burns, K.A. (2009). Autism spectrum disorder and the inclusive classroom: Effective training to enhance knowledge of ASD and evidence based practices. *Teacher Education and Special Education*, 32(2), 166-179.
- Levine, A. (2006). *Educating school teachers: The Education schools project* (Report No. 2). Retrieved from [http://www.edschools.org/pdf/Educating\\_Teachers\\_Report.pdf](http://www.edschools.org/pdf/Educating_Teachers_Report.pdf)

- Lincoln, Y.S. & Guba, E.G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.
- Lipsky, D.K., & Gartner, A. (1997). *Inclusion and school reform: Transforming America's classrooms*. Baltimore, MD: Brookes.
- Loreman, T., Sharma, U., & Forlin, C. (2013). Do pre-service-teachers feel ready to teach in inclusive classrooms? A four country study of teaching self-efficacy. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 38(1), 27-44.
- Losen, D.J., & Orfield, G. (2002). *Racial inequity in special education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Lu, H.L., & Soares, L. (2014). US elementary pre-service teachers' experiences while teaching students in Taiwan. *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 14 (1), 59-74.
- Lyon, G.R., Fletcher, J.M., Shaywitz, S.E., Shaywitz, B.A., Torgesen, J.K., Wood, F.B., Schulte, A. & Olson, R. (2001). Rethinking learning disabilities. In Rethinking special education for a new century. C.E. Finn, A.J. Rotherham & C.R. Hokanson (Eds.) Washington, D.C.: Thomas B. Fordham Foundation and the Progressive Policy Institute.
- MacMillan, D.L., Semmel, M.L., & Gerber, M.M. (1994). The social context of Dunn: Then and now. *The Journal of Special Education*, 27, 466-480.
- Maloy, R.W., Edwards, S.A., & Evans, A. (2014). Wikis, workshops, and writing: Strategies for flipping a college community engagement case. *Journal of Educators Online*, 11(1), 1-23.
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G.B. (2006). *Designing Qualitative Research* (fourth Edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- McHatton, P.A. & Daniel, P.L. (2008). Co-teaching at the pre-service level: Special education majors collaborate with English education majors. *Teacher Education and Special Education*, 31(2), 118-131.
- McKenzie, R.G. (2009). A national survey of pre-service preparation for collaboration. *Teacher Education and Special Education*, 32, 379-393.
- McLaughlin, M.J. (2010). Evolving interpretations of educational equity and students with disabilities. *Exceptional Children*, 76(3), 265-278.

- Mercer, C.D., & Mercer, A.R. (2005). *Teaching students with learning problems (7th ed.)*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
- Mosher, E.K., Hastings, A.H., & Wagoner, J.L. (1979). *Pursuing equal opportunity: School politics and the new activists*. New York, NY: ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education, Teachers College, Columbia University.
- Müller, E., & Burdette, P. (2007). Highly qualified teachers and special education: Several state approaches. In *Forum NASDSE Brief Policy Analysis*, 1-10.
- National Center for Improving Personnel Preparation in Special Education (2012). Retrieved September 18, 2014 from <http://ncipp.education.ufl.edu>.
- National Council for Accreditation of Colleges of Education (2006). *Professional standards for the accreditation of schools, colleges and departments of education*. Retrieved April 17, 2010 from <http://www.ncate.org/public/standards.asp>.
- National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities (2010). Retrieved November 14, 2010 from: <http://www.nichcy.org/EducateChildren/placement/Pages/placement-LRE.aspx>.
- New Jersey Department of Education (2004). *New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers and School Leaders*. Retrieved April 17, 2010 from: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/profdev/profstand/standards.pdf>.
- New Jersey Department of Education (2005, August 26). *N.J.A.C. 6A: Chapter 8 Standards and Assessment*. Retrieved November 16, 2007 from: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/aps/cccs/wl>
- New Jersey Department of Education (2006). *N.J.A.C. 6A: Chapter 14: Special Education*. Retrieved November 16, 2007 from: <http://www.nj.gov/education/code/current/title6a/chap14.pdf>
- New Jersey Department of Education. (2009). *New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standard for world languages*. Trenton, NJ: Author.
- New Jersey Department of Education (2012). *Teacher Effectiveness and Accountability for the Children of New Jersey (TEACHNJ Act)*. Retrieved March 31, 2015 from: [http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2012/Bills/PL12/26\\_.PDF](http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2012/Bills/PL12/26_.PDF)
- New Jersey Department of Education (2014). *New Jersey Administrative Code: Chapter 9 – Professional Standards*. Retrieved November 3, 2014 from: <http://www.nj.gov/education/code/current/title6a/chap9.pdf>

- New Jersey Department of Education (2015). *Enhancing Preparation & Certification to Increase Novice Teacher Effectiveness: Presentation of Proposed Amendments to State Board of Education*. Retrieved March 24, 2015 from:  
<http://www.state.nj.us/education/sboe/meetings/2015/February/public/N%20J%20A%20C%206A-9%209A%209B%209C%20Final%20State%20Board%20Powerpoint.pdf>
- Niles, W.J. & Cohen, A. (2012). A case based analysis preparation strategy for use in a classroom management for inclusive settings course: Preliminary observations. *SRATE Journal*, 21(1), 44-54.
- No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, Pub. L. No. 107-110, § 115, Stat. 1425.
- North West Special Education Needs Regional Partnership (2004). *Children with autism: Strategies for accessing the curriculum: Modern Foreign Languages*. London: Department for Education and Skills.
- Ortíz, P. (1991). Assessing appropriate and inappropriate referral systems for LEP special education students. Proceedings of the Second National Research Symposium on Limited English Students Issues: Focus on Evaluation and Measurement. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs.
- Otis-Wilborn, A., Winn, J., Griffin, C., & Kilgore, K. (2005). Beginning special educators' forays into general education. *Teacher Education and Special Education*, 28, 143-152.
- Oxford, R. (1990). *Language learning strategies: What every teacher should know*. New York, NY: Newbury House.
- Oxford, R. L. (2003). *Language learning styles and strategies: An overview*. Learning Styles & Strategies/Oxford, GALA, 1-25
- Parkinson, G.M. (2002). High incidence of language disorder in children with focal epilepsies. *Developmental Medicine & Child Neurology*, 44, 533-537.
- Patton, M.Q. (2002). *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Pearson, S. & Chambers, G. (2005). A successful recipe? Aspects of the initial training of secondary teachers of foreign languages. *Support for Learning*, 20(3), 115-122.
- Piper, T. (2003). *Language and learning: Home and school years*. 3rd Ed. Columbus, OH: Merrill / Prentice Hall.

- Platt, E., Harper, C., & Mendoza, M.B. (2003). Dueling philosophies: Inclusion or separation for Florida's English Language Learners? *TESOL Quarterly*, 37(1), 105-133.
- Portocarrero, G., and Bergin, J. (1997, March). *Developing literacy: A co-teaching model using readers' and writers' workshop*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Orlando, FL.
- Pugach, M.C., & Blanton, L.P. (2009). A framework for conducting research on collaborative teacher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 25, 575-582.
- Pugach, M.C., & Blanton, L.P. (2012). Enacting diversity in dual certification programs. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 63(4), 254-267.
- Reed, D., & Stansfield, C. (2004). Using the modern language aptitude test to identify a foreign language learning disability: Is it ethical? *Language Assessment Quarterly*, 1, 161-176.
- Reynolds, C.R. (1984). Critical measurement issues in learning disabilities. *Journal of Special Education*, 18, 451-476.
- Reschly, D.J. (2005). LD identification: Primary intervention, secondary intervention, and then what? *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 38(6), 510-515.
- Rice, M.L. (Ed.). (1996). *Toward a genetics of language*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Ross, A.D. (1976). *Psychological aspects of learning disabilities and reading disorders*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Rowe, M.B. (1986). Wait time: Slowing down may be a way of speeding up! *Journal of Teacher Education*, 37, 43-50.
- Ruiz, R.(1984). Orientations in language planning. *National Association of Bilingual Educators Journal*, 8, 15-34.
- Russo, C., Massucci, J., Osborne, A., & Cattaro, G. (2002). *Catholic schools and special education: A reference guide*. Washington, DC: National Catholic Educational Association.
- Salend, S.J. (2008). *Creating inclusive classrooms* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Columbus, OH: Pearson.

- Sanyal Tudela, A. (2014). Discourses of experience: The disciplining of identities and practices in student teaching. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 39(3), 153-164.
- Scott, S.S., & Edwards, W. (2012). Project LINC: Supporting lectures and adjunct instructors in foreign language classrooms. *Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability*, 25(3), 253-358.
- Scruggs, T.E., Mastropieri, M.A., & McDuffie, K.A. (2007). Co-teaching in inclusive classrooms: A metasynthesis of qualitative research. *Exceptional Children*, 73, 392-416.
- Seidman, I. (1998). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences* (2nd ed.). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Shaw, R. (1999). The case for course substitutions as a reasonable accommodation for students with foreign language learning difficulties. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 32, 320-328.
- Sindelar, P.T., Shearer, D.K., Yendol-Hoppey, D., & Liebert, T.W. (2006). The sustainability of school reform. *Exceptional Children*, 72, 317-331.
- Skinner, M.E. & Smith, A.T. (2011). Creating success for students with learning disabilities in postsecondary foreign language courses. *International Journal of Special Education*, 26(2), 42-57.
- Smith, T.E.C., Polloway, E.A., Patton, J.R., & Dowdy, C.A. (2012). *Teaching students with special needs in inclusive settings*, (6th edition). Columbus, OH: Pearson.
- Sparks, R. (2009). If you don't know where you're going, you'll wind up somewhere else: The case of "foreign language learning disability." *Foreign Language Annals*, 42(1), 7-26.
- Sparks, R. and Ganschow, L. (1996) Teachers' perceptions of students' native language skills and affective characteristics. *Journal of Educational Research*, 89, 172-185.
- Sparks, R. and Ganschow, L. (1997) Aptitude for learning a foreign language: a review. In M. O'Connell and M. Gardenghi (Eds), *Prüfen, Testen, Bewerten im modernen Fremdsprachenunterricht*, pp. 49-61. Frankfurt am Main: Europaischer Verlag der Wissenschaften.
- Sparks, R., Artzer, M., Patton, J., Ganschow, L., Miller, K., Hordubay, D.J., and Walsh, G. (1998). Benefits of multisensory structured language instruction for at-risk

- foreign language learners: A comparison study of high school Spanish students. *Annals of Dyslexia*, 48, 239-270.
- Sparks, R., & Javorsky, J. (1999). Section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act: Accommodating the learning disabled student in the foreign language curriculum: An update. *Association of Departments of Foreign Language (ADFL) Bulletin*, 30, 36-44.
- Sparks, R., Philips, L., Ganschow, L., & Javorsky, J. (1999). Comparison of students classified as learning disabled and the college foreign language requirement: A quantitative analysis. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 32, 566-580.
- Sparks, R., Philips, L., & Javorsky, J. (2003). Students classified as LD who petitioned for or fulfilled the foreign language requirement – Are they different? A replication study. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 36, 348-362.
- Speece, D.L., Molloy, D.E., & Case, L.P. (2003). Starting at the beginning for learning disabilities identification: Response to instruction in general education. *Advances in Learning and Behavioral Disabilities*, 16, 37-50.
- Stake, R. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Stapleton, P. (2014). Language teaching research: Promoting a more interdisciplinary approach. *ELT Journal*, 68(4), 432-441.
- Stromswold, K. (1998). Genetics of spoken language disorders. *Human Biology*, 70, 297-324.
- Suciu, A.I., & Mata, L. (2011). Pedagogical competences: The key to efficient education. *International Journal of Educational Sciences*, 3 (2), 411-423.
- Thorndike, R.L. (1963). *The concepts of over and under-achievement*. New York, NY: Columbia University Bureau of Publications.
- Tomic, G., Stojanovic, M., Pavlovic, A., Stankovic, P., Zidverc-Trajkovic, J., Pavlovic, D., Markovic-Jovanovic, Z., & Covickovic-Sternic, N. (2009). Speech and language disorders secondary to diffuse subcortical vascular lesions: Neurolinguistic and acoustic analysis. *Journal of the Neurological Sciences*, 283, 163-169.
- Tufford, L., & Newman, P. (2010). Bracketing in qualitative research. *Qualitative Social Work*, 11(1), 80-96.
- United States Department of Education (2007). *IRIS center for the national association of state directors of special education's IDEA partnership*. Retrieved August 14,

2014 from [http://www.ideapartnership.org/document/IRIS\\_DG\\_IQ-Discrep\\_RTI.pdf](http://www.ideapartnership.org/document/IRIS_DG_IQ-Discrep_RTI.pdf)

- Utley, B.L. (2009). An analysis of the outcomes of a unified teacher preparation program. *Teacher Education and Special Education, 32*(2), 137-149.
- Verstegen, D. (1994). *Fiscal provisions of the individuals with disabilities education act: Historical overview*. Palo Alto, CA: American Institutes for Research, Center for Special Education Finance.
- Vygotsky, L.S. (1986). *Thought and language*. Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institution of Technology Press.
- Weintraub, F.J., Abeson, A., Ballard, J., & LaVor, M. (Eds.). (1976). *Public policy and the education of exceptional children*. Reston, VA: Council for Exceptional Children.
- Wiener, I., & Murawski, W.W. (2005). Schools attuned: A model for collaborative intervention. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 40*, 284-290.
- Wiggins, G., & McTighe, J. (1998). *Understanding by design*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Williams, D.L. (2010). *Developmental language disorders: Language, learning, and the brain*. San Diego: Plural Publishing.
- Winter, E. & O'Raw, P. (2010). Literature review on the principles and practices relating to inclusive education for children with special education needs. Institute of child education and psychology Europe (Maynooth) in conjunction with the 2007-9 NCSE Consultative Forum.
- Wolfberg P., LePage, P., & Cook, E. (2009). Innovations in inclusive education: Two teacher preparation programs at the San Francisco State University. *International Journal of Whole Schooling, 5*(2), 16-36.
- Wood, D., Bruner, J.S., & Ross, G. (1976). The role of tutoring in problem solving. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 17*, 89-100.
- Zare, P. (2012). Language learning strategies among EFL/ESL learners: A review of literature. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, 2* (5), 162-169.
- Zeichner, K.M. (2005). A research agenda for teacher education. In M. Cochran-Smith & K. Zeichner (Eds.), *Studying teacher education: The report of the AERA panel*

*on research and teacher education* (pp. 737-759). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

### List of Appendices

#### *Appendix I-Sample interview questions for university students pre-student teaching*

1. Why did you decide to become a world language teacher?
2. What were some of the reasons that you chose to attend this university? How did you first learn about this program?
3. Describe for me the experiences that you have had here at the university thus far.
4. What types of material are you learning in your courses?
5. What is your ED320 course like? Describe for me some of your projects and assessments.
6. Describe for me the experiences that you have had working with or observing students. Do you have a memorable experience that you would like to share?
7. Have your courses discussed the ways to work with students with special needs? If so, how? If not, what are some ways that you think you will be able to work with students with special needs?
8. Describe for me your familiarity of IEPs or Section 504 documents. Can you describe for me what it means to make accommodations or modifications?
9. What do you believe student teaching will be like? Where will you be working and with whom?
10. Describe your training thus far in helping you to meet the learning needs of students with LD and other at-risk learners.
11. In what ways do the training and coursework that you have undertaken connected research to practice in ways that you believe are helpful to you for working to meet the needs of students with special needs?
12. To what degree and in what ways have learning barriers and ways of working through those barriers (i.e. specific to the individual, particular to teacher and classroom, or related systemic issues in a school district) affecting students with LD been discussed thus far in your training?
13. Is there anything else that you would like to share with me?

*Appendix II- Sample interview questions for university students during student teaching*

1. Please describe for me the experiences that you have had student teaching thus far.
2. How do you feel that your coursework and fieldwork has prepared you for your student teaching experiences?
3. Do you have students with special needs in your classes? If so, how do you differentiate your lessons to include them in classroom activities? Do you feel that you were prepared to work with students with special needs? How do you make accommodations/modifications for these students?
4. Describe for me the way that you work with your cooperating teacher to plan lessons. How do you plan your lessons? Please describe for me a typical planning session for when you create lessons. What types of activities do you plan for your classes?
5. How do you collaborate with other members of the school (i.e. guidance counselors, administrators, other subject area teachers, special education teachers)?
6. Have you attended any professional development or in-service days in your district? What were some of the topics of discussion?
7. Describe for me some of the ways that you communicate with parents. Do certain parents request more communication? If so, which ones? If not, which parents would you like to communicate with more?
8. Is your student teaching experience what you thought it was going to be like? Why or why not?
9. What types of assessments do you give to your students? Do all students receive the same assessment? Why or why not?
10. Please describe for me your grading policy. How do you assign grades in your class?
11. Describe your training thus far in helping you to meet the learning needs of students with LD and other at-risk learners.
12. In what ways do the training and coursework that you have undertaken connected research to practice in ways that you believe are helpful to you for working to meet the needs of students with special needs?
13. To what degree and in what ways have learning barriers and ways of working through those barriers (i.e. specific to the individual, particular to teacher and classroom, or related systemic issues in a school district) affecting students with LD been discussed thus far in your training?

*Appendix III- Sample interview questions for university students post-student teaching*

1. Please describe for me the experiences that you had during student teaching. Describe your most positive moment. Describe your least positive moment. Why do you believe that these moments were positive/not positive?
2. How do you feel that your coursework and fieldwork (i.e. observations) prepared you for your student teaching experiences?
3. Do you feel prepared to begin working in your own classroom? How do you feel that student teaching will be different from your future classroom? How do you feel that it will be the same?
4. Describe for me the way that you worked with your cooperating teacher to plan lessons. How did you plan lessons? What do you believe lesson planning will be like moving forward? How will you differentiate your lessons to include the needs of all students in your classroom?
5. How did you make accommodations / modifications for students with special needs in your class? Who was in charge of making the accommodations/modifications?
6. How did you collaborate with other members of the school (i.e. guidance counselors, administrators, other subject area teachers, special education teachers)?
7. Did you attend any professional development or in-service days in your district? What were some of the topics of discussion?
8. Did you communicate with parents? If so, how? If not, why not?
9. Was your student teaching experience what you thought it was going to be like? Why or why not?
10. Do you feel, specifically, that you are prepared to work with students with special needs in your future classroom? What experiences have you had that lead you to that conclusion?
11. Describe your training thus far in helping you to meet the learning needs of students with LD and other at-risk learners.
12. In what ways do the training and coursework that you have undertaken connected research to practice in ways that you believe are helpful to you for working to meet the needs of students with special needs?

13. To what degree and in what ways have learning barriers and ways of working through those barriers (i.e. specific to the individual, particular to teacher and classroom, or related systemic issues in a school district) affecting students with LD been discussed thus far in your training?

14. Is there anything else that you would like to share?

*Appendix IV- Sample interview questions for cooperating teachers during student teaching*

1. Please describe for me how you were selected to work with a student teacher.
2. Have you worked with a student teacher from this university before? If yes, please describe some of the experiences. How about students from other universities?
3. How do you typically work with a student teacher? What is the most important thing you would like for them to walk away with from working with you?
4. How do you approach lesson planning with a student teacher? How do you guide your student teacher when working with lessons?
5. Describe for me how you plan your lessons. How do you differentiate to meet the needs of all students?
6. How do you work specifically with students with LD and at-risk students? How do you provide modifications/accommodations for them? How do you plan to pass this information along to your student teacher?
7. How familiar are you with the IEPs and Section 504 plans of your students? Please describe how you collaborate with the special education department. How do you share these experiences with your student teacher?
8. How does your student teacher communicate with parents? How do you plan to share parent communication skills with your student teacher? How does your student teacher communicate with parents of students with special needs?
9. To what degree and in what ways have you collaborated with school staff from the special education department at your school? How often? Regarding what types of issues?
10. Is there anything else that you would like to share?

*Appendix V- Sample interview questions for cooperating teachers post-student teaching*

1. Please describe for me your overall experiences of working with your student teacher this semester.
2. How prepared do you feel your student teacher is to begin working as a teacher?
3. How prepared, specifically, do you believe this student teacher is for working with students with special needs?
4. At what point did you begin to allow the teacher more autonomy in the classroom? How did that change from the beginning, middle, and end of your time with the student teacher?
6. How did your student teacher work specifically with students with LD? How did he/she provide modifications/accommodations for them in the world language classroom?
7. How familiar was your student teacher with the IEPs and Section 504 plans of your students? Please describe how you and your student teacher collaborated with the special education department.
8. How did you student teacher communicate with parents? Did the student teacher ever sit in an IEP meeting with the parents and Child Study Team?
9. To what degree and in what ways have you collaborated with school staff from the special education department at your school? How often? Regarding what types of issues?
10. Is there anything else that you would like to share?

*Appendix VI- Sample interview questions for university administrators*

1. Please describe for me how a person can gain certification to become a language teacher at this institution.
2. What types of experiences are students exposed to before, during, and after student teaching (if applicable).
3. Are there any ways that the university works to promote *inclusion* in the world language classroom?
4. Describe for me the type of collaboration that exists between the WL and Special education departments.
5. Is there anything that you would like for me to know about the ways that the needs of students with LD and other at-risk learners are taken into consideration while training pre-service language teachers?
6. Please describe for me how the current curriculum / sequence of coursework came to be.
7. Are there any things that you would like to see included in the pre-service teachers' experiences?
8. Is there anything that you think can be excluded from the current program?
9. Who makes the decisions as to the types of experiences that the WL teachers will receive during their training?
10. How much input is given from current professors when deciding the coursework sequence and activities?
11. (If appropriate) Have you thought about the ways that the special education and language education departments communicate?
12. Please describe for me the types of collaboration that take place between the language department and other university departments.
13. Please describe for me the types of faculty and department meetings that you have regarding coursework creation.
14. Does the department of education ever collaborate outside the school of education? If so, for what reasons?

15. What role do you have in the communication with partner schools for student placement? Please describe for me how student teachers are placed through your program. How are cooperating teachers chosen?
16. Does the program meet its intended goals of preparing World Language teachers to work with students with special needs? How? Why?
17. Is there anything else that you would like to share with me today?

*Appendix VII- Sample interview questions for university professors (general education)*

1. Please describe for me how a person can gain certification to become a language teacher at this institution.
2. What types of experiences are students exposed to before, during, and after student teaching?
3. How are students with Learning Disabilities (LD) addressed in the pre-service teacher coursework? Are there specific methodologies that you expose teachers to for working with students with special needs?
4. Are there any ways that the university works to promote *inclusion* in the world language classroom?
5. What type of attention is paid to local, state, and federal special education laws (i.e., IEPs, 504s, and LRE) in the preparation of world language teachers?
6. Describe for me the type of collaboration that is seen between the WL and Special education departments.
7. Is there anything that you would like for me to know about the ways that the needs of students with LD and other at risk learners are taken into consideration while training pre-service language teachers?
8. Please describe for me how the current curriculum / sequence of coursework came to be.
9. Are there any things that you would like to see included in the pre-service teachers' experiences?
10. Is there anything that you think can be excluded from the current program?
11. Who makes the decisions as to the types of experiences that the WL teachers will receive during their training?
12. How much input is given from current professors when deciding the coursework sequence and activities?
13. Who are the students that are taking the ED320 course? How did this course come to be? What are the goals of this particular class?
14. (If appropriate) Have you thought about the ways that the special education and language education departments communicate?

15. Please describe for the types of collaboration that take place between the language department and other university departments.
16. Please describe for me the types of faculty and department meetings that you have regarding coursework creation.
17. Have you ever attended the faculty/department meetings of another department? If so, for what reasons? What were your thoughts about the encounter?
18. Does the department of education ever collaborate outside the school of education? If so, for what reasons?
19. How do you prepare students before they begin their student teaching placements?
20. What role do you have in student teaching placements? How do you believe that the student placement program functions?
21. Do you have any interactions with the partner schools? If so, what type? If not, would you like to? Why or why not?
22. Is there anything else that you would like to share with me today?

*Appendix VIII- Sample interview questions for university professors (special education)*

1. Please describe for me how a person can gain certification to become a world language/special education teacher at this institution.
2. What types of experiences are students exposed to before, during, and after student teaching?
3. How are students with Learning Disabilities (LD) and other at-risk learners addressed in the pre-service world language teacher coursework? Are there specific language teaching methodologies that you expose teachers to for working with students with special needs?
4. What type of attention is paid to L1 and L2 learning in special education courses?
5. Describe for me the type of collaboration that is seen between the WL and Special education departments.
6. Is there anything that you would like for me to know about the ways that the needs of students with LD are taken into consideration while training pre-service language teachers?
7. Please describe for me how the current curriculum / sequence of coursework came to be.
8. Are there any things that you would like to see included in the pre-service teachers' experiences?
9. Is there anything that you think can be excluded from the current program?
10. Who makes the decisions as to the types of experiences that the WL teachers will receive during their training?
11. How much input is given from current professors when deciding the coursework sequence and activities?
12. (If appropriate) Have you thought about the ways that the special education and language education departments communicate?
13. Please describe for the types of collaboration that take place between the language department and other university departments.
14. Please describe for me the types of faculty and department meetings that you have regarding coursework creation.

15. Have you ever attended the faculty/department meetings of another department? If so, for what reasons? What were your thoughts about the encounter?
16. Does the department of education ever collaborate outside the school of education? If so, for what reasons?
17. How do you prepare students before they begin their student teaching placements?
18. What role do you have in student teaching placements? How do you believe that the student placement program functions?
19. Do you have any interactions with the partner schools? If so, what type? If not, would you like to? Why or why not?
20. Is there anything else that you would like to share with me today?

*Appendix IX- Sample interview questions for university placement site coordinator*

1. Please describe how you work with different departments when deciding upon placements for pre-service teachers.
2. How do you work with the special education department in particular?
3. How do you work with the world language department in particular?
4. Please describe your interactions when working with university administration in charge of the world language and special education departments. Do they share ideas for placements?
5. What is your knowledge of the certification program for world languages and special education?
6. How do you find receiving schools? Are there particular schools or teachers that you use more often? Why or why not?
7. When placing students, do you know which certification program they are in? Could you explain to me the process from start to finish?
8. How do you work with the administrators and teachers at receiving schools? Please describe the typical process for placing a student teacher.
9. What types of feedback do you receive from placement schools? Do you receive feedback from cooperating teachers? How about administrators? How do you use the feedback that you receive?
10. How much time do you personally spend each year (how many visits; how many different sites) in placement schools, meeting with school personnel and/or learning on-site about what your placed students are doing?
11. Is there anything else that you would like to share with me today?

*Appendix X – Sample interview questions for field supervisors*

1. How long have you been working with this university?
2. Please describe your position at the university.
3. What types of things do you look for during an observation?
4. Please describe the types of feedback that you provide. How do you provide feedback to the pre-service teachers?
5. How familiar are you with the World Languages department and courses at Baytown? What types of interactions do you have with the members of the World Languages department?
6. How familiar are you with the Special Education department and course at Baytown? What types of interactions do you have with the members of the Special Education department?
7. Is there anything else that you would like to share with me today?

*Appendix XI- Sample interview questions for partner school administrator*

1. How long have you been accepting student teachers from this university?
2. Please describe for me your role in assigning student teachers with cooperating mentors.
3. How do you decide which teacher to pair with students? Who else is involved in the decision making process?
4. Do you keep the type of certification a candidate is seeking in mind when placing student teachers with cooperating teachers?
5. Please describe some of the experiences that you have had with student teachers and their placements.
6. How do you collaborate with the university to place student teachers? Please describe for me how the relationship has been over the years that you have worked with the university and placing student teachers.
7. What are some of the benefits of working with a university for placing student teachers?
8. Please describe for me the best experience you have had working with student teachers and explain why it was a good experience. Then, please describe for me the worst experience you have had working with student teachers and explain why it was a bad experience.
9. What do you believe would be the best way to train teachers? What does the ideal preparation model look like to you?
10. Do you know about the overall goals of the world language teacher preparation program at the university? How does it influence the way that you place student teachers in the district?
11. Based on your experiences with world language teachers, what training, if any, has been lacking, with reference to their ability to meet the needs of students with LD, or other at-risk learners?
12. Is there anything else that you would like to share with me today?

*Appendix XII- Sample interview questions for recent program graduates (currently teaching)*

1. Please describe for me the experiences that you had in your teacher preparation program.
2. What type of coursework did you take? Which class do you feel prepared you the most for teaching? Which class do you feel prepared you the least?
3. Describe for me your student teaching placement. What was it like? Whom did you work with? Describe a memorable moment.
4. Do you feel that you were prepared to work with students with special needs during your program? Why or why not?
5. How do you incorporate the needs of all students in your lessons and activities?
6. Please describe for me the ways that you plan your lessons. How do you include standards when writing them?
7. How do you collaborate with the special education and guidance departments in your school?
8. If there is one thing that you could change from your teacher preparation program what would it be and why?
9. How familiar are you with the IEPs and 504 plans of your students? Do you consult them when planning your lessons?
10. How do you make accommodations/modifications for your students with special needs?
11. What is your grading policy like? How do you make grading accommodations for your students with special needs?
12. What is your parental involvement like? How do you work with parents to ensure that children are learning to the best of their ability?
13. Please describe barriers faced by you in meeting the learning needs of your students with LD, or at-risk learners, what you did, outcomes, and how this may have connected to your training?
14. Is there anything else you would like to share with me today?