



## Teacher Preparation for Educating English Language Learners (ELLs)

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### Abstract

This investigation reports on the effects of a university Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) program on general teacher readiness, attitudes, beliefs, and planning for instruction. The program consisted of 18 credit hours of university coursework delivered onsite at the participating school. The participants were a group of 16 regular elementary teachers and two administrators at a school in the Midwestern part of the United States. This school had been recently designated as a school district site that would deliver instruction to a mixed-population of native English speaking children and an influx of English Language Learners (ELLs). The participants had no prior professional teaching experience with ELLs. It should be noted that the participants had on average 15 years of prior teaching experience and half of them had at least some form of prior TESOL in-service instruction before the program was implemented. In addition, most of the participants already had a master's degree in education and had studied a foreign language at some point in their lives in advance of the training. The data collection included four elements: a questionnaire administered to the participants before and after the conclusion of the TESOL program, teacher comments on course evaluations, written course assignments, and formal observations of the instruction after the training had ended. Statistically significant results were recorded on the paired pre- and post- administered questionnaire for teacher readiness, attitudes, and planning for instruction. Only teacher beliefs about how children acquire a second language did not grow positively to a statistically significant extent. However, based on the pre-test results, their beliefs in this area were somewhat well informed prior to the training. Based on the course evaluations, course assignments, and observations of their post-program teaching performance, the qualitative findings paralleled the quantitatively established outcomes that well constructed university TESOL programs can positively effect teacher readiness, attitudes, and their ability to plan for instruction.