Title of Project:
How Preservice ESOL Teacher-learners Construct their Teacher Identities:
Case Studies from an MATESOL Program

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Project Summary:

Conceptualized as teachers' dynamic, ever-changing self-conception and imagination of themselves as teachers, teacher identity is considered as an integral part of learning-to-teach process. It has a major influence on many matters, ranging from how ESOL teachers learn to perform their profession, how they practice theory and theorize their practice, how they deal with school politics, to how they interact and collaborate with their colleagues in their social setting. Having this conceptual backdrop, the proposed study builds upon the premise that the investigation of teacher-learners' identity construction can shed light on the way second language teachers develop as professionals while transitioning from a graduate student self to a teacher self. Therefore, it examines the ways that MATESOL students construct their teacher identities during their coursework and internship experiences in an intensive teacher education program at a large research university in the mid-Atlantic US.

Utilizing case study methodology, the proposed study will glean data from four sources: individual interviews, focus group interview, observations of teacher learners in their university courses and their school classroom settings, and document review. This study intends to contribute to our understanding of (1) what kind of identity-building processes preservice ESOL teacher-learners go through in their university-based courses and public school practicum, (2) what factors play roles in this process, (3) how identity-building changes or fluctuates over time as a result of programmatic components, and (4) how preservice L2 teachers' teaching practice and understanding of L2 teaching changes as their identities as teachers emerge.