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Effect of Transnational Standards on U.S. Teacher Education

Abstract

The Standards for Effective Pedagogy and Learning (CREDE, 2014) specify five *transnational universals of teaching* that are especially effective for the rapidly growing population of English language learners in North America. CLASSIC is an evidence-based, CREDE-aligned model of teacher education for classroom educators of English language learners. CLASSIC has utilized with more than 10,000 teachers in 100 school districts, located in eight states, in collaboration with eight different universities. This study examined the impact of the transnational standards of CLASSIC curricula on teachers' observed practices with English language learners as measured by the recently developed *Inventory of Situationally and Culturally Responsive Teaching* (ISCRT). Despite some variability, over 110 participating teachers in 37 U.S. schools demonstrated *statistically significant improvements* in their delivery of effective pedagogy, across a wide range (18 of 22) ISCRT indicators; teachers exhibited *highest levels of growth* in instructional conversations, joint productive activity, and challenging activities.

Keywords

transnational standards, teacher education, professional development, English language learners; multilevel statistical modeling, contextualization, United States

Cover Page Footnote

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EFFECT OF TRANSNATIONAL STANDARDS ON U.S. TEACHER EDUCATION

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"Common themes continue to surface in our class topics, one being the importance of taking the time to get to know our students as individuals, so as to build rapport and show appreciation for the gifts they individually bring [to learning]. Academic achievement has increased as a result. I view rapport and achievement to be directly related. I wasn't such a believer before taking these classes." (Anonymous, teacher survey response, collaborative groups 1-5, CLASSIC English as a Second Language Methods, EDCI-740, Fall, 2013).

Introduction

No single undertaking in the last ten years has so influenced changes in the enterprise of teaching and learning in the United States as has the release of, and progressive state adoptions associated with, the common core standards as the benchmark for what students should know and be able to do (MacDonald, Miller, Murry, Herrera, & Spears, 2013; NGACBP & CCSSO, 2010; Samson & Collins, 2012). These benchmarks are quite likely to further underscore or even increase attention on the current achievement gap that persists between English language learners and their classmates. This gap is

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persistently evident among eighth graders. To wit, in four of the five states with the highest populations of these students, only 25% or fewer of English language learners score at or above the basic level in reading (Samson & Collins, 2012).

Today, one in four children in the United States arrive at school from immigrant families and live in households where a language other than English is spoken (Samson & Collins, 2012). In the decade between 1997-98 and 2008-09, the number of English language learners in public schools increased by 51%, while the general population grew by only 7%. NCES (2014) further reports that the number of Hispanic students enrolled in U.S. schools between 2001 and 2011 increased from 8.2 million to 11.8 million students, and their share of public school enrollment increased from 17 to 24%.

Among transatlantic countries surveyed in 2010, Canada had, by far, the highest percentage of foreign-born residents, about 20% of the population; by comparison, immigrants were only 11% of the population in the United Kingdom (Keung, 2014). However, in contrast to U.S. trends, Bloemraad (2012) reports increasing support for immigration in Canada, despite rapid growth in numbers. In fact, she reports that immigrants, many of whom are not proficient in English, constitute a far greater proportion of the population in Canada than in countries such as the United States, France, Germany, and Italy.

Purposes

Hence, in the second decade of the new millennium, it is not unreasonable to forecast that the average classroom teacher in suprafroteran North America can expect high levels of student diversity, especially English language learners in the classroom. In fact, it has been argued, every educator across the curriculum will need to become a literacy teacher if all students are to become well educated as benchmarked by the common core standards (Fair & Fair, 2013; MacDonald et al., 2013; NGACBP & CCSSO, 2010).

However, recent research and analyses indicate that little attention has been afforded to the essential content knowledge, skills in practice, and alignment to appropriate standards that teachers should demonstrate in order to prove effective with the fastest growing populations in their classrooms (Samson & Collins, 2012; Tellez, 2010; Tellez & Waxman, 2005). Samson and Collins (2012) conclude that system-level changes are needed in the ways that teachers are educated and supported in the profession to deliver standards-based practices with English language learning students and others who are struggling with content area learning and/or literacy development in English. This manuscript will detail the findings of quantitative research designed to study the effects of teacher education curricula aligned with transnational standards on the culturally responsive practices of U.S. teachers in situ.

Theoretical Framework

During these first two decades of the 21st century, one of the most robust efforts to identify appropriate standards for the *evidence-based and effectual* teaching of English language learners has been the development of the Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence (CREDE) standards. This effort, which spanned more than a decade of research and analyses, yielded five *transnationally effective* (global) *universals* for effective teaching practice (Doherty, Hilberg, Epaloose, & Tharp, 2002; Doherty, Hilberg, Pinal, & Tharp, 2003; Tharp, 1997; Tharp & Dalton, 2007; Tharp, Estrada, Dalton, & Yamauchi, 2000). These five universals, now known as the *CREDE Standards for Effective Pedagogy and Learning* (CREDE, 2014), emphasize persistent, systematic classroom observation and are as follows:

- *Contextualization* – making meaning by connecting educational content to students' lives;

- *Language development* – nurturing academic language;
- *Instructional conversations* – teaching through didactic and dialectic interchanges of information;
- *Joint productive activities* – teacher and students producing together; and
- *Challenging activities* – advancing complex and critical thinking.

Each of these universals for evidence-based teaching was derived from the study of the most effective practices of teachers who were serving students from a wide range of nationalities, cultures, and home languages (Doherty et al., 2002; Tharp & Dalton, 2007). In the United States, the National Education Association has endorsed these standards for all students.

The CLASSIC (Critically reflective, Lifelong Advocacy for Second language learners, Site-specific Innovation, and Cross-cultural competency) model is a robust example of appropriate, evidence-based, *CREDE-consistent*, professional development for grade-level classroom teachers who will educate increasing numbers of English language learners. Elsewhere, we have detailed the specifics of the CLASSIC model and field-based research that has documented its effectiveness in the high-quality professional development of grade-level teachers of English language learners in highly diverse U.S. classrooms (e.g., Herrera, Murry, & Perez, 2008; Murry & Herrera, 1999). In brief, eight universities and 100 school districts in eight states have utilized this model for capacity building among teachers of English language learners (Herrera, Morales, Holmes, & Terry, 2011; Holmes, Fanning, Morales, Espinosa, & Herrera, 2012; Penner-Williams, Perez, Worthen, Herrera, & Murry, 2010).

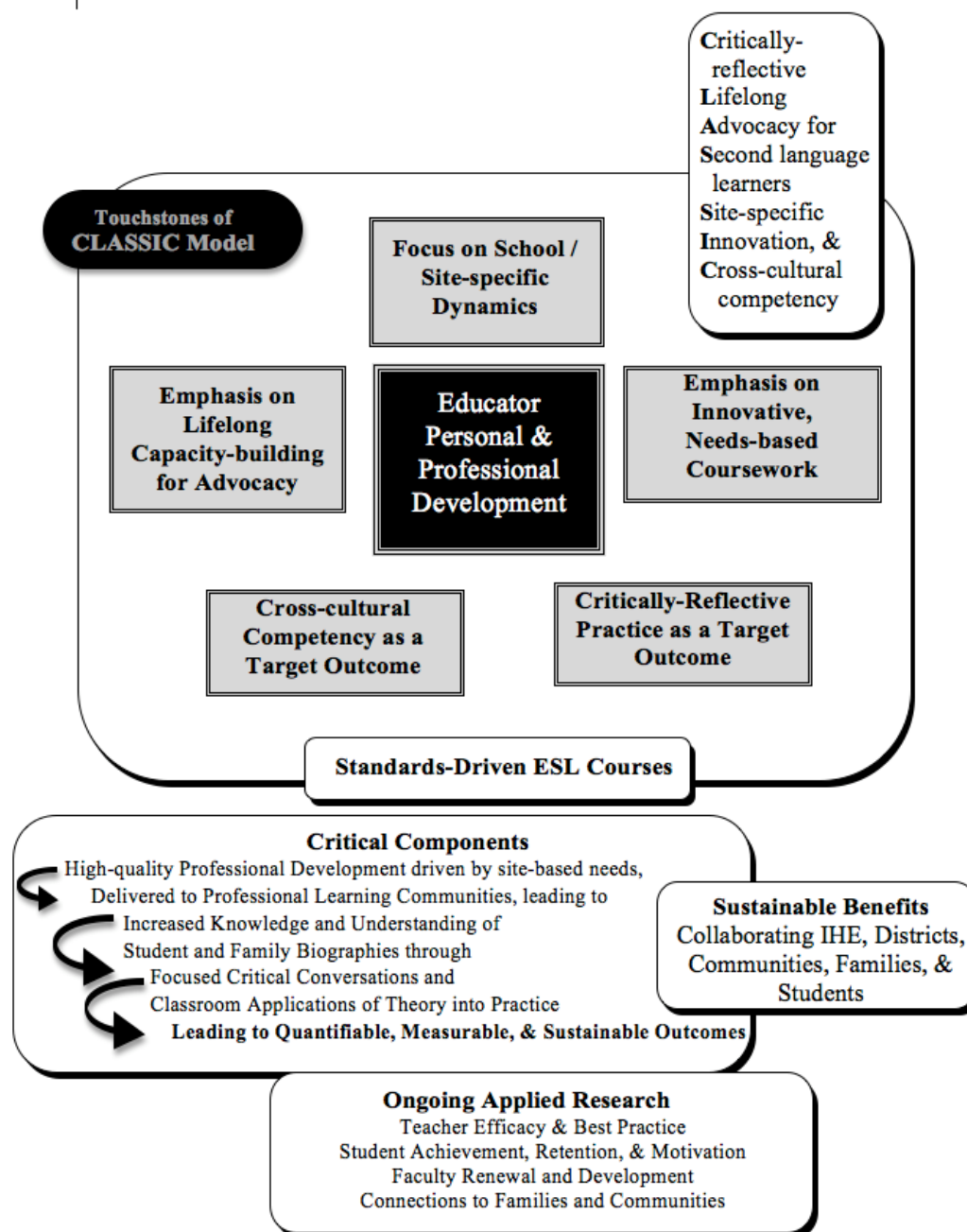
CLASSIC optimizes communities of inquiry through its emphasis on collaborative and lifelong learning among colleagues. To this end, CLASSIC organizes teachers into collegial groups that collaborate in site-specific (local), theory-into-practice applications of their professional development. Group-driven inquiry regularly prompts teachers to question even longstanding assumptions of both classroom practices and school/district policies with a critical lens. Recent research (Borrero, Yeh, Cruz, & Suda, 2012) has found that unrecognized stereotypes that teachers may hold can reinforce persistent beliefs that underrepresented (e.g., English language learning) students are, for example, chronic low achievers or uneducable. Such stereotypes are inherently *meaning perspectives* grounded in longstanding and often unchallenged assumptions. CLASSIC groups are also practice-based to the extent that course assignments situate good teaching as a participative and hands-on activity. Recent research indicates that professional development for grade-level teachers that is inquiry-driven, yet hands-on in practice yields better outcomes (Yamauchi, Im, & Mark, 2013).

CLASSIC English as a Second Language is a prime example of a program grounded in the broadly disseminated CLASSIC model of professional development (Herrera & Murry, 2010; Herrera et al., 2008; Murry & Herrera, 2010; Murry & Herrera, 1999; Murry, 1998; Penner-Williams et al., 2010). When used in this way, CLASSIC is a participant-centered design of undergraduate- and graduate-level English as a Second Language endorsement courses (up to 15 hrs.), each of which is philosophically consistent with the model's five-touchstone framework (Murry & Herrera, 1999). In turn, each of these touchstones offers participating educators approaches and strategies for native language and home culture support as they better accommodate the needs of their English language learners. Among English as a Second Language courses delivered via CLASSIC are English as a Second Language: Methods, Linguistics, Assessment, Culture and Language, and a portfolio-based Practicum Experience.

Each of the model's five touchstones is consistent with the philosophies of high-quality teacher preparation represented by the CLASSIC acronym: Critically reflective, Lifelong Advocacy for Second language learners, Site-specific Innovation, and Cross-cultural competency. As illustrated in Figure 1, the first touchstone of the CLASSIC model,

a focus on target site (site-specific) dynamics, involves activities that specifically prompt program participants to adapt and modify as necessary the theory, concepts, and strategies learned in a given course to their particular student population and school dynamics.

Figure 1. CLASSIC model for professional development.



The second touchstone ensures participants' access to development opportunities through distance education (i.e., Internet or DVD based programming in CLASSIC English as a Second Language). Differentiated delivery modes better fit the geographic locales and variant schedules of both urban and rural educators.

The third touchstone of critically reflective practice engages participants in activities that prompt them to address and confront the cultural filter that influences our interpretations of cross-cultural and multilingual classroom dynamics. Through targeted strategies, such as reflection journaling (Murry, 2012), teachers progressively build the

capacities to check their assumptions in practice, test the validity of those (reflection), and locate their origin in their prior socialization (critical reflection). Ergo, regular assumption checking, reflection, and critical reflection on practice are target outcomes of teachers' professional development via CLASSIC.

The fourth touchstone of the CLASSIC model, cross-cultural competency, challenges teachers to understand the cultural and experiential biographies of their students. This capacity is targeted through biography-driven strategies such as cultural quilts and biography cards (Herrera, 2010). Finally, the fifth touchstone of lifelong/self-directed learning prompts participants to better understand that every school's population and dynamics will differ, and there is no single solution to the appropriate education of English language learners. Instead, effective teachers become lifelong, issue- and practice-directed learners who approach professional practice through critical process thinking and reflection. This capacity is nurtured through such program design elements as critical debates, professional platform articulation, and field-based portfolio development.

In a recent qualitative study of the experiences and perspectives of underrepresented students, Borrero and colleagues have asserted that teachers' cross-cultural competencies and community engagement prowess may prove pivotal for English language learning and other nontraditional students (Borrero et al., 2012). They found that English language learners frequently struggle with notions of dual or multiple cultural identities amidst school environments that tend to promote unilateral assimilation to dominant cultural norms. Cross-culturally competent school educators are in a formidable position to promote positive identities through diversified educational opportunities and interactions that celebrate students' biographical and cultural assets.

Ultimately, in an age of increasing and appropriate attention to issues of social justice in Education, CLASSIC has, from its inception, focused on capacity building for advocacy among participant educators. As a target outcome, advocacy has been reconceptualized for teachers by CLASSIC as currency, defensibility, and futurity (Herrera & Murry, 2010, 2016). Currency explores the extent to which the educator is aware of threats to best practice for English language learning and other students (e.g., political). CLASSIC builds this capacity through its emphases on life-long learning, needs-based distance education, and site-specific dynamics. Defensibility examines the extent to which educators are capable of self-reflection on practice, theory-/research-based rationales behind that practice, and the reflective development of a personal platform for best practice. CLASSIC bolsters this capacity through its emphases on critically reflective practice, lifelong learning, and cross-cultural competency as a target outcome of professional development. Ultimately, futurity involves stepping outside of traditional roles in practice to enhance the success potentials of all students, especially those from underrepresented groups. CLASSIC does this through its emphases on advocacy as a tool for social justice and critically reflective practice as a target outcome. This notion of school and classroom leadership redefines the effectual educator as one who influences and engages others to take both individual and collective actions to defend best practice and/or to prompt appropriate change for social justice.

Recently, literature of teacher education has begun to acknowledge the power of teacher advocacy for English language learning and other marginalized youth who have been victimized by racism (e.g., Murry & Herrera, 2010; Zucker-Conde, 2009). For example, Borrero and colleagues have written: "Educators and researchers can benefit by considering the specific advocacy-oriented methods of interaction that reinforce giving voice, creating equity, and blurring the lines between 'normal' and 'other'" (Borrero et al., 2012, p. 32). For these authors, such youth have, for too long, been treated as the *other*—whose histories, whose biographies are not recognized as worthy of investigation.

At the practical level, the CLASSIC model was among the first in the country to offer grade-level classroom teachers and other school educators course-based preparation

for increasingly diverse classroom populations via distance education (Murry & Herrera, 1999). In turn, this capacity enabled the program to reach school educators in geographically isolated, local schools that serve English language learners from families that were employed in rural industries, such as farming, ranching, and beef packing. Recent evidence indicates that the families of English language learners are, once again (i.e., for the first time since 2008), immigrating to rural communities to obtain jobs not otherwise filled by local community members (Gomez, 2013; Maxwell, 2013). For example, many rural communities in South Carolina have seen the most extreme growth in English language learners — a jump of 610% in the last decade (Maxwell, 2013).

In like manner, CREDE-aligned CLASSIC programming has demonstrably impacted teachers' capacity building for local practice with English language learners in both rural and urban school settings across eight states and over 100 school districts. In the Midwest, where the numbers of English language learners in rural schools exploded at the turn of the new millennium, CLASSIC has operated as the primary model for the professional development of some 10,000 teachers since 1998. Many of these teachers have completed 12-15 credit hours of graduate-level coursework toward English as a Second Language endorsement in their respective states. Between 1999 and 2009, CLASSIC served an average of over 1,300 teachers per year across 35 school districts, of which about 10% were urban and 90% were rural. During this same time period, practitioners who took the courses of the program and who sat for the *English as a Second Language Content Area Test* of the Praxis II examination passed that assessment at an average rate of 89% per iteration of the exam.

More than 300 school educators have applied their English as a Second Language endorsement hours from CLASSIC toward a master's degree in *Curriculum and Instruction*, with an emphasis in English as a Second Language. Of these, 244 were elementary school teachers, 67 were secondary educators, and four were adult educators. Since its inception, the standards-driven CLASSIC model has served as the vehicle for the effective delivery of localized teacher education in 18 externally funded projects at the state, regional, and national levels.

At the theoretical level, evidence-based arguments for the CREDE-aligned CLASSIC model are perhaps best grounded in its acceptance in the literature of the field. To date, CLASSIC has served as the primary or secondary theoretical framework for over 75 different publications or presentations in Education, including 12 refereed articles, 10 book chapters, and 50 refereed conference presentations. Among referred publications and presentations, CLASSIC has served as the theoretical framework for research on teacher education in a significant range of both quantitative and qualitative studies (e.g., Herrera & Murry, 2010; Holmes et al., 2012; Murry, & Herrera, 2010; Penner-Williams et al., 2010).

CLASSIC as Professional Development for Best Practices

Ultimately, the theoretical significance of the CLASSIC model to the field may be best extrapolated from the degree to which key elements of the model align with standards for best practice with English language learners as specified by the CREDE *Standards for Effective Pedagogy and Learning* (Doherty et al., 2002; Doherty et al., 2003; Doherty & Pinal, 2002; Tharp, 1997; Tharp & Dalton, 2007; Tharp et al., 2000). Discussion to follow will articulate these alignments, organized according to the five CREDE standards.

Table 1 illustrates those key and supporting elements of the CLASSIC model that align with the CREDE *Standards for Globally Effective Pedagogy and Learning*. Column 1 of this table specifies each of the five CREDE standards. Column 2 specifies which element of CLASSIC (as illustrated in Figure 1) most directly builds teachers' capacities for professional practices that target the corresponding CREDE universal/standard listed in column one of the table. In turn, column 3 of the table specifies the professional practice

with English language learners that the matching CLASSIC element targets through the program of professional development. Finally, column 4 of Table 1 specifies other elements of the CLASSIC model that further support the teachers' development of practices that align with the corresponding CREDE standard.

Table 1. Alignment of key elements of the CLASSIC model for professional development with five universals for effective teaching.

Universal/Std. for Effective Teaching	Key Element(s) of CLASSIC PD Model	Key Processes of Teacher Growth	Supporting Element(s) of CLASSIC
	<i>That target the Std:</i>	<i>Capacity Building for:</i>	<i>That target the Std:</i>
Contextualization	Critically Reflective Practice	Checking assumptions about ELL student assets vs. deficits	Focus on School/Site-Specific Dynamics
	Cross-Cultural Competency	Appreciating/maximizing students' culture-bound ways of knowing	Innovative, Needs-Based Coursework for Teachers
Language Development	Focus on School/Site-Specific Dynamics	Pre-assessing & maximizing ELL bilingualism and L1 Dev.	Critically Reflective Practice
	Innovative, Needs-Based Coursework for Teachers	Innovating ways to build upon Sts. L1 capacities as a means to L2 Dev.	Lifelong Capacity Bldg./Advocacy
Instructional Conversations	Innovative, Needs-Based Coursework	Creative C&I that nurtures, scaffolds, & affirms.	Cross-Cultural Competency
Joint Productivity	Critically Reflective Practice	Checking assumptions about grouping, Collab. pedagogy, & efficacy	Focus on Site/School Dynamics
	Innovative, Needs-Based Coursework	Bio-driven C&I that is reciprocally beneficial	Cross-Cultural Competency
Challenging Activities	Lifelong Capacity Building for Advocacy	Asset vs. deficit-driven decisions about teaching and learning	Critically Reflective Practice
	Critically Reflective Practice	Testing assumptions about student labels	Cross-Cultural Competency

Legend: PD-professional development; Std-standard; Dev-development; L1 –first language; L2-second language; Collab-collaboration; Sts-students; C&I-curriculum and instruction

At this juncture, it is appropriate to highlight other indications and implications of the table that may be less evident. First, the table illustrates the important fact that a wide variety of CLASSIC elements tend to support teachers' capacity building for best practice with English language learners as indicated by CREDE standards. Second, key elements of model often tend to operate concomitantly to develop teachers' capacities for standards-aligned practices with diverse student populations. Similarly, local teachers who build the capacities for classroom practices that are indicative of one CREDE standard, for example *contextualization*, often tend to simultaneously build capacities for practices that align well with other CREDE standards, such as *instructional conversations* or *joint productivity*.

Contextualization. This standard involves connecting the educational content (what is to be known) to students' lives (their biographies) and their preferred (mostly culture-driven) ways of knowing. Integrating new information in contexts that are familiar to the student facilitates the organization of that new content into long-term memory by activating or enhancing the availability of associated knowledge in a more conceptual form that enables retention and recall (Herrera, 2010; Murry & Herrera, 2011).

As illustrated in Table 1, teachers' capacity building for best practices that promote localized contextualization is most directly bolstered by the *critically reflective practice* and *cross-cultural competency* elements of CLASSIC. Pivotal to these efforts are the teacher's emergent capacities to check and test his/her assumptions about the assets for learning that the English language-learning student may already bring to the lesson. These are resources that effective teachers can maximize in targeted, non-redundant instruction and coaching. Yet, such foundational, biography-driven practices often necessitate letting go of a *deficit perspective* on teaching for and learning capacities among English language learners through recurrent and critical reflection on practice (Herrera & Murry, 2016). In addition, researchers who have recently explored ways to uncover and maximize the assets of English language learners and other marginalized students argue that these biographical assets are typically embedded in social and ecological systems including families, neighborhoods, cultural groups, and institutions (Borrero et al., 2012). For this reason, home visits and regular/informal discussions with student family/caregivers at local neighborhood events are central to CLASSIC professional development.

Language development. As highlighted by the English literacy emphases of the common core standards, language proficiency is highly correlated with overall student achievement. Language development and maximization are fundamental to academic discourse, problem-solving, and persuasive argument (Herrera, Perez, Kavimandan, & Wessels, 2013). In fact, it is no longer just a topic for English language learners and English as a Second Language educators (Fair & Fair, 2013). Increasingly, grade-level/content-area teachers will need to assume significant roles in literacy development among all students through questioning, rephrasing, and modeling.

The CLASSIC model most directly targets teachers' capacity building for best practices that promote language and literacy via a focus on *site/school dynamics* and *innovative, needs-based coursework* (see Table 1). Through the first of these, teachers learn to ask themselves, and others, fundamental questions, such as: What are the local demographics of students and families that we serve at this school? What first languages and multiple literacies are represented? What assets, from culture, experience, prior schooling, and more may be maximized among my students to target and enhance language acquisition and literacy development? The CLASSIC element of *innovative, needs-based coursework*, on the other hand, is designed to effectively model biography-driven practice at the programmatic level. That is, through targeted program structure and activities, CLASSIC demonstrates how teachers should build their instruction and assessments upon not just students' language and literacy assets, but also their identified needs in resources, instruction, scaffolding, assessments, and more. Through CLASSIC, these needs are identified using such strategies and techniques such as intake surveys, content-based preassessments, and instructional conversations.

Instructional conversations. The frequency, duration, and quality of teacher-student, academic interactions are three of the most pivotal factors in student learning (Doherty et al., 2002; Herrera, 2010). An essential goal for teachers of English language learners is to elicit and extend student talk on academic, social, and cultural experience as related to the academic topic of the lesson (Herrera et al., 2013; Yamauchi et al., 2013).

CLASSIC targets these capacities through *innovative, needs-based coursework* (see Table 1). For example, some teachers are not especially comfortable with social conversation, especially with learners who bring unfamiliar cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Yet, such regular and unplanned discourse with English language learners in the classroom often enables more structured conversations that relate to the academic topic of instruction. CLASSIC encourages participating teachers to build their social discourse skills through localized and collaborative inquiry groups of colleagues who share and address their dialogic challenges as they learn from each other in collective and synergistic

professional development. Through these groups, teachers build their skills for both social discussions and pedagogical conversations.

Joint productivity. Classroom strategies and activities that promote joint productivity encourage multifaceted student collaborations to attain a common goal or generate a collectively created product. Such goal-driven collaborations among students with various levels of skills and expertise encourage, for example, perspective taking and collaborative problem solving. Local teachers who optimize joint productive activities with English language learning students and others participate as collaborators, model language skills, demonstrate ways to problem solve, respond to student needs, and assess context-appropriate, academic performance.

Column 2 of Table 1 illustrates those key elements of the CLASSIC model that build teacher readiness to organize and support joint productivity. One such element is *critically reflective practice*. It offers teachers structured ways to check and test their assumptions about issues related to joint productive activity, such as: What grouping arrangements (irrespective of the noise and dialogue they may generate) encourage goal-directed collaboration? In what ways does my classroom environment need to change if it is to facilitate joint productive activities with all learners? How can I proactively accommodate the environmental changes that may be essential?

In preparation for joint productivity in the classroom, teachers also benefit from the CLASSIC element of *innovative, needs-based coursework*. In particular, they develop effective ways to deliver strategies that have been explicitly designed to, for example, facilitate collaboration toward a common goal or product, or promote group problem solving.

Challenging activities. As illustrated by the common core standards, it is increasingly important to teach academic skills and cognitive processing, including high-order thinking skills and evidence-based/defensible argumentation, along with content. Challenging activities are designed by the teacher to stretch all students toward their zones of proximal development that enable such skills and processes (Herrera, 2010; Murry & Herrera, 2011; Tharp & Dalton, 2007). The critical roles for the teacher in challenging activities for English language learners are to: (a) keep students' affective filters low as they progressively build their prowess for cognitive complexity, (b) facilitate student understandings of rigorous academic content, and (c) to assess student performance (Doherty et al., 2002; Murry, 2012).

Teachers' capacity building for best practices that feature challenging activities is most directly targeted by CLASSIC via *lifelong capacity building for advocacy* and *critically reflective practice*. The first of these is especially valuable to teachers in the era of the common core because it promotes evidence-based, defensible pedagogical positions and ensures development of argumentation skills among students. Similarly, teachers who build capacities for *lifelong advocacy*, especially that related to English language learners and families, learn how to maximize currency, defensibility, and futurity.

Lastly, the *critically reflective practice* element of the CLASSIC model bolsters teachers' competences for the development and effectual implementation of challenging activities. This is true because assumptions associated with labels such as English as a Second Language, English as a Foreign Language, and English language learning persist in our nation's schools, despite research, literature, and teacher preparation/development to the contrary (Herrera & Murry, 2016; Murry, Herrera, Kavimandan, & Perez, 2011). Among educators' assumptions are ones such as the following: (a) because English language learners are simultaneously learning content and language, they are not ready for challenging activities, and (b) because English language learners have been educated across multiple school systems and language programs, they are not ready for higher-order thinking about rigorous academic content.

Therefore, as outlined in the prior narratives of this section, CLASSIC is purposively aligned with the evidence-based, transnational (global), universals of best practice detailed

by the CREDE standards. In turn, these alignments and the prior narratives of this manuscript bolster the argument that CLASSIC is an informed, evidence-based, and highly successful model for teacher education—especially for teachers of culturally and linguistically diverse student populations. Therefore, the purpose of the current study was to answer the following research question through rigorous, quantitative, and recurrent inquiry.

Research Question

To what extent does teacher education that has been aligned to transnational (global) standards of best practice and delivered according to the evidence-based CLASSIC model, influence local, U.S. teachers' enactment of best practices for English language learners, as measured by the *Inventory of Situationally and Culturally Responsive Teaching* (described below)?

Method

Participants

Observed participants consisted of 113 public school teachers in 37 community (local) schools across four Midwest school districts. All participants were enrolled in CLASSIC English as a Second Language. By grade level, the sample consisted of 62 elementary teachers (grades K-5), 30 middle school teachers (grades 6-8), and 21 high school teachers (grades 9-12). Teachers in this sample taught a variety of content areas, of which 25% of the observed lessons were science (7.4%), math (16.0%), or technology (1.6%) lessons.

Measuring Teachers' Enactment of Best Practices

Teachers' enactment of best practices with English language learning students were measured using the *Inventory of Situationally and Culturally Responsive Teaching* (ISCRT; Herrera et al., 2013; Herrera, Perez, Kavimandan, Holmes, & Miller, 2011; Murry, 2012). The ISCRT (pronounced "*i assert*"; previously known as the Biography-Driven Practices rubric) is a systematic classroom observation tool that is well grounded in the latest research on teaching in diverse and complex classrooms in which students' backgrounds and preparedness for pedagogy may differ at subtle levels and their monolingual and bilingual language proficiencies are variable. This framework for the observation of teaching in highly diverse settings enables the quantitative measurement of teachers' levels of enactment of key pedagogical indicators of situationally (sometimes referred to as *contingency-based*) and culturally responsive teaching amidst high levels of cultural and linguistic diversity (e.g., Kourova & Modianos, 2013; Walqui & Heritage, 2012).

The ISCRT is an enrichment and enhancement of the Standards Performance Continuum (Doherty et al., 2002; Tharp & Dalton, 2007) also designed for highly diverse classrooms. However, the ISCRT accounts for 22 additional and observable indicators of performance that are indicative of more recent knowledge gains that have emerged from research on second language acquisition and effective, biography-driven, instructional practices for English language learners (e.g., Borrero et al., 2012; Herrera, 2010; Murry, 2012; Perez, Holmes, Miller, & Fanning, 2012; Sousa, 2011; Yamauchi et al., 2013). For example, the ISCRT accounts for the teacher's appropriate assessment of students' backgrounds and experiences (i.e., their biographies) and the ways in which these may facilitate their connections to and success with the classroom curriculum (Herrera, 2010; Murry, 2012).

Trained observers rate teachers' levels of enactment for each of the 22 ISCRT indicators on a 0 - 4 scale, where 0 = Not observed, 1 = Emerging, 2 = Developing, 3 = Enacting, and 4 = Integrating. Individual indicators are categorized under and aligned with

each of the original, five standards or core areas contributed by Standards Performance Continuum researchers. In the extant sample, a high degree of internal consistency ($\alpha = .94$) was found among the indicators. Furthermore, across the five observers who conducted these observations, inter-rater reliability coefficients for each of the 22 indicators were exceptionally high ($> .90$).

Although an illustration of the complete ISCRT inventory is beyond the scope of this manuscript, Table 2 illustrates examples of ways in which the three of 22 indicators of best practice that apply to contextualization are coded for teacher observation as well as teacher actions that observers would note if the observed teacher was performing at the *integrating level* of best practices in contextualization for English language learning and other students.

Table 2. Selected examples of the ways that three of 22 ISCRT indicators of best practice that apply to contextualization may be coded for teacher observation.

Contextualization		
Indicator of BDI	Code	Integrating Level of Prototypical Teacher Actions
Funds of Knowledge, Prior Knowledge, Academic Knowledge	BK3	Pre-assesses & documents students' funds of knowledge, prior knowledge, and academic knowledge for use throughout lessons.
Assets/ Community of Learners	A/CL	Uses students' biographical assets to find commonalities that foster and maximize a community of learners.
Biography Connections	BIO	Connects students' biographies to real-world applications of content and process learning.

Using a longitudinal design, participants were observed via the ISCRT inventory during each of their first four semesters of CLASSIC prior to their practicum experience. All participants were observed on at least one occasion. Observation duration averaged 65 minutes and each spanned delivery of a full lesson. All teachers were observed in their own classrooms.

Data Analysis

Because we were interested in estimating longitudinal growth vis-à-vis transnational standards for effective pedagogy, we chose to analyze these data using semester number (e.g., 1-4) as the unit of time in a multilevel growth model (Singer & Willet, 2003). Multilevel Modeling (MLM) is an appropriate technique for analyzing longitudinal data where participants are nested within time points. An additional benefit of MLM is that it allows researchers to model the variability across different participant trajectories. Specifically, MLM can be used to test whether there is significant variability in the intercepts and slopes across the individual growth trajectories. An additional benefit of MLM is that it is robust to unbalanced data, which were present in the extant sample.

We first calculated an ISCRT composite score created by averaging together the 22 indicators. This single variable thus represented the average level of enactment for each participant across all 22 indicators of best practice. Analyses were first conducted using this

single variable to protect against the inflated Type I error rates that we would risk by running separate multilevel growth models on each of the 22 indicators. However, this omnibus analysis precludes information about the level of growth on particular practices measured by the ISCRT inventory. Therefore, we conducted additional analyses on each of the individual indicators to provide a more detailed description of teachers' growth across four semesters with CLASSIC.

Results

Inspection of the descriptive statistics for the composite ISCRT score revealed variability in levels of teacher enactment of effective pedagogy. ISCRT composite scores ranged from 0.45 to 3.82 across teachers and time points ($M = 2.13$, $SD = 0.60$), and the observed distribution of scores approximated a normal distribution. Thus, over the course of our observations, we observed teachers who scored near the bottom of the 0-4 scale as well as teachers who scored near the top.

To test for significant levels of longitudinal growth in teachers' enactment of effective pedagogy, the ISCRT composite scores were entered as the criterion variable and semester was entered as the predictor in a stepped-up multilevel modeling approach (conducted using restricted maximum likelihood estimation). This approach was also repeated for each of the five standards contained within the ISCRT (see Table 3). For the ISCRT composite score, in Model 1, we used a fixed intercept and a fixed slope to estimate the growth trajectory of ISCRT composite scores. This model indicated that there was a significant positive growth trajectory over the four semesters ($b = 0.17$, $SE = 0.03$, $p < .001$), providing evidence that teachers' levels of enactment of the practices measured by the ISCRT significantly increased over the course of the four semesters of the professional development program. To test whether teachers differed in terms of the intercepts (i.e., baseline levels) of their individual growth trajectories, we next tested a random intercept, fixed slope model (Model 2). Growth trajectory estimates from Model 2 ($b = 0.18$, $SE = 0.03$, $p < .001$) were similar to Model 1. The residual variance components in Model 2 revealed that 24% of the residual variance was accounted for by differences in the growth trajectory intercepts, providing evidence that teachers significantly differed in terms of their baseline ISCRT scores. Next, with Model 3, we tested a random intercept and random slope model to determine whether the amount of growth (i.e., slope) across individual growth trajectories significantly varied. Model 3 revealed that there was no significant variability in the slope of the growth trajectories between teachers, thus we can conclude that, although teachers' baseline ISCRT scores differed, there was no evidence that teachers demonstrated different levels of growth. In other words, teachers demonstrated similar levels of growth over the four semesters of professional development.

This stepped-up multilevel modeling approach was repeated on the composite scores (created by averaging the individual indicator scores for each standard) representing each of the five standards contained within the ISCRT (see Table 3). Teachers made significant growth on all five standards, as evidenced by the significant growth trajectory estimates (i.e., fixed effects). Additionally, we can see from the residual variance components estimates for Model 2 that the intercepts for each standard significantly differed between teachers, providing evidence that teachers' baseline levels of ISCRT enactment differed. One exception was the contextualization standard, where the residual variance explained by random intercepts was only marginally significant (95% confidence interval lower limit = -0.006, upper limit = 0.22), but still explained a rather large 12% of the residual variance. The addition of random slopes in Model 3 did not explain a significant amount of residual variance for any of the five standards (although the residual variance explained by random slopes was significant for the language and literacy development standard, less than 0.01% of residual variance was explained by random slopes for this standard). From these analyses of the five standards scores, we again can conclude that teachers differed with respect to

their baseline levels of enactment of the five standards, and that teachers demonstrated similar levels of growth in enactment of the five standards over the four semesters of the professional development program.

Table 3. Multilevel Growth Models of ISCRT Composite Scores.

Variable	Model 1 <i>b</i> (<i>SE</i>)	Model 2 <i>b</i> (<i>SE</i>)	Model 3 <i>b</i> (<i>SE</i>)
Fixed effects of semester			
Composite ISCRT	0.17 (0.03)*	0.18 (0.03)*	0.18 (0.03)*
Joint productive activity	0.22 (0.04)*	0.22 (0.04)*	0.22 (0.04)*
Language and literacy development	0.13 (0.03)*	0.13 (0.03)*	0.13 (0.03)*
Contextualization	0.13 (0.05)*	0.14 (0.05)*	0.14 (0.05)*
Challenging activities	0.18 (0.03)*	0.18 (0.03)*	0.18 (0.03)*
Instructional conversation	0.20 (0.04)*	0.20 (0.03)*	0.20 (0.03)*
Residual variance components			
Composite ISCRT			
Random intercepts		0.09 (0.03)*	0.08 (0.03)*
% variance		25%	24%
Random slopes			-0.01 (0.01)
% variance			< 0.1%
Residual		0.26 (0.03)*	0.26 (0.03)*
% variance		75%	76%
AIC	542.9	539.2	540.3
Joint productive activity			
Random intercepts		0.13 (0.04)*	0.13 (0.04)*
% variance		28%	27%
Random slopes			< 0.01 (0.02)
% variance			< 0.1%
Residual		0.35 (0.04)*	0.36 (0.04)*
% variance		72%	73%
AIC	660.3	652.2	654.3
Language and literacy development			
Random intercepts		0.09 (0.03)*	0.08 (0.03)*
% variance		23%	19%
Random slopes			-0.04 (0.01)*
% variance			< 0.1%
Residual		0.29 (0.03)*	0.33 (0.04)*
% variance		77%	81%
AIC	581.2	579.1	572.5
Contextualization			
Random intercepts		0.10 (0.06)	0.10 (0.06)
% variance		12%	12%
Random slopes			-0.01 (0.04)
% variance			< 0.1%
Residual		0.74 (0.07)*	0.75 (0.08)*
% variance		88%	88%
AIC	833.6	839.4	841.4
Challenging activities			
Random intercepts		0.06 (0.02)*	0.06 (0.02)*
% variance		19%	19%
Random slopes			< 0.01 (0.01)
% variance			< 0.1%
Residual		0.27 (0.03)*	0.27 (0.03)*
% variance		81%	81%
AIC	549.5	551.3	553.4
Instructional conversation			
Random intercepts		0.09 (0.03)*	0.09 (0.03)*
% variance		24%	23%
Random slopes			< 0.01 (0.02)
% variance			< 0.1%
Residual		0.29 (0.03)*	0.29 (0.04)*
% variance		76%	77%
AIC	583.5	582.6	584.6

Note. Model 1 = fixed intercepts, fixed slopes; Model 2 = random intercepts, fixed slopes; Model 3 = random intercepts, random slopes. The percentage of total variance accounted for appears below the variance component estimates. AIC = Akaike's Information Criterion (an estimate of model fit).

To provide a more detailed description of the impact of CLASSIC (transnationally-aligned) teacher education on local teachers' level of enactment of effective pedagogy, we performed separate exploratory analyses on each of the 22 indicators. For each analysis, we used Model 2 to derive the growth trajectory estimates because there was no evidence from the analysis of the composite ISCRT scores, or the five standards scores, that growth trajectory slopes significantly differed between teachers, but there was consistent evidence that teachers' differed in their baseline levels of enactment. Table 4 displays the growth trajectory estimates for each indicator, and Figure 2 (parts a-e) displays growth trajectory plots derived from these growth estimates. Parameter estimates of the growth trajectories were significantly positive for 18 of the 22 ISCRT indicators, providing evidence that teachers demonstrated significant growth on the majority of the individual indicators measured by the ISCRT.

Table 4. Multilevel Growth Model Estimates.

	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>
Joint Productive Activity	0.22*	0.10
Learning Environment	0.26*	0.04
Teacher Collaboration	0.05	0.06
Total Group, Partner, Small Group, Individual	0.30*	0.06
Partner/Grouping Determination	0.22*	0.06
Activity Connections	0.24*	0.05
Language & Literacy Development	0.13*	0.03
Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing	0.13*	0.05
Questioning, Rephrasing, Modeling	0.20*	0.04
Native Language	-0.02	0.05
Language/Literacy Background Knowledge	0.21*	0.05
Contextualization	0.14*	0.05
Funds of Knowledge, Prior Knowledge, Academic Knowledge	0.14*	0.06
Assets/Community of Learners	0.27*	0.07
CLD Biography Connections	0.01	0.04
Challenging Activities	0.18*	0.03
Accommodations	0.31*	0.04
Content Objectives & Language Objectives	0.12*	0.04
Standards/Expectations	0.20*	0.05
Affective Filter	0.12*	0.05
Feedback (formative assessment)	0.15*	0.04
Instructional Conversation	0.20*	0.03
Eliciting Student Talk	0.21*	0.05
Known to Unknown	0.25*	0.05
Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills/Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency	0.25*	0.05
Revoicing	0.01	0.04
Student Articulate Views	0.30*	0.04

Note. Model 2 (random intercepts, fixed slopes) was used to derive the parameter estimates for each of the 22 BDP indicators. * $p < .05$.

Figure 2a. Multilevel growth trajectories for each of the ISCRT indicators and the composite associated with contextualization.

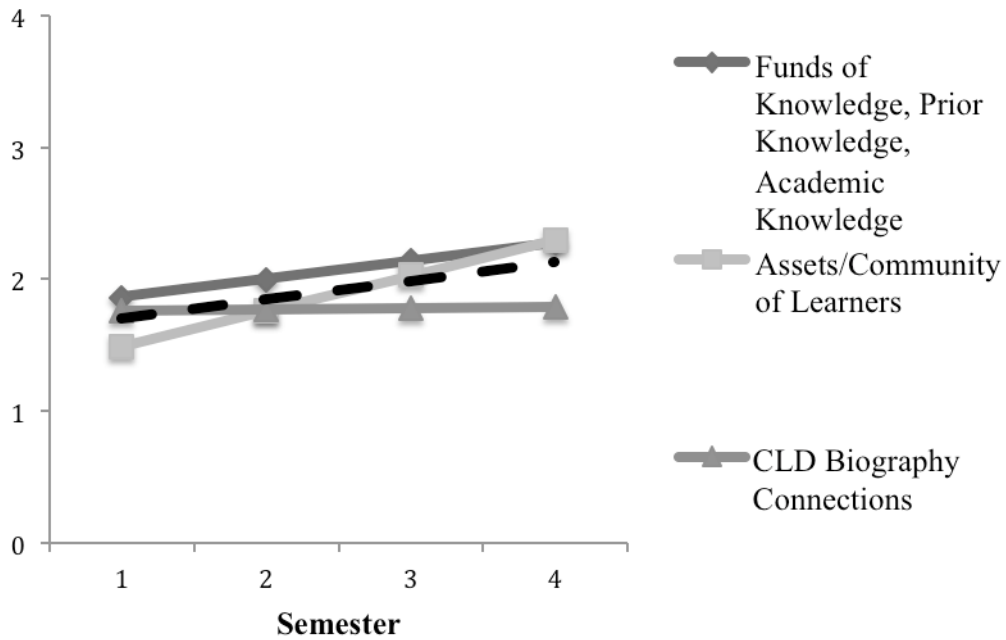


Figure 2b. Multilevel growth trajectories for each of the ISCRT indicators and the composite associated with language and literacy development.

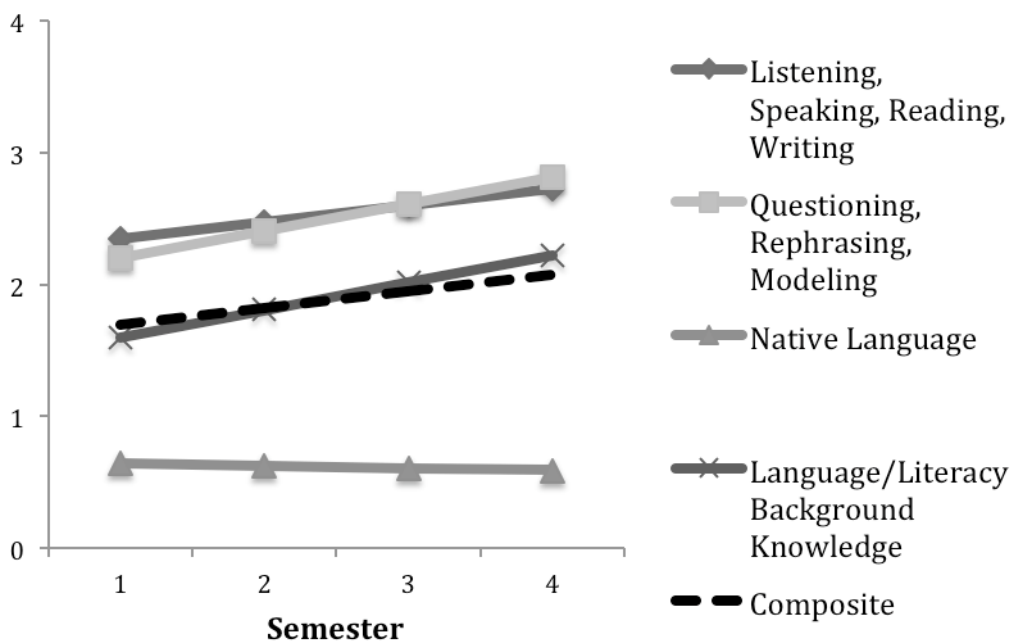


Figure 2c. Multilevel growth trajectories for each of the ISCRT indicators and the composite associated with instructional conversations.

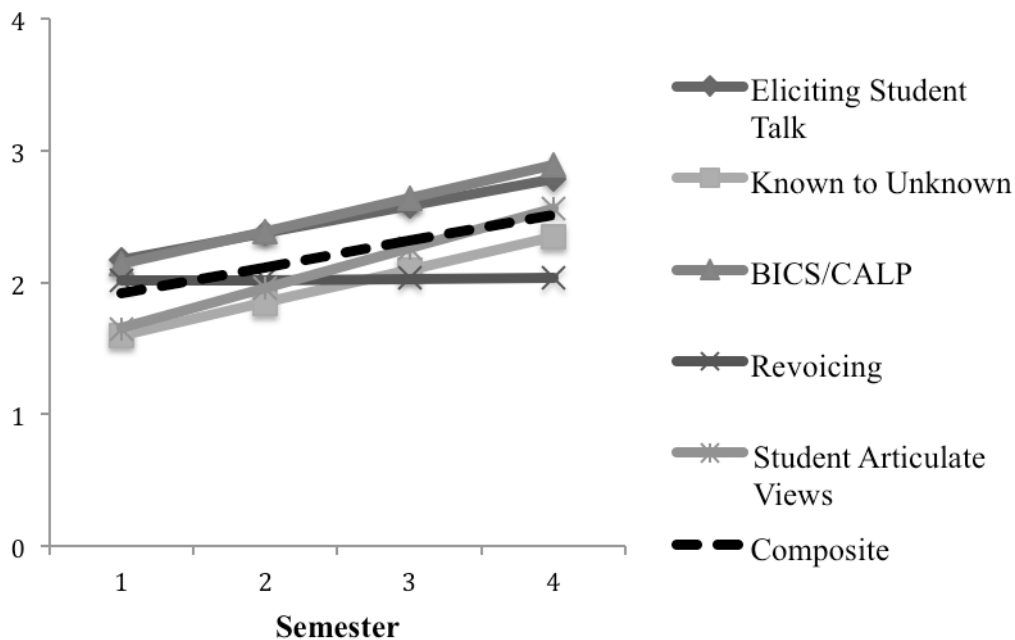


Figure 2d. Multilevel growth trajectories for each of the ISCRT indicators and the composite associated with joint productivity.

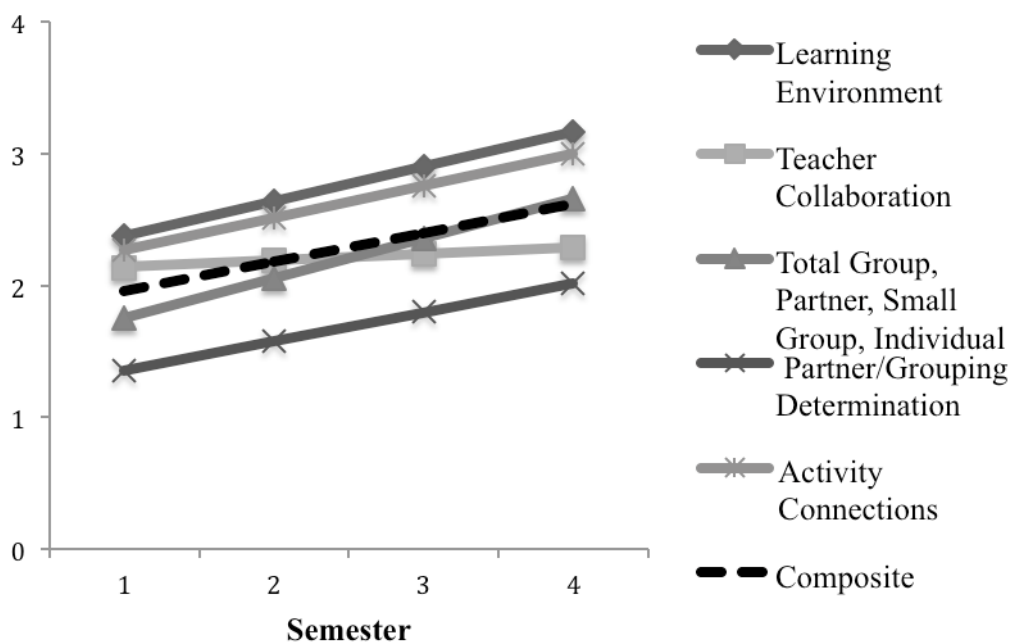
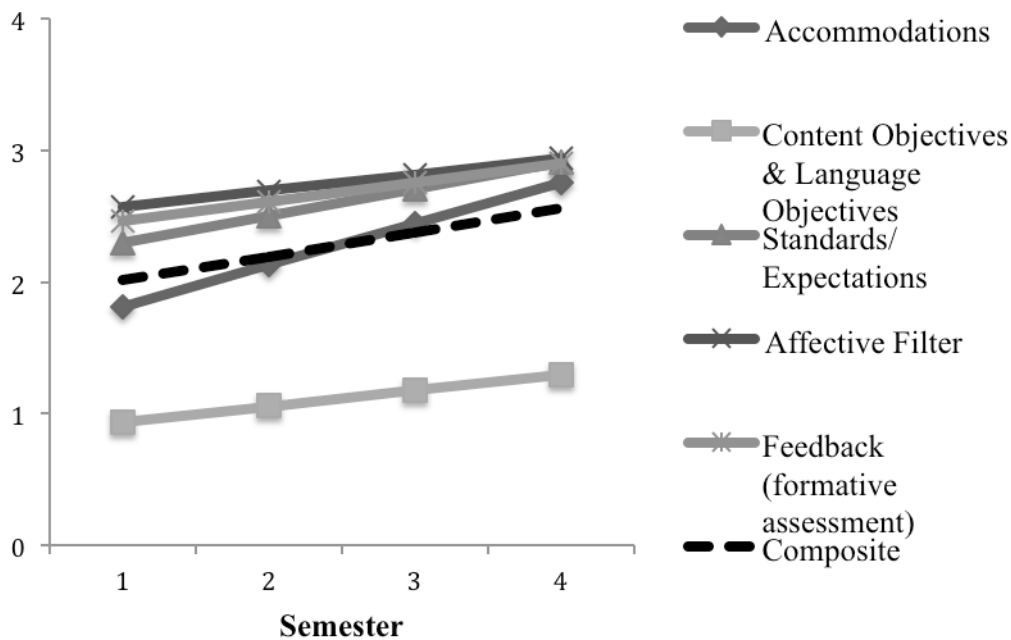


Figure 2e. Multilevel growth trajectories for each of the ISCRT indicators and the composite associated with challenging activities.



Discussion

Our findings support the inference that teachers' level of implementation of effective pedagogy with their U.S. students *significantly increased* over the course of the four semesters. Moreover, although there was significant variability in teachers' baseline composite ISCRT scores, there was little evidence that there was significant variability in the amount of growth teachers expressed in their enactment of ISCRT practices. Growth trajectories were significantly positive on the composite ISCRT score and on all five of the composite scores representing the five standards of effective pedagogy. However, the analysis of the growth trajectories for each of the individual 22 indicators revealed some variability in levels of growth between indicators. Although we did not conduct statistical tests of the difference between growth trajectories for each of the indicators and standards, at least descriptively it appears that participants demonstrated more growth on some measures compared to others.

Furthermore, estimates derived from the multilevel growth models indicated that participants demonstrated higher levels of growth in the core areas of instructional conversations (Figure 2c), joint productive activity (Figure 2d), and challenging activities (Figure 2e), as compared with contextualization (Figure 2a) as well as language and literacy development (Figure 2b). We also should point out that significant levels of growth were not observed on four of the 22 indicators. Encouragingly, however, inspection of the overall level of teacher enactment of the indicators with null effects (see Table 4) revealed that only native language support appeared to be implemented at a relatively lower level (i.e., average levels between 0 and 1, see Figure 2b). The higher levels of teacher enactment of the other three indicators with null slopes (see Table 4) suggests that, although there was no evidence of growth for these indicators, teachers were not deficient in these practices (see Figure 2a-e). In contrast, overall levels of enactment on the content and language objectives indicator were relatively low compared to the other indicators, although we did observe significant growth on this indicator. Regardless of the variability in the level of growth between

indicators, teachers demonstrated growth in enacting the teaching practices measured by the ISCRT inventory on the preponderance of these practices (i.e., 18 of 22 indicators).

As indicated by the high degree of consistency among ISCRT indicators and the high rate of inter-rater reliability across observers, measuring levels of teacher enactment of effective pedagogy via a purposive and well-designed observation rubric is a robust way to assess the impacts of professional development programs for school educators. The results of this longitudinal investigation of professional development reveal that teachers in this sample demonstrated statistically significant growth in the enactment of teaching practices that were operationalized by the standards for, and indicators of, effective pedagogy for English language learners and other students, as measured by the ISCRT inventory.

Moreover, professional growth was sustained over the course of, and as a product of, four semesters of highly differentiated professional development via the CLASSIC model. CLASSIC is a prime example of teacher education for (local) U.S. educators that has been intentionally aligned with *transnationally* (globally) *effective best practices* in teaching. These findings are robust to the extent that they reflect a sample of over 100 teachers from a broad cross-section of U.S. grade-levels and local school settings. The results of the multilevel models suggest that, on the majority of the specific practices measured by the ISCRT inventory, teachers exhibited different baseline performances, but tended to grow at similar rates over the course of their professional development. Therefore, teacher education that has been aligned to transnational standards of best practice (CLASSIC) *does* appear to *influence local teachers' enactment of best practices* with English language learners in U.S. classrooms in statistically significant ways. Further, this finding is consistent with the longstanding and consistent performance history of CLASSIC graduates on state endorsement exams, such as the Praxis II.

Taken together, these findings are consistent with the literature of best practices for English language learners, which asserts that transnationally effective teaching should surround instructional activities that target five core areas of standards-driven education: contextualization, language and literacy development, instructional conversations, joint productive activity, and challenging activities (Doherty et al., 2002; Herrera, 2010; Herrera et al., 2011; Murry et al., 2011; Tharp & Dalton, 2007; Yamauchi et al., 2013). Purposive alignments between these five transnationally effective (global) standards and the CLASSIC model have demonstrably ensured that professional development for local U.S. school educators will yield best practices for English language learners. This effective professional practice appears to occur even among grade-level teachers who have experienced limited preservice preparation that is particular to the differential assets and needs of English language learners and families.

The findings of this research indicate that teachers experience highest levels of benefit from differentiated professional development for best practices in the core areas of *instructional conversations*, *joint productivity*, and *challenging activities*. Nonetheless, growth demonstrated in the other two core areas—*contextualization* and *language development*—likely influenced teacher growth across all core areas. For instance, teachers who build their capacities for contextualization often tend to concurrently build skill sets that align well with other standards, such as challenging activities. In fact, biography-driven instruction is grounded in the premise that those standards that are closest to students' biographies are the most central and foundational to practices that will sufficiently differentiate English language learning instruction for student achievement (Herrera, 2010). Certainly, no core area of best practice with English language learners relates more to the student's biography than contextualization. Thus, local teachers' capacity building for contextualization via teacher education grounded in transnationally effective practices may have synergistically enhanced their instructional differentiations involving challenging activities as well.

Teachers' local provisions for native language support as well as content and language objectives were predictably lower than scores for other indicators. The authors'

experiences with thousands of teachers across 30 years of professional development have demonstrated that grade-level teachers who are beginning to grasp the assets and needs of English language learners have seldom been prepared to provide effective classroom instruction that simultaneously advances both *content learning* and *language acquisition*. Necessarily then, they are exceedingly less prepared to support students and families in using the native language to help the student acquire English. In fact, research by Reeves (2006) has shown that many grade-level teachers are overtly opposed to instructional practices that offer native language support, by virtue of their prior socialization. Similarly, it also stands to reason that teachers who are not prepared to support language acquisition are not well versed in writing both content and language objectives for their students. Local sociopolitical dynamics and school policies also tend influence the degree to which teachers feel supported in emphasizing native language support and in implementing content and language objectives (rather than content-focused, overarching lesson objectives) in the classroom (Herrera & Murry, 2016).

Limitations and Future Directions

Although the findings from our observations provide some compelling evidence that teachers' participation in the CLASSIC program results in increased levels of enactment of effective pedagogy, our study is not without limitations. First, we did not observe participants prior to the beginning of the program. Many of our participants were observed in the latter half, or near the end of their first semester. In the context of the program, teachers generally take the Methods course during this timeframe; in this course teachers learn and try out many of the practices measured by the BDP rubric. It may be the case that teachers grow at higher rates over this first semester. Therefore, our estimates of growth may be conservative with respect to the overall level of growth teachers experienced.

Second, our research design was limited by not having longitudinal observations of a comparison group of teachers who were not participating in the CLASSIC program. However, we believe that the level of growth in effective pedagogy demonstrated by our participants would be unlikely to be as high as we observed without some type of intervention or professional development that emphasized the transnationally effective standards of teaching embodied by the CLASSIC program.

Finally, the current research does not address the broader impacts of the CLASSIC program in terms of the benefits that can be expected for the schools and students of teachers who enact these teaching standards. Existing evidence suggests that higher levels of enactment of the five standards for effective pedagogy is related to better student outcomes (Doherty & Hilberg, 2007; Doherty et al., 2002; Doherty et al., 2003). Future research is needed to assess the improved student and school-level outcomes that can be attributed to teachers' increasingly higher levels of enactment of the standards for effective pedagogy.

Conclusion

Despite some variability in the observed growth trajectories, the overall inference that we draw from the findings of this investigation is that *CLASSIC-trained teachers made statistically significant improvements* in their enactment of effective pedagogy across a wide range (i.e., 18 of 22 indicators) of research-based teaching practices. Importantly, teachers at the end of the four semesters performed, on average, comparatively high in relation to the scale on which these practices were measured (i.e., above the midpoint of the 0-4 ISCRT scale). Accordingly, we interpret this evidence as supportive of the superordinate conclusion that teacher education aligned to transnationally (globally) effective standards has a positive impact on U.S. teachers' local delivery of effective pedagogy.

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