



DEVELOPMENT OF A KNOWLEDGE BASE FOR ESOL TEACHER EDUCATION

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Abstract—This paper considers the process of constructing a knowledge base for preparing teachers of English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) by examining initial efforts at knowledge base development within a university-based teacher education program. The paper (a) reviews the literature on the knowledge base in teacher education, (b) describes currently available resources and efforts toward TESOL knowledge base development, (c) describes knowledge base development within the context of a university's teacher education program and describes the components of a TESOL knowledge base in this program, and (d) advocates for a TESOL knowledge base to enhance the profession at the national and international levels. © 1998 Elsevier Science Ltd. All rights reserved.

There is little room in today's society for those who cannot manage complexity, find and use resources, and continually learn new technologies, approaches and occupations... Tomorrow's work sites will require employees to frame problems, design their own tasks, plan, construct, evaluate outcomes, and cooperate in finding novel solutions to problems. (Darling-Hammond, 1993, p. 753)

Managing complexity is a task most teachers of English to speakers of other languages (ESOL)¹ understand well. In the United States, few work sites have the potential for greater complexity than classrooms where students representing many nationalities, language backgrounds, and a range of literacy experiences convene to learn English as a new language. Because of the differences in students' prior educational experiences, levels of achievement, and cultural orientations and expectations for schooling, no other group of educators faces the challenges of diversity that ESOL teachers encounter daily. The complexity of most ESOL classrooms requires that teachers have an adequate knowledge base for effective instruction. This complexity also requires that in identifying and addressing educational issues, teachers be prepared to access this knowledge base in a manner that meets their own professional expectations as well as their students' learning needs (Lemberger, 1990).

The purpose of this paper is twofold: (a) to consider the importance of a knowledge base for preparing teachers of English to speakers of other languages (TESOL), and (b) to share insights gained from initial efforts at knowledge base development within a university's teacher education program. First, the paper reviews the literature on the knowledge base in teacher education in general as a background for discussing the need for a TESOL knowledge base. Second, the paper describes currently available resources and efforts toward TESOL knowledge base development. Third, the paper briefly describes knowledge base development within the context of a university-level teacher education program, and then, describes the components of a specific knowledge base designed for TESOL. Finally, the paper concludes by advocating for a TESOL knowledge base to enhance professional development at local, national, and international levels. Although the need for a TESOL knowledge base is international as well as national, the context of this discussion is a university in the United States.

Including TESOL in the Knowledge Base for
Teacher Education

The term 'knowledge base', as it is used in this paper, refers to the repertoire of knowledge,

skills, and dispositions that teachers require to effectively carry out classroom practices (National Center for Research on Teacher Education, 1988; Tom & Valli, 1990). The establishment of a knowledge base is central to teacher education reform (Galluzzo & Pankratz, 1990; Tiedt & Tiedt, 1995). In the United States, concern for improved academic learning and literacy is a national priority, as indicated by the enactment of Goals 2000: Educate America Act of 1994 (PL 103-227). Quality instruction is considered to be the key to this national priority (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996). Two issues are discussed in this section: (a) knowledge base development for teacher education in general and (b) knowledge base development in TESOL in particular.

The Development of a Generic knowledge Base in Teacher Education

The impetus for knowledge base development originates from both theoretical and policy perspectives. Discussion of the knowledge base within a theoretical and epistemological framework was initiated by Lee Shulman (1986, 1987). Shulman's conception of the knowledge base for teaching has focused specifically on 'pedagogical content knowledge', or teachers' ability to present subject matter in ways that students can understand and appreciate. For example, teachers must know how to select analogies, examples, metaphors, and explanations in order to make subject matter meaningful and relevant to their students. Shulman's theoretical framework has been supported by research across subject areas, including English (Grossman, 1990), mathematics (Ball, 1990), science (Anderson & Roth, 1989; Carlsen, 1991), and social studies (Wilson & Wineburg, 1993).

The perspective of teaching practices and policy in knowledge base development is also important (Darling-Hammond, 1996; Lieberman & McLaughlin, 1992; The Holmes Group, 1986, 1990). The National Board of Professional Teaching Standards [NBPTS] (1996) represents an effort to implement the concept of a knowledge base in teaching. The NBPTS developed professional standards and assessment procedures for what teachers should know and be able to do in order to demonstrate their commitment to excellence in teaching. The standards are

nested within the core policy statement that contains a set of five propositions: (a) teachers are committed to students and their learning; (b) teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students; (c) teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning; (d) teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience, and (e) teachers are members of learning communities. Using these standards, individual applicants undergo a rigorous review process to be recognized as exemplary teachers.

The importance of a professional knowledge base has been recognized by National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education [NCATE], which requires higher education institutions to have an established knowledge base as part of criteria for institutional review. Within NCATE-approved institutions, a specialized knowledge base, such as one for the preparation of ESOL teachers, must correspond to both institutional and professional expectations. It must be consistent with the philosophy and mission of the academic unit in which it is housed, congruent with the needs of the communities in which it is to be applied, and based on the research and practices of the field (NCATE, 1996).

A variety of reform efforts have been underway to create national standards for curriculum, instruction, and assessment across academic subject areas, including mathematics (National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, 1989, 1991, 1995), science (National Research Council, 1996), and English (Sierra-Perry, 1996, for the National Council of Teachers of English). Based on the conception of high academic standards of student learning in each subject area, these standards documents present a vision of effective teaching practices, as well as teacher preparation programs and policies to support such teaching.

The theoretical perspective attempts to identify and develop the knowledge teachers need to demonstrate, while the practice and policy perspective intends to enhance the teacher preparation process and teaching practices. In spite of differences in perspectives and purposes from which these two traditions of knowledge base development have been fostered, their efforts at creating a basis for teacher preparation are complementary. Common elements from both theoretical and policy perspectives include integration

of subject matter and pedagogical knowledge to meet the learning needs of diverse students in the context of the community. Collaboration among teacher education, liberal arts and sciences, and school districts has become an important thrust of teacher preparation and enhancement (Schwartz, 1990).

The Development of a Knowledge Base in TESOL

Because the teaching of English as an additional language occurs in many nations and involves students of all ages, the relevance of a TESOL knowledge base is international. In spite of its international orientation and appeal, a TESOL knowledge base at the international level is difficult to conceptualize and define because of differences among nations in terms of the status of the teaching profession in general and English teaching in particular, students' motivations for studying English, and the conditions under which instruction occurs. Examples of the differences for which English is taught and learned include: communication within an English-speaking community, participation in international events, access to scientific research and technology, and work place advancement. Variations in motivations for learning English, in combination with differences in credentialing requirements within and across national borders mean that a TESOL knowledge base would be shaped by national expectations as well as local and regional demands.

As a result of differences in motivations and opportunities to learn English, the development of an international-level TESOL knowledge base is not likely to occur without initial efforts at individual institutions in collaboration with local, state, and national organizations within the confines of individual nations. Groups interested in knowledge base development could begin by focusing on the specific needs of a particular population, such as, for example, master's level teachers at an institution of higher education in the United States, which is the focus of this paper.

The Need for a TESOL Knowledge Base. Around the world, conceptions of what constitutes literacy have evolved during every decade of the 20th century (Hornberger, 1992; Michaels

& O'Connor, 1990; Verhoeven, 1992). Within the past several decades, the importance of technological and scientific literacy has been identified as essential for workforce participation in the 21st century (American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1989, 1993). Along with the expanding conceptions of literacy and the important role that literacy plays in global workforce participation, indicators of the need for comprehensive professional development are also notable within the TESOL profession. Examples are discussed next.

As a recent survey of ESOL program administrators and teacher educators indicates, there is little consistency in courses for TESOL preparation (Reid, 1995/1996). The most frequently available course was methods and materials, followed by an assortment of linguistics courses and internship/practicum activities. Only a third of the programs in the survey offered a course on culture. Few master's level TESOL programs offered preparation in literacy development or subject matter instruction in areas, such as science, mathematics, or social studies.

Although teachers' ability to promote academic language development has been identified as important in providing effective instruction (Cummins, 1981; Short, Cloud, Hamayan, Hudelson & Ramirez, 1996), many ESOL teachers cannot define the concept of 'academic' language. Even fewer can describe specific strategies for promoting academic language learning (Solomon & Rhodes, 1996).

The process of teacher change in developing knowledge, skills, and dispositions is demanding and time-consuming. One study of teacher change through participation in ESOL workshops reveals that teachers' beliefs are often not translated into action. Short-term activities have little, if any, impact on enhancing teachers' ability to effectively assess students' learning needs. Opportunities to observe and reflect on classroom practices are required for teachers to become skillful in assessing and instructing students learning English (Rhine, 1995). When teachers are provided with models of performance and opportunities for practice and feedback, they can attain significantly increased levels of knowledge and skills (Fradd & Lee, 1997; Fradd, Lee, Cabrera, del Rio, Leth, Morin, Ceballos, Santalla, Cross & Mathieu, 1997).

Support for Knowledge Base Development. Information and resources from which a knowledge base can be constructed are becoming abundant. For example, access to repositories of research literature, such as on-line subscriptions to journals, journal collections stored on CD-ROMs, and internet linkages to research centers, make professional information increasingly available. Teacher preparation, however, requires more than information access; it requires a process of learning to convert information into professional knowledge and practice. Here the value of a knowledge base lies both in the conversion of information to understandings and the appropriate application of knowledge in a variety of contexts.

The importance of dealing with complexity and the need for effective decision-making are salient in the discussion of fledgling efforts at developing a TESOL knowledge base. For example, Larsen-Freeman (1983) highlighted the need for positive attitudes and an openness to complexity, as teachers learned to make informed pedagogical choices in promoting English language learning. Freeman (1989) emphasized the importance of a core of knowledge, some specific to the TESOL profession and some shared with the teaching profession in general. Within this core, teachers' knowledge, skills, attitudes, and awareness are central to the decision-making process (Tedick & Walker, 1994). Effective decision-making is also essential in promoting equity for students learning English (Freeman, 1993). In attempting to identify and define what second language teachers must know, Freeman and Richards (1993) conclude that thinking and reasoning are essential components for TESOL preparation.

In contributing to the conceptualization of a TESOL knowledge base, efforts have been made to establish a knowledge base from the perspective of teaching practices and policies. As an example, the NBPTS (1996) recently published *English as a New Language*, a set of standards for accomplished teaching practices in working with students learning English. The 12 standards specific to English as a New Language require that teachers not only demonstrate a commitment to excellence, but also an ability to perform complex instructional functions.

Another recent example of efforts at knowledge base development involves the release of

The ESL Standards for Pre-K-12 Students (Short et al., 1996) by TESOL Inc. (the professional organization). The document presents three goals students should achieve through effective instruction: (a) the development of social discourse; (b) the development of academic language skills; and (c) the knowledge of culture required for effective participation in different language-use contexts. Each goal is associated with progress indicators organized by grade level and accompanied by vignettes illustrating instruction to achieve these indicators. The document also explains the need for standards, discusses myths and general principles of second language learning, and promotes a vision of effective education. All of these components are designed to assist teachers, administrators, and advocates by providing a comprehensive view of the process of learning English as a new language. The document is designed to be used in conjunction with other national standards for subject area instruction.

In sum, educators and policy makers within and outside the TESOL profession have recognized the importance of teachers' knowledge of subject matter, their dispositions toward managing complexity, and their skills in integrating a variety of information sources in promoting effective instruction for students learning English. These efforts and resources provide an important background for the development of a specific TESOL knowledge base. Many of the standards and expectations identified by these groups are reflected in the efforts discussed next.

TESOL Knowledge Base Development as Part of a University-Level Teacher Education Program

The efforts for TESOL knowledge base development discussed here occurred at a university located in a geographic area with sustained high levels of immigration. This particular effort at knowledge base development is directly related to the needs of teachers and the school districts served by the university. Because the university is located in one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse communities in the nation (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1993), it must prepare teachers who are competent to work in a variety of settings from kindergarten to high

school with students from many language backgrounds. Most teachers live and work in two large urban school districts whose combined enrollment of English Language Learners (ELLs)² is more than 50% of all the students identified as eligible for ESOL instruction in the state (Florida Management Information Services, 1996). In addition to having a large portion of the state's ELLs, both districts use an inclusion model for serving students with mild disabilities (Will, 1986). As a result, ESOL teachers are expected to work with both typical and special needs students learning English.

By initiating a self-study of all of its programs five years ago, the School of Education began a long-range restructuring process. Generic knowledge base development resulted from institutional efforts to create a comprehensive set of skills and practices for teacher preparation. The knowledge base emphasized three domains with a theme for each domain. These domains and their respective themes included: (a) knowledge of subject matter, with a theme knowledge base in the School of Education, the TESOL knowledge base has three domains and themes: (a) knowledge of the academic content of ESOL, with the theme of content area instruction; (b) knowledge of specialized pedagogy, with the theme of instructional technology; and (c) knowledge of students, schools, and communities, with the theme of instructional leadership and advocacy. Although each of these domains stands alone, each is also related to the others like threads that intertwine to form a tapestry. The goal of the TESOL Program, i.e., the development of a comprehensive, integrated knowledge base, is the central force uniting the domains (Figure 1). The three domains are discussed next.

Knowledge of Academic Content

From a theoretical perspective, ESOL teachers require specialized knowledge within the fields of linguistics, language acquisition, anthropology, and sociology in order to teach students from diverse language backgrounds. From a practical perspective, they require an in-depth understanding of the academic content that they will teach. Within the knowledge base, these perspectives merge to form bodies of knowledge including: (a) knowledge of the language acquisition

process; (b) knowledge of academic content in subject areas, such as science, mathematics, and social studies, in combination with the language required to participate in these areas; and (c) knowledge of culture and the pragmatics of communication. These components are discussed next.

Knowledge of the Language Acquisition Process. A number of scholars have contributed to the definition and creation of a research-based model of language acquisition. During the past several decades, scholarly consideration has focused on the concept of *communicative competence* (Brown, 1993; Canale & Swain, 1980; Hymes, 1967), the relationship of this concept to language instruction (Dubin & Olshtain, 1986; Nunan, 1988), and the assessment of students' ability to competently communicate (Bachman, 1990). Although the concept of communicative competence is still under development, most linguists and theoreticians agree on the multi-componential nature of language development that includes grammatical, discourse, and strategic competence (Bachman, 1991; Celse-Murcia, Dornyei & Thurrell, 1995). With respect to understanding the second language learning process, linguistic, psychological, and sociological perspectives contribute to knowledge base development (Brown, 1993).

Understanding how the acquisition process is influenced by a variety of factors, such as age, gender, motivation, socioeconomic levels, prior educational experience, and learning contexts, extends this body of knowledge exponentially (Ellis, 1985). In acquiring a research-based understanding of communicative competence, it is often necessary for teachers to un-learn previously held opinions, myths, or misconceptions about how language is learned (McLaughlin, 1992), such as the belief that children learn a new language faster than adults. Theoretically, the understanding gained through this process can also enhance teachers' ability to recognize the complexities of what may appear to be simple communicative acts (Ellis, 1992). Practical applications include, for example, insights into when to provide feedback, require additional practice, or give contextual support for communication.

Theoretical development occurs as teachers acquire a solid foundation in: (a) research in

TESOL Knowledge Base

Domains and Themes

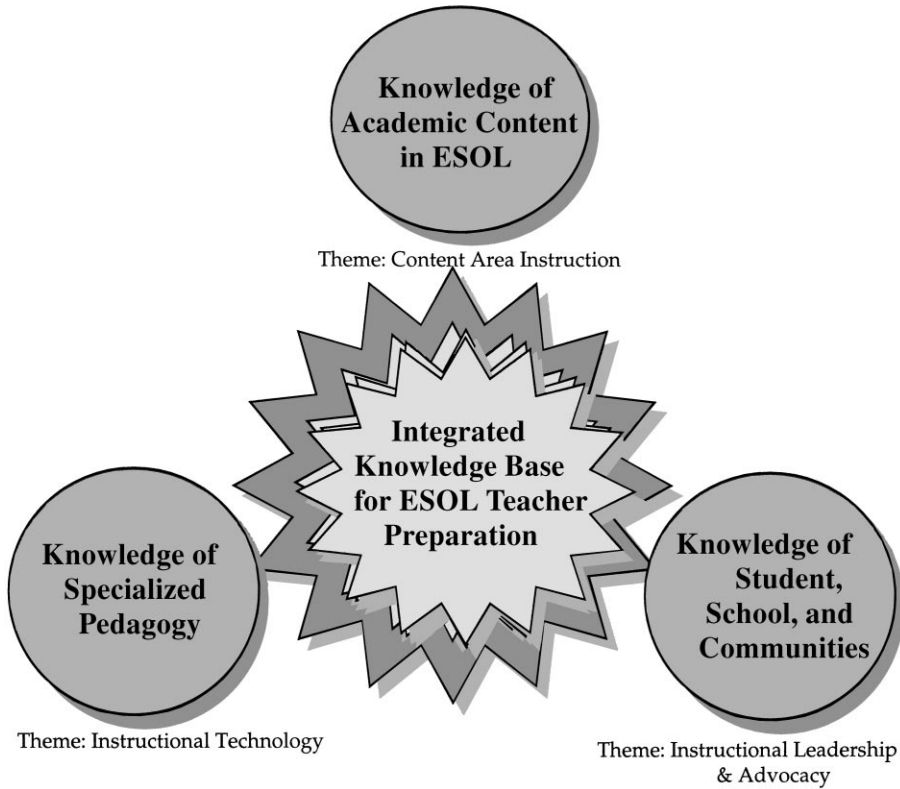


Figure 1

language learning (Ellis, 1985; Hakuta & Bialystok, 1994; Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991); (b) second language research and policy formation (Crawford, 1992; August & Hakuta, 1997); (c) concepts of bilingualism (Baetens Beardsmore, 1986); and (d) dual language instruction (Lessow-Hurley, 1996; Shannon, 1995; Valdés, 1997). The practical focus occurs as teachers develop the tools for observing students' language use in a variety of settings (Cazden, 1988; Halliday, 1978) and using the insights gained to modify instruction (Fradd & Klingner, 1995).

One of the essential purposes for learning English is full participation in the settings where English is used. For students, the classroom is one such setting. In order for ELLs to participate in subject area instruction of the typical English-language classroom, ESOL teachers

must promote literacy development in oral and written contexts (Cummins, 1981; Lee & Fradd, 1996a). In order to facilitate students' transitions between languages, modes of communication, and social and academic contexts, teachers can benefit from understanding the language learning process as it occurs for both English-language-background students and students learning English as a new language (Firth & Wagner, 1997).

Knowledge of Subject Area Content. Knowledge of subject area content involves more than an understanding of the subject areas. Communication about the content of each subject area has unique discourse features and predominant ways language is used. In science, for example, students frequently use language to hypothesize,

observe, describe, explain, and justify their understandings (Lee, Fradd & Sutman, 1995). These language uses, or functions, require specific grammatical structures that support science discourse. For example, the language used to describe an event or an action is often done in the present tense. However, in order for students move beyond simple descriptions to adequately hypothesize what they predict will happen in a science activity, students must have a command of future tense. Explanations and justifications require a synthesis of information and understandings of cause/effect relationships expressed in past, present, and future tense. Language development is not limited to tense differences, but includes a full range of complex ways of making meaning to express understanding of relationships, predictions, and outcomes.

Other subject areas have similarly complex language requirements. In social studies, for example, in order for students to compare and contrast events, they must be able to identify and communicate similarities and differences. To fully communicate an understanding of relationships, students must use comparison words, first to describe, then to differentiate, and finally to summarize key features (Short, 1994). In mathematics, students must be able to restate questions and identify key features of word problems (Secada, 1998). As language develops, students are expected to deduce, extrapolate, and use cause and effect reasoning to show mathematical relationships (Cuevas, 1991). Although the discourse of subject area content, such as science, social studies, and mathematics, has unique linguistic requirements, there are also common ways that language is used to communicate across subject areas. By enabling students to use unique and common language functions, teachers can promote students' full participation in academic discourse.

Because English-proficient students usually have the initial language development required for participation, teachers may be unaware of the specific linguistic features students learning English require in order to participate in subject area discourse. By analyzing students' language as they participate in instructional tasks, teachers can identify specific linguistic and conceptual difficulties and provide specific instruction to promote the language development

required for effectively communicating subject area content.

National, state, and district curriculum frameworks and performance standards also play an important role in shaping subject area discourse. These documents provide teachers with guidelines for content instruction which can also be useful for language development. In order for students to achieve parity with their English-proficient age-peers, teachers must become familiar with the specific topics as well as the scope and sequence of the texts and instructional materials for the grade levels they teach (O'Malley & Valdez Pierce, 1996). Because increasingly ESOL teachers are expected to apply grade-level subject area frameworks and standards with the students they teach, curriculum frameworks provide an important resource for language instruction.

Knowledge of Culture and Pragmatic Language Use. Within the domain of subject matter knowledge, culture is considered from a theoretical perspective, such as value orientations (Condon & Yousef, 1975) and contexts (Gudykunst & TingToomey, 1988; Hakuta & Bialystok, 1994; Hall, 1959, 1966, 1976). Both the theoretical and practical aspects of cultural understanding are central to effectively using language in different contexts (Thomas, 1995). Consideration of *culture* as a phenomenon, an area of research, and a factor influencing communication and comprehension represents vastly different topics with their own bodies of knowledge. When seen through the lens of theory and research, culture is a formal study of ways of thinking, organizing, valuing, and communicating (Brislin, 1993). When seen through the lens of practical application, an awareness of cultural similarities and differences across languages is central in promoting effective cross-cultural communication and pragmatically appropriate language use (Banks & Banks, 1997; Nieto, 1996).

In the preparation of ESOL teachers, each of the three areas of subject matter knowledge—language acquisition, subject area content, and culture and pragmatic language use—is central to the academic orientation of language instruction. Taken together, these areas provide a foundation for ensuring students develop academic and social discourse as they learn to participate in the English-speaking world.

Knowledge of Pedagogy

Knowledge of pedagogy involves an understanding of curriculum, instruction, assessment, and the application of technology. Such knowledge also enables ESOL teachers to collaborate with other educators in identifying and meeting students' needs (Fradd & Larrinaga McGee, 1994; Rigg & Allen, 1989).

Curriculum and Instruction. For ESOL teachers, knowledge of pedagogy includes an understanding of curriculum at specific grade levels and in particular subject areas. For most subject area teachers, students' proficiency in English is a given. In contrast, ESOL teachers require specialized understanding of how to create, use, and adapt grade-level curricula to meet the needs of students with a wide range of literacy experiences and English language proficiency (Dubin & Olshain, 1986; Nunan, 1988; Richard-Amato, 1996). ESOL teachers must know and understand the content they teach within the context of the curricula used at specific grade level(s).

Because of differences in literacy development and educational experiences, the use of pedagogy relevant for mainstream students is not necessarily appropriate for students learning English (Reyes, 1992). Making instruction meaningful and relevant means that teachers must have an understanding of the similarities and differences in the performance of typical English-proficient students and students learning English (Firth & Wagner, 1997). Because ELLs' academic performance can range from concrete and cognitively undemanding to abstract and cognitively demanding, ESOL teachers must address both the cognitive and linguistic demands of instruction within the curriculum (Cummins, 1981).

Assessment. In spite of the attention given to ELLs' successful participation in mainstream classes, research comparing their learning needs with students whose only language is English is not readily available (August & Hakuta, 1997). An understanding of formal assessment and use of standardized procedures is important for measuring and interpreting students' performance. Because placement and exit from ESOL programs is often based on standardized assessments, teachers require a clear understanding of

how the information obtained through standardized tests may or may not reflect students' actual performance. Although traditional assessment has involved discrete point, norm referenced procedures (Oller, 1983), recent approaches consider alternative, informal performance assessment for individuals and groups (O'Malley & Valdez Pierce, 1996).

Because assessment plays a central role in identifying students' level of language proficiency and academic achievement, effective ways of measuring students' performance and relating assessment to instruction are essential (Fradd & Larrinaga McGee, 1994). A combination of formal and informal procedures can be used to promote effective instruction and to monitor students' progress.

Technology. The integration of technology provides teachers with opportunities for bridging students' understanding of content with their ability to communicate. Often teachers are not prepared to teach with technology (Abramson, 1993; Fulton, 1993). Instruction in the hows and whys of technology, in combination with opportunities for practical applications, is required to integrate technology into classroom teaching. Applications of technology can provide valuable support for language learning through interactive feedback and visual cues linking real-world experience with academic content and discourse. Computers offer interactive auditory, iconic, and written input to promote students' comprehension and expression of content and ideas in multiple representational formats.

Knowledge of Students, Schools, and Communities

Teachers' knowledge of students' social and cultural backgrounds, in addition to their individual needs, is essential for effective instruction. Because ESOL teachers serve as advocates of students and families as well as liaisons between schools and communities, the need and the access to this knowledge extends well beyond the classroom or the school.

The Classroom Context. Studies of interactions between teachers and students illustrate clear differences between the mainstream patterns and the patterns of students whose

experiences differ from the mainstream (Au & Kawakimi, 1994; Heath, 1983; Moll, 1992). To build on students' prior knowledge, teachers need to consider the students' unique interactional patterns while enabling the students to participate effectively within the mainstream (Cazden, 1988; Tikunoff, 1985, 1987).

Just as each language has its own genre and ways of organizing ideas, so too does each subject area require specific cultural knowledge (Lee et al., 1995). Teachers must be aware of cultural expectations for student performance within subject areas (Cazden, 1988). In a science classroom, for example, if students have not developed scientific habits of mind, such as reasoning, questioning, arguing, and critiquing, they may not participate effectively in science instruction (Lee & Fradd, 1996b). ESOL teachers must be aware of the learning situations in which students require specific kinds of support to participate effectively (Fradd & Klingner, 1995).

The School Context. Leadership and advocacy are essential to the complexities of the modern classrooms and schools. Teachers require an understanding of the policies and practices of the school. Being familiar with the laws, the court decisions, the executive orders, and the historical precedents influencing current policy enables teachers to be informed in making educational decisions and advocating on behalf of their students. This body of knowledge also enables teachers to explain current policies and practices to others.

Because ESOL teachers work directly with students from language and cultural backgrounds about which many other teachers have limited personal knowledge, ESOL teachers are often called upon to interpret students' behaviors and to explain cultural differences. In contributing to the collaborative organization of a school, ESOL teachers must be prepared to function as interpreters as well as advocates, to observe and comprehend students' meanings as well as their communication (Fradd, 1995).

The Community Context. For teachers in public school settings, kindergarten through grade 12, understanding the interface between schools and communities forms an important part of the

informal knowledge that creates the foundation for instruction. By recognizing differences in socialization patterns of the home and the school, teachers can build on students' strengths, while making students strategically aware of language use differences within school and community settings (Aboud, 1987; Au & Kawakimi, 1994; Ramsey, 1987). By understanding the funds of knowledge within the home and the community, teachers also obtain insights for promoting effective subject area instruction (Moll, 1992).

Often instructional decisions are made informally without teachers' awareness of either the input for the decisions or the impact that the decisions will have. An understanding of the context of instruction in the classroom, the school, and the community can provide teachers with multiple data sources for pedagogical decisions. As teachers become aware of these sources as operatives that impact instruction and assessment, they can use the information to strategically promote student learning (Fradd & Larrinaga McGee, 1994).

English language instruction includes a focus on the development of academic and social language skills, as well as the pragmatic knowledge of culture required for effective communication. In addition to teaching English as an additional language, ESOL teachers are often expected to provide content area instruction to promote ELLs' academic participation with their age peers. In addition, in states and school districts seeking to reform educational practices, ESOL teachers serve as advocates of their students; as intermediaries in bridging linguistic and cultural differences; and as collaborators in program development and implementation (Fradd, 1995).

Integrating and Expanding the TESOL Knowledge Base

The development of a TESOL knowledge base can promote several important outcomes. When used at the university level to prepare beginning teachers to the field, the knowledge base can enable program participants (in-service and pre-service teachers) to become aware of the body of knowledge that provides the foundation for instruction. Because knowledge base development occurs through the

integration of theoretical and practical perspectives, it enables teachers to recognize the value and importance of both theory and practice in their work. Classroom complexity requires ESOL teachers to have an adequate knowledge base for effective instruction. The same complexity provides ESOL teachers with opportunities to reason and to develop unique skills that can be beneficial to the entire school as well as the community the school serves.

At a school, district, or state level, a TESOL knowledge base can benefit both ESOL teachers and teachers in other areas. Defining what ESOL teachers need to know and be able to do could be insightful for promoting collaboration and for planning and implementing instruction. At the school level, the presence of a TESOL knowledge base can provide teachers with a focus for identifying specific instructional needs and organizing resources to meet these needs. At the district level, such a knowledge base can be valuable for curriculum development and textbook adoption, reviewing assessment outcomes, and planning in-service programs. At the state level, a TESOL knowledge base can be used to enhance articulation of professional services and responsibilities across instructional areas. In short, the specification of a TESOL knowledge base can benefit both the TESOL profession and the larger education community which is also responsible for ensuring that students learning English achieve high academic standards (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996).

Increasing the knowledge available for teacher preparation requires an interplay between the use of local knowledge about specific populations of students and comprehensive knowledge applicable across settings (Goldenberg & Gallimore, 1991). The development of a comprehensive TESOL knowledge base has the value of integrating discrete, local knowledge with generalizable knowledge relevant at the national and international levels. The TESOL knowledge base can be enriched by encouraging educators to identify professional knowledge within and across instructional areas, grade levels, and purposes for studying English. This understanding is important not only in enabling credentialing organizations and institutions to facilitate teacher preparation, but also in helping professionals to recognize how their own prepa-

ration may be similar to and different from that of professionals in other geographic regions and nations. With the globalization of the workforce and increasing opportunities for international employment, an understanding of the knowledge identified for TESOL preparation could be insightful.

The benefit of university-level TESOL knowledge base development could be extended through national and international level efforts. These efforts could include teaching English for adult learners across settings and for different purposes. Further extensions could also include state, national, and international credentialing requirements. Such developments could foster discussion of how teaching English to ELLs is similar to and different from English instruction for native English speakers (Firth & Wagner, 1997).

Both epistemological and policy factors must be considered in developing a TESOL knowledge base that is relevant to ESOL teachers, students learning English, and the TESOL profession as a whole. A generic TESOL knowledge base has not yet been articulated to include information on the possible configurations of students and communities in which ESOL teachers may work. Development could be initiated through the construction of specific knowledge bases, such as the one discussed here, that have evolved for particular groups of teachers and students.

Although the imperative to promote academic achievement for all students is clear (Darling-Hammond, 1996), identifying what is already known about effective instruction for students learning English and making this knowledge available at the classroom level has not yet been fully accomplished (August & Hakuta, 1997). In the United States, most ESOL teachers recognize the challenges of diversity. Because of the complexities that ESOL teachers address on a regular basis, they can offer insights in meeting the learning needs of ELLs at the classroom and school level. To enable ESOL teachers to do what they are capable of doing, professional collaboration and commitment are required to create a comprehensive knowledge base that can enhance the TESOL profession, while also enabling other professional groups to recognize the potential contributions of ESOL teachers.

Notes

¹ The term 'English to speakers of other languages (ESOL)' is used to refer to a specific group of teachers and the instructional programs in which they work. The term 'teachers of English to speakers of other languages (TESOL)' is used to refer to type of teacher preparation programs for ESOL teachers.

² The term 'English Language Learners (ELLs)' is used to identify students who have frequently been referred to as 'Limited English Proficient (LEP)' students. Although LEP is the official term used by the U.S. federal government, the use of ELLs is preferred by many professionals because it places emphasis on what students are learning rather than their limitations.

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