Educating English language learners in early childhood classrooms: A survey of teachers' sense of preparedness and self-efficacy in Washington State

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Abstract

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The increasingly diverse population of children in early childhood care and education settings has called attention to the growing demands being placed on teachers to effectively support these students. Current literature has focused primarily on the experiences of teachers of school-aged English language learners (ELLs). This research study builds on this literature by examining the experiences of early childhood education professionals who are teachers of ELLs. The current study analyzed survey data from 62 early childhood care and education teachers in Washington State. Survey items addressed teachers' perceived preparedness and self-efficacy regarding ELLs in their classroom. Teachers were also asked to provide background information about their program, their students, and themselves. This information was then examined in light of its influence on teachers' self-efficacy in teaching ELLs.

The quantitative analysis conducted for this study revealed six main significant findings. First, the descriptive analysis revealed notable trends in teachers' self-efficacy and perceived

preparedness related to a need for appropriate resources and staffing support as well as concerns about effective communication with parents and guardians of ELLs. Second, inferential statistical analyses showed that teachers' and co-teachers' language characteristics were associated with how self-efficacious respondents felt regarding the ELLs in their classroom. Third, the training experience teachers received outside their teacher preparation programs appeared to have a positive impact on their self-efficacy scores. Fourth, teachers who had received some type of ELL, ESL, TESOL, or bilingual certification/endorsement reported significantly higher levels of self-efficacy regarding ELLs. Fifth, results indicated a notable relationship between self-efficacy scores and ELL achievement levels. Sixth, instructional format appeared to be associated with self-efficacy scores, with mainstream teachers reporting lower levels of self-efficacy than teachers in all other formats. Seventh, self-efficacy scores were strongly related to levels of perceived preparedness to teach ELLs.

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Dedication

For my wonderful parents. Obviously.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

Chapter I: Introduction

Walk into Mrs. B's preschool classroom and you may be reminded of the Disney theme park ride, "it's a small world," only more chaotic and with slightly less singing. With seven different languages spoken in her classroom, and only half of the students fluent in English, stepping into this classroom is like looking through a cultural kaleidoscope of sorts. Each day Mrs. B finds herself in a perpetual balancing act—trying her best to recognize and celebrate each child's home culture and language while also supporting every child's development in English. Because Mrs. B is a monolingual English-speaking teacher, she is concerned about the impact she is having on the children who are less fluent in English or who speak no English at all. Through ongoing observation and child assessments she has determined that many of the children in her classroom will need some type of specialized support in language development. However, she is unsure of the extent to which language ability has influenced certain children's abilities in areas like social skills and math. Ultimately, Mrs. B will need to design lessons, activities, and feedback in a way that is sensitive to each child's linguistic capabilities. However, given her lack of experience and training with children who are English language learners (ELLs), she wonders if she is getting through to many of her students. This hypothetical vignette, representing a growing reality among early childhood educators, highlights an important construct related to effective teaching known as teacher self-efficacy.

No matter the setting, no matter the children, some factors related to effective instruction remain the same. Successful teachers are motivated, confident, prepared, and knowledgeable about the needs and abilities of the population of students they are teaching. These characteristics are collectively associated with teacher self-efficacy—believing in one's ability to teach

effectively in a particular context. For clarity, it is important to point out that *efficacy* and *self-efficacy* cannot be used interchangeably. Efficacy is defined as one's ability to produce a desired effect by completing a given task. The term self-efficacy refers to one's belief (accurate or not) in their ability to produce an effect. In other words, self-efficacy is the belief in one's efficacy (Bandura, 1977). That said, throughout this dissertation, the term self-efficacy will be used interchangeably with comparable terms such as *efficacy beliefs, efficacy appraisals*, or *perceptions of efficacy*.

Previous studies of teacher effectiveness have found a relationship between high self-efficacy and high motivation to improve practice, which in turn increases student achievement. (Bandura, 1986; Kritikos, 2003). However, available research suggests that teacher self-efficacy does not exist in a vacuum; rather it is a construct which tends to reflect and be affected by a wide array of contextual factors. For example, self-efficacy can vary by teachers' personal beliefs about language policy and instruction (Karabenick & Noda, 2004; Reeves, 2006), or there may be relationships between self-efficacy and external factors such as school setting (Durgunoglu & Hughes, 2010), availability of specialized training for teaching ELLs (Youngs & Youngs, 2001), or educational policies related to ELL instruction (Walker, Shafer, & Iiams, 2004). Self-efficacy warrants attention when teachers' preparation, personal experiences, and beliefs are out of sync with the learning needs of the populations they are trying to teach. For this reason, teacher self-efficacy is especially important to consider in areas where classrooms are becoming increasingly diverse. One place where this is occurring is in preschool and early childcare, where in many parts of the country, classrooms like Mrs. B's are quickly becoming the norm rather than the exception.

Teacher self-efficacy has been shown to be highly predictive of student outcomes across a range of educational settings (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk, Hoy & Hoy, 1998). However, much of the existing research on teacher self-efficacy has avoided making distinctions about specific subpopulations of students. Namely, there remains little research that is specific to linguistically and culturally diverse populations. Additionally, there appears to be little to no research that looks specifically at early childhood education (ECE) programs. Yet it is important to make these distinctions because of the unique challenges associated with educating ELLs between the ages of 3 and 5. For example, ELLs under the age of 5 are building skills in a new language while still attempting to fine-tune skills in their home language. Thus their learning needs differ from those of older ELLs who may have a stronger grasp on their first language as they begin to develop their second (Espinosa, 2014). In addition, students in early childhood teacher preparation programs receive little dedicated coursework in language acquisition or in teaching students from diverse backgrounds and teacher-preparation programs for English as a Second Language (ESL) and bilingual education do not always address the needs of the preschool age group (Nemeth, 2009; Early & Winton, 2001). Finally, with ELLs enrolling in pre-K classrooms at higher rates than ever before and early education quality improvement policies in full swing, the argument for examining teacher self-efficacy with regard to this particular population of children appears to be an easy one.

The present study analyzes survey data from 62 ECE teachers in Washington state. Survey data are used for three related analyses. First, descriptive statistics are used to explore background characteristics of teachers as well as classroom and programmatic characteristics. Second, correlational and mean comparison analyses are used to look at the relationship between these descriptive variables and teachers' self-efficacy scores related to their perceived ability to

effectively support ELLs in their classroom. Finally, this study will investigate the relationship between teacher self-efficacy and a second construct of interest—teachers' perceived preparedness to teach ELLs. Results of these analyses will serve to inform researchers, educators, and policy makers about the state of ECE English language learner education in Washington state.

This dissertation begins with a review of the literature on areas related to effective education for pre-K ELLs which includes a discussion of teacher self-efficacy as it relates to this population. Next, specific research questions and hypotheses are proposed, followed by methods, statistical analyses, and results. This dissertation will conclude with a discussion of the findings and their implications in the context of the literature, limitations to the study, and directions of future research.

Chapter II: Literature Review

The following literature review will be divided into five major sections. The first will establish a clear definition of the term English language learner, discussing demographic characteristics and school enrollment trends. The second section will discuss a conceptual framework related to culturally responsive teaching and learning as well as teacher preparedness in teaching ELLs. The third section will turn to the topic of teacher self-efficacy, broadly defining the term using conceptual frameworks developed by Rotter (1966) and Bandura (1977). The fourth section explores the concept of self-efficacy as it relates to teaching and learning. The final section is a review of the literature exploring influences on teacher self-efficacy.

Who are ELLs?

ELLs are children who speak a language other than English in the home and who are not fully fluent in English (Nemeth, 2009). Some states and school districts have adopted related

terms such as Limited English Proficient (LEP), English learners, bilingual, dual language learners (DLL), and children who speak a Language Other Than English (LOTE) (Espinosa, 2014). Throughout this dissertation the term ELL will be used as this is the preferred language used in Washington state public school systems. To help clarify exactly how the term ELL is defined by law, the U.S. Department of Education (2015) offers the following definition:

> An individual who, due to any of the reasons listed below, has sufficient difficulty speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language to be denied the opportunity to learn successfully in classrooms where the language of instruction is English or to participate fully in the larger U.S. society. Such an individual (1) was not born in the United States or has a native language other than English; (2) comes from environments where a language other than English is dominant; or (3) is an American Indian or Alaska Native and comes from environments where a language other than English has had a significant impact on the individual's level of English language proficiency. (p. 1)

Population trends. Across the United States, approximately 20% of the school-age population consists of ELLs (Capps, Fixx, Ost, Reardon-Anderson, & Passel, 2005). This percentage increases substantially in schools serving primarily low-income populations (Administration for Children and Families, 2008.). Head Start, which serves primarily low-income children and their families, has estimated that approximately 30% of their enrollees can be identified as ELLs (Office of Head Start, 2014).

According to the U.S. Census Bureau (as cited by Espinosa, 2014), the percentage of school-age children whose home language is something other than English is projected to increase from roughly 22% to 40% of the population by the year 2030. Due to increasing immigration and birth rates, much of this growth will be seen in the 0–5 age range. By some

estimates, this makes young ELLs the fastest growing segment of the population nationwide (Espinosa, 2014).

Part of the challenge in educating ELLs is that, although they may share a need to become proficient in English, they differ widely in terms of their linguistic, cultural, and socio-economic backgrounds (Espinosa, 2008; LaCelle-Peterson & Rivera, 1994). The complexity of this issue is well framed by Espinosa (2008) who writes,

> The educational performance of DLL students may vary due to many factors: the family's socio-economic status, the educational level of the mother, the quality of early language experiences in the home language, the age of exposure to English, as well as differences in cultural beliefs and child socialization practices across families. (p. 16)

Espinosa goes on to mention that there may be as many as 140 different home languages represented in ECE centers across the country.

ELLs in Washington State. In Washington state, the percentage of ELLs in public schools increased from 6.9% in 2003 to 7.9% in 2012 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). Hispanic/Latino children represent the largest and fastest growing ethnic subgroup of ELLs—representing 67% of the ELL population, however, as a whole, ELLs vary widely in language and ethnicity (Center for Public Education, 2012). In Washington state, 203 languages were spoken among school-aged ELLs in the 2009–2010 school year. Sixty-seven percent of ELLs spoke Spanish and 18% spoke one of the following seven languages (listed in order of frequency): Russian, Vietnamese, Somali, Ukrainian, Chinese, Korean, and Tagalog.

Washington State ranks 10th in the nation in diversity and 12th in ELL student enrollment (Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2011).

According to a 2011 report issued by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), "there remains a significant gap between ELLs and the percentage of all Washington's student in terms of the academic performance on the standardized math, science, reading and writing academic assessments" (p. 1). Many of these students enter the public school system with little to no previous exposure to English regardless of whether or not they had received some form of early education or care prior to kindergarten (many do not). As a result, ELLs tend to lag behind their peers academically.

Of late this has ignited a greater urgency among educators and policy makers to address the needs of this growing population. Many stakeholders, recognizing the foundational importance of early childhood development, point to early childhood care and education programs as promising instruments of change (Gormley, 2008). For example, Washington state's early learning guidelines promote a more deliberate approach to educating young ELLs which includes an academic emphasis on ELLs' home language in addition to English at a young age (National Center on Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness, 2012). Additionally, Washington state's early childhood care and education Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) has included specific guidelines for childcare providers aimed at promoting cultural and linguistic diversity in the classroom (DEL, n.d.). However, little is known about the effect of these guidelines and programs on ELLs in ECE settings at the state level. Because there is not yet a reliable means of identifying ELL enrollment trends or tracking student or teacher performance outcomes in *all* ECE settings state-wide, there remains to be little substantive information to draw from when attempting to validate these and other related policy efforts.

Conceptual Framework

Culturally responsive teaching and learning. ELLs are not only the fastest growing group in ECE programs, they are also one of the most vulnerable. For many ELLs, their first classroom experience will mean not only learning a new language but also acclimating to a different socio-cultural environment. ELLs are also more likely than not to come from low-income households which is commonly associated with a variety of developmental risk factors (Espinosa, 2014). Unfortunately, these factors often contribute to less than optimal early academic and social experiences for ELLs. As previously discussed, evidence suggests that the achievement gap between ELLs and their English-speaking peers can be seen as early on as the preschool years and often persists throughout later grade levels, leading to lower test scores, higher dropout rates, and lower rates of college enrollment (Gandara, Rumberger, Maxwell-Jolly, & Callahan, 2003; Rios-Aguilar, González-Canche, & Moll, 2010).

A growing recognition of the difficulties faced by linguistically diverse and other minority student populations has lead researchers such as Gay (2002) and Landson-Billings (2000) to suggest that many educational systems are grounded in dated structural and instructional formats that lack cultural responsiveness. Additionally, many areas face challenges with an overly homogeneous teaching force that fails to represent the demographic diversity of students (Gay & Howard, 2000). Moreover, these demographic differences between students and teachers are often related to vastly different socioeconomic backgrounds and lived experiences (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005).

Overall, school systems in the United States appear to be largely geared toward the norms and preferences of white, middle-class students (Banks, 2006)—a reality that often creates serious consequences for minority students. Indeed, a growing body of research suggests that the

degree to which students' culture is infused in classroom practices is strongly associated with academic outcomes for those students (Epstein, 1983; Irvine, 2003; Keengwe & Onchwari, 2014).

Fortunately, great strides have been made by researchers and educators to identify effective approaches to instruction that properly address and value diversity in the classroom (Gonzalez, Rosi, Marta, & Moll, 2001; Keengwe & Onchwari, 2014; Ovando & Combs, 2012). For example, drawing from a synthesis of research findings, Gay (2000) suggests "using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames, of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them" (p.29). Additionally, and perhaps more relevant to the current study, a considerable body of evidence exists that is specific to effective practices for linguistically diverse populations in ECE settings. One commonly cited review of this information (Espinosa, 2008) lists the following seven evidence-based practices for ELL teachers and administrators:

> **1.** Support DLL students' home language and literacy development while also promoting their English language development (ELD). All young children are capable of learning two languages; becoming bilingual has long-term cognitive, academic, social, cultural, and economic benefits—it is an asset.
>
> **2.** Family engagement policies and practices need to be examined through the lens of diversity. Traditional models may need to be expanded to include a focus on developing meaningful relationships with extended family members and a better understanding of family expectations for their children's development and learning. Family partnerships that are mutually respectful, engage in two way communication and incorporate important cultural and family background information offer promise for stronger home-school connections.

> **3.** Review current state early learning standards and expectations to ensure they are appropriate for DLL students. Where necessary, expand standards to address unique features of dual language development and instructional supports, including attention to executive function skills that explicitly promote English acquisition while supporting continued home language development.
>
> **4.** Design, implement, and evaluate instructional strategies that help develop essential academic concepts in DLL students' home language and within cultural contexts that are familiar and culturally consistent with diverse language groups.
>
> **5.** Provide professional development and training to all ECE teachers and staff on specific instructional strategies that are culturally and linguistically appropriate and promote English language development (ELD).
>
> **6.** Support bilingualism for all children whenever possible; dual language programs are an effective approach to improving academic achievement for DLL children while also providing many benefits to native English speakers.
>
> **7.** Assess all DLL children's linguistic and conceptual knowledge in both their home language and English**.** Assessing the child only in English will underestimate the child's knowledge and true abilities. This may require investment in the development of linguistically, culturally and developmentally appropriate assessment tools for young DLL children across all domains of development. (pp. 19-20)

Of course, a teacher's ability to carry out these recommendations largely hinges on existing infrastructures at almost every level, including previous education and training. That is, the link between culturally and linguistically responsible teaching practices and a

teacher's perceived ability to achieve these goals (i.e., teacher self-efficacy) is mediated in large part by the type of preparation and training they have received.

Teacher preparedness. There are substantial barriers to providing high-quality early care and education experiences to ELLs. As a recent nationwide survey of ECE directors reveals, the challenge often amounts to a lack of guidance on how to fully embrace linguistic and cultural diversity in the classroom (Schulman et al., 2012). Limited research on the topic suggests that many preschool teachers may be largely unprepared to work with these linguistically diverse populations (Buysse, Castro, West, & Skinner, 2005; Early & Winton, 2001). While this remains to be a relatively unexplored question in early childhood settings, the K-12 literature paints a similar picture with regard to a general sense of unpreparedness among mainstream (O'Neal, Ringler, & Rodriguez, 2008) and (to a lesser extent) ESL teachers (Fradd & Lee, 1997). Studies suggest that this lack of preparedness may lead to challenges in the field such as teachers developing negative attitudes toward ELLs (Youngs & Youngs, 2001), difficulty encouraging and motivating students, or difficulty supporting a wide range of academic needs and English levels among students (Gandara, Maxwell-Jolly, & Driscoll, 2005).

There is, however, surprisingly little information in the ECE literature which adequately addresses professional development for ECE teachers aimed toward cultural and linguistic competencies. This is evidenced by Zaslow and colleagues (2010) who conducted an extensive review of the literature on effective professional development for early childhood educators. These authors conclude that, "the literature does not adequately address the issue of cultural and linguistic competence for early childhood educators" (p. xiv). Indeed, this review did not find any peer-reviewed literature examining the effectiveness of PD opportunities to improve cultural

and linguistic skillsets for ECE teachers. For this reason is it necessary to draw from the broader literature on preparation for teachers of school-aged ELLs to help inform the present discussion.

Accordingly, a teacher's level of preparedness toward ELLs can be discussed in a variety of ways. This includes (a) training and education received at 2- and 4-year institutions, (b) certifications and endorsements obtained, (c) field experiences, (d) in-service training, (e) availability of classroom support and resources, and (f) teachers' *perceived* preparedness.

Two- and 4-year training and education. At the institutional level, programs vary considerably in the amount of emphasis placed on ELL and bilingual education. This was indicated by a national survey of preparation and certification of teachers working with limited English proficient (LEP) students where it was found that "only a small minority of institutions of higher education offer a program specifically to prepare bilingual education teachers and fewer than 1/6th of institutions studied require preparation for mainstream teachers regarding the education of ELLs" (Menken & Antunez, 2001, p. 4). It should be noted also that there is great variance in the ways in which states mandate requirements for cultural and linguistic diversity training for teachers, and typically these mandates do not dictate the type of programming that is offered at higher education institutions. Similar trends exist among early childhood teacher preparation programs where state regulations specifying the level and type of education needed to support diverse populations are minimal at best (Early & Winton, 2001).

There are, however, promising steps being made in the early childhood education community aimed at developing explicit strategies for teachers attending 2-and 4-year colleges and universities. One such effort, spearheaded by the National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning (created in fall 2010 with a grant from the U.S. Office of Head Start), seeks to provide affordable access to higher education courses for ECE teachers. Explicit coursework will address

cultural and linguistic diversity and aim to cultivate knowledge of these topics through a "Know, See, Do, Improve" module approach (Pianta, n.d.). Such efforts, while still very much in development, could provide greater accessibility to cultural and linguistic diversity-related course content for future ECE teachers.

Certifications and endorsements. There are a variety of certifications and endorsements teachers can pursue in preparation for teaching diverse populations. These include: ELL or ESL endorsements, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages certifications (TESOL), or bilingual certifications and endorsements. To varying degrees these programs educate teachers about the mechanics and patterns of language and social development among ELLs (or other linguistically diverse students) and provide extensive content regarding effective pedagogical strategies for these students (Espinosa, 2014). Still it is not always clear to what extent ESL teachers' are benefiting from their preservice certifications. In one investigation of certification programs for ESL teachers, Beacher (2012) found that few TESOL programs collect data on how graduates are faring in their first years of teaching. Beacher further addressed this issue with qualitative interviews in which teachers indicated that there was a "disconnect" between their experiences in the classroom and the content covered in their teacher preparation programs (Baecher, 2012, p. 579).

Field experiences. A great deal of research points to the need for immersive field experiences as a means of preparing preservice teachers for culturally and linguistically diverse settings (Keengwe, 2010; Hovater, 2007; Liaw, 2009; Maistre & Pare, 2010; Haberman, 1996). This insight follows the work of Dewey (1938), who commonly referred to field experiences as an essential component of teachers' education.

Unfortunately, American preservice teachers' field experiences often do not take place in culturally and linguistically diverse settings, but in areas where most students are from white-, middle-class backgrounds (Ladson-Billings, 2000b; Sleeter, 2001). Thus the value of such experience may be diminished for teachers entering the workforce in more diverse communities. As a consequence, a teacher's self-efficacy beliefs are often lowered as these beliefs may have been based on their success in a certain type of classroom. Indeed, Hodgkinson (2002) found that teachers' self-efficacy appraisals were negatively affected by the realities of urban classrooms when their field experiences were based in wealthier communities.

In-service training. In-service teachers will often receive ESL training through workshops, on-site coaching, or other professional development opportunities provided by their local school districts (O'Neal, Ringler, & Rodriguez, 2008). However, these typically occur as isolated, one-time experiences leading some to suggest that such efforts give superficial attention to the topic of ELL instruction (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995). Indeed, it is difficult to expect meaningful change without concerted on-going efforts being made to inform teachers about best practices for ELLs and ensuring that this knowledge gets transferred to the classroom.

This is not to say that promising models of professional development and training for practicing teachers do not exist. Wilson and Berne (1999) examined a professional development implemented in an ethnically and linguistically diverse area of New York City. This program utilized staff collaboration, summer learning opportunities, informal classroom observations conducted by fellow teachers, and administrative support. According to Wilson and Berne, the effectiveness of the program relies on a clear and purposeful framework centered around opportunities for teachers to enact (or "do") a particular teaching strategy and then to review and discuss teaching and learning outcomes with peers and administrators. This corroborates with

additional literature that has pointed towards the effectiveness of purposeful, feedback-oriented in-service programs for teachers of ELLs (Gandara et al., 2005).

Recently, the development and implementation of state-wide quality rating and improvement systems (QRIS) has shown to have a marked influence on the scope and scale of in-service training and professional development for ECE professionals (U.S. Department of Education, 2013). A common priority for all QRIS programs has been to promote school readiness for children with high-needs through an established set of standards. However, it is not clear the extent to which these standards contain explicit and intentional guidance for promoting increased outcomes for ELLs. In an unpublished review of the 19 state QRIS programs funded by the Race to the Top federal grant competition, Cummings (2014) found that only six states (Georgia, Maryland, New Jersey, Illinois, New Mexico, and Rhode Island) were shown to use language specific to linguistic and culturally diverse populations in their QRIS profiles. For example, Maryland included a provision specifying that daily schedules should be responsive to the individual needs of all children, including English language learners. New Jersey emphasized the promotion of multicultural learning by requesting the participation of parent/family members. So, while QRIS systems have tremendous upside as vehicles of purposeful and explicit professional development opportunities for teachers, it appears that more attention is needed with regard to linguistically diverse student populations.

Classroom support and resources. Teachers of ELLs often cite preparation challenges involving shortcomings in instructional support and appropriate resources for students. In a mixed methods examination of K-12 teachers in California, Gandara and colleagues (2005) found that among the most reported challenges for teachers of ELLs were (a) lack of tools to teach including appropriate assessment materials, (b) need for paraprofessional help, (c) limited

opportunities to collaborate with peers, and (d) lack of time to address the unique and varying learning needs of a diverse classroom. These sentiments are echoed by elementary and secondary teachers in Arizona who reported "deep and overwhelming concern" about whether or not a 4-hour English language development (ELD) block is sufficient to adequately address the needs of their ELL students (Rios-Aguilar, Gonzalez-Canche, & Moll, 2010, p. 26).

Past research has revealed that there may be some benefit in peer coaching and collaboration between novice teachers and ESL (Davidson, 2006; Galbraith & Anstrom, 1995; Showers, 1984; Wesley & Buysee, 2001). Through this situative learning format, novice teachers can develop necessary skills to teach ELLs through on-going professional dialogue coupled with an ability to apply newly learned techniques to the classroom.

Perceived preparedness. The above sections have discussed the actual learning experiences and resources that serve to prepare teachers to teach diverse populations. However, the rate and pace at which reform efforts are rolled out in the field of education often requires teachers to adapt to continually changing expectations and standards of accountability. Moreover, the growing cultural and linguistic diversity in schools and classrooms across the country presents teachers with many new challenges. For these reasons, information about qualifications and preparation received by teachers may not adequately address whether or not teachers are actually prepared given the changing demands of their field. So, while preparedness is an important indicator of success for teachers, it is also important to determine whether or not teachers *feel* prepared as a result of these experiences (National Center for Education Statistics, 1999).

The perceived preparedness of teachers of ELLs has been well documented in the literature (e.g., Alexander, Heaviside, & Ferris, 1999; Durgunoglu & Hughes, 2010; Siwatu,

2011). Lewis et al. (1999) examined teachers' perceptions of the adequacy of their preparation to teach ELL or culturally diverse students. Results indicated that just 20% of teachers with ELLs or culturally diverse students in their classrooms felt adequately prepared to teach them. Additionally, a study by O'Neal, Ringler and Rodriquez (2008) indicated that mainstream teachers at a rural elementary school did not feel that their teacher training programs had adequately prepared them to teach ELLs. Taken together, such research suggests many teachers are not exposed to diversity training in their teacher education program or in their current practice and that preparation they do receive for ELL instruction is largely inadequate (Alexander et al., 1999). This points to a greater need for understanding of how teachers respond to challenging circumstances related to unpreparedness. The following section turns to the topic of self-efficacy, a construct which has shown to be strongly correlated with feelings of preparedness (Siwatu, 2011).

Self-Efficacy: Theoretical Orientation

From a theoretical perspective, teacher self-efficacy most closely aligns with two frameworks: Rotter's (1966) social learning theory and Bandura's (1977) social cognitive theory. Rotter (1966) first introduced the idea that peoples' motivation to engage in a particular behavior is impacted by the expected outcome of that behavior. In other words, an individual's behavior may be strengthened or weakened depending on his/her perception of the relationship between that behavior and the subsequent reinforcement or punishment.

In line with this thinking, Bandura (1977) published research emphasizing the role of cognitive, self-reflecting, and self-regulating processes in motivation. For Bandura, the construct most centrally connected to these processes was perceived self-efficacy. Here, perceived self-

efficacy refers to the beliefs one has in their ability to control events and the subsequent effect this has on one's motivation, affect, and action. It is said to be perceived because the construct concerns people's personal beliefs about their capabilities in certain contexts—not an objective measure of actual ability or performance (Henson, 2001). As Woolfolk Hoy and Spero (2005) point out, "this is an important distinction because people regularly overestimate or underestimate their actual abilities, and these estimations may have consequences for the course of action they choose to pursue and the effort they exert in those pursuits" (p. 344).

This is not to say that these beliefs can't eventually lead to a higher likelihood of accomplishment and well-being. For example, Bandura (1994) contends that individuals with higher perceived efficacy tend to approach difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered. This tends to foster genuine interest and deep engagement in activities, and a fortified commitment to one's goals in response to setbacks or failures. Conversely, people with low perceived efficacy tend to approach difficult tasks as threats to be avoided. That is, those who see themselves as less capable will often respond to setbacks and failures by developing low aspirations and a weakened commitment to their goals.

Teacher Self-Efficacy in Practice

Thirty years ago, in an attempt to investigate the construct of teacher efficacy, researchers at the RAND Corporation asked teachers to express their agreement or disagreement with the following two survey items:

- "When it comes right down to it, a teacher really can't do much because most of a student's motivation and performance depends on his or her home environment."

- "If I try really hard, I can get through to even the most difficult or unmotivated students" (Armor et al., 1976; as cited in Protheroe, 2008).

The first item is designed to assess an individual's view on general teaching efficacy (GTE)—the extent to which a teacher believes students learning is influenced by external factors (e.g., poverty, home environment) beyond his or her control. The second item is designed to assess an individual's view on personal teaching efficacy (PTE) —the extent to which a teacher believes students can learn under his or her instruction (Ashton & Webb, 1982; Gibson & Dembo, 1994; Henson, 2002).

Since the RAND Corporation study, the concept of self-efficacy has seen many applications in the field of education. *Teacher* self-efficacy has also been explored at length and has been interpreted in a variety of ways. Because the exact meaning of both teacher efficacy and self-efficacy can be difficult to pin down, it is helpful to use Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy's (2001) seminal review and interpretation of this construct as a point of reference. Here, Tschannen-Moran and colleagues define teacher self-efficacy as teachers' beliefs in their ability to organize and execute strategies for bringing about student and instructional outcomes in a particular context. This can be operationalized using, what these authors refer to as, the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES). The TSES captures this construct through explicit wording of survey items which represent a departure from previous efforts to capture teachers' confidence or sense of control over student outcomes. For example, instead of asking, "How much can you help your students think critically?" the TSES asks, "How much can you do to help your student think critically?" According to Tschannen-Moran and colleagues, this slight change in wording is essential in that it reflects teachers' judgments about their capabilities in a given *context.* This is an important distinction to make because teachers' emotional and

instructional resources are largely context dependent. In this way, the model of teacher self-efficacy developed by Tschannen-Moran and colleagues helps to identify the interaction between teachers' judgements of the teaching task in context and their beliefs about their own personal teaching capabilities. Therefore, examinations of self-efficacy may allow for a more robust interpretation of a teacher's perceived effectiveness as it relates to unique classroom experiences.

Self-efficacy effects on teaching and learning. The past 30 years of research has provided ample evidence supporting the connection between teachers' perception of efficacy and various aspects of teaching and learning (see Hoy & Spero, 2005 for a review of this literature). Teachers with higher levels of self-efficacy are often better at planning and organizing and show greater enthusiasm for teaching (Allinder, 1994). Cousins and Walker (2000) found that higher efficacy scores are related to openness to new ideas and willingness to try out new instructional techniques. Additionally, a teacher's self-efficacy is an important indicator of teacher persistence and effectiveness (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk, Hoy, & Hoy, 1998; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). Finally, research suggests that teachers with higher levels of efficacy tend to be less critical of struggling students (Ashton &Webb, 1986) and are less likely to refer a student to special education (Soodak & Podell, 1993). This last point is especially relevant for ELL populations who are often over-referred to special education classrooms (Skiba et al., 2008).

Students themselves also benefit greatly from higher efficacy beliefs among teachers. Past research has shown links between teachers' perception of efficacy and academic achievement (Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2000; Ashton & Webb, 1986), students' motivation to learn (Schunk, 1991), and students own sense of efficacy toward learning (Anderson, Greene, & Loewen, 1988, as cited by Hoy & Spero, 2005). Taken together such

research has helped to fortify an empirical link between teaching and learning outcomes and a teacher's personal beliefs about his or her ability to effectively teach in a particular context.

Developing teachers' self-efficacy. Bandura (1977) identified four specific sources of efficacy beliefs: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and arousal. Mastery experiences are characterized by accomplishments in bringing about a desired outcome. For example, a teacher may use curriculum adaptations and student grouping strategies to help facilitate a science experiment in a linguistically diverse classroom. The following day, a knowledge check reveals that students have a strong conceptual understanding of the experiment which leads the teacher to believe that her intentional teaching strategies were responsible for student learning. As a result the teachers' self-efficacy has been developed or strengthened and these judgments are likely to increase her efficacy for conducting science experiments with linguistically diverse students in the future. This may underscore the potential value of field work or practicum experience for improving self-efficacy among pre-service teachers (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). However, as previously noted, it is important that this field work be demographically representative of the settings for which teachers are intending to prepare (Hodgkinson, 2002).

Self-efficacy can also develop as a result of exposure to vicarious learning experiences or verbal persuasion (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). This may occur as a result of teacher education coursework or opportunities to observe and learn from an experienced mentor. This is a concept rooted in Bandura' (1977) social cognitive theory which emphasizes the role of observational learning and social experience in the development of personality. Finally, arousal constitutes a physiological state (e.g., excitement or anxiousness) which works to help or hinder one's ability to produce a desired outcome. Here again, an experienced mentor or

coach may help teachers to cultivate positive feelings of arousal when taking on new challenges in the classroom (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). Broadly speaking, these sources of efficacy offer insight into the ways in which teachers identify and approach challenging classroom experiences.

Influences on Teacher Self-Efficacy

Bandura (1977) emphasized that self-efficacy is not a stable trait. Rather, an individual's appraisals of his or her own relative effectiveness at a given task is expected to be at least partially determined by surrounding contextual factors. As discussed, the unique needs of ELLs present challenges in any context however, self-efficacy can wane or strengthen as a consequence of individual, classroom, or structural level factors. The following section explores some of these factors which include, (a) student and teacher language characteristics, (b) teaching experience, (c) cultural experience, (d) teachers' attitudes and beliefs, (e) school context, (f) level taught, (g) program variables and curricula, (h) academic policy, and (i) teacher training and preparation.

It should be noted once again that these research syntheses offer conclusions that apply primarily to school-aged children, but also point to factors that require further evaluation with a younger group of children enrolled in early education programs.

Student language characteristics. Broadly speaking, mismatches between teachers and students may create difficulties with interaction and communication in the classroom. Nowhere is this more apparent than in linguistically diverse settings where English is the language of instruction. In a study that focused on teacher efficacy in the context of diverse elementary classrooms, Tasan (2001) found that there was a clear connection between student language

background and teacher efficacy—with higher teacher efficacy in classrooms with mostly English-speaking children. Encouragingly, Tasan found the relationship between student language background and teacher efficacy could be influenced by teacher preparation and professional development.

In another study examining special education teachers' feelings of efficacy toward ELLs with disabilities, Paneque (2006) revealed that there was a positive correlation between English language proficiency of the students and teacher level of self-efficacy. These findings are supported by previous research indicating that while special education teachers had high perceptions of their efficacy overall, they did report feeling less efficacious with regard to their ability to support linguistically diverse students with disabilities (Carlson, Brauen, Klein, Schrool, & Willig, 2002).

Teacher language characteristics. Predictably, language characteristics among teachers have been shown to relate to efficacy beliefs toward ELLs. Lee and Oxelson (2006) examined this relationship among teachers in California and found that teachers who had not enrolled in some type of language education program held negative or indifferent attitudes regarding ELLs' primary language use in the classroom. Youngs and Youngs (2001) found a similar relationship among second language fluency in teachers and their willingness to adopt new instructional techniques including promoting the use of ELLs' home languages in the classroom. Finally, Garcia-Nevarez et al. (2005) indicated that bilingual-certified teachers were more supportive of ELLs' primary language use in the classroom than teachers with regular education and ESL certifications. This suggests that bilingual teachers, perhaps due to their own bilingualism, might be more knowledgeable about and/or supportive of the academic, social, and intellectual benefits of ongoing dual language acquisition. Moreover, they likely know firsthand about the underlying

mechanics of second language acquisition and may be less intimidated by this process (Espinosa, 2014).

Cultural experience. A teachers' contact with other cultures, both in and out of the classroom, appears to be a mediating factor in determining their efficacy toward ELLs. Youngs and Youngs (2001) indicate that "contact" with another culture can be measured and discussed in terms of the frequency, diversity, and intensity of ESL students in a given program. Frequency concerns the amount of students from diverse backgrounds in one program; diversity indicates the range of ethnic backgrounds represented in a program; and intensity concerns the extent to which students from diverse backgrounds are clustered in a few classrooms or dispersed across the program evenly. That is, a teacher with multiple different languages spoken in her classroom might have a much different experience than a teacher with a similar number of ESL student but whom all speak the same language. So in one sense, increased familiarity with students from diverse backgrounds may have a positive effect on teachers' self-efficacy toward those students, but it is also possible for negative attitudes to develop as a result of an overly complicated set of expectations created by increased diversity and intensity of ESL students in the classroom.

Gandara, Rumberger, Maxwell-Jolly, and Callahan (2005) found that the number of ELLs in the classroom was positively correlated with teachers' competence toward these students. Additionally, Youngs and Youngs (2001) found mainstream teachers who had lived outside the United States were significantly more positive about teaching ELLs. These authors concluded that direct personal contact with people from diverse cultures promotes self-awareness and appreciation of cultural differences.

However, it's not clear whether certain personality traits such as openness to new experiences and acceptance of other cultures may have proceeded these experiences or if the

experiences themselves may have led to higher levels of self-efficacy. Investigating this question, researchers purport that direct personal contact with people from diverse cultures affects teachers' attitudes and that such contact is frequently advocated as a means to greater self-awareness and awareness of cultural differences (Harris, 1996; McEwen & Roper, 1994). This line of thinking is supported by social cognitive theory which suggests that prolonged, meaningful interactions with other cultures will reduce prejudice or negative attitudes toward those groups (Bandura, 1986b).

Teacher attitudes and beliefs toward second language learning. Some evidence suggests that teacher attitudes and beliefs about ELL-related issues, such as whether instruction in an ELL's home language is beneficial to learning, are strong determinates of a teachers' sense of efficacy toward teaching ELLs. For example, Karabenick and Clemens Noda (2004) revealed that teachers with more favorable attitudes toward ELLs were more likely to adopt a mastery approach to instruction (being intrinsically motivated by the challenge itself) and exhibited higher levels of self-efficacy for teaching ELLs. Attitudes and beliefs are important because they affect teachers' motivation to engage with certain students as well as their willingness to pursue training or new instructional strategies. It is also important to consider that attitudes and beliefs toward ELLs and whether or not they should be able to use their native language in the classroom is related to knowledge of ELLs themselves, including knowledge of second language acquisition and its potential benefits for classroom learning (Reeves, 2006). Thus more research is needed to determine the exact nature of the relationship between self-efficacy and teachers' attitudes and beliefs toward ELLs.

School context. Where a school is located has been shown to play a role in teachers' efficacy appraisals. For example, Knoblauch & Woolfolk Hoy (2008) found that among a sample

of student teachers in rural, suburban, and urban school districts, those from urban settings exhibited significantly lower perceived efficacy. Similarly, Siwatu (2011) found that school contextual factors contribute to American preservice teachers' sense of preparedness and appraisals of self-efficacy with regard to teaching diverse culturally populations. Specifically, teachers felt more prepared and confident to teach in suburban settings compared to those in urban settings. All teachers, regardless of school context, felt less prepared and less confident to teach ELLs. Siwatu attributes these differences to the larger number of culturally and linguistically diverse students from low-income families in urban schools compared to suburban schools. That is, these differences may not only be explained by the characteristics of students but also by the lower tax revenues, quality of school facilities, and amount of educational resources available to students and teachers in urban settings (Strizek, 2006).

Level taught. Generally, there is a negative relationship between teaching level and teacher self-efficacy. For example, a thesis submission by Fraser (2014) found that self-efficacy regarding teaching ELLs was greater for elementary school teachers than for middle and high school teachers. One explanation for this trend is that children are more malleable (academically, linguistically, and socially) early on in life. Thus teachers may feel that they are able to exert more influence over student outcomes in early grades. Interestingly, this research found that teachers of all levels had high feelings of general efficacy toward ELLs. That is teachers were relatively positive about teaching as a means to improve the lives of ELLs but were less confident in terms of their *own* ability to make such a difference. More research is needed to determine why grade level appears to influence teachers' personal efficacy beliefs but not beliefs about general efficacy toward ELLs.

Program variables and curricula. School and classroom level factors appear to play a role in teachers' self-efficacy appraisals. Research suggests that teachers' self-efficacy beliefs can be influenced by a variety of school practices including availability of instructional resources, quality of facilities, frequency of classroom observations from a supervisor (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy & Hoy, 2007; Chester & Beaudin, 1996), and opportunities to collaborate with peers (Chester & Beaudin, 1996).

Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, and Hoy (1998) point out that "teachers make efficacy judgments, in part, by assessing the resources and constraints in specific teaching contexts" (p. 344). Tasan (2001) notes that fundamental differences in resources and instructional support between classrooms with larger proportions of language minority students compared to primarily English-speaking classrooms may contribute to levels of self-efficacy among teachers. For example, language minority students are disproportionately placed in lower track programs and teachers in lower track programs tend to experience lower levels of self-efficacy (Oakes, 1990; Raudenbush, Rowan & Fai Cheong, 1992). This could be due in part to lower availability of necessary resources, lack of specialized support from qualified supervisors, or just a general sense of isolation and inability to collaborate with one's peers (Chester & Beaudin, 1996; Rosenholtz & Simpson, 1990).

Academic policy. Some literature points to increased pressure on teachers for educational accountability with a growingly diverse population of students a potential source of tension in the field (Walker, Shafer, & Liams, 2004; Alamillo & Viramontes, 2000; Gandara, 2000). These tensions arise when there is a mismatch between a teachers' capabilities, beliefs, and/or values and the expectations of policy makers, administrators, parents, or other outside influencers. For example, Walker, Shafer, & Iiams (2004) contends that in areas where state or

federal legislation have implemented stringent accountability measures concerning the achievement of ELLs or other minority groups, negative attitudes toward these students may develop among teachers who feel ill-prepared to meet these expectations. These authors also present evidence of negative attitudes among teachers of ELLs occurring in places like California, Arizona, and Massachusetts where bilingual education has been banned and ELL instruction has been restricted to a single year of structured immersion (Walker, Shafer, & Iiams, 2004).

Teacher training and preparation. One of the more studied predictors of teacher self-efficacy is the amount and nature of training and preparation teachers receive both prior to and during their teaching careers. As discussed previously, multiple state and national surveys reveal that many ELL teachers have had little to no preparation designed specifically to help them teach ELLs (Gandara, et al., 2003; Hopstock & Stephenson, 2003). Moreover, this lack of preparation has been shown to negatively affect teacher confidence in working with ELLs (Gandara Maxwell-Jolly, & Driscoll, 2005; Youngs & Youngs, 2001). Encouragingly, teacher certifications, endorsements, and training relate to higher levels of teacher confidence and self-efficacy toward ELLs. Multiple studies, for instance, have found links between ELL-related teacher preparation and professional development programs and higher levels of self-efficacy. Two studies, (Kwiat, 1989; Tasan, 2001) found that teachers' self-efficacy improved as a result of in-service diversity training. Looking at both preservice and in-service special education teachers, Paneque (2006) found a similar link between diversity training and efficacy beliefs. A follow up qualitative analysis indicated that preservice teachers especially valued field based learning experiences and in-service teachers most valued professional development activities.

Perceived preparedness has also long been associated with measures of teacher confidence and self-efficacy. This appears to be especially true for preservice and novice teachers. For example, Darling-Hamond, Chung, and Frelow (2002) found that overall perceived preparedness of novice teachers was strongly related to their confidence in making a difference in the lives of students from all backgrounds as well as those with discipline issues. *Within* an individual teacher, self-efficacy levels also varied, as a function of perceived preparedness as the teacher moved from one setting to the next. This suggests that self-efficacy and perceived preparedness are two constructs that respond relatively similarly to environmental changes such as class size, subject matter, and student body characteristics (Raudenbush, Rowan, & Cheong, 1992).

Regarding ELL populations in particular, Durgunoglu and Hughes (2010) found a positive correlation between mainstream preservice teachers' perceived preparedness and self-efficacy. In addition, classroom observation revealed that preservice teachers with lower scores of self-efficacy were also receiving less guidance from mentoring teachers and overall were less prepared to teach ELLs. These authors discuss the importance of examining self-efficacy beliefs among preservice teachers in particular noting that "personal efficacies remain stable across the years, and in fact may get worse as they start their professional lives" (Durgunoglu & Hughes, 2010, p. 33).

Summary

Teacher efficacy appraisals and perceived preparedness are important indicators of instructional quality and student outcomes. However these constructs are sensitive to contextual influences particularly when there is cultural and linguistic diversity among the students being taught. The literature offers some insight about how and why teacher's efficacy appraisals

toward ELLs may be affected by contextual influences, however, little is known about how these relationships play out in early childhood settings.

Current Study

Statement of the problem. Young ELLs often have needs beyond those of older ELLs and English-speaking peers. With early care and preschool teachers receiving so little training in language acquisition or in teaching students from diverse backgrounds (Nemeth, 2009), it is difficult to say whether or not these needs are being adequately met. One way to examine this question is to survey teachers about their personal sense of efficacy with regard to teaching diverse populations. It is also important to investigate whether teachers' feelings of efficacy vary according to personal or contextual factors. At present, there is no research looking specifically at teachers' feelings of efficacy toward ELLs in early learning settings. Considering the unique needs presented young ELLs between the ages of 3 and 5, a population that is rapidly increasing in preschool settings, further investigation is warranted.

Purpose of study. The aim of the current study is three-fold. First, a preliminary descriptive analysis will be conducted seeking to highlight trends with regard to program and provider characteristics. This section will also include information about average teacher efficacy toward ELLs, average perceived preparedness toward ELLs, and average beliefs about language learning in the classroom. Second, it is necessary to examine the relationship between program and provider characteristics as they relate to reported levels of self-efficacy toward ELLs. Third, this study will investigate the relationship between teacher self-efficacy and teachers' perceived preparedness to teach ELLs. This study builds on existing literature about factors related to teachers' self-efficacy toward ELLs (Durgunoglu & Hughes, 2010; Siwatu, 2010; Tran, 2011) and teachers' perceived preparedness to teach ELLs (Siwatu, 2010; Durgunoglu & Hughes,

2010). It adds to the current body of knowledge by focusing on the experiences of teachers in early care and education settings.

Based on these objectives, the following research questions will be examined. Corresponding research hypotheses were informed by the literature reviewed above:

Research question 1. How self-efficacious and well prepared do teachers feel in teaching ELL students?

Hypothesis 1. It is hypothesized that ECE teachers' levels of self-efficacy and perceived preparedness toward ELLs will be comparable to levels found in the literature regarding teachers of older ELLs.

Research question 2. How are the correlates of teacher background characteristics related to teachers' self-efficacy regarding ELLs?

Hypothesis 2. It was hypothesized that correlates of teachers' language characteristics, ethnicity, and years teaching would be related to self-efficacy regarding ELLs.

Research question 3. How are the correlates of experience, ongoing training, and educational background related to teachers' self-efficacy regarding ELLs?

Hypothesis 3. It was hypothesized that correlates of experience, level of education, and types of preparation for working with ELLs will be related to teachers' self-efficacy regarding ELLs.

Research question 4. How are the correlates of student characteristics related to teachers' self-efficacy regarding ELLs?

Hypothesis 4. It was hypothesized that student variables related to total class size, percentage ELL enrollment, language diversity, and ELL achievement level will be associated with teachers' reported self-efficacy scores regarding ELLs.

Research question 5. How are the correlates of program characteristics related to teachers' self-efficacy regarding ELLs?

Hypothesis 5a. It was hypothesized that the correlate of community context will explain at least part of the variance in self-efficacy scores.

Hypothesis 5b. It was hypothesized that correlates of instructional format and program staffing will be related to teachers' self-efficacy scores.

Hypothesis 5c. It was hypothesized that correlates of program accreditation and ratings will be related to teachers' self-efficacy scores.

Research question 6. How are teachers' self-efficacy beliefs related to levels of perceived preparedness to teach ELLs?

Hypothesis 6. It was hypothesized that teachers' reported levels of perceived preparedness to teach ELLs would be positively related to self-efficacy scores regarding ELLs.

Chapter III: Methods

A cross-sectional survey was used to investigate the experience of ECE teachers working with ELLs and to explore the relationship between variables associated with teacher self-efficacy and perceived preparedness. The following section first describes the respondents and survey procedures, then describes the variables and plan for the analyses.

Respondents and Recruitment

Respondents were preschool and early childhood care and education providers currently teaching in the state of Washington. Recruitment of a convenience sample took place through multiple avenues. On April 29, 2015, emails were sent to each of the seven regional offices of Child Care Aware of Washington (CCA-WA) with an explanation of the survey and a request to

forward the information to providers/teachers in the region. (See Table 1 for a list of regions.) CCA-WA regional coordinators then sent to their provider contact list emails that included a survey invitation letter (provided in both English and Spanish) and a link to the survey. It was not clear when the seven CCA-WA regional coordinators were able to send out this information to providers. It should also be noted that some regional coordinators expressed some concern about the timing of the survey recruitment, explaining that, while they were happy to help, they could not promise much of a response as this was a particularly busy time of year for them and for the providers in their region.

On May 27, a final request for responses was sent to all seven CCA-WA regional coordinators. Again, it was not clear through email correspondence which coordinators were able to forward this request to providers in their region.

Table 1
Sample size by region

Region	Counties	Sample N= 62	
		N	%
Olympic Peninsula	Clallam, Jefferson, Grays Harbor, Mason, Kitsap, Thurston	4	6.5
Northwest	Whatcom, Skagit, Snohomish	3	4.9
King County	King	11	17.7
Pierce County	Pierce	17	27.4
Southwest	Pacific, Lewis, Cowlitz, Clark, Skamania, Klickitat	16	25.8
Central	Okanogan, Ferry, Chelan, Douglas, Grant, Kittitas,	4	6.5
Eastern	Stevens, Lincoln, Spokane, Pend Oreille, Whitman, Franklin, Walla Walla, Columbia, Garfield, Asotin	7	11.3
Skipped Question		0	0

Throughout the months of April and May, other avenues of recruitment were pursued. On April 27, the deputy director of Washington State Association of Head Start and ECEAP was contacted and agreed to advertise the survey in a weekly newsletter sent to providers across the state. Additionally, from May 18–24, approximately 150 direct mailings—containing the survey invitation letter, a flyer summarizing the information, and $1 as a gesture of thanks for the recipient's time and consideration—were sent out to providers in all seven regions of the state. ECE program mailing addresses were acquired through an online database. State zip codes known to have particularly diverse student populations (Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2011) were specifically targeted. Programs were randomly selected by zip code from a list generated by the online database search engine. Unfortunately, because all survey responses were anonymous, it was impossible to determine the response rate yielded by each method of recruitment.

Initial emails and mailings included a cover letter addressed to center directors requesting that they forward the information to preschool and early care and education teachers in their center. Survey invitations informed teachers that the study's purpose was to learn about their experiences working with ELLs so that future efforts can be focused on the needs of ECE teachers in the field. The survey itself was created through SurveyMonkey.com. The first page of the survey provided brief information about the survey and informed teachers that their responses would be completely anonymous and could not be traced to any identifiable information. Potential respondents were also made aware of an opportunity to enter a raffle for a $100 Amazon gift card. The raffle was conducted by directing participants to a separate survey link at the end of the main survey. Here, teachers were asked for contact information and

preference for a delivery method should they win the gift card. On June 10, the winner of the raffle was randomly selected from the list of teachers who responded to this additional survey. All information (including the surveys themselves) was provided in both English and Spanish, see Appendices A and B.

In total, 75 preschool and child care providers responded to the survey. Of these respondents, 36 responded to all of the items on the survey (not including the last item on the survey which was open ended and received 23 responses). Respondents who did not answer questions about self-efficacy or perceived preparedness (n = 13) were removed from the analysis. Respondents who skipped some of the other items were still included in the analysis. This criteria yielded a final sample of 62.

Measures

Participants completed a 34-item survey which took approximately 10–15 minutes to complete. The survey included 31 author-developed questions about program characteristics (19 items), teacher background characteristics (11 items) and needed supports (1 item). These items were both multiple choice and open-ended and were informed by a review of the literature on factors related to teacher self-efficacy. The remaining survey items were grouped into three distinct scales which included, teacher self-efficacy toward ELLs (9 subscales), perceived preparation to teach ELLs (8 subscales), and beliefs about language learning in the classroom (6 subscales).

Questions regarding teacher self-efficacy used a Likert-type scale and were adapted from Durgunoglu and Hughes (2010) (modified from a survey originally developed by Darling-Hammond et al. [2002]). Questions regarding perceived preparedness also used a six-point Likert-type scale and were adapted from a survey developed by the Council of Chief State

School Officers (2015). Questions regarding beliefs about language learning in the classroom were adapted from Grady and O'Dwyer (2014). However, due to low internal consistency reliability, the beliefs scale was not used in the final analysis for this study.

Prior to any data collection, cognitive interviews were conducted with five ECE teachers to test all of the survey items. Based on feedback from these interviews, the survey was shortened and several questions were modified for clarity. Finally, the survey was reviewed by faculty members at the University of Washington, including one individual who teaches a graduate course in survey methods.

Analysis

The first section of the analysis describes respondent background characteristics, program characteristics, average levels of self-efficacy toward ELLs, and perceived preparedness to teach ELLs. This portion of the analysis incorporates the majority of the survey items and is intended to give the reader a clear understanding of the study sample and the programs in which they work.

The second section of the analysis explores the relationships teachers' self-efficacy scores and various predictor variables. Predictor variables were grouped by (a) teachers' background characteristics, (b) teacher preparation and educational background, (c) student characteristics, (d) program characteristics, and (e) teachers perceived preparedness to teach ELLs. These relationships were explored in various ways, depending on the nature of the data that was being examined.

Pearson's *r* and Spearman's rho correlation coefficients were used to investigate the possible linear relationships among the predictor variables and self-efficacy scores. Pearson's *r* coefficients were used to examine continuous variables, and Spearman's rho coefficients were

used to examine ordinal variables. Both methods offered a generalized interpretation of the strength and directionality of relationships and revealed significant correlations. Additionally, a series of independent samples *t*-tests were used to examine the mean differences of self-efficacy scores in relationship to all dichotomous predictor variables. Dichotomous variables were dummy coded as 0s and 1s.

Predictor variables. Correlational and *t*-test analyses were conducted to examine the relationships between multiple predictor variables and levels of teacher self-efficacy toward ELLs. Predictor variables can be grouped into five broad categories, (a) teacher background characteristics, (b) teacher preparation and educational background (c) student characteristics (d) program characteristics, and (e) perceived preparedness to teach ELLs. Note that not all survey items were used as predictor variables.

Teacher background characteristics. The following survey items addressed language(s) spoken, and ethnicity.

- "Do you speak any of the home languages spoken by ELLs in your classroom? If so, how fluent are you?" This question was treated as an ordinal variable from 1 to 4 based on the level of fluency indicated: "I do not speak any of the home languages spoken by the ELLs in my classroom" (1), "I know some words in one or more languages" (2), "Conversant in one or more languages" (3), and "Fluent in one or more languages" (4).
- "Is there a full-time or part-time co-teacher or para-educator in your classroom who speaks any of the home languages spoken by ELLs in your classroom?" If so, how fluent are they? This question was also treated as an ordinal variable, however, the response choice "Not applicable (there are no co-teachers or para-educators in my classroom)" was coded as a 99 (missing data) in the analysis.

- "What language(s) do you speak fluently?" Teachers indicated a range of languages spoken. However, for interpretability, response categories were analyzed dichotomously as 'English fluency only' (n = 44) and 'Fluency in a language other than English' (n = 9).
- "What is your ethnicity?" Again, to allow for comparable groups, ethnicity was condensed into dichotomous categories for the analysis: 'white' (n =41) and 'other' (n = 10). The response choice, "Prefer not to say" was coded as a 99 (missing data) in the analysis.

Teacher experience and education background. The following survey items addressed respondents' individual experience as preschool teachers and their educational background, including types of preparation directed specifically towards working with ELLs.

- "Highest level of education you have attained?" This was initially treated as a categorical variable for the descriptive analysis. For the *t*-test analysis this was treated as a dichotomous variable wherein the six response items for "Highest education achieved" were combined to create a new variable with only two response items—High school/GED/CDA/AA (n = 25) and BA/BS/MA/PhD (n = 28).
- "In your teacher preparation program, did you receive explicit instruction in language acquisition through a dedicated course?" Treated as a dichotomous variable, responses to this question were assigned dummy code values of 1 = Yes or 0 = No.
- "In your teacher preparation program, did you receive any explicit instruction in teaching students of culturally diverse backgrounds?" Treated as dichotomous variable, dummy coded as 1 = Yes and 0 = No.
- Do you have an ELL, ESL, TESOL, or Bilingual teacher certification/endorsement? Treated as dichotomous variable, dummy coded as 1 = Yes and 0 = No.

- "Outside of your teacher preparation program, have you received any specific training/professional development in working with the ELL population?" Treated as dichotomous variable, dummy coded as 1 = Yes and 0 = No.
- Related to the previous question: "If yes, where have you received this training/PD? (Select all that apply)" Type of training received could only be analyzed descriptively, as there were not enough responses to warrant an investigation of their relationship to SE scores.
- "How many years have you been teaching preschool?" Treated as a continuous variable which ranged from 1 to 43 years.

It should be noted that some effort was required to determine what percentage of the sample were teachers of preschool-aged children. An oversight was discovered 1 week into data collection (May 7, 2015), in that the original survey information may have been inadvertently sent to some teachers of children outside of the intended 3- to 5-year-old age range. Subsequently, for the respondents who completed the survey after May 7, a question was added to the survey to determine the age range taught. For responses received prior to May 7, two survey items were used to extrapolate which of the respondents were preschool teachers. First, program type could be used in the sense that all respondents who indicated Head Start, ECAEP, or some type of preschool program were, by definition, preschool teachers. Second, a survey item asked, "How many years have you been teaching preschool?" This of course, rests on the assumption that teachers indicating 1 year or more were currently teaching preschool. Because this was an open-ended field, respondents could either skip the question or indicate that "I do not teach preschool." Between these two original items and the additional item added on May 7, it was determined that at least 90% of the sample (n = 56) were preschool teachers. Of the total (N

= 62), two respondents indicated that they taught an older age group (age 5 to 12), an additional two indicated that they taught a younger age group (age 2 and under) and for the remaining four respondents, the age group taught could not be determined. Respondents were included in the final analysis regardless of age-group taught.

Student characteristics. The following survey items addressed one or more ELLs in the classroom, total class size, percentage ELL enrollment, student language diversity, and ELL achievement levels.

- "Are there currently one or more children in your classroom who speaks English as a second language?" Treated as a dichotomous variable, responses to this question were assigned dummy code values of 1 = Yes or 0 = No.
- "How many children are currently enrolled in your classroom?" Class size was treated as a continuous variable. Note that two respondents entered center enrollment numbers instead of enrollment for a single classroom and were subsequently counted as missing data for this variable.
- Two questions: "How many children are currently enrolled in your classroom?" and "How many of these children are considered to be English Language Learners (ELLs)?" were combined to create a new variable which was *percentage ELL enrollment.* For purposes of interpretability, this percentage was divided into 3 ordinal categories: 14% or less, 15 to 49%, and 50% or more. Respondent were relatively evenly distributed across these three categories.
- "How many different languages are spoken by the children in your classroom?" Treated as a continuous variable. It should be noted that this question may have been unclearly worded. That is, many respondents (n = 20), despite having indicated they had at least

one ELL in their classroom, reported having "0" or "1" language spoken in their classroom. Therefore results addressing this question were treated with caution.

- "What is the average achievement level of the ELLs in your classroom?" This question was treated as an ordinal variable from 1 to 3: low achievement (1), medium achievement (2), and high achievement (3). "Not sure" was coded as a 99 (missing data) in the analysis.
- Two questions: "How many children are currently enrolled in your classroom?" and "How many children in your classroom receive a childcare subsidy?" were combined to create a new variable which was *percentage childcare subsidy.* For purposes of interpretability, this percentage was divided into 3 ordinal categories: 25% or less, 26 to 75%, and 75% or more. Respondents were relatively evenly distributed across these three categories.
- "Regarding the racial background of your students, which of the following choices most accurately characterizes your classroom?" The six response categories (i.e., mostly white, mostly Hispanic, mostly black, mostly Asian, mostly Pacific Islander, and mixed races) were condensed into 3 categorical categories: Mostly white (n = 27), mixed races (n = 26), and mostly Hispanic/Black/Asian (n = 9). No classrooms were described as mostly Pacific Islander.

Program characteristics. The following survey items addressed staffing support, type of instructional format, community setting, program accreditations and Early Achievers ratings.

- "Think of the last school day. How many adults were working in the classroom? This includes co-teachers, para-educators, community volunteers, educational specialists, or other adults who were working with children in your classroom over the course of three

or more hours." This question was treated at an ordinal variable from 1 to 4 based on the number of adults working in the classroom: "I was the only adult working in the classroom" (1), "One other adult" (2), "Two other adults" (3), or "Three or more other adults" (4). This portion of the analysis controlled for classroom size and number of ELLs.

- What type of classroom do you teach in (or closest approximation)? Response items included, (a) Mainstream, (b) Non-structured Immersion Program, (c) Structured English Immersion (SEI), (d) Paired Bilingual/Alternative Immersion, (e) Bilingual Program, (f) Two-Way Bilingual/Dual Language Program, (g) Other Type of Program. See Appendix B for descriptions of these instructional program types (Item 5 of the survey). For the present analysis, these seven categories were combined to form two new categories. Specifically, Mainstream, Non-Structured Immersion, and Structured English Immersion programs were combined (n = 44) as each of these categories suggest that ELLs are taught in the English language only formats- receiving various levels of English language development support. The second category was composed of Bilingual, Paired Bilingual, and Two-Way Bilingual/Dual Language programs (n = 8) which indicate various combinations of English and home language instruction and support. Additional respondents (n = 9) identified their program type as "Other" which could not logically be included in either of the above categories and was consequently not included in the analysis.
- "Which best describes the community you currently teach in?" This question was treated as a categorical variable as respondents indicated whether their program was located in a Rural, Urban, or Suburban setting.

- "Is your program NAEYC, NAC, or NECPA Accredited?" Treated as a dichotomous variable, responses to this question were assigned dummy code values of 1 = Yes or 0 = No.
- Has your program received an Early Achievers rating? Treated as a dichotomous variable, responses to this question were assigned dummy code values of 1 = Yes or 0 = No. Rating level could only be analyzed descriptively, as there were not enough responses to warrant an investigation of their relationship to SE scores.

Perceived preparedness to teach ELLs. The final independent variable used for the analysis portion of this study was multi-item construct addressing teachers' perceived preparedness to teach ELLs. Perceived preparedness was adapted from a survey developed by Council of Chief State School Officers (2015) which was composed of six Likert items ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." Higher levels of agreement indicated higher levels of perceived preparedness to teach ELLs. The adapted perceived preparedness scale used in the present study demonstrated a high level of reliability ($\alpha = .89$). Respondents' scores on each item were averaged to create an additional variable, *average perceived preparedness*, which was used for the correlational analysis. The construct was made up of the following items:

- I feel prepared to teach ELLs in my classroom.
- The training/education I have received has sufficiently prepared me to effectively support ELLs.
- I have sufficient resources and materials to effectively support ELLs.
- I have appropriate assessment instruments to accurately assess the language and academic abilities of ELLs.

- I am knowledgeable of teaching practices that are attuned to students' language proficiencies and cognitive levels.
- I am knowledgeable of the language demands of the content area that I will teach.
- I am knowledgeable of the stages and mechanics of second language development.
- I am adequately supported by staff, specialists, and/or community volunteers in supporting ELLs.

Teacher self-efficacy toward ELLs (criterion variable). This study sought to examine the effects of the various predictor variables, discussed above, on teacher self-efficacy regarding ELLs in the classroom. The teacher self-efficacy scale, adapted from Durgunoglu & Hughes, (2010), was composed of nine items and utilized 6-point Likert scales ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." Higher levels of agreement indicated higher levels of self-efficacy towards ELLs (Two items were reverse coded). This scale was shown to have an acceptable level of reliability with a sample of 62 preservice teachers ($\alpha = .83$). Respondents' scores on each item were averaged to create an additional variable, *average self-efficacy,* which was used as the criterion variable in the analysis. The scale was made up of the following items:

- If I try hard I can get through to most of the ELL students in my class.
- When it comes down to it, a teacher really can't do much because most of an ELL student's motivation and performance depends on his or her home environment. (Reverse coded)
- I am confident in my ability to handle most discipline problems with ELL students.
- I am confident in my ability to teach all ELL students to high levels.
- I am uncertain how to teach some of my ELL students. (Reverse coded)

- I am confident of my skills to effectively communicate with parents and guardians of ELL students.
- I am confident of my skills to provide accurate /appropriate performance assessments to ELL students.
- I feel confident in providing linguistically and culturally appropriate learning experiences for ELL students
- I feel confident in my ability to teach students from a variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Chapter IV: Results

This chapter is divided into two sections. First, teacher and program demographic characteristics are discussed. Next, results of several analyses are presented, which are grouped by research question. The first research question, regarding average levels of teacher self-efficacy regarding ELLs and average perceived preparedness to teach ELLs, was explored through a descriptive analysis. The remaining four research questions—about the relationships between various predictor variables and teachers' self-efficacy scores regarding ELLs—were examined in several ways depending on the type of data.

Specifically, the relationships between continuous predictor variables and teachers' self-efficacy (SE) scores were examined using Pearson's *r* correlation coefficients. Ordinal predictors were examined using Spearman's rho correlation coefficients. Finally, all dichotomous variables were dummy coded as 0s and 1s, and mean differences were examined using independent samples *t*-tests. All analyses were conducted using SPSS version 21.

Respondents' Descriptive Characteristics

The descriptive characteristics of survey respondents and their programs includes:

(a) Teacher background characteristics (i.e., gender, ethnicity, language[s] spoken, years teaching).

(b) Teacher experience and education background (i.e., level of education, types of preparation for working with ELLs)

(c) Student characteristics (i.e., ELL and total classroom enrollment, student language and ethnic characteristics, average ELL achievement).

(d) Program and student characteristics (i.e., geographic location of program, community setting, type of program, instructional format of program, ratings and accreditations, program staffing).

Teacher background characteristics. All of the respondents in the final sample were females. The majority of the respondent were White (65%), a smaller percentage were Hispanic (9%), and the remaining 8% of teachers who responded to this question were either Asian, American Indian, Black, or unidentified. Eighteen percent of the respondents did not answer this question. The majority of the respondents were monolingual English speakers (63%), an additional 24% indicated that they were fluent in a language other than English, and the remaining 13% did not respond to the question. Language fluency among respondents also varied. Specifically, respondents were asked how fluent they (and their classroom assistants) were in any of the home languages spoken by ELLs in their classroom. This information is summarized in Table 2. Finally, among respondents who indicated they were preschool teachers (n = 54), years teaching preschool varied widely (M = 16.02, SD = 9.89, Range = 1, 45).

Table 2
Teacher and classroom assistant fluency in home language(s) of ELLs.

Language Fluency	Total *N* = 62	
	N	*%*
Teacher language level		
Doesn't speak	15	24.2
Some words	27	43.5
Conversant	10	16.1
Fluent	8	12.9
No response	1	1.6
Classroom assistant language level		
Doesn't speak	14	22.6
Some words	11	17.7
Conversant	7	11.3
Fluent	21	33.9
No response	9	14.5

Experience and education background. Respondents provided information about any training and/or education they had received both prior to teaching and while working as teachers. The respondents' level of education ranged from a high school degree (n = 2) to a master's degree (n = 14). The most common levels of education were an AA (n =16, 30%), BA (n = 14, 26%), and MA (n = 14, 26%). Regarding language acquisition, 22% (n = 14) of the teachers indicated that they had received explicit instruction in language acquisition through a dedicated course in their teacher preparation program, and 56% (n = 35) reported receiving explicit instruction in teaching students of culturally diverse backgrounds, while 52% (n = 33) indicated that they had received specific training or professional development in working with ELL populations outside of formal teacher preparation programs. A variety of different types of education were reported. This information is summarized in Table 3.

Table 3
Additional training received outside of teacher preparation program.

Training Type	Total *N* = 62	
	N	*%*
Graduate school	3	4.8
In-service training	14	22.6
Workshops	14	22.6
Conferences	13	21.0
Coaching	7	11.3
Books/pamphlets	11	17.7
Reflective groups	7	11.3
Other	3	4.8
No training	21	33.9
No response	8	12.9

Note. The frequency of training types indicated represents the number of respondents who marked any of the options listed below. Respondents were able to mark as many training types as desired, percentages do not add up to 100%.

Program characteristics. The sample included teachers from a variety of different program types. Due to the nature of recruitment efforts, certain types of programs were overrepresented. The most commonly represented program types were *For Profit Child Care* (*n* = 13) and *Center Based Child Care* (*n* = 11). Count and percentages of all program types are displayed in Table 4. Programs also differed by instructional format. The largest single group of respondents reported teaching in mainstream classrooms (52%). However, instructional formats for the remaining 48% of respondents varied widely. This information is reported in Table 4.

Table 4
Type of program and type of instructional format.

Program/ Instructional Format	Total $N = 62$	
	N	*%*
Program Type		
For profit child care	14	22.6
Not for profit child care	12	19.3
Faith affiliated	7	11.3
Head Start	9	14.5
Early Head Start	2	3.2
ECEAP	11	17.7
Center based child care	12	19.3
Family child care	11	17.7
Other	6	9.7
No response	0	0.0
Instructional Format		
Mainstream	32	51.6
Non-structured Immersion	9	14.5
Structured Immersion	3	4.8
Paired Bilingual Immersion	2	3.2
Bilingual	3	4.8
Two-Way Bilingual	3	4.8
Other	9	14.5
No response	1	1.6

Note. The frequency of program type indicated represents the number of respondents who marked any of the options listed below. Respondents were able to mark as many program types as desired, percentages do not add up to 100%.

A small percentage of teachers (16%, *n* = 10) worked in programs that were accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). About half of the teachers who responded to the question (49%, *n* = 25) indicated that their program had been rated by Washington state's Early Achievers Quality Rating and Improvement program (ratings are the result of on-site evaluations and are based on adherence to a certain set of recommended practices). Of those teachers working in rated programs, rating levels broke down as follows: rating level 2 (*n* = 4, 6%), rating level 3 (*n* = 14, 22%), rating level 4 (*n* = 3, 5%), rating level 5

(*n* = 2, 3%). Respondents also indicated that an average of 46% of students in their classrooms currently received a child care subsidy. Classrooms also differed in number of co-teachers, para-educators, or volunteers in the classroom on a typical day. This broke down as follows: only adult (*n* = 6, 10%), one other adult (*n* = 19, 31%), two other adults (*n* = 17, 27%), and three or more adults (*n* = 17, 27%). Finally, as was discussed in the previous chapter, three survey items were combined to determine that at least 90% of the sample (*n* = 56) were preschool teachers. Of the total (*N* = 62), two respondents indicated that they taught an older age group (age 5 to 12), an additional two indicated that they taught a younger age group (age 2 and under) and for the remaining four respondents, the age group taught could not be determined.

Student characteristics. A majority of respondents (87%, *n* = 54) indicated that they currently had at least one ELL in the classroom. Respondents indicated a wide range of both total number of students (*M* = 20.84, Range = 1, 50) and number of ELLs (*M* = 6.27, Range = 0, 43) in the classroom. One respondent indicated that there were 96 students in her classroom, but was likely referring to the center as a whole. This was subsequently treated as a nonresponse for all analyses. It is possible that other respondents made this error as well, but for purposes of this analysis, all enrollment numbers of 50 and under were considered as classroom enrollment. Class size and number of ELLs were combined to calculate the percentage of ELLs for each respondent. This information is summarized in Table 5.

Teachers were asked to indicate the average achievement level of the ELLs in their classroom. On average, ELLs were reported to be in the medium achievement range. Reported achievement levels of ELLs are summarized in Table 5. The average number of languages spoken in each classroom was two languages. However, the survey item, “How many different languages are spoken by the children in your classroom?” may have been unclearly worded. That

is, many respondents (n = 22), despite having indicated they had at least one ELL in their classroom, reported having "1" language spoken in their classroom. Thus, it is not clear if, for example, "1" suggests one language in addition to English. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that there was a range of responses to this question with 22 respondents reporting two languages spoken in the classroom and the remaining 18 reporting between three and seven languages spoken.

Table 5.
Percentage of ELLs, Average ELL Achievement, and Ethnicity

% ELLs /Average Achievement/Ethnicity	Total N = 62	
	N	*%*
Percent ELL		
14% or less	22	35.5
15 to 49%	21	33.9
50% or more	18	29.0
No Response	1	1.6
Average ELL Achievement		
Low	3	4.8
Medium	27	43.5
High	22	35.5
No Response	10	16.1
ELL Ethnicity		
Mixed races	28	45.2
Mostly White	22	35.5
Mostly Hispanic	7	11.3
Mostly Asian	2	3.2
Mostly Black	1	1.6
No Response	0	0

Teachers' Views on Self-Efficacy and Preparedness

Respondents provided information about their own self-efficacy regarding ELLs as well as their perceived preparedness to teach this population. Each construct (self-efficacy, perceived

preparedness) was composed of several 6-point Likert-type questions, ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." For purposes of interpretability, both Likert scales can be described qualitatively as follows: 1–2 (low), 3–4 (average), and 5–6 (high).This data was used to address the first research question of this dissertation.

Research question 1. How self-efficacious and well prepared do teachers feel in teaching ELL students?

Hypothesis 1. It is hypothesized that ECE teachers' levels of self-efficacy and perceived preparedness toward ELLs will be comparable to levels found in the literature regarding teachers of older ELLs.

Overall, levels of self-efficacy among respondents were slightly above average (M = 4.26, SD = 0.83) and levels of perceived preparedness were average (M = 3.87, SD = 1.28). Average responses and standard deviations for each individual item within the two constructs are displayed in Tables 6 and 7.

Table 6.
Mean and standard deviations for teachers' self-efficacy by item.

N = 62	*M*	*SD*
If I try hard I can get through to most of the ELL students in my class.	4.79	1.10
When it comes down to it, a teacher really can't do much because most of an ELL student's motivation and performance depends on his or her home environment (Reverse Coded).	4.40	1.31
I am confident in my ability to handle most discipline problems with ELL students.	4.74	0.81
I am confident in my ability to teach all ELL students to high levels.	4.24	1.21
I am uncertain how to teach some of my ELL students (Reverse Coded).	3.92	1.26
I am confident of my skills to effectively communicate with parents	3.80	1.48

and guardians of ELL students.		
I am confident of my skills to provide accurate /appropriate performance assessments to ELL students.	4.10	1.32
I feel confident in providing linguistically and culturally appropriate learning experiences for ELL students.	4.10	1.29
I feel confident in my ability to teach students from a variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds.	4.22	1.29
Average	4.26	0.83

Table 7.
Mean and standard deviations for teachers' perceived preparedness by item.

$N = 62$	*M*	*SD*
I feel prepared to teach ELLs in my classroom.	4.03	1.32
The training/education I have received has sufficiently prepared me to effectively support ELLs.	3.68	1.50
I have sufficient resources and materials to effectively support ELLs.	3.66	1.46
I have appropriate assessment instruments to accurately assess the language and academic abilities of ELLs.	3.52	1.43
I am knowledgeable of teaching practices that are attuned to students' language proficiencies and cognitive levels.	4.27	1.33
I am knowledgeable of the language demands of the content area that I will teach.	4.31	1.42
I am knowledgeable of the stages and mechanics of second language development.	3.85	1.48
I am adequately supported by staff, specialists, and/or community volunteers in supporting ELLs.	3.58	1.52
Average	3.87	1.28

Relationships Between Predictors and Self-Efficacy Regarding ELLs

A teacher's belief in his or her ability to adequately support the needs of ELLs in the classroom may be influenced by a variety of variables related to (a) teachers' background characteristics, (b) teachers' experience and educational background, (c) student characteristics, (d) program characteristics, and (e) teachers' perceptions of preparedness to teach ELLs. The following sections explore these relationships in multiple ways. First, Pearson's *r* and Spearman's rho correlation coefficients were used to investigate the possible linear relationships among the predictor variables and self-efficacy scores. Pearson's *r* coefficients were used to examine continuous variables and Spearman's rho coefficients were used to examine ordinal variables. Both methods offered a generalized interpretation of the strength and directionality of relationships and revealed significant correlations. Next, a series of independent samples *t*-tests were used to examine the mean differences of self-efficacy scores in relationship to all dichotomous predictor variables. Dichotomous variables were dummy coded as 0s and 1s.

Predictor variables were excluded from the analysis if there were too many or too few responses to allow for meaningful comparisons between groups. In some cases, response items were combined to allow for larger and similarly sized comparison groups. For example, the six response items for "Highest education achieved" were combined to create a new variable with only two response items—High school/GED/CDA/AA (n = 25) and BA/BS/MA/PhD (n = 28). Results of the correlation and *t*-test analyses are grouped by their corresponding research questions.

Research question 2. How are the correlates of teacher background characteristics related to teachers' self-efficacy regarding ELLs?

Hypothesis 2. It was hypothesized that correlates of teachers' language characteristics, ethnicity, and years teaching would be related to self-efficacy regarding ELLs.

The effect of teachers' and co-teachers' language characteristics (N = 61 and N = 49 respectively) on respondents' SE scores was addressed by conducting Spearman's rho correlations. Results revealed significant positive correlations between respondents' level of fluency in ELL students' home language and SE scores, r (1, 59) = .28, p = .03 as well as co-teachers' level of fluency in ELL students' home language and SE scores, r (1, 47) = .28, p = .05. In other words, higher levels of fluency among teachers and co-teachers were related to higher levels of self-efficacy reported among respondents (teachers). The effect of teachers' ethnicity on SE scores was explored through the use of an independent samples *t*-test. First, it was necessary to allow for comparable groups, ethnicity was condensed into two categories: "white" (n = 41) and "other" (n = 10). While the means of these two groups did indeed differ (M = 4.18, SD =.82 and M = 4.54, SD = .98 respectively) the *t*-test yielded no significant differences between the two groups. A similar approach was taken when examining the effects of teachers' language fluency on SE scores. While teachers indicated that they were fluent in a variety of languages, for interpretability, response categories for this variable were combined into two categories: "English fluency only" (n = 44) and "Fluency in a language other than English" (n = 9). *T*-test results indicated a significant difference between the means of these two groups, (M = 4.12, SD =.80 and M = 4.89, SD = .77 respectively); t (58) = -2.64, p = .01.

Research question 3. How are the correlates of experience, ongoing training, and educational background related to teachers' self-efficacy regarding ELLs?

Hypothesis 3. It was hypothesized that correlates of experience, level of education, and types of preparation for working with ELLs will be related to teachers' self-efficacy regarding ELLs.

This hypothesis was partially supported. According to the results of an independent samples *t*-test, the level of education teachers attained was not significantly related to levels of SE. Similarly, the continuous variable of years teaching preschool was not significantly associated with SE scores as indicated by a Pearson's *r* correlational analysis. Whether or not teachers received explicit instruction in language acquisition through a dedicated course in their teacher preparation programs also did not appear to influence SE scores. Results of an independent samples *t*-test found a difference (however, not significant) between teachers who received explicit instruction in teaching students of culturally diverse backgrounds in their teacher preparation programs (M = 4.37, SD = .78) and those who did not receive such instruction (M = 3.94, SD = .94). Hypothesis 3 was supported with regard to two predictor variables related to teacher training. First, teachers who received ELL-related training or professional development outside of their preparation programs reported significantly more self-efficacy regarding ELLs (M = 4.49, SD = .78) than teachers who did not receive such training (M = 3.89, SD = .81); t (52) = 2.74, p = .008. Finally, teachers with ELL, ESL, TESOL, or bilingual certification/endorsements reported significantly higher levels of self-efficacy regarding ELLs (M = 5.29, SD = .43) than teachers who did not possess such certification or endorsements (M = 4.17, SD = .81); t (51) = 2.69, p = .01. Finally, the continuous variable of years teaching preschool was not significantly associated with SE scores.

Research question 4. How are the correlates of student characteristics related to teachers' self-efficacy regarding ELLs?

Hypothesis 4. It was hypothesized that student variables related to total class size, percentage ELL enrollment, language diversity, classroom ethnicity, and ELL achievement level will be associated with teachers' reported self-efficacy scores regarding ELLs.

This hypothesis was partially supported. A Spearman's rho correlational analysis indicated that the percentage of ELL enrollment within classrooms was associated, but not significantly related, to SE scores (r = .24, p = .07). It should be noted that percentage of ELL enrollment was calculated first by dividing ELL classroom enrollment by total classroom enrollment. Next, for purposes of interpretability, this percentage was divided into three ordinal categories: 14% or less, 15 to 49%, and 50% or more. Respondents were relatively evenly distributed across these three categories.

According to a Pearson's r correlational analysis, ELL language diversity (or number of different languages spoken within classrooms) was also associated, but not significantly related, to SE scores (r = .23, p = .09). Similarly, SE scores were not related in any notable way to overall classroom ethnicity. Pearson's r coefficients did show that SE scores were positively related to the percentage of ELLs teachers were able to effectively communicate with (r = .33, p = .01). Another finding that clearly supported the research hypothesis had to do with the association between SE scores and ELL achievement levels, as indicated by teachers. A Spearman's rho correlation coefficient showed that the ordinal variable of ELL achievement was significantly related to SE scores with higher levels of achievement relating to higher reported levels of self-efficacy among teachers (r = .40, p < .01).

Research question 5. How are the correlates of program characteristics related to teachers' self-efficacy regarding ELLs?

Hypothesis 5a. It was hypothesized that the correlate of community context will be related to self-efficacy scores.

Here, the null hypothesis was supported in that no relationship was found between community context and levels of self-efficacy among teachers.

Hypothesis 5b. It was hypothesized that correlates of instructional format and program staffing will be related to teachers' self-efficacy scores regarding ELLs.

This hypothesis was partially supported. An independent samples *t*-test was used to examine the effect of instructional format on SE scores. It is important to note that, for interpretability, the original seven categories of the instructional format variable were combined to form two new categories. Specifically, Mainstream, Non-Structured Immersion, and Structured English Immersion programs were combined (n = 44) as each of these categories suggest that ELLs are taught in the English-only formats and receive various levels of English language development support. The second category was composed of Bilingual, Paired Bilingual, and Two-Way Bilingual/Dual Language programs (n = 8) which indicate various combinations of English and home language instruction and support. Additional respondents (n = 9) identified their program type as "Other" which could not logically be included in either of the above categories. Therefore, these responses were treated as missing data for this portion of the analysis. Based on these new conditions an independent samples *t*-test revealed that teachers in dual immersion or bilingual programs felt significantly more self-efficacious regarding ELLs (M = 4.84, SD = .93) than teachers who indicated teaching in English-only formats (M = 4.11, SD = .81); t (50) = -2.29, $p < .05$. This topic was explored further in an independent samples *t*-test by comparing the SE means of teachers from just mainstream classrooms (N = 32, M = 4.01, SD = .83) to SE scores of teachers from all other formats (N = 29, M = 4.53, SD = .77). In this instance, "all other formats" was related to significantly higher SE scores; t (59) = -2.52, $p < .05$. Contrary to the above stated hypothesis, the number of adults working in the classroom was not related to SE scores regarding ELLs, as indicated by a Spearman's rho correlation coefficient.

Hypothesis 5c. It was hypothesized that correlates of program accreditation and ratings will be related to teachers' self-efficacy scores.

While this hypothesis was not supported, an independent samples *t*-test did find significant results related to whether or not programs had received an Early Achievers rating. Interestingly, teachers from programs that had not received an Early Achievers rating were significantly more efficacious regarding ELLs ($M = 4.52$, $SD = .80$) than teachers from programs that had received a rating ($M = 3.96$, $SD = .75$); $t\ (49) = -2.597$, $p < .05$. Finally, whether or not programs were NAEYC, NAC, or NECPA accredited did not appear to affect teachers' SE scores.

Research question 6. How are teachers' self-efficacy beliefs related to levels of perceived preparedness to teach ELLs?

Hypothesis 6. It was hypothesized that teachers' reported levels of perceived preparedness to teach ELLs would be positively related to self-efficacy scores regarding ELLs.

A Pearson's *r* correlation coefficient revealed evidence in support of hypothesis 6. It appears that there is a significant positive relationship between teachers' perceived preparedness to teach ELLs and levels of self-efficacy regarding ELLs ($r = .809$, $p < .001$). Table 8 summarizes correlations among average self-efficacy (variable 1), average perceived preparedness (variable 2) as well as individual items for both scales. Variables 3 through 10 represent individual items on the perceived preparedness scale and variables 11 through 19 represent individual items on the self-efficacy scale.

Table 8
Correlation Matrix of Variables

Variable	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*	*8*	*9*	*10*	*11*	*12*	*13*	*14*	*15*	*16*	*17*	*18*	*19*
1 SELF-EFFICACY	-																		
2 PREPAREDNESS	.81**	-																	
3 PRE_TO_TEACH	.70**	.93**	-																
4 TRAINING	.76**	.94**	.89**	-															
5 RESOURCES	.76**	.91**	.85**	.88**	-														
6 ASSESS_LANG	.77**	.87**	.81**	.82**	.85**	-													
7 KNOW_TCH_PRACT	.66**	.86**	.75**	.76**	.69**	.68**	-												
8 KNOW_LANG	.67**	.85**	.74**	.73**	.68**	.65**	.91**	-											
9 KNOW_STAGES	.71**	.88**	.83**	.83**	.74**	.68**	.72**	.75**	-										
10 SUPPORTED	.73**	.87**	.78**	.80**	.83**	.75**	.67**	.63**	.75**	-									
11 GET_THROUGH_ELL	.47**	.51**	.57**	.46**	.48**	.49**	.37**	.32*	.48**	.45**	-								
12 TCH_CAN'T_DO_MUCH	.14	-.14	-.19	-.22	-.12	-.11	-.10	-.02	-.09	-.18	-.09	-							
13 CONFIDENT_DISCP	.68**	.50**	.40**	.49**	.48**	.42**	.42**	.52**	.45**	.41**	.40**	-.02	-						
14 CONFIDENT_TCH	.91**	.76**	.63**	.74**	.70**	.69**	.64**	.65**	.68**	.67**	.44**	.07	.72**	-					
15 UNCERTAINT_TCH	.52**	.31*	.22	.32*	.33**	.26*	.17	.23	.33*	.34**	-.04	.34**	.21	.42**	-				
16 CONFIDENT_COMM	.76**	.64**	.56**	.63**	.59**	.64**	.47**	.44**	.55**	.63**	.17	-.23	.44**	.59**	.37**	-			
17 CONFIDENT_ASSESS	.84**	.75**	.65**	.69**	.70**	.78**	.66**	.65**	.60**	.62**	.32*	-.08	.53**	.73**	.25	.77**	-		
18 CONFIDENT_LRN_EXP	.85**	.79**	.68**	.76**	.71**	.71**	.68**	.66**	.67**	.70**	.33*	-.18	.49**	.78**	.26*	.68**	.80**	-	
19 CONFIDENT_TCH_BK	.86**	.77**	.69**	.75**	.76**	.74**	.60**	.58**	.62**	.76**	.46**	-.11	.57**	.78**	.26	.64**	.73**	.90**	-

** Correlation is significant at the 001 level (2-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the 005 level (2-tailed)

The dependent and explanatory variables included in the model are:
Average Teacher self-efficacy (1 SELF-EFFICACY), Average Teacher perceived preparedness (2 PREPAREDNESS), I feel prepared to teach ELLs in my classroom (3 PRE_TO_TEACH), The training/education I have received has sufficiently prepared me to effectively support ELLs (4 TRAINING), I have sufficient resources and materials to effectively support ELLs (5 RESOURCES), I have appropriate assessment instruments to accurately assess the language and academic abilities of ELLs (6 ASSESS_LANG), I am knowledgeable of teaching practices that are attuned to students' language proficiencies and cognitive levels (7 KNOW_TCH_PRACT), I am knowledgeable of the language demands of the content area that I will teach (8 KNOW_LANG), I am knowledgeable of the stages and mechanics of second language development (9 KNOW_STAGES), I am adequately supported by staff, specialists, and/or community volunteers in supporting ELLs (10 SUPPORTED), If I try hard I can get through to most of the ELL students in my class (11 GET_THROUGH_ELL), When it comes down to it, a teacher really can't do much because most of an ELL student's motivation and performance depends on his or her home environment (12 TCH_CAN'T_DO_MUCH), I am confident in my ability to handle most discipline problems with ELL students (13 CONFIDENT_DISCP), I am confident in my ability to teach all ELL students to high levels (14 CONFIDENT_TCH), I am uncertain how to teach some of my ELL students (15 UNCERTAINT_TCH), I am confident of my skills to effectively communicate with parents and guardians of ELL students (16 CONFIDENT_COMM), I am confident of my skills to provide accurate /appropriate performance assessments to ELL students (17 CONFIDENT_ASSESS), I feel confident in providing linguistically and culturally appropriate learning experiences for ELL students (18 CONFIDENT_LRN_EXP), I feel confident in my ability to teach students from a variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds (19 CONFIDENT_TCH_BK)

Chapter V: Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine ECE teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and perceived preparedness with regard to culturally and linguistically diverse student populations. Drawing from the literature on culturally responsive teaching, teacher preparedness, and teacher self-efficacy, a survey was developed and used to provide the data for the analysis. A series of quantitative procedures were carried out to determine the extent to which teachers' self-efficacy regarding ELLs was related to a range of contextual factors including teacher characteristics, teacher training and education, student characteristics, program characteristics, and teachers' perceived preparedness to teach ELLs. This chapter begins with a summary of the major findings and their implications, followed by a discussion of the limitations. Finally, future directions for research are discussed.

Findings

The quantitative analysis conducted for this study revealed six main findings. First, the descriptive analysis revealed that, while items loaded reliably on both the self-efficacy and perceived preparedness scales, there were also notable trends such as a need for appropriate resources and staffing support as well as concerns about effective communication with parents and guardians of ELLs. Second, inferential statistical analyses showed that teachers' and co-teachers' language characteristics were associated with how self-efficacious respondents felt regarding the ELLs in their classroom. Third, the training experience teachers had received outside their teacher preparation programs appeared to have a positive impact on their self-efficacy scores. Fourth, teachers who had received some type of ELL, ESL, TESOL, or bilingual certification/endorsement reported significantly higher levels of self-efficacy regarding ELLs. Fifth, results also indicated a notable relationship between self-efficacy scores and ELL

achievement levels. Sixth, instructional format appeared to be associated with self-efficacy scores, with mainstream teachers reporting lower levels of self-efficacy than teachers in all other formats. Seventh, self-efficacy scores were strongly related to levels of perceived preparedness to teach ELLs.

Teachers' Views on Self-Efficacy and Preparedness

Research question 1. How self-efficacious and well prepared do teachers feel in teaching ELL students?

Perceived preparedness. In total, 17 Likert scale items addressing teachers' self-efficacy regarding ELLs and perceived preparedness to teach ELLs were descriptively analyzed. Concerning perceived preparedness, the four highest rated items were: knowledge of language demands of the content areas being taught (M = 4.31); knowledge of teaching practices attuned to students' language proficiencies and cognitive levels (M = 4.27); preparedness to teach ELLs (M = 4.03); and knowledge of the stages and mechanics of second language acquisition (M = 3.85). These items are similar in that they address teachers' existing knowledge or basic preparedness. There is, however, a notable contrast between these items and the four lowest rated items on the perceived preparedness scale, which were: sufficiency of training/education in preparing teachers to support ELLs (M = 3.68); sufficiency of resources and materials to effectively support ELLs (M = 3.67); adequateness of support by staff, specialists, and/or community volunteers in supporting ELLs (M = 3.58); and availability of appropriate assessment instruments to accurately assess the language and academic abilities of ELLs (M = 3.52). Interestingly, these four items all relate to availability or appropriateness of program-level supports and resources. This supports past survey research in which teachers of ELLs have reported concerns over low availability of necessary resources and assessment tools, lack of

support from specialists, administrators, and teaching assistants, and an inability to collaborate with one's peers (Gandara et al., 2005; Tasan, 2001; Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, and Hoy, 1998).

Supporting research and implications. In the classroom, necessary resources and materials may include technical tools teachers use to supplement or aid their instruction such as visuals or graphic organizers. They may also include classroom artifacts such as books, videos, music, or toys that are representative of students' cultural backgrounds. Such tools have shown to be vital aspects of teacher preparation for diverse classrooms (Lucas, Villegas, & Freedson-Gonzalez, 2008). However, certain factors should be considered when addressing the overall need for appropriate materials and classroom resources. In a study of cultural and linguistic diversity in Head Start centers, Joseph (2000) mentions that most of these classrooms had sufficient multicultural materials. This study also found that while multicultural materials were often available, teachers did not typically use them in daily activities and, in some cases "did not always know what to do with them" (p.11). Finally, this study indicates that Head Start educational staff found it difficult to find materials that were relevant to certain groups, including Vietnamese, Chinese, Hmong, and other Asian languages/ethnicities. Taken together with findings from the present study, it is clear that there are many variables to be considered with regard to availability and appropriateness of classroom resources and materials, and programs may vary in terms of their specific needs.

Teachers also perceived that the training and education they had received was somewhat helpful for supporting ELLs. This highlights prior research emphasizing necessary competencies that all teachers need in order to adequately support ELLs (deJong & Harper, 2005; Espinosa, 2008; Lucas et al., 2008). While these are important considerations for all teachers at any level,

some researchers argue that there may be a particularly sizable gap with regard to diversity education and training for ECE teachers. These researchers argue that students in early childhood teacher preparation programs often receive little dedicated coursework in language acquisition or in teaching students from diverse backgrounds, and teacher preparation programs for ESL and bilingual education do not always address the needs of the preschool age group (Early & Winton, 2001; Nemeth, 2009). Ultimately, such evidence suggests that there may be a need for improved training as well as program-level supports and resources in preparing ECE teachers for working with students from diverse backgrounds.

Self-efficacy. The descriptive analysis also addressed teachers' self-efficacy beliefs regarding ELLs. The mean averages for the five highest rated items on the self-efficacy scale were: If I try hard I can get through to most of the ELL students in my class (M = 4.79); I am confident in my ability to handle most discipline problems with ELL students (M = 4.74); When it comes down to it, a teacher really can't do much because an ELL student's motivation and performance depends on his or her home environment –reverse coded (M = 4.40); I am confident in my ability to teach all ELL students to high levels (M = 4.24), and; I feel confident in my ability to teach students from a variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds (M = 4.22). These scores suggest that teachers are largely confident in their ability to support students from diverse backgrounds despite any potential discipline problems or challenges related to students' home environments.

That said, there does not appear to be a clear distinction between these items and the four lowest rated items which were: I am confident of my skills to provide accurate/appropriate performance assessments to ELL students (M = 4.10); I feel confident in providing linguistically and culturally appropriate learning experiences for ELL students (M = 4.10); I am uncertain how

to teach some of my ELL students (*M* = 3.92) and; I am confident of my skills to effectively communicate with parents and guardians of ELL students (*M* = 3.80).

Supporting research and implications. Overall, teachers report average to slightly above average self-efficacy regarding ELLs. However, it appears that findings are mixed with regard to teachers' confidence in adequately supporting *all* ELL students, suggesting perhaps that ELLs within a single classroom may vary considerably in language level and overall ability level. This would be consistent with observations made by researchers like LaCelle-Perterson and Rivera (1994) and Espinosa (2008) who note that the educational performance of preK-aged ELLs differs widely as a function of varying linguistic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Consistent with teachers' ratings of perceived preparedness, teachers report less self-efficacy with regard to appropriate assessment practices. This corroborates with a great deal of research stressing the need for valid, reliable, and equitable assessment practices for ELLs (Abedi, 2002; Abedi & Lord, 2001; Ballantyne, Sanderman, & McLaughlin, 2008; Farnsworth & Chang, 2008; Lacelle-Peterson & Rivera, 1994). Indeed, classroom assessment practices are only valuable insofar as they provide teachers with accurate and reliable information about all students. Perceived preparedness ratings relating to this issue suggest perhaps that teachers' lower levels of self-efficacy may have to do with a lack of appropriate resources and materials needed for accurate and meaningful assessment of ELLs. While there are differing views on what constitutes an "appropriate" assessment for ELLs (e.g., Ballantyne, Sanderman, & McLaughlin, 2008; Espinosa, 2014; Lacelle-Peterson & Rivera, 1994), many leaders in the field emphasize the importance of assessing children's knowledge in both their home language and English. As Espinosa (2008) points out, "This may require investment in the development of

linguistically, culturally and developmentally appropriate assessment tools for young DLL children across all domains of development" (p. 20).

Teacher Background Characteristics and Self-Efficacy

Research question 2. How are the correlates of teacher background characteristics related to teachers' self-efficacy regarding ELLs?

Results of the inferential statistical analysis revealed significant relationships between teacher language characteristics and self-efficacy scores. This was evidenced by significant associations between SE scores and responses to three survey items related to teachers' bilingualism. First, results indicated a significant positive correlation between teachers' level of fluency in ELL students' home language(s) and SE scores. Second, there was a significant relationship between co-teachers' level of fluency in ELL students' home language and SE scores. Finally, teachers who indicated that they were fluent in a language other than English showed significantly higher levels of self-efficacy regarding ELLs.

Supporting research and implications. Perhaps not surprisingly, having some level of fluency in the home language of ELLs has been shown to influence teachers' attitudes and level of supportiveness toward these students (Lee & Oxelson, 2006; Pettit, 2011; Youngs & Youngs, 2001). Bilingualism among teachers may allow for a better understanding of the principles and mechanics of second language acquisition in their classrooms (Espinosa, 2014). This may lead to more patience and supportiveness of students who are learning to speak English while still fine-tuning their ability to speak their home language (Espinosa, 2014). Finally, teachers who are able to incorporate the home language of their students into daily classroom interactions are often able to strengthen a common sense of ethnic, cultural, or linguistic identity between themselves and their students (Lee & Oxelson, 2006). Taken together, the findings from the present study

and evidence from the literature support the notion that a teachers' ability to breakdown language barriers in linguistically diverse classrooms can have a positive impact on teaching and learning outcomes. However, it is likely that second language fluency by itself does not tell the whole story. Rather, the benefit of this skillset may be fully actualized when teachers are given the opportunity (through dedicated training) to conceptualize this knowledge and apply it to student learning.

Educational Background and Teachers' Self-Efficacy

Research question 3. How are the correlates of experience, ongoing training, and educational background related to teachers' self-efficacy regarding ELLs?

Professional development opportunities were shown to be associated with teachers' self-efficacy ratings. Specifically, teachers who indicated that they had received specific training or professional development in working with ELLs outside of their teacher preparation programs reported a greater sense of self-efficacy than teachers who had not received such opportunities. The independent-sample *t*-test revealed a statistically significant relationship between the two variables. Interestingly, self-efficacy did not appear to be influenced by level of education attained by teachers (i.e., high school/ GED, AA, CDA, BA, MA, or PhD) or by language or culturally responsive content or coursework received in teacher preparation programs.

Supporting research and implications. These findings underscore the importance of high-quality in-service professional development experiences for ECE teachers and suggests that providing these opportunities for practicing teachers can serve as a practical approach to building teachers' self-efficacy regarding ELL students (deJong & Harper, 2005). This builds on the research of Borko (2004) who emphasized that teachers feel best supported when their learning is relative to their participation in an active community. Indeed, when teachers in the present

study were asked in indicate *which* types of training and professional development they had received, the most common responses were in-service training (*n* = 14), private workshops (*n* = 14), and conferences (*n* = 14). Taken together, evidence from the literature and the present study points to the potential usefulness of training that can be directly applied to teachers' current classroom teaching experiences.

Still, it appears that some types of training received in teacher preparation programs may be related to higher levels of self-efficacy regarding ELLs. Specifically, teachers with ELL, ESL, TESOL, or bilingual certification/endorsements reported significantly higher levels of self-efficacy compared to those without these credentials.

Supporting research and implications. These findings follow Grant and Wong's (2003) assertion that ESL and related methodology coursework that leads to teacher credentials and endorsements is an important recommendation for all teachers of ELLs. In fact, explicit coursework that builds both the understanding the mechanics of language acquisition and the knowledge of how to support this process may especially important for teachers of ELLs in the 3- to 5-year-old age group who may be developing English while continuing to hone their home language (Espinosa, 2014). However, it is worth asking whether the extent of teacher training required for ELL, ESL, TESOL, or bilingual certification/endorsement is necessary or appropriate for *all* teachers of ELLs, particularly those who intend to teach in mainstream formats. Indeed, Bunch (2013) points out that teachers often have concerns about the "space and place for such courses in already-intensive teacher education programs" (p.305). Nevertheless, the results of the present study show that these questions are worth investigating in relation to ECE teachers as it appears that they can benefit from various types of training addressing the social, cultural, linguistic, and economic backgrounds of ELL students.

Student Characteristics and Teacher Self-Efficacy

Research question 4. How are the correlates of student characteristics related to teachers' self-efficacy regarding ELLs?

Various student characteristics were associated with teacher self-efficacy scores. Percentage of ELL enrollment within classrooms was associated but not significantly related to SE scores. While this finding was not significant, it nonetheless shows support for prior research that has established a link between higher ELL enrollment numbers and higher teacher self-efficacy (Pettit, 2011) pointing to increased exposure to ELLs as an explanatory factor in this relationship. However, it is also likely that programs with more ELLs are more likely to hire teachers who are well qualified and prepared to teach this population. Also, instructional techniques and practices can be consistently oriented to the needs of these students. Understandably then, teachers may have lower confidence in supporting ELLs when they represent a smaller proportion of the classroom. Durgunoglu and Hughes (2010, p. 32) describes such students as "isolated ELLs" and argues that teachers of these students may have more trouble connecting with these students or may assume that they are the responsibility of the ESL teacher.

The present study also investigated the link between ELL achievement levels (as indicated by their teachers) and teachers' self-efficacy scores. Results of a Spearman's rho correlational analysis indicated that there was indeed a strong positive correlation between ELL achievement and teachers' SE levels. This relationship is well documented in the literature (Bandura, 1997; Brownell & Pajares, 1999) and while most studies have explored the influence of teacher self-efficacy on the achievement patterns of their students, some have argued that this

link may be multidirectional (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007). That is, teachers may experience higher levels of efficacy as a result of having more capable and engaged students.

Program Characteristics and Teacher Self-Efficacy

Research question 5. How are the correlates of program characteristics related to teachers' self-efficacy regarding ELLs?

Results of an independent-sample *t*-test revealed that individuals teaching in bilingual or dual immersion programs had significantly higher levels of self-efficacy regarding ELLs than individuals who taught in mainstream or English immersion formats.

While the present study did not explore the use of specific instructional strategies, past research suggests that teachers in bilingual or dual immersion classrooms are perhaps more familiar with explicit methodologies that are important to ELLs' academic and language development (Schleppergrell, 2004). Such strategies include slowed speech, repetition, nonverbal cues, highlighted vocabulary, native language support, visual scaffolds, clarification of learning goals, individualized adaptations appropriate to individual language proficiency levels, language scaffolding, graphic aids, use of hands-on and kinetic activities, and flexible grouping and/or pairing strategies (Nemeth, 2009). Indeed, these strategies are common in ECE bilingual/dual immersion classrooms (Howes, Downer, & Pianta, 2011).

Another characteristic of programs that was shown to be significantly related to SE scores (albeit in the opposite direction than what was hypothesized) was whether or not programs had received an Early Achievers rating. That is, teachers from programs that had not received an Early Achievers rating reported significantly higher levels of self-efficacy regarding ELLs than teachers from rated programs (actual program rating was not shown to be predictive of SE scores). A review of the literature did not provide any hints as to why this may be the case but it

is plausible that programs that have entered into the Early Achievers program may have a greater need for coaching, training, technical assistance, and financial support and these needs may be associated with lower levels of self-efficacy among teachers. Indeed, more research should be done to examine the effects of Early Achievers and other QRIS programs on teachers' self-efficacy regarding ELLs—especially after the potential long term impacts of these programs have had a chance to develop.

Teacher Self-Efficacy and Perceived Preparedness

Research question 6. How are teachers' efficacy beliefs related to levels of perceived preparedness to teach ELLs?

The present study sought to explore the connection between teachers' self-efficacy regarding ELLs and levels of perceived preparedness to teach ELLs. Results showed these two scales to be highly correlated with higher levels of self-efficacy relating to higher levels of perceived preparedness. These findings affirm past research which has established a connection between these two constructs (albeit using slightly differing scales) among older age groups of students (Durgunoglu, 2010; Siwatu, 2011; Tran, 2011).

Self-efficacy was also examined with respect to individual items on the perceived preparedness scale. While all items were significantly correlated with self-efficacy at the .01 level, there were three areas of perceived preparedness with which this relationship was especially pronounced. Namely, items related to training and education (r =.790), resources and materials (r =.770) and appropriate assessment instruments (r =.785) were strongly related to SE scores. As previously discussed, the descriptive analysis of the perceived preparation scale showed these three items were among the four lowest-rated areas of preparedness for teachers in the sample. So while these areas of preparedness are among the greatest concerns for teachers of

ELLs, they also have the most drastic effect on their levels of self-efficacy regarding ELLs. This further substantiates the notion that high-quality training, combined with appropriate classroom materials and resources can strongly influence how capable and effective teachers believe themselves to be in teaching diverse populations (Gandara et al., 2005).

Study Limitations

Several important study limitations warrant discussion. These limitations relate to the study sample and the design of the survey. First, the analysis for this study drew its conclusions from a convenience sample of just 62 teachers. While it can be roughly estimated (M. Flynn, personal communication, May, 5, 2015) that over 1,000 preschool and child care providers were contacted or attempted to be contacted about the survey (via email or direct mail), just 75 individuals participated in the survey (62 of whom provided sufficient information to be used in the final analysis). This limited generalizability of the findings and made it difficult to derive meaningful conclusions from certain items on the questionnaire which contained a larger number of variables (e.g., ethnicity, program type, training type, etc.).

There are several possible reasons for this low response rate. Several steps were required for survey invitations to reach classroom teachers. In many cases, emails needed to be forwarded by regional CCA-WA offices or other administrative personnel who were asked to send the information to center directors who then needed to forward the information on to classroom teachers. Direct mailings were sent to program mailing addresses listed on an online database but it is possible that some of these letters were not delivered to the appropriate individuals. In some areas of the state, emails may not have been received due to poor Internet access. Moreover, while the survey and survey invitation were provided in Spanish, teachers who were not proficient in English may have had trouble accessing the information. Another reason for the low response rate was that survey invitations were sent out during the months of May and June which

is an especially busy time of year, both for CCA-WA regional coordinators and classroom teachers. During this time of year, many programs are involved with end-of-year reviews and student evaluations so it is likely that many of the individuals being contacted were already overwhelmed and did not feel as though they had time to complete the survey. Finally, the number of items on the survey itself may have discouraged some individuals from completing the survey. There were 34 items on the survey and cognitive interviews revealed that it took approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete. It is possible that some teachers believed the survey to be too long which may have led to skipping items, satisficing, or deciding not to take part in the study altogether. While responses were received from all seven regions of the state that were targeted, these rates of participation were much too low to generalize results to the larger population.

Additionally, generalizability was limited by the lack of diversity in the study sample. Specifically, respondents were not evenly distributed across gender, ethnicity, and other demographic variables. A higher response rate might have contributed to the diversity in the sample allowing for more meaningful results. That said, responses did seem to come from a range of different programs types, regions, and community settings.

Another caveat that should be discussed is the issue of age range among the students of the teachers in the sample. While invitation letters specified that the survey should be completed by teachers of preK-aged students, there was no guarantee that others would not participate in the survey as well. While it can be assumed by responses to various survey items that at least 90% of the sample were teachers of the 3- to 5-year-old age group, this is still an *estimate* which limits the ability to draw conclusions about the 3- to 5-year-old age group alone.

Additional limitations had to do with the survey items themselves. Perhaps due to the survey's length, responses to individual items tended to decline toward the end of the survey. As a result, there was less data related to the last section of questions regarding teacher background characteristics and education. Moreover, the last question on the survey was open-ended and asked teachers which type of supports would be most helpful to their work in supporting ELLs. Due to the low response rate to this question, it was not possible to conduct a meaningful qualitative analysis of this information. Another limitation which stemmed from the survey design had to do with the question addressing type of instructional format. Specifically, teachers who indicated "other" where not able to indicate exactly what instructional format they taught under. This limits the ability to draw conclusions from the use of this variable as both a predictor and variable in the study.

There were also limitations having to do with the modified self-efficacy, perceived preparedness, and beliefs scales. Namely, these scales were not pretested for internal reliability among individual items. Fortunately, the self-efficacy and perceived preparedness scales were highly reliable with each of the items loading well on the desired construct. However, the beliefs scale had an unacceptably low level of reliability and could not be used in the final analysis.

Future Research

The present study contributes to the literature about teachers' self-efficacy and perceived preparedness in teaching ELL populations. Specifically, this dissertation represents one of the first known efforts to investigate these questions as they relate to ECE settings. Therefore, it was the aim of this research to cast a wide net on the subject in order to encourage dialogue in a variety of important areas. In doing so, I hope to have called attention to several future avenues of research.

One topic that could not be adequately addressed in the present study but certainly warrants further investigation is the degree to which ECE program type (e.g., FCC, CCC, ECEAP, Head Start, etc.) may be related to teachers' self-efficacy regarding ELLs (or other ELL-related outcomes). Future research should make a more explicit effort to identify differences between program types and then to account for these differences when analyzing the data. That is, the effects of training and professional development should be examined differentially by program type instead of making sweeping statements about the nature of preparation in all ECE settings.

One major finding of the present study was that the language characteristics of teachers and classroom assistants were associated with teachers' reported levels of self-efficacy regarding ELLs. Future research should seek to further explore this relationship. Specifically, the advantage of teachers' bilingualism should be examined in classrooms where students speak a variety of different languages. In other words, is bilingualism advantageous to the extent that it allows teachers to communicate with their ELL students in their home language? Or are their benefits of bilingualism in situations where many students still do not speak the same language as the teacher?

Another major finding of the present study had to do with the potential benefits of diversity training and professional development. However, due to this study's small sample size and certain limitations of the survey, it was not clear which training and professional development opportunities were most beneficial for teachers. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate training and professional development opportunities made available to ECE teachers more thoroughly. Such research could help determine how various types of training and professional development differ in terms of how information is being delivered and the extent to

which knowledge, skill sets, and strategies learned are being actively implemented in classroom settings. Indeed, similar questions could be asked with regard to teacher preparation programs as well as various types of certification and endorsement programs commonly pursued by ECE teachers.

One area of study that may be crucial to our understanding of, not only teacher efficacy, but teacher effectiveness as a whole as it pertains to ELLs in ECE settings is the topic of classroom instructional strategies and practices. The present study provided some evidence that there may be important differences between mainstream/English immersion classrooms and classrooms that operate under bilingual/dual immersion instructional formats. However, this study did not explore how these formats differ in terms of the types of strategies and practices teachers typically employ in their classrooms. It is also worth investigating how these strategies may vary by other influential factors such as program funding, availability of resources and materials, and students' first language variety and frequency. It is important to ask these questions because certain strategies that prove to be highly effective in one setting, may not be as feasible or beneficial in another type of classroom. For example, a great deal of research points to the many benefits of dual language immersion in ECE classrooms where ELLs are acquiring English while being actively supported in their home language (see Espinosa, 2008, 2014 for reviews of this literature). However, such an approach may not be practical or useful in a classroom where several different languages are spoken. Future research should examine how confident and self-efficacious ECE teachers feel with respect to these situations.

Finally, it is important to recognize that teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and experiences about diversity are highly nuanced and often difficult to pin down quantitatively. Thus, future research should adopt a qualitative approach to these questions in order to provide a more

complete and detailed description of the phenomena. Specifically, interviews and focus groups conducted in naturalistic settings might allow for richer dialogue between teachers and the researcher. Ultimately, it is important to listen to teachers first-hand when attempting to understand the challenges they face in the classroom—particularly when it comes to the complexities involved with educating diverse student populations.

Appendix A: Recruitment Letters

Dear Program Director,
The Supporting English Language Learners survey is an opportunity for child care providers to share their experiences working with young children who speak English as a second language. Their answers will inform policies that impact child care programs across the state. They will also be given the opportunity to enter a drawing for a $100 Amazon gift card.
Your assistance in forwarding the letter and survey link below to lead preschool teachers in your program is greatly appreciated.
Thank you for your time,
Kevin Cummings
cummink@washington.edu
Graduate Student, University of Washington

Dear Child Care and Early Education Providers,
Thank you for your interest in the **Supporting English Language Learners survey**. Your responses will inform policy makers in Washington state and provide you with an opportunity to enter a raffle for a $100 Amazon gift card. The only criteria for participation are that you are the lead teacher in your classroom and that you currently have at least one student in your classroom who speaks English as a second language.
As Washington state continues to develop and implement early learning policies and support systems, we must ensure that young language minority students are not being left out of the equation. For this reason it is important that early care and education providers have their unique perspective heard. This survey has been developed to gain a better understanding of the challenges that you are facing in the classroom, the supports you receive, and what types of supports that would be most helpful to your work.
This is an anonymous survey. None of your answers will ever be linked back to you or your place of employment.
Upon submission of the survey responses, you will be invited to enter into an online raffle to win a $100 Amazon gift card. In order to enter the raffle you will be asked for some personal information so that the prize can be awarded, this information will be managed by SurveyMonkey.com, an online survey manager. The information you provide will never be shared, linked to survey answers, or seen by anyone involved with the research.
The raffle drawing for the $100 Amazon gift card will take place electronically via SurveyMonkey's online survey manager on **June 10th**.
The whole survey will take **about 10- 15 minutes** to complete. If you are interested in taking the time to share your experiences while helping us to answer some important questions about ELLs in early childhood settings, then please type the following web address into your internet browser:
http://tinyurl.com/SupportingELLs-Survey
Thank you for your time and consideration,
Kevin Cummings
cummink@washington.edu
(253) 677 0591
Graduate Student, University of Washington

For any complaints or concerns regarding your rights as a participant in this study, feel free to contact the University of Washington Human Subjects Division at:
(206) 543-0098
hsdinfo@uw.edu

Queridos Proveedores de Cuidado Infantil,
Gracias por su interés en la encuesta de **Apoyo a Aprendices del Idioma inglés (ELL)**. Sus respuestas informarán a los creadores de reglas en el Estado de Washington y les proveerán con la oportunidad de entrar a una rifa para una tarjeta de regalo de Amazon de $100 dólares. Las únicas criterias para participar es que usted sea el/la maestra principal en el salón de clases y que usted actualmente tenga al menos un/una estudiante en su salón que hable inglés como segundo lenguaje.

La Encuesta Apoyadora a Estudiantes de Inglés *es una oportunidad para que su perspectiva única sea escuchada. Las preguntas serán sobre:*

- **Desafíos**
- **Preparacíon**
- **áreas de soporte necesario**
- **Confianza**
- **Creencias**
- **Información sobre usted y su programa**

Esta es una encuesta anónima. Ninguna de sus respuestas serán relacionadas de regreso a usted o su lugar de trabajo.
Tras la sumisión de las respuestas de la encuesta, usted será invitado/invitada a entrar a una rifa en línea para ganar una tarjeta de regalo de Amazon de $100 dólares. Para poder entrar a la rifa, usted será cuestionado por información personal para que el premio pueda ser entregado. Esta información será manejada por SurveyMonkey.com, gerente de encuestas en línea. La información que usted dará jamás será compartida, relacionada con respuestas para encuestas, o vista por cualquier persona involucrada con la búsqueda.
Toda la encuesta le tomará **aproximadamente de 10 a 15 minutos** para completar. Si usted está interesado/interesada en tomarse el tiempo para compartir sus experiencias mientras nos ayuda a responder preguntas importantes sobre aprendices del idioma inglés (DLLs) en ajustes de primera infancia, haga clic en el vínculo de abajo.

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Supporting_ELLs_Survey_Spanish_Version

Gracias por su tiempo y consideración,
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Para cualquier tipo de quejas o preocupaciones con respecto a sus derechos como participante en este estudio, siéntase libre en contactar a the University of Washington Human Subjects Division (Universidad de Washington División de Sujetos Humanos) en:
(206) 543-0098
hsdinfo@uw.edu

Appendix B: Survey Instrument

Program Information

*Notes

–This survey will ask you provide information about the English language learners (ELLs) in your classroom. These students might also be referred to as Dual language learners (DLLs), Bilinguals, or some other designation in which English is not considered to be the first language of the child. -Remember, all responses are completely anonymous and will never be linked back to you or your place of employment.

-This survey should take about 10-15 minutes to complete.

-Upon submission of the survey responses, you will be invited to enter into an online raffle to win a $100 Amazon gift card. In order to enter the raffle you will be asked for some personal information so that the prize can be awarded, this information will be managed by SurveyMonkey.com, an online survey manager. The information you provide will never be shared, linked to survey answers, or seen by anyone involved with the research.

- For any complaints or concerns regarding your rights as a participant in this study, feel free to contact the University of Washington Human Subjects Division at:
(206) 543-0098 hsdinfo@uw.edu

1. Are there currently one or more children in your classroom who speaks English as a second language?
    - o Yes
    - o No

2. How many children are currently enrolled in your classroom?
    _____

3. How many of these children are considered to be English Language Learners (ELLs)?
    _____

4. In what part of Washington State is your program?
    - o Olympic Peninsula (Clallam, Jefferson, Grays Harbor, Mason, Kitsap, Thurston Counties)
    - o Northwest (Whatcom, Skagit, Snohomish Counties)
    - o King County
    - o Tacoma or Pierce Counties
    - o Southwest (Pacific, Lewis, Cowlitz, Clark, Skamania, Klickitat Counties)
    - o Central (Okanogan, Ferry, Chelan, Douglas, Grant, Kittitas, Yakima Counties)
    - o Eastern Washington (Stevens, Lincoln, Spokane, Pend Oreille, Whitman, Franklin, Walla Walla, Columbia, Garfield, Asotin Counties)

5. What type of classroom do you teach in (or closest approximation)?
    - Mainstream – English language learners (ELLs) are taught in English only and receive no English language development (ELD) support.
    - Non-structured Immersion Program – ELLs are taught in English only and receive language development support, but the way this support is provided is not structured.
    - Structured English Immersion (SEI) - ELLs are taught in English only and receive language development support, but the way this support is provided is carefully planned by ELD teachers/staff and center administrators e.g. by relying initially on simplification and vocabulary building strategies according to ELLs' development.
    - Paired Bilingual/Alternative Immersion – ELLs receive instruction in both English and their native language at different time periods each day until they develop their language skills in English.
    - Bilingual Program – ELLs receive significant amount of instruction in their native language for some years, and then are transitioned into English only classrooms.
    - Two-Way Bilingual/Dual Language Program – ELLs and English native speakers receive instruction in both English and Spanish or another foreign language.
    - Other Type of Program – Please specify.

6. Which best describes the community you currently teach in?
    - Rural
    - Urban
    - Suburban

7. Regarding the racial background of your students, which of the following choices most accurately characterizes your classroom?
    - Mostly White
    - Mostly Hispanic
    - Mostly Black
    - Mostly Asian
    - Mostly Pacific Islander
    - Mixed races

8. How many children in your classroom receive a childcare subsidy?

    _____

9. Think of the last school day. How many adults were working in the classroom? This includes co-teachers, para-educators, community volunteers, educational specialists, or other adults who were working with children in your classroom over the course of **three or more hours.**

- I was the only adult working in the classroom
- One other adult
- Two other adults
- Three or more other adults

10. Of the choices below, which best describes your child care center? **Please mark all that apply.**

- For profit child care
- Not for profit child care
- Faith Affiliated
- Head Start
- Early Head Start
- ECEAP
- Center based child care
- Family child care
- Other (please specify) _____

11. Is your program NAEYC, NAC, or NECPA Accredited?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

12. How many different languages are spoken by the ELLs in your classroom?

_____

13. Do you speak any of the home languages spoken by ELLs in your classroom? If so, how fluent are you?

- Fluent in one or more languages
- Conversant in one or more languages (can have limited conversations but not 100% fluent)
- I know some words in one or more languages
- I do not speak any of the home languages spoken by the ELLs in my classroom

14. Among your ELL students only, how many can you communicate with in their home language?

_____

15. Is there a full-time or part-time co-teacher or para-educator in your classroom who speaks any of the home languages spoken by ELLs in your classroom? If so, how fluent are they?
    - o Fluent in one or more languages
    - o Conversant in one or more languages
    - o They know some words in one or more languages
    - o The co-teachers and/or para-educators in my classroom do not speak any of the home languages spoken by the ELLs in my classroom
    - o Not applicable (there are no co-teachers or para-educators in my classroom)

16. What is the average achievement level of the ELLs in your classroom?
    - o Low achievement (Few are meeting age appropriate academic standards)
    - o Medium achievement (Some are meeting age appropriate academic standards)
    - o High achievement (Most are meeting age appropriate academic standards)
    - o Not sure

17. Has your program received an Early Achievers rating?
    - o Yes
    - o No
    - o Not sure
    - o

18. If so, what is your program rating?
    - o 1
    - o 2
    - o 3
    - o 4
    - o 5
    - o Have not received an Early Achievers rating

19. What is the age range of the students in your classroom? (Closest approximation)
    - o Age 2 and under
    - o Age 3 to 5 Years
    - o Age 5 to 12 Years

20. Consider your personal experience in teaching ELLs over the past 12 months and indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel prepared to teach ELLs in my classroom	O	O	O	O	O	O
The training/education I have received has sufficiently prepared me to effectively support ELLs.	O	O	O	O	O	O
The training/education I have received has sufficiently prepared me to effectively support ELLs.	O	O	O	O	O	O
I have sufficient resources and materials to effectively support ELLs.	O	O	O	O	O	O
I have appropriate assessment instruments to accurately assess the language and academic abilities of ELLs.	O	O	O	O	O	O
I am knowledgeable of teaching practices that are attuned to students' language proficiencies and cognitive levels.	O	O	O	O	O	O
I am knowledgeable of the language demands of the content area that I will teach.	O	O	O	O	O	O
I am knowledgeable of the stages and mechanics of second language development.	O	O	O	O	O	O

I am knowledgeable of the stages and mechanics of second language development.	O	O	O	O	O	O
I am adequately supported by staff, specialists, and/or community volunteers in supporting ELLs.	O	O	O	O	O	O

21. Consider your personal experience in teaching ELLs over the past 12 months and indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
If I try hard I can get through to most of the ELL students in my class.	O	O	O	O	O	O
When it comes down to it, a teacher really can't do much because most of an ELL student's motivation and performance depends on his or her home environment.	O	O	O	O	O	O
I am confident in my ability to handle most discipline problems with ELL students.	O	O	O	O	O	O
I am confident in my ability to teach all ELL students to high levels.	O	O	O	O	O	O
I am uncertain how to teach some of my ELL students.	O	O	O	O	O	O
I am confident of my skills to effectively communicate with parents and guardians of ELL students.	O	O	O	O	O	O
I am confident of my	O	O	O	O	O	O

skills to provide accurate /appropriate performance assessments to ELL students.						
I feel confident in providing linguistically and culturally appropriate learning experiences for ELL students.	O	O	O	O	O	O
I feel confident in my ability to teach students from a variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds.	O	O	O	O	O	O

22. Please indicate the extent to which your personal beliefs are in agreement or disagreement with the following statements regarding the instruction and support of ELLs in early childhood settings.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
It is important for ELLs to learn basic English skills before engaging in critical thinking.	O	O	O	O	O	O
My teaching strategies are more or less the same for all students, regardless of their English language abilities	O	O	O	O	O	O
It is important to support ELLs' literacy development needs in their home language.	O	O	O	O	O	O
Educational activities should be representative of a variety of languages and cultures.	O	O	O	O	O	O
Ideally, teachers	O	O	O	O	O	O

should support bilingualism for all children whenever possible.						
Because some programs don't have the capacity to provide instruction in all the languages represented by ELL children, programs should provide instruction in one common language-English.	O	O	O	O	O	O

Background

These questions will ask you a bit about yourself.

23. What is your ethnicity? (Please select all that apply.)
    - o American Indian or Alaskan Native
    - o Asian or Pacific Islander
    - o Black or African American
    - o Hispanic or Latino
    - o White / Caucasian
    - o Prefer not to answer
    - o Other (please specify) _____

24. In what language do you speak most fluently?
    - o Arabic
    - o Armenian
    - o Chinese
    - o English
    - o French
    - o French Creole
    - o German
    - o Greek
    - o Gujarati
    - o Hindi
    - o Italian
    - o Japanese
    - o Korean
    - o Persian
    - o Polish
    - o Portuguese
    - o Russian

- Spanish
- Tagalog
- Urdu
- Vietnamese
- Other (please specify) _____

25. Do you consider yourself to be bilingual?
    - Yes
    - No

26. What is your gender?
    - Female
    - Male

27. How many years have you been teaching preschool?
    _____

28. Highest level of education you have attained?
    - High school/GED
    - CDA
    - AA
    - B.A. or B.S.
    - M.A.
    - PhD

29. In your teacher preparation program, did you receive explicit instruction in language acquisition through a dedicated course?
    - Yes
    - No
    - Not sure/ Not applicable

30. In your teacher preparation program, did you receive any explicit instruction in teaching students of culturally diverse backgrounds?
    - Yes
    - No
    - Not sure/ Not applicable

31. Outside of your teacher preparation program, have you received any specific training/professional development in working with the ELL population?
    - Yes
    - No

32. If yes, where have you received this training/PD? (Select all that apply)

- Graduate School
- Inservice Training
- Private Workshops
- Conferences
- Onsite coaching- Someone has come to my program to observe, provide feedback, and/or model effective strategies for supporting ELLs
- I have read books or pamphlets on supporting ELLs
- Reflective groups or communities of practice
- Have not received any training
- Other (please specify) _____

33. Do you have an ELL, ESL, TESOL, or Bilingual teacher certification/ endorsement?
    - Yes
    - No

34. This last question is open ended: What type of support(s) would be most helpful to your work in supporting English language learners in the classroom?
    _____

Please follow the link below to enter the raffle for a $100 Amazon gift card! **When finished return to this page and press 'done'**
https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Gift_Card_

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