CLASSIC Impacts: A Qualitative Study of ESL/BLED Programming

Kevin Murry
Kansas State University

Socorro Herrera
Kansas State University

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...The findings of this study indicate that long-term programs in postgraduate professional development can effectively target reflective practice and, in so doing, enhance teachers' personal and collective sense of efficacy in practice with diverse student populations.

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Changing Times and Changing Needs

In the last five years, educators in the state of Kansas have witnessed radical changes in their classroom environments which they have not been successfully prepared to address. During the period 1994-1997, the State of Kansas has experienced a 76 percent increase in the number of *identified*, English Language Learning [ELL] students; from 6,900 students in 1994/1995 to over 13,000 students in the 1997/1998 school year (Kansas Department of Education, 1999). Estimates of the number of *unidentified* ELL students could add another 30 percent to the identified figure (Murry & Herrera, 1998). The United States [US] Commission on Civil Rights [USCRC], (1997) has reported that Kansas was one of only nine US states which experienced more than a 100 percent increase in the number of ELL students during the period 1990-1995.

The number of languages spoken by students in Kansas schools has increased by a notable 103 percent– from 38 languages spoken in 1994 to 77 languages spoken in 1997 (Murry & Herrera, 1998). Of particular importance, this mostly unanticipated increase encompasses a 79% increase in the number of ELL students who speak Spanish (from 5,173 to 9,253 students). These dramatic changes in the cultural and linguistic diversity of classroom, student populations in Kansas have been the subject of recent, national attention in education [*Teaching Tolerance Magazine* (Harrison, 1998); *NABE News,* (Judd & Kreicker, August, 1997)]. Mary Harrison of *Teaching Tolerance* (1998) reports that although increasing cultural and linguistic diversity has, for many years been an inevitable challenge for Kansas elementary teachers, it is also fast becoming an unavoidable challenge for secondary schools in Kansas as well. This is especially true in fast growing communities like those in southwest Kansas where at least one district's elementary school population is already 68 percent Hispanic. The demographics in schools are so changed that in some districts where ESL pullout programs have served as a stopgap response to increasing diversity, continuing such programs with today's demographics would mean pulling 60 percent of the teacher's class for auxiliary instruction.

Kevin Murry is the Coordinator of the CLASSIC, ESL/BLED Endorsement Program and Assistant Professor of Foundations and Adult Education at Kansas State University. Socorro Herrera is the Director of the CLASSIC, ESL/BLED Endorsement Program and Assistant Professor of Elementary Education at Kansas State University.

Many of the challenges which Kansas school systems are experiencing as a result of these profound changes in classroom diversity are consistent with those which have been identified at the national level. Specifically, recent analyses by the USCRC (1997) found many school systems are unprepared for the differential learning and instructional needs of ELL students. Consequently, the USCRC found that ELL students are: (a) three times more likely to be classified as low achievers than high achievers, (b) two times more likely to be at least one grade level behind in school, and (c) four times more likely to drop out than their native-English-speaking counterparts [especially Hispanic students who often receive inadequate native language support (USCRC)].

In Kansas, recent and sometimes radical changes in classroom diversity have resulted in a variety of new and complex needs among the State's school districts. Ongoing collaborations between Kansas State University [KSU] and many of these districts, including: (1) formal and informal meetings and sessions with district administrators, coordinators for language-learning programs, teachers, and staff; (2) needs assessment surveys; and (3) site visits to schools within the districts, have identified at last three critical needs shared among educators and policy makers in these changing-need school systems. The first of these is the need to improve academic achievement and success among ELL students. A second need is to increase the number of teachers endorsed for either English as a Second Language [ESL] or Bilingual Education [BLED] in districts across the state. A third critical need is access to flexible, postgraduate programs in professional development for school educators.

In addressing the first of these critical needs, many Kansas districts have attempted to: (1) provide staff development workshops for teachers of ELL students; (2) encourage their educators to pursue their endorsement for ESL/BLED Education; and (3) encourage teachers, as they come into contact with these students in their classrooms, to increase the identification of ELL students in need of targeted services. By and large, these efforts have not kept pace with the level of increasing student diversity in Kansas. Generally speaking, short-term training for educators of ELL students and minor adjustments to instructional delivery are insufficient to purposively impact ELL student achievement (Krashen, 1996; Miramontes, Nadeau, & Commins, 1998). Additionally, teachers and administrators who independently undertake perhaps an ESL Methods or an Assessment course in an effort to better understand the needs of ELL students usually do not benefit from sufficient continuity in their studies to meaningfully increase their effectiveness in practice with these students. Furthermore, neither of these efforts has tended to significantly increase the number of ESL/BLED endorsed educators in Kansas nor significantly decrease the numbers of underidentified ELL students in Kansas school systems. Recent research indicates that this critical need is most appropriately addressed through teachers' and administrators' long-term, professional development emphasizing site/school specific dynamics and student populations (Murry & Herrera, 1998).

The second critical need shared among many Kansas districts surrounds the shortage of BLED and ESL endorsed teachers. Some schools/sites in the greatest-need districts in Kansas now have ELL student populations which would justify a Bilingual Education Program, and a few have begun so-called, *grow-your-own* incentives to eventually enable such programs. However, not only have a great number of Kansas districts found it virtually impossible to attract

bilingual educators, they are increasingly in greater need of ESL endorsed educators, given the degree of language diversity in their classrooms (Judd & Kreicker, 1997; Murry, 1998). As many as 10 different languages are represented in some classrooms of high-need districts in Kansas.

These trends are occurring during a time period in which the State of Kansas began the 1997/1998 school year with less than *three percent* of its total teacher population endorsed in either BLED or ESL Education, statewide (Kansas Department of Education, 1999). Although recent and noteworthy efforts by the Kansas State Department of Education have increased the number of endorsed teachers in Kansas, most endorsees remain concentrated in a few western districts and a generalized shortage of ESL and BLED endorsed teachers persists in the majority of districts, statewide. These trends are consistent with a recent analysis at the national level (Mazzarella, 1999) which indicates that less than 20 percent of surveyed teachers, nationwide, consider themselves prepared to address the needs of ELL students. Recent research (Murry, 1998) indicates that this critical need is appropriately addressed through a large scale, program capable of high-impact professional development which, at the same time, maintains high standards of excellence by targeting and verifying educators' achievement of critical competencies necessary for professional practice with ELL students.

The third critical need increasingly shared among Kansas school districts is teachers' lack of access to flexible, postgraduate programs in professional development. Many district educators are geographically isolated from ESL/BLED endorsing institutions. Others, because of increasing demands upon their professional schedules, are unable to attend on-campus classes in professional development. Still others are increasingly in need of long-term programs in professional development which enable a focus on site- and district- specific challenges in professional practice with ELL students. Past needs assessments among high-diversity districts in Kansas have indicated a lack of access to long-term professional development, especially postgraduate programming, which is, (1) flexible enough to address the geographic isolation, resource constraints, sociopolitical limitations, and practice dilemmas of site-based educators; yet, (2) sufficiently integrated to produce continuity in capacity building for complex practice. Recent research indicates that a program of needs-based, distance education provides the capacity to responsively, yet responsibly address this critical need (Murry & Herrera, 1998).

Discussion to follow will briefly summarize the key design and service elements of a program in postgraduate ESL/BLED endorsement which was developed in response to these changing and challenging needs among high-diversity school districts in Kansas. Ongoing, applied research on this program has led to the refinement of a program model which is grounded in the needs of clients, yet, appropriately tempered by the necessity for rigor, theory-into-practice applications, and continuity in participants' ongoing professional development.
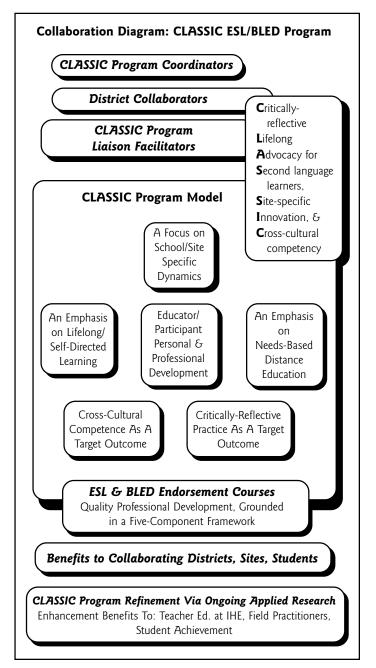
The CLASSIC Program: New Perspectives, New Approaches

Elsewhere we have described applied research on, and the incremental development of, an innovative program of ESL/BLED endorsement education, specifically designed to increase the number of and upgrade the qualifications and skills of certified education personnel to meet high standards of professional practice with ELL students in school districts across the State of Kansas (Murry &

Herrera, 1998). The outcome of these efforts in program development is the CLASSIC [**C**ritically reflective, **L**ifelong **A**dvocacy for **S**econd language learners, **S**ite-specific **I**nnovation, and **C**ross-cultural competency] Program of ESL/BLED Distance Education at KSU.

The centerpiece of the Program's design from which these strategies and activities are derived is the CLASSIC Program Model which is a participant-centered design consisting of ESL and Bilingual Education endorsement courses, grounded in a five-component framework. Each of these *components* offers participating classroom teachers and administrators approaches and strategies for native language and home culture support as they better accommodate the needs of their ELL students. The model is especially focused on changing: (1) low ELL student achievement, (2) the shortage of ESL and Bilingual Education endorsed teachers in Kansas, and (3) teachers lack of access to flexible, postgraduate programs in professional development.

Figure1. CLASSIC Collaboration Diagram

Collaboration Diagram: CLASSIC ESL/BLED Program

- *CLASSIC Program Coordinators*
- *District Collaborators*
- *CLASSIC Program Liaison Facilitators*

Critically-reflective **L**ifelong **A**dvocacy for **S**econd language learners, **S**ite-specific **I**nnovation, & **C**ross-cultural competency

CLASSIC Program Model

- A Focus on School/Site Specific Dynamics
- An Emphasis on Lifelong/Self-Directed Learning
- Educator/Participant Personal & Professional Development
- An Emphasis on Needs-Based Distance Education
- Cross-Cultural Competence As A Target Outcome
- Critically-Reflective Practice As A Target Outcome

ESL & BLED Endorsement Courses
Quality Professional Development, Grounded in a Five-Component Framework

Benefits to Collaborating Districts, Sites, Students

CLASSIC Program Refinement Via Ongoing Applied Research
Enhancement Benefits To: Teacher Ed. at IHE, Field Practitioners, Student Achievement

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As illustrated in Figure 1 (CLASSIC Collaboration Diagram), and detailed elsewhere (Murry & Herrera, 1998) the first component of the CLASSIC Program Model, is a *focus on site/school dynamics.* By concentrating on specific, building-level needs, participants are actively involved in appropriately adapting the theory, concepts, and strategies learned in a given endorsement course to their particular student population and school dynamics. The second component ensures participants' access to quality professional development opportunities through *needs-based distance education* (that is the *needs* of teachers and other educators in the districts). Needs-based distance education offers the *reach* and the *flexibility* to provide quality, large-scale, professional development at the same time that high standards and competence in practice with ELL students are targeted as Program goals. The third component of *critically-reflective practice* targets capacity building for reflective practice among educators of ELL students. This reflective practice, which checks the validity of assumptions about students, families, teaching, and learning, enhances teachers' expectations for, and improved academic achievement among, ELL students. The fourth component of *cross-cultural competency* challenges teachers to do more than provide content instruction to their ELL students. Instead, teachers learn that they must *reach* these students in order to understand them and the culture in which they have been socialized. This *reach* involves teachers learning to *feel with* culturally and linguistically different [CLD] students, rather than *feeling for* them. (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Finally, the fifth component of *lifelong/self-directed learning* prompts teachers and other educators to better appreciate that every school's population and dynamics will differ and there is no *one solution* to ELL student education. Instead, teachers must become lifelong, issue- and practice- directed learners who approach professional practice through critical, process thinking and reflection.

The curriculum of the CLASSIC Program is intentionally designed to increase the number of ESL and Bilingual Education endorsed teachers available to provide high-quality education to ELL students. This curriculum prepares teachers to obtain their endorsement in either ESL Education [15 credit hours] or Bilingual Education [21 credit hours] in Kansas.

Continuity and participant support are hallmarks of the CLASSIC Program in ESL/BLED distance education for school professionals. Each semester, this innovative Program in distance education maximizes the various components of the CLASSIC Program Model, in order to deliver participant-centered, content and instruction according to the following sequence:

• The CLASSIC Program Faculty conduct intensive, on site, 3-5 hour, opening/closing sessions involving extended instructor-participant contact and collaborative group formation.
• As groups set their own schedule at their own site, collaborative group learning and hands-on activity completion then take place around a series of eight to ten videos which, along with a course module, and textbooks, provide the primary course content. Course participants also maintain weekly, individual, reflection journals on critical incidents in practice.
• With the guidance of KSU faculty, collaborative groups develop a site-specific course project. Throughout, extended participant-instructor access is maintained/supported, during the initial years of ESL/BLED practice, via feedback loops

including: toll-free telephone lines; ListServe; and ChatLines. Throughout these course cycles, ongoing, applied, program research improves all Teacher Education at KSU.

Through the sorts of site-specific, critically reflective, professional development which participants in the CLASSIC Program receive, teachers and administrators who participate build the necessary capacities to become the nucleus for site-based, schoolwide, innovation and restructuring to better meet the needs of ELL students and maximize their achievement potential. As others in the school also progress through the program of studies, they add to the infrastructure essential to operationalize these restructuring plans toward institutionalization.

The models for restructuring taught in the courses of this comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning in language acquisition settings are: (1) the *six premise framework* for *restructuring* to *improve* ELL *student achievement* (Miramontes, Nadeau, & Commins, 1998), and (2) the *Guiding Principles* (George Washington University [GWU], 1996) of best practice with linguistically diverse learners. The content of the courses which emphasize these frameworks is periodically reviewed and revised based on current research findings in the fields of ESL Education, Bilingual Education, and Multicultural Education (Collier, 1995; Collier & Ovando, 1998; Thomas & Collier, 1998; George Washington University, 1996; Krashen, 1996; Miramontes, Nadeau, & Commins, 1998).

Discussion to follow summarizes the methods utilized for an interpretive study of CLASSIC Program impacts on practice with and programming for ELL students in participating schools and districts. This discussion begins with an overview of the study design.

Methods

This research was undertaken as a qualitative study of the perspectives which participants of the CLASSIC Program articulate when prompted to discuss the impacts of the Program on practice with and programming for ELL students in participating schools and districts. A qualitative design is appropriate when the outcomes of the study will surround descriptions and interpretations arising from discovery, insight, and analysis (Creswell, 1998).

A purposive (Merriam, 1998) sample of 90 self-selected, elementary and secondary teachers who participated in the Program from 1996-1998 was utilized for the study. These practicing teachers were each engaged in professional development for their English as a Second Language [ESL] endorsement via this Program of postgraduate study. Data for the study were collected from teachers' responses to a Program Exit Survey which prompted them to reflect on, and discuss, Program impacts. In-state and out-of-state specialists in Program Development were asked to review the survey questions. Their suggestions were incorporated into the final drafts utilized for data collection.

Coding (Creswell, 1998) was utilized to initiate data analysis. Utilization of the constant comparative method (Strauss, 1987) facilitated immediate and ongoing comparisons of incoming data with information already collected. Data was first coded according to an *etic perspective*, utilizing the CLASSIC Program Model as a substantive framework. As the study proceeded, these initial and etic codes gradually suggested relevant *emic codes, categories, and themes,* which better reflected participant voice and participants' perspectives as insiders.

The trustworthiness criteria, the relevant benchmarks for establishing the truth value of qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), which were targeted by the design of this study were transferability and credibility. Transferability was established through thick description (a systematic effort to document the nature, context, findings, and interpretations of the research). Credibility was established through *referential adequacy* which involves the archiving of selected data collected from participants; data which are readdressed at a later date, after tentative interpretations of other data have been made, in order to determine if similar analyses lead to similar interpretations.

Results

Three dominant impacts (themes) were derived from the analyses of data in this qualitative investigation: capacity, collegiality, and efficacy. Each of these impacts/themes reflects perspectives which participating teachers tended to articulate when prompted to discuss the impacts of the CLASSIC Program on practice with and programming for ELL students in participating schools and districts. These three dominant impacts provide a useful framework for the organization of findings arising from this study.

Capacity

A recurrent theme in teachers' discourse associated with this study was a newfound recognition, not only of the cross-cultural and cross-linguistic complexities of professional practice with ELL students, but also an emergent sense of capacity-building for complexity. For some teachers, a recognition of the complexity of practice with these students was discussed in terms of the many cross-cultural adjustments in understanding necessary for teachers and schools to impact ELL student achievement. For others it was discussed in terms of initially perceived language barriers between teachers/administrators and ELL students and families. For still others, a recognition of these complexities came as a result of new understandings about the many challenges of second language acquisition for ELL students. Such challenges are reflected in the following teacher's remarks:

> *The classes have broadened my knowledge of the way ESL [ELL] students acquire a second language. It has provided me with a different set of strategies to help these students. One of the main things I learned was to give ESL students a period of time to be quiet. I remember when I first started to teach these students. I immediately set out to bring the students quickly and completely into the classroom by having them talk and discuss. During this time, I had them teach me their language (which I often butchered, not intentionally) as I taught them mine. Although we often had a few laughs, many students were reluctant to participate. Since learning more about the 'silent time' that many of these kids will go through in learning the new language, I now feel free to allow the ESL students this time to adjust when they need it. As long as I am sensitive to their needs, I know that they will join in when they are ready (S1r-111998).*

This teachers' remarks about this particular aspect of the many language acquisition challenges through which ELL students must progress is indicative of similar realizations about complexity to which

many teachers arrived as a result of Program participation. Nonetheless, she has taken what she has learned about the fact that many second language learners require a 'silent period,' in which they nonverbally assimilate what they are learning about the dynamics of the new language before they are ready for language production, and she has applied that knowledge to new strategies for practice. These actions are indicative of *capacity*-building for complex practice with ELL students.

The responses of other teachers which were associated with this impact on practice and programming were more focused on an increasing sense of capacity with which to address the multiple complexities of practice with ELL students. The following excerpt from a teacher's survey response is but one example:

> *The program has impacted not just our school but several area districts in the way we approach ESL policies and curriculum. Teachers in these districts have gained knowledge and understanding about the importance of instruction that is best suited to the very different sorts of needs ESL kids bring to the school. Teachers and districts are now more aware of the need for different strategies, different methods, that can be used to help the ESL student be more successful in school. Many of the assignments we have completed as a group [collaborative group] of teachers have been presented to our administrator and even shared with our Board of Education. I think we are all beginning to see that with some adjustments and fine-tuning we can better meet the needs of these kids (S2r-12598).*

This teacher, like other teachers, has come to recognize that her school and her district, have the *capacity* to confront the challenges and complexities of ELL student education. Although the needs of these students are "different," and may vary, even from school to school, the teachers and the schools' leaders are in the best position to develop the sorts of *site-based modifications* which the CLASSIC model predicts will be necessary to the improvement of ELL student achievement.

Collegiality

In their discussions of CLASSIC Program impacts on practice and programming for ELL students an overwhelming majority of teachers also focused on the perceived benefits of the Program's collaborative group format for learning, deliberation, and course project development. Many of these course projects were not only collaborative but also intentionally assigned to address site-based issues, dilemmas of practice, or policy needs. For these teachers the benefits of the collaborative group format extended beyond just assignment or project completion. Instead, these teachers found the collaborative group structure the basis for such auxiliary benefits as: (1) an experiential model for what to expect and not to expect from cooperative learning strategies undertaken with students, (2) an opportunity to learn that many of their concerns about their readiness for ESL practice were shared by other teachers as well, and (3) a realization that teachers working together could often achieve outcomes for ELL students and families not possible in their isolated efforts. Each of these findings pointed to the benefits of *collegiality* to participants perceived benefits obtained from the Program structure.

For at least one-third of the surveyed teachers, the personal and professional development achieved as a result of participation in the Program, was, as a result of the collaborative group structure, also staff/professional development for the school's faculty. The teacher comments which follow are illustrative of this perspective:

> The impact [of the Program] on our building has been most visible in the staff development of other staff; to share information and the strong feeling of collaboration among staff. An increased awareness of methods and approaches to teaching ESOL [ESL] students has had a positive effect on all students and all of their teachers. The large ESOL population at our school is now better served through the development of more trained staff. Our district has benefited also from the better prepared teachers and the additional state funds to serve this ESOL population (S5r-112398).

Collaboration and *collegiality* in this school have impacted staff development in ways that have benefited not only teachers, but ELL student outcomes, as well. At the same time, the district has benefited from not only a more prepared staff and an intensified commitment to improved education for a large percentage of their student population.

For other teachers the collegiality promoted by the Program's collaborative group structure enabled the added benefit of new perspectives on old problems and new synergies in solving those problems. These teachers found that the Program structure, which not only facilitated collaborative group learning but also teachers' setting of their own schedule and environment for learning, often prompted a different level of dialog and interaction among colleagues than was otherwise the pattern "in school." The excerpt to follow, taken from a teacher's survey response, is one example of recurrent discourse among teachers who held this perspective:

> For myself, I have found it [the Program] beneficial for the time I have gained in interaction with other faculty I work with. The cooperative [collaborative] group concept is especially beneficial– an opportunity to know our peers in a different aspect, to hear their thoughts, brainstorm, problem-solve. It's wonderful to discuss situations 'at-home' [outside of the school] instead of hearing others talk about their situations & sometimes, that can become very boring to others. I also really like the flexibility of my groups' meeting time and not having to drive miles to attend class. Time is our most valuable resource and the on-site courses save precious time and money for the teachers (S3r-112898).

This teacher's collaborative group, like many others, choose to meet for learning and project development, outside of the confines of the school building; in this case, at one teacher's home. As her discourse (like that of other teachers) indicates, this enabled a focused brand of collegial dialog and interaction that was not possible "in school." Teachers who held this perspective often reported that conversations about the challenges of ESL Education, which sometimes drifted into complaint, divisiveness, and defeatism, "in-school" would, when undertaken "outside of school," often become more controllable, more

purposeful; because teachers felt more comfortable to challenge such defeatism, "outside of school." The impact of both the *site/school specific* and *needs-based* components of the CLASSIC Model, on the Program outcomes perceived by participating teachers, are evident in this teacher's exemplary discourse. The final passages of her discourse, in particular, highlight the ways in which these Program components empowered new forms of, and often unexpected outcomes from, the sorts of *collegiality* which were fostered among Program participants.

Efficacy

Although somewhat less recurrent in teachers' discourse about CLASSIC Program impacts on practice with and programming for ELL students in participating schools and districts, the theme of efficacy which emerged from data analysis in this study remains one of the most powerful of those analyzed. According to this theme in teachers' discourse, one impact of the Program has been to prompt teachers' personal and collective reflection on practice and programming such that a greater sense of confidence, if not *efficacy*, in practice has been facilitated. For some, this sense of enhanced efficacy has been personal. For others it has been a sense shared and evident at the school, and even the district levels. At the level of teachers' personal growth and classroom practices, this sense of enhanced efficacy with ELL students and families is often grounded in prior reflection on such factors as: the capabilities of ELL students, appropriate strategies for these students, and, in some cases, the teacher's confidence in being able to rationalize approaches to instruction for ELL students. One teacher's reflections are particularly illustrative of these trends in discourse:

> The courses [of the Program] have given me excellent timely information on ESL approaches, methods, strategies, and techniques. The classes have affected my personal teaching style. Especially because of my participation in a collaborative group, I have taken time to examine and evaluate my own cultural awareness. I am more reflective in my practice and have developed a deeper awareness of my students' needs. Although I am accepting of other teachers' situations, I am more aware of our buildings' diversity. My increased awareness of the varied needs and appropriate instructional techniques for ESL children has influenced other teachers in my building. What we have learned and begun to use will eventually impact our district and our community. I know that I am more informed as an educator. I can defend my school practices to those who question me (S1r-12798).

A Program focus on participant-centered, personal and professional development have, for this teacher, impacted her professional teaching style toward perspectives that are more inclusive, thoughtful, cross-culturally-sensitive, and critically-reflective. Interaction with professional peers, facilitated by Program structure, has prompted reevaluation of cross-cultural competency, self direction, and building-level dynamics. An enhanced sense of *efficacy* as a practitioner is as evident as it is grounded in these reevaluations and critical reflections on self and practice.

For other teachers in the Program this sense of enhanced efficacy, built upon a foundation of reflective practice, extended to the

building and even the district levels. For some schools, collaborative group reflection on misconceptions about language acquisition prompted a stronger schoolwide sense of what was possible with ELL students. The passage which follows is typical of this scenario:

> *The KSU, Distance Ed. approach to ESL endorsement has helped me and other teachers in my school to dispel some of the preconceived ideas we had about 2nd language acquisition. This has made many of us more willing to explore new strategies with ELL students and has encouraged me to be more reflective about my practice. I now realize that unless one is encouraged to continually take the time to reflect on what one is doing and thinking, and where one has come, the average individual just doesn't take the time to reflect. A very important aspect for personal and professional growth (S3r-12498).*

Critically reflective practice as a target outcome of the CLASSIC Program model has, for this teacher, impacted not only her own growth as a professional but also the willingness of faculty in her school to explore new approaches and new strategies for their ELL students. Her comments point to the need for programming in professional development for cultural and linguistic diversity which "encourages" repeated and progressive efforts toward a growing capacity for reflective practice as a means to *efficacy* in practice. For other teachers who hold this more global perspective on Program impacts, greater numbers of culturally and linguistically different [CLD] students in the schools also suggest the possibility that increasing numbers of these students are underserved. Many of these teachers were of the view that preparedness for diversity was not just a teacher issue, but a district issue as well. The discourse in the following teacher reflections illustrates this point:

> *The program has had a positive effect on the teachers (and districts) who have participated. More than anything else, it has increased awareness of the CLD student's plight. It has encouraged many districts I'm familiar with to reconsider new strategies in dealing effectively with the growing numbers of CLD students enrolling in their schools. On a personal note, the program allowed me to participate in several meetings which addressed deficiencies in our district's CLD [ELL] student identification instrument and in evaluating the district's compliance with OCR [Office of Civil Rights] recommendations. This program is like a pebble dropped in a pool of water– its ripples continue to reach out to the needs of CLD students throughout our area (S2r-112998).*

Cross-cultural sensitivity (a target outcome of the CLASSIC Program Model) to the needs of potentially underserved, CLD students in her geographic region is evident in this teacher's discourse. For her, the changes she has witnessed, in district approaches to the needs of these students, are positive for students, teachers, and districts. Her comments also suggest that participation in site/district specific course projects has enhanced both her and her district's *efficacy* in meeting the differential needs of CLD students.

Discussion

In this qualitative investigation, a group of practicing teachers from disparate school and district settings of ELL student education demonstrated remarkably recurrent perspectives regarding CLASSIC Program impacts on practice with and programming for ELL students. Each was very much aware of the sociocultural and sociopolitical environments of her/his professional practice and the potential influences on success with ELL students. Yet, their discourse consistently reflects a willingness to purposively confront existing resource, support, and other constraints in order to appropriately adapt and modify programming, instruction, and assessment to better meet the needs of ELL students and their families.

The findings of the study demonstrate that the CLASSIC Program Model for long-term, postgraduate, professional development has the potential to yield favorable and purposeful impacts on teacher, school, and district preparedness for diversity. Each of the five primary components of the Model was variously influential in teachers' discourse concerning these favorable impacts, as were the Program structures (such as the collaborative group structure) which are a product of the Program's emphases on these components.

Participant teachers' discourse in this interpretive investigation conveys a variety of favorable and purposive Program impacts. These CLASSIC Program impacts are reflected in three themes arising from data analyses in this study: (1) an enhanced *capacity* among teachers and their schools to address the complex demands of increasing classroom diversity; (2) emergent potentials among school practitioners for *collegiality* in practice, facilitated through collaboration; and (3) an enhanced sense of personal and collective *efficacy* enabled through reflective practice. The Program's impact on perceived *capacity* among teaching professional's to address the many and complex challenges of diversity was evident, in spite of: teachers' cross-cultural adjustments to ELL students and their families, communication challenges associated with a potential language barrier between teacher and pupil, and the professional challenge of appropriately modifying programming and instruction for differential student needs. Teachers' related discourse suggests that combining content and theory on appropriate practices with site-specific opportunities for theory-into-practice applications holds the potential to supersede the influence of potential constraints on capacity-building associated with in-practice complexity.

The findings of this study also indicate that the collaborative group format for learning, deliberation, and cooperative assignment completion yielded both expected and unexpected benefits for teacher participants; one of which was an emergent potential for *collegiality* among members of participating school staffs. This collaborative group format, a product of the Program Model's emphasis on the component of needs-based, distance education, was consistently referred to as perhaps the most beneficial aspect of programming for professional development.

Among unexpected outcomes of collaborative group formation, the findings of this study which relate to collegiality suggest a number of interesting implications associated with this impact of the Program. First, almost twenty-five years after Lortie's groundbreaking analysis (1975), teachers' opportunities for genuinely collegial planning, programming, and professional development within the egg-carton structure of schools, remain limited. Second, as Rosenholtz (1989) observed almost ten years hence, teachers continue to believe that their own concerns about adequacy for teaching practice, especially

practice in diverse school settings, are not shared by other teachers, even within the same school. Third, "out-of-school" opportunities for collegial sharing may be more effective than "in-school" arrangements in prompting teachers to tackle the tough issues associated with personal and collective adaptations to student diversity. Fourth, teachers' appropriate professional development for the implementation of truly cooperative learning arrangements in the classroom may be best facilitated through experiential models of capacity-building which prompt the teachers also to function in cooperative learning and deliberation groups.

Finally, the findings of this qualitative investigation indicate that critically reflective practice as a target outcome of the CLASSIC Program Model was instrumental in bolstering teachers' personal and collective sense of *efficacy* in professional practice with ELL students and families. In supporting and sustaining teachers' perceived sense of personal efficacy in the classroom, reflection seemed a powerful motivator in the practitioner's willingness to evaluate such factors as: awareness of student needs, cross-cultural competency in practice, and rationales for appropriate practice with ELL students. At the level of cross-cultural competence, these findings are consistent with prior research indicating that reflection on prior socialization and experiences vis-à-vis intercultural interactions will often prompt professional revaluation of preparedness for cultural and linguistic diversity (Herrera, 1996). At a more global level, teachers' collective reflections on practice, particularly in collaborative group arrangements, seemed to encourage the exploration of new approaches and alternative strategies to increase ELL student achievement, as well reconsiderations and reevaluations of the extent to which CLD students remained underserved by existing district policies and infrastructures.

Conclusion

This study found three dominant themes in teachers' perspectives on the impacts of the CLASSIC Program in professional practice with and programming for ELL students in participating schools and districts. Although these findings are in many ways consistent with existing literature concerning each of the five components of the CLASSIC Program Model, in other ways they suggest new implications for teachers' appropriate professional development for cultural and linguistic diversity.

At minimum, these findings point to the importance of professional development for diversity which is linked to schoolwide and district-inclusive restructuring efforts to better accommodate the differential resource, learning, and programming needs of CLD and ELL students. Teachers who are genuine in their efforts to better prepare for professional practice with diverse student populations must sense that their efforts are a part of larger site-based or district-driven restructuring efforts if their enhanced capacities are to be translated into meaningful changes in classroom and schoolwide practices.

Additionally, these finding suggest that teachers are open, albeit somewhat reluctant, to collegial planning and programming to improve ELL student achievement. What reluctance they suffer is often a function of school structure, limited opportunities for meaningful collaboration, and the barriers that "in school" culture may impose on potentials for collegiality. On the other hand, such openness to collegiality opens the door for synergistic teacher cooperation in professional planning, programming, instruction, and assessment which is site-focused, self-directed, and cross-culturally competent.

Finally, these findings further indicate that long-term, flexible, programs in postgraduate professional development can effectively target reflective practice as a target outcome, and in so doing, enhance teachers' personal and collective sense of efficacy in practice with diverse student populations. These findings suggest the need for additional research which explores, in a more focused manner, the specific ways in which this emergent capacity for reflective practice influences both a sense of self-efficacy among cross-cultural practitioners and the potential for an enhanced sense of collective efficacy among school faculties.

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