Title of Project:
Preparing Pre-service Teachers for Working with Linguistically Diverse Students: Examining University Teacher Preparation Programs Across the United States

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Project Summary:
Language is central to teaching and learning, both socially-mediated endeavors dependent on context (Schleppegrell, 2004; Vygotsky, 1987). New common academic standards, requiring all students to interact with complex texts, rich disciplinary language, and academic discourse features highlight an increasing need for repositioning language and language expertise in the classroom. This requires a paradigm shift within teacher preparation programs (Kibler, Valdes, & Walqui, 2014; Zeichner, 2005) and capacity building amongst teacher educators. My study explores the efforts of several university-based teacher preparation programs (UBTPPs) across the U.S. to better understand what these varied approaches can afford new teachers in support of their work with ELLs. Utilizing multiple case study methodology (Stake, 1995) to both examine the uniqueness of individual programs and to analyze programs across research sites to collectively to gain understanding of the range of perspectives and possible practices across a variety of institutional and policy contexts, I seek to highlight promising practices and opportunities in the field as well as larger trends within teacher education programs. Framed within a sociocultural paradigm of learning (Vygotsky, 1986; Wertsch, 1995), the study draws upon an ecological systems perspective (Bronfenbrenner,1979, 1994) and Bakhtin's theory of dialogism (1981, 1986) to analyze the overlapping social, political, and cultural factors which may influence program design and play a role in the socially-mediated learning of teacher candidates. Findings will contribute to an understanding of the role of language in teacher preparation, and assist in identifying promising practices and opportunities for teacher educators to support teacher candidates' future work with language learners.