A Case Study of Conflicting Narratives of Language and Culture in a Foreign Language Teacher Education Program

DISSERTATION

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By

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Abstract

The goal of this qualitative research project is to analyze the narratives of a foreign language student teacher who decided to join a masters program to become a certified foreign language teacher in the American K-12 setting. The research focus of this study used Narrative Inquiry as applied to teacher education (Clandinin and Connelly, 1995, 2000) where researchers record the experiences of their participants to find the relevant narratives that contribute to the construction of the teacher identity of the individual. Narratives contribute to the construction of identity, which is defined as a series of reifying, significant, endorsable stories about a person (Sfard and Prusak, 2005).

In nine months, the researcher performed as a student teacher supervisor, while collecting data from several sources, such as student teaching practicum observations, in classroom assignments, researcher and participant journals, informal conversations and semi-structured entrance and exit interviews. Although previous research revealed that individuals use their existing narratives to find a meaning of those new experiences they face, the additional narratives of language proficiency and foreign language culture added yet two more layers to the already complex narratives of good teaching, successful learning and assessment in the foreign language classroom.

The process of identity transformation is greatly affected by how interns visualize their role as teachers and their knowledge of the foreign language. In addition, due to the
different needs of each student teacher, as well as the beliefs and perceptions of the interns towards the teaching profession, student teachers usually build a personalized definition of identity that shares some common aspects from one teacher to the next, but will never be the same for two of them. At the same time, Sfard and Prusak (2005) support this notion when they define identities as a collection of narratives that are significant and relevant. In the field of teaching education, therefore, interns construct their identity by means of the significant stories that are relevant to their experiences in their professional lives, inside and outside of the classroom.

Findings suggest that although the participant has the skills required to succeed in the teacher education program where the study took place, her conflicting narratives do not necessary equip her with the tools to succeed in the teaching world. In addition, there seems to be a conflict in the narratives of the organizations that teach languages at the undergraduate level and language teaching at the teacher education scenario. It is necessary then, for teacher education programs in general, to keep in mind those existing conflicts and mediate between the challenges prospective teachers will face when exposed to different narratives inside and outside of the teacher education context. At the same time, it is important for teacher education programs to keep in mind the differences in learning a language in context and teaching a foreign language in the harsh reality of the American K-12 classroom. A solution for this challenge requires a closer partnership between the fields of humanities, language teaching and foreign language teacher education, to help prospective teachers to succeed in the teaching world.
Dedicated to my father, who made sure that plane did not leave without me, and to Sandra and Laura, my family and my all.
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Vita

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Fields of Study

Major Field: Education

Minor Fields: Foreign and Second Language Teacher Education, Ethnographic Research

Methodologies
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Problem Statement, Significance of the Study

My personal narrative.

In 2003, before completing my Masters’ degree in Spanish Literature, I faced diverse challenges as a teacher and a junior scholar. For the first time, I found myself teaching Spanish to undergraduates from an American Midwestern University. My cultural background and the different views I had on teaching collided with those within my Masters program, as a heavier emphasis was given to Hispanic literature than to foreign language learning. At the same time, the gap between the theories I learned in South America and the actual conditions in which the Spanish language was taught in my new teaching scenario grew even bigger. While I was in charge of two Basic Spanish classes a quarter in my second year, I had several issues with reconciling the differences between theory and practice in the setting where I was teaching Spanish. While I loved teaching my native language and culture, I was exposed to students with diverse backgrounds and goals: Some of my students loved the language, but others would take my class because of the foreign language requirement. Some others would not even show up to class. I would spend hours preparing classes, reviewing methodologies, and teaching endless lessons on culture that most of my students seemed to find irrelevant and
boring. I had a clear perception of teaching as a tool to share my experiences as a Latino, while sharing with my learners my love for my culture. These experiences seemed, in my head, relevant and vital for a person to learn a foreign language in context. My personal experiences and learning history contributed to my definition of successful and effective teaching. This definition, however, was different to the idea that some of my students had. Clandinin and Connelly (1995) would describe my situation as a clash of definitions of good teaching. My definition of good teaching conflicted with the vision of my Masters program, while some of my students did not see the learning of Spanish language and culture as a priority in their lives. It was a shocking learning experience. At that time, I was unaware of the fact that my students came to my classroom with different stories, opinions and experiences that justified their perceptions on learning Spanish, and I was giving preference to my own, personal opinions, rather than understanding my students’ backgrounds and needs, their personal narratives.

Towards the end of my Masters program, I was more aware of the conflicting narratives and needs of my students and mine, but I still ignored the relevance of those differences in the learning process of my students and my own. As I assumed that I would not be able to reconcile the existing differences between my learners, my teachers and myself as a language teacher, and upon completion of my Masters degree, I chose to join Corporate America as an English /Spanish teacher and translator for a landscaping company. I was hired, among other duties, to train, and teach English and Spanish to the entire Mexican and American workforce. Even though their Mexican workers were all Hispanics, like me, their different backgrounds made my adaptation to my new role as an
English teacher a challenge. The language teaching methodologies I learned in Colombia seemed to be somewhat ineffective with this audience. Some of them, because of our different backgrounds and experiences, rejected me from the beginning. They were like nothing I had ever seen before in my years as a teacher. Their self defined identities as male Latino workers in the United States clashed with how they perceived me, as a privileged male Latino who did not work as hard as they would. Some of them were illiterate in their native language, which made the English learning process even more challenging. Their learning styles were different, their motivations were different, and the path they chose to reach their goals was different. In other words, their narratives differed greatly from mine. Nothing that I learned until that moment prepared me for something like this. The gap between theory and practice in language teaching grew even bigger for me.

At that point, I chose to begin my doctoral studies in Foreign and Second Language Education (FSLED). Because of my experience with Spanish teaching, I became then a College teaching supervisor, and I was then assigned to the M.Ed. Cohort in Foreign and Second Language Education (FSLED) in which students obtain a Masters degree upon completion of a specific coursework, a research project and a one year intensive teaching experience. During my tenure as a Graduate Teaching Assistant for the M.Ed. Program in FSLED, I had the opportunity to see how our interns evolve from bilingual novice students to very strong teacher candidates, who are ready to advance through the program and to become professional teachers.
Towards my fourth year in the Doctoral program, I had the opportunity to teach a class to one of the cohorts, in which students had to lead discussions and presentations on our readings. One group in particular, represented a short scene where an Intern was being pulled simultaneously by her partners from several directions, each representing an aspect of the program: mentor teachers, students, personal demands and university supervisors. One of the interns then discussed the difficulties of teaching culture and language in American high schools, where foreign language is not a priority for administrators, other teachers or even the students.

This vivid moment helped me realize how hard interns had to perform to adapt and establish connections between the theories learned in their classes and the practice component of the M.Ed. program. However, I was also been able to notice the struggle of the student teachers when appropriating the methodologies they learned, and the challenges they face when trying to put all the theory into practice in the reality of the US school system. These interns were facing some similar challenges to those I had back in my days as a Spanish teacher. In order to succeed, student teachers walked a long path, in which they ended up questioning their personal beliefs and their own, personal identities. Sfard and Prusak (2005) define a main identity as an interconnection of the individual’s different stories and narratives, each one of them being an identity in its own right. In the case of the M.Ed. program interns, Their individual identities develop differently, mostly due to the different expectations prospective teachers might have when arriving to the program, either in terms of difficulty level, personal advancement, their conceptions of the teacher profession in general, and the very competitive status of teacher education.
programs in the area where my study took place. In some cases, interns even decided to leave the program or the teaching profession after their first year, because the teaching profession was not what they expected. This situation was, in sum, a challenge where their narratives clashed with the expectations of the program and the teaching profession in general. It was, to an extent, quite similar to my challenge when I was a Masters student and decided to leave to become an English teacher.

At this point, I discovered that even though the interns in the M.Ed. program faced some challenges similar to mine, they found their way through obstacles in different ways. A new question arose then, represented in the negotiation of identity, its meaning and evolution in the context of FSLED teacher education. Sfard and Prusak (2005) explain my personal inquiry as one of the main challenges of Narrative inquiry, where researchers explore why different individuals react differently to the same situations (14), including their navigation of conflicting narratives found in the fields of language learning in the humanities and language teaching methodologies in education and the social sciences. Pre-service teachers such as Selena, my participant, are constantly exposed to these conflicts, yet they are unaware of them, or unable to explain why their existing and new narratives collide.

**Narratives as life stories that build identities.**

Sfard and Prusak (2005) provide an operational definition for identity as a collection of stories about persons, or more specifically, as those narratives about individuals that are *reifying, endorsable and significant* [italics in the original] (16). In other words, narratives are a series of stories that build the identities of the individual.
Narrative theory, consequently, analyzes different stories that interact with each other, and how they construct a larger story, that help the researcher situate the individual in a context. In teacher education, the context would be, as defined by Clandinin and Connelly (1995) the professional landscape of the individual.

I found necessary, then, to explore what research could provide in terms of identity of student teachers. The literature of teacher identity and pre-service teachers’ identity is extensive. However, there is not a large amount of studies in the more specialized field of foreign language teacher identity or foreign and second language pre-service teachers and their process of identity construction and acquisition. In order to explore the challenges of identity construction of pre-service teachers in foreign and second language education (FSLED), a qualitative\(^1\) research project with ethnographic perspectives is a powerful way to document and document the transformation of the students and their appropriation of the teaching role during their time as students in a pre-service education program. This teaching role, as with every identity construction scenario, is socially negotiated. According to Gee (1999), as with other individuals, identity negotiation happens socially for the interns, and can therefore be explored under the paradigm of the ethnography of communication. As further explained by Hymes (1972), even though ethnographic research is longitudinal in nature and students will only stay in the M.Ed. program for one year, the changes in identity and the development of their teaching skills of the interns happen during that particular year. A research project

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\(^1\) The term qualitative research is used in the sense of a longitudinal study that looks for patterns in interactions, or in the case of ethnography and language socialization, the use of speech acts and how the individuals adapt to their contexts.
participant can also be followed during the early stages of their actual teaching, during the first year of their experience in the teaching world.

This previous description of the different narratives of interns and K-12 students also brings up an apparent disconnection between the goals and objectives set in foreign language departments and language organizations, which interests and goals range from literature, culture, to language use. This disconnection appears to be historically and partially political, as explained by Freeman and Larsen-Freeman (2008)

In the United States, the “foreign” language teaching profession was supported by two main associations, one focused principally on literature (the Modern Language Association [MLA], founded in 1883) and the other started in 1967 as an offshoot of the MLA to focus mainly on spoken proficiency or what would later be called “communicative competence” (the American Council on Teaching Foreign Languages [ACTFL]). Support for teaching English as a second or foreign language emerged as a new enterprise through two international professional groups, one headquartered in England, the International Association of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (IATEFL), started in 1967, and the other based in the United States, Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), which began in 1966. (p. 153)

Even though American students learning to communicate in languages other than English, their program would fall under the ACTFL rules and paradigms. The needs and goals of learners in the world of the MLA, and the humanities in general, are somewhat different to those who received their teaching training and experience under the TESOL
umbrella. Even though it is not my goal to suggest that the methods and approaches of one organization are better than those of the other, I do propose that the different approaches in these organizations appear to affect the narratives of language learners. For undergraduate students who come from MLA oriented language learning programs, with a focus on literature, for instance, there will be a somewhat conflictive approach when working within a graduate program guided by TESOL standards, which are language use oriented, and geared towards foreign English learners. In the case of ACTFL, although its goals are geared towards language proficiency, an emphasis in context is given, making literature a tool to reach proficiency in the target language, rather than the main goal of the learning process.

**Narrative Inquiry as a Research Methodology**

Sfard and Prusak (2005) define identity as a series of narratives that interact with each other within the context of the individual. It is by means of this interaction of the different narratives that the identity of the individual is shaped, while the different narratives are transformed by both the interaction of the individual, and the context in which these narratives take place. Simultaneously, how the individual sees others and sees him/herself are affected and constantly transformed by this interaction in a specific context or Discourse, as defined by Gee (1999)

Sfard and Prusak’s work would be supported by the early findings of Clandinin and Connelly (1995) who would define the constructs of identity and context by means of the metaphor of Professional Knowledge Landscape (PKL), in which a teacher is exposed to different narratives and experiences in his/her professional life, and these narratives are
explored in terms of interactions with other teachers, other narratives and other professional lives interacting in the same landscape, or professional scenario. Narrative inquiry, therefore, document how individuals make meaning of the different stories they are exposed, and how they interpret the realities to which they are exposed according to their individual experiences and needs in their respective contexts (Golombek and Johnson, 2004, 308.) Given the fact that narratives and contexts are built by social interaction, a qualitative approach is the most accurate method to document the growth and transformation of the identities of the participant, while exploring how her narratives are transformed in the landscape where the interaction takes place. This exploration, due to the changing nature of identities and narratives, can best be documented chronologically.

Even though narrative inquiry is a powerful method for documenting the individual growth of student teachers and how they adapt to their realities in context, there are some limitations. One of them is the different interpretations that can be given to each individual’s reactions and interpretations, which can be as many as the perspectives involved in the narrative analysis. Another concern is related to the context in which each narrative takes place, which is the key to an accurate, detailed interpretation of the reactions of the individual. If narratives are analyzed out of context, or interpreted without a clear perception of the reality in which the individual performs, or even the stories that construct the identity of the individual him/herself, inaccurate, limited interpretations of the narratives of the individual are possible. These limitations can be overcome by accessing as many perspectives and narratives as possible to build a
more accurate context, and by means of interacting with the participant within their narratives, to have a better understanding of the reality in which each narrative takes place.

In order to explore the power relationships that affect the participant in detail, I chose to explore Selena’s identity transformation in three different contexts: As a student teacher in her placement, as a student in the M.Ed. program, and as a reflective participant who helped me explore her perceptions and her transformation during the capstone projects. This description of scenarios matches the definition of Professional Knowledge Landscape suggested by Connelly and Clandinin (1995) who recognized that, to understand the struggle of teachers and student teachers, it is necessary to analyze their worlds and the environments in which they interact.

In order to understand what disturbed teachers about their professional lives, we discovered that we needed to understand the relationship between how teachers live in their classrooms and how teachers live in those other professional, communal places. (5)

Connelly and Clandinin discussed the connection between landscapes in the professional lives of teachers, as well as their lives within their communities. As suggested by Lave and Wenger (1991) in their framework of communities of practice, teachers interact within each community to achieve common goals, even though their needs and uptakes might differ from each other. In the context of the M.Ed. Program, it is necessary to observe the interaction of interns within their communal places, while
monitoring their uptake of the experiences they are exposed to, and how these experiences affect their past and present narratives in context.

**Theoretical Assumptions**

1. Identity construction happens by means of social interaction (Gee, 1999).

2. Social interaction is represented in the narratives (stories) of the individuals involved (Connelly and Clandinin 1995).

3. Different scenarios require that people interact differently with each other (Sfard and Prusak, 2006).

4. Identity construction involves people negotiating their meaning and beliefs with others (Gee, 1999).

5. Classrooms are social environments where students negotiate meaning (Bloome, Carter, Christian, Otto, Stuart-Faris, Smith, & Madrid, 2008).

6. Foreign language is a vital component of the identity of foreign language teachers (Larsen Freeman and Freeman, 2008).

7. All forms of interaction involve power relationships, which vary according to the context in which these interactions take place. (Blommaert, 2005)
Research Questions

With the previous consideration on identity as a series of interconnecting narratives, in which I include my personal views as a supervisor of the M.Ed. program and its interns, I intend to analyze the following research questions:

1. How does a student teacher draw on the M.Ed. program in FSLED narratives to reach the program’s standards of successful teaching?
   1a. What are the most conflictive narratives of teaching and learning that a pre-service teacher found in her time with the M.Ed. Program in FSLED?
   1b. How does a student teacher and the M.Ed. program reconcile the competing narratives of teaching and learning foreign languages during the interns’ time with the M.Ed. Program in FSLED?

2. How does a student teacher position herself through written and oral narratives as she adapts to power relationships with students, mentor teachers, supervisors and professors as part of her status as student within the PKL of the M.Ed. Program in FSLED?

Organization of This Dissertation

The main contribution of this study to the field of language teacher education is a clearer understanding of the narratives and professional landscapes of a foreign and second language education student teacher as she negotiated her identities and made meaning of the different narratives she found while being part of the Masters of Education (M.Ed.) Program in Foreign and Second Language Education (FSLED) in an American Midwestern Research 1 (R1) University. At the same time, it has allowed me
to understand how narratives of successful language learning and teaching are built from the different perspectives of students, student teachers and teacher education professionals in general. I now have a clearer understanding of the expectations of both student teachers and teacher education programs in the United States, and how the inevitable conflict that will happen between both perspectives can be mediated to construct better, more effective language teachers who are more aware of the needs of the K-12 education scenario and the different realities they will face upon completion of their studies in the M.Ed. Program.

In the first chapter, I introduced my personal narrative and the context in which the study takes place, while I explained its significance and importance to the field. In Chapter Two I outlines the preliminary research on the field, what I believe is missing and where does my study fill the research gap, while I explain in detail how my theoretical framework was built and applied during the project. Chapter Three explains in detail the research methodology I designed for this project, while I describe the context in which the study takes place and who my participant is. In chapter four, the reader will find a detailed analysis of the data and the participant’s needs and narratives in which she interacts, and how her identities and narratives conflict and transform while participating of the language teacher education landscape. Finally, Chapter Five provides a discussion of the practical and theoretical implications of the study, for which I focus on the thematic categories derived from my intensive data analysis.
Chapter 2: Related Literature Review

In order to understand what disturbed teachers about their professional lives, we discovered that we needed to understand the relationship between how teachers live in their classrooms and how teachers live in those other professional, communal places. These are two fundamentally different places on the landscape, the one behind the classroom door with students, and the other in professional places with others. (Clandinin and Connelly, 1995, 5)

Introduction

In the following sections of this research project, I frame the discussion within the research paradigm of Narrative Inquiry, in which my participant and her challenges are addressed from a professional landscape perspective, where her professional stories are built upon existing narratives and challenged as she encounters programmatic and other professionals’ narratives.

The investigation described here explored the narratives of a student teacher, and how her experiences transformed her views on language teaching and learning, while documenting how her narratives helped Selena to make sense of the conflicts faced in the Masters of Education (M.Ed.) program in Foreign and Second Language Education (FSLED) in a Research one (R1) university in the United States. This literature review is divided in the following sections: First, I will support the use of Narrative Inquiry as the
theoretical framework for my research. Second, I will discuss relevant research on identity transformation, focusing on teacher education and foreign and second language education. Next, I will analyze the complex reality of a student teacher, and how she built her identities based in both personal and external expectations. Upon presenting a series of qualitative studies in the field of teacher education, I will present a conclusion.

**Theoretical Framework: Narrative as Inquiry**

**Narrative Inquiry in the Teacher Education Context**

Clandinin and Connelly’s (1995) definition of narratives as stories that construct an individual’s landscape complements the definition of teacher identity proposed by Smagorinsky, Cook, Jackson and Fry (2004) within the frame of Activity Theory, a research paradigm that has its roots in the later work of Vygotsky, as explained by Leont’ev (1978). Smagorinsky et al. have used this paradigm to explore how student teachers adapt their existing knowledge, as well as the knowledge they acquire in the classroom to become better teachers. However, the different types of knowledge accessed might not necessarily harmonize with one another. After defining student teaching being as an exposure to different challenges, they suggest that,

> Learning to teach is thus in part a process of constructing an identity in the midst of systems of relations. During student teaching, there are multiple systems of relations involved in overlapping, often conflicting activity settings that make this identity formation quite challenging. (Smagorinsky et al, 2004, p 10)

This perception of the diverse systems of relations in conflict is even more complex in foreign language teacher education, where language proficiency is another
important factor in the construction of the identity of language teachers and student teachers. Language, consequently, plays a very particular function for the construction of identity for foreign language teachers, as explained by Larsen-Freeman and Freeman:

Insofar as a subject matter helps to frame a teacher’s professional identity as well as the practices that enact that identity, language plays a rather ambiguous role, particularly in view of its dual role as subject matter and as means of instruction.

(2008 p. 171)

Consequently, foreign and second language student teachers have to add yet another factor to the existing systems of relations. Being a foreign language speaker is an entire identity on its own, built under a different series of rules and regulations, which become part of the negotiation of the professional identity of the student teacher. For those interns with a higher level of proficiency in the language being taught, the foreign language is more of a positive element within their professional identity. If the intern believes his or her proficiency is subpar, the identity construction process will be affected negatively. As explained by Sfard and Prusak (2005) identities are ingrained in the subconscious of the individual, creating a set of expectations according to how the identity is constructed.

As implied by the common wisdom that “success begets success and failure begets failure,” stories of victories and losses have a particular tendency toward self-perpetuation. On their way into designated identities, tales of one’s repeated success are likely to reincarnate into stories of special “aptitude,” “gift,” or
“talent,” whereas those of repeated failure evolve into motifs of “slowness,” “incapacity,” or even “permanent disability.” (Sfar and Prusak, 2005, p 18)

The analysis of how past and present stories contribute to either the failure or success in the individual are useful to determine the best approaches to successful teacher education programs. Narrative Inquiry can contribute to the existing gap in the analysis of identity construction of student teachers in teacher education.

In their review of the Narrative Inquiry approach, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) support their use of Narrative inquiry to better understand the challenges of teachers and their application of knowledge within the landscape of teachers’ professional lives. Narrative Inquiry takes elements from sciences such as anthropology and psychology. Although in most fields, narratives are often synonyms of stories, the applications on each field are different. Riessman (2008) summarizes these different applications according to each field and the goals researchers pursue. For disciplines such as social history and anthropology, narratives are considered “an entire life story, woven from threads of interviews, observations and documents” (5). In the case of psychology and sociology, narratives are composed by one, or several long sessions of conversation, either for research or therapeutic purposes. It is through the different interpretation that is given to the stories, and how they are collected; which allows narrative inquiry to achieve the specific goals in the field where it is used.

The common element to the different sciences where narrative inquiry is used is the common assumption that narratives contribute to the construction of the individual’s identity, when discussed in the specific context where the narrative takes place.
Depending on the context, and how narratives are interpreted, some of their functions range from reassessing memories, arguing a personal position, engaging others in personal experiences, supporting personal ideologies, and even entertaining and misleading audiences, when used by someone in a power position who needs support of others. For effects of this study, narrative will be defined as in anthropology, where stories are built from a series of sources in a specific context.

Narrative Inquiry allows researchers to explore from a wide range of perspectives (participant, researcher, witnesses, etc) while focusing on the conflict between narratives, the different challenges participants face when their beliefs and perceptions are exposed to other systems of beliefs that conflict with their own. At the same time, Narrative inquiry allows researchers to explore the construct of continuity in the individual. In other words, by analyzing a vast array of components within the continuum of professional life of teachers, Narrative Inquiry allows a researcher to observe the discrepancies among events (or stories, for narrative purposes) in the professional life of the participant, and hypothesize how those discrepancies transform the beliefs and identity of the student teachers in my research project.

Narratives represent the experiences of the individual and are transformed constantly by interaction with others and their experiences and narratives. In qualitative research, Narratives are a source of data collection to help researchers address the individual nature of identities and how they interact and transform, according to the needs of each individual in their specific scenarios. In the field of teaching education, prospective teachers are exposed to an array of narratives that clash with their personal
stories and experiences, which make the adaptation process a challenge for those who pursue a career in education. In order to explore how to better understand the conflicts in experiences, and how prospective teachers adapted to the resulting challenges, Clandinin and Connelly (1995) explored narratives of teachers as forms of inquiry, in an effort to better understand how the experiences to which student teachers are exposed in their education contribute to the construction of their identities. Later, and in an effort to explain how narratives of individuals will create different conflicts for participants in the same context, they coined the concept of Professional Knowledge Landscape (PKL) in which the researcher must explore the relationships of teachers and their experiences inside and outside of the classroom, and while they interact with other teachers in their professional lives. It is through these strategies, and while constructing these narratives, that it is possible for the researcher to inquire about the different challenges teachers face in their professional lives, while constantly shaping their identities and adapting to their social context. By providing evidence of how teachers build their narratives within their PKL, and how the challenges teachers faced transform their identities, researchers are able to identify the strategies used by teachers to succeed in their landscape. As individuals have different experiences and different narratives to support how their identities are constructed, their reactions to similar situations will be different and related to their individual experiences. Researchers, consequently, will be able to previously found evidence to possible individual reactions to similar situations, in an effort to help teachers with similar backgrounds and narratives to succeed in similar situations, by
predicting how their personal experiences will affect their interaction within the existing PKL.

Hendry (2010) went even further in her appreciation of Narrative as a tool to do scientific inquiry, when she suggested that all inquiry is narrative. She then divided narratives in three types: Sacred, Symbolic and Scientific. In the professional landscape of teacher education, we could frame the M.Ed. Program within the specific type of Symbolic Narratives. According to Hendry, Symbolic narratives are those that seek to respond to questions of human experience. (76) Hendry’s definition of Symbolic narratives as an answer to human experience relates strongly to Gee’s (1999) explanation on how language and context build and interact constantly with each other. In Gee’s perception, individuals build the world that surrounds them by constant interaction and transformation of individual experiences. He explains;

We continually and actively build and rebuild our worlds not just through language, but through language used in tandem with actions, interactions, non-linguistic symbol systems, objects, tools, technologies, and distinctive ways of thinking, valuing, feeling, and believing. Sometimes what we build is quite similar to what we have built before; sometimes it is not (Gee, 1999, 11)

For both Hendry and Gee, interaction and experience transform individual beliefs and identities by interactions within specific contexts. For each individual, reactions to specific situations within similar contexts will be different, even when exposed to similar situations repeatedly, due to the constant transformation of beliefs and diverse narratives involved in each particular experience. In the specific case of this research project, the
experiences of my participant are being analyzed from their individual perspectives and narratives, where their experiences before joining the M.Ed. program shape their perceptions of student teaching, while transforming their lives and narratives during their tenure as graduate students. It is this analysis of Symbolic Narratives what allows me, as a researcher, to explore my participant’s identity transformation during their year of classes and student teaching.

Hendry’s analysis of Narrative as a form of inquiry and research is not the only source of support for the importance of Narrative analysis. Riessman (2008) explored and defined the use of Narratives as a form of inquiry within the parameters of social interaction in the framework of Human Sciences. While her focus is the use of Narratives as oral stories, she explained how Narratives in general are the resources used by communities and individuals to justify their beliefs and perceptions of the world that affects them.

Narratives often serve different purposes for individuals than they do for groups, although there is some overlap. Individuals use the narrative form to remember, argue, justify, persuade, engage, entertain, and even mislead an audience. Groups use stories to mobilize others, and to foster a sense of belonging, Narratives do political work. The social role of stories –how they are connected to the flow of power in the wider world- is an important facet of narrative inquiry. (Riessman, 2008, 8)

Although Riessman has just identified the differences in use and application of narratives in individual and group settings, the common points in both scenarios are...
evident. As narratives are used to support personal beliefs and personality shifts, groups also use narratives as a resource to construct ideologies, and create a sense of belonging to a group made with individuals who support the same beliefs. A clear example of this situation can be found in common life contexts such as politics, where individuals from different contexts and diverse experiences gather together, under a common set of expectations and ideas that create a sense of belonging to a political party with a set of goals common to all members. In the context of this study, ideology will be defined as a conceptual phenomenon that derives from experience and contributes to the construction of the identity of both the individual and his or her society, as proposed by Woolard (1998). In this particular identity construction, ideology is connected to power, which also builds during the identity construction process.

In the particular context of teacher education, knowledge is built on common narratives to which student teachers must agree and accept in order to become members of the group. In order for student teachers to belong to their PKL, they are expected to abide to the narratives of that particular group and accept how power relationships are handled, while adapting their personal narratives to those of the dominant group. I argue that the contrast between these narratives, and the personal stories that prospective teachers bring to the program transform the interns’ views and their narratives about language teaching, teacher education, and the teaching profession as a whole.

Golombek and Johnson (2004) explored the use of narrative inquiry as a space of analysis for the individual, and focused on its use in the field of teacher education. For the authors, narratives explore the connections between phenomena and give
interpretations to these phenomena by situating and relating facts to one another. Therefore, narrative analysis allows the researcher to use past experiences to 1) reconstruct and 2) interpret the understandings of the participant. To achieve this goal, narrative analysis focus mainly on how participant use their past experiences to find meaning in the new narratives they encounter, while also exploring how the meanings of previous narratives and events are transformed when personal emotions, experiences and values are involved. When analyzing how their experiences are shaped by means of this involvement of personal emotions, experiences and feelings, participants are compelled to question and reinterpret their perceptions within the existing narratives, past and present. In the concrete scenario of the M.Ed. Program, it is expected that the backgrounds and previous narratives of my participant will play a key role in how they make sense of the learning experiences they will be exposed inside and outside of the classroom. As a researcher, it is my role to identify how these narratives contributed to the transformation of my participant in novice teachers, and how they negotiated the conflicts they found between their narratives and the new ones that came up during their year in the program.

In order to understand how narratives affect the individual, they need to be contextualized. Clandinin and Connelly (1995) used the Professional Knowledge Landscape model (PKL) to explain how teachers construct their knowledge based on their experiences and professional relationships inside and outside of the classroom, and how their interactions within similar contexts, such as teaching placements, transform the
teachers and their perceptions of reality and even their personal and professional identities. In their own words,

Teachers’ lives take certain shapes because of their professional knowledge landscape. They draw on their individual biographies, on the particular stories of the professional landscape in which they find themselves, on how they are positioned on the landscape, and on the form of everyday school life that the professional landscape allows. Furthermore, the everyday professional life of the teacher off the professional landscape influences the life on the landscape.

(Clandinin and Connelly, 1995, p. 27)

By applying the PKL model to the context of teacher education research, investigators opportunity to identify some of the dilemmas that affect the teacher, and consequently develop a better understanding of the challenges and needs of the student teacher when exposed to similar dilemmas. For this project, by identifying how my participant positions herself within the PKL of the M.Ed. program, I will be able to understand how her past narratives influence her interpretations of the narratives she found along her learning process to become a teacher, and how the conflicts between new and existing narratives transform her identities as a teacher.

Narratives as Stories

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) identify narratives as experiences, in which individuals involved see their identities transformed and affected by other narratives that surround them. In their explanation of the relevance of narrative as a form of inquiry, they explain that “Experience happens narratively. Narrative inquiry is a form of
narrative experience. Therefore, educational experience should be studied narratively” (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p. 19). As narratives are defined by Clandinin and Connelly as experiences, education is also defined as a form of experience. With those two elements in common, it makes sense that the processes used by individuals to assimilate education can be analyzed from a narrative perspective. As prospective teachers use their existing narratives to make sense of the narratives found in their PKL; it is possible to tell a new narrative of how this process of ‘making sense’ takes place.

While the authors explained how they believe Narratives are a source of experience, and that narratives transform when exposed to other narratives, a possible interpretation is that student teachers and the transformation of their identities can be approached and recorded by exploring how their previous and present experiences are affected by the experiences they are exposed when in the context of teacher education programs. As defined by the authors, this recording of experiences and transformation can only be done by interaction and collaboration between both participant and researcher. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) explain this interaction with their participants by being active in the PKL. In their explanation, Narrative Inquiry defines narrative research projects as new stories being told in conjunction with the participant. While explaining how Narrative Inquiry was used in Bay Street School with two of their participants, both researchers became actively involved in the activities of the school and library, while constantly negotiating the relationships constructed within the research project. In the context of the M.Ed. Program, and in my dual role as a researcher, I dialogued constantly with my participant to negotiate our relationship within this
investigation. However, my role as a supervisor limited my active participation within the PKL in which she was involved. However, the feedback provided and the conversations we had at the end of my observations contributed, to an extent, to make myself more active within Selena’s PKL. I could not contribute directly to the Spanish classes of my participant, but my interaction afterwards helped negotiate her roles and mine within the research project. In the M.Ed. program, this application of experience and transformation of narratives can be found during the interactions between prospective teachers and other students of the program. As prospective teachers have an existing set of narratives and beliefs before joining the M.Ed. In FSLED, they will be exposed to a different set of narratives and stories that sometimes do not align with their own when in the classroom, during student teaching or even interacting with other prospective teachers. It is the analysis of conflict that happens when those different narratives interact that constitutes the strength of Narrative Inquiry. While exploring the challenges interns face in their different contexts (research projects, student teaching, classes taken as students, relationships with mentors, faculty, peers and student teachers) Narrative Inquiry allows the researcher to identify the conflicting narratives within the same PKL, and how the resulting tensions between conflicting narratives force participants to negotiate a meaning within the individual’s system of beliefs and core values that constitute their identities, before and after being part of teacher education programs in general.

Bamberg and Georgakopoulou (2008) support the approach of narratives as experiences that transform the identity of the individual. In their work on small stories as experiences that build identities, they explain that
numerous studies have focused on research or clinical elicitation techniques to pull for narratives that are invariably about nonshared, personal experience, past events. These stories (cf. life stories, autobiographies, short-range stories of landmark events) are often employed as heuristics for the inquiry into tellers’ representations of past events and how the tellers make sense of themselves in light of these past events; in short, these stories have often been taken as more or less unmediated and transparent representations of the participant’s subjectivities and from there as reflecting back on their identities (2008 p.378.)

In order to be analyzed, narratives must be contextualized and mediated. In order for this analysis to be successful, the context in which narratives take place must be considered at all times, as they are transformed according to the situations in which narratives take place. For example, the narratives on teaching that my participant will share with me will be different to those they will tell to someone outside of the context of this study. Narratives are defined and transformed by the context, and how participants position themselves within the PKL.

As Bamberg et al suggested, experiences are key components of narratives and identity construction. It is the documenting of those experiences that allows qualitative researchers to identify how identities are built, and how people involved in those experiences make sense of them by connecting them to their previous narratives. For instance, when M.Ed. students compare how they learned languages with how their teacher educators expect them to teach languages, they are making sense of their new
narratives by comparing them with their previous ones. By analyzing those narrative experiences in which individuals are involved, it is possible to add different layers to the narrative inquiry approach and explore how narratives interact with each other and modify the ideologies and beliefs of student teachers in the M.Ed. Program.

Analyzing narrative experiences involves a series of elements that must be kept into account at all times to construct an accurate PKL in which participants interact with each other and the context itself. Gee (1999) suggested a series of building tasks to perform discourse analysis. In this proposal, he explained that language and utterances are composed by clues that indicate how to move back and forth between contexts and languages. (85). These clues indicate how the context is constructed, and cannot be taken out of the context itself.

Given the complex realities described in teacher education, and the challenges constructing the existing PKL in the M.Ed. Program, analyzing narratives requires a detailed construction of the context in which narratives are constructed, and how language is used within each context and interaction. The term ‘language’ is used to refer not only to verbal or oral cues, but also written assignments and the demands of the M.Ed. program, which constitute the context in which the language is used by a particular participant. Attention to all details, such as how assignments are written, who was reading a particular assignment, and what was the narrative constructed for specific language uses are crucial.

Because of the importance of social interaction in Narrative Inquiry, narratives are defined as stories that overlap and interconnect with each other. Sfard and Prusak
(2005) explain their vision of narratives as identities when they explain how narratives situate the individual in context and document how identity is constructed. They then divide identities in two categories: actual identities, which are defined as “the actual state of things” or how individuals define themselves and their narratives, and designated identities, which are “expected to be the case”, or, in other words, are a goal to attain for the individual (18). Both sets of identities are created by narratives that are significant to the individual, but it is the development of the designated identities, their description by means of narratives, and how they are transformed by actual identities in sociocultural context what helps identities to transform, as Sfard and Prusak suggest;

   It is now not unreasonable to conjecture that identities are crucial to learning.
   With their tendency to act as self-fulfilling prophecies, identities are likely to play a critical role in determining whether the process of learning will end with what counts as success or with what is regarded as failure. (2005, 19)

As narratives allow researchers to define the elements that construct both actual and designated identities of their participants in a sociocultural context, it is also important to analyze how the interaction between both sets of identities affects the expectations of the individual. While designated identities are constructed by the beliefs of others, it is their interaction with actual identities that builds the core identity of the individual. The key elements of this core identity are the stepping stone for individuals to succeed or fail in the learning process, as identities create a series of expectations that the individual must fulfill to be considered successful in the learning context.
As identities are built in sociocultural contexts, expectations play a key role in identity construction and the learning process. As narratives are seen as stories that build identities, it is possible to assume that, according to the experiences lived by the individuals; narratives are able to build expectations. In other words, narratives contribute to situate the individual in a context, in which he or she creates a series of expectations based on both newly found and existing experiences. It is by these expectations that participants situate themselves, and to an extent, create expectations of either success or failure based on the conflicts created in the interaction of new and old narratives.

Sfard and Prusak support this idea of identities building expectations in their own research, in an 11th grade advanced mathematics program. By analyzing the data obtained from their participants, the researchers concluded that the learning objectives of both participants seemed to be different, even though they were learning the same concepts in class. Also, how their acquired knowledge was stored and processed seemed to differ, as well as the use of the mathematical concepts learned outside of the classroom. However, and in spite of this difference in results, both participants could be considered as having successful results in the same mathematics class.

Even though Narrative theory has a strong set of supporters, other researchers disagree with some of the approaches used when using this research method. In her critique of Sfard and Prusak’s approach, Juzwik (2006) proposes that the terms sociocultural, Discourse and narrative are being used in diverse, unclear ways that make their signification and application indistinguishable. Using a sociolinguistic approach, Juzwik suggests that the Narrative approach proposed by Sfard and Prusak does not take
into account other factors, such as social agency and contextual cues, which should be considered when analyzing stories that construct identities.

Unlike work on narrative and identity in the American sociolinguistic tradition, Sfard and Prusak background the particularity and ineluctable creativity of agents in communicative practices. Only such an enrichment and their operationalization of identity-as-story will allow successful pursuit of one of their leading (and closing) questions: Why do different individuals act differently in the same situations? (p. 14, p.21) (Juzwik, 2006, p.19)

Juzwik indicated that, from the sociolinguistic perspective, Sfard and Prusak disregard concrete elements of importance within the process of constructing identities as narratives. Some of these elements include how data is collected, saved and interpreted, and external elements to the stories, such as how the story is told, who tells the story and what are the important elements to the stories. For Juzwik, all of these considerations make the whole construct of identities as narratives much more complex than it was visualized by Sfard and Prusak. However, Juzwik does not seem to approach the issue of actual and designated identities that Narrative Inquiry addresses in teacher education. By using designated identities and interpreting them as what is expected to be the context, a set of expectations and even biases are created in the narrative approach. By means of analyzing the specific context in which narratives are addressed, and keeping in mind the expectations generated in such a context, a researcher might be aware of the biases generated by designated identities. Therefore, it is the goal of Narrative Inquiry to
interpret those expectations in each scenario within the PKL, and analyze how identities are built and transformed by interaction.

In her rebuttal to Juzwik’s concerns, Sfard (2006) explained how the terms are used, in fact, in very specific ways. For Sfard, Sociocultural is used as a mixture of terms, which, instead of oversimplifying the analysis of narratives, allows for multiple interpretations typical of qualitative research. Sfard then explains,

Our use of the term sociocultural is thus very broad and inclusive, and it is the common participationist core of the numerous sociocultural traditions, rather than any one of these traditions in particular, that underlies the idea of identity-as-narrative. Within this context, differences between various shades of sociocultural studies are a clear advantage. (Sfard, 2006, p. 23)

By expanding the definition of sociocultural, Sfard and Prusak have allowed for diverse interpretations within the context of identities as narratives. In the particular scenario of FSLED, by adapting the definition of sociocultural to the context in which the narrative takes place, the researcher is able to narrow down his/her research focus and use the richness of the sociocultural construct to understand how narratives are built. Based on this analysis, and my experience as a researcher and supervisor for the M.Ed. program, it is my belief that the definition of sociocultural must be a wide construct that allows for individuals to interact in different contexts, in which their narratives are in constant interaction with other narratives, which causes a transformation of each individual’s beliefs, which are, at the same time, transforming the context in which the interaction takes place, and the narratives of those involved in the context in which narratives are
being studied. For these reasons, and for effects of the present project, I will use the definition of sociocultural as defined by Sfard (2006), which is explained as “the transition from acquisitionist to participationist vision of human development and learning” (Sfard, 2006 p.23). In other words, how individuals participate within the context and make sense of the narratives they find.

In regards to the perception of narratives supported by Juzwik, Prusak explains that narratives, in her research, are focused on the processes of identity construction itself, (how individuals see themselves and are seen by others) rather than how the narratives are built from the sociolinguistic perspective. Context and Discourses, as explained by Gee (1999) play a role in the construction of these narratives as the specific scenarios in which the construction of narrative, and therefore identity, takes place. By structurally compressing and simplifying the definition of discourse, researchers have the opportunity to create more complex discursive layers that can be assimilated by a new member of the context, rather than starting the assimilation process from scratch (Sfard, 2006 p. 24). When investigating the Discourses in which participants are involved at a specific point, rather than focusing on an analysis of the origins of these Discourses, as a researcher, I will be able to focus on the challenges faced by my participant, rather than losing direction on the challenges faced by other M.Ed. students in similar situations. In order to have a clear understanding of the present context, however, it is necessary to keep in mind the many dimensions of social interaction that contribute to the construction of the Discourses involved. In this construction, a detailed methodology of Discourse Analysis, as proposed by Gee (1999) is crucial. In Gee’s approach, in order to make
discourse analysis valid, it must develop in detail a small part of the full picture being analyzed. However, the whole picture (Discourse) must be considered when doing discourse analysis. (p.92). At the same time, researchers must ask themselves questions related to six building tasks that individuals use to construct and construe situations and discourses in specific times and places. Those tasks are:

1. Semiotic building, or how cues are used to assemble situated meanings to communicate.

2. World building, or how cues are used to assemble situated meanings in the specific situation being addressed.

3. Activity building, or how cues are used to assemble situated meanings in the activities taking place during the situation being addressed.

4. Socioculturally-situated identity and relationship building, or how cues are used to assembled situated meanings according to the identities of those involved in the situation being addressed.

5. Political building, or how cues are used to construct the relevance of social descriptors, such as power, status, verbal skills, during the situation being addressed.

6. Connection building, or how cues are used to identify connections between past, present and future events related to the situation being addressed.

For narrative analysis, a clear, detailed description of specific events in which narratives take place contributes to the creation of a detailed description of specific events, and how the affect the actual and designated identities of the individual.
Discourses, however, cannot be studied in isolation. They must be studied in conjunction with the narratives involved in each Discourse. On this regard, Sfard (2006, explains;

If one wants to understand why people learn the way they do or why they engage in processes of individualization in the first place, one needs to keep an eye on the activity of identifying that accompanies, informs, and results from processes of learning. (Prusak, 2006, 25.)

Prusak considers that, in order for Narratives to be accurate tools in the identity construction process, researchers must focus on the story itself and how this story interacts with the other existing stories of the individual, rather than the mechanics of the narrative construction and their sociolinguistic background. In other words, the most relevant part of the narrative construction is to analyze how the individual positions her actual and designated identities, and how they interact with others within the knowledge landscapes in which the person is exposed. As defined by Gee (1999 p.81) situated meanings are constantly revised by the individual within the specific context in which s/he is involved. This negotiation takes place when interaction happens within this context. In this research project, pre-service teachers join the program with a set of expectations and defined narratives on teaching. These narratives construct their situated meanings within the PKL, which are to be negotiated when interacting with others. As this interaction is recorded and the discrepancies in narratives are found, the conflicts in identity construction will be evident, and it will be easier to identify the strategies used for my participant to reconcile these conflicts.
It is the goal of this study to analyze the experiences and narratives of one student teacher within the PKL of the M.Ed. Program in FSLED. I document and analyzed her interactions with the narratives she found in the program, what elements built her personal experience and helped her construct a narrative on successful language teaching, while documenting the narratives that helped her make sense of the PKL she found in language teacher education.

As with all research approaches, Narrative Inquiry possesses strengths and limitations. Its main strengths, as already established, include the ability to help researchers understand their participants’ previous experiences, while helping them to access to information that even the participants ignored about themselves. This can be done by means of detailed analysis, which allows hidden assumptions and beliefs of the participants to appear (Bell, 2002, p. 209.) Some of the main limitations of Narrative inquiry include the subjectivity found in qualitative research that allows investigators to place meaning in specific events of the participant’s experience that can be misleading and affect the outcome of research. At the same time, a biased focus on a specific set of past narratives and experiences might affect the research outcome. It is the responsibility of the researcher to address these limitations by means of systematic interaction and discussion with the participant, and a detailed analysis of the events being positioned within the landscape (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p. 139.)

I will analyze some of the existing literature on this subject in the following sections.
Identity and Positioning of the Individual

Based on the definitions given by Gee, (1999) Smagorinsky, Cook, Jackson and Fry (2004) and Coldron and Smith (1999), identity is a social construct that is always evolving and changing based on the context of those individuals involved. Identity, at the same time, is based on a series of negotiation processes, which sometimes are problematic for the individual, because of personal views and beliefs being compromised in the negotiation processes. In other words, identity becomes the result of the interaction between how I position myself in a context, and how others position me in the same context.

Gee (1999) defined identity as a social construct, a combination of how we are seen by other people and how we see ourselves in different situations across time. These different views of ourselves and other people, however, tend to conflict when we are constructing, for instance, our own identity. Several other factors, such as the context and the identities of others contribute to this social construct.

In the process of constructing an identity, individuals are constantly interacting and negotiating their views of themselves and how they are seen by others when interacting in specific context (or discourses, according to Gee) it is this interaction, and the discourse in which the interaction takes place, what affects and modifies each individual’s identity. At the same time, this interaction and the identity transformation modify the Discourse in which the interaction takes place, and how this Discourse is seen by others. As a consequence, the small discourses that compose the main Discourse are also affected by this interaction. Gee then explained that “making visible and
recognizable who we are and what we are doing involves a great deal more than ‘just language’”. (p. 17). Other factors, such as personal experiences, the context in which interaction takes place, and the personal experiences of others involved in both discourses and Discourses, contribute to the identity construction and transformation. In other words, discourses, Discourses, contexts and identities are constantly interacting with each other and transforming each other.

In social interaction, there are several factors that contribute to the construction of an individual’s identity. And even though language plays a vital role in the process of identifying ourselves and others, there are other diverse, powerful forces at play in the game of identity construction. Other individuals’ perceptions, the context in which the interaction takes place, how other individuals see themselves and see me in our interaction, contribute to the creation of an individual’s identity. These perceptions, their overlapping and how they modify each individual’s social interaction, are represented in the different components of identity, and how one individual sees and is seen by others in the same scenario, in the middle of his/her identity construction.

A clear example of this interaction and how identity is transformed is represented in the context of the M.Ed. program, where interns visualize themselves as advanced language learners with no teaching experience, while their teachers and supervisors see them as prospective teachers. It is the interaction between interns, teachers, supervisors and mentor teachers that transforms the views of the interns in regards to the M.Ed. Program, and how they see themselves within the PKL. At the same time, the M.Ed. program representatives create and transform their perceptions of the interns, while
adjusting the program to the needs of the participants. By means of this interaction, how the interns are seen by themselves and others has changed, while the context is also modified by the participant. Identity is then, for Gee, the sum of personal views, other people’s views of the individual, the scenario where the identity is constructed and the rules of this particular scenario, which is called Discourse. All individuals are, then, involved in Discourses, which are not exactly the same to every individual. As individuals interact, a context, or Discourse, is required for the interaction to take place. While individuals interact in a Discourse, they are transformed by the interaction, and the Discourse itself is transformed by such an interaction. However, Discourses are composed by a series of smaller discourses that are part of each individual that participates of the main Discourse. Because of the uniqueness of each individual, different discourses will contribute to the construction of the main Discourse, which will be interpreted differently by each participant, since the small discourses are not exactly the same for each person interacting simultaneously. Consequently, the main Discourse itself will be interpreted differently by each individual as well.

Gee’s definition of identity implies that identity is, mostly, constructed by the context and the Discourse with capital D, a wider construct than discourse with small d, in which the participant is involved. Every individual is involved in several discourses, which interact with each other and build a larger, main Discourse. The main Discourse is, at the same time, influenced by other individuals’ Discourse and discourses, which constantly transform by means of this interaction. In the context of this review, where teacher education is the Discourse and foreign language teacher education is the
discourse, language teachers build their identities around the constructs and theories discussed within language teaching methodologies classes in the context of language teacher education programs.

Because Gee’s definition of Discourse is related to a series of more personalized, concrete discourses that overlap and interconnect to each other, there is a similarity within Gee’s views and the construct of knowledge landscapes as proposed by Clandinin and Connelly (1995), where in order to construct the professional landscapes of individuals, researchers must approach their situations from different narratives that overlap and construct the larger identity of an individual. Chart 1 explains how narratives and individuals interact and transform each other within a specific PKL, by means of interaction.

Figure 1: Interaction of narratives and individuals within a specific PKL
Figure 1 explains how individuals and their narratives are exposed to other individuals and their narratives within a PKL in which they all interact. This interaction involves both the new narratives brought by participant within teacher education programs, and the defined, programmatic narratives existing within the PKL in teacher education programs. As individuals belong to the same PKL, their interactions are connected and affect each other and the context in which the interaction takes place. In other words, discourses and Discourses as proposed by Gee, and narratives and landscapes as suggested within the framework of Narrative theory, are concepts that can be interpreted similarly in the context of language teacher education, where students interact with each other, students, teachers and supervisors in different scenarios, which affects their teacher identity and transforms their perceptions of the teaching profession as a whole. For effects of this particular research project, the interaction between interns and others in their PKL, represented in the M.Ed. program, is what defines their individual narratives on teaching and how they are challenged and transformed within the PKL in which the interaction takes place. At the same time, the PKL is also transformed when interns bring their narratives and experiences as part of this interaction. However, and due to the vast, unlimited possibilities to address within the PKL transformation, my study will focus on how one intern’s narratives and ideologies are transformed in the context (PKL) of the M.Ed. program.

The construct of Identity, therefore, and for effects of this study, is a dynamic, evolving entity is formed by a series of reifying, endorsable and significant narratives (Sfard and Prusak, 2005 p. 16). In other words, identity is built by narratives that affect
and identify the individual in specific contexts, or the, significant stories that help an individual to make sense of the daily constructs found in daily life. A student, for instance, interacts constantly with his/her teacher and other students in the context of the classroom. It is the student’s experience within this classroom that helps him/her make sense of the rules involved within the context of the classroom. This experience is, consequently, a narrative from the student’s perspective.

When those narratives overlap and interact with each other, they help the individual to position herself in her context. All together, and due to the variety of narratives and contexts in which individuals are involved inside and out their professional lives, Sfard and Prusak believe that narratives, which differ to each individual, are key in finding answers to the key issue of why individuals act differently in the same situations. (2006, 21)

Similar research projects addressed the challenges of student teachers involved in multiple contexts. In their research project on agency in pre-service teachers in Wales, Roberts and Graham (2008) suggested that pre-service teachers are exposed to a variety of influences from different social contexts. Pre-service teachers become, then, part of diverse multi-directional, personal processes, which involve large amounts of social interaction that conflicts with contexts such as the construct of Communities of Practice (CoP) as proposed by Lave and Wenger (1991). It is concluded, then, that communities of practice do not take into account the diverse social aspects of interaction, or the internalization that occurs in the pre-service teacher scenario. These processes, for
Roberts and Graham, develop diverse types of agency, which manifests differently according to the individual needs and goals of each pre-service teacher.

Although Roberts and Graham presented a very valid concern in the social challenges pre-service teachers face beyond the novice-expert dichotomy, a study with ethnographic tools would allow researchers to begin filling the gaps proposed by these two investigators. When addressing the individual aspects of the participants, their needs, and different contexts in the community of practice where they interact, it is possible to better explain their identity construction, and how agency develops in each participant. As Haneda stated, “an implication for research is the importance of addressing both participant’s past life stories and their envisioned futures in developing an understanding of their current mode of engagement in a particular CoP” (Haneda, 2006, 814). A study with ethnographic elements would, consequently, help researchers analyze the life stories of student teachers and how much their previous experiences affect their identity construction.

Other studies have approached the challenges brought by the interaction of conflicting identities of the individual within a specific context. Simpson (2010) addressed some of the challenges faced by teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) in the contexts in which they perform. The main goal of the study was to document the strategies used by the participant to negotiate, reject or adapt to the identity in which they were situated by their common context. Simpson then concludes by discussing the importance of external student narratives, and their contribution to the
identity construction of ESOL students in the classroom, in what he calls “bringing the outside in” (2011, 21).

Simpson’s study establishes a connection between identities and narratives, and how they influence and transform each other in context. Consequently, identity can be visualized as transforming by means of interaction, which happens at all levels in which individuals perform in their daily lives. However, although there is a discussion on how ESOL teachers can help their students to bring their identities to the classroom, there is not a clear analysis on how individuals involved in diverse kinds of power relationships would perform when exposed to diverse beliefs and experiences as those common to the field of Teacher Education.

The concept of teacher identity as continuously evolving is supported by Coldron and Smith (1999), who contend that in the field of teacher education, professional identity is not a stable entity since it cannot be interpreted as fixed or unitary. Identity is built by means of a complex and dynamic balance between both the teacher’s professional self-image and the diverse roles played by teachers in their individual teaching scenarios. It is important, however, that identities are explained within these teaching scenarios (contexts) for the researcher to understand how these identities and roles transform while interacting with each other. On this aspect, the authors emphasized the constant struggle between the personal dimension in teaching (defined by the authors as agency) and structure (Defined as the socially ‘given’ aspects of the teacher profession.). In their own words, “part of the experience of teaching is continually constructing a sustainable identity as a teacher”. (Coldron and Smith, 1999, 714).
Consequently, this continuous construction of identity is greatly affected by how interns visualize their role as teachers and their knowledge of the foreign language. In addition, due to the different needs of each student teacher, as well as the beliefs and perceptions of the interns towards the teaching profession, student teachers usually build a personalized definition of identity that shares some common aspects from one teacher to the next, but will never be the same for two of them. At the same time, Sfard and Prusak (2005) support this notion when they define identities as a collection of narratives that are significant and relevant. In the field of teaching education, therefore, interns construct their identity by means of the significant stories that are relevant to their experiences in their professional lives, inside and outside of the classroom.

Consequently, foreign and second language student teachers have to add yet another factor to the existing systems of relations. Being a foreign language speaker is an entire identity on its own, built under a different series of rules and regulations, which become part of the negotiation of the professional identity of the student teacher. For those interns with a higher level of proficiency in the language being taught, the foreign language is more of a positive element within their professional identity. If the intern believes his or her proficiency is subpar, the identity construction process will be affected negatively.

As a result, this continuous transformation of identity is greatly affected by how interns visualize their role as teachers and their knowledge of the foreign language, as will be explored in the following sections.
Identity and language proficiency.

Coldron and Smith (1999) suggested that teacher identity evolves constantly. In some cases, changes in the intern’s views of the teaching profession make this evolution more drastic. In his case study analysis, Moran (1996) discussed the identity changes of a student teacher in New Hampshire, who transitioned from teaching English to teaching Spanish, and how this participant built a very strong self defined teacher identity, which had as main features a high proficiency in the target language, knowledge of the most accurate teaching methodologies and cultural elements surrounding Spanish. Based on her intensive summer training program, as well as her previous and evolved perceptions of what a language teacher should know, Moran’s participant became a foreign language teacher and learned her language of choice while being an English teacher whereas other language teachers learned the language first and became teachers second. By means of analyzing his participant’s stories and views of foreign language teaching, Moran documented the construction of his participant’s foreign language teaching identity. At the same time, he emphasized the different needs and identities of foreign language teachers, while he situates the construct of alternative learning in the context of teaching education. Moran defines alternative learning as the learning process that happens in contexts other than the teacher education classroom, and beyond the more formal teacher education program. More traditional teacher education programs, then, will ask for the intern to learn the language before learning teaching methodologies. The alternative learning can be seen as inferior, yet produces effective, self aware teachers who are as
dedicated as those with a more traditional background. Moran proposes that teachers can create a professional identity, regardless of their choice of teaching education paths.

Moran’s study is helpful for my work on second language teacher identity because it is an introspective analysis of the personal beliefs of foreign language student teachers. Although it was not conducted in a more traditional context, where interns are just beginning their work as student teachers, the insight gained is beneficial because, ultimately, each student comes from different backgrounds and levels of experience, which help interns to construct their teaching identity by means of constant social interaction.

**Teachers’ professional identity formation and negotiation**

Identity is a continuously evolving construct. Teacher identities evolve with the social context of the teachers. Consequently, what is relevant to other teachers and their scenarios may conflict with what teachers personally desire and experience as successful teaching. The nature of this conflict can lead to an inner struggle in teachers’ professional identity construction, especially in cases where the individual views and the mainstream perceptions of teaching are too disconnected from each other. In their literature review of teacher identity construction, Beijaard et al. (2004) attempted to explain this inner struggle faced by researchers on student teachers and identity, as they found a repetitive pattern in which, “Most of the researchers saw professional identity as an ongoing process of integration of the ‘personal’ and the ‘professional’ sides of becoming and being a teacher.” (p. 113) It is important, then, for teacher education programs to avoid this disconnection between theory and practice and work towards a more sociocultural
approach where theory and practice construct the student teacher’s identity by means of constant interaction between the narratives involved in the specific contexts within the PKL where this interaction takes place.

Ten Dam and Blom (2006) supported this affirmation some years later. In their case study analysis of the Amstilo pilot project for school-based teacher education in Amsterdam, they explored further how student teacher identity is composed and modified by diverse internal and external factors such as interaction and reflection on the teaching practicum. The authors achieve their goal of exploring interns’ identities by means of analyzing the importance of integrating student teachers into the actual scenario of their placements, where they will become socialized and adapt to what it means being a teacher. For the authors, agency is defined as the capacity to make autonomous decisions based on social practice and experience. For Ten Dam and Blom, agency plays a key role in the construction of the teacher identity of the intern. In order to be balanced and focused, teachers, interns must be given opportunities to develop agency and reach their fullest potential, which is achieved by reflection on previous experiences in the teaching field. However, agency, as defined by the authors, cannot be reached until the intern is exposed to the teaching scenario itself, where he or she has the opportunity to practice the theories learned in the room, adapt them to his or her reality and negotiate his or her individual teaching identity when all the elements (theory, practice, reflection and agency) are exposed to the intern simultaneously, in order for the student teacher to integrate them to himself.
Using a sociocultural perspective on learning that focused on the co-construction of knowledge in the Amstilo pilot program, the authors demonstrated that student teachers are better able to build their novice teacher identities by actively participating in the teaching context. This novice identity means that if interns are going to develop agency, they must become independent and able to make their own decisions based on their personal experiences, even though that is not always the case in all student teaching scenarios. This participation provides pre-service teachers a scenario where their theoretical knowledge does not seem to be disconnected from actuality, whereby theory can be made relevant to the interns. Hence, identities are socially co-constructed and “the idea that learning should be understood as increasing participation in communities of practice and that teacher education should be linked to school development is central” (Ten Dam and Blom, 2006 p. 657).

In order to document these changes, and to explore how interns achieve agency in their student teaching experiences, narratives are crucial for the students of the M.Ed. Program in FSLED. In order to reflect on their practice and the theories they have learned in the classroom, interns are usually asked to write reflections on their teaching experiences. Teachers and supervisors expect that these reflections are built upon the interns’ experiences in their teaching scenarios, and how interns learn from their success and mistakes. Therefore, as narratives are used to document the growth of the intern, they also contribute to explore how the prospective teacher evolves and sees his/her identity transformed during their experiences inside and outside of the classroom.
Reflection and the Construction of Teacher Identity

Identity in the field of teacher education is seen as an evolving, adaptable, ever-changing construct. Identity transforms depending upon the social context of the individual, the perceptions of others towards the individual, and the perception the individual has of him/herself. As a consequence, reflection plays a very important role in documenting how teacher identities transform, and what experiences trigger these transformations.

In their research project on student teacher portfolios, Antonek, McCormick & Donato, (1997) identified reflection as a key component associated with the concept of self. In other words, it is a challenging task to speak about the self without reflecting on the constant changes taking place upon learning and interacting with others. To develop the self as a teacher, the authors used a Vygotskian approach\(^2\) to explain how teaching portfolios can help student teachers, while emphasizing the need to develop reflective skills as an important tool to the evolution of student teachers’ identity. By means of documenting their evolution and analyzing the entries to their portfolios, both participants were able to access to their identities and their formation in a more conscious way, when analyzing the diverse elements that constructed their professional identities.

While this literature review has mainly focused on the issues pertaining to identity construction of student teachers and teacher education in general, it is also important to focus on the connection between foreign language proficiency and its role in the construction of the student teacher identity. Although most of the literature existing on

\(^2\)The term ‘Vygotskian approach’ here refers to the idea of knowledge being internalized by means of psychological tools adapted by the learner, as explained by John-Steiner and Mahn (1996, 193).
language proficiency does not discuss directly the professional identity of teachers, common topics such as the interns’ view of themselves and their perceptions of successful teaching overlap in both areas.

**Professional Identity and Self Confidence.**

As identity is built by means of interaction with others and the perceptions the individual has of him/herself and others within a context, it is necessary to address the existing literature on self confidence and its role in the construction of identity. A lack of self confidence represented in negative opinions on one’s own language skills will adversely affect the intern’s process of identity construction and evolution. At the same time, teacher identities are vastly influenced by the negotiation that happens when individuals position themselves in a teaching context, while positioned by others who see their performance in the same context. In her quantitative study of Asian teachers’ perceptions of their own proficiency in English as a Foreign Language (EFL), Butler (2004) found that a very high percentage of the participants (EFL teachers from Korea, Taiwan, and Japan) visualized themselves as being below the proficiency levels required by both the government and their personal definition of what means to be a proficient teacher. Butler then established a connection between this gap and the notion of teacher identity, in which,

Such perceived shortfalls in their proficiencies need to be taken seriously because they could influence various aspects of their English teaching, including the teachers’ confidence, pedagogical skills, the content of their teaching, student motivation, and ultimately, students’ success in acquiring English. (p. 268)
Even though Butler’s findings clearly relate to the context of identity construction of foreign language teachers, there is not a clear analysis of how the student teachers’ self confidence becomes affected by the language proficiency. At the same time, there is a lack of clear definitions of constructs such as confidence, pedagogical skills or even student motivation. A more qualitative analysis of the data might allow a discussion of these definitions in more detail, and to explore how teacher educators can help foreign language educators improve their students’ perceptions of their proficiency and their Foreign Language Teaching (FLT) roles.

While Butler’s study did not address how self confidence affects the identity construction of student teachers, later studies focused on the issue. Pavlenko (2003) studied how the self perceptions of 44 student teachers of a Master of Arts in Teaching English to Speakers of other Languages (MATESOL) program affected their identity in both negative and positive ways. By means of analyzing how her participants positioned themselves in a classroom assignment where they had to write their linguistic autobiographies, Pavlenko problematized the dichotomy of Native and Non Native speaker of a target language, and added a third identity; the Multilingual user group, whose members are multilingual and multicompetent, with different needs and characteristics from those out of the Native-Non native speaker dichotomy. Pavlenko explains how this new identity helps position interns position themselves in a new, empowering light represented in the multilingual user group, when she concludes:
The new identities of multicompetent and multilingual speakers allowed some American educators to reimagine themselves in a new and much more positive light and to position themselves differently with regard to their languages (p. 262).

Pavlenko’s findings on Multilingual identity go further into the power and importance of linguistic theories as legitimizers of social identities, beyond the traditional view of identities as social constructs (p. 252).

Pavlenko then concludes that, for student teachers, classroom discourses are vital in the formation of their professional identities, because they can either reinforce the negative dichotomy of Native and Non Native Speaker, or strengthen the concept of Multilingual user and give interns more powerful tools to construct a realistic, self confident core professional identity.

Unfortunately, and even though being a Multilingual Second Language (L2) user is a realistic, beneficial concept for L2 speakers, student teachers can only appropriate this identity when introduced to the concept of multicompetence by their peers or other researchers, who can show them their strengths as L2 users, beyond being Native or Non Native speakers.

Although many identity studies such as those by Butler (2004) and Pavlenko (2003) focus on teacher education programs, their pedagogical content knowledge, and identity construction and expectations, my literature review shows a research gap in the areas of pre service foreign language teaching education beyond the English as a Second language (ESL) context. Within the studies I found that documented identity transformation in context, the main focus was in the fields of English as a Second

Language Learners, Language Teachers and Their Positioning Within the PKL

In their previous narrative as students, prospective teachers have built a series of expectations about good teachers. These narratives play a substantial role in the process of identity construction of interns. In his cross-cultural survey study of Asian students’ expectations of foreign language teachers, Banno (2003) found that a very high percentage of the students considered important that their foreign language teacher must know his/her subjects well. The findings of this study, although evident, demonstrate that high proficiency in the target language is highly regarded in the process of the professional identity construction of foreign language teachers. However, in the data analysis portion of this study, there is not a clear definition of knowing the subject well. At the same time, there is not clear evidence on how the concept of being proficient in the language varies from students to teachers, or more specifically, how the views of students
in the K-12 setting could influence the identity construction of foreign language student teachers and its evolution.

This individuality in the concept of being good teacher and proficient in their respective subject matter is explained by Clandinin and Connelly within the metaphor of narratives in the professional landscape, where past experiences construct the present narratives of the individuals involved in a specific PKL. They propose that Teachers’ lives take certain shapes because of their professional landscape. They draw on their individual biographies, on the particular histories of the professional landscape in which they find themselves, on how they are positioned on the landscape, and on the form of everyday school life that the professional landscape allows. (1995, 27)

What Clandinin and Connelly propose, therefore, is that landscapes and identities are constructed by the narratives of each individual’s narratives and how they interact with each other. In the case of the M.Ed. Program, this interaction and narrative construction is reflected in how interns see themselves and are seen by others. In this positioning of the foreign language intern in the landscape, proficiency in the target language plays a key role. In order to explore how professional K-12 teachers in the State of Georgia position themselves according to their level of preparation, Cooper (2004) did a quantitative study to explore this issue from the foreign languages perspective. Some of the findings include that teachers believe that some areas of teaching education programs needed improvement, such as the mentoring stage, classroom management, and opportunities to improve language proficiency and use the target language in context. The
more qualitative side of the survey revealed a bias of the participants towards practical approaches rather than methods seminars and theoretical approaches taught during their teacher education training.

Even though there is not an apparent connection between Cooper’s work and the tenets and goals supported by Narrative Inquiry, it is important to note that the areas in which Cooper’s research revealed that more research is needed to identify how the interaction between student teachers and leadership in teacher education programs can be strengthened. It is through qualitative approaches such as Narrative Inquiry that researchers could document how the negotiation between program and student narratives can become more successful.

Although the main goal of this study is not to establish the role of proficiency in identity construction, the connection between language proficiency, target language culture and the narratives of foreign language teachers cannot be neglected. One of the main challenges of discussing the views of interns and students on proficiency is, in fact, the subjectivity they entail, as the variables and criteria used are self defined by the participants themselves, without a concrete, standardized definition of proficiency and fluency in foreign language. It is not established, at the same time, whether these views on proficiency are common to all participants, or vary according to each individual. A qualitative, longitudinal, more personalized study with a more clear definition of language proficiency would provide a wider, more concrete definition of the beliefs and needs of the participants. At the same time, qualitative research would allow the possibility of documenting the participant’s identity construction, and a more specific
definition of proficiency according to the academic level of the interns, their personal views and the proficiency level in the target language as recommended by American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). (2002, p. 4)

As stated in the review of the previous studies, language proficiency plays a role in the construction of identity of language teachers. Identity, at the same time, is a core construct composed of a series of reifying, significant, endorsable narratives about a person (Sfard and Prusak, 2005). These narratives are constituted by include the past and present experiences of the interns. Therefore, it is necessary to explore the research made on how previous experiences influence the identity of student teachers.

Identity and the Transfer Issues in Foreign Language Teacher Education

In addition to personal views, reflection, social context and views of others, previous experiences contribute to the construction of the professional identity of teachers. Bailey et al. (1996) reported their findings of the qualitative study conducted on the authors themselves, as they used teacher autobiographies to reflect on how their previous experiences as language learners affected through their TESOL program and their evolution to become ESL/EFL teachers. Through the analysis of the model of “apprenticeship of observation”, in which learners internalize the teaching styles they have been exposed after hours of playing the role of students before becoming student teachers. These internalized styles will end up conflicting with those styles taught in their teacher education programs. The intern, then, will repeat some of the habits learned during his student days, even if these habits conflict with the methodologies learned in the teaching education program. The authors reveal some repetitive patterns/challenges in
the introspection process of the participants, such as the concepts of good and bad teaching, the influence of the teacher’s personality on the learner, and the differences between formal learning and a more naturalistic setting. The study explored how much the participant carry over from their previous language learning experiences into their classrooms, and establishes a parallel between teachers and teachers as learners of the foreign language itself. The findings revealed how much reflection helps student teachers to identify what areas of “apprenticeship of observation” are ingrained in their teaching identities, and whether these areas must be negotiated for the interns to become more rounded teachers. Consequently, and even though identity is a social negotiation, it can be manipulated by means of personal reflection.

This article addressed some very important issues in the process of foreign language teaching education programs, such as the inner struggle of the student teachers to reach a balance between their experiences as learners and their later transition into language teachers. However, there is not a clear discussion in terms of the language proficiency level required to be a successful teacher. The authors/participants define good and bad teaching in terms of student-teacher motivation and the issue of transferring personal experiences to the classroom, but there is not a clear focus on what is the most appropriate type of knowledge for student teachers to reach before becoming good teachers in the language of their choice, or how the language proficiency affects the intern’s perception of themselves as good teachers.

Because this literature review has mainly focused on narrative inquiry and how identity is constructed and transformed by means of the interaction within context in
which individuals perform, it is necessary to address how individuals make sense of their contexts. Since interaction is built upon language and the different factors that construct a discourse, such as past experiences, interaction and beliefs, (Gee, 1999) it is important to address the most seminal research on ideology and context, as past, individual experiences and beliefs are socially constructed by means of interaction between communities and their ideologies (Woolard, 1998). This interpretation requires a review of the literature on discourse analysis and ideologies.

**How does the discourse “make sense”?**

Quinn’s (2010) perception of discourse and interpretation complements the research views on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and how the reception of messages affects each participant differently. Blommaert (2005) discussed the deep connection between discourse and ideology and the role of CDA in interpreting ideologies and context. According to Blommaert, the context itself in which the discourse takes place is ideological. Messages and context are, consequently, affected by the environment.

It is not the speaker alone who offers context to statements and generates context, but the other parties in the communication process do so as well. And often what counts or what is most consequential is the contextualization performed by the one who receives and decodes the message – the *uptake*. (p. 43).

Under Blommaert’s interpretation, it is important to see how the student teachers in this study received the messages sent to them by all the sources involved. Simultaneously, it is important to explore how interns interpret their respective uptakes.
Their identities are different, and, consequently, their interpretations of discourse will be different as well.

**Ideology**

Ideology is a construct that allows multiple interpretations and different associations based on the context and the research paradigm used. Woolard (1998) discussed this challenge when she addressed the multiple definitions of ideology, from the first use of the term by French philosopher Destutt de Tracy. She then discussed 4 common themes addressed by some of the researchers, out of the multiple definitions of ideology:

1. Ideology as ideational or conceptual, referring to mental phenomena (consciousness, subjective representations, beliefs and ideas)
2. Ideology as derived from the experience of interests of a particular social position. This is the most widely accepted approach to ideology
3. Ideology seen as a direct link to inhabitable positions of power (discourse, meaningful practices in the struggle to keep and/or maintain power)
4. Ideology as distortion, error, mystification or rationalization. This approach usually happens as a defense of interest and power

These multiple approaches to ideology have generated a multi faceted term that is, in most cases, connected to social structure, culture and language. Woolard went even further as to establish connections between ideology and the structures of the languages, and how they affect each other.
Given the diverse approaches and definitions of ideology used in different fields such as social sciences and the humanities, I have chosen to define ideology as a mixture of two of the approaches explained by Woolard. For the present discussion, ideology will be defined as a conceptual phenomenon that derives from experience and contributes to the construction of the identity of the individual and his or her society. In this identity construction, ideology is strongly connected to power, which also builds during the identity construction process. Language, consequently, is used to socialize the individual and to reinforce the ideologies of the society to which he or she belongs.

**Language ideology.**

Saville-Troike (2003) also discusses this double connection between ideology and language and how the latter is used to reinforce the former. Historical events, such the women’s liberation movement, affected languages and how some expressions are used in different contexts. Consequently, ideologies affect language, which is reflected in the community’s social organization and the identity of the individuals. The author gave an example in the demise of Yugoslavia, which has generated several other countries (Serbia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Croatia) as different communities that want to show their different identities and languages. Fables, as a resource to control behavior, are another example of language used as a means to spread cultural ideology.

Social changes and evolution in a culture’s ideology are also reflected in their language and its changes over time. In the case of the pre-service teachers, research is needed to the question of how the ideologies of interns about Foreign Language Teaching (FLT) will evolve and be modified by the language ideologies they will discover when
they join the M.Ed. in FSLED. At the early stages of the program, the ideologies of FLT will likely differ from their views upon completion of the M.Ed. Within this study, using ethnographic tools will allow me, as an investigator, to document this process of language ideology construction, when transitioning from language learners to language teachers. Ethnographic research tools such as observation, interactions, audio and video recording, and artifact collection, will play a pivotal role in this monitoring process. I will address these tools more directly in my methodology section.

There is a strong connection between language and its social roles within each different culture. Terminology, context, and even accents are part of a social context. To approach the challenges of language and language ideology in a community of practice, we must start with the safe assumption that culture and identity (social views) are interconnected. In the case of a community of practice such as a cohort in FSLED, there is a clear set of social rules and regulations in which students get acquainted and adapted. Once students become active members of the FLT community of practice, they move on and construct knowledge together. Their language ideology, as a consequence, will evolve from the traditional beliefs associated with foreign language learners, to the modified views of foreign language teaching professionals. Their views of language learning and teaching, methodologies and research in the foreign language classroom will evolve and transform as the school year passes. Woolard (1998) explained this transformation as language-structure-in-use (p. 12), where the discourse of the pre-service teachers will be transformed as their ideologies are modified by the teacher education program. The new discourse of the pre-service teachers will be modified by the
use of the new tools they will have at their disposal as members of a teacher education program with its own culture and rules. As suggested by Farr, both language and culture are created, re-created and changed through language use (Farr, 2006, 14).

Inside this process, students must familiarize themselves with the language and expectations of the teaching profession. An approach that relies on the basic concepts of ethnography of communication would allow researchers to explore the challenges the interns face during the year of learning and student teaching.

Societies vary in the extent to which communicative behavior is bound with the definition of social roles. Pre-service teachers struggle when constructing their teacher identity. There are several systems and societies that oppose and conflict with each other; their student identity and pre-service teacher identity could conflict as each identity holds a separate ideology and unique social expectations. How these expectations interact with each other to make interns successful teachers in the future is a challenge that can be documented by means of the already addressed resources available in narrative inquiry.

In the previous sections, I have established that identity is a social construct that transforms in social interaction. Identity is, consequently, the result of how different narratives interact with each other and how participants position themselves and are positioned by others in their landscape. It is also important to establish how to describe these interactions, and how they influence the identity construction of the individual.

In sum, identity is built and transformed by means of the existing, interacting narratives in a specific context. Due to the unique, qualitative nature of identity and the challenges involved in the analysis of its transformation, narrative inquiry presents a tool
to explore and document the changes taking place in the beliefs of personal teachers, and how they are affected by the social context in which they perform. The past and present narratives of the individual are, consequently, the basis to explore how different individuals react to challenges and conflicts in similar contexts. It is the differences in narratives that help researchers understand why and how identities are built. In a more concrete sense, narratives help us explore why student teachers learn and adapt knowledge differently, because of the differences in the narratives of each participant involved in the professional landscape of teacher education.

**Conclusion**

Narrative Inquiry, as described above, helped me to better understand the challenges my participant faced during the diverse stages of this study. The main concern of this project was the identity transformation of the participant, especially how her previous and present experiences conflicted and transformed upon interaction within the specific context of a Foreign Language Teacher Education in a R1 University in the United States. The main goal of the M.Ed. in FSLED was to create a series of narratives within a context where students could apply their learned theories and adapt them to their individual needs. This research of the relevant literature documented some of the ways in which teacher identity is transformed and how it can be influenced by diverse factors, such as personal views, ideologies, and new and existing narratives within the PKL in which student teachers interact, as well as the more programmatic, existing narratives of good teaching held by the program and prospective teachers.
This literature review has mainly focused on narrative inquiry and how identity is constructed and transformed by means of the interaction within context in which individuals perform. In order to achieve this goal, I have established connections between contexts, the PKL model as proposed by Clandinin and Connelly (1995) and the constructs of discourse and Discourse as explained by Gee (1999). I have established that narrative inquiry’s goal is to identify how individuals make sense of the situations and contexts in which they perform. However, a more detailed explanation about how individuals make sense of their contexts is required. As narratives and experiences are shaped by experiences and group interaction, a section on ideology and language ideology was included. In order to explain how Narrative Inquiry can be used successfully in a context such as the M.Ed. Program, a detailed description of the research methodology and the data collection strategies used is required. I address those methodology concerns in the following chapter.
Chapter 3: Methodology

Purpose of the Study

By means of Narrative inquiry as my theoretical framework, the main research question this study asked was: How does a student teacher draw on the M.Ed. program in FSLED narratives to reach the program’s standards of successful teaching? The study I conducted explored the identity acquisition and transformation of one student teacher in a teacher education program in a Midwestern research university in the United States. In the course of answering the larger research question that motivates the project, it also addresses the following questions:

1a. What are the most conflictive narratives of teaching and learning that a pre-service teacher found in their time with the M.Ed. Program in FSLED?

1b. How does a student teacher and the M.Ed. program reconcile the competing narratives of teaching and learning foreign languages during the interns’ time with the M.Ed. Program in FSLED?

2. How does a student teachers position herself through written and oral narratives as they adapt to power relationships with students, mentor teachers, supervisors and professors as part of their status as students within the PKL of the M.Ed. Program in FSLED?
Design of the Study

My research project focused on the narratives of a student teacher, and how her narratives composed a larger professional landscape that contributed to the construction of her teacher identity, while documenting how her beliefs conflicted, negotiated and transformed during the M.Ed. Program in FSLED. Table 1 summarizes how data were collected by means of observation and informal conversations with my participant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Data sources</th>
<th>Data Collection Strategies</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall Quarter 2009</td>
<td>1. Class observations (Seminars)</td>
<td>• Informal conversation with the participant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 1 (Recruitment)</td>
<td>2. In class discussion with interns</td>
<td>• Collection of class assignments</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. Mini lessons</td>
<td>• Initial interview with participant and mentor teachers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4. Elementary placement teaching</td>
<td>• Researcher journal</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5. Initial views of teacher identity</td>
<td>• Informal conversation with M.Ed. Faculty about research project, goals and expectations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6. Syllabi of classes, descriptions about expectations of the M.Ed. Program Faculty</td>
<td>• Supervisory forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter Quarter 2010</td>
<td>1. Mini lessons</td>
<td>• Collection of Methods II Seminar Assignments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phase 2</td>
<td>2. Secondary placement teaching</td>
<td>• Informal conversation mentor teachers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. Observation of changes and appropriation of teacher identity</td>
<td>• Mini lessons and student teaching reflections from participant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Syllabi from Winter quarter classes, rubrics used to grade students upon completion of assignments</td>
<td>• Researcher journal</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5. Capstone project assignments</td>
<td>• Informal conversations with participant about research project, goals and expectations</td>
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<td>• Supervisory forms</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring Quarter 2010</td>
<td>1. Observation 10 weeks of student teaching</td>
<td>• Observation of student teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 3</td>
<td>2. Observation of changes and final appropriation of teacher identity</td>
<td>• Interviews with other sources (program manager, capstone seminar professor)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Inquiry about future plans of the participant</td>
<td>• Collection of Capstone project from participant</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Supervisory forms, teaching rubrics</td>
<td>• Exit interview with participant</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Researcher journal</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Written interviews with mentor teachers,</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Supervisory forms</td>
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Table 1: Data collection chronogram
As Table 1 shows, the data collection stage of this research project covered one school year divided in three different phases, represented in three academic quarters, during the 2009-2010 academic year. Due to the extensive amount of data available, and the detailed nature of ethnographic research, I have chosen to explore and contrast the case study of one pre-service teacher, who was willing to participate in the project. She was purposefully selected due to her background and experiences before joining the M.Ed. program. My participant was not coerced to become part of the research project, but rather motivated by the benefits that detailed reflection and an analysis of her behavior might bring to her career as Foreign Language Teaching professional.

As the purpose of the study was explained to all of the members of the 2009-2010 cohort of the Masters of Education (M.Ed.) Program in Foreign and Second Language Education (FSLED), students were given the choice to join. Out of 16 possible participants, 7 asked to participate. Due to time constraints and the qualitative nature of the project, 4 were chosen due to the proximity of their student teaching placements, while representing diverse socio-cultural levels and languages present within the M.Ed. program. In the end, two participants were selected because their characteristics made them the most representative of the sample available in terms of language of choice and gender. Upon completion of the data collection phase, I decided that focusing on data coming from one participant, Selena, would make it possible to develop a richer, and more detailed analysis than a review of two participants’ data. In fact, both participants were very similar in terms of the typicality of their backgrounds; and in their similar concerns about becoming teachers of a foreign language. In my experience as a
supervisor of the M.Ed. program during the four years prior to the study, I found that Selena, a white female Spanish teacher, fit what could be defined as an average M. Ed. in FSLED. It is important to add, consequently, that for the 2009-2010 cohort of the FSLED M.Ed. program, as well as the two years prior to this study, the vast majority of students were females who chose to teach Spanish in the high school setting. Chart 2 explains the composition of the FSLED cohort in terms of foreign language choices in three years. For this study, the total sample available in the 2009-2010 M.Ed. cohort was 16 students.

Figure 2: Language of expertise of the M.Ed. cohort in the past three years

As explained in Figure two, in the years prior to the study and when the study was conducted, a vast majority of the M.Ed. in FSLED cohort members chose program chose
to become Spanish teachers. In addition, the majority of cohort members were white and female. This majority of female prospective teachers was a common phenomenon over 3 years prior to this study\(^3\), as shown in Figure 3.

According to the information in Figure 3, in the years prior to this study, the population of student teachers from 2007 to 2010 has been predominantly white females. In addition, data from Chart 1 shows that 62\% of the 2009-2010 cohort students chose to become Spanish teachers. Consequently, one white female prospective Spanish teacher is the most representative sample available for this analysis.

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\(^3\) Source: M.Ed. Program Class rosters from 2007 to 2009
Where is the Student Teaching Taking Place?

**Demographic information.**

Selena\(^4\), the participant of this study, was an intern at a high school located in a Midwestern Suburb in the United States. The US Census also revealed some interesting information on the community in which Selena’s high school placements was located. Out of its approximately 9000 inhabitants, more than 93% of them are of white race, 1.4% of them are listed as Asian, 1.3% is listed as Latino, and 3.7% are listed as Black or African American. At the same time, 4.5% of the population identified themselves as speaking a language other than English at home. Only 2.6% of families in the area live below the poverty level.

**A Description of an M.Ed. Student**

**Selena.**

Selena is a 25-year-old white female who is very focused on teaching and is a self defined competitive person. She grew up in a small town in which she had the same Spanish teacher during her high school years. This continuity and influence by the same teacher caused her to develop a strong attachment to her teacher and the Spanish language at an early point in her language learning process, as shown in her following comments.

I studied, you know, I began Spanish my freshman year of high school, I went to a rural school that didn’t offer any other languages, and definitely didn’t offer it at the middle school or elementary. There are only two Spanish teachers in the

\(^4\) In order to protect the privacy of my participant, pseudonyms were used for all names of people and places.
building, and I was fortunate enough to have for all four years the same one, and she was awesome. (Interview, 1/19/2010)

These comments by Selena show how much her perceptions towards Spanish teachers influenced her, making her learning experience engaging and challenging since the beginning. Furthermore, she saw her high school teacher as a role model and decided to become a more advanced learner of Spanish. This challenge could be, consequently, the encouragement that Selena needed to develop an increasing interest towards the Spanish language and culture.

After graduation, Selena attended a small university in the United States. And even though she had the inner motivation to learn the language that her high school teacher instilled in her, Selena did not decide to pursue Spanish as her professional career until she had the opportunity to interact with other Spanish speakers in their home countries. This is demonstrated by her comments on Hispanic language and culture after her first study abroad trip while doing her undergraduate program.

And I really learned a lot in Spanish, I wasn’t even that, you know, that passionate about it though until I did my first study abroad and got more involved with culture, the culture, you know, has inspired me to continue my study. I did not start out as a Spanish Major, that wasn’t my original career path at all, but I love Spanish, all of the culture, and I love working with adolescents, so that’s what’s kind of brought me to be where I am (Interview, 1/19/2010)

As the previous statement shows, Selena enjoyed greatly her Spanish classes in the past, but did not see her using the language in the teaching context until she explored
other countries where she had the opportunity to interact with the culture and used her acquired language skills in a realistic setting. This contact with a foreign culture and ideology changed her personal views on the language and made it part of Selena’s core identity.

During the course of her undergraduate studies, Selena decided to move towards the M.Ed. Program because of the reputation of the university and the prestige of having a Masters degree. Moreover, her experiences traveling abroad and using the Spanish language seemed to motivate her to work towards her goal of sharing her knowledge with others. This motivation; and her opinions of the teaching profession can be seen in Selena’s following remarks from her statement of intent when applying to the M.Ed. Program.

I have the enthusiasm and dedication that it takes to keep my class awake and interested, that so many teachers have lost or forgotten. I want to fill the world with beautiful flowers by planting seeds of thought in developing minds. My goal is a career in the Spanish and English as a Second Language fields. (Selena’s statement of Intent, winter 2009)

Selena’s previous comments about her past experiences in language learning and education in general allow us to see different aspects of her personality. First, her views on how her experiences as a student have shaped her perceptions of the teaching profession in general are clearly shown in the previous paragraph. Second, Selena’s statement seems to explain her definition of being a good teacher, which seems to be strongly focused on creativity, commitment and love for the target language being taught.
**Selena’s placement.**

Selena was assigned to Far High School, a large high school in Midwestern USA. Built less than a decade ago, it has a well-known reputation for sports and music and has received several awards for performance in both areas. Far school is a four-year public high school, and its student population is approximately 1800. The school is fully accredited by the State’s Department of Education. Far High School is located in a big suburban area, which has more than 9000 residents, according to the US Census 2000⁵. However, the total population was expected to increase by more than 1,000 people by 2009.

Although the statistics seem to demonstrate that Far High School is not located in a very diverse area, the school itself and its size appear to be very diverse. In Selena’s case, her students are in all proficiency levels, from novice to heritage and native speakers. At the same time, Selena’s mentor teacher is also a Spanish native speaker.

**María: Selena’s mentor teacher.**

María is a seasoned veteran with 10 years of Spanish teaching experience. She had previous experience in a larger and more diverse school district before moving to the area where Far High School is located. This was María’s third year as a Mentor teacher with the M.Ed. Program. María seems to like her profession and appears to have a close relationship with her students. On this respect, María is very clear when describing her expectations when having student teachers in her classroom.

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⁵[www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)
Student teachers must have their heart in it. Student teaching should be their main interest and they must dedicate themselves to it. If they are involved in other things they find it difficult to concentrate on the teaching experience.

Commitment is the most important part in student teaching. If commitment is there, they will be dependable, they will be punctual and they will develop lessons that will benefit our students. (Answer to written questionnaire, March 14, 2010)

In this past warrant, María clarifies her perceptions of successful teachers.

Apparently, María believes that commitment is the key factor to succeed for a student teacher under her supervision. It is important to add, however, that the aforementioned warrant does not clarify what other elements are important for María in terms of subject matter or classroom management skills, which appeared to be most relevant for interns before their student teaching experience began.

**Researcher Narrative**

From 2006 to 2010 I worked as a graduate student and a teacher supervisor for the M.Ed. program in FSLED, where I had the opportunity to supervise and work with prospective language teachers at all levels. My background as a native speaker of Spanish, in addition to my experience as a high school teacher in Colombia and a College instructor and graduate assistant in the United States allowed me to experience the challenges teachers face in their foreign language classrooms. In addition, my role as supervisor gave me the opportunity to better understand the different challenges prospective teachers encounter when pursuing teaching licensure in a Midwestern research one (R1) university in the United States. In the process of understanding these
challenges, I realized that, even though most teachers are taught similar methodologies and given similar tools when learning how to teach, how they use these tools and apply these methodologies differed from one person to the next. Under the lens of Narrative inquiry, I was able to understand that, because of different backgrounds and past experiences; teachers will learn and behave differently when exposed to different challenges, especially because their individual narratives and needs are different, even though their teaching contexts are quite similar.

**Ethics and positionality issues.**

The position that the researcher assumes in qualitative research is influenced by his role in the project. However, it is important for the investigator to be aware of his or her role and ensure that this role does not adversely affect the data collection and analysis processes. In my particular situation, my role as a student and a supervisor represented a major duality. I was able to understand the challenges that my participant was facing in her student teaching scenarios, but my expectations as a supervisor involved pushing my participant’s comfort zone and documenting the strategies used by my participant to overcome those challenges, regardless of my sympathy towards her individual obstacles in her student teaching. In addition, my role as a power figure could affect my participant’s answers and my interpretation of the data analyzed. Strike (2006) explored the issues of ethics in research and clearly indicates that, according to the American Education Association (AERA) standards, researchers are expected to perform with honesty beyond their personal beliefs and biases. Consequently, researchers must ensure that their projects reflect a constant analysis in which they are able to identify their own
biases that might affect research. Simultaneously, it is the responsibility of the researcher to protect their participants and respect them as individuals, in situations during the project in which their integrity might be at risk. Saville-Troike (2003) discussed this issue in her introduction to the ethnography of communication, when she suggested that participants must be protected at all costs,

There are some data that should go unreported if they are likely to be damaging to the individuals of the group. Whenever the subjects of research are human beings, there are ethical limits on scientific responsibility for completeness and objectivity which are not only justified but mandated. (Saville-Troike, 2003, p. 91)

For both Saville-Troike, and Strike (2006), a researcher’s top priority is the well-being of the participant, regardless of the findings. At the same time, the researcher must be constantly questioning himself about the effect his findings will have on the participant. Manipulation of the data and the results cannot be allowed by third parties and findings must be expressed with honesty. Subjectivity in qualitative research, consequently, is represented in a constant review of the personal biases and beliefs of the researcher, rather than a cold, distant interpretation of facts. On the views of subjectivity and objectivity in ethnographic research, Saville-Troike also explained that, “Complete escape from subjectivity is never possible of our very nature as cultural animals; however, the constraints and guidelines of the methodology are intended to minimize our perceptual and analytical biases”. (Saville-Troike, 2003, 4)
As Saville-Troike indicated, qualitative research is not exempted from personal views and influences from the researcher, and the data analysis phase is constantly influenced by the perceptions of the researcher and his expectations. This bias can and must be addressed by the researcher, consequently, by means of defining what his position is in the project, and a concrete exploration of how this position will affect the outcome of the research. Peirce (1995) summarized this issue of the position of the researcher in her discussion on methodology in qualitative research, by proposing that qualitative research is not unbiased, but it does require that the researcher acknowledge the existing biases and discuss their influence in the data collected and analyzed. As Peirce perceives it, positions and power relations are unavoidable at all levels and in all contexts. Researchers, therefore, will often be in a power position, but must avoid using this power position to negatively affect the project.

My position as supervisor/researcher.

Student teachers in the M.Ed. Program performed within a community of practice, as defined by Lave and Wenger (1991), with concrete common goals. Even though I acted as a mediator between faculty members and students within this community of practice, I was also in a position of power as a supervisor. I also possessed other roles in this scenario. In addition to being a supervisor, I am a graduate student and am also in the process of the construction of my identity as a junior scholar and teacher educator, as my participant is. Although my identities are not going to be constructed similarly to those of my participant, we have common points in our identity construction and transformation. We both have to struggle with challenges related to our identities, our previous habits.
carrying over to our academic and professional lives, and the conflict of having different points of view converging in the same scenario. I am emotionally involved within the program and the project, and in my role as a graduate student, I experienced similar transitional issues to those of my participant, even though my views on teaching and teacher education are closer to those stated by the M.Ed. Program faculty as a whole.

In my position as a Graduate Research Assistant and investigator, I recognize I was in a power position where my participant might have felt coerced to be part of the project, or forced to give me the answers I expected. In addition, my role as a representative of the M.Ed. program represented the narratives of the program, which interns are supposed to abide. I had limited authority as to deciding whether a student teacher had transformed into a novice teacher. In my capacity as a gatekeeper, I had the ability to generate a lot of stress in my participant. These fears are minimized by the fact that, although my role as supervisor influenced the final grade of my participant and her opportunities to obtain teaching licensure at the end of the school year, by reminding myself that the goals of my project and my personal biases should not be a factor when analyzing my participant’s performance and assigning grades towards the end of the project and the student teaching experience, while not allowing my data and additional knowledge to affect adversely my participant’s grades, I was able to separate my research goals from my duties as a University employee. At the same time, my performance as both researcher and university supervisor were constantly assessed by my direct supervisor, who agreed to oversee the research process and help me to pursue a research project as ethical as possible, where I did not use my position of power to affect my
participant. During the data collection phase, my role as supervisor had as a main goal to observe the M.Ed. students’ performance and provide constructive criticism. Although my role involved grading the students in terms of their academic writing and teaching skills, those grades were based directly in the participant’s performance during my observations, rather than my personal opinions. It is important to add, however, that in qualitative research, the individual views and personal perceptions of both researchers and participants cannot be isolated from the outcome of the project itself.

As proposed by Peirce (1995), total objectivity is neither possible, nor desirable in qualitative research due to personal investment, experience, and/or the dichotomy of the insider/outsider role of the researcher. At the beginning of this project, it was important for me to identify my biases and personal opinions; in order to be able to share them with my readers so they understood my position and were able to reach their own conclusions, while keeping in mind my personal experience, my background, and those of my participant. Whelan (1999) is a clear example of this emotional investment. When describing her experiences with Sarah, one of her participant in a narrative analysis and identity construction, the author described the emotional farewell with her participant, in a relationship that allowed both researcher and participant to learn both from each other and explore their positioning in their teaching and learning context.

As I watched Sarah celebrating her growth, I could not help but think about this sharing signified the end of our journey together. This was the culmination of 2 years of shared memories. It was an important conference – a sacred one.

(Whelan, 1999 p.25)
As Whelan discussed in her experience, my position did not entail that my personal biases could affect the project adversely. It was my responsibility, therefore, to clearly define my position and biases, so my readers could understand the context and interpret my data analysis accordingly. In order to face those biases and to add other points of view to the research itself, my participant played the role of reviewers. In addition to this member checking, data was triangulated to ensure reliability.

Simultaneously, my participant was able to discuss my project and add their opinion, acting as peer reviewers. This interaction, where my participant played an active role in the project, aligns with the views of ethics in educational research as proposed by Strike (2006), who suggested that, “To take a communitarian approach requires that researchers examine their behavior in the light of the goals of the community” (p. 72). Consequently, as my participant a member of the community of practice analyzed, during our conversations she helped me identify her needs and her particular goals.

As a researcher using a qualitative approach that focuses on Narrative inquiry, it is important for me to identify what my biases are and how I will be positioning myself during the project. Chiseri-Strater (1996) explains the importance of being aware of the role of the researcher when she states that, when doing ethnographic research,

a major goal of the research process is self-reflexivity – what we learn about the self as a result of the study of the “other”. To achieve a reflexive stance the researcher needs to bend back upon herself to make herself as well as the other an object of study. (p. 119)
Chiseri-Strater explores how important researcher reflexivity is besides constant documentation of the identity growth of the participant in any research project. In the particular case of this project, by keeping a research journal and checking my biases with my supervisor and my dissertation advisor, I kept my own identity in check, as my interaction with my participant and her views also affected my identity, my views, (insert comma) and my position and biases. By means of using a research journal and constant review of my findings and my position as supervisor and researcher, I achieved a reflexive stance that allowed me to identify those changes in both my participant and myself, and identify how those changes affected the outcome of my project. Clear examples of these reflections are some of the informal conversations with my participant, which I wrote in my journal to analyze as the project progressed.

Selena’s mentor just returned to me a preliminary questionnaire I sent the mentor teachers so we could talk about expectations and views. Her comments are pretty much what I thought they would be. María thinks very highly of her student teacher, and does not mention any major issues in terms of classroom management or teaching grammar in the classroom. I am not surprised, but I was hoping I would receive a series of different comments out of María in regards to Selena’s performance. Is this because I am biased and I want classroom management to work in a specific way? Selena seems to be happy with her performance, and so is her mentor, so I guess I must wait and see how the semester progresses in order to make comments on Selena’s teaching skills. I should probably discuss this with Dr. Laura. (Researcher log entry, March 16, 2010)
By keeping my journal entries as reference when reviewing my supervisory forms and related paperwork, I was able to keep my observations more objective and detailed than I would with other students not involved in my research project. And although I acknowledge that this behavior would put my other supervisees in a slight disadvantage when compared to Selena, my role as a researcher required a more detailed analysis of my participant, which included a less neutral perspective when analyzing my data sources. Illustration one is an example on how data was collected by means of field notes that would later be used as research field notes. Information on the left column includes the exact time date on which the teaching event took place. On the right column, a detailed description of events explains the context and the circumstances surrounding each teaching event.
As Figure 4 shows, supervisory notes are divided in two columns: the column on the left describes a specific time in which an event that took place in each supervision. The column on the right provides detailed information on the context and circumstances in which the situation described took place. At the end of each observation, my
descriptions and feedback were discussed with my participant, who provided her view and opinions of the experiences described.

After this data collection, and next to my conversation with Selena, I would use my log entries to contrast them with other sources of data collected and reflect on how this new information affected my opinions of Selena, and whether the different, more complex sources of information at my disposal were affecting adversely my participant, when compared to my other supervisees, with whom my interactions were more supervisory oriented, and my emotional investment was not as deep.

In qualitative research, the investigator must be aware of his biases and personal views, and must continually revisit them while data is collected and analyzed in order to discern whether his personal perceptions are affecting the project. In my role as a researcher of the M.Ed. program, my position was clearly twofold because of my influence as both researcher and supervisor of my participant. This influence tends to be reduced by means of my interaction with my participant, where her role as peer reviewer allowed her to participate in the data analysis. In the context of the M.Ed. in FSLED, pre-service teachers and supervisors develop a working relationship, although there is always an existing power relationship. The working relationship was strengthened by giving my participant a more active role in the data collection and interpretation process, while reducing the risk of my subjectivity affecting my interpretations. By giving my participant an opportunity to help me describe her and reflect her personal voices, I insured the quality and honesty of my data. For instance, when analyzing data instances that I believed were problematic, I would ask for my participant’s direct advice on what
she thought was relevant in my interpretation of those data instances. As a result, my data interpretation and findings were at less risk of being affected by my views on the issue of identity construction of pre-service teachers. One of these instances took place when I interpreted one of Selena’s reactions to my feedback as dismissive. After we had an informal conversation on the issue, she followed up her perceptions in writing at the end of the day.

As far as the program is concerned, I know I have A LOT to learn. I try to take the feedback with a grain of salt. Like I said in my last journal entry, I look at my writing/lesson plans like I do my artwork. Some of my art projects I will spend up to fifty hours on. I develop almost a personal relationship with my work and grow very close to it… so to post it on the wall for an art critique and have people tear it apart is just upsetting. (Written feedback, February 2, 2010)

As this comment from Selena shows, I used all resources available to allow my participant to share her perspectives in the process of constructing the Professional Knowledge Landscape (PKL) in which she interacted. Although my interpretation of the specific event was, to an extent, that Selena was rejecting my feedback, there was a series of additional comments and events taking place that day that affected Selena and caused her to react to my feedback in an unexpected way. Her reaction was not directed to me as a supervisor, but to her belief that others assumed that she was not dedicated enough to the M.Ed. Program.

The different interpretations that can be given to comments, reactions and interactions between participants in a specific context requires a detailed analysis of the
data collected. This analysis can be provided by the tools given by additional resources to complement Narrative Inquiry, such as those provided by Discourse Analysis.

**Data Collection Methods**

Since the main goal of the study was documenting identity growth and challenges of the participant during the school year, the main strategies chosen include interviews and discussions, audio and video recording, artifact collection, and analysis of written samples and journals from the participant. As Sfard and Prusak (2005) suggested, narratives are one of the most powerful tools to document identity and agency growth. It is the different narratives of my participant what will create a difference in the identity construction process, when Selena is exposed to similar situations to other students from her cohort.

**Interviews and Discourse Analysis**

For the purposes of this project, and due to the different, sometimes contradictory interpretations of discourse existing in humanities and social sciences, I will be using the definition of Discourse as proposed by Gee (1999) in which discourses are seen as contexts that are part of a larger Discourse (with capital D) that contributes to the identity construction of the individual. Due to the Narrative Inquiry approach I used, I applied the definition of discourses as synonyms of the contexts in which my participant is involved in a day to day basis.

Given the qualitative nature of this study, in which I used some ethnographic methods (such as collecting data and artifacts that helped the researcher to construct the context) for my data collection, an emphasis was given to discourse analysis and how my
participant becomes part of the teaching context, while assimilating elements into her own ideologies, by making sense of the narratives she found in the M.Ed. Program and the interaction between those and the narratives she brought to the learning process. For the present discussion, ideology will be defined as a conceptual phenomenon that derives from experience and contributes to the construction of the identity of both the individual and his or her society (Woolard, 1998). As I had conversations with my participant about her teaching experiences and her interactions in the context of the M.Ed. program, I analyzed her answers in order to find different indicators that could shed some light on the different interpretations that my participant was giving to her narratives, as well as trying to interpret information in her answers that was not being disclosed due to either unawareness of my participant or uncertainty of my reaction as a supervisor. I believe, consequently, that an analysis of the cultural context of my participant is vital to interpret some of her beliefs, and how her ideologies evolved from the beginning of the M.Ed. Program through the defense of her capstone. As narratives and context are interconnected and transforming each other by means of narrative interaction (Connelly and Clandinin, 1999 p2), hearing the stories of my participant contributed to how I selected and viewed the narratives that informed the PKL of the M.Ed. program. Interviews were crucial to discuss the conflicting narratives found by my participant. However, my effort was to approach interviews in a way that the participant felt free to address her personal challenges and interests. Quinn (2010) explains this concept in her view of Cultural Discourse Analysis,
Encouraging the interviewee to organize the interview (or series of interviews) his or her own way and to pursue his or her own thoughts, conveying the interviewer’s openness to the interviewee’s own perspective, unique insight and special knowledge, and being an extraordinarily good listener and a non-judgmental one. (p. 243)

Since my participant was actively documenting her personal struggle with her beliefs in constant change and evolution, it was my role as researcher to allow her to explore her own needs and changes, without interpreting her progress negatively. It was my responsibility to identify patterns and areas of change, without framing them within positive or negative ideologies, or questioning their ways of thought. However, in some instances, a subjective interpretation of answers and interactions was required from the researcher, in order to identify some of the conflictive narratives my participant faced when interacting in the PKL constructed by the M.Ed. program. This was the role played by Discourse Analysis in a Narrative Inquiry project. In order to avoid being judgmental with my participant, it was necessary to discuss my views on the project with Selena before and after her observations, and with having a series of meetings with the M.Ed. Program coordinator, who helped me distinguish between my biases and the Program’s goals and expectations for our students, and reminded me constantly that interns should be able to find the most accurate teaching practices within their beliefs and narratives before and after the M.Ed. Program.
Analysis

Phase one - fall quarter.

In Phase one of the research project, during Fall quarter 2009, by collecting data from my participant’s classes in the M.Ed. Program and her early student teaching experience, I had the opportunity to explore and analyze Selena’s beliefs on teaching and learning foreign languages, by closely analyzing Selena’s written assignments, her descriptions of her teaching experiences, my notes during her teaching practicum, and her comments during our conversations. Phase one included a recorded audio interview with my participant, where I explored her initial beliefs and perceptions of the M.Ed. Program, and her goals and objectives for her graduate studies. Although the data collected during the early stages of the M.Ed. Program allowed me to create an initial landscape of the beliefs and expectations of my participant, it was the last quarter of the program, which focused on the student teaching experience, which allowed me to clearly observe my participant’s beliefs and how she positioned her role as a student teacher in professional landscape and the narratives created by the M.Ed. program. Simultaneously, after observing my participant in her teaching practicum, I could document how she applied and adapted the theories learned in her classes to her particular scenarios, while negotiating her identities and beliefs with her mentor teachers, her university professors, and supervisor (me).

The requirements of the M.Ed. Program, the expectations of the mentor teachers, and the ideas and beliefs of the interns shaped the constructs of identity and ideologies created by the participant. In addition, the different discourses in which my participant
was involved helped me construct a larger professional landscape of the participant to
better understand her identity transformation, as explained by Connelly and Clandinin
(1995). The main tools of the early stages analysis included a general overview of the
M.Ed. expectations, the mentor teacher’s goals and the personal perceptions and beliefs
of the interns in regards to the teaching profession in general.

**Phase two - winter quarter.**

Phase two, which focused on collecting data from the participant’s capstone
research seminar and the early stages of her secondary placements, explored how Selena
started adapting to the demands of the M.Ed. program while negotiating her beliefs on the
teaching profession and her previous experiences as a language learner. By collecting
data specifically from her written assignments and her Action Research project, I had the
opportunity to construct my participant’s landscape of the teaching profession, her
expectations and perceptions of foreign languages in general, and how some of those
perceptions could generate conflicts and challenges for Selena during her intensive
student teaching experience in Spring quarter.

Although most of the data analyzed was obtained from the student teaching
experience in Spring Quarter, the information obtained in winter quarter contributed
greatly to shift the focus of the investigation and address the answers to my research
questions in more detail in the third phase of the project, which focused on the intensive
student teaching experience.
Phase three - spring quarter.

In the third and final phase of my research project, data collection focused heavily on the student teaching experience of the participant, where I explored how she applied the theoretical concepts learned in her methods seminars, while negotiating her beliefs with the classes taken in the M.Ed. Program and her personal perceptions of teaching and learning foreign languages. At this point, my research shifted its focus from identity construction to identity transformation, to include more active thoughts and opinions of my participant. During the weekly observation of her teaching practicum, I took notes in detail and analyzed Selena’s teaching style, while exploring how her attitudes towards language teaching and learning were influenced by her program and her personal beliefs. In this stage, a final exit interview was conducted, where my participant and I discussed the evolution of her attitude towards the teaching profession and her future plans upon graduating as a licensed K-12 Spanish teacher.

As the data analysis progressed, I found that different sources of data allowed me to find different patterns and themes that my participant and I found relevant during the project. Figure 5 displays some of the different sources of data and the themes that generated in Selena’s data analysis.
As Figure 5 shows, even though my participant contributed many data sources, not all of the common themes found appeared in the same data source. However, some common topics were found, regardless of the data source that generated them. For instance, Selena’s data sources demonstrated a growing set of narratives on the importance of learning culture in the target language, but while most of Selena’s perceptions appeared more in her oral statements and informal conversations, her written descriptions revealed information on her passion for culture teaching and learning. These were found mostly in her written assignments and her reflections on teaching. The following is a fragment from...
Selena’s statement of intent to join the M.Ed. program, which is a clear example of how a narrative is not singular, but a collection of stories built by an individual into her experiences (see Appendix H for full statement).

**ed·u·cate** \(\text{\textperiodcentered e-\textperiodcentered j\textperiodcentered \textperiodcentered k\textperiodcentered \textperiodcentered \textperiodcentered a\textperiodcentered , \textperiodcentered \textperiodcentered k\textperiodcentered \textperiodcentered \textperiodcentered \textperiodcentered \textperiodcentered a\textperiodcentered \textperiodcentered , k\textperiodcentered \textperiodcentered \textperiodcentered a\textperiodcentered} \) vb 1 a : to provide schooling for  b : to train by formal instruction and supervised practice esp. in a skill, trade, or profession 2 a : to develop mentally, morally, and aesthetically esp. by instruction  b : to provide with information : INFORM 3 : to persuade or condition to feel, believe, or act in a desired way

Now one might be curious as to why someone would start their statement of intent with a definition from the old Webster’s Dictionary, but please read over the definition once again. It talks about the basics of what an educator’s responsibilities include; however, I want my contribution to be much greater than what this simple definition entails. Education is not just the planting of seeds. It takes of a lot of hard work, fertilizer, and the right tools to nurture students into beautiful, strong flowers. […] I want to be the teacher that engages the class through, new and exciting activities, projects, and group discussions. I have the enthusiasm and dedication that it takes to keep my class awake and interested, that so many teachers have lost or forgotten. I want to fill the world with beautiful flowers by planting seeds of thought in developing minds. My goal is a career in the Spanish and English as a Second Language fields.

**Being a language educator opens a whole new nutritional package to feed my students. […] I want to contribute to bridging the language gap that exists for**
non-native English speakers. Once that gap has been closed, these students will grow in all other aspects of learning, not only what goes on in my classroom, but also in all subject areas. Lastly, I want to teach my students not to judge those who are different, but to value and learn from those differences. Students may see something and think that it is strange, but in all reality, they may not realize that they are being ethnocentric. It is not strange. It is just not how Americans are accustomed to doing things. Where better to teach that lesson than in a language class? I believe that Americans have a lot to learn from other cultures about quality of life and the time has come to learn that lesson.

Luckily, I have had the opportunity to till fields of students from all ages and backgrounds. While studying at ________, I had the opportunity to observe for one hundred hours in classrooms, which included students from elementary to high school. Not only did I learn a lot about how a classroom is managed and how to interact with students, but I saw firsthand the impact of diversity in schools. While working in a second grade classroom, I met xxxx. He was a good student, well behaved and always eager to learn. Even at his young age, xxxx already knew the importance of a good education because where he comes from not everyone has that opportunity. Xxxx is from xxxx and speaks little to no English. If someone does not take the time to cultivate children like xxxx, these children would fall through the cracks. I want to be that teacher who takes the extra time to get beneath the surface and get to the roots of each student’s individual needs.
To me there is nothing more personally rewarding than seeing the faces of a team that I coached when they have won a championship. During my first year of coaching, I coached xxxx, who had never touched a softball in her life. However, with a little extra instruction I was able to help her blossom to her full potential. Before I knew it, xxxx was getting base hits and fielding balls, which improved her self-confidence. If educators just make the extra effort the rewards are endless. I would like the opportunity to apply this extra effort to my future students.

There are many reasons why I would like to become a teacher; however, two experiences have influenced me above all others. Those experiences were my amazing opportunities to study abroad. […]

I also had the opportunity to study abroad in Spain for three months. Once again immersed in the Spanish culture and language, I was able to learn a new dialect of Spanish and about a new culture. […] I yearn to see a day when every American can communicate in a language other than English.

Not only am I interested in teaching Spanish, but also English as a second language. For the past seven years, I have worked in the restaurant industry. In that capacity, I have helped train Hispanic employees. It always amazes me that even after living here for five to ten years that they still cannot complete simple English phrases. I would appreciate the opportunity to enrich the soil that helps other cultures to be open to opportunities other than washing dishes […]

(Statement to apply to the M.Ed. program, fall 2008.)
Although this statement of intent could be understood as a list of achievements rather than a series of narratives, as narratives are built on past experiences, Selena is sharing with the M.Ed. program faculty how her identity as a language learner and prospective teachers were built on a series of stories. In the extended narratives existing in Selena’s documents, I found a series of more complex, interrelated, narratives that became part of my analysis.

Upon collecting data in all three phases, and comparing and contrasting my findings and my field notes and research journal, in which I made regular entries throughout the entire project, I had a series of conversations with Selena, who reiterated how she wanted to explore a specific set of concepts she believed would be relevant in her student teaching. This information, allowed me to code data according to the categories Selena considered relevant, such as classroom management strategies and teaching methodologies. After data was coded, a series of new categories emerged that included both Selena’s concerns and my interpretation of the existing data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories generated by data analysis and research journal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Role of teaching in the classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Importance of culture in the foreign language classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Meaning of successful teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Teacher dispositions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Personal expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Mentor teacher vs. Student teacher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Categories used when coding data analyzed

As Table 2 shows, the categories I found were based on what I found to be the most representative narratives of Selena’s experiences and beliefs. The main focus was
the contrast between Selena’s narratives and the M.Ed. Program’s expectations. In some instances, my participant’s narratives conflicted greatly with the goals of the teacher education program, and it was important to explore how she handled this conflict and the power relationships it entailed. It was the negotiation between these binaries, and how my participant adapted to the requirements of the program, that allowed me to define how the identity transformation of my participant took place. This negotiation, and the ways in which Selena made sense of the requirements of the M.Ed. Program, her high school placements and her personal beliefs, allowed me to analyze how the narratives of this student teacher transformed and evolved from the beginning of her studies up to the end of the program one year later. In order to analyze these narratives and how they recorded Selena’s transformation, I used Gee’s categories to identify how tasks are built in discourse analysis. (1995, p. 93) These categories allowed me to establish connections between Selena’s narratives and her interaction with others within the PKL of the M.Ed. program.

**Observation and interview data.**

The most important element of this project involved observing my participant in one of the multiple contexts in which she interacted: her high school teaching placement, at least once a week during three months, in spring quarter. For the entire observation project, a total of 24 hours of observations in high school were collected for Selena, plus additional 4 hours for elementary placements. During these observations, I used the information collected in my role as a supervisor as part of my data within the project. Consequently, I used the required M.Ed. Forms to take notes on her teaching style,
provided some feedback and recommendations, and shared those with Selena during short one on one conversations right after the student teaching experience I observed took place\(^6\). Of those conversations, I audio recorded the first and last meetings, in order to analyze the evolution and transformation of Selena’s beliefs as the program progressed. Those recordings were electronically archived for further analysis. Recordings were transcribed line-by-line, and then coded according to the emerging patterns found that allowed me to find the most relevant elements of narrative construction. Interviews were handled by using Discourse Analysis methodologies suggested by Bloome, Carter, Christian, Otto, Stuart-Faris, Smith, M. and Madrid, (2008), where utterances are analyzed line by line, with special attention given to the context in which the utterances take place. At the early stages of data processing, 26 categories were found. As the analysis progressed, categories were narrowed down according to the most conflictive narratives found. The final list reduced to six narratives. Relevance was determined at the early stages of the project, upon discussing with my participant what her concerns were with regard to the challenges she would face in the teaching profession in general.

In addition to the interviews, I collected a wide arrange of data from different sources, including interviews, written assignments for the M.Ed. program, reflections on student teaching experiences from my participant, information on the M.Ed. program and the student teaching placements, my teaching journal and student teaching observations. As my data collection progressed, my goal was to find instances that could reveal some of the main narratives that defined the experiences of my participant, while contrasting

\(^6\) See illustration one for an example of an official M.Ed. Program supervisory form.
them with the narratives my participant would find in the M.Ed. program classes and
their student teaching placements, and documenting how the narratives of my participant
transformed during their time in the M.Ed. program. Clandinin and Connelly (2000)
defined narratives as experiences that interact with other narratives, and consequently
transform the identities (narratives) of the individual. For instance, when students
compare their experiences as both language learners and later language teachers, there is
a narrative interaction that transforms the existing narratives of the students in their
process to become licensed teachers. Although I had access to a vast amount of
experiences in which my participant was involved, it was important to find the most
relevant instances in which her identities were challenged, or even transformed by her
interactions within the M.Ed. Program. While Selena was concerned about her interaction
with students (classroom management related concerns), her mentor teacher and other
students not in this project seemed to be more interested in issues of teaching culture and
classroom management.

**Narratives in context**

In order to identify how Selena made sense of her personal narratives and those to
which she was exposed, it was crucial to analyze all those stories in context. The
particular context in which my participant interacted is defined by Clandinin and
Connelly (1995) as Professional Knowledge Landscape (PKL), which is the specific area
where I, as a researcher, could explore how my participant interacted and related with
others in their professional lives. Upon finding common ground with my participant in
analyzing what we both considered the most relevant narratives within my participant’s
PKL, I contrasted them with the M.Ed. program’s narratives, in order to find the most conflicting narratives and identify how they were accepted (or rejected) by my participant, in order to explore how the M.Ed. program’s narratives could have changed Selena’s views on teaching while being part of the M.Ed. Program.

In order to make a fair, accurate comparison of the discourses and narratives in which my participant was involved, it was necessary to identify the boundaries of the PKL in which my Selena participated. This took place by defining the expectations of the M.Ed. Program, which defined the key narratives that my participant had to accept to become a teacher after finishing her graduate studies. Once these narratives were identified, it was then important to determine the narratives of my participant. These boundaries were identified by the data sources inside the M.Ed. program classes to which I had access as a supervisor that included the Methods, Professionalism and Capstone seminars, as well as the assignments and expectations for each class.

**Data collection methods in the M.Ed. classes.**

Data were collected from diverse sources, during three academic quarters (Fall, Winter, and Spring). Some of my data sources included audio recorded interviews with the participant, her personal reflections on her student teaching experience, and her lesson plans for her student teaching practice, which were designed according to the tools, rules and regulations provided in the language teaching methods seminar. I used the supervision reports from my observations of her secondary student teaching experiences. During the observations, I took notes on the strategies Selena used to become a successful teacher by the M.Ed. program standards, gave feedback and recommendations.
that were then shared with Selena during short conversations immediately following each observation. Since most of the scenarios in which my participant interacted are based on power relationships within social interactions, I analyzed her comments and perceptions as discussed in our interviews, using the concept of power in discourse provided by Blommaert (2005),

The suggestion I want to offer is that it [CDA] should be an analysis on power effects, of the outcome of power, of what power does to people, groups and societies, and how this impact comes about. (2) [emphasis in the original]

Blommaert suggested that interactions are not exempted of power relationships, but power should not be considered as a single, unitary block, but as a transforming role. As the interactions evolve, power relationships transform. Whelan (1999) exemplifies this transformation in her story with Tina, who started as one of her participant in her project. Although Tina started as one of the researcher’s most challenging students in the classroom, and their relationship was built on distrust and aggressiveness; as the project progressed, and Tina was given a space to express herself within Whelan’s classroom and the project, the relationship transformed and Tina became a successful student. The author explains how Tina succeeded in her class when given a chance to tell her own story in a motivating context built by her teacher, her parents, and the school where the study took place.

In the context of the M.Ed. program, one of my challenges was to explore how my participant handled these power relationships and interactions within the M.Ed. Program and how these relationships (interns and mentor teachers, interns and
supervisors, interns and M.Ed. faculty) contribute to the constructions of her teaching identities during her student teaching experience. It was my interaction with my participant that led the interview questions I asked, and it was her challenges and concerns about the M.Ed. program and language teaching and learning that allowed me to guide the interviews. Although some of the questions were common to both Selena and other non participants of this project, the conversations revolved around Selena’s concerns and individual needs within the M.Ed. program.

**Data collection in the M.Ed. program classes: in class assignments.**

**The methods seminar.**

In order to build a PKL as accurately as possible, I collected data from multiple sources. Even though the key aspect of the narrative analysis was centered in observing my participant during student teaching, it was necessary to access other contexts where my participant built her narratives as a language teacher. In addition to 24 hours of interviews, I collected data from the teaching methods seminar that the students have to take as a requirement to obtain teaching licensure. The seminar is the backbone of the M.Ed. program and is divided in three quarters, and students must complete assignments for two of them, while teaching full time in the third quarter. Out of the seminar sequence, I was able to collect a series of lesson plans designed according to the M.Ed. Program requirements (four per quarter) these lesson plans were taught by my participant during the teaching practicum component of the M.Ed. program. After these lesson plans, students must submit a series of reflections on their student teaching episodes, one per each lesson taught. The Methods seminar provides some of the key narratives on
language teaching education of the M.Ed. program, since it is taught by the M.Ed.
program coordinator, who sets the requirements, goals and policies that students are
expected to abide during their year of preparation to become language teachers.

Additional data sources include assignments submitted by my participant as part
of the Methods seminar, which included reflection papers on teaching perspectives, as
well as syllabi and rubrics used by the Methods seminar professor to grade classroom
assignments. Simultaneously, additional data from the Capstone research project and a
seminar on Teacher Education issues and Teaching research (taught by myself) were also
used.

*The capstone project and the teacher education issues seminar.*

The Capstone seminar is a key requirement for M.Ed. students to obtain teaching
licensure, and provided a very rich source of narratives for both the M.Ed. program and
my participant. Upon completion of the seminar, students are expected to submit an
Action Research Project (ARS), which is qualitative in nature and must be completed
between winter and spring quarters. In addition to the ARS, students must submit a series
of assignments related to their student teaching experience and their views on language
teaching education. The main assignments of the Capstone project included a series of ten
tasks that involved interaction with principals and teachers in the high school placements
of the participant, a position paper on a key issue in language education, a personal
narrative on each student teacher that discusses why the student teacher has decided to
pursue teaching licensure, and the ARS project itself, which is submitted in two drafts
before a final version is graded at the end of winter quarter. Students are given spring quarter to submit final results and make minor adjustments to their ARS.

The final element to construct the PKL of my participant in the classrooms of the M.Ed. program was presented in the Teacher Education Issues seminar which I taught in fall quarter. In this seminar, students were encouraged to discuss personal concerns related to professionalism, dispositions to be a successful teacher, Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) and standards and expectations held by major teacher accreditation institutions in the United States. Although the goal of the seminar was to reinforce some of the topics and narratives already learned by the students in previous courses, it provided me with some of my participant’s personal narratives and experiences that Selena would face during her year in the M.Ed. program. The key data sources from this seminar were the course syllabus that reinforced some of the concepts learned in the Methods seminar, and a final project that consisted in creating a syllabus for a language class and a rationale on how the syllabus was created. A connection between the M.Ed. program readings and personal experiences was expected.

**Ongoing data analysis.**

Upon completion of the interviews, my guiding goal was to identify how student teachers made sense of the narratives they found in the M.Ed. program. In order to achieve this goal, I compared my participant’s past and present experiences and her answers with some of the comments made in her journals and reflections, while I wondered how her answers might have been affected by her participation in the Methods seminar, or a consequence of her power relationships with me and the other cohort.
members of the M.Ed. Program. One of the main challenges was to identify the conflicting narratives for Selena, while also finding to what extent she was accepting these new narratives, and which ones were rejected or accepted to satisfy the program requirements. This goal was achieved by identifying the key elements in Selena’s narrative, then analyzing our conversations and her answers in detail. The method for this analysis involved a preliminary conversation with Selena at the beginning of fall quarter, where I would identify her main concerns in regards to the M.Ed. program, and some of the challenges she would believe she would find. These concerns would be identified in each of Selena’s individual narratives, and then addressed when collecting data from other sources. These concerns later became data categories, and were coded as such as the project progressed. As these concerns were clearly identified, I proceeded to find the narratives on each concern, that later were compared and contrasted for my participant.

With all narratives identified, I then searched for the participant’s existing conflicts and the negotiation methods she used. In their work on Grounded Theory, Glaser and Strauss (1967) define this approach as open coding, where data sources are deconstructed for intensive scrutiny. While concepts and interpretations evolve during analysis, they are used as a foundation for later data collection and interpretation.

An example for this rationale is my approach to Selena during the early stages of the project. Upon our preliminary conversation, some of her main concerns involved assessment and classroom management strategies. Upon identifying the M.Ed. program narratives for both areas, it was necessary to identify Selena’s beliefs on both and how these beliefs manifested in her past and present narratives. Quan, Phillion, and He (1999)
demonstrated this approach in their case study of Nancy, a nurse educator in Canada. As the researchers approached Nancy, it was by means of their conversations that they were able to position Nancy in her PKL as a teacher, while Nancy shared some of her beliefs on the challenges students experienced in their learning processes, and her narratives on the meaning of a good nurse, which sometimes conflicted with her experiences as a teacher.

This analysis of the conflicting narratives can be compared to the multiple images that can be seen through a kaleidoscope. By observing through multiple lenses (participant, mentor teachers, researchers) a clearer construction of the PKL is possible. It is the challenge of the researcher to observe those images and construct a PKL that reflects as many of them as possible.

Figure 6: Positioning of participant and researcher within the PKL of the M.Ed. Program.
As explained in Figure 6, both participant and researcher are positioned particularly in the PKL of the M.Ed. program. While Selena is in the middle of a complex system of narratives and expectations, my role as a supervisor and researcher positions me closer to the narratives of the M.Ed. program. While observing the actual and designated identities constructed by this series of narratives in which Selena is involved, the narratives of culture and languages from the FSLED and Humanities perspectives contribute to the conflicting narratives Selena has to negotiate to become a licensed teacher towards the end of the 2009-2010 school year.

If I considered that some of Selena’s answers conflicted with her behavior and reactions within specific situations in the PKL; I documented these conflicts and tried to explore the reason why these conflicts were taking place. Later on, upon identification of these conflicts, I looked for instances in which I could document how my participant made sense of these conflicts, and how her narratives and views on language teaching were transformed.

**Conclusion**

The main goal of this study was to analyze the narratives of a foreign language education student teacher, and how she made sense of the conflicting narratives she found within her studies in the M.Ed. program. As I used Narrative Inquiry as the framework to do such an analysis, I argue that my analysis was richer because of my dual role as a researcher and supervisor, because I had access to different perspectives that allowed me to better construct the context in which my participant interacted and transformed their narratives on language teaching in general. The data collection and analysis were
extensive and complex, since it was necessary to document the instances in which my participant found conflict between her narratives and those imposed by the M.Ed. program. While documenting these instances, a series of binaries were key to identify the challenges of my participant.

In order to present a clear overview of my methodology, I addressed my dual role as a researcher and supervisor, while I acknowledged the obstacles I faced when trying to maintain a subjective position while researching the issues at hand, and keeping an objective without affecting my performance as University Supervisor. In Chapter 2 I provided an analysis of the existing literature in the field and how I use narrative inquiry as my theoretical framework; in Chapter 4, I will provide a more concrete analysis of Selena’s individual needs, beliefs and expectations, and how they affect Selena’s performance.
Chapter 4: Research Findings

Introduction

The goal of this study was to analyze the identity formation of a student of the Masters of Education (M.Ed.) program in Foreign and Second Language Education (FSLED) in a Research one (R1) University in Midwestern United States, in relationship with the narratives she found when joined the M.Ed. program. By means of using narrative inquiry, I identify and contrast the existing narratives of language teaching and language learning that my participant brought to the Professional Knowledge Landscape (PKL) of FSLED.

As student teachers begin their education to become licensed language educators in the American K-12 system, their identity is transformed by means of interaction with others in different contexts within the PKL in which the interaction takes place. (Clandinin and Connelly, 1995 p. 5) During this interaction, the identities of the individuals are transformed and the PKL is transformed as well. (Sfard and Prusak, 2005 p.15). This constant transformation takes place for as long as the interaction within the PKL occurs. As suggested by Clandinin and Connelly (1995) teachers’ professional landscapes can only be constructed by means of observing and documenting their interactions, and this documentation, as well as all possibilities of identity construction and transformation, can only be interpreted chronologically.
Within the realm of teacher education, narratives can help researchers to better understand the landscapes in which student teachers interact and become novice teachers in their specific realities, and how they appropriate knowledge in different ways according to their individual experiences. Clandinin and Connelly (1995) explain this interaction by means of the professional landscape metaphor, whereby a researcher can better understand and construct the professional landscape of the teacher by creating a larger overview of the diverse narratives in which the teacher is involved, their different contexts, and how the interaction takes place. In the professional landscape metaphor, individuals are positioned in a series of relationships that build the landscape itself, while researchers identify how the interactions of the individuals within the landscape shape the PKL and the individual at the same time.

Clandinin and Connelly (2000, p 17) explain that, in their experience, the world can be understood as a series of narrative moments enacted in storied moments of time and space. In other words, daily life can be understood as a series of interactions represented in narratives. Consequently, narrative inquiry and analysis can help researchers understand how individuals react differently to the same situations, as indicated by Sfard and Prusak (2005). Thus, for the present analysis, narratives will be defined as contextualized stories, in which participants negotiate meaning and understand their context according to the cultural models in which they interact. As explained by Gee (1995) because of the reflexivity of language, language and context reflect and construct each other (p.82). In other words, narratives must be explained and understood in the
situation they take place, and in conjunction with the other narratives to which they are connected.

In the process of constructing narratives to better understand the reality of the individual, Riessman (2008, p. 54) explains that it is important to explore narratives from different perspectives, and how details such as personal beliefs are important to the construction of the professional landscape in which participants interact. In order to better understand those details and how they affect those involved within each narrative, a detailed analysis of the emerging themes (good teaching narratives and successful language learner narratives) is crucial.

Because of my definition of narratives as contextualized stories, it is necessary to keep in mind that the narratives involved in Selena’s landscape must be analyzed within the situated meaning in which they take place. Gee (1999) defines situated meanings as the images that we assign in the contexts in which we interact. In this respect, language and context are constantly interacting with each other and transforming each other. In my participant’s case, she was situated as a student teacher of the M.Ed. Program, and as an advanced speaker of Spanish. Both of these designated identities carried narratives intended to help her construct a teacher identity as a successful teacher who could complete licensure requirements.

In order to give a clear understanding of Selena’s professional landscape and how her narratives influenced her teaching identities in the cultural model in which she was involved, this chapter will be divided in the following sections: First, I will describe the context of the M.Ed. program from the faculty and supervisor perspectives, as well as
Selena and her past experiences before becoming a student teacher; then I will summarize the cultural model and narratives within the M.Ed. Program and the ideas and positions it uses to guide students to become successful teachers. Next, I document chronologically Selena’s changes and conflicts in her narratives within her student teaching experience and the theoretical component of the M. Ed. Program. Finally, I will discuss how my participant’s interaction with other narratives of professionals in their landscapes (mentor teachers, supervisors, other students) transformed her perception of teaching, and contributed to her modified new teacher narratives inside and outside of the M.Ed. Program.

**Context**

**The M.Ed. Program**

The Masters of Education (M.Ed.). Program in Foreign and Second Language Education (FSLED) offers teacher licensure upon completion of an intensive one year student teaching experience. Students coming to this program are, mostly, foreign language majors recently graduated from teaching oriented program. The program is housed in the College of Education of a large Research One (R1) American Midwestern University.

The main requirements of the M.Ed. in FSLED include (1) students will take a series of courses focused on language teaching education theories and methodologies; (2) teacher candidates will join Elementary and Middle or High School placements, where they will teach their language of expertise supervised by a collaborative teacher and an university supervisor; and (3) teacher candidates will prepare and defend an Action
Research Project (capstone) as a requirement to obtain their M.Ed. degree. Due to the intensive nature of the program, a strong emphasis is given to the balance between theory and practice, where the capstone project acts as a bridge between both domains. As described in the M.Ed. website.

The M.Ed. teacher preparation program is a full-time graduate program that begins in the summer and may be completed in four quarters. The program includes professional courses leading to both the master’s degree and initial Ohio teacher licensure in foreign language (grades K-12). Students engage in a coherent series of interdisciplinary core courses, content-specific courses, seminars, a research and inquiry component, the internship (combined field experiences and clinical practicum), and a culminating Capstone Project focused on critical issues in foreign language education. (M. Ed. Program Statement, website, retrieved on 5/20/2010)

In the professional landscape, and because it is the connection between the university and the high school placements, the M.Ed. is situated as a mediator between the classroom work and the student teaching experience of the interns. In this narrative, the program constructs a definition of a good teacher, which is determined by the skills acquired during the four quarters of the program, and a balance between practice, reflection and theory, as explained in their definition of the capstone project.

The Capstone Project is a portfolio created during the internship. It includes an action research project that will be conducted during the field experience, a personal statement, reflections on your teaching, sample lesson plans and other
examples of your work. You will have a one hour oral defense of your project at the end of the year. (M.Ed. program website, retrieved on 9/4/2011)

As this description shows, students are expected to connect theory, practice and reflection in the capstone project, in which students will document their growth within the M.Ed. program, and support their narratives of good teaching acquired in their year as graduate students. In the process of connecting the theoretical, practical and reflective elements of the M.Ed. program, students will position themselves in the PKL of the program, and will find conflicts between their old and new narratives found in the program and their teaching scenarios. To that effect, I intend to develop the narratives of Selena within the M.Ed. program, her views and challenges as the program progressed, her views and experiences related to good teaching, and what it means for her to be successful in the classroom. At the same time, it is important to show the narratives within the M.Ed. program itself, as the interaction between the program and my participant will demonstrate the existing conflicts in the process of identity transformation within the cultural models and situated meanings built in the PKL of language teaching education.

At the early stages of this project, there was not an apparent conflict between Selena’s narratives and the M.Ed. program, but it is the interaction between both participant and the PKL that will create a series of dichotomies and contradictions that Selena will have to negotiate in order to obtain teacher licensure at the end of the school year. The relevant elements of this negotiation involve how individuals build the situated meanings and the cultural models involved in their narratives as teachers, and how a
participant interprets the narratives of the M.Ed. program. In order to better illustrate these narratives, I find relevant to show the context of the M.Ed. program from the very perspectives and narratives it entails, represented in the various people that build the PKL of the participant, and in the cultural models and situated meanings they build as part of the narratives of the M.Ed. program. (Gee, 1995 p. 80)

**Dr. Laura: M.Ed. program coordinator.**

A middle aged white female with several decades of experience in language teaching, Dr. Laura is the coordinator of the M.Ed. Program and the person in charge of teaching the Methods seminar to the student teachers. In charge of assigning elementary and high school placements, mentor teachers and supervisors to the student teachers, she is the faculty member with whom the interns spend most of the time. Licensed to teach K-12 Spanish, Dr. Laura was interested in foreign languages since her days in middle school and always enjoyed teaching others. After exploring several languages in high school and in her college years, she earned a dual Spanish and German teaching degree. She worked as a Spanish teacher for several years until she had the opportunity to teach English to Latino immigrant children in her Spanish class. She enjoyed this experience so much that she chose to do it in her free time, and then moved on to pursue a Master of Arts Degree in ESL. She then joined the ESL program of the R1 University where this study takes place, and became the director upon completion of her PhD ten years ago. Due to her vast experience with language teaching education, she was offered to lead the M.Ed. Program three years ago. During her first year as coordinator, she performed both her ESL and M.Ed. duties simultaneously. Upon realizing how challenging directing the
teaching licensure program was, she decided to leave the ESL program and lead the M.Ed. program full time before her retirement at the end of the 2009-2010 school year.

Dr. Laura is very direct with her students regarding to her expectations within the M.Ed. program. Consequently, she has constructed a clear series of narratives that she expects her students to follow to become licensed at the end of the year.

What I tell the students is that what we try to do, what I try to do in my classes is to tell them what it’s possible. It’s possible to use the target language all the time. And it is possible to get students to really be users of the language rather than just learners of the language. And I also tell them that this might not be the case when they are in their internship, they might find that their mentor teacher doesn’t practice what we teach. (Conversation, March 11, 2010)

Being the sole person responsible for the training of language teachers within the M.Ed. Program, Dr. Laura has constructed a powerful narrative that is strongly reinforced by university supervisors and not disputed by her students. In addition to the Methods seminar, she coordinates the M.Ed. program supervisors, assigns the interns to each classroom, and works in conjunction with the Capstone seminar teacher to help students create the components of the Capstone project. Because of her role within the M.Ed. program, her vast experience and her attitude towards the students, they looked up to her as their role model and sometimes developed an emotional attachment deeper than a traditional teacher-student relationship. For instance, at the end of the school year of this study, interns gave Dr. Laura a bench engraved with her name, as a testimonial of their gratitude for the hard work and dedication she showed during the entire school year. This
bench is engraved with Dr. Laura’s name and is installed in front of the building in which the M.Ed. program is housed.

As Dr. Laura designed the practical component of the Methods seminar, she worked closely with Dr. Brown, who was in charge of the research component of the M.Ed. program.

**Dr. Brown: the capstone project advisor.**

Dr. Brown has been immersed in foreign languages all her life. Born outside of the United States to European American parents, she has been exposed to other languages since her childbirth. This contact with other languages and cultures became a career interest, and she taught German in the United States, and then English inside and outside of the country. Some years later, she pursued a PhD in FSLED, she has also worked in the ESL context due to the demands of her position.

Because of her experience in both ESL and FSLED, Dr. Brown has a strong set of beliefs that have created a strong narrative for the students of the M.Ed. Program, as reflected in her syllabus of the Capstone project seminar.

The seminar will present multiple perspectives on teacher “action research,” focusing on the ways in which an **inquiry orientation** to pedagogy aids in fostering active reflection about teaching and student learning. A central goal is to guide you to apply an inquiry orientation to your teaching practice, and to see reflective inquiry as normal part of the art of teaching. [bold and quotations in original]  

(Dr. Brown’s Capstone seminar description, January 5, 2010)
Dr. Brown’s role is to help students engage in active reflection during their practicum, while performing a series of tasks that help them become stronger, more mature teachers. Because of the intensive nature of the M.Ed. Program, students must complete a larger percentage of the Capstone requirements in winter quarter, while they will have a portion of Spring to report results of their Action Research Study (ARS) and defend their project as a requirement to graduation at the end of the school year.

The supervisor/researcher.

With several years of experience in language teaching in my home country of Colombia, I came to the United States in 2000 to work as a teaching assistant in a small Community College in Eastern United States. At the end of my appointment, I joined a Midwestern R1 University to pursue a Master of Arts in Spanish literature. Upon completion of my degree, I worked as a translator, Spanish and English teacher for a landscape company. All of these experiences created a research interest in language teaching and teaching identity. Three years later, I decided to continue my graduate education by means of a PhD in FSLED, where I worked as a Graduate Assistant and supervisor for the M.Ed. program. My role involved working with both Dr. Laura and Dr. Brown as support in her seminars, where I lead some of the classroom sessions and graded assignments for the M.Ed. students. I also supervised the teaching practicum of the M.Ed. students. Finally, I had the opportunity to teach a fall seminar on Professionalism and teacher education issues the M.Ed. cohort, which generated my interest in narratives, teacher identity construction and Narrative inquiry.
Because of my dual role as a student and supervisor, I understood the challenges my interns faced inside and outside of the classroom. However, my primary duty was to reinforce the narratives generated by the M.Ed. program and its faculty members. Since I acted as the observer of the program, my comments and feedback could affect the performance of students in the eyes of the M.Ed. coordinator and the Capstone seminar professor. However, as a researcher I was aware of the existing power relationships with my students and always strived to be objective and help my students regardless of beliefs and personal biases. My position as a supervisor and my role as a researcher allowed me to build strong relationships with Selena, and those were reflected in our interactions inside and outside of the M.Ed. program.

My Participant

Selena

Born in a small suburb in Midwestern United States, Selena is a white female in her middle twenties. After learning Basic Spanish from one of her high school teachers, Selena developed a big appreciation for the Spanish language and culture. Selena completed her undergraduate Spanish major in a small university in the same area where she was born. Upon traveling abroad to improve her Spanish and expose herself to the culture of the language, Selena developed an appreciation for the Spanish culture. After her abroad experiences, when she returned to her home country she worked as a restaurant manager in a large American franchise and then decided to pursue teaching licensure in the Masters of Education (M.Ed.) program in foreign and Second Language Education (FSLED). Selena’s previous experiences as a student apparently constructed a
narrative of good teaching that involved creativity, interaction and the ability to motivate students.

As one of the requirements to be accepted in the M.Ed. Program, students are asked to write a statement of intent explaining why they want to become language teachers. The goal of this statement is to identify where prospective teachers position themselves in the field of language learning, while exploring the expectations and backgrounds of the potential students. For this statement, Selena explained;

After sitting in classrooms for more than seventeen years, I know which teachers changed my life and I want to become that kind of teacher. I feel strongly that my creativity and ability to think outside the box will change the lives of my students. I believe that anyone can put notes on an overhead projector and have students copy them down. I want to be the teacher that engages the class through, new and exciting activities, projects, and group discussions (Statement of Intent to apply to the M.Ed. Program, Fall 2008)

The past remark shows how Selena has built a narrative of good teaching from her position as a learner. After being exposed to diverse teachers in her years as a student, Selena has positioned her views of good teaching in the professional landscape, using her beliefs as a point of reference to help her create this narrative of good teaching in general, where effective teachers are committed, creative and motivate students to succeed. She has at this point, a complete series of situated meanings (Gee, 199, p. 80) where her definition of a good student will influence her views on good teaching. As Selena’s time as a M.Ed. student passes, it is relevant to explore how these situated
meanings of good teaching and being a good student are negotiated within the M.Ed. Program, and how this negotiation conflicts with Selena’s perceptions of the teaching profession and how her position as a language learner is challenged by the new narratives she is finding in both the M.Ed. Program and her placements in elementary and high school.

After analyzing my data and looking for patterns, some of the semiotic constructions found in Selena’s narratives of good teaching involved the importance of teaching culture in the language classroom, the role of accents in the construction of teacher identity, the importance of classroom management (dispositions) and the role of creative assessment forms for learners to be more successful.

In Selena’s professional landscape, the narratives that appeared to be more important and repeated involved her interaction with students, her mentor teachers and peers in the M.Ed. Program. By analyzing the tensions generated by the interactions between Selena’s narratives and the narratives of the M.Ed. program, and after coding my existing data, I was able to explore the dichotomies generated in Selena’s professional landscape, in order to construct a clearer understanding of Selena’s reality and needs as a prospective teacher. Selena’s experiences and interactions within her professional landscape generated two main categories: Narratives of a successful language learner, and narratives of good teaching. Within the narratives of good teaching, several interconnected, conflicting narratives were identified: Selena’s narrative of teaching culture and grammar in the classroom, the challenges of classroom management, and the lack of accent seemed to be crucial in Selena’s construction of her teacher identity.
Narratives of culture.

One of the key expectations for students to be successful in the M.Ed. Program was for students to be able to reflect on their teaching experience. By asking students to reflect on their practice and experiences, it was expected that they would be able to identify the changes in their narratives, while learning from their challenges, in order to become strong, reflective teachers. In other words, it was expected that students would analyze how they transitioned from students to teachers, while they learn to analyze how their situated identities are negotiated to create their designated teacher identities (Sfard and Prusak, 2005, p. 19) To complete their reflective experience, students were asked to write about their experiences and discuss how they could handle their challenges more effectively when in the classroom.

In their fall teaching methods seminar class, students were asked to write two essays at the beginning and end of the quarter, in which they explained their guiding principles and goals when teaching a foreign language. With regards to this assignment, the syllabus for the Methods Seminar requested; “You are asked to write what you believe about how people learn languages and the best way to teach them” (Methods Seminar Syllabus, September 2009). The goal of this activity was to discuss, after submission of the assignment, how much these goals changed as the learning of the student teachers progressed. In her first essay, Selena reported,

My guiding principles are [not]fully developed in my mind just yet, I strongly feel that they will be derived in some way from my two main objectives for teaching the Spanish language. The first objective is to give students a global knowledge
and cultural awareness. The second objective is to teach students how to effectively communicate in another language. (Perspectives on teaching assignment, Methods Seminar, September 2009)

As suggested in her statement of intent, at the early stages of the M.Ed. Program, Selena’s narrative still appears to be built upon her previous positioning as a language learner. In this comment, Selena seems to consider the situated meaning of culture as the most relevant factor in her teaching. As she emphasizes the word and makes it a top priority in her assignment, she has created a cultural model where language teachers must be geared towards teaching cultural differences between the languages first, and the communication process second. As this analysis progresses, readers will find a mention of the term *culture*, which appears to play a key role in Selena’s cultural model of teaching. In this positioning, Selena seems to have a situated meaning of the construct of successful teaching, in which the situated meaning of culture appears to be even more important than effective communication skills in the target language.

In Selena’s narrative of a good teacher, teaching culture appears to be crucial. From a narrative perspective, it is relevant to analyze how culture in foreign language affects Selena’s views and narratives of good teaching in her professional landscape. In her time in the M.Ed. program, her negotiation of the situated meaning of culture will define Selena’s narrative of good teaching, and will affect her search for the designated identity of teacher (Sfard and Prusak, 2005 p 18) which is her main expectation at the end of the licensure program. It is the set of expectations of Selena’s actual identity as a language speaker, and the conflict with the M.Ed. program’s designated identity of
teaching, the key factors that will create a series of conflicting narratives in which Selena must make sense and perform according to the expectations of the M.Ed. program, in order to succeed in her graduate studies.

In foreign language learning, it is safe to assume that language and culture are being learned simultaneously, rather than in isolation from one another. However, as Hadley, (2001, p.347) explains, not all foreign language teachers visualize learning culture as an important goal in their lessons, mainly because of time constraints in their curriculum, fear of not being proficient in the target language culture, or to avoid dealing with students attitudes and misconceptions of the culture being taught. In the context of the M.Ed. Program, students are reminded that language and culture are intertwined, and must be taught in conjunction, rather than in isolation.

The M.Ed. Program’s narrative construction on culture relies heavily in the construct of teaching for cultural understanding, where teachers are expected to promote cultural awareness and cross cultural understanding in their lessons (Hadley, 2001, 105). In order to help students appropriate this construct and make it part of their teaching narratives, M.Ed. students are invited to reflect on how to incorporate culture to their language lessons. During their classes and in their readings, students were motivated to use culture as an element of the language learning process. In order to help students grasp the importance of culture in foreign language teaching and learning, during Fall quarter, and as part of their preparation for elementary student teaching, students were asked by their professor to create a series of culture lessons that would focus on specific cultural items, while connecting these items to the regular language learning process. In addition
to the culture lessons, students were asked to write a rationale about the importance of culture in the foreign language classroom. The prompts in the Methods Seminar for this assignment were “In groups you will create a culture lesson that incorporates principles of culturally relevant teaching and present it to the class. A lesson plan will be submitted.” (Culturally relevant teaching assignment, Methods Seminar Syllabus, September 2009).

In this past prompt, the methods seminar professor appears to request for specific goals from the students, which should align with the M.Ed. Narrative of culture teaching in the classroom. As Selena’s group decided to do a presentation on Sports in Spain, she chose the following rationale to explain the positioning of her group as language teachers who believe in culturally relevant teaching.

Lessons in culture are not only important for students who plan on traveling to Spanish speaking countries, but also [to] reach an understanding about other cultures that we live amongst. The United States is one of the most diverse countries in the world and there is a lot of culture to be exposed to and a lot of opportunity to apply use of the target language, as well. I would like to prepare students to go out into the world whether it is limited only to a small town in [her home state] or extends from here to China. (Rational paper on culture use, Oct. 17, 2009)

Hadley (2001) defines Culturally Relevant Teaching as establishing connections between the culture of the language being taught and the grammar concepts at hand, using strategies that make foreign language culture relevant and meaningful to students.
In her group’s past comments, Selena explained her beliefs in regards to the importance of culture in the foreign language classroom, which appear to focus on diversity and exploring the differences of others, while learning a foreign language in the process. In the connection between culture and language, Selena’s narrative appears to align with the demands of the M.Ed. Program. While Selena is positioning herself as a teacher who supports the construct of culturally relevant teaching, this positioning does not conflict at all with her past views on culture, learned apparently in her previous positioning as a language learner. It is relevant, then, to explore whether this narrative of teaching culture in the classroom transforms or conflicts with the goals of the M.Ed. Program as time passes.

Selena’s definition of culture in foreign language education appears to involve interaction and understanding among diverse ethnic groups. In addition, her understanding appears attainable only by traveling and interacting with these groups in their reality, where they use the language being learned. In other words, Selena’s situated meaning of CRT seems to involve seeing and experiencing foreign cultures in context. This definition, which aligns with the narratives of foreign language learning in the humanities, might become a challenging task in the discourse of the American K-12 educational system, where students might not even have a situated meaning of culture. It is the negotiation between these situated meanings, that will transform Selena’s actual identity of teaching in the context of the M.Ed. program.

Selena’s vision of culture, however, did not seem to transform from her early stages in the program, as explained in her personal statement, which is a part of her
Capstone project, a main requirement to attain teacher licensure. During winter quarter, M.Ed. students must complete a capstone project, which includes a research project and different additional documents to demonstrate the student teacher’s growth as a prospective teacher. In their personal statement, as a follow up to the perspectives assignments from the Methods Seminar, students were asked to tell their narratives, in order to explain their motivations to become foreign language teachers. The Capstone Seminar director included the following directions for students to complete the assignment.

Personal Statement

In Ed T & L 615/616, you wrote a Perspective Paper. Given your most recent experiences and development as a teacher, you will revisit this paper and modify it to reflect your new understandings of yourself and your developing role in the profession of foreign and second language education. Your personal statement should include the following narrative (in essay form): a) a clear introduction of yourself to the reader of your Capstone Project; b) a reflection on your background, particularly as it relates to languages and culture; c) your decision to become a foreign language teacher; and d) your personal and professional development throughout your M.Ed. experience at [University Name] (Prompts for Personal Statement Assignment, Capstone Seminar Syllabus, January 2010)

In the Personal Statement prompts, students are asked to expand the ideas discussed in their perspectives on teaching assignments, while explaining how their ideas have evolved during their experience in the M.Ed. Program. By requesting the use of
narratives, the M.Ed. Program professor aims to help students to clearly position themselves in the professional landscape of foreign language teaching. Selena’s reaction to this assignment reflected her opinions on the role of culture beyond the language learning process itself, when she focused her narrative on her experiences when traveling abroad.

There are many reasons why I would like to become a teacher; however, my studies abroad have influenced me and continue to influence me the most. By living with host families, I was immersed in both language and culture. Although I was able to perfect my language ability that was not what changed my life. My first study abroad took place in Chile. I never thought that I could learn so much about myself and my country while living in another country. The Chileans were so accepting and eager to learn about us as Americans that it made me realize how close minded many Americans can be. Especially when this is a country made of immigrants with no official language established (Personal Statement, Capstone Project, 3/7/2010)

Selena has just explained why she believes traveling abroad and learning about other cultures is important. At the same time, she is establishing a negotiation between her designated identity as a teacher and her situated identity as an advanced traveler and a language learner. In her narrative of good teaching, she is establishing connections between the experiences acquired when traveling, and the importance of traveling abroad. As she mentions her experiences in foreign countries in this utterance, she makes an associates traveling with a tool to improve her language proficiency. In her experience as
a learner, her trip to Chile changed her views on foreign culture; and, in turn, she believes other language learners must experience this life changing event. When Selena positions her narrative of traveling to become familiar with a foreign culture as crucial, she seems to give less importance to the language learning process itself. In this dichotomy between cultural understanding and language learning that Selena has created, culture is the entrance door to learn a foreign language effectively. In her now different positioning in the professional landscape, Selena has built a connection between travel and culture, yet there is not a clear link between the language learning process and this cultural interaction.

As interns are encouraged by their professors to teach the culture of the target language in context, the concept of teaching culture in the M.Ed. Program appears to be a cultural model that is shared and co-constructed among faculty and teachers in general (Gee, 1999, p.81). Selena explored her personal beliefs on the importance of culture and diversity in a later version of her Personal Statement, while she still places language learning as a less influential experience in her learners. “I want to help nurture the minds and hearts of future generations so they can value the diversity of this country and create global citizens rather than just a citizen of the United States of America.” (Capstone Project, Personal Statement, 4/22/2010)

In this writing, Selena discussed one of her personal goals within the teaching profession in general. While a safe assumption is that language learners who are proficient must be able to interact using the target language, Selena discussed how, in her personal narrative, nurturing love for diversity and cultural differences in her students
appears to be more important. A possible conclusion is that Selena has constructed an actual identity of teaching where teachers have the opportunity to share their appreciation of Spanish speaking cultures, (Sfard and Prusak, 2005, p. 19). This cultural model of teachers as seasoned travelers who share their experiences with others will conflict, to an extent, with the actual identity of teachers Selena found in the M.Ed. program and in her high school placement.

**Narratives of good teaching.**

In her positioning as a learner and a later student teaching within the M.Ed. Program, Selena brought her personal experiences and narratives previous to her graduate studies. During our interactions within the M.Ed. Program, which usually happen in the form of conversations or in class discussions, Selena brought her narrative on the role of teachers as supporters and nurturers. It seemed that one of the key elements in the construction of a successful teacher narrative, Selena visualized student/teacher interaction as vital. A clear construction of this narrative, where teachers nurture and support their teachers can be observed in Selena’s statement of intent, which was written before joining the M.Ed. program, and as a requirement to be accepted as part of the 2009-2010 cohort. Towards the end of her statement, while explaining why she wanted to become a licensed teacher, Selena concluded:

> In closing, I would like to say that being a teacher is like being a patient gardener. With the right tools, a little hard work, and patience, the seeds of young minds can grow into a beautiful field of flowers. If someone would just give me the soil, I
would love to be that patient gardener. (Statement of Intent to apply to the M.Ed. Program, Fall 2008)

In her early narrative before joining the M.Ed. Program, Selena used a socioculturally-situated metaphor of teaching, where students and learners have clearly defined roles. Teachers are compared to gardeners. A good teacher is a nurturer, who motivates students to learn and instills in them the motivation required to learn the subject matter in question. In her personal narrative, a good teacher also appears to be a motivator. Students, on the other hand, have the role of being willing to receive knowledge, represented in the nurture and passion of the gardener that Selena represent in her classroom. As Selena began her classes in the M.Ed. Program, these narratives appeared to be challenged by the existing narratives within her high school placement and in the program itself.

In this well developed metaphor of teachers as gardeners, Selena has constructed a series of situated meanings for the teaching world, where the teacher gives learners all the means to succeed, and learners are tabula rasa. Knowledge, represented in the world of the gardener, is transmitted in idealistic conditions, and students are only expected to become involved as a passive part of the learning process, in ways that do not visualize conflict or challenges addressed in the PKL of the M.Ed. program. Selena and I discussed the role of Selena’s students in her situated meaning of teaching at the beginning stages of the program, when she said that, in order to be successful in her classes, students needed “Willingness to learn, the rest I’ll provide” (Conversation 1, January 19, 2010).
This comment shows Selena’s initial narrative of the teaching profession and what she would expect from her students in order to become successful Spanish learners. She has constructed a situated meaning of the teaching profession. (Gee 1995 p. 80). In Selena’s metaphor of teaching, learners are only made accountable for being willing to learn. At this early stage in her M.Ed. studies, it is not possible to infer Selena’s actual view of the teaching profession, but it is possible to use this assertion to document how she has started building connections between the narratives of teaching and learning. These connections, and the conflict found between her narratives of teaching and learning, and those Selena found in the M.Ed. program, will be the key factors in the construction of Selena’s designated identity as a language teacher, which will conflict with the actual identity of teaching expected by teachers in her high school placement and in the M.Ed. program.

During the early stages of her student teaching, Selena defined her teaching role as one of responsibility, in which learning takes place mostly by personal effort made by the teacher. In contrast, and as her student teaching experience progressed, the following answer shows how much Selena’s narratives of good teaching changed from the beginning of the program, to the final weeks before graduation.

I think the best way for a student to be successful is to be open, to getting to know the language and culture and getting to know me, cause I feel that once that I’ve developed that relationship with the students that they wanna learn more from me and I can better educate them, so, I think kind of, just being open and getting to know me as a teacher (Conversation 2, May 27, 2010)
In this statement, how Selena has articulated different points of view addressing what students must bring to her classroom to become successful. Although Selena still believes strongly that willingness to learn is the key factor for a student to be able to succeed in her class, she now has situated her role as a teacher differently within the professional landscape: her students should also be open minded, willing to discuss cultural issues, and interested in establishing a relationship with Selena as a teacher and a person. At the same time, even though Selena still seemed to believe that the teacher is the primary person responsible for students’ success or failure, she has modified the connections between her narratives of teaching. Now, her past experiences as a learner do not play such a key role in her construction of a narrative of good teaching. This change of beliefs could be taking place because Selena realizes that her narratives as a learner are different to those of her students. In Selena’s transforming narrative, she seems to be acknowledging interaction and negotiation as key factors in her students’ learning process.

**Narratives of teacher’s proficiency.**

Language proficiency also plays a vital role in the ideology of student teachers when discussing their teaching identities. As demonstrated by Pavlenko (2003), and Butler (2004), when student teachers believe their proficiency is subpar, their self confidence is seriously affected and their struggle to identify themselves as good teachers is greater. This affirmation was also supported by Cooper’s study (2004) in which student teachers’ level of self confidence was directly related to their personal definition of
foreign language proficiency, and whether they will be able to reach their personal standards of excellence when using the target language.

In one of our conversations, Selena and I discussed the importance of being proficient in the target language and her definition of proficiency. While we talked about the influence that her high school teacher had on her, and Selena then addressed indirectly how her narrative on foreign language proficiency had changed after she met her high school teacher again some years later.

Julián: How different, from your perspective as a student and now as a prospective teacher, how different is, was your learning process from the things you have been learning in the M.Ed. program in terms, you think you learned the same way we have taught you how to teach, or how different was it

Selena: I think that it was actually very similar, [the language teaching methods used in high school and in the university] my high school teacher offered a lot of input, started out slow you know, Spanish 1, she would try to do, you know, some, and then, by the time of Spanish 4 it was all, in Spanish. In hindsight now, I met her and talked to her, boy does she have an American accent on her Spanish, but I might too. People compliment me a lot that I don’t; but I don’t know (Conversation 1, January 19, 2010).

In this comment, Selena appears to have constructed a narrative of foreign language proficiency, where accents are not the standard for an effective foreign language teacher. These comments strongly support Medgyes’ (1994) findings on the idealization of the concept of Standard English, in which Non Native speakers of the
English language struggle to reach the personal, unrealistic, unattainable standard of Native Speaker of English in their classrooms. In her teaching situation, Selena appears to have a narrative where she prioritizes the lack of accent as an element to be a good language teacher. In this respect, Selena appears to have created a dichotomy where good teachers have no accents, and subpar teachers do not possess a standard pronunciation of the Spanish language. As part of her teacher identity in construction, Selena recognizes the strengths her high school teacher had with regards to handling the pedagogical content knowledge\(^7\) in her classroom. In her previous comment, Selena acknowledges she has been praised for her lack of accent, while she subtly criticizes her role model (her high school teacher) for having an American accent when speaking in Spanish. In the context of teacher education as a whole, Selena’s prioritizing of this proficiency narrative could affect her teacher identity adversely. As stated by Gee (1999) identity construction involves diverse factors other than “just language.” Other factors, such as the situated meanings of the language, the cultural models and how the language is used in discourses and context, are crucial to language interaction. By focusing heavily on language accent as a disadvantage in the teacher profession, Selena could end up neglecting some of her other narratives, which could be as important for a language teacher as being fluent in the target language. It is important, therefore, to explore Selena’s other narratives and contrast them with her belief that good teachers lack of accents, and see how they interact with each other in the construction of her professional landscape.

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\(^7\) Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) as defined by Schulman (1986)
Consequently, one of Selena’s narratives that constructed her perception of good teaching involves being fluent in the target language, in which an English accent is not acceptable. It is important, as a result, to explore how other aspects involved in Selena’s perception of being a good teacher affected her performance and her interactions with others during student teaching. While exploring the importance of being proficient in the language, and being able to speak without accents, Selena showed yet another narrative that conflicted with those given to her by the M.Ed. Program: the importance of teaching grammar in the foreign language class

**A narrative of grammar in the foreign language classroom.**

As the M.Ed. Program supports a series of effective and research proven language teaching methodologies, its narrative of effective teaching strongly supports the application of the concept of communicative competence as proposed by Hymes (1972) and later applied to language learning itself by Canale and Swain (1980). Under the premise of communicative competence, the goal of the students is to be able to effectively communicate in specific contexts, rather than focus on mastering the language from an academic perspective that lacks of a context. Gee (1999, p 80) supports this approach with the construct of situated meanings, that can only exist by means of communicative social interaction. The importance of language learners being able to perform in specific contexts is also supported by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) standards for the preparation of foreign language teachers (2002) in which language teachers are expected to be able to help students
understand complex grammatical structures in the context of the target language in which they are used.

However, this narrative that focuses on teaching language in context while allowing students to decipher grammar rules in the process of communication, could be misinterpreted by student teachers, who sometimes ended up positioning grammar as irrelevant in the language learning process. Consequently, and although mastering of language grammar should not be considered the main goal of language teaching and learning, teachers are expected to master all grammar concepts and rules in order to find different ways to guide their students through their learning process. This assumption on teacher knowledge is supported by Grossman, Schoenfeld and Lee (2005), who explain how teachers must be able to address the potential challenges of their learners from all possible perspectives. (p. 205). Such a skill requires mastery of the subject matter being taught. This explanation has roots in the concept of Pedagogical Content Knowledge as explained by Shulman (1986) who proposed that teachers must be able to explain the concepts of their fields of expertise from all angles, because of the different backgrounds and needs of their learners.

In foreign language learning, grammar learning, although challenging and discouraging for students, is important for mastering the key concepts of the language being learned. It is a necessary component of the communicative competence when learning to communicate in context. Some students enjoy mastering the language and openly communicating in realistic scenarios, but do not visualize learning grammar is not a pleasant experience.
In Selena’s narrative of good teaching, grammar appears to be less important for her learners than actual communication. Consequently, the teaching of grammar was downplayed in her lessons. As a result, during her student teaching, Selena found herself in an inner struggle with her teaching style and the program’s goals. As the program progressed, some of the methods Selena strongly believed were the most effective; were apparently criticized consistently by the program itself and even her students in the classroom. The genesis of this conflict can be found in winter quarter, when the M.Ed. Program faculty begins preparing their teachers for their first high school teaching experience. Shortly before Selena’s first lesson, we had a short conversation on the challenges she believed she would find in her student teaching experience. She then mentioned;

For me the hardest thing to teach will be grammar. Grammar lessons are boring, you know, I’m gonna try and find my own way to make them more interesting and more understandable, especially, you know, sitting in, you know, in the FSLED program, where a lot of those, a lot of my colleagues in that program are so super into the grammar and love the linguistic elements of it and I don’t, I would rather give them lots of comprehensible input for them to be able to start understanding the grammar in their own terms, I don’t wanna make it like eh here’s a verb, here’s how you conjugate it (Conversation 1, January 19, 2010)

The previous assertion shows how Selena finds common points between her narratives on grammar and the construct of communicative competence learned in the M.Ed. Program. As student teachers are advised not to focus on grammar in the language
taught, but rather give students the tools to find the grammar rules on their own.

Afterwards, Selena discusses how she believes this particular narrative has met some resistance from her peers, yet she still seems to believe that students do not need to learn grammar rules in order to successfully communicate in a foreign language.

In this particular context, there seems to be a disconnection between the narratives of both the M.Ed. Program and Selena from her position as an advanced learner. In Selena’s cultural model of language teaching and learning, she has connected the main activity of speaking a language with interaction and culture, and the action of grammar learning is a lesser priority in the process. However, in the M.Ed. program’s narrative of good teaching, it is expected that teachers are able to explain grammar concepts from different perspectives, while still teaching to communicate effectively in context. Selena, however, connected the activity of grammar learning to a narrative where grammar is more of a burden than a tool to learn foreign languages. Her clear definition of grammar as boring not only lessens the importance of grammar in language learning, but also shows how her personal beliefs and experiences conflict with the situated meanings of teaching and learning thin the M.Ed. program has created. And although situated meanings can be transformed and negotiated by interaction (Gee, 1995, p. 80), this negotiation will not transform the actual identity of language teachers as grammar proficient, as it is expected in the designated identities of language teachers within the context of language education (Sfard and Prusak, 2005). In some of her comments, Selena expressed how she is not willing to negotiate her situated meanings with the M.Ed. program, (grammar being boring, a personal search for her own teaching style
where grammar is less dominant), but rather prepare to teach using a style more relevant to her actual, unchangeable teacher identity.

Selena’s negative perception of grammar manifested very strongly during one of my observations, in which she was teaching past participles to her Spanish students. After being questioned by a student on a verb conjugation, she started explaining the grammatical nature of the concept to her students. At this point she made a particular comment in front of the class that revealed her feelings on the matter. “I hate these words. Spanish is fun, if we didn’t have irregulars” (Class observation # 5, April 29 2010)

Selena made this past observation in the middle of a grammar explanation that, apparently, she was not enjoying. This comment seems to confirm her narrative on the importance of the Spanish grammar concepts she is required to teach in class, but that she appears to consider not as relevant as the actual conversational skills or the cultural knowledge required to successfully communicate in the language. As the activity of teaching the grammar concept takes place, a series of secondary actions are taking place. She has shared her dislike for grammar with her students, and has tried to position herself as a learner and a regular student who, in Selena’s opinion, finds grammar concepts boring and somewhat unnecessary.

Even though Selena’s views of teaching grammar seem to be in compliance with the teaching expectations of the program (more focus on interaction than grammar explanations) and the current teaching methodologies taught to her in the methods seminar, she seemed to find some resistance among her colleagues in the M.Ed. program, and even among her students, as the following warrant shows.
I sometimes, I, do have difficulty, it is easier just to speak the language, but then they wanna know why and, and then they say how do you conjugate this verb and I’m like, how do you conjugate that verb, like, what is the irregular yo form in the passive, like, what the heck, and when they come at you with questions like that, and that’s when I go back to the roller coaster, and sometimes I feel like maybe I don’t know anything about Spanish (Conversation 2, May 27 2010).

The previous reflection by Selena shows how she seems to have found some friction with her students’ narratives when trying to avoid teaching complex grammar concepts in her classroom. Students, in Selena’s words, seem to be inquiring how and why the Spanish language works. Selena, however, appears to believe strongly in the importance of using verbal skills and communicative tools rather than focusing on grammar. Due to the existing conflict between her beliefs on the importance of grammar and the narratives she has found in her students and mentor teachers, Selena might be in a situation where her self confidence is diminished, and she does not meet the standards set by herself to become a good teacher. As explained by Butler (2004) this negative self perception of teachers affects greatly their construction of their teaching identities.

A second interpretation is probable for the previous claim. In her narrative of good teaching, Selena explained to me the importance of teachers being fluent in the language and able to identify with their students and share their concerns. Her goal is, seemingly, to build a relationship, a connection between her identity as teacher, and her Spanish students. But, in most cases, Selena’s support for the use of language in context has affected her perceptions of the activity of teaching grammar. She has, therefore,
created a discourse where her meaning of grammar is not negotiable with the situated meanings found in the M.Ed. program. This belief has seemingly created a conflict between her narrative and the narrative of her students, who in this particular activity revealed they wanted to learn more grammar in Selena’s lessons.

At this point, a new conflict appeared, represented in the situated meanings of good teaching supported by Selena and her students. While Selena has built a situated meaning of grammar that, in her opinion, is supported by research and the M.Ed. Program’s rules, her experiences in the classroom and with her teachers conflict with the existing narrative of the K-12 learning scenario. As a consequence, she appears to question her strengths as a teacher, or the authenticity of her good teacher narrative, where grammar is not crucial to be successful in the classroom.

It is possible to assume that Selena’s beliefs on Spanish grammar are a key limitation that conflicted her narrative on the teaching profession. Concurrently, it is also a possibility that Selena was aware of her knowledge of Spanish Grammar was an area of improvement. While reflecting on her elementary student teaching experience, she mentioned:

This week during my lesson, I decided to take on the challenge of introducing a new grammar point. Grammar is not something that comes easy to me, nor do I really like teaching or learning about it. I realize however, the important role it plays when learning a language so I stepped out of my comfort zone and decided to give it a try. (Student Teaching Reflection, Winter 2010)
This excerpt of Selena’s teaching reflection, written at the early stages of Selena’s high school student teaching experience, discussed how Selena found the teaching of grammar challenging since the beginning of her internship. As she willingly admits that she does not enjoy teaching or learning Spanish grammar, she recognizes that grammar has a place in the narrative of the M.Ed. Program for successful teachers, even if in a minor capacity. Her situated meaning of grammar is negative and discouraging, as she emphasizes in every sentence. This can be found in her definition of grammar as a personal challenge and even an unpleasant experience. At this early stage, Selena had already discovered that in order to be successful according to the M.Ed. program’s expectations, she had to adjust her narratives on teaching to the requirements of the M.Ed. Program, the expectations of her mentor teacher, and the expectations of her students in general.

A potential interpretation of this written reflection is that Selena’s apparent discomfort when teaching Spanish grammar has affected adversely her perception of teaching as an exciting activity. It is possible that Selena misinterpreted the approach of the M.Ed. Program towards focusing on target language use, and decided to work more on alternative assessment projects and additional teaching tools that were more appealing to her and her personal narrative of good teaching. However, when Selena was exposed to the reality of teaching a foreign language, where grammar is needed as a complement to the communication skills required to succeed, she found her beliefs affected and questioned, which turned out to be unpleasant and even discouraging for the young intern. A clear manifestation of this inner struggle can be found towards the end of
Selena’s student teaching experience, when she was challenged by a more experienced teacher who did not agree with Selena’s methods and views on teaching and assessment. Although Selena was able to support her beliefs and perceptions on teaching to this particular teacher, she later expressed to me her frustration and sadness when she felt she was not supported by her mentor teacher, who was present at the time of the confrontation. And although Selena asked me not to get involved due to fear of seeing her interactions with others in her high school placement affected, this experience affected her to an extent where she became more of a traditional teacher in her final lessons at the high school. While her teaching style was questioned, her approach to classroom management was also questioned not only by others in her placement, but by me as her supervisor as well.

**Conflicting narratives of classroom management skills.**

In the M.Ed. Program, effective classroom management is an important part of the narratives of good teaching the program reinforces. The key element of this narrative was always the reiteration that keeping students engaged would minimize all classroom management challenges interns could find in their classrooms. The teaching grading rubric given to interns before the start of the program listed what both supervisors and faculty would consider as strong classroom management skills. This rubric divided the teaching expectations of the program in three groups: Lesson planning, teaching techniques and classroom management. Those areas were graded in four different levels: Excellent, good, in progress, and needs improvement.
Figure 7: Assessment tool for M.Ed interns, September 23, 2009

### Assessment tool for MEd interns 2009-2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AREA/POINTS</th>
<th>Excellent (9-12)</th>
<th>Good (6-8)</th>
<th>In progress (3-5)</th>
<th>Needs improvement (0-2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lesson Planning</strong></td>
<td>• Consistent and structured use of advanced organizers • Warm up consistently in TL • Variety of activities (3-5)* • Length of activities appropriate to content • Consistent and effective modeling of each activity (in TL) • Smooth, logical transitions • Effective mixture of new and review materials • Clear objective(s) for lessons/activities given to students</td>
<td>• Some use of advanced organizers • Warm up in both English and TL • Variety of activities (2-3)* • Length of activities generally appropriate to content • Effective modeling and pacing</td>
<td>• Limited/awkward use of advanced organizers • Warm up in English • Variety of activities (2)* • Length of activities somewhat related to content • Inconsistent, unclear modeling • Awkward/illlogical transitions • Little review, mostly new material • Disorganized lesson plan • Objectives inconsistently stated on lesson plan or to students</td>
<td>• No advanced organizers provided • No greeting or warm up • No variety of activities • Length of activities with little relevance to content • No modeling of activity • No transition/connection to previous or future material • No review • Objective(s) not stated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Techniques</strong></td>
<td>• TL nearly always; effective use of L1 • Teacher/student talk well balanced • Effective and frequent comprehension checks • Visuals enhance lesson and are used effectively • Tries to involve all students • Appropriate body language supports classroom management and student participation. • Projects voice well, appropriate intonation • Consistently able to adjust lesson to circumstances</td>
<td>• TL used most of the time; L1 used more than necessary • Teacher talks more than necessary; still good student talk • Some comprehension checks, effective when used • Visuals used frequently and somewhat effectively • Most students encouraged to participate • Body language enhances class, but is not used as a tool • Projects voice well most of the time • Frequently able to adjust lesson to circumstances</td>
<td>• TL used sometimes, L1 used too often • More teacher than student talk • Checks comprehension but could be more effective • Many students do not participate; focuses on one section of the classroom • Body language somewhat appropriate • Visuals somewhat related to lesson; used somewhat effectively • Projects voice and uses appropriate intonation sometimes • Some difficulty adjusting lesson to the unexpected</td>
<td>• TL rarely used • Nearly all teacher talk • Very few comprehension checks • No visuals/unrelated to lesson • Calls on same students (volunteers only) • Inappropriate body language • Poor voice projection and intonation • Unable to adjust lesson to the unexpected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Class Management/Discipline</strong></td>
<td>• Effective techniques for keeping students on task • Consistent, fair, timely consequences for students' behavior • Teacher circulates appropriately for activity • Positive rapport • Models professional behavior</td>
<td>• Students frequently on task • Somewhat consistent, fair and timely consequences for students' behavior • Teacher circulates appropriately sometimes for activity • Mostly positive rapport • Models somewhat professional behavior</td>
<td>• Students sometimes on task • Inconsistent consequences for behaviors • Teacher circulates infrequently • Somewhat positive rapport • Inconsistent modeling of professional behavior</td>
<td>• Students seldom on task • Little or no response to students' behavior • Teacher does not circulate appropriately for activity • Poor rapport • Does not model professional behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Final Score: (Lesson Planning: /12; Techniques: /12; Class Management: /12; Total = /36)

* for Clinical Practice only

Comments and suggestions:
Although Selena was aware of the narratives of the program in terms of successful teaching and classroom management and discipline, she did not completely agree with the program’s expectations. In her elementary placement at the beginning of the M.Ed. program, she mentioned how successful she was when working with her students in the classroom.

The students were motivated because of the good rapport that I was able to develop with them. I developed this through thoughtful inquiry into their personal lives, their likes/dislikes, and taking an active interest into what they do. The class wanted nothing more than to please me, thus giving them a motivational factor. The next thing that they had was the confidence to try. I believe this was due to my ability to encourage the students and by giving every student the opportunity to succeed. (Teaching Reflection 4, December 2009)

In Selena’s teaching experience at the elementary level, she did not seem to have any major classroom management issues that affected her performance as a teacher. Therefore, and also because of her existing narratives of culture and foreign language, she constructed a classroom management narrative connected with her past experiences as a learner, where teachers nurture and share experiences with their learners, rather than a more disciplinarian focus, and students are willing to please and perform to their teacher’s standards. This perception strongly ties to Selena’s socioculturally situated gardener metaphor, which reappeared towards the end of her high school teaching practicum, when she mentioned her narratives of good classroom management in our
second conversation. “I think my classroom management probably is one of my strongest things” (Conversation 2, May 27, 2010)

However, the M.Ed’s narrative of being a good teacher focused heavily on classroom management, and its definition was slightly different from the narrative used by Selena in her experience as a language learner and student teacher. In my role as the program’s supervisor and enforcer, my views apparently collided with Selena’s perception of effective classroom management and her application of the concept during my observations. During my visits to Selena’s classroom, I found a particular group of students that were mostly disruptive and, I think, not as respectful of her as they should have been. Upon discussing these negative attitudes of her students with Selena, she not only disagreed, but was adamant in believing that she was doing good work with these particular learners, as they were obtaining satisfactory grades in her classes. Selena’s reasoning was that, if the academic results were taking place, and if the students were learning the concepts explained by her, she could be more relaxed in terms of discipline. In the lessons taught in this particular group, noise levels were above standard for Selena’s high school placement, students seemed to be disengaged, and sometimes even disrespectful towards Selena as her teacher. These results would place Selena directly under the needs improvement area of the M.Ed. program rubric used to measure the success of the student teachers in the classroom.
• Students seldom on task
• Little or no response to students’ behavior
• Teacher does not circulate appropriately for activity
• Poor rapport
• Does not model professional behavior

(Assessment tool for M.Ed. Interns, September 23, 2009)

However, since Selena connected academic results to her situated definition of good teaching, classroom management and discipline seemed irrelevant. This originated a conflict between narratives and the expectations of the M.Ed. program.

Although Selena’s views on classroom management appeared to be producing the results she expected as a teacher, some of the mismatches between her narrative as a student teacher and the goals recommended by the program showed. Even though Selena’s students were reaching the results she expected, by program standards her classroom management skills were subpar. Selena believed firmly in her narrative of classroom management and chose not to negotiate her meaning of classroom management until the end of her student teaching, as she expressed to me in several of our informal conversations. On the other hand, and since her mentor teacher supported Selena’s approach to classroom management in our conferences, I had to negotiate my definition of classroom management and accept Selena’s views in this particular discourse.

Interestingly enough, this particular, relaxed perception of classroom management that Selena has, seemed to be similar to the approach used by her mentor teacher, with
whom Selena did not seem to want to be compared. It is interesting to note that Selena saw this laid back approach in classroom management in her mentor teacher, but does not want to be associated with it, as expressed in the following comment. “I’m always going, I’m always fast, I always wanna do better, I always wanna try to fit more and, and she has a more laid back attitude with it.” (Conversation 2, May 27, 2010)

The previous sentence explains how Selena sees herself being more focused on teaching her subject matter than her mentor teacher, who is more laid back, according to her own words. On the other hand, Selena previously admitted that she is willing to be more laid back in terms of discipline and classroom management if the students are performing up to her standards. However, in this particular context, Selena’s construct of classroom management appears to involve discipline and academic performance, which can be interchangeable, as told to me in one of our meetings. “if they are doing what I ask, why should I bother them? They have plenty with all the things going on here at the school” (informal communication, April 13, 2010) In Selena’s perception, if students are reaching the standards, classroom behavior is a minor concern. Selena’s view, however, conflicted greatly with both the M.Ed. narratives and my perception as a supervisor, in which both performance and discipline are interconnected. My perception was supported in the views of the M.Ed. Program Faculty and the teaching rubric supervisors used during our observations, which clearly expressed the vision of the program in terms of outstanding classroom management and discipline;
• Effective techniques for keeping students on task
• Consistent, fair, timely consequences for students’ behavior
• Teacher circulates appropriately for activity
• Positive rapport
• Models professional behavior

(Assessment tool for M.Ed. Interns, September 23, 2009)

The previous description from the observation rubric used by the M.Ed. program reflects how Faculty and supervisors strongly believed that a narrative of a good teacher involves good student behavior, which is associated with a role oriented interaction between student teachers and language learners while in the classroom. Selena, however, did not seem to abide to this rigid narrative of discipline as a strong construct when students were performing according to her academic standards. This presented a small conflict between her and me as a supervisor, and a representative of the university and its standards. Our views were, in this aspect, drastically different. What seemed to be disrespectful from the students, in my opinion, (students yelling at each other and sitting in different corners of the classroom, textbooks closed, apparently ignoring Selena and her explanations: while talking loudly about topics not related to their Spanish learning) appeared to be acceptable behavior in Selena’s class.

This conflict between my narrative and Selena’s, where our stories on classroom management and discipline conflicted, to the point where we held several meetings to reconcile our different views on classroom management. While Selena had the academic
results of this particular group of students to support her narrative on classroom management, my narratives and cultural meanings developed during my years as a supervisor conflicted with Selena’s approach. Given the fact that these students were reaching the school standards and seemed to be performing according to Selena’s expectations, it was I who had to negotiate my narrative in this particular context, as I had to accept her mentor teacher’s recommendations to approve Selena’s performance in terms of classroom management skills. Although Selena agreed to become somewhat stronger with this particular class and her demands, the results and the positive interaction she had with this group allowed her to continue with this particular narrative as part of her landscape within her student teaching context.

As her student teaching progressed, Selena repeatedly tried to demonstrate how much her style differed from her mentor. It was, to an extent, difficult for Selena to accept some similarities in style with her mentor teacher. In our second interview, I established a comparison that Selena refused to accept, when talking about teaching styles and classroom management.

[After discussing how Selena handled some classroom management issues in her class]

Julián: So, how different is that from your mentor? Because I mean, that sounds just like what your mentor does, and you’re saying you’re not like your mentor

Selena: [hesitating] wait, what?

Julián: You’re just saying that those things make you different, and that’s what you do, that’s your teacher voice, but that sounds a lot like, what your mentor does,
Selena: No. My mentor is a lot more laid back in the classroom, like way more laid back, she lets a lot of things go in the classroom management than I do, for sure, and she’ll tell you that, she says that, something that she wants to work on, personally, we’ve talked about it, she always compliments me on it, cause I’m much more firm (Conversation 2, May 27, 2010)

In this segment of a conversation, Selena and I discussed her reaction to an incident in the classroom. After seeing Selena’s behavior, I noticed her reaction was similar to Maríá’s relaxed, usual behavior. However, she was very adamant when clarifying that her conduct was different to what her mentor would do in such a situation, and even commented how her mentor supports Selena’s stronger approach. I believe, therefore, that Selena’s struggle to construct her teacher persona is due to the contrasting her perceptions on classroom management and student interaction, supported by the program, her mentor and Selena herself. Simultaneously, even though Selena partially negotiated her definition of classroom management to be closer to my views and expectations as her supervisor, she came to question those expectations and her personal beliefs as the program progressed, yet she applied her own narrative of classroom management to her student teaching.

Narratives of being a good student.

During my observations and discussions with Selena, I noticed her concern about being able to fulfill the requirements of the M.Ed. program, but I was not sure of the source of these concerns. In an effort to balance her personal life and her graduate studies, Selena was able to complete the requirements to become a licensed teacher.
During the process, I did notice that her aforementioned concerns were directed mostly at her academic performance. Upon submitting one of the various assignments given to her in the Methods Seminar, Selena added this note to her Professor.

Ok... here it is! Hope you like my ideas and how I tried to build on what the students already know. Let me know what you think. I loved all the feedback last week, it was very helpful (Methods Seminar Submission, October 7, 2009)

Some repetitive patterns can be analyzed in Selena’s discourse when contrasting the previous remarks with those given to her research project professor upon submitting a position paper assignment later in the school year.

I really like the direction and tone of my position paper so far, however, my fear is that you won't and it's not what you are looking for. I decided to stop where I am... before getting into tons of research... to get your feedback then go from there. Please let me know what you think! (Capstone Seminar Submission, January 27, 2010)

The same word usage and expression observed in the two previous comments can be found in most of Selena’s submissions and even in some additional comments given during my classroom observations. Upon detailed observation, it is possible to find some repetitive expressions that contribute to Selena’s semiotic meaning of good teaching, where she is assembling cues to construct the situated meaning of a good student (Gee, 1995, p. 85). As it is the case with situated meanings, as defined by Gee, Selena seems to be willing to negotiate her definition of good teaching with her professors. Comments such as let me know what you think and I hope you like it can be read through most of
Selena’s submissions. These expressions and its usage helped me conclude that, to an extent, Selena is concerned that her narrative of being a good student could conflict with those of the M.Ed. Program, which could reflect in her final performance. My conclusion can be supported by the following statement, given to me by Selena in our final conversation merely weeks before the end of her student teaching experience. In this narrative, she addresses the struggle of feedback and comments from diverse sources, and how she plans to approach those experiences learned in the M.Ed. Program in the future.

I feel that I have the skills, now applying it, and, I think, what’ll be really nice is when I’m not getting feedback from like three or four different directions, that makes it very difficult to know what I’m doing, like, I’ll follow the feedback from my mentor teacher, then I get observed and they give me different feedback. And then I get observed by another person, they tell me something else, and then we go to our classroom meeting with my colleagues and I’ll say this is what I’m doing and they’ll shoot that down ten ways from Sunday, I feel like when I get on my own, I feel like I will really come into my own to be a better teacher.

(Conversation 2, May 27, 2010)

In the previous comments, Selena expressed her discomfort and frustration when given feedback that seemed confusing when it came from different sources. It is interesting to notice, however, that Selena seems to believe that she will be a stronger teacher when given the chance to follow her own instincts and beliefs, beyond the expectations of other people who might not be familiar with her context or teaching style. As she uses the conflicts generated by diverse types of feedback, she reveals her personal
struggle to build a cultural model and a situated meaning of teaching languages that can be accepted by others involved in her process to become a language teacher. It is possible, consequently, that Selena is, to an extent, performing to satisfy the demands of the program, even though those demands might not satisfy her personal narratives or ideologies on successful teaching. These comments appear to explain the struggle of the diverse narratives in conflict that Selena faces at the different levels of her professional landscape, as explained by Clandinin and Connelly (1995). In Selena’s professional landscape, her narratives of good student might be a somewhat unattainable standard, and her willingness to perform up to the program’s standards appears to affect her personal views on teaching and her experiences in her high school placement and her relationship with her mentor teacher.

**Power relationships and beyond.**

There is also an additional element that I believe is important to Selena’s identity construction. My role as her supervisor seemed to affect her answers for the project. In fact, some of Selena’s answers to me and the other authority figures within the M.Ed. Program were, to an extent, affected by what Selena believed were our expectations. One of Selena’s key narratives, therefore, seemed to define good teachers as good students, which sometimes conflicted with her narratives on teaching. In several instances, Selena’s answers could be interpreted as a performance, where she was eager to meet the expectations of the authority figures within the M.Ed. Program and tried constantly to follow their lead and answer the questions in a way in which, she thought, was satisfying everyone and moving through the different stages of the program. This behavior would
not necessarily reflect Selena’s beliefs on good teaching, but would comply with the M.Ed. program standards. A clear example of this performance took place during Fall quarter. After submitting one of her assignments for her Teaching Methods Seminar, which I had to grade, she added the following note;

    Ok... here is my reflection from my first lesson. I will be emailing my second reflection to you by 6:00 on Sunday. Let me know if you were expecting more or if there is anything you would like me to include in my next reflection. Thanks!
    See you tomorrow! (Teaching Methods Seminar submission, 10/18/2009)

The previous remark shows how Selena seems to be under a lot of stress trying to please me as her grader, and later as her supervisor, when we are interacting based on our power relationship. She showed concern while trying to meet my expectations in the Seminar, which could be identified as extreme caution. Selena knew how important my role as a supervisor was, and this was, perhaps, the reflection of her fear to see this project affecting my perception of her and our future intern/supervisor relationship.

    As time passed, I noticed the same pattern repeating again with some of the other relationships Selena had in the M.Ed. Program. When submitting a very important portion of her research project, Selena stated; “Wow this was tough! I have never really done a lit review. Hopefully this is what you were looking for, if not please direct me to where I can get help! Thanks! Happy grading!” (Capstone Project Submission, January 27, 2010)

    In the past affirmation, Selena kept addressing her Capstone Project Professor with a discourse identical to the one used to talk to me when discussing her assignments.
She repeated terms that appear to look for a common semiotic meanings between her personal expectations and those in charge of the M.Ed. program. At this point, Selena is trying to find relevant systems that make her a successful student, which involves approval of her performance by others (hopefully this is what you are looking for). At the same time, none of these utterances was confrontational in nature. At the same time, Selena is, apparently, deferring to those with more experience in the program, without strongly stating her opinions, but rather mentioning her hard work and her intention of reaching the goals set by her teachers in the M.Ed. Program. Her goal appears to be to be able to adjust her narrative of being a good student to the definition proposed by the M.Ed. program, while mentioning her dedication to the program as one of her characteristics of a good student.

At this point, Selena’s narratives seem to align with those within the M.Ed. Program. In both cases, a good teacher is identified as proficient in the target language, familiar with the most effective teaching methodologies, and able to adjust his classroom management style to the needs of her students, while having the appropriate dispositions to be concerned for her students’ success. It is the interpretation of those narratives by those involved in Selena’s landscape that causes conflict and affects the construction of her teaching identity.

It can be concluded, therefore, that since Selena is in the middle of a power relationship struggle, where she believes that she must defer to the narratives of others more experienced than her. Selena, apparently, in terms of classroom management and alternative assessment, has a definition of teaching that does not necessarily agree with
the definition given to her by her peers, professors or mentor teacher. Yet, she appears to agree with all members of her professional landscape in the M.Ed. Program, as she is aware this relationship will evolve and transform upon her completion of the teaching licensure requirements.

All these interactions Selena faced during her tenure as a student appeared to affect her personal beliefs as a teacher, and, to an extent, her dispositions towards the teaching profession in general. However, as part of the professional landscape of the teaching profession, Selena is exposed to a series of narratives that frame a specific discourse (Blommaert, 2005, p.51). Within every social interaction, framed within power relationships, (M.Ed. Program as an institution vs. a student teacher) there is a different series of narratives that, consequently, conflicted with Selena’s personal world and her own personal narrative as a student. This intersection of stories seems to reflect the framing of sociocultural theory and interaction discussed by Enciso (2007), in which human thought is affected by the diverse stories that took place in both the individual, and the interactions with others.

Even if Selena’s personal narratives sometimes conflicted with the expectations of the M.Ed. Program, her reaction in the instances shown (classroom management, alternative assessment and teachers as gardeners) was to comply and try to abide to the narratives to those of the program as a whole. She tried to assimilate the designated identity of teaching created by the M.Ed. program. However, as Selena’s student teaching progressed, these conflicts became more evident, and her narrative of teaching as an ideal profession transformed while she was part of the M.Ed. program.
As I was aware of the meaningful challenges that those interactions would represent for Selena, I explored to what extent she was aware of the effect those stories could have in her personal story.

**Selena: conclusion.**

Early in the school year, Selena was a very open minded student, with strong beliefs about education and the importance of culture when teaching/learning a language. As the year progressed, I saw how several of Selena’s narratives were strongly challenged by the narratives of the student teaching experience. At the same time, Selena transferred some of her personal narratives on culture, grammar and traditional assessment forms to her student teaching experience. In this regard, while Selena progressed greatly to become a very proficient Spanish teacher, she acknowledged that she had to use some of her previous experiences from the past and adapt them to reach the standards of the M.Ed. program. For instance, Selena mentioned that she learned some of her most effective classroom management techniques during her days as a restaurant manager, which partially aligned with the classroom management skills learned in her M.Ed. courses. This was revealed to me towards the end of her student teaching in one of our meetings.

Even though several of her teaching narratives (love for the language, target language proficiency, ability to understand her learners) carried on during her student teaching, Selena saw her perceptions constantly challenged by the program and even other teachers outside the M.Ed. program, as in her confrontation with a teacher in her placement. In the end, in order to survive and become licensed, she performed her role as
a student within the narrative of a community of practice, as defined by Lave and Wenger, (1991) as she was trying to reach the expectations of those in a power position. Upon completion of the program, she had the opportunity to test those beliefs and explore whether she would be able to handle the pressure and the different sources of discomfort in the teaching world.

Selena supported a narrative where grammar was a less important concept that would not be as beneficial for students as learning the culture of the target language. This approach was not negotiable for the narratives of the M.Ed. program, in which being knowledgeable of the subject matter is crucial to succeed as a licensed teacher. The challenge Selena experienced when making sense of this narrative is, to an extent, similar to the findings of Moran (1996), whose participant created a series of narratives where she considered a less effective Spanish teacher due to developing language proficiency after being licensed to teach the language.

After obtaining her licensure, Selena married her fiancé and chose not to pursue a teaching position. Instead, she joined the business world. Although it is clear to me that she loves the Spanish language and culture, some Selena’s expectations of the teaching profession did not match the narratives she found in the M.Ed. program and in her placement, which caused her to move on to a different profession. In a later conversation one year after completing the M.Ed. program, she explained to me that, besides financial reasons making the teaching profession not as attractive as it was when she joined the M.Ed. program, she had additional reasons not to become a teacher.
I love the language and culture I love making creative lesson plans and using my art to communicate to the students... but I HATE the cattiness of the other teachers. I don't care for the administration and over all politics and direction of public schools. I didn't feel my mentor teacher was very supportive and just over all the year left kind of a bad taste in my mouth. [Capitals in the original] (Email communication, September 14, 2011)

As Selena explained, the narratives she found conflicted with her perceptions of teaching in general. Now, far from the teaching profession, she keeps in touch with her M.Ed. Program peers and me, now in a different capacity. She has all the tools and experience to become a strong, powerful teacher of the Spanish language, but her existing narratives and experiences with foreign languages modified her initial goal to make teaching her career.

Conclusion

In the previous analysis section, I have described in detail the context in which my participant negotiated meaning within her Professional Knowledge Landscape (PKL) within the M.Ed. program. Upon constructing this context, I observed and documented Selena’s growth in the program as both a students and student teacher. As I recorded her narratives on teaching, learning, language proficiency and culture, I identified some of the conflicting narratives Selena found, which required an identity negotiation process. This negotiation ended with Selena’s decision not to pursue a teaching career, due partially to not being able to reconcile some of the conflicts she found between her narratives and those in her placement. These conflicts between narratives motivate a
deeper analysis as to why these conflicts took place, and how contradictory are the existing and new narratives of these two student teachers. These conflicts and how they are approached will be addressed in the following chapter.
Chapter 5: Discussion and Implications

Introduction

The main goal of this research project was to record the identity transformation and growth of a student teacher in a Masters of Education Program (M.Ed.) in Foreign and Second Language Education (FSLED) in a Research one University (R1) in the United States. With narrative inquiry as my theoretical framework, I documented both individual and common stories of my participant, her views on language learning and language teaching. At the same time, I documented how my participant’s narratives conflicted, were negotiated and affected by her year in graduate school, and when teaching in her high school placement.

Through narrative analysis, and after discussing my participant’s expectations of the research project, six coding categories emerged: 1) The role of teaching in the classroom, 2) the importance of culture in the foreign language classroom, 3) the meaning of successful teaching, 4) teaching dispositions, 5) personal expectations and 6) the dichotomy of Mentor teacher vs. Student teacher. I discuss the context in which foreign language majors become involved with the teaching profession, which affects their personal views of the teaching profession and their expectations in general. To explore the issue further, I addressed the apparent disconnection between language programs and education programs within the landscape of R1 universities. Then, I discuss
the views of my participant towards language learning, language teaching and culture, and how their identity is influenced in the context of teacher education. Then, I will move towards discussing the role of teaching education programs as mediators between theory and practice within the teaching profession. Finally, I will summarize my study.

**Language Speakers vs. Language Teachers: Conflicting Narratives**

According to their data since 2008, the Modern Language Association (MLA) website\(^8\) shows that 21,071 college students graduated with a major in foreign languages, literatures and linguistics. In contrast, most of the students in the M.Ed. Program are foreign language majors from the United States.

The goals of Modern and Foreign language departments are clear and concrete. After doing Internet research on the goals and requirements of several R1 Universities in the United States, I found several common points in regards to their goals and expectations from students. For instance, in its foreign language website, a major R1 University explains;

> The Department of Spanish and Portuguese is dedicated to the study of the Spanish and Portuguese languages, literatures and cultures, from introductory language skills courses to specialized graduate seminars. Our courses focus on the many different facets of literary, cultural, and linguistic expression found throughout the history of the Hispanic civilizations and their contact with other cultures. (Statement, Language Website, R1 University)

\(^8\) [http://www.mla.org/cgi-shl/docstudio/docs.pl?fisurvey_results](http://www.mla.org/cgi-shl/docstudio/docs.pl?fisurvey_results)
This statement shows how undergraduate students from a R1 university are oriented towards the importance of literature and culture when learning a foreign language. This phenomenon is common to other universities in the same area.

The Department of Romance Languages and Literatures (RLL) prepares students of French, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish with more than basic reading, writing and speaking skills. Our courses also feature the histories, politics, cultures, customs, and literatures of countries that speak Romance languages. (Statement, Foreign language website, R1 University)

As the past statement from another R1 University, the main focus of their language department is to teach students to speak and explore the culture of the foreign language. There is not, however, a concrete emphasis on the differences between teaching and learning a Romance Language. Some R1 Universities do mention teaching as a possibility, but do not focus on teaching as a whole.

Thanks to the importance of Spanish in the United States and the world at large, knowledge of Spanish is at a premium throughout the United States' economy. Spanish teachers are in high demand at schools and universities; businesses are eager to hire people with knowledge of Spanish; and Spanish is increasingly valued in fields such as nursing, law, social services and policing. Your knowledge of Spanish will place you in an excellent position to develop careers in sales and marketing, business management, government administration, university administration or tax assessment. (Statement, foreign language website, R1 University)
Although this last statement mentions that language majors could pursue a career in teaching, it is possible to conclude, based on the aforementioned statements from three different R1 Universities, that the focus is not on training teachers, but rather language users who are able to interact in a different culture and use a language proficiently.

As a result, it appears that language program alumni develop clear views on language use and learning, but are seemingly unprepared to deal with the challenges of language learning from a teaching perspective. When they finally have the opportunity to join the teaching profession in a permanent basis, conflict takes place between their narratives as learners, and their newly found student teacher identity. It is possible to conclude, then, that the focus on language acquisition from language departments creates some tension with the language teaching focus of teacher education programs such as the M.Ed.

The M.Ed. Program in FSLED, on the other hand, lists very concrete expectations for their prospective students:

The M.Ed. teacher preparation program is a full-time graduate program that begins in the summer and may be completed in four quarters. The program includes professional courses leading to both the master’s degree and initial Ohio teacher licensure in foreign language (grades K-12). Students engage in a coherent series of interdisciplinary core courses, content-specific courses, seminars, a research and inquiry component, the internship (combined field experiences and clinical practicum), and a culminating Capstone Project focused
on critical issues in foreign language education. (M. Ed Program Statement, 

Although both language and language education programs appear to have 
concrete goals and directions, it is challenging to clearly establish a connection between 
the two of them. In addition, the standards and expectations of an undergrad program 
usually differ to those of a Masters level. In language education programs, it appears to 
be the rule that language proficiency is not a goal. However, and even though students 
are apparently aware of this condition, their expectations of language use are different 
from what they find in the program and their teaching placements. Upon completion of 
her undergraduate program, and before joining the M.Ed. Program, Selena showed in our 
conversations that she had a clear vision and definition of the Spanish language and 
culture, generated mostly by her personal motivations to learn Spanish. My participant 
appeared to love and live the Spanish culture, and the differences related to learning a 
language other than English. This particular scenario leads me to believe that my 
participant, to an extent, saw herself as an ambassador of the Spanish language and 
culture. However, at the beginning of her graduate studies, Selena did not appear to be 
truly aware of the challenges associated with language education, or the difference 
between speaking a foreign language in its real context and learning how to teach others 
to speak their language of choice. In both cases, it seems that Selena truly enjoyed 
sharing her views on Spanish language and culture, but was not aware of the obstacles 
she would face when sharing her views with students within the US K-12 school system, 
where the needs and narratives of the students are different to their individual needs as
advanced, educated foreign language speakers. In their student teaching experience, interns will usually face classrooms where diversity is the norm. In these scenarios, students with diverse backgrounds and expectations might not have language learning as one of their top priorities. This difference in narratives is a clear conflict between language learners in the K-12 American system and students in the M.Ed. Program.

To support my argument, and for the purposes of this discussion, Table 3 shows an average track for undergraduate Spanish majors in a Midwestern R1 University. Although programs, classes and requirements might differ among programs, Table 3 represents the most common elements I found in undergraduate foreign language programs.

**Mandatory Classes for Spanish Majors in R1 Universities in Midwestern USA**
- Basic language classes
- Advanced Grammar
- Intermediate Spanish Composition
- Introduction to the Study of Literature and Culture
- Spanish Pronunciation

**Afterwards, learners might have three possible groups (major tracks)**

- **Group A**
  - European Literatures and Cultures

- **Group B**
  - Latin American Literatures and Cultures

- **Group C**
  - Spanish Linguistics

- **Electives**
  - Business Spanish, Advanced Composition, Research, etc.

Table 3: Courses required for Spanish majors at Midwestern R1 universities in the US
Table 3 summarizes the possible tracks existing for Spanish majors at Midwestern R1 Universities. Upon completion of four advanced level classes that focus on advanced learner skills, students have the possibility of choosing one of three groups of classes that are intended to make learners proficient in one specific field of the Spanish language. Elective classes, however, are not a major track, but rather an existing series of courses to reinforce the skills acquired in the other three groups of courses.

Classes offered at most Spanish Programs appear to guide learners to truly master the Spanish language and its culture while fostering cultural immersion as a vital part of the language learning process. It is not the goal of undergraduate programs to provide the skills required to become a successful language teacher in the American K-12 scenario. The focus on language nurtures in its participant true love for language, literature and culture without keeping language education as a consideration. It is possible to conclude, as a consequence, that when an undergraduate language major decides to pursue foreign language teaching education as his or her major, this person has not been truly exposed to the challenges of American schools and the needs of high school learners, which differ to those of an undergraduate student.

In the case of Selena, her passion for Spanish language, culture, alternative methods of assessment and motivation to become proficient in the target language were in conflict with some of the needs of their students in the American Midwestern Suburb where their student teaching took place.

In the aforementioned scenario, undergraduate foreign language majors join the M.Ed. Program with a romanticized version of teaching, where interns visualize
themselves as the nexus between Hispanic languages and cultures and the high school student. This situation creates a mismatch of styles and motivations: teacher educators must mediate the clash of goals between interns, who are expected to perform according to the goals and regulations of the M.Ed. Program, and the high school learners, who are not always motivated to learn a foreign language. In addition, even though mentor teachers’ ideologies and narratives usually align with teacher education programs, they are under the pressure of school administration and parents, whose expectations and goals are sometimes different to those of the mentor, and consequently, the intern herself.

In this turmoil of goals, expectations and realities, the role of the M.Ed. Program should be a mediator, aiming to reconcile the differences between the sometimes idealistic narratives of the interns, and the complex realities that interns will face in American schools. This conflictive situation could be better addressed, however, if prospective language education students were more aware of the narratives they will be facing at the earlier stages of their teaching careers. By having both the M.Ed. program and the language major program assuming more proactive stances towards the possibilities students will face if they choose a teaching career, some of these challenges would be potentially less surprising for the interns.

Even though it is clear that language education programs are not responsible for language proficiency of the interns, and the M.Ed. Program does an acceptable job by informing prospective students about the challenges of teaching in the K-12 setting, some of these vital pieces of information reach the interns when they have already enrolled in the program, or when they are in the middle of their coursework. And because of the
different narratives and individual needs of prospective students in language education, teacher educators must be aware of the needs of prospective teachers and how they can be addressed. The necessity of individualizing teaching education programs, then, raises questions on the quality and standards of said programs if instruction is individualized. The following section addresses some of those needs and how teacher education programs can approach them.

**Teacher Education Programs and Their Role as Mediators in the Narrative Conflict**

The importance and the lack of uniformity in the teaching education field has been widely discussed and debated. To this end, Labaree (2003) states that

> There is not a set of standards for professional practice that operates reliably in promoting learning for most students. There is no way to reduce the amazing complexity of teaching, which is shaped by a huge number of variables that affect student learning, including everything from issues of time and place to issues of form and position (2003, p 2)

Labaree appears to believe that some challenges within the teaching profession are unavoidable. Consequently, the main objective should be for teaching education programs to prepare interns for these challenges, rather than looking for strategies to avoid them. Shulman (2008) agrees with Labaree (2003) on the lack of existing common grounds for teaching education, as he indicates that

> If we do not converge on a common approach to educating teachers, the professional preparation of teachers will soon become like the professional
education of actors. There are superb MFA programs in universities, but few believe they are necessary for a successful acting career. (2008, p.1)

Shulman advocates for a standardization of teacher education programs, or else there is a risk of programs being considered unnecessary for teachers. Although research has demonstrated the importance of teachers receiving appropriate training to succeed in their profession, the discussion needs to move to the grounds of preparing interns from homogeneous backgrounds to succeed in the diverse, complex scenarios they will face in American K-12 education. In this regard, it is important to explore how the conflicting narratives of my participant interacted within the PKL, and the consequences of this interaction.

**How Narratives Made Sense for Selena**

Rather than accepting the narratives given to her by the M.Ed. Program, Selena chose to make sense of the experiences she found by adapting the new narratives to her, instead of adapting her narratives to those found in the program and within the PKL. In her experience, it’s possible to assume that the narratives on language learning she developed in her time as a student in a language department before joining the M.Ed. program clashed strongly with the requirements and expectations of the college of education where she pursued teaching licensure. Selena had two conflicting narratives that, apparently, should not clash with each other. Her love of the language and culture clashed with the narratives of successful teaching imposed to her by the M.Ed. program, her mentor teacher and her supervisor. This conflict was, apparently, too difficult for
Selena to resolve and she decided not to pursue a teaching career, as her expectations were not on agreement with the narratives she found in the teaching profession.

Selena’s positioning in the PKL of teaching education was also problematic. While she tried to situate herself as a novice teacher in front of her supervisor and her M.Ed. program faculty, Selena also tried to position in front of her students as an experienced learner who could connect with them. This clash between her actual identity of learner and her situated identity of student teacher (Sfard and Prusak, 2005) contributed to Selena’s decision of leaving the teaching profession. As both identities contradicted each other, the conflict was too big for the prospective teacher to make sense of both narratives in context.

Selena’s previous experiences with foreign languages are more related to narratives of learning a language and using it in context, interacting with other users and learning about culture. In her experience as a learner, she created a narrative of teaching that was related to those experiences, and conflicted with the teaching narratives of the M.Ed. program.

In her time as a language learner first and a prospective teacher next, Selena developed narratives about how language teachers must be proficient in their field of expertise. Selena’s positioning as a teacher was also affected by her narratives and the context in which she interacted (Gee, 1998). While Selena did not position herself as a novice teacher according to the narratives of the M.Ed. program, she maintained most of her views on language culture cultural understanding she had while in her undergraduate
program. However, she found it challenging to negotiate the meaning of those realities with other language teachers and her students in her high school placement.

While these changes and clashing narratives might suggest that language teacher education programs should be, to an extent, personalized according to the narratives of their participant, it is important, in my opinion, to differentiate the standardization of terminology and fields of research in the teaching profession.

Grossman and McDonald, (2008) propose a discussion on diversity within the teaching field. This need of a diverse body of interns, however, requires that teacher education professionals set some standards as to what the content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and practical experiences should be, in hopes of producing more diversity aware, proficient, successful teachers. The creation of diversity standards, at the same time, requires that interns and researchers explore in more detail the connections between theory and practice in their profession, and the diverse backgrounds of student teachers, whose views on language and culture might not necessarily agree with those of teaching licensure programs in general.

However, the creation of concrete diversity standards and goals for the teaching profession does not involve a total personalization of the teaching field. Teacher education programs must play a mediation role, in which they act as a contact between the somewhat unrealistic scenarios that interns visualize before facing the complex reality of the American education system. It is only this mediation role that must be, to an extent, personalized to the individual needs of each learner, because of their different
backgrounds and individual experiences, perceptions and ideologies on the teaching profession.

Within this existing need to prepare interns to face diverse classrooms, Selena was an average typical prospective intern who joins the M.Ed. Program each year. Although she had clear narratives on teaching because of her background, and her dedication to the program allowed her to succeed in the end, it is clear that her needs were different from the other members of her cohort. And even though she appeared to be satisfied with her instruction and initially had a positive impression of the program, it is possible that her comments about the obstacles faced when receiving feedback and comments from various sources are probably due to her partial awareness of the teaching profession and the challenges she would face as a student teacher. Unlike other students, however, the challenges and interactions to which she was exposed led Selena to not pursue a teaching career upon completion of the licensure program.

This difference among students’ perceptions of similar experiences confirms the importance of exploring the narratives of interns in teaching education programs. As Sfard and Prusak (2005) suggested, narratives are the key element to explore why different people react differently to the same situations in similar contexts.

**Culture and Motivation: Narratives That Clashed**

Selena demonstrated repeatedly a clear appreciation for the Spanish language and culture. At the same time, she showed a strong inner motivation to share her romantic vision of language infatuation with others. In her desire to become an ambassador of the Spanish language and culture, and with a clear opinion of the important role Spanish
plays in her personal life, Interns have to navigate this view as they face the challenging reality of the American K-12 education system. In Selena’s case, her love of Spanish language and culture did not seem to change, but her perception of the teaching profession as a means to share her views with others affected her in different ways. Due to her high expectations and the personal challenges she faced during her student teaching, she chose to pursue another job not related to the teaching of foreign languages. Her love of the language was unaltered, but her view of the teaching profession was transformed.

In this respect, it is possible that language education programs could address the issue of cultural mediation in the classroom, and the initial perceptions of interns. While all prospective teachers appear to share the same goals and opinions regarding the importance of learning another language and its culture, not all of them are aware of the narratives present in the context of schools in the United States. When interns face realities in which students do not see language learning as a priority, or even as a useful skill in their future, their perceptions and beliefs are strongly tested. It is imperative for teacher education programs to teach interns to become acquainted not only with the needs of their learners, but also with each student teacher’s personal beliefs, ideologies and biases, and how they might affect their contact with the reality of teaching foreign languages in the context of the K-12 education system.

As interns’ perceptions are shaped by their narratives and the discourses where they belong (as defined by Gee, 1999), it is important to better prepare prospective teachers for the conflictive scenarios they will face. In order to encourage them to
continue being part of the teacher profession upon completion of their teacher education programs, and in the years to come.

**Limitations of the Study**

As in all research projects, some challenges surfaced when exploring the different aspects that constructed the narratives and identities of my participant. Given my role as a supervisor within the M.Ed. Program, it was difficult Selena to see me as a neutral observer, but rather as a representative of her professors at her teacher education program. While this was not a disadvantage, future similar research projects would require a closer contact with my participants, in which they do not feel that their beliefs or personal opinions might affect their performance in the language teacher education program. At the same time, I found myself struggling with my personal narratives, views and perceptions on language teaching and teacher education in general, which had been shaped by my experiences as a doctoral student and a foreign language teacher both inside and outside the United States. My definition of good teaching; mostly oriented by classroom management and teaching outcomes; was not necessarily in agreement with the views of my participant. In future research projects, it would be acceptable for me to embrace my background and narratives to construct my participants’ PKL from my perspective, which provides me with a powerful tool to recreate the narratives and expectations of teacher education programs, while still recording the conflicts found from the perspective of my participants.

Even though Selena would not openly disagree with my views, as she assumed she would be in disadvantage in terms of how our power relationship was built, she could
have generated a series of answers and data sources that gave her some power over my data analysis and findings. Therefore, for this analysis, I have focused on the perceptions and stories of my participant, in order to provide a clear description of how her perceptions and narratives transformed. If given the possibility to replicate this study, an even more active involvement of the participants would be encouraged, in which they would be encouraged to provide more frequent member checks when coding data, analyzing and interpreting narratives. As a consequence, by having more involved participants, data collection and analysis would be richer and cover both sides of the research spectrum.

It is evident that fields such as humanities, where language-learning programs are housed in R1 universities in the United States, and education departments, where language education programs originate, have different narratives and expectations for their students. However, as a considerable number of language learners decide to pursue language teaching as a career, a partnership between both fields of knowledge is required to help prospective teachers to succeed, by means of creating narratives of language learning and teaching that contribute to a more realistic set of expectations from prospective teachers.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, as I have outlined some of the challenges and obstacles found by my participant within the M.Ed. program in Foreign and Second Language Education (FSLED), I have also indicated how one intern faced different challenges in her particular context, and due to her specific, individual needs. As a teacher educator, I strongly
believe that interns must have the appropriate mixture of content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge and dispositions towards the teaching profession and their students. At the same time, I have also argued that both language learning and teaching education programs must work together to better prepare prospective teachers for the demands of the teaching profession. This preparation must take place by means of showing them a more realistic picture of the K-12 American classroom context. Concurrently, interns must be helped to realize that their personal beliefs and perceptions on language, culture and interaction might not be necessarily shared by their students, and that it is possible that a prospective teacher’s strong attachment to a foreign language and culture does not translate into love for the teaching profession in general, where demands and goals differ to those at the learner level in an American institution of higher education.
References


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Appendix A: Assessment Tool Used to Assess Intern’s Performance during Observations
## Assessment tool for MEd interns 2009-2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AREA/POINTS</th>
<th>Excellent (9-12)</th>
<th>Good (6-8)</th>
<th>In progress (3-5)</th>
<th>Needs improvement (0-2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lesson Planning</strong></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Consistent and structured use of advanced organizers</td>
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<td>2. Warm up consistently in TL</td>
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<td>3. Variety of activities (3+)</td>
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<td>4. Length of activities appropriate to content</td>
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<td>5. Consistent and effective modeling of each activity (in TL)</td>
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<td>6. Smooth, logical transitions</td>
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<td>7. Effective mixture of new/review material</td>
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<td>8. Clear objective(s) for lessons/activities given to students</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Techniques</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. TL nearly always; effective use of L1</td>
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<td>2. Teacher/student talk well balanced</td>
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<td>3. Effective and frequent comprehension checks</td>
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<td>4. Visuals enhance lesson and are used effectively</td>
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<td>5. Tries to involve all students</td>
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<td>6. Appropriate body language supports classroom management and student participation.</td>
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<td>7. Projects voice well, appropriate intonation.</td>
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<td>8. Consistently able to adjust lesson to circumstances</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Class Management/Discipline</strong></td>
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<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Effective techniques for keeping students on task</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Consistent, fair, timely consequences for students' behavior</td>
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<td>3. Teacher circulates appropriately for activity</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Positive rapport</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Models professional behavior</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Final Score: (Lesson Planning: 9/12; Techniques: 11/12; Class Management: 10/12; Total = 30/36) |
| Comments and suggestions: | Keep working on: |
| 1. Able to adjust lesson to circumstances | 1. Add a greeting/warm up before your lesson |
| 2. Variety of activities | 2. Don't let students get you off task |
| 3. Review of materials | 3. Reacting to students' behavior |

* for Clinical Practice only
Appendix B: Field Observation Forms (Sample)
Student: Selena  
Observation 5 (unannounced visit) Spanish 3, 5th period, 4/29/2010  
School: Far Away district, Mentor teacher: María  
Supervisor: Julián Vásquez  
*Objectives written on board  
*Activities in original lesson plan had to be changed due to extracurricular activities affecting regular schedule and attendance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>My views</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10:30</td>
<td>Lesson and observation start. Bell ringer activity, students start doing it without needing an explanation</td>
<td>No greeting or warm up activity? Class feels a little “cold”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:35</td>
<td>Selena suggests changes in bell ringer activity and asks students for feedback.</td>
<td>Although students disagree with her and with each other, this approach of asking for their opinion seems to be working for her, not sure if I’d do it in my class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:38</td>
<td>Activity with stopwatch and flashcards (in pairs) students compete to see how many words in Spanish they know. Selena keeps time and tells them to switch partners</td>
<td>As activity goes on, a student who was missing is completing a test from a previous class (he was absent) what’s the school policy on this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45</td>
<td>Review: Past participles. Students will have to use paper and pencil, grammar review of present perfect and how to use it</td>
<td>As explanation progresses, Selena takes a deep breath and says: “I hate these words. Spanish is fun if we didn’t have irregulars”. Why did she do this? She might be trying to identify herself with her students, but this is wrong!!! She is giving students reasons to dislike Spanish! She should be careful as to what she says and how she says it!! I need to address this after class!!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:55</td>
<td>Game: Tic-tac toe. Selena explains the rules to class. Students work in teams and have the opportunity to place x or o if they conjugate the verbs in present tense correctly.</td>
<td>As game explanation goes on, a student raises his hand and asks an irrelevant question about use of cell phones in class that completely disrupts the flow of the class. Selena chooses to answer the question. I believe she could have chosen to address this at the end of class. This same student, 5 minutes later, complains about Selena erasing blackboard too soon. (he was not even writing in the first place) Selena threatens to send him out, but it does not seem to be working. Some students are participating actively of the activity, others are sitting and not doing anything or talking to each other. Why does she let this happen?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:02</td>
<td>Explanation of tomorrow’s class activity and how the next exam will be graded (oral part, written part)</td>
<td>Noise levels increase, students are preparing to leave while Selena speaks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:04</td>
<td>Class and observation end.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Appendix C: Syllabus of M.Ed. Program Teaching Methods Seminar (Fall Quarter)

Methods of Teaching Foreign Language

Course Overview

This course will serve as an introduction to the principles of learning and teaching a foreign language in both the elementary and secondary contexts.

Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes – Pre-service teachers must know and demonstrate the content, pedagogical and professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to help all students learn.

- Demonstrate familiarity with the foundational theories of second language acquisition
- Demonstrate familiarity with best practices in lesson planning and execution
- Explain the role of culture in foreign language teaching
- Explain how theoretical foundations relate to classroom practices
- Design syllabi, activities and assessments for foreign language classes
- Draw links among proficiency standards, the academic content standards, instruction and assessment

Required Texts:


Grade A Notes Packet for ED T&L 615/616/884 (To be assigned by the GTAs)

Suggested Readings


on Education, Inc.


**Weekly Topics:**

Week 1: Characteristics of Young Learners

Reading: C & D Parts 1 and 2
Week 2: Lesson Planning for Young Learners, The Standards
   Reading: C&D Part 3

Week 3: Culture
   Reading: C&D Part 4, Hadley Chapter 8

Week 4: Connecting FL to the larger school experience
   Reading: C&D Part 5

Week 5: Classroom Activities
   Reading: C&D Part 6

Week 6: Theories of Language Acquisition, Overview of Methods
   Reading: Hadley Chapters 1, 2 & 3

Week 7: Comprehension, Teaching Receptive Skills
   Reading: Hadley Chapters 4 & 5

Week 8: Teaching Productive Skills
   Reading: Hadley Chapter 6 & 7

Week 9: Assessment
   Reading: Hadley Chapter 9
   Wiggins, The Case for Authentic Assessment

Week 10: Planning and Review
   Reading: Hadley pp 456-466

**Assignments and due dates (Note: All assignments are to be submitted on Carmen by 6pm on the due date. Emailed assignments will not be accepted.)**

**Elementary FE Lesson Plans (25%)**
You will create four lesson plans based around a theme for your Elementary FE. The lessons should be 15-20 minutes in lengths, guided by appropriate Ohio FL Proficiency Standards, age appropriate, fun and creative. They should include some form of authentic formative assessment. You will submit
a draft on the dates below, receive feedback and revise your lesson plan before delivering it in your placement setting. See Rubric for Details.

**Due Dates: Sept 30, Oct 7, Oct 14, Oct 21**

**Reflections on Elementary FE Lesson Plans (25%)**

After teaching each mini-lesson, you are to reflect on the experience. How did it go? What could you have done to make it better? If it was not successful, why do you think that was? Support your reflection with theory and expert opinion. See Rubric for Details.

**Due Dates: Oct 8, Oct 15, Oct 22, Oct 29**

**Perspective on Foreign Language Teaching and Learning (5%)**

You are asked to write what you believe about how people learn languages and the best way to teach them.

**Due Dates: Sept 25, Dec 4**

**Assessment Project (5%)**

You will create a lesson that includes multiple points of assessment, both traditional and authentic. Your project will include development of a rubric. Details will be provided in class.

**Due Date: Nov 24**

**Research Question (5%)**

In preparation for the Action Research piece of your Capstone, you will develop a primary research question.

**Due Date: Nov 20**

**Culturally Relevant Teaching Project (5%)**

In groups you will create a culture lesson that incorporates principles of culturally relevant teaching and present it to the class. A lesson plan will be submitted.

**Due Date: Nov 17**

**Annotated Bibliography (5%)**
You will find four articles, books, or other scholarly sources related to your proposed Capstone research question and create an annotated bibliography based on these sources.

**Due Date:** Dec 3

**Final Exam (in class) (25% of Grade)**

You will have a mid-term exam covering all class materials. This exam will take approximately three hours and will be administered in a final exam session on December 8.

**Grading**

**Grading Scale**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>% Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>73-76</td>
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<td>D+</td>
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<td>D</td>
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<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
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<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>59% or less</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Course Policies**

Attendance and participation are essential to building your knowledge base and skill sets as a foreign language teacher. Punctuality is expected.

All assignments must be submitted on Carmen by 6pm on the due date.

It is expected that all students will have read the course materials by the beginning of the week for which they are assigned.

All papers submitted must be in APA style.

If I email you with instructions to do something, please acknowledge the message and let me know that you’ve acted on it.

**Dates for your Calendar**

**Reminder of FE dates** –

Elementary FE -- Sept 21-Oct 26 (Mondays only; 5 hours per week)

Secondary FE Ib – Nov 2-Dec 4 (Mondays only; 5 hours per week)

Secondary FE IC – Dec 7-Dec 18 (20 hours total – spread across two weeks; flexible days and times)
Secondary FE II – Jan 11 – Feb 22 (Mondays only; 5 hours per week)
Clinical Practice – March 1-June 11 (12 weeks, 40 hours per week including before/after school duties and planning time) Note: These dates may vary depending on when your school ends. Time has been built in for professional development (TeachOhio; OFLA; Capstone Defense) and calamity/sick days. You will continue to attend and complete work for your winter quarter classes while beginning your Clinical practice placement.
Appendix D: Syllabus for the Professionalism and teacher education issues taught by researcher (fall quarter)

Issues on Teacher Ed. and Teacher Research

Fall 2009

*Course Objectives*/Learning Outcomes

Candidates preparing to work in schools as teachers or other professional school personnel must know and demonstrate the content, pedagogical and professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to help all students succeed.

Following successful completion of this course, the student will be able to explain and discuss issues related to teacher dispositions, pedagogical content knowledge and the NCATE Standards for the accreditation of teacher preparation institutions.

Required Text(s) and Course Materials

Text

Hammond, & J, Bransford (Eds.) *Preparing Teachers for a Changing World. What Teachers Should Learn and Be Able to Do*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers. (the chapters we are reading will be available in CARMEN.)


**Grading Plan/Grading Rubric** – In class presentations and lesson plan activities will be graded with rubrics. These rubrics are available in Carmen. Attendance and individual student performance will be assessed weekly. Your final grade will be based on your performance in this seminar and the previous part that you took during summer quarter 2009.

**Grading Scale**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
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<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>59% or less</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Course Calendar

Oct. 29: Theoretical Perspectives on Language Learning and Methodology

Readings:

Diane Larsen-Freeman and Donald Freeman:


Nov. 4: Introduction to NCATE

FOR THIS SESSION, WE’LL MEET ON WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 10 AM, PLEASE, MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!!!

Readings:

NCATE Standards: Chapters 1 & 2
Guest speaker: Associate Professor,
Nov. 12: Dispositions and challenges

Readings:

(1-12.)

Nov. 19: Reaching all students

Readings:

(232-274)

“I Won’t learn from you” by Herb Kohl

Discussion on classroom evaluation for last session

Nov. 26: No Class (Thanksgiving break)

Dec. 3: PCK, Closure

Readings:


Educational Researcher, 15, 4-14.

NCATE Standards: Glossary

Lesson activity and assessment of the topics discussed in class

**Lesson Plans due**

**Assignment Details**

More details will be provided on these assignments as the quarter progresses.

**Discussion (rubric provided) - 30%**

Working with a team of classmates, plan and implement a presentation featuring an interactive activity and a group discussion based on assigned readings. Plan to use about one hour of class time. Please provide your classmates with a handout summarizing key points from the reading. Each team must generate at least 3 questions to discuss during class time. You will also be evaluated based on your participation in your peers’ presentations.
Lesson Plan activity - 30%

This is an individual activity. Relying on the time you will have spent observing and analyzing the language classrooms you visited, and our classroom readings and discussions in this class and your Methods seminar, write a sequence of 4 lesson plans outlining specific topic. (Culture or 4 skills) Your lesson should include the story behind your students, the reasoning for each activity, an explanation of their relevance, and a concrete, well defined set of assessment and follow up activities. You will be given a specific group of students to whom you must address your lesson plan, and explain the reasons why you made certain decisions based on the needs of your learners.

When discussing the story behind the lesson, please consider:

1. What are the standards I intent to reach with these lessons?
2. What are my students’ backgrounds’ what do they need to learn?
3. What are my expectations as a teacher?
4. What are my students’ expectations?
5. What would my principal and my school district expect me to cover?
6. What would my parents expect from a foreign language class? What would they of the approach of my lessons?

Some of the possible scenarios in which you will need to apply your lessons include, but are not limited to:

1. A high school in East Ohio, where most of the students are not familiar with a foreign language or have not left their hometown. You are their first contact with a foreign language.
2. An urban high school in a big city, where a large percentage of the students have faced race and diversity issues
3. An urban high school with some of the highest dropout rates in the district
4. A middle school in which students are mostly immigrants from different countries and mother languages
5. A catholic school
6. A high school facing district budget cuts. Students and other teachers are very discouraged.

**Attendance, punctuality & participation – 40 %**

The student teaching seminar is designed to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas, and to provide an environment of support for you amongst your peers. Attendance, punctuality and participation are mandatory. If you will be late or cannot come to class, please call or email me as soon as possible.

Presentations and in class activities cannot be made up, and dates on other assignments cannot be modified unless discussed with me in advance.
Appendix E: Syllabus for the Capstone Seminar Class, Winter quarter

**Required Texts, Readings & Resources**


Occasional E-reserve readings as needed (see in-class announcements)

Closed reserves at the Education, Human Ecology, Psychology, and Social Work Library (EHS), Sullivant Hall (for samples of previous Capstone Projects)

**Materials & Supplies**

Please obtain the following materials to aid you in completion of activities, assignments and your Action Research Study:

- Notebook(s) to use for keeping a research journal, school field notes, etc.
- Folder or binder for keeping collected class materials and research artifacts
- Colored pencils, highlighter and 3x5 index cards for eventual data coding and analysis
Access to an audiotape recorder, digital recorder, iPod, etc. with external or good built-in microphone (if you plan to do interviews)

**Course Description**

The seminar will present multiple perspectives on teacher “action research,” focusing on the ways in which an **inquiry orientation** to pedagogy aids in fostering active reflection about teaching and student learning. A central goal is to guide you to apply an inquiry orientation to your teaching practice, and to see reflective inquiry as normal part of the art of teaching. Thus, the course will help you to develop the skills and habits of mind necessary to engage in disciplined inquiry and reflection around issues of language, literacy and culture in the constantly evolving educational landscape of the 21st century. The foundation you gain from this course will distinguish you from teacher colleagues who lack a similar, research-oriented, pre-service experience.

To achieve these goals, our seminar addresses pedagogical issues and teacher action research in the field of foreign and second language teaching/learning through a blend of theory and practice. Participants will a) engage in intensive class discussions and activities; b) conduct independent library research; and c) collect actual data in their individual teaching settings. Through this introduction to action research, you will learn how reflection and inquiry are integral parts of all aspects of teaching, including curriculum development, planning for student learning, understanding learners and learning, and monitoring and evaluating student learning. Class discussions will focus on
qualitative research theory and practice, and on your participation in the various school
cultures of which foreign and second language teaching is a subculture.

Other class activities and assignments will help you to meet the requirements of the
M.Ed. Capstone Project, which serves as the “alternative examination” for the M.Ed. in
FSLED (which is, in essence, a Master’s thesis plus oral exam). The course will
culminate in a practice session for the oral exam and the near-completion of the Capstone
Project. The Capstone Project is due during the spring quarter of 2010, and the oral exam
will take place within approximately two weeks of the due-date.

Goals, Professional Standards, and Tk20

The M.Ed. program in foreign and second language education (FSLED) is
accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE).
As such, our teacher licensure program is bound to exemplify and promote the standards
set by NCATE, in conjunction with the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign
Languages (ACTFL). The ACTFL/NCATE Standards for the Preparation of Foreign
Language Teachers are noted in parentheses according to each of the course goals that
represent these standards.

1) To **articulate the assumptions** that underlie your beliefs about teaching and
learning, especially as these relate to your inquiry questions for the Capstone
Project. (Standards 3, 6)
2) To **study** in-depth the specifics of teacher research, to engage in extended **discussions** and dialogue about specific **teacher research**, and communicate your acquired knowledge to your teacher-colleagues (Standard 6)

3) To **develop the skills** to conduct **classroom-based inquiry**, from a teacher-researcher perspective, as a means for continued reflection on practice (Standards 3, 6)

4) To **develop the skills** to work **collaboratively** with your mentors and teacher-colleagues, in order to exemplify professionalism (Standard 6)

5) To guide you through the **Capstone Project** requirements, which include a personal narrative, position paper, teacher action research study, and video reflections (Standards 3, 4, 6)

6) To **assist you with aspects of your field placement(s)** and your teaching experiences (Standards 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6)

7) To provide in-class time with peers and instructors to **reflect on weekly tasks**, situations, and theory/practice, which will facilitate your success during your teaching internships and in completion of your Capstone Project (Standard 3)

8) To prepare and engage you in **formal presentations** of inquiry-based knowledge to your teacher-colleagues (Standard 6)

**Tk20:**

Further information about Tk20, the “online portfolio” system that ________ uses for documenting teacher candidates’ attainment of benchmarks for licensure, will be provided in class.

---

**Written Assignments**

All assignments should be word-processed and double-spaced, using **12-point font size** and the standard, pre-set, 1-inch page margins. Times New Roman is the recommended standard font style. Professionalism is important, so all papers must be **proofread** and
include your name, the date, and the assignment title on them. Assignments are to be saved as an MS Word file (.doc or .docx) only, submitted electronically to the course “Dropbox” on Carmen, and must be posted no later than 4:00 p.m. on the due-date, no exceptions. Do not submit assignments to the instructor or GAs via e-mail.

All assignments should be saved electronically as “Lastname_Assignment_Title.doc” (e.g., Brown_Week2_Task.doc). Successive versions of the Action Research Study (plus any appendices) and Position Paper should be submitted as one single document. Points will be deducted for submission of multiple documents—do not make us “hunt” for piecemeal assignments!

You must also bring a stapled, printed copy of each assignment to class for reference, discussion, and in-class activities (which will include peer review and feedback). If you do not bring assignment copies to class, you will be considered unprepared for class and unable to participate in peer activities related to the assignment.

Because you will receive extensive, intensive feedback on your assignments (probably more than you have ever received on assignments before!), it is absolutely essential that all assignments be submitted on time. Note: All late work will have one grade deducted for each day the assignment is overdue. For example, an assignment that would have received an A on Wednesday will receive a B if it is submitted on Thursday.
Attendance & Participation

In order to participate fully in this course and in your professional preparation, and because our time together is so brief, attendance is mandatory. It is crucial that you come to every class on time. If you have a dire emergency and must miss any class or portion of a class, please e-mail Dr. Brown in advance. **NOTE: Please do not schedule meetings, appointments, etc., during class time!** In the event of a snow emergency and ______ closure, we will hold that week’s class meeting via Carmen, and online “discussion” will continue until the following week’s meeting (watch email for announcements and how-tos!).

You will lose attendance points if you habitually miss class, come late to class, or come unprepared. Please note that if you have two (2) or more absences for any reason, it will not be possible to receive an A in this course.

Graduate-level performance is expected from all students in the course. At the graduate level, it is assumed that students take initiative and are responsible for their own learning and the completion of assignments on time. It is also expected that you will do all of the assigned readings and weekly tasks and come to class prepared to discuss and evaluate them. Do bring questions that you may have about the assigned readings as a prompt and aid in our class discussions!
Professionalism

Laptop computer use is not permitted during class. Cell phones are always to be turned off during class, no exceptions! Receiving or making phone calls and text messaging are prohibited. Students who persist in using computers or phones during class, or whose phones ring, will be asked to leave the classroom and will have points reduced for class attendance. In short, “Be here now.”

Also, please do not chew gum or eat dinner during class. You are welcome to use your cell phone, check email, surf the Web, and eat during class break time or after class. Please be considerate to our cleaning staff and dispose of any papers or trash in the trashcan before leaving the classroom.

E-mail Correspondence and Communication

Do visit your instructor and graduate assistants in office hours, chat after class, or send an e-mail to discuss the course and its assignments! Indeed, it is expected that graduate students remain in frequent contact with their instructors and visit office hours often. Personal conversations are highly encouraged and preferred over e-mail. E-mails will generally receive a response within 24 hours, and e-mails sent late on Fridays or during the weekend will receive a reply on Mondays. Note: It is not acceptable to e-mail the instructor assignment before it’s due and ask them to proofread it or “check it over.”

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Instructors should *never* be treated as online, on-demand secretaries or editorial assistants. Assignment drafts will only be discussed in person during office hours, before assignments are due. Also, see “Writing Assistance for Papers” below.

Since we only meet once per week, I will occasionally send brief e-mail updates to supplement the course. E-mails will be sent only to ________ e-mail addresses, so if you prefer not to use ________ e-mail, you must set up an automatic forward (i.e., change the delivery address) on your ________ e-mail account.

As a professional, you should be in the habit of checking and promptly responding to e-mail at least once per business day (Monday-Friday) and maintaining a professional tone. If you must send an email to the instructor or graduate assistants that is beyond the scope of a brief question or comment (i.e., that will be longer than two or three sentences), you should make an appointment to speak with them *in person* in office hours or after class instead. E-mail should never be used to send “excuses,” to avoid personal conversations, or to “flame” at instructors, and you should *never* write anything that you would not say in person. It is always proper to use good “netiquette.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation &amp; Grading Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignments:</td>
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210
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment Description</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Task Reflections (7 @ 5 pts ea.)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Chapter Presentation</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Revised Research Question(s) for the Action Research Study</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>25</td>
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<td>Position Paper (final version)</td>
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<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>290 pts.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grading Scale:****

- **A (93-100%)**
- **A- (90-92%)**
- **B+ (87-89%)**
- **B (83-86%)**
- **B- (80-82%)**
- **C+ (77-79%)**
- **C (73-76%)**
- **C- (70-72%)**
- **D+ (67-69%)**
- **D (60-66%)**
- **E (59% or less)**

Assignment Descriptions
Specific details, directions, and grading rubrics for each of the following assignments will be announced in class:

**Weekly Task Reflections (7)**

For each week of class, you will find tasks listed on the syllabus under “Course Schedule” below. These tasks help you explore and expand on issues related to this course and your Capstone Project with your mentor teachers and other school personnel. Complete the tasks *before* the due-date, write a 1½ page summary (of substance, with examples!) of your experiences with these tasks, and be ready to address them in class.

**Group Chapter Presentation**

You and a partner will offer a 20 – 30 minute presentation on the highlights from your assigned chapter, and engage your classmates in discussion and activities that are intended to deepen their understanding of the issues addressed in the chapter. There should be clear “presentation” and “activity” portions, and opportunities for interaction *must* be included. It is highly recommended that you discuss your presentation with the instructor before the date of your presentation.

**Revised Research Question(s)**
Drawing on your tentative research questions completed during the fall quarter in Ed T & L 615/616 and the feedback you received, along with our class discussion and activities, write a 2-page paper in which you revisit your question(s), modify them, or recast them altogether. Discuss why you have chosen your topic, and why you have made any changes to the questions. Additionally, offer a “hypothesis” about what you think you may find as you explore the question(s), and any obstacles that you may face as you consider this Action Research Study. (Note: Qualitative research generally abstains from hypotheses, but it is crucial for you to explore potential outcomes, “issues,” and pitfalls as you plan for and conduct your research. All references to hypotheses should be removed from subsequent versions of your Action Research Study.)

**Action Research Study**

This paper forms the centerpiece of your Capstone Project and will be completed in four steps throughout this quarter: 1) Revised Research Question(s); 2) Action Research Study (first version); 3) Action Research Study (second version); and 4) Action Research Study (third version). You will revise and complete any outstanding elements of the Action Research Study during the Spring Quarter and include it in your Capstone Project.

**Personal Statement**

In Ed T & L 615/616, you wrote a Perspective Paper. Given your most recent experiences and development as a teacher, you will revisit this paper and modify it to reflect your new understandings of yourself and your developing role in the profession of
foreign and second language education. Your personal statement should include the following narrative (in essay form): a) a clear introduction of yourself to the reader of your Capstone Project; b) a reflection on your background, particularly as it relates to languages and culture; c) your decision to become a foreign language teacher; and d) your personal and professional development throughout your M.Ed. experience at _______. You are welcome to incorporate and expand on any educational philosophy statements completed in previous education courses, in keeping with your current thoughts and personal development.

**Position Paper**

The Position Paper allows you to explore and articulate your perspective on an important issue of your choice in foreign and second language education. This paper will be completed in three steps throughout the quarter, including: Position Paper topic, Position Paper (first version), and Position Paper (final version). The Position Paper will be included in your Capstone Project.

**Relationship to Other Courses/Curricula**

Edu T & L 926.45 is a required course for graduate students enrolled in the Foreign & Second Language M.Ed., and affords participants the chance to coalesce their learning experiences from other coursework and from field placement/internship/mentorship and student teaching experiences into a coherent and professional “whole.” The curriculum compliments other courses in the M.Ed. program and further develops important concepts.
related to 1) graduate studies; 2) foreign and second language education; 3) theory and practice; 4) qualitative research; 5) reflective practice; 6) professionalism; and 7) professional development in language education. This course also helps students complete the Capstone Portfolio and prepare for the oral examination, two central requirements for successful completion of the M.Ed. degree at ________.

**Course Schedule**

DTR = *Doing Teacher Research*  
ARLT = *Action Research for Language Teachers*

Note: Readings and assignments should be completed before the class period for which they are assigned.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1: January 6, 2010</th>
<th>Introduction to the course</th>
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| • Course requirements discussion  
• What is teacher research?  
• Capstone Project & samples  
• Research questions; the role of feedback; professionalism |

**Note tasks for the coming weeks:** Establish contact with field placements and begin discussion of Capstone Project with mentor. Look ahead and complete the Week 2 Task (and plan for/schedule Week 3 Task).
Week 2 Task: Discuss your intended Action Research Study’s Research Question(s) and project with your mentor(s) and solicit their feedback and suggestions. Discuss with your mentor the issue of student assessment and exams, i.e., format, skills assessed, scoring, amount of time for students to take exams and for evaluation, common tests for the foreign language department, etc. If possible, review examples of previous exam(s) with your mentor. How are students assessed? Importantly, how/could you use any of this data (or similar data you could generate with students) for your Action Research Study? What are some additional ways in which you might “assess” students or “measure” some aspect of student performance or beliefs for your intended Action Research Study?
Readings: ARLT, Ch. 1-2; DTR, Ch. 2-3; Ch. 4, p. 73 - 85

Due: Position Paper topic; Week 3 Task Reflection

Week 3 Task: Conduct a brief, 15-minute interview with your school’s principal (or assistant principal). Focus your interview around only two or three topics, particularly the value of foreign language education. (You could also inquire about ESL, student policy regarding discipline, teachers’ roles and responsibilities, teacher professional development, hiring of new teachers, and what principals look for in prospective job candidates, etc.) Be respectful of your administrator’s time, and thank them for the opportunity to learn more about the teaching profession!

Week 4: January 27, 2010

Field Notes

• Field notes, methodology and data analysis

Readings: ARLT, Ch. 4-5

Due: Action Research Study (first version, with Research Question(s), Literature Review and Data Collection indications); Week 4 Task Reflection

Week 4 Task: Arrange to spend one class period observing a teacher other than your mentor in your building. It need not be a language teacher—in fact, it will actually be more beneficial for you to observe a teacher from a totally different discipline, like social
studies, special education, ESL, biology or language arts. Draw the classroom set-up, and take as many field notes as you can during the lesson. After observation, speak with the instructor about their goals for the lesson, and how the lesson went. Ask the instructor to explain more about how their beliefs and experiences relate to their teaching practice. In your brief write-up, summarize the themes/goals of the class you observed, but focus on the teacher’s beliefs and how you saw them evidenced (or not) in their teaching practice. What did the teacher do well, and why? What might you do if you were to teach this class? Note any new ideas that you gained for your teaching: How could you apply what you learned to language teaching?

Week 5: February 3, 2010  
Research Settings, Data Collection & Analysis

- Limitations in research
- Issues related to data collection
- Video debriefing

Readings: ARLT, Ch. 3; DTR, Ch. 5

Due: Position Paper (first version); Week 5 Task Reflection

Week 5 Task: Formally interview a teacher other than your mentor at your school. The interview need not last more than 15 minutes, and need not be with a language teacher. Ask about the teachers’ background, decision to go into teaching, teaching experiences, and work as a teacher, and other questions that you prepare in advance. After the
interview, write a summary of the interview **process** (and *not* the teacher’s answers to your questions), i.e., What was easy about the interview? What was difficult? What “problems” arose? What do you wish you had done differently? What might you do differently in the future when you interview someone—particularly for a research project?

**Week 6: February 10, 2010**

<table>
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<th>Questionnaires &amp; Interviews</th>
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- Survey research

**Readings:** ARLT, Ch. 6-7; DTR, Ch. 6

**Due:** Action Research Study (second version, also including Methodology, Validity, Data Collection [plan and draft instruments], Limitations); **Week 6 Task Reflection**

**Week 6 Task:** Interview your mentor about his/her multiple roles as a teacher. Ask your mentor to discuss the following topics: Professional development, managing the school day, teacher collaboration, committee work, extracurricular activities, positives and negatives of the workplace, classroom seating arrangements, group work, intervention strategies, student cheating and disruptive behaviors, schedule interruptions, managing the paperwork, parent communication, and balancing work and private life. Be sure to *reflect* upon your mentor’s comments, i.e., don’t just write a list of their responses.
Week 7: February 17, 2010  Case Studies

Readings: ARLT, Ch. 8

Due: Position Paper (final version); Week 7 Task Reflection

Week 8 Task: Discuss your Action Research Study with your mentor(s). What suggestions does he or she have for you in terms of continued observation, interviews, data collection, expected “findings,” etc.? How does he or she recommend that you proceed with discovering “answers” to your questions? What suggestions does he or she have at this point in your progress? What new issues might you need to explore, or what issues bear revisiting? What are your “next steps”?

Week 8: February 24, 2010  Orientation to Spring Practicum

Interns, mentor teachers, and M.Ed. staff meet from 4:00 – 6:00 p.m. at Metro High School, 1929 Kenny Rd., Columbus, OH, 43210.

Week 9: March 3, 2010  Data & Professional Considerations

- Data Analysis and Findings
- Teaching materials
- ESL: What every FL teacher needs to know
Readings:  ARLT, Ch. 9; DTR, Ch. 7-8

Due:  Personal Statement; Week 9 Task Reflection

Week 9 Task:  Discuss ESL with your mentor and with any teacher(s) who is involved with ESL teacher at your school.  How many ESL students are at your school?  What are their needs?  What support do students receive?  What have you observed so far about ESL students at school?  How can you as a language teacher be of assistance to ESL students and to colleagues who work with ESL students in your school?

Week 10:  March 10, 2010

Professional Life

- Practice for the Capstone Project Oral Defense (with invited guests)
- Ongoing professionalism and professional engagement

Readings:  ARLT, Ch. 10

Due:  Action Research Study (third version, also including Introduction, Data Analysis, Findings, tentative Implications)

Looking ahead:  Pace yourself for the successful completion of your Capstone Project. Remaining work includes revising all aspects of the Capstone Project, particularly the Personal Narrative, Introduction, and final Analysis of the Action Research Study. Be
sure to incorporate all feedback and suggested changes into your final product! The Capstone Project is due by Friday, April 23rd, 2010, 4:00 p.m. (4 bound copies)
Appendix F: Interview with participant

Selena, Transcription notes from conversation 1, held on January 19, 2010.

(Data organization tool taken from Bloome et al, 2005)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line #</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Message Unit</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Julián</td>
<td>Ok then, so Selena, How are you doing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Selena</td>
<td>Muy bien I'm fine, thank you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Julián</td>
<td>[giggles] Great, thank you very much for your help (1) aand for volunteering for doing this aand eehm, I have a lot of the information you have right here, so I’m gonna go straight to the point, tell me more about your story, I have a lot of information right here, but just give me some more details, when did you start in the language, how did you</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Selena</td>
<td>Umm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Julián</td>
<td>become involved in it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Selena</td>
<td>I studied, you know, I began Spanish my freshman year of high school, I went to a rural school that didn’t offer any other languages, and definitely didn’t offer it at the middle school or elementary. Uhhm there are only two Spanish teachers in the building, and I was fortunate enough to have for all four years the same one, and she was awesome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Julián</td>
<td>Ok</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Selena</td>
<td>And I really learned a lot in Spanish ↑ I wasn’t even that, you know, that (1) passionate about it though until I did my first study abroad and got more involved with culture (2) the culture you know has inspired me to continue my study (1) I did not start out as a Spanish Major, that wasn’t my original career path at all↑, but I love Spanish, all of the culture, and I love working with adolescents, so that’s what’s kind of brought me to be where I am</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Julián</td>
<td>Umm so basically you like talking and dealing with teenagers and then that’s what encouraged you to go into teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Selena</td>
<td>Huh huh, I’m passionate about, what I’m going to teach, the culture, and the language, I’m passionate about working with eh adolescents↑, I love coaching and things like that, so I love to be involved that ways [hands on desk, smiles constantly]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Julián</td>
<td>I see, So, basically, you have been for the things I heard and some of the other things you mentioned in the class you have been pretty much a leader in the entire (1) school career</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Selena</td>
<td>Yeah, I guess [smiles, hesitates]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Julián</td>
<td>Ok</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Selena</td>
<td>A leader as in what term, what</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Message Unit

15 Julián  Ok, let me rephrase that, not a leader, but competitive
16 Selena  I’m always competitive in everything I do [giggles]
17 Julián  Ok, that’s good, just be careful that doesn’t burn you out
18 Selena  Yeah
19 Julián  Aaaah
20 Selena  It does [giggles]
21 Julián  Let me go through some of the things that I see here uh jmm tell me a little more about your (1) school high school placement right now the things you have seen at this point, with the students, the things you do
22 Selena  Umm my high school placement ah it’s definitely very different to any experiences I’ve had in the past as I said, I went to a rural school, 99 in my graduating class (1) so to walk into a school and I think there is 1800 students enrolled here, it’s more like a College Campus yeah it’s been a little difficult because (2) coming from a place where you know everybody in the entire school building toooo I barely even know, I don’t even know, I hardly any of the students, and the fact that there’s a whole language department, I feel like it really influences what’s gonna be taught and how’s gonna be taught rather than, you know, you decide what you’re, you’re teaching and you’re kind of the leader where this way you have to kind of more catered to the needs of what the department says um so that, in that terms it’s gonna be difficult for me to adjust but I feel like I am adjusting well because I am rather loud and outgoing if you know me at all [both giggle] ah, I’m a little ah intimidated by the lack of (1) production that I’ve, I’ve noticed\up, ah,(2) the students seem ra—ther (1) or are timid when it comes to actual language use, the day that she does Spanish only day, ah the students choose just not to talk, she’s just like well just talk to each other [imitates mentor teacher] you don’t have to talk to anything about school or anything, and they just sit there quietly [back to her previous voice] so I guess it works for classroom management in that terms but, eh, ah, other than that ah (1) yeah (2)
23 Julián  No—w (1) how is this school similar to the experiences you had when you were learning the language
24 Selena  Ah, similarities (2) ah, (2) in my observations so far there aren’t very many similarities, my mentor that I am observing now is real, I feel more laid back, takes a laid back approach ahm, she offers, eh, you know, she, if the students do something, she grades it, that way kind of gives it an incentive to do it, now in my\↑ high
school I’ve experienced in the way I’ve learned the language, my teacher would actually keep a stopwatch in her hand, and each activity would be timed down to 2 minutes, and every moment at the class was taken up and I am, more like, that’s more my personality than the more laid back approach so maybe that is why I’m a little scared to take over the classroom as far as student teaching goes, I would be more like my high school teacher and have activity after activity and eh, well, a lot of them involve them, a lot of groupwork and things like that, which I think I don’t see as much

25 Julián

Ok, the you’re bringing something very interesting here, tell me now what do you think are going to take from your high school teacher, what do you think you are going to take not as much from your mentor teacher, from the things you have seen up to this point and what you think you are going to add from yourself to your teaching, just things that you like and see

26 Selena

I think that that’s a fairly easy question, I ah, I will probably cater more towards the style of my high school teacher because she offered tons of differentiated instruction, she, uh, had alternative forms of assessment and was real huh, like, organized right to the minute, and everything, however what was at my junior year, her high pace actually put her in some sort of stress she was actually in the hospital for like 6 weeks because she’s too, too into it, except from that, I want to take more from my mentor teacher’s approach and do a combination of the two, so I don’t give myself a heart attack before I’m 30 [giggles] and as far as ah what I want to contribute is my personality and I want to get to know the students real well ah I wanna be able to make my lessons catered around things that they’re interested in, what is current, I don’t wanna just follow what’s, you know, written in the book, I wanna bring in, you know, authentic materials, things that they can be interested in, maybe cool new movies, and things like that, you know, and really relate them to them, and I wanna get to know them and put my personality into that, and I’m very creative, and I bring my creativity to the class

27 Julián

Now, what I want to ask you at this point is to keep those things you just told me in mind when you start teaching

28 Selena

All right

29 Julián

Because from the things I’m hearing, I’m afraid that you might slowly become your high school teacher, so keep those things in check
Keep what you are doing, keep the things you are learning from your mentor. That you learned from your high school teacher, and then we’ll come back and revisit this because

Ah, I mean, I’ve been taking advice to, like to her, like the advice you’ve been giving me and I’ll reiterate it for the recording [video recording] that, you know, if I take the feedback and I’m too critical of myself, you know, that you mentioned that eh, you didn’t think that I could survive, basically, and I’ve been trying to take that to heart, but when that’s who I’ve been for 25 years up, it doesn’t matter what it is, it doesn’t matter if it’s eh, sports, it doesn’t matter if it’s my artwork that I like to do, I like the best at everything I do (1) and I, and I tried, I’m trying to take that feedback as best as I can, but at the same time, I don’t think that if I had that drive↑, maybe I wouldn’t be sitting where I’m at today

That’s ok, [she giggles] but keep in mind I don’t, again, I don’t want you to become your high school teacher, I want you to be you, so

Of course [sore throat]

Now, eh, from the things, from the experiences you have had as a learner, and then, and now as a soon to be teacher, what do you think will be the hardest thing to teach, and then the easiest thing, or how, in your↑ class

Huh, for me the hardest thing to teach will be grammar (2) grammar lessons are boring↑, you know, I’m gonna try and find my own (.5) way to make them more interesting and more understandable, ah (1) especially, you know, sitting in, you know, in the FSLED program, where a lot of those, a lot of my colleagues in that program are so super into the grammar and love the linguistic elements of it (2) and I don’t, I would rather give them lots of comprehensible input for them to be able to start understanding the grammar in their own terms, I don’t wanna make it like eh here’s a verb, here’s how you conjugate it [school announcement interrupts] as a learner of the language as, you know, it’s my second language obviously, I hate↑ when I have to stop in the midst of a sentence and conjugate a verb (1) you know, like when you’re speaking and speaking, and then you stop like hm, what is this subjunctive foo→rm, and that would be definitely one of the things that I want to differ from my high school teacher cuz I feel that she’s more willing to, like you heard, definitely your grammar lesson, and that’s how you form
your sentences, (1) and (1) I wanna just do more comprehensible input, and I mean, but that’s, that’s gonna be something I’m gonna learn in along the way, like, some people need that grammar, and, we’ll see how that goes

37 Julián  Hmm, that’s interesting
38 Selena  Did I answer that question for you
39 Julián  Amm yeah, you did, don’t worry I’m just I’m just making sure I’m not missing anything now, what do you think it will be the easy part
40 Selena  Mmmh, the easy part? Amhh, creating (1) fun, interactive activities
41 Julián  Huh-huh
42 Selena  I’ll bring my creativity and my artistic ability and eh, things like that, you know, their ways to play games and huh eh, ah, and it doesn’t feel like learning
43 Julián  Huh-Huh
44 Selena  You know, but it is learning at the same time
45 Julián  Now, ahhh, first time I met you, you mentioned that you’re big into culture (Selena: Yesss –smiles-) aand giving that information
46 Selena  Very much so my passion
47 Julián  Could you please elaborate on that?
48 Selena  Sure, I aah did my first study abroad in Chile and Argentina and I immediately fell in love with the people there, the culture and the more I travel, the more I see the differences and the different cultures, eh, I also did 3 months in Spain, even traveled to Italy, I’ve been to London, I just came back from Guatemala and everywhere I go, even if it’s not necessarily a Spanish speaking country↑ you learn so much about yourself and your country
49 Julián  Huh-huh
50 Selena  Learning through other→ you know, cultures and other countries→ and I want, I plan oh, using that as my guide for my curriculum, focusing on, you know, say, this semester I’m gonna focus on (2) some place different that you don’t (mumbles) I’ll go with Chile you usually learn about Mexico and Spain, Mexico and Spain, Mexico and Spain, everybody assumes you know, they speak Spanish, they’re from→Mexico and, obviously that’s not the case
51 Julián  Thank God
52 Selena  Yes (giggles) so, uhm, yeah, I wanna definitely do that and eh I, I, you know, my hope is, originally I wanted real bad to be in a suburban school, and the more I get into it, I really wanna go
rural, where I speak, you know, do Spanish 1, 2, 3 and 4 and each year I can focus on maybe 4 different countries and by the time they get to Spanish, I will have taught all the different countries and not just teaching culture like here’s the kind of music they listen to (falsetto voice, Julián giggles) here’s what they eat, no, I’m talking about, like, one thing that I didn’t learn in high school is the amount of poverty, and the poverty affects greatly the types of culture that there is and I think, you know, you can learn a lot about you know, the connections standards, and things like, or wait, the connections standards, yeah, the connections standards, the, or comparisons†, those two I get mixed up, but you can really achieve those standards by, you know, my family has (pa speaker interrupts) for example, one of the things that I thought it was really interesting when I first did my study is my family at the time, lived in a house, there are 6 of us living there and we had 10 motor vehicles, between the 8 cars, or the 6 cars and the 4 motorcycles in my house, and then I go to Chile where they had 1 car that the whole family shared for five of them and they eh, they rarely used it, me, I would die without my car (1) something like that is something like these kids look forward to, when they turn 16, they get a car, they get to drive and then you connect, you know, you can make this comparison to these other places that they don’t have money for that, they’re lucky to have a bike when they’re you know, that age, or the public transportation, there’s different types of culture than (1) just (1) tango† lessons↓.

53 Julián

I think I hit a nerve here, that’s good. (Selena giggles) Now, you mentioned, you’ve been talking about your high school teacher and your mentor now, tell me a little bit, how different, from your perspective as a student and now as a prospective teacher, how different is, was your learning process from the things you have been learning in the M.Ed. Program in terms, you think you learned the same way we have taught you how to teach, or how different was it?

54 Selena

I think that it was actually very similar ah, my high school teacher offered a lot of input (1) ahm, started out slow you know, Spanish 1, she would try to do, ahm, you know, some, and then, by the time of Spanish 4 it was all, in Spanish, in hindsight now, I met her and talked to her, boy does she have an American accent on her Spanish, but I might too, people complement me a lot that I don’t, but I, I don’t know but, I, ah, you, I see what
you’re saying from what I’m saying that it seems like I’ll do a lot more towards her style but, it sh→ it worked, like, she, the differentiation of instruction that she offered, you know, we’d do things like roll dice and, you know→ match numbers to create sentences, you know, with a given worksheet, or we’d do comic strips, or presentations, or a fashion show, all thes→e, I mean, → she really was a good mentor, and it seems like just yesterday that I was sitting in her class, and then the interesting thing too is, my little sister, you know, like I said, small community, or whatever, my sister had her too, and she had been taking some lessons at the University or whatever, and they were doing a different method of just mostly comprehensible input and they, eh, did some sort of program, I don’t know if you’ve heard of this, like, where they do a lot of reading and then they, from the reading, they,(1) it was a really different way, and she said she wasn’t happy with it and it went back to her with the way she had taught my class, so it was kind of interesting

55 Julián

Now, how about when you were in college, how different was it to your experience with the M.Ed. Program

56 Selena

Now, my college experience was (1) I’ve, I actually felt a little cheated, I had a professor, first they went to (university name) for two years and they’re, I, ah, didn’t do as much Spanish ah, what kind of class did I take, I took one, it was kind of like, more immersion they’d give you a lot authentic materials, like songs and news broadcasts↑ (1) that you had to kinda drag meaning from, I took one just like, a review of all like grammar, pretty much, and then I transferred to (another university name) and my experience at (previously mentioned university) maybe that too has helped to influence my culture, the eh professor that I had the most, she was real big into culture, and she would actually, like I kind of resent it, because she’d actually have us, you know, we’d watch a lot of film, and you can learn a lot about culture through film and that’s a very good medium I think, to explore, but, she’d have us write tons of reflection papers on it, and she’d wanted them in English↑, so the thing was just like, although I was learning on culture and stuff, my Spanish didn’t improve↑, (1) and you know, I kind of resent that because, my writing could have really, it really needed some help↓ (giggles) it’s totaled up, I learned most of my Spanish in my studies abroad

57 Julián

Mmmkay, let me just backtrack then, a little about yourself, so you started and you come from a very small town somewhere in
Line #   Speaker

Message Unit

Central (state) where you were raised, you had the same Spanish teacher for roughly 5 years, then you moved to (her present university) for two years, where you had also a Spanish teacher but it was more like an immersion thing

58  Selena  I did more, I studied more arts when I was at (present university) so I wasn’t, I was a Spanish major, so it was kind of on the backtrack so

59  Julián  And then you transferred to this other school where you finished your degree and then

60  Selena  Where I transferred there because I, ah I eh oh, at the time, (her current university) didn’t have a program I believe they’ve just started up a program now where you can get your certification in your undergrad, and I was thinking that I would transfer to (previous university) where I can get my certification in the four years, get my certification to teach when I kind of figured out that Spanish was the route that I wanted to go, and teaching was definitely where I wanted to be able to share my knowledge or whatever ahm I got there and I started taking the Spanish classes and I took a couple of the Education classes and I got looking at things and I needed so many more Education classes, that, basically I needed to go 2 more quarters, and 2 more quarters at (previous university) is 15000 dollars

61  Julián  Ouch

62  Selena  Which pays for my Masters that I have to get and in Ivy league, (uncomprehensible) anyhow, so, that’s when, give me whatever degree I can get (Julián giggles) which was Spanish, ehm, and then I worked as a restaurant manager to save money and get to where I am now, so

63  Julián  I see, sooo

64  Selena  And that money was spent a long time ago but, that’s the end of the story

65  Julián  So you mentioned here that then you joined to (present university) but you mentioned that you get into the M.Ed. Program by lots of Internet research

66  Selena  Yes, I, I wanted to be a teacher ahm, for sure, it’s the place where I feel at home, I can explore my creativity, I love working with the kids, I love coaching sports, it’s kind of I discovered that I had that passion for working with like the adolescents ahm, and all the programs, two years, expensive, when I, you know (previous university) is so expensive I’m already in debt over my head and I always wanted to be a (name given to present university’s
students) so, I, that’s somehow the roundabout way I did my Internet research and I found that program and I was like, one year, that’s one year’s of tuition, it’s an intense program, I like intense, I don’t wanna drag it out in one night a week or that kind of stuff, I like the what, eh, what, you know, the people that I contacted said, you know, just how the program was set up, I was really intrigued by it, from the beginning, and I was like, ok, and it was actually the only masters program I applied to, because that’s where I wanted to be.

Nice, now, for the last part, I’m going to ask you to switch your mind from student to teacher and then back to student so let’s begin as a student, what do you think you need as a student to be a successful language learner.

No, don’t think about the program, think about yourself as a language learner what do you need to be successful to learn a language.

Ok (1, hesitates) I think that you need a lot of input I think that you need ah, patience (1) and definitely some sort of inspiration, like a reason why you wanna learn that language or (1) how it’ll be relevant to your life or (1) for me, it was some, for me personally it was just like the passion of the culture ah, so other people would be job opportunities, other people would be, you know, I kind of too, travel (giggles) I hate to put that up there but that’s just my excuse, to travel more to learn more, and I mean, everybody has their own reason to learn and those are some of mine.

Mmmkay, now think of it as ah (1) student again, what do you think you need, what kind of teacher would you like to have for language class again, think of it as a student, don’t think about the program or anything you have learned at this point.

As a student I would like a lot of activity, I’m a kinesthetic learner so ahm, anything that would involve like drawing and comics (0.5) or ahm, (1) ah, creative, making a narrative or a skit, maybe journaling, I like to write, ahm, yeah, yeah, that’s what I like!

Ok, ok, now let’s switch back to your role as an M.Ed. student, what do you need to be a successful teacher.

I need to know how to implement those things that I just named successfully in my class (giggles) I need to know how to make it relevant to the student, like (pauses, thinks) and this is where I
mess, I know a lot about Spanish, I know I wanna do this, I have the creative thing, and it’s like putting the, putting all these three elements together in my teaching, that’s what I need to do, and that’s what I’m hoping to get from my experience and I can already feel myself just through observation and eh, feedback and hearing what’s working for my colleagues and what’s not working is really making me learn a lot

75 Julián Now, as a prospective teacher, what does a student need to be successful in your class

76 Selena Ahm (3) I’m sorry, I’m a hot mess, my brain is just like mushed eh, what’s the word for like the willingness to learn like the, like they want to learn

77 Julián Willingness to learn is the right word, I think

78 Selena There is like a word, to make me sound intelligent but I can’t think about it (laughter)

79 Julián Don’t worry, you don’t need to sound too fancy or intelligent, I’m gonna use your own words, actually what I need is an actual description of yourself, don’t try to sound over the top

80 Selena But there’s like, it’s just not really a difficult word, it’s just some word (incomprehensible) yeah, but anyways, it’s willingness from the students to learn

81 Julián Email it to me if you remember, don’t worry, I’ll quote it, what else

82 Selena Ahm (2) that’s mostly what, that’s mostly what I feel that they need, if they have that, then the rest will just come you know, then the rest I’ll provide, you know, if they’re there, just because they have to be there, because their moms making them take a foreign language if, ‘cause the school says they eh, they need it for college no, I want them there because you know what, I wanna learn Spanish, I wanna learn about the culture, these things interest me, that’s what I need the students to have↑ and if they don’t have it I wanna get that to them

83 Julián Mmkay, Ahh, and finally, anything you would like to add or anything else you would like to mention that we haven’t covered from the interview and the answers you gave me and anything we have discussed

84 Selena (5) Anything else would you like to know? (giggles)

85 Julián No, I think I’m fine, I have plenty of information to start ahm, as I told you the goal of this is try to know you a little better and see what makes you tick and I have plenty now and then moving on and see
86 Selena

I’m an open box then (uncomprehensible) I guess the thing that, if I wanted to add something it doesn’t exactly pertain to foreign language, just education in general, I feel like, when you look around at like, you know, for example the people, the crowded prison system, and you know, the county jails are overflowing with, you know, I feel like it’s educators, if we are doing our job (1) these people wouldn’t be (1) there, you know, it’s these few students that are in the middle that aren’t getting the support of home, it’s our responsibility as the educator to (1) give the support and really see, you know, everyone be successful in their own way, not everybody has to go to college to be successful, but I don’t wanna see people like (re?)going back to jail seven, eight, nine times, I don’t wanna see, you know, prostitution, as the only way for people to make money, and I feel if we do our jobs as the educator, no matter what your field is, whether it’s science or foreign language, or (1) home ec, I think that if we do our jobs, that (sniffles, joking) in a nutshell

87 Julián

That was very touching

88 Selena

But it’s true

89 Julián

Yeah A→nd I also wanted to ask you something, how far do you see yourself at this point in your career, (1) from being (1) a good teacher

90 Selena

(3) Hmm, that’s a good question↑ I think I have what it takes to be a good teacher, but I think I need to eh, get in the field and, you know, trial and error, you know, do an activity, if it works, it doesn’t, you know, probably↑, I think I’ll be a good teacher a-after my first year, put a year in, after everything I learned in this program and getting on, and applying it on my own, I definitely have the passion, and I refuse not to be good at something, that’s my competitive spirit again, so (1) I’ll be near then (?) that’s for sure (giggles)

91 Julián

Ok a→nd tha→t’s it
Appendix G: Researcher Narrative Journal (Fragment)

January 19, 2010

I have finally been able to start my interviews. Selena is my first participant. We met in a small teachers’ lounge in her high school placement. Our enter interview last for 25 minutes, where I learn a lot of interesting things from her and her background. She is a sports person, very competitive, born and raised in Central Ohio. Selena began her BA in _____, but moved to a smaller university to finish her undergrad. She then worked as a manager in a well known restaurant to save money in order to rejoin to ________ to pursue her M.Ed.

Selena is very direct and open minded. Always looks into my eyes and smiles when answering a question or during an informal conversation. In her words “I am an open book.” And in fact, she is. No question is left unanswered, but the audio recorder affects her neutrality more than I hoped. Besides her background, we discussed her views on teacher identity, what language teacher made an impact on her (she specifically mentions a 4th grade teacher) and then the conversation shifts to her goals with her interns and her placement in general. She is very strong minded, and I believe she will make it through regardless of the challenges she has to face.

However, after I switch off the recorder and our conversation turns an unexpected turn. Selena confesses to me that she is scared of what will happen in her placement this coming two quarters. First, she believes her mentor teacher’s style is subpar. In addition to that, the students have confessed to her their dislike for their previous student teacher who was, in my opinion, one of the most organized, strong interns I’ve worked with in
my tenure with the M.Ed. Program. In Selena’s words “she (the mentor) does nothing that I can call teaching”. I told her to relax and prepare for what might be a rough transition when she takes over. But I wonder how is this going to affect her performance as a student teacher. At the same time, Can I use this information in the project? This unknown information changes things a lot for me, but I don’t know what to do.
Appendix H: Selena’s statement of Intent to apply to M.Ed. program

**ed·u·cate** \\e-jə-kāt\ vb 1 a : to provide schooling for b : to train by formal instruction and supervised practice esp. in a skill, trade, or profession 2 a : to develop mentally, morally, and aesthetically esp. by instruction b : to provide with information : INFORM 3 : to persuade or condition to feel, believe, or act in a desired way

Now one might be curious as to why someone would start their statement of intent with a definition from the old *Webster’s Dictionary*, but please read over the definition once again. It talks about the basics of what an educator’s responsibilities include; however, I want my contribution to be much greater than what this simple definition entails. Education is not just the planting of seeds. It takes a lot of hard work, fertilizer, and the right tools to nurture students into beautiful, strong flowers. After sitting in classrooms for more than seventeen years, I know which teachers changed my life and I want to become that kind of teacher. I feel strongly that my creativity and ability to think outside the box will change the lives of my students. I believe that anyone can put notes on an overhead projector and have students copy them down. I want to be the teacher that engages the class through, new and exciting activities, projects, and group discussions. I have the enthusiasm and dedication that it takes to keep my class awake and interested, that so many teachers have lost or forgotten. I want to fill the world with beautiful flowers by planting seeds of thought in developing minds. My goal is a career in the Spanish and English as a Second Language fields.

Being a language educator opens a whole new nutritional package to feed my students. First of all, the United States of America is one of the most diverse countries on the planet. This alone will allow me to invite guest speakers into my classroom so that my students can learn firsthand from people who have come from all over the world. My passion for other cultures and diversity drives me to do more and I want to cultivate that passion in others. Secondly, I want to contribute to bridging the language gap that exists for non-native English speakers. Once that gap has been closed, these students will grow in all other aspects of learning, not only what goes on in my classroom, but also in all subject areas. Lastly, I want to teach my students not to judge those who are different, but to value and learn from those differences. Students may see something and think that it is strange, but in all reality, they may not realize that they are being ethnocentric. It is not strange. It is just not how Americans are accustomed to doing things. Where better to teach that lesson than in a language class? I believe that Americans have a lot to learn from other cultures about quality of life and the time has come to learn that lesson.

Luckily, I have had the opportunity to till fields of students from all ages and backgrounds. While studying at ______________, I had the opportunity to observe for one hundred hours in classrooms, which included students from elementary to high school. Not only did I learn a lot about how a classroom is managed and how to interact with students, but I saw firsthand the impact of diversity in schools. While working in a second grade classroom, I met xxxxx. He was a good student, well behaved and always
eager to learn. Even at his young age, xxxxxxx already knew the importance of a good education because where he comes from not everyone has that opportunity. Rodney is from Zimbabwe and speaks little to no English. If someone does not take the time to cultivate children like xxxxxx, these children would fall through the cracks. I want to be that teacher who takes the extra time to get beneath the surface and get to the roots of each student’s individual needs.

I have also done volunteer work with adolescents. I have helped with youth drug and tobacco-free events and helped coach sports. Through these experiences, I have acted as a role model by showing the benefits of hard work and determination. To me there is nothing is more personally rewarding than seeing the faces of a team that I coached when they have won a championship. During my first year of coaching, I coached xxxxxx, who had never touched a softball in her life. However, with a little extra instruction I was able to help her blossom to her full potential. Before I knew it, xxxxxx was getting base hits and fielding balls, which improved her self-confidence. If educators just make the extra effort the rewards are endless. I would like the opportunity to apply this extra effort to my future students.

There are many reasons why I would like to become a teacher; however, two experiences have influenced me above all others. Those experiences were my amazing opportunities to study abroad. By living with host families, I was immersed in both language and culture. Although I was able to perfect my language ability that was not what changed my life. My first study abroad took place in Chile. I never thought that I could learn so much about myself and my country while living in another country. The Chileans were so accepting and eager to learn about us as Americans that it made me realize how close minded many Americans can be. Especially when we are a country made of immigrants. I want to help nurture the minds and hearts of future generations so they can value the diversity of the world.

I also had the opportunity to study abroad in Spain for three months. Once again immersed in the Spanish culture and language, I was able to learn a new dialect of Spanish and about a new culture. While in Spain, I had a group of Swedish friends whom I would tutor in Spanish everyday. It was amazing to work in foreign soil, but what was even more amazing was that this group of friends was only twenty-years old and was already learning their third language. In most of Europe, English is a common language and they begin learning it at a very young age. I yearn to see a day when every American can communicate in a language other than English.

Not only am I interested in teaching Spanish, but also English as a second language. For the past seven years, I have worked in the restaurant industry. In that capacity, I have helped train Hispanic employees. It always amazes me that even after living here for five to ten years that they still cannot complete simple English phrases. I would appreciate the opportunity to enrich the soil that helps other cultures to be open to opportunities other than washing dishes.

In closing, I would like to say that being a teacher is like being a patient gardener. With the right tools, a little hard work, and patience, the seeds of young minds can grow into a beautiful field of flowers. If someone would just give me the soil, I would love to be that patient gardener.