Theses and Dissertations

1-2018

How do English Teacher Educators in Oklahoma Utilize the Secondary English Methods Course to Prepare English Teacher Candidates for Today's Classroom?

Lara Elaine Searcy
University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

Recommended Citation

Searcy, Lara Elaine, "How do English Teacher Educators in Oklahoma Utilize the Secondary English Methods Course to Prepare English Teacher Candidates for Today's Classroom?" (2018). *Theses and Dissertations*. 2697.
http://scholarworks.uark.edu/etd/2697

How do English Teacher Educators in Oklahoma Utilize the Secondary English Methods Course to Prepare English Teacher Candidates for Today's Classroom?

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Curriculum and Instruction

by

Lara Elaine Searcy
Northeastern State University
Bachelor of Arts in Education, 2006
Northeastern State University
Master of Education in Teaching, 2009

May 2018
University of Arkansas

This dissertation is approved for recommendation to the Graduate Council.

_____
Christian Z. Goering, Ph.D.
Dissertation Director

_____
Vicki S. Collet, Ph.D.
Committee Member

_____
Jason L. Endacott, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Abstract

The study focuses on how English teacher educators in Oklahoma utilize the secondary English methods course to prepare English teacher candidates in four thematic strands: a) instructional approaches, b) inclusion and alignment to national and state standards, c) focus on the state subject-area teacher certification assessment, and d) the course's curricular changes made due to educational policies. Using a qualitative, descriptive, collective case study approach, the results describe how six instructors prepare English teacher candidates for today's classroom in 2017.

A description of the secondary English methods course in Oklahoma is difficult to define by a single course title, but it either has content-focus or provides general methods. Instructional approaches instructors use include an emphasis on experience, theory, and reflection, as well as a newly defined emphasis on dialogic approaches and technology. The possible absence of critical literacy was noted. For most cases, standards get an introduction and are addressed through standards-based lessons and units, but are not an explicit element of the course. All agreed that standards are similar and based on skill, just organized differently, so many did not see issues in candidates understanding different sets of standards. Findings in the state subject-area teacher certification assessment were minimal with half of the cases stating no formal focus on preparation for the exam in the course. Finally, the course has changed due to educational policies, such as the amount of time (from 2010-2016) and effort spent creating state-specific K-12 content standards and state-specific teacher licensure exams. All participants saw only drawbacks to this state-specific context. In addition, political challenges, such as low teacher pay and high cuts in education funding, have caused a dire teacher shortage which has created an increase in alternative and emergency certified teachers. Though this was not a focus of the study, many participants noted concern about the future quality of clinical faculty during the

field experience. Research recommendations include creating a collective English teacher educator network where educators can continue to share resources and expand their knowledge of English teacher preparation, especially as a call to advocacy in response to the state's political challenges.

Acknowledgements

My educational journey, like the Hero's journey, has been guided by the supernatural aid of my family, friends, and teachers. Throughout this process, I have lovingly called them #TeamDrLara because this accomplishment is a collective effort. Thank you, first, to "my boys" (Brian, Blake, and Luke) for time. You have given me the gift of time to work, you have invested time (away from me) into our future, and you must know that "I love you all the time." To my siblings, Justin and Lesley, for being educational travelers— who would have known back during the Montero commuting days that we would all be traveling Ph.D. roads. To the Landers/Jacobs family-- thank you for your own investments into education and into my life. To the Searcy family-- thank you for your continued support and encouragement. To my English teacher friends-- you are my favorite ELA nerds, and I am so grateful to have such an inspiring professional learning community. To the #NSUEngEd faculty and students-- thank you for allowing me to learn with you. To my wonderful University of Arkansas committee members-- I appreciate all your feedback and instruction, it has provided such guidance in my scholarship. And finally, thank you to my teachers-- I am a teacher because of you. I have realized more than ever that students really do become the teachers, so now that I am a teacher (of future teachers), it is my hope to share "the life-giving power of literature" with them. May you all know that #TeamDrLara is more than the words on these pages. You are my world beyond these pages and "there is still much to be written…"

Dedication

To the students in today's classroom --

become the future teachers.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

I. Chapter One: Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Those who prepare English teacher candidates need to understand how to design a methods course that prepares English teacher candidates for a changing world that includes curricular and political challenges (Caughlan, Pasternak, Hallman, Renzi, Rush, & Frisby, 2017). Curricular changes include states' development of their own K-12 standards and assessments and political changes include accountability measures that challenge the efficacy of traditional programs of teacher certification (Caughlan et al., 2017). Political changes ultimately affect curricular decisions since "top-down educational policies" seek to reform teacher preparation as a means of strengthening our educational system (Brass & Webb, 2015, p.vii; NCTQ, 2014). According to Taubman (2010), the effects of these top-down educational policies greatly affect educators: they inform our teaching practices, constrict our school life, influence how and what we think and do in the classroom, how we spend our professional time, how we are evaluated, and ultimately the meaning of our work. Therefore, understanding how educational policies, such as standards-based reforms and assessment, are addressed in Oklahoma secondary English Language Arts methods courses will provide insight on the preparation of English teacher candidates for today's classroom and how (if at all) English teacher educators are reshaping their methods course in response to these challenges (Brass & Webb, 2015).

The "subject-specific methods course is the primary location where secondary teachers develop subject-matter-specific pedagogical content knowledge" (Caughlan et al., 2017, p. 266), so it provides an ideal setting where teacher candidates can increase their awareness about these challenges. Also, it provides opportunities for English teacher educators to "shift the conversation of educational reform toward more generative visions of literacy, the English

language arts, and university-based teacher education" through multidisciplinary research, critical theories, and practitioner inquiry (Brass & Webb, 2015, p. xi).

The methods course is a complex phenomenon that is evolving in the education research field, especially in regard to how it informs teacher preparation. Early researchers were concerned more with teaching techniques than examining the context and content of methods courses (Brady & Clift, 2005); however, changes in context and content are pertinent to English education, particularly curricular and political changes at program and methods course levels (Caughlan et al., 2017). Therefore, the study examined both the context and content of such changes.

Context- Oklahoma.

Oklahoma provided a unique context of study because it prepares its teacher candidates using state-specific K-12 standards and state-specific teacher certification assessments. In addition, Oklahoma has unique political challenges: The average starting salary for an Oklahoma teacher is $31,600, which ranks Oklahoma at 49th in the nation in teacher pay. Oklahoma is also the worst in the nation for public education cuts with per-pupil spending cut 23.6% since 2008 (OEA, 2017). Due to budget cuts, many districts have had to cut teaching positions to cover the loss which increases class sizes and creates additional challenges for teachers (OEA, 2017). Also, more Oklahoma educators left the profession than joined from 2010-2015 which means Oklahoma is losing 10% of its teachers with a decade of experience every year, "or approximately 383 teachers per month" (OEA, 2017). A recent article by an Oklahoma researcher explains this loss: "We lose our investment in [teacher] training and education. We also lose [qualified teacher] expertise to educate our children and build our future economy. As these well-prepared teachers leave, our state is forced to fill many of their jobs with emergency

certified personnel without specific training or experience in education" (Cullen, 2017).

Therefore, poor compensation, combined with budget cuts and other challenges, have caused

many qualified Oklahoma teachers to look for teaching work elsewhere. Due to qualified

teachers leaving, "50,000 Oklahoma kids are in classrooms with emergency teachers, with 90

emergency teaching certificates issued every month" (OEA, 2017). This means that "in 2016,

1,500 Oklahoma classrooms were led by either a long-term substitute teacher or a teacher

without proper training and qualifications" (OEA, 2017). In 2017, the number of emergency

certifications continued to increase with 1,429 approved by the Oklahoma State Department of

Education whereas five years ago, the state issued only thirty-two emergency teaching

certificates in a year (Eger, 2017). This creates a state problem because when "teachers resign,

institutional memory is lost, and ties to the community, [or state], weaken" (Goldstein, 2014, p.

251). Therefore, the need for qualified teachers who are prepared for today's classroom is a

pertinent issue in Oklahoma, and it provides a critical context for the study to examine how

English teacher candidates are prepared in response to such curricular and political challenges.

Content- Secondary English Methods Course.

The secondary English Language Arts methods course provided relevant content for the

study because it is often defined as "the primary location where secondary [teacher candidates]

develop subject-matter specific content knowledge" that focuses mainly on teaching of English

language arts content for students in grades 7-12 (Caughlan et al., 2017, p. 269; Smagorinsky &

Whiting, 1995). The methods course should include inquiry regarding beliefs, how to plan

lessons and units, and content-specific classroom management strategies with the purpose of

integrating content, pedagogy, and professionalism (Pasternak, et al., 2018; Caughlan et al.,

2017). The study looked at the content of secondary English methods courses as it related to four

thematic strands: a) its instructional approaches, b) its inclusion and alignment to standards, c) its focus on the state subject-area teacher certification assessment, and d) the course's curricular changes made due to educational policies.

Overall, the research problem sought to understand how Oklahoma secondary English Language Arts methods instructors approach the course and to identify curricular changes the course has undergone due to educational policies, such as recent standards adoptions and assessment requirements. The research problem was corroborated by the concern about the ways teachers themselves are taught (Smagorinsky & Whiting, 1995). Reports such as the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ)'s *Teacher Prep Review* (2014) are looking critically at "improving teacher preparation quality to produce more classroom-ready teachers." Their report shows, "far more needs to be done to expand the pool of teachers properly prepared to meet the challenges of the contemporary American classroom" (NCTQ, 2014).

One way to examine teacher preparation is to focus on how the specific English methods course prepares teacher candidates for the specific kinds of professional work required in the twenty-first century, which includes standards-based instruction and assessment (Pasternak et al., 2014). Currently, the impact of standards on secondary English methods courses is not a focus of scholarship which is why it is relevant to study how the methods courses are preparing teacher candidates. Both standards and assessments are critical issues for twenty-first-century teaching, so it is important to study how English teacher educators actually use policy documents to teach teacher candidates since educators use policy documents to engage in social practice (Caughlan et al., 2017; Fredericksen, 2011). Examining how the English methods course is designed and how it approaches the content and pedagogical knowledge English teacher candidates should

4

know and be able to do, informs the discussion of how teacher candidates engage in meaningful, theoretically motivated, and important learning (Smagorinsky & Whiting, 1995).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to see how English teacher educators in one state utilize the secondary English methods course. English teacher educators need to examine, identify, reflect, and incorporate different instructional approaches and qualities into their content methods course that is context-dependent (Smagorinsky & Whiting, 1995). The study described how English methods courses are situated within the larger context of the state's requirements for English language arts teacher preparation. Based on multiple case descriptions, the study provided a collective description of how Oklahoma English language arts methods courses are preparing English teacher candidates for today's classroom. This description about what constitutes a secondary English methods course is pertinent because "there is little consensus across the field regarding what constitutes a 'methods' course in the United States" (Pasternak et al., 2017, p. 28).

The English methods course is an important area of research focus because it provides situated learning experiences where "the knowledge [teacher candidates] get in school should serve as a tool for their practical work in the world" (Smagorinsky & Whiting, 1995, p. 24). Given sociocultural theories of situated learning, English teacher educators need to consider not only how the knowledge from the methods course extends into today's classrooms, but also how they can extend their connections with teacher candidates beyond the course to support beginning teachers' transition into the profession (Cercone, 2015). Therefore, in the study, the "situated learning" refers to the relationship between what is learned in the secondary English

methods course and how that knowledge is practical, meaningful, and valuable to the state's collective preparation of English teachers.

A goal of the research is to share and use the collective description of the secondary English methods course to identify common instructional approaches, resources, and its unique context and content in a state (NCTE, 2005b). This aligns to NCTE's Belief, as stated in the *Program Assessment in English Education: Belief Statements and Recommendations* position, that there should be "arrangements with colleges, schools, and departments of education to gather cross-institutional studies of the features of English education programs" (NCTE, 2005c). The impetus of these arrangements then should be for English education faculty to use research evidence to better understand their program within not only their institution, but also the state. This is especially important for the state of Oklahoma which is encountering a decreased enrollment in teacher preparation programs overall (OSSBA, 2016). Sharing evidence from the research study "has the ability to contribute to a deeper understanding of curricula and processes in English education programs and supports the profession's ability to meet broader goals" (NCTE, 2005c). Therefore, the intention of the research is to first describe how English teacher candidates are taught in the methods course and then use the data to inform practice across the state, encouraging collaboration and long-term work that will "decrease the isolation among teacher education researchers and support more collaborative, cross-institutional, and longitudinal research" (Brady & Clift, 2005, pg. 335). Working together across institutions is not automatic or easy, according to Brady and Clift (2005), but it does have the potential to encourage collaborative, reflective practice.

The study determined what instructional approaches the secondary English methods course takes at institution levels and whether the course is guided by standards and assessments

since the national guidelines recommend modeling instructional strategies utilized in the course (Smagorinsky & Whiting, 1995). The study determined what recent course changes have occurred, if any, due to changes in both national (*NCTE/NCATE Standards for Initial Preparation of Teachers of Secondary English Language Arts, Grades 7-12)* and state (*Oklahoma Academic Standards for English Language Arts*) standards. Similarly, what course changes have occurred, if any, due to the redevelopment of the state's teacher certification assessment (Oklahoma Subject Area Test- English 107) which happened as a result of the standards changes.

Conceptual Framework

The Conceptual Framework (Figure 1) of this study centered on how secondary English methods courses are developed in regard to four thematic strands: a) instructional approaches, b) inclusion and alignment to national and state standards, c) focus on the state subject-area teacher certification assessment, and d) the course's curricular changes made due to educational policies.

HOW DO SECONDARY ENGLISH EDUCATORS IN OKLAHOMA UTILIZE THE ENGLISH METHODS COURSE TO PREPARE FUTURE ENGLISH TEACHERS FOR TODAY'S CLASSROOM?

Qualitative, Descriptive, Collective Case Study of Secondary English Methods Courses in Oklahoma

Data Collection

Phase I. Syllabus Review

Phase II. Questionnaire

Phase III. Follow-Up, Member Check Interview

Research Question Themes

a) Instructional Approaches (*adapted from Smagorinsky & Whiting, 1995)

b) Inclusion/ Alignment of Standards (NCTE 2012 and OAS-ELA, 2016)

c) Focus on OSAT Preparation (Oklahoma Subject Area Test in English)

d) Curricular Changes due to Educational Policies

Data Analysis- Framework analysis; qualitative; descriptive; deductive

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework.

A. Instructional Approaches.

The study is also in part related to the work of Smagorinsky and Whiting (1995) completed in the mid-1990s in *How English Teachers Get Taught*. In 1995, Smagorinsky and Whiting's study was the first comprehensive and national study of how English teachers are taught, especially in regard to the English methods course; however, the field has changed much since then which is why there is a need for more current data and research (Caughlan et al., 2017). For example, in the mid-1990s, issues such as K-12 content standards were not at the forefront of English methods courses because standards-based reforms were not yet required at the state level.

8

The study aligned Smagorinsky and Whiting's (1995) five approaches of teaching English methods courses through a review of English methods course syllabi and interviews of English teacher educators. The five approaches include: 1) Survey, 2) Workshop, 3) Experience-Based, 4) Theoretical, and 5) Reflective and were used as a way to categorize the English methods classes. Each approach considers the organization, or sequence of the course; syllabus qualities; typical assignments and assessments; tendencies and attempts; goals and purposes; advantages and disadvantages; assumptions; problems; and emphasis of the course as described in the course syllabus.

In Survey approaches, the knowledge of the course is built from topics with the attempt to cover many issues and topics during a single course, or semester. In Workshop approaches, the class session is devoted to student participation and activities, or small-group development. In Experience-based courses, there is a link between theory and practice, which often involves the planning and implementing of lessons. In the Theoretical approach, there is an emphasis on theory rather than practice, so the course may rely heavily on texts. Finally, in the Reflective approach, teacher candidates reflect on course readings, experiences, and the course. Courses can overlap in each of these approaches, which according to Smagorinsky and Whiting (1995), is the best way to approach a methods course. However, they do share that while there no "best" way to teach a methods course, it is important to understand the context, content, disposition of the instructor, the course's situation within program, demands of local schools, state requirements, student characteristics, and other factors that affect instructors and students (Smagorinsky & Whiting, 1995).

The study was different than that of Smagorinsky & Whiting's 1995 national review of syllabi and other methods course research in that it extends the conversation about secondary

English methods course into the field through interviews with English methods course instructors, as well as consider recent and necessary political and state contexts that early researchers seldom include in their review of methods courses (Clift & Brady, 2005).

B. Inclusion/Alignment of Standards.

The study focused primarily on how teacher candidates are prepared in K-12 content standards, an influential area noted in the most recent national study, the *CEE Methods Commission National Study: Secondary English Teacher Education in the United States* (2018) conducted by Pasternak, Caughlan, Hallman, Renzi, and Rush, with data collection from 2011-2015. By focusing on the "critical orientation (e.g. putting standards in their sociohistorical or political context, or inviting candidates to read them comparatively or critically)" English methods course instructors take, if at all, when teaching the standards (Pasternak et al., 2018; Caughlan et al., 2017, p. 287), the study informed how the role of standards affect English teacher preparation at the state level. This is important because "standards-based reform is the most powerful engine for education improvement currently operating in the United States, and all part of that undertaking-- including teacher preparation--is supposed to be aligned with a state's standards" (Stotsky, 2005, p. 6). Ninety-nine percent of respondents in the recent national survey reported addressing K-12 content standards in their program (with 45.50% reporting they are addressed "in the English methods course" and 44.83% reporting "throughout coursework"), so this study focused on how both national and state content standards are included and aligned specifically in one state's secondary English methods courses (Caughlan et al., 2017). This was a pertinent topic to study because with "the most universal inclusion of standards as a topic in methods course, it even more interesting that so little has been said about the place of standards in teacher preparation in the English teacher education research literature" (Caughlan et al.,

2017, p. 287). In addition, "if both the English and education faculty in institutions of higher education are not held responsible for preparing prospective English teachers to be capable of addressing content-rich and content-specific K-12 literature standards, states may see no gains in student reading beyond the early grades" (Stotsky, 2005, p. 14).

National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE).

The National Council of Teachers of English's *Standards for Initial Preparation of Teachers of Secondary English Language Arts, Grades 7-12* provides the national specialized program association (SPA) standards for secondary English Language Arts teacher preparation. It guides the study with its Content Pedagogy standards that identify what English language arts teacher candidates should know and be able to do. Since the goal of standards is to steer curriculum and teaching (Schmoker, 2011), the study sought to understand how standards documents support and inform a course because standards provide the "ELA curricular requirements" that teacher candidates should be learning about and planning for in their own instructional design. One specific standard the study addressed is how instructors "plan standards-based, coherent, and relevant learning experiences" in addition to also "plan[ing] instruction based on ELA curricular requirements and standards" (NCTE, 2012). However, programs that use *NCTE Guidelines* "to shape their curriculum should expect to exceed these minimal standards" (NCTE, 2006). Just as students "should know, understand, and be able to do," these *NCTE Standards* provide expectations instructors should have for teaching secondary English education candidates.

Oklahoma Academic Standards in English Language Arts (OAS-ELA).

The *Oklahoma Academic Standards* (OAS) are the state standards for pre-kindergarten through twelfth-grade students. They were created in response to Oklahoma's repeal of the

Common Core State Standards (*CCSS*) in June 2014 and are an update from Oklahoma's

previous standards, the Priority Academic Student Skills (PASS), which were last adopted in

2010. Oklahoma first adopted the *Common Core State Standards (CSSS)* in June 2010, supported

them with a four-year transition plan, and was prepared for full implementation in Fall 2014.

However, "propelled by a national wave of local-control school politics and accusations that the

Obama administration was guilty of federal overreach in education," Oklahoma "claimed that the

federal government was using *CCSS* to undermine local school control" (Feemster, 2014).

Therefore, Oklahoma sought to ensure that their state values were represented in the standards

process.

In June 2014, Oklahoma's Governor, Mary Fallin, signed into law House Bill 3399 which

stated that Oklahoma must adopt new standards that ensure students are prepared for higher

education and/or the workforce, and the standards should reflect Oklahoma values while

following a democratic process that involved the voices of students, candidates, teachers, and

stakeholders. HB3399 "called for the repeal of Common Core, and forbade any state agency to

give up state discretion or control over academic content standards, teaching standards, student

assessment or funding of public schools or programs" (Feemster, 2014). The new *Oklahoma*

English Language Arts Standards (OAS-ELA) were drafted, approved, and then implemented in

Fall 2016 (OSDE, 2015c). They serve as expectations, or "concise, written descriptions of what

students are expected to know and be able to do at a specific stage of their education," with the

goal that upon graduation from high school, all students are college and career ready (OSDE,

2015b). The *Oklahoma Academic Standards in English Language Arts (OAS-ELA)* document

states that "teachers use standards as guides for developing curriculum and instruction that is

appropriately engaging, challenging, and sequenced for the students in their care" (OSDE,

2015b), which is why their inclusion in secondary methods courses is a focus of the research study.

C. Preparation for the Oklahoma Subject Area Test (OSAT) in English (107).

The study also reviewed how teacher candidates are prepared for standards-based assessment with the Oklahoma Subject Area Test (OSAT) in the field of English. The (OSAT) in English (107) is an assessment tool created by the Evaluation Systems group of Pearson for the Certification Examinations for Oklahoma Educators program (CEOE) and administered by the Oklahoma Commission for Teacher Preparation (OCTP). It is a criterion-referenced exam based on specified competencies aligned with Oklahoma subject matter competencies and NCTE standards. The OSAT English (107) measures subject matter and English pedagogical knowledge. The OSAT is evaluated using a scaled score. "The scaled minimum passing score for the test is designed to reflect the level of knowledge and skills required for effective teacher performance in Oklahoma schools" (CEOE, 2012).

The Oklahoma Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (OEQA) has completed prior alignments between the *NCTE* and *OAS-ELA Standards* and OSAT test framework. As of February 6, 2017, the English OSAT has been redeveloped to align with the new *NCTE* and new *Oklahoma Academic Standards*. Candidate data first became available with the April 2017 score report. According to *The state of state English standards* report, "states should require their subject-matter tests for licensure to address the academic knowledge needed for teaching content-specific and content-rich standards" (Stotsky, 2005), so the study sought to understand how secondary English methods courses in Oklahoma are preparing teachers for this aspect of their certification.

D. Course Changes due to Educational Policies.

Change often creates resistance and/or ambivalence, and it should be regarded as a process, not an event (Evans, 2014; Fullan, 2016). Regarding educational policies, English teacher educators often feel resistant toward the discourse of educational reform and the languages and practices of standards and accountability because that discourse should not dictate how teachers think or act since it creates political pressure and economic incentive for universities to align teacher preparation programs with educational policies (Caughlan et al., 2017; Brass, 2015). In fact, the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) was formed in 1911 due to protest against college entrance requirements and their effects on high school English education (NCTE, 2017). Even today, as Brass (2015) reports, many English educators are experiencing "attacks on their professional expertise, academic freedom, and central passions and commitments" due to recent educational policies (p. 14). Some of these attacks and accountability pressures come from the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) which "advocates for reforms in a broad range of teacher policies at the federal, state and local levels to increase the number of effective teachers" (NCTQ, 2014).

The prevalence of reform in the field of education means that educators work in a constant state of change, and thus a constant state of resistance. This means that there should be a healthy skepticism of reform because conflict, ambivalence, and resistance inevitably will accompany it (Schmoker, 2011; Evans, 2014). In order for reform to be meaningful, change needs to involve "a change in practice" which, according to Fullan (2016) involves three dimensions: 1) the possibility of using new or revised materials; 2) the possibility of using new teaching approaches; and 3) the possible alteration of beliefs (p. 28). These three dimensions reveal how both standards and assessment have the potential to impact curricular decisions, such

as in the secondary English methods course, thus providing opportunities for meaningful change in instructional approaches. Therefore, reviewing how English teacher educators are navigating changes in areas such as their materials, practices, and beliefs provided insight on how educational policies inform curricular decisions— even if educational policies "mostly contradict contemporary research, theory, and pedagogical models" (Brass, 2015, p. 12; Fullan, 2016).

Significance of Study

The study was significant because it contributed to the topic of how teacher candidates are prepared in their secondary English methods course, specifically in regard to instructional approaches, how the course includes and aligns coursework to ELA curricular requirements, how it prepares teacher candidates for teacher certification assessments, and the curricular changes made due to educational policies. The study informs a broader community of stakeholders into a discussion about how "educational policies often serve as barriers to good teaching and teacher education" by informing them about the role the English language arts methods course plays in teacher preparation and "shifting the conversation of educational reform toward more generative visions of literacy and the field of English language arts" (Brass & Webb, 2015, p. xi).

According to Smagorinsky & Whiting (1995), "teachers should know the [reforms] that motivate their practice in order to make informed decisions about how to organize their classes and plan instruction for particular groups of students" (p. 23). Therefore, the examination of how teacher candidates are prepared informed English teacher educators about their course. This is important because as these English teacher educators engaged in the research study, their participation in the process aided their own knowledge about the topic which supports the goal to

use the results and research implications to inform the practice of all participants (Smagorinsky & Whiting, 1995).

Before Smagorinsky & Whiting's 1995 study, there had been little research on how the secondary English methods class was taught. In fact, research conducted by Brady and Clift (2005), state "very few studies looked at methods courses" with only 24 studies published from 1995 through 2001 on English and language arts methods courses. Of those 24 studies, 16 were self-studies, which seemed to represent much of the research (pg. 331). Specifically, the *CEE Methods National Study* (2018) showed that there has been almost no research on how teacher candidates are prepared to address academic content standards which is interesting since it is an almost universal topic in English methods courses (Pasternak et al., 2018; Caughlan et al., 2017). Due to this need for this research, the study offered more current data, especially regarding context that is geographically oriented and specific, to aid in the understanding of how English teacher educators (in the English methods course) are preparing teacher candidates for teaching in today's classroom.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, today's classroom looks different than it did ten, twenty, or even fifty years ago. "The United States has one of the highest high school dropout rates in the world. Among students who do complete high school and go on to college, nearly half require remedial courses, and nearly half never graduate" (United States Department of Education, n.d.). What this means is that as teacher educators prepare future teachers, they need to consider how today's students, in the twenty-first century, learn. According to *The Innovator's Mindset,* things that are needed for the learners of today to be successful in our world include: "voice, choice, time for reflection, opportunities for innovation, critical thinking, problem solving/finding, self-assessment, and connected learning" (Couros, 2015). This all

depends on how education prepares students in the classroom for college and careers. Teachers are the ones in those classrooms, so their preparation for today's classroom is a focus of the study.

The study was different than the national studies previously conducted because of its state demographic contextual factors and its focus on four thematic strands: a) its instructional approaches, b) its inclusion and alignment to national and state standards, c) its focus on the state subject-area teacher certification assessment, and d) the course's curricular changes made due to educational policies. These themes were corroborated by influential needs in the field of English education: 1) to describe the critical orientation of standards in English teacher candidate preparation due to recent reforms in Oklahoma, and 2) to understand how educational policies affect current (and future) English teacher candidate preparation in our state. For example, the Oklahoma Subject Area Test (OSAT) for the field of English was recently redeveloped due to changes in the national and state standards. This test is a high-stakes assessment for English teacher candidates because it is a requirement to become certified in the field of English teaching. Therefore, there is need to review coursework and assessment data and use that data to inform instruction on how Oklahoma teacher candidates in secondary English are being prepared in their content and pedagogical knowledge. Currently, this discussion is not occurring, and it has the potential to affect pertinent issues in Oklahoma regarding qualified teachers. This answers the call to use national studies, like the *CEE Methods National Study* (2018), as a grounding to support claims made on a smaller scale (Pasternak et al., 2018, p. 23).

Research Questions

The following served as the guiding question of this study: How do English teacher educators in Oklahoma utilize the secondary English methods course to prepare English teacher candidates for today's classroom? To explore this overarching question, the following questions were considered:

a) What instructional approach(es) does each English methods course take?

b) How does the English methods course, if at all, address and incorporate standards (state: OAS-ELA and national: NCTE)?

c) How does the English methods course, if at all, prepare teacher candidates for the Oklahoma Subject Area Test (OSAT) in English?

d) How has the course, if at all, changed due to curricular and political challenges (educational policies)?

Brief Overview of Methodology

The research study was a qualitative, descriptive, collective-case study that described how Oklahoma secondary English Language Arts methods courses prepare teacher candidates for today's classroom. Since a "multiple case study enables the researcher to explore differences within and between cases," the goal was to collectively describe the phenomena of how English methods courses operate in the real-life context in which they occur (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 548). Previously, "in studying the impact of a methods course on teaching practice, researchers have employed both direct methods (such as classroom observations) and indirect methods (such as interviews or examinations of lesson plans). Seldom did the researchers interrogate the social, political, or cultural contexts in which methods instructors work, although context has become a

salient issue" (Brady & Clift, 2005, pg. 313). Due to the need for context, the study provided an in-depth understanding of Oklahoma secondary English methods courses from a potential of eighteen approved teacher education preparation programs.

The sampling was criterion-based where all cases met the following criteria: an English methods course from an approved secondary English education program, as listed by the Oklahoma Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (OEQA) in its Teacher Preparation Inventory (Figure 2). Other degree programs certifying teachers in Oklahoma that are not on this list were excluded from the study as well as alternative certification routes. The unit of analysis was a secondary English methods course, defined as "primarily focusing on the representation of and teaching of ELA content" (Caughlan et al., 2017, p. 269). This is a "phenomenon that occurs in a bounded context" since the course is bound by time, place, activity, and definition (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 545). The course selection met the following requirements: a 3-hour required class in the English education degree program, offered at the bachelor's level, and housed in either the English department or College of Education during the Fall 2017 semester. This type of course represents 17.42% of ELA Methods courses from the most recent national study (Caughlan et al., 2017).

Data collection and analysis followed a deductive, Framework Approach that aggregated data across cases and within cases. Data collection included a review of course artifacts, including syllabi, as well as questionnaires and interviews with English methods course instructors. Through a review of secondary English methods course syllabi (Phase I), the study aligned secondary English methods courses within the five approaches to better understand how English teacher educators approach, identify, reflect, and incorporate various qualities into their courses. Each syllabus was reviewed to understand the course's 1) content (textbooks); 2)

instructional approaches; 3) activities & assessments; 4) field experience component or requirement; and 5) extent syllabus includes national and state standards (Smagorinsky & Whiting, 1995).

Though there are limitations in syllabi review, syllabi can give an overall perspective of the what a course will look like, what the candidates will know, understand, and be able to do, how they are assessed, and "what theories candidates are exposed to in their orientation of the field" (Smagorinsky & Whiting, 1995, p. 101). Syllabi can also provide many ideas to improve how others teach their courses, which is a goal of the study. However, it should be noted that in reviewing syllabi, the attempt was to be "descriptive in order to characterize how instructors have conceived their courses and what they are having [candidates] do in them" (Smagorinsky & Whiting, 1995, p. 107). Due to this, instructors will self-report their instructional approaches, and the researcher will then review how the syllabus demonstrated instructional approaches, included and aligned to standards, and focused on assessment. Questionnaires and interviews with English teacher educators (Phases II & III) allowed for specific insight on how English methods courses are designed and the instructional decisions made regarding coursework and program changes.

The researcher gained access through a gatekeeper-- the instructor of the secondary English methods course-- and recorded information through field notes and interview transcription. All data collection occurred via the internet because of the advantages of cost, time, and flexibility (Creswell, 2013). Interviews were recorded via video and audio with data storage on a password-protected computer and paper copies stored securely in locked file cabinets when not in use. Research participant anonymity was masked by assigned attribute codes linked to *Carnegie Classifications of Institutions of Higher Education*.

Researcher Reflexivity

With a qualitative research approach, the researcher is the primary research instrument; therefore, they often interpret their findings through filters such as their own experiences, or theories from their professional or academic disciplines (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010; McCaslin & Scott, 2003). This means that my presence and interaction in the field may produce bias that stems from my own experiences, beliefs, and identities as an English teacher educator and English methods course instructor in Oklahoma. It was my responsibility to share my assumptions, biases, and considerations that shape my methodological choices (Athanases & Heath, 1995, p. 278).

For example, my teaching career began in 2006, so it has always been informed by educational reform-- from *A Nation at Risk* (1983) to *Goals 2000* to *No Child Left Behind* (2001) to the *Common Core State Standards* (2010)-- whether I was aware of their influence or not. Due to this, I tend not to resist educational policy mandates because, as Taubman (2009) states, the effects of top-down educational policies have always affected me. Policies inform my teaching practice-- I align all of my assignments, assessments, and scoring guides to both state and national standards. Policies influence how and what I think and do in the classroom-- most of my curricular decisions in the English methods course are based on the NCTE Standards and OSAT competencies. Policies determine how I spend my professional time-- I have participated in task force professional development with the Oklahoma State Department, I have served on CEOE assessment committees to review the OSAT redevelopments, and I have been an advocate for the adoption and implementation of the new *OAS*. Policies determine how I have, or my program has been evaluated-- through Specialized Program Assessment reports (SPA) for teacher preparation accreditation. And ultimately, policies provide meaning to my work-- which is why I am seeking

out the effects of reform as a research interest. So for me, today's classroom is aligned to standards, held accountable by assessments, and uses curriculum and instruction to engage and challenge students by ensuring they can read, write, and speak effectively and think critically (OSDE, 2015b; Schmoker, 2011).

My reflexivity shows an awareness of my own axiological beliefs, experiences, and biases. As a researcher, I align with the social constructivist theoretical framework because it is my belief that "reality is co-created between the researcher and the researched" (Creswell, 2013, p. 21). Since I teach pre-service English teachers, what I value in research is the blending of English content, pedagogy, and teacher preparation. I am interested in "making sense" of what works in the English methods course, both as a researcher and participant. Implications for research include the "researcher openly discussing values that shape the narrative and includes his or her own interpretation in conjunction with the interpretations of participants" (Creswell, 2013, p. 21). Therefore, I "positioned myself" by recognizing that my background shapes my interpretation as well as my personal, cultural, and historical experiences (Creswell, 2013, p. 25).

My background as a methods course instructor involved an imposition of my perspective and bias. As Smagorinsky & Whiting articulate, my own experiences as a teacher candidate and as a teacher, as well as informal conversations with peers in the profession provide a preliminary understanding of how I teach the undergraduate secondary English methods course (1995, p. 2). Informal discussions about the methods course usually include topics such as books used, activities, assessment, and other aspects of teacher preparation, but there is not currently a network to begin this necessary professional conversation. My own experiences, research, and analysis of standards and instructional design guides the knowledge, understandings, and skills I

use to develop my secondary English methods course, but I was interested in the experiences of others who also design the course.

Assumptions

Assumptions about teacher preparation are usually empirical since there are questions about the purposes and processes of learning that can not be answered by research alone. Education is a social science, so its focus on moral, ethical, social, philosophical, and ideological questions makes the issue of teacher preparation complex (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, eds., 2006). Teacher preparation is affected by state and political reforms, in addition to candidate interactions and experiences (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, eds., 2006). Therefore, it was important to acknowledge that "English language arts teacher preparation programs differ along various critical dimensions; their basic requirements, the dispositions they foster in candidates, and the program's general philosophy can vary somewhat; state and national approval bodies also can shape programs so that they meet a certain standard of effectiveness." This aligns to Social Constructivism because even though candidates have similar learning experiences (such as attending the same English methods course), they base their understandings on aspects most meaningful to them because learning is an active and continual process (AERA, 2005).

Theoretical Framework – Sociocultural, Social Constructivist

The research followed a sociocultural, social constructivist theoretical framework because the researcher sought to understand the world in which they work-- or in the case of the research, the course in which they teach (Creswell, 2013, p. 24). Vygotsky's sociocultural theory contributed to the development of constructivist theory and connects curricula and pedagogy

(Jaramillo, 1996). Parallels between the research study and sociocultural theory included: socially negotiated meanings of what constitutes a secondary English methods course and competent, adult peers as the learning facilitators, or the instructors (Jaramillo, 1996). Specifically, the research emphasized the "collaborative nature of learning and the importance of its cultural and social context," especially the process by which the research participants are integrated into a knowledge community through their role as secondary English methods instructors (UCD Teaching and Learning, n.d.).

Subject-specific methods often relate to a social constructivist theory of learning because candidates must understand their subject matter and how students learn (Caughlan et al., 2017; Jaramillo, 1996). Therefore, understanding Vygotsky's sociocultural theory aids in first understanding the teaching strategies, or instructional approaches the participants used, as well as their curricula, as examined through the collected syllabi (Jaramillo, 1996). The collective case study methodology took a sociocultural, constructivist approach because social experience helped to shape the interpretation of data (Jaramillo, 1996). Also, the research findings were dependent on perspective because the participants are able to describe their views which enabled the researcher to better understand the social construction of reality (Baxter & Jack, 2008). By seeking participants' views of the English methods course, the research sought to make sense, or interpret the findings, based on interaction with others. The approach to inquiry, or methodological beliefs, associated with this framework included a narrative, literary style of writing through interviews, observation, and analysis of artifacts (Creswell, 2013). Due to this, the social constructivist approach to the study sought multiple representations of reality through case study in order to represent a complex perspective.

Limitations on Generalizability

Smagorinsky and Whiting's 1995 study addressed some limitations to studying a methods course. In an artifact review, such as syllabi, the syllabi cannot tell us everything about the way in which a course is taught, the quality of instruction, or how the course is situated in the program. This is a criticism Berliner (2000) addresses, "a problem we have in communicating what methods courses accomplish is that syllabi for these courses often sound quite simple when described in plain, everyday English" (p. 362). Also, syllabi can only reflect the way the methods course is taught in that designated semester, so it does not articulate revisions and program changes, as well as the influence of recent research that becomes available with time (p. 109). Also, it is difficult to determine how national, state, and/or local control constrains the curriculum. Though these are limitations in a national study, the study addressed these limitations by including questionnaire and interview qualitative approaches to better triangulate the data.

An additional factor that limited the study regarding syllabus review included university policies influencing syllabus development. According to the Higher Learning Commission (HLC)'s *Criterion Three, Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support,* "Institutions provide high-quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered. [Courses] must demonstrate that instructional quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery, time frames, and locations, modalities, venues, etc. A common syllabus format assists peer reviewers and site team members in reviewing syllabi, evaluating quality, and completing the Federal Compliance worksheet" (HLC, 2017). If universities require a specific syllabus template, this may have confined the amount of detail a course instructor included which may

affect the researcher's review of the syllabi and alignment to Smagorinsky and Whiting's (1995) five approaches.

In addition, some instructors may take a constructivist approach to their syllabus by preparing it in response to student needs as the course develops. Conversely, there are often course evaluation questions regarding how well a course is aligned to the syllabus that may guide syllabus influences. For example, some sample evaluation questions may include how well "the syllabus was an accurate guide to the essential elements of the course" and how well "the course objectives were clearly presented." Either way, this limitation was addressed through interviews with the course instructor.

Another limitation to a study on methods courses was the short-term nature of the review. Since the research study only reviewed one semester of artifacts, there were limitations to how the course changes from semester to semester, or year to year. This limitation was addressed in the interviews with questions regarding course and program changes due to standards adoptions and assessment cycles.

The study acknowledged that there are other degree programs certifying teachers in Oklahoma, as well as alternative certification routes, but it did not address these since the study focused on specific criterion-based sampling.

Delimitations Regarding Nature of Project

Some delimitations in the study included the planning instead of implementing of teaching and learning. This was due to research being limited to the secondary English methods course, not the field experience. Though the course may have field experience components, which the *CEE Methods National Study* (2018) viewed as a complex and context-specific component of

their study, the focus was on how English methods instructors utilize the secondary English methods course, not observations on how they teach it or how teacher candidates implement their learning. Therefore, the study focused on how English methods course focused on the "planning of standards-based, coherent, and relevant learning experiences" and how it "plans instruction based on ELA curricular requirements and standards," not on how it "implements" (NCTE, 2012).

According to Brady and Clift (2005), "current research limits our ability to learn more about how teacher education methods courses lead to long-term professional growth." Therefore, studying one semester of a methods course enabled the researcher to build case studies of short-term impact, but it did not evaluate long-term professional growth or student learning outcomes. Especially since research suggests that "both prospective teachers and experienced teacher educators often have difficulty translating concepts learned in methods courses into their classrooms" (pg. 331).

Two other limitations when studying methods courses was the coherence (or lack thereof) of the entire program and how the outcome of the course is dependent on the instructor, course, or content area (Brady & Clift, 2005). Though the researcher engaged in interviews, the study did not have control of who the instructors for these courses were.

Definitions

Since the English methods course is situated in a variety of contexts and taught by a variety of instructors, it is important to list common definitions for terms used in this study. The following is a list of significant terms and their meanings:

- **Academic/Educational Standards:**
  - "the benchmarks of quality and excellence in education such as the rigor of curricula and the difficulty of examinations" (Adey, 2016).
  - "Educational standards are the learning goals for what students should know and be able to do at each grade level" (CCSS, 2017).
  - "Standard statements are written with verbs that indicate specifically what learning students must demonstrate and at what depth." They include "concise, written descriptions of what students are expected to know and be able to do at a specific stage of their education" (OSDE, 2015b).
- **Assessment:** "the evaluation or estimation of the nature, quality, or ability of someone or something" (Oxford Dictionary).
- **Certification Examinations for Oklahoma Educators (CEOE):** "The CEOE program is a specific requirement of Oklahoma law. It is based on House Bill 1549, which required the Oklahoma Commission for Teacher Preparation (OCTP) to develop and implement a competency-based teacher assessment system that includes a test of general education, tests of subject-area knowledge, and tests of basic professional education" (CEOE, 2012).
- **Common Core State Standards (CCSS):** "The *Common Core State Standards* are educational standards for English language arts (ELA)/literacy and mathematics in grades K-12" (CCSS, 2017).
- **Curriculum:** "standards are what students need to know and be able to do, and curriculum is how students will learn it" (CCSS, 2017).

- **English education:**
    - "often considered a subfield within teacher education, so the content domain (English language arts) and is often viewed as secondary to the focus on pedagogy (Caughlan et al., 2017, p. 268).
    - "there are differences between what an appropriate course of study might be for college English majors and what a curriculum designed to prepare teachers of English language arts might include in addition to, or different from, that for English majors. These curricula might be different in terms of outcomes and goals, though not different in terms of value. We concur that teachers at all grade levels need to understand what language is, how it is acquired and developed, and how to provide students with experiences and opportunities to use their language in order to develop expertise in communication" (NCTE, 2006).
    - includes "knowledge of content for teaching, an understanding of student development in relationship to content, and a means for representing core concepts" (Caughlan et al., 2017, p. 269).
- **English language arts (ELA):** includes five basic categories: reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing.
- **English teacher educator (ETE):** instructors/professors who work with English teacher candidates
- **National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE):** Founded in 1911 with the "intention to create a representative body, which could reflect and render effective the will of the various local associations and of individual teachers, and, by securing concert of action, greatly improve the conditions surrounding English work" (NCTE, 2017). Currently, it provides

members with opportunities to engage in conventions, meetings, and professional learning materials; connect through an online resource- and information-sharing communities; access digital journals; subscribe to members-only magazines; gain insight on stories, resources, and opportunities in the field; and browse instructional ideas that have been written and vetted by NCTE members and expert colleagues (NCTE, 2017).

- **Oklahoma Academic Standards (OAS):** "*Oklahoma Academic Standards* serve as expectations for what students should know and be able to do by the end of the school year" (OSDE, 2015a).

- **Oklahoma Subject Area Test (OSAT):** "The Oklahoma Subject Area Tests are offered in 54 test fields, [including English,] that match the certification/licensure categories currently approved by the OCTP (Oklahoma Council of Teacher Preparation). The OSATs are designed to assess subject-matter knowledge and skills of entry-level educators in Oklahoma. The OSATs are criterion-referenced; that is, each test is designed to measure an examinee's knowledge in relation to an established standard of competence (criterion) rather than in relation to the performance of other examinees" (CEOE, 2014).

- **Pre-service Teacher:** *see Teacher Candidate*

- **Secondary English Language Arts Methods Course (English Methods Course, Methods Course):**
  - "primarily focusing on the representation of and teaching of ELA content"; it should include inquiry regarding beliefs, how to plan lessons and units, and content-specific classroom management strategies with the purpose of integrating content, pedagogy, and professionalism (Caughlan et al., 2017, p. 269; Pasternak, et al., 2018).

- ○ "The methods course is generally thought to be where novice teachers encounter the specific pedagogical problems in a discipline and the specific instructional practices for addressing them as they intersect with the content that needs to be taught" (Caughlan et al., 2017, p. 270).

- ○ "subject-specific methods course [which is] the primary location where secondary teachers develop subject-matter-specific pedagogical content knowledge" (Caughlan et al., 2017, p. 266).

- ○ "The appearance of some combination of labeling, the materials read, and the issues covered" (Smagorinsky & Whiting, 1995).

- **Standards:** *see Academic/Educational Standards*

- **Teacher Candidate:** "An individual engaged in the preparation process for professional education licensure/certification" (CAEP, 2015).

- **Today's Classroom:** defined by the research study's criterion-reference: Fall 2017 semester; may be determined by the current landscape and educational legislation, reforms, and policies that impact teaching and learning in the classroom

II. Chapter Two: Review of Literature

Research Methodology Approach

The researcher's interest in English teacher preparation in secondary English methods courses first began with a review of Smagorinsky and Whiting's book *How English Teachers Are Taught* (1995) during graduate coursework. This text, paired with the recent national study, *CEE Methods Commission National Study: Secondary English Teacher Education in the United States* (2018), by Pasternak, Caughlan, Hallman, Renzi, and Rush provided the initial direction, guidance, and research sources on how methods courses inform teaching practice. The continued research was guided by computer searches of keywords such as: "English methods," "methods course," and "English teacher preparation" in online subject-matter-specific journals, such as *English Journal, English Education Journal,* and *Research in the Teaching of English.* Additional research was conducted in teacher education textbooks, including *Studying teacher education: The report of the AERA (American Educational Research Association) Panel on Research and Teacher Education* and the *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education.* The researcher then reviewed selected sources from included Reference lists. The literature review research on methods courses is limited to the content field of English and does not include field experiences. It is organized by research themes that align with the research Conceptual Framework (Figure 1).

According to research conducted by Brady and Clift (2005), "very few studies looked at methods courses" (pg. 310). They found 24 studies published from 1995 through 2001 on English and language arts methods courses, with self-studies representing much of the research. Before Smagorinsky & Whiting's 1995 study, there has been no research on how the secondary English methods class is taught to English teacher candidates. In fact, in early research, cognitive

studies expressed skepticism over teacher education, content, and proof of efficacy because of the seemingly incoherent curriculum of teacher preparation programs (Brady & Clift, 2005). Since 1995, most research on teacher candidates in ELA methods courses is concerned with a) effective methods of teaching specific ELA content, b) developing a teacher identity, and c) the methods course within the context of a larger program (Caughlan et al., 2017).

Results from the *CEE Methods National Study* (2018) shows subject-specific methods courses have changed since the Smagorinsky and Whiting study in 1995. For example, "the default program is still a bachelor's degree with 75% of bachelor's programs have 4 or more credits of methods required, with 50% of the content-specific methods classes housed in the English department, and 37% housed in education" (Pasternak et al., 2018; Caughlan, et al., 2017, p. 277). This was the default twenty years ago from the Smagorinsky and Whiting study in 1995, but the majority of respondents from the national study "indicated that their programs required a comprehensive methods course that covered the teaching of all aspects of ELA content: literature, composition, language, and linguistics" (Pasternak, et al., 2018; Caughlan, et al., 2017, p. 278). Therefore, it is crucial for English teacher educators (ETE) to "understand the new areas of emphasis to ensure that they are included in the methods course, or might be addressed by other courses within the teacher education program" (p. 291). Five influential areas that are changing in the field, as noted in the most recent study include 1) field experiences; 2) preparation for racial, cultural, and linguistic diversity; 3) new technologies; 4) content-area literacy; and 5) K-12 content standards and assessments. The study focused primarily on how teacher candidates are prepared in the last influential area: K-12 content standards and teacher certification assessment. Also, some questions that came from the national study that guided the

research included: "Should a methods course cover ELA content or just pedagogy?" and "Should methods instructors teach the standards, and which ones?" (Pasternak et al., 2017).

Much of the "research on methods courses rarely addresses the issue of whether teacher education is affected by including content-specific methods in teacher preparation programs" (Caughlan et al., 2017, p. 268). Therefore, it is important to clarify that "the context of English education is often considered a subfield within teacher education, so the content domain (English language arts) is often viewed as secondary to the focus on pedagogy" (Caughlan et al., 2017, p. 268). This understanding is affirmed by NCTE's Standing Committee on Teacher Preparation and Certification which operates from the premise that

> there are differences between what an appropriate course of study might be for college English majors and what a curriculum designed to prepare teachers of English language arts might include in addition to, or different from, that for English majors. These curricula might be different in terms of outcomes and goals, though not different in terms of value. We concur that teachers at all grade levels need to understand what language is, how it is acquired and developed, and how to provide students with experiences and opportunities to use their language in order to develop expertise in communication. (NCTE, 2006)

This view of English education coursework shows that there needs to be a balance between content and pedagogical knowledge. This is important because a teacher candidate should possess disciplinary expertise that includes "knowledge of content for teaching, an understanding of student development in relationship to content, and a means for representing core concepts" (Caughlan et al., 2017, p. 269; Stotsky, 2005).

In studying the impact of a methods course on teaching practice, "researchers have employed both direct methods (such as classroom observations) and indirect methods (such as interviews or examinations of lesson plans). Seldom did the researchers interrogate the social, political, or cultural contexts in which methods instructors work" (Brady & Clift, 2005, pg. 313). Therefore, this literature focuses on the role of the English methods course as it relates to the

four main themes of the study: 1) instructional approaches; 2) standards, including a history, goals, their impact on English language arts instruction and assessment; 3) teacher certification assessment; and 4) course changes due to educational policy in order to provide social, political, and cultural context to the research problem. In addition, the literature review addresses some of the realities of teaching in today's classroom and other implications for research, including instructional advocacy.

Secondary English Methods Course

The secondary English methods course is often defined as "the primary location where secondary teacher candidates develop subject-matter specific pedagogical content knowledge that focuses mainly on the representation and teaching of English language arts content for students in grades 7-12" (Caughlan et al., 2017, p. 269; Smagorinsky & Whiting, 1995). It should include inquiry regarding beliefs, how to plan lessons and units, and content-specific classroom management strategies with the purpose of integrating content, pedagogy, and professionalism (Pasternak, et al., 2018; Caughlan et al., 2017). Unfortunately, "there is little consensus across the field regarding what constitutes a 'methods' course in the United States" (Pasternak et al., 2017, p. 28). Therefore, the research of Brady and Clift (2005) in their chapter, "Research on Methods Courses and Field Experiences" in *Studying teacher education: The report of the AERA Panel on Research and Teacher Education,* attempts to provide a comprehensive overview of previous studies conducted in the field regarding content methods courses. Their chapter establishes research procedures and impact claims regarding the methods course. They focus on: 1) Who is conducting the research on or within the methods course?; 2) How was the research designed?; 3) What claims of impact were made?; 4) What are the contributions and limitations of this research, within and across content areas?; and 5) What does

this research suggest for future research agendas? Within each content area, they include tables with research authors, dates; researcher relationships with participants; theoretical frameworks or positions of the research; participant information; data sources, durations, and data analysis procedures; and impact claims examined with findings (Brady & Clift, 2005). This informs the literature review because the researcher sought to use similar procedures and design, as well as the Conceptual Framework to make contributions to the research that attempts to provide a comprehensive review in the form of a collective case study in Oklahoma.

In the *CEE Methods National Study* (2018), the authors at least specify that the purpose of methods courses is to integrate content, pedagogy, and professionalism. Content covered in the methods class might include: a) pedagogical content knowledge, b) teaching methods and materials, c) lesson and unit planning, and d) assessment practices. Other common areas included: e) teaching philosophy, f) subject matter, g) micro-teaching, h) classroom management, and other, including specific literacy and language content, technology, and multiple literacies (Pasternak et al., 2018).

Also, informal discussions about teacher preparation and the methods course often include topics such as books used, activities, assessment, and other aspects of pre-service education. Research is needed in the development of methods courses because often in these discussions instructors rely on their own experiences in teaching as the "preliminary understanding of how the undergraduate secondary English methods course is taught" (Smagorinsky & Whiting, 1995, p. 2). According to Smagorinsky and Whiting (1995), the best way to teach a methods course depends on

> the context in which it is taught, including the disposition of the instructor, the way in
> which the course is situated in a larger teacher education program, the demands and
> interests of the local school systems, the requirements of the state, the characteristics of
> the students, and other factors that constrain and empower instructors and students. (p.

36

22-23)

The following position statement from the National Council of Teachers of English's *What Do We Know and Believe about the Roles of Methods Courses and Field Experiences in English Education* (2005) document provides some guidance for English education programs and its methods course:

> 1. English education programs exhibit coherence.
> 2. English education programs create partnerships.
> 3. English education programs are attuned to contexts.
> 4. English education programs build professional communities.
> 5. Instruction that addresses the teaching of English language arts infuses core principles of content, pedagogy, and professionalism and provides opportunities for practice, reflection, and growth.
> 6. Instruction that addresses the teaching of English language arts emphasizes that teaching and learning are social practices influenced by specific contexts.
> 7. Instruction that addresses the teaching of English language arts attends to diverse texts and literacy practices.
> 8. Instruction that addresses the teaching of English language arts fosters understanding of the teacher candidate's shift of role from student to teacher.
> 9. Instruction that addresses the teaching of English language arts prepares teacher candidates to choose appropriate materials, methods, and assessments which promote and enhance student learning.
> 10. Instruction that addresses the teaching of English language arts enables teacher candidates to articulate rationales for pedagogical choices.
> 11. Instruction that addresses the teaching of English language arts supports teacher candidates in becoming proactive in their own teaching and professional lives.
> 12. Instruction that addresses the teaching of English language arts promotes reflective inquiry informed by first-hand experiences. (NCTE, 2005b)

However, the position statement clarifies that "in no way do programs in English education have to implement all of the recommendations to be considered high quality" (NCTE, 2005b). To be considered "high quality," the National Council of Teacher Quality (NCTQ)'s *2014 Teacher Prep Review* notes that "beyond knowing content, candidates should have skills enabling them to introduce content to students. Best practices differ among content areas, so methods courses should be tailored to a candidate's chosen subject area" (NCTQ, 2014). In their *Standard 15: Secondary Methods* analysis, they affirm that it is "one thing to know a subject and

quite another to teach it;" however, they cite that out of 664 secondary programs evaluated, "a large proportion of programs (25 percent) do not even require a single 3-credit subject-specific methods course" (NCTQ, 2014).

This may be due to a prominent belief shared by many that "prospective teachers should immerse themselves in the content of their discipline rather than wasting their time learning teaching methods" (Smagorinsky & Whiting, 1995, p. 111). This argument provides an implication for the research because according to Smagorinsky and Whiting, "the education profession itself has exacerbated the problem by treating the methods course so lightly that we have little formal knowledge about the ways in which it is taught" (1995, p. 111). Even research by Berliner (2000), notes that methods courses are still underestimated; therefore, he charges that high-quality courses must exist, with an emphasis on the techniques and principles that "help translate subject matter knowledge into cognitive structures that are useful and accessible for students," so that the worth of methods courses can then be easily defended (p. 362).

Another argument against methods courses includes the belief that pedagogy can be learned in the field experience. Researchers, however, have found that teachers "attributed their knowledge of a range of instructional strategies, classroom discipline and management, and classroom routines to their educational coursework" (Smagorinsky & Whiting, 1995; NCTE, 2006b). Teaching, according to Berliner (2000), "it is not a craft to be learned solely through apprenticeship [or fieldwork]," as some argue— though there is little research regarding the "connection between the specialized English methods course and the application of that content in field experiences"-- but rather, coursework, which includes the English methods course, provides "fundamental findings, concepts, principles, technology, and theories is needed" (p. 365; Caughlan et al., 2017, p. 280). Specifically, content methods courses provide future teachers

with the unique place where they "encounter the specific pedagogical problems in a discipline and the specific instructional practices for addressing them as they intersect with the content that needs to be taught" (Caughlan et al., 2017, p. 270). We do not want "novice teachers to enter the classroom without taking teaching methods courses" because they may only have a bare understanding of instruction, as Berliner (2000) also suggests; and also, "their range of teaching skills would be severely limited" (NCTE, 2006). English teacher educators need to consider how they provide this range of instructional approaches into their methods courses because "the best methods course involves elements of workshop, experience-based, theoretical, and reflective courses" (Smagorinsky & Whiting, 1995, p. 29).

A. Instructional Approaches

Smagorinsky and Whiting's (1995) five approaches of teaching English methods courses include: 1) Survey, 2) Workshop, 3) Experience-Based, 4) Theoretical, and 5) Reflective. Each approach considers the organization, or sequence of the course; syllabus qualities; typical assignments and assessments; tendencies and attempts; goals and purposes; advantages and disadvantages; assumptions; problems; and emphasis.

Survey.

In Survey approaches, the knowledge of the course is built from topics with the attempt to cover many issues and topics during a single semester. This approach provides more of an introduction to the range of issues in the field from a "coverage" perspective. Due to this, the course may attempt to satisfy all of the national standards and provides a lengthy list of course objectives. Characteristics of Survey courses include: they often follow a single textbook and have a catalog-style course description with a lengthy list of course objectives. There are many brief assignments that rarely allow for collaborative learning. Also, their goals attempt to provide

39

teacher candidates with an introduction to the content and pedagogy as well as a range of potential issues that they may possibly encounter in the field. Advantages of the survey approach include exposure to a range of topics that may affect their career, but the disadvantages may be neglect of connecting knowledge and integrating understandings. It is assumed that preservice teachers will be able to take the many parts and connect them to a whole understanding. This approach can become a problem because students are often overwhelmed with the range and scope of expectations (Smagorinsky & Whiting, 1995).

Workshop.

In Workshop approaches, the class session is devoted to student participation and activities, or small-group development. There is continuity and recursive approaches to the topics because synthesizing knowledge is a goal. Due to this, "a single course is usually insufficient in preparing students for all professional responsibilities" (or national standards), so there may be fewer course objectives. Characteristics of Workshop courses include in-class collaborative activities with larger assignments that are often situated in context to a larger plan. There is usually integration of learning recursively. This approach usually involves students in their learning and utilizes multiple approaches-- textbook, handouts, feedback, discussion, etc. Students should learn in a classroom environment that models many of the strategies experienced in the course. The work produced is often practical and used in teaching. A potential problem with this type of approach includes limited perspective and differences in realities of teaching found in the classroom that may not be collaborative (Smagorinsky & Whiting, 1995).

Experience-Based.

In Experience-based courses, there is a link between theory and practice, which often involves the planning and implementing of lessons. In this approach, there is a focus on good

mentoring relationships. Some characteristics of Experience-Based courses include extensive observations where there is usually an alternate between field experience and regular class. Activities usually include observation logs and contextual factor profiles. However, sometimes this type of learning is very context-specific, and problems could arise based on the quality of the mentor teacher (Smagorinsky & Whiting, 1995).

Theoretical.

In the Theoretical approach, there is an emphasis on theory rather than practice, so the course may rely heavily on texts. Activities often include writing assignments such as research reports and developing projects that incorporate research. The Theoretical approach tries to involve students in the theories they are learning which often provides understanding, but not a lot of methods since the focus is on theory and not practice (Smagorinsky & Whiting, 1995).

Reflective.

Finally, in the Reflective approach, teacher candidates reflect on course readings, experiences, and the course. The focus is to have the teacher candidates understand and then articulate their beliefs about teaching. The Reflective approach usually involves students and reveals their tendencies. Course descriptions often articulate philosophies of learning and teaching. Activities often include reading logs and reflective essays. However, some problems with this approach are that teacher candidates often have problems making the transition between pedagogical knowledge and their own experiences with school, so preservice teachers may replicate how they were taught without understanding goals (Smagorinsky & Whiting, 1995).

Overall, English teacher educators need to examine the various approaches and identify, reflect, and incorporate qualities of each into their own methods courses (Smagorinsky & Whiting, 1995). According to Smagorinsky and Whiting (1995), "survey approaches have the

least potential for helping to prepare pre-service teachers for professional life;" yet it was the most dominant approach after the national survey of syllabi (p. 29). Due to the vast purpose methods courses have to integrate content, pedagogy, and professionalism, there is often an "effort to satisfy too many requirements, or to 'cover all the bases' in a methods course" (Smagorinsky & Whiting, 1995, p. 29). English teacher educators need to concentrate on a few topics most pertinent to the learning more than attempt brief coverage of many topics since no single course can satisfy all topics in-depth (Caughlan et al., 2017).

Regarding alignment to standards, Smagorinsky and Whiting (1995) acknowledge that "there is no way of knowing the extent to which the professors designing the courses consciously attended to the *[NCTE] Guidelines*" (p. 101). However, with today's emphasis on educational policy affecting curricular decisions, it is important to know the responsibility English teacher educators have in addressing standards in their course. The *CEE Methods National Study* (2018) notes that "the majority of respondents indicated that their programs either distribute responsibility for teaching the standards throughout program coursework (44.83%), or center it in the ELA methods course (45.40%)" (Pasternak et al., 2018; Caughlan et al., 2017, p. 281). Also, according to Scherff & Hahs-Vaughn (2008), when English teachers were asked to select their top two professional development priorities, twenty-eight percent indicated "English language arts content" as the most important, followed by "content and performance standards" with eighteen percent (p. 183). By addressing both content and standards in the secondary English methods class, instructors can prepare teacher candidates to 'meet and exceed' what they are expected to master in order to be prepared to encounter the realities of teaching (Pasternak et al., 2014). According to the most recent national study, only a small number of English methods instructors approach the standards critically by providing a critical orientation of the

sociohistorical or political context of standards (Caughlan et al., 2017). In fact, researching

historical issues that shape education policy and practice, such as standards-based reform, is a

program belief in *What Do We Know and Believe about the Roles of Methods Courses and Field*

Experiences in English Education? (NCTE, 2005b). The position statement also affirms this

knowledge and inclusion of standards by stating:

> teachers should incorporate state and locally established standards and guidelines for the
> English language arts into units and lessons that reflect such interconnectedness because
> a knowledge of broad national and state standards should inform—but not limit— the
> content, processes, and skills addressed in both unit and daily instructional plans. (NCTE,
> 2006)

B. Standards

Reform, as history will show, is not as simple as putting policy into place. It requires

change—of culture, classrooms, schools, districts, universities, states, and so on— which is often

difficult and creates resistance and ambivalence, especially when priorities are constantly

shifting (Evans, 2014; Goldstein, 2014). In implementing standards-based reform, it must be

viewed as a process, not an event (Fullan, 2016). The standards-based reform process provides a

cautionary story of events that span over thirty years and includes bipartisanship efforts, goals, a

"big business" price tag, division of federal and state educational control, and the need for a

democratic process.

The process of drafting academic, or educational, content standards started in 1981 when

Terrell Bell, President Ronald Reagan's Secretary of Education, assembled a panel to report on

"the quality of education in the United States." The result was the *A Nation at Risk (ANAR)*

report released in 1983 by the U.S. National Commission on Excellence in Education (NCEE). It

is "one of the most influential federal documents ever published" and ushered in reforms on

teacher evaluation, national standards, and accountability to improve schools; but primarily,

policymakers focused on teachers: their training, demographics, evaluation, and pay (Goldstein, 2014, p. 165). Consequently, *ANAR* also set states up to be in educational competition with one another for the first time with its core message— schools were failing and it portrayed education as "eroded by a rise tide of mediocrity" (U.S. National Commission on Excellence in Education [NCEE], 1983; PBS, 2002; Goldstein, 2014). To raise the level of mediocrity, one of *ANAR's* main recommendation was for "schools, colleges, and universities to adopt more rigorous and measurable standards" (NCEE, 1983).

Ultimately, when public education is under fire, so is teacher education. Since *ANAR,* "policymakers have increasingly critiqued the methods of preparing teachers for effective classroom practice, claiming that the so-called failures of American students can be linked to the lack of knowledge and preparation of their teachers" (Zancanella & Alsup, 2010, p. 70). In fact, former Teachers College president Arthur Levine and former U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan "have both criticized teacher education programs and called for their reform— or even elimination" which is why the history of educational reform greatly affects teacher preparation (Zancanella & Alsup, 2010, p. 70). This means that any standards-based reform decisions that happen (at the state or federal level) affect teacher preparation and teacher certification testing because "standards-based reform is the most powerful engine for education improvement currently operating in the United States, and all part of that undertaking— including teacher preparation— is supposed to be aligned with a state's standards" (Stotsky, 2005, p. 6).

Goals of Standards.

According to Stotsky in *The State of State English Standards*, "after the United States was deemed 'a nation at risk,' academic standards for our primary and secondary students are more important than ever-- and the quality of those standards matter" (2005, p. 5). Academic

standards are learning goals, or "expectations, for what students should know and be able to do"

(Common Core State Standards [CSSS], 2016; Oklahoma Academic Standards [OAS], 2016);

therefore, academic standards provide a response to the call to action set forth by *ANAR* thirty-

three years ago to ensure that

> all children by virtue of their own efforts, competently guided, can hope to attain the mature and informed judgment needed to secure gainful employment, and to manage their own lives, thereby serving not only their own interests but all the progress of society itself. (NCEE, 1983)

Therefore, the goal of having national standards is to acknowledge that to be an advanced

society, "what students should know and be able to do" needs to be the same everywhere

(Ravitch, 1996, p. 8). According to the *Brown Report* (2012), even if this amounts to a greater

degree of standardization, the goal is to produce more common, desirable educational outcomes.

President Clinton agrees with this goal, claiming that the national standards should represent

"what all our students must know to succeed in the knowledge economy of the 21st century"

(Clinton, 1997).

English language arts standards steer curriculum and teaching by developing a

guaranteed and viable curriculum that ensures students can read, write, and speak effectively

(Schmoker, 2011, p. 40). Standards-- national or state-- simply indicate *what* should be taught,

not *how* content should be taught; however, as Gallagher (2015) notes, "how the standards are

taught is the critical component in elevating our students' literacy skills" (p. 6). Standards are

helpful, and a necessary starting point for building curriculum, but the emphasis should always

be placed on using instructional practices that are proven to sharpen our students' literacy skills

(Gallagher, 2015).

Since standards establish expectations about what students should know and be able to

do, they should provide opportunities for meaningful changes, such as pushing students towards

more critical, analytical, argumentative types of thinking (Goering, 2012). According to the intentions of the *Oklahoma Academic Standards (OAS),* the standards were written to be both rigorous and flexible. They do not prescribe a curriculum, but rather, they aim to guide the "development of curriculum and instruction that is appropriately engaging, challenging, and sequenced for students" (OSDE, 2015). This is the role standards documents should play in the design of curriculum: "they should provide room for a rich curriculum where teachers, curriculum developers, and states get to determine how learning goals should be reached and what additional topics should be addressed," not constrict curriculum, which has been an errant byproduct of poor implementation (Applebee, 2013, p. 30).

Unfortunately, the goal of national standards to steer instruction sometimes got lost in the maze of "high-stakes testing, outcomes-based performance management, privatization, automation, and outsourcing of core educational processes" (Brass, 2016, p. 230). Some see accomplishing the goals of standards linked to assessment, so they seek to establish conditions for high-stakes testing to steer curriculum and teaching. In today's era of high-stakes testing, instruction is not necessarily driven by what standards are adopted; but rather, instruction is often driven by shallow assessments (Gallagher, 2015). This standards-testing linkage provides a business rationality of reform that misconstrues the goals of standards: "Without measurement, there is no pressure for improvement" (Brass, 2016; Gates, 2009, para. 20). This creates a "big business" aspect of education and how corporations can control the masses— without regard to the effects of standardization on children— is another criticism of national standards (Endacott & Goering, 2014). According to the *Achieve Report* (2008), creating common standards requires new curriculum, instructional materials, assessments, professional development, and alignment-- all "big business" endeavors because they involve money and accountability. This mentality is

why educators need to be smart reviewers and make sure that the standards and chosen resources provide a coherent, quality curriculum that is clear on the relationship between content and the ability to think and reason-- not just linked to assessments (Schmoker, 2011). Fortunately, one advantage of having common standards is that "different states can then pool their financial and intellectual resources to develop common, quality tools than they could have working independently" (p. 22).

History of Standards-Based Reform.

The expectation established in *A Nation At Risk* is that our nation "should expect schools to have high standards, not minimum requirements" which starts with the creation, adoption, and implementation of rigorous academic standards (NCEE, 1983). The standards movement, with the backing of the business community and President H.W. Bush, began making progress when the first National Education Summit met in September 1989. It began the first drafting of national "goals" for education and established broad objectives to be reached by 2000 and provided an appearance of "bipartisan support for a national movement that would support state and local goals and standards" (PBS, 2002). In July 1990, President Bush along with the states' governors began the National Education Goals Panel which monitored progress toward the objectives. Bush's education proposal (1991-1992), called *America 2000,* began to fund efforts through the U.S. Department of Education to draft national curriculum standards in several subject areas (PBS, 2002).

When President Bill Clinton took office in 1993, he continued Bush's plan and drafted his own education proposal, called *Goals 2000* (PBS, 2002). U.S. Congress enacted *Goals 2000* in March 1994, a standards-based reform, which was "a bipartisan effort to raise academic standards in our nation's school" (Schwartz & Robinson, 2000). *Goals 2000* attempted to use

federal resources to support state education reform and its purpose was to certify and approve voluntary national standards and assessments (Ravitch, 1996). Due to these standards-based reforms, the National Education Standards and Improvement Council (NESIC) was formed to emphasize competitiveness and accountability by asserting that national standards were central to the educational reform movement because they provide a sense of direction that provides results in education (Mulcahy, 1994).

In, March 1996, the second National Education Summit met and they pledged support in the creation of state and local academic standards. However, members of this summit were mainly business leaders who began to enter the conversation about state academic standards because they wanted "a common agenda to help educators and policymakers" that would help them look for places to set up new businesses (PBS, 2002). Education then began to be seen as an economic issue since it has "a direct impact on employment, productivity, growth, and on the nation's ability to compete in the world economy" (PBS, 2002). Also, many "standards advocates argue that common standards are necessary for keeping the nation competitive in a global economy;" however, as Mathis (2010) shows, "no studies support a true causal relationship between national standards and economic competitiveness." With most states adopting national standards, it creates a national "market" where education becomes a commodity; therefore, the standards are more likely than previous efforts to "shape teacher development and curricula, influence classroom practice, and improve student learning" (Brass, 2016, p. 236). With this inclusion of business leaders involved in educational decision-making, some have argued that the national standards movement had been "hijacked," too removed from the public (Schwartz & Robinson, 2000, p. 198)

President Clinton continued to focus on the standards and accountability movement, as

demonstrated in his *1997 State of the Union address* where he advocated for

> a national crusade for education standards, not federal government standards but national standards, representing what all our students must know to succeed in the knowledge economy of the 21st century. Every state and school must shape the curriculum to reflect these standards and train teachers to lift students up to them. To help schools meet the standards and measure their progress, we will lead an effort over the next two years to develop national tests of student achievement in reading and math. Tonight I issue a challenge to the nation: Every state should adopt high national standards, and by 1999, every state should test every fourth grader in reading and every eighth grader in math to make sure these standards are met. (Clinton, 1997)

However, *Goals 2000* soon met opposition by "the American Right [who] had long

demonstrated an overactive paranoia about supposedly liberal national attempts to influence the

curriculum of local schools" (Goldstein, 2014, p. 171). Those who questioned the federal

government's influence in the standards saw any adoption of national standards as a "dangerous

step toward federal control of education since education has always been a state function"

(Ravitch, 1996, p. 7). *Goals 2000* and the NESIC finally fell victim in 2001 to the question, "is

standards-based reform a product of federal policy?" which plagued the discussion about

standards since *A Nation at Risk* (1983). Initially, when making the recommendation for national

standards, Reagan saw the standards as a state issue since he opposed a federal role in education

(PBS, 2002). However, the question about federal control is one of the reasons why national

standards have been a target since the voluntary standards movement of the 1990s. The issue

then is that states have new standards and new tests, but they also have no consequence, no

accountability, or no way to manage hundreds of underperforming schools (Goldstein, 2014).

With President George Bush's 2001 *No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB),* the next cog in the

standards-based education reform wheel, came the withdrawal of all authorization for *Goals*

2000. NCLB was based on similar ideas— "that setting high standards and establishing

measurable goals would improve outcomes in education— and it declared that 100 percent of American children would be "proficient" in reading and math by 2014" (Goldstein, 2014, p. 185). However, *NCLB* required "states to develop assessments in basic skills and to give those assessments at select grade levels," but it did not call for a national set of standards. This shift in focus was also present at the third National Education Summit in 1999 where there was "less on the development of standards and more on holding schools accountable for their students' achievement through measures such as testing and issuing school report cards to the public" (PBS, 2002). This focus on assessment forced schools to adopt more "scripted or so-called teacher-proof curricula which standardized lesson plans and materials" and transferred attention to students' test scores and abilities which made the achievement gap visible between certain groups of students (Goldstein, 2014, p. 186).

At the fourth National Education Summit in October 2001, the summit acknowledged the "fatalistic" time public education was having with reforms (PBS, 2002). When *No Child Left Behind* became law in 2001, standard setting became state responsibility. Due to this, there were fifty different visions of "what students should know and be able to do," accompanied by fifty different ways to assess that knowledge. These standards-based assessments were "high-stakes" for students in their respective state, but the stakes were different in each jurisdiction (Applebee, 2013, p. 26). This then became the primary argument for national standards and one of the reasons why Ravitch, Assistant Secretary of Education in the President George H.W. Bush administration, argues "not for federal standards managed by the federal government," but for the acknowledgement that to be an advanced society, "what students should know and be able to do" needs to be the same everywhere (1996, p. 8). Ravitch predicted in 1996 that "we will get serious about standards again" because the national standards issue is one that focuses on

50

students' needs for excellence and equal opportunity. Since Ravitch led the federal effort to promote the creation of voluntary state and national academic standards, her call to action was for the development to occur during a credible public process, not one that is conducted by the federal government (Ravitch, 1996). Current hindsight on the issue affords us the opportunity to look back and see if Ravitch's observations became a reality thirteen years later in 2009 during the development of the *Common Core State Standards*.

History of *Common Core State Standards (CCSS).*

By the early 2000s, as a result of a defeated *Goals 2000* education reform, "every state had developed and adopted its own learning standards" (CCSS Initiative, 2016). This meant that unrelated state standards and assessments have had their own definition of proficiency. According to the *Brown Report* (2012), states have thus undermined their own credibility because individual state reports cannot accurately give the public an estimate of student learning in America (Loveless, 2012). This lack of standardization, just like the earlier call to provide a sense of direction that provides results in education, was one reason why states decided to develop the *Common Core State Standards (CCSS)* in 2009 (CCSS Initiative, 2016; Ravitch, 1996; Mulcahy, 1994). So in 2008, Napolitano, the 2006-2007 chair of the National Governors Association, created a task force along with the Council of Chief State School Officers and the nonprofit education reform group Achieve, to begin the process of addressing the recurring idea of national standards (Bidwell, 2014). They set out to answer one of the big questions from the *Goals 2000* initiative: "how could states, working independently of each other, produce 'world-class standards?'" (Ravitch, 1996, p. 7). In answering this question, they gave their support to the development of the *Common Core State Standards.*

It should be noted that the creation of educational standards in itself is not necessarily controversial, but rather, the inclusion of *Common Core State Standards (CCSS)* in federal legislation is (Matlock et al., 2015). Therefore, the creation of the *CCSS* has been open to similar federal government control critique as outlined in the aforementioned standards-reform history. What started as a bipartisanship effort became divided when the Obama administration increased support for the *Common Core.* President Barack Obama encouraged states "to raise their standards so students graduate ready for college or career and can succeed in a dynamic global economy" and he affirmed his support during his *2013 State of the Union address*, by taking credit for using *Race to the Top* funds to persuade "almost every state to develop smarter curricula and higher standards" (Bidwell, 2014; Obama, 2013).

Financial incentive, unfortunately, is a primary reason why many states initially signed on to the adoption of the *Common Core State Standards.* Though the standards are billed as voluntary, policy choices suggest that they are more federal than state, especially considering how the *Race to the Top* initiative included the adoption of *CCSS* as one of its evaluation criteria (Applebee, 2013). *Race to the Top*, a $3.4 billion grant from the U.S. Department of Education under President Obama and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, tied federal dollars to school accountability, which was the impetus some states need to improve their standards (NPR, 2014; Stotsky, 2005). Therefore, even though the federal government did not play a role in creating the *CCSS*, nor did it require state adoption, it did provide incentives. Regardless, the *CCSS* were often better than their previous standards, but in general, the adoption was viewed by many as a clever way to initiate federal law (Ravitch, 2013; Stotsky, 2005; Goldstein, 2014).

Republicans, especially, expressed concern that the *CCSS* had too much federal government overreach, so they drafted a *Resolution* in April 2013 that called the Common Core

"an inappropriate overreach to standardize and control the education of our children"

(Republican National Committee, 2013, p. 5; NPR, 2014; Bidwell, 2014). This perceived

overreach of federal control is why some states, including Oklahoma, felt the *CCSS* undermined

local school control (Feemster, 2015).

As outlined by Ravitch (1996) in her considerations for developing new standards, the

Common Core State Standards also did not follow a democratic process. The *CCSS* Initiative

(2016) claims that the development was launched by "state leaders, including governors and state

commissioners of education from 48 states, two territories and the District of Columbia, through

their membership in the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center)

and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO)," but others argue that they were

developed by a network of "'others' who answered their own call to develop national college and

career readiness standards on behalf of the fifty states" (Brass, 2016; Achieve, 2008). Ravitch

makes it clear that corporations, not educators nor the public, created the *CCSS*, citing that they

were developed by "a private organization, Achieve and the National Governors Association,

both funded by the Gates Foundation" (2013).

As asserted by Matlock et al. (2015), "teachers and education professionals should be

involved in reform" before backlash occurs. Teachers need to be seen as assets, not liabilities

which is "crucial to any sustaining reform program which teachers must carry out on the

ground," like implementing standards (Goldstein, 2014, p. 232). Unfortunately, with the case of

the *CCSS*, teachers' perceptions were absent from the creation process with minimal public

engagement and feedback solicited-- and only after the standards were drafted. If long-term

educational change is going to be successful, the stakeholders and teachers who are in the

classrooms implementing the reforms need to have support and commitment (Endacott, Collet, Goering, Turner, Denny, Wright, Lee, 2016).

Once the *Common Core State Standards* development process concluded in June 2010, states began voluntarily adopting (or in some cases, like Oklahoma, ratifying and then repealing) the *CCSS* based on their existing process. As of August 2015, "42 states, the District of Columbia, four territories, and the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) have adopted the *Common Core* and are implementing them according to their timelines" (CCSS Initiative, 2016). According to Gates, Co-Chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and a major influencer and supporter of the *CCSS*, "if your state doesn't join the common standards, your kids will be left behind; and if too many states opt out—the country will be left behind" (Gates, 2009). His argument about states becoming closer to innovation across state borders and becoming more competitive as a country echoes the first sentiments of the standards-based reform process, but as noted, this collaboration often comes with a "big business" price tag.

Overall, the main criticisms about national standards are due to partisanship, the "big business" price tag, the divide in federal and state educational control, and the need for a democratic process; not the actual expectations of what "students should know and be able to do"-- read, write, and speak effectively (Loveless, 2012, p. 9; Schmoker, 2011, p. 40). These goals, written as educational policy at any level, are not some passive act. Policy documents, like standards and assessment, support the work of teachers and the documents inform the work educators do with students and colleagues (Fredericksen, 2011, p. 47). Due to this, the purpose for common education standards is for students to "study a common curriculum; take common, comparable tests that measure their learning; and have results interpreted on a common scale-- all of which greatly affects instruction" (Loveless, 2012, p. 7).

History of *Oklahoma Academic Standards in English Language Arts (OAS-ELA)*.

Oklahoma's role in the adoption of national standards has a unique story that falls victim to the divide between federal and state educational control. Oklahoma adopted the *Common Core State Standards (CCSS)* in 2010, supported a four-year transition plan, and planned for full implementation in Fall 2014. However, Oklahoma claimed that "the federal government was using *CCSS* to undermine local school control," so they sought to ensure that their state values were represented in the standards process (Feemster, 2015). Oklahoma repealed the *CCSS* in June 2014 when Oklahoma's Governor, Mary Fallin, signed into law House Bill 3399 which stated that Oklahoma must adopt new standards that ensure that students are prepared for higher education and/or the workforce and should reflect Oklahoma values and follow a democratic process that involved the voices of students, candidates, teachers, and stakeholders.

After the repeal of *CCSS*, Oklahoma continued to implement its Priority Academic Student Skills (PASS) standards which were last revised in 2010. Oklahoma did receive praise from Stotsky (2005) in her evaluation of the Priority Academic Student Skills: "A welcome feature of these standards is that the blueprint for Oklahoma Core Curriculum Tests appears at the end of each set of grade-level standards. This kind of transparency between standards and standards-based testing is commendable-- and rare" (p. 60). This transparency continued during the creation of the new *Oklahoma Academic Standards (OAS)* which started on May 4, 2015, with a committee of multiple stakeholders—created by Oklahomans for Oklahomans-- and are ready for implementation during the 2016-2017 school year (Oklahoma State Department of Education [OSDE], 2015c).

The *OAS* are different from the *Common Core State Standards* because they were written by Oklahomans for Oklahomans, not the "network of others" who represent the "trade groups,

policy entrepreneurs, philanthropists, think tanks, nonprofits, and testing companies" (Brass, 2016, p. 232). The writing teams for the new *Oklahoma Academic Standards* represent various stakeholders, including Oklahoma Institutions of Higher Education, classroom teachers, curriculum directors, and instructional coaches (OSDE, 2015c, p. 3). Even though states might not have identical standards, the *Achieve Report* (2008) echoes the reason for standards: to articulate a fundamental core of knowledge that "all graduates must know to succeed in college and careers." The new *Oklahoma English Language Arts Standards (OAS-ELA)* were drafted, approved, and then implemented in 2016 (Oklahoma State Department of Education [OSDE], 2015c).

       History of *NCTE Standards*.

       The field of English education has also had a unique role in developing national standards, with complications specific to the discipline. English focuses on multiple dimensions, including the personal, aesthetic, cultural, civic, and critical, so it does not easily lend itself to prescribed standards, constricted curriculum, or measurable performance outcomes (Brass, 2016). This is evident in the complications the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and the International Reading Association (IRA) had when it created and published the national English standards in March 1996. There was already negative attention from the press due to the already hostile environment created by the censure of the history standards by U.S. Senate in January 1995, but the IRA/NCTE Standards were deemed "limiting" with "unpredictable effects on classroom practice because they tried to work upon and through teachers' knowledge and curricular decisions" (Ravitch, 1996; IRA/NCTE, 1996). According to Ravitch (1996), the document was "rich in professional jargon, but poor in specific guidelines about what students of English should know and be able to do" (p. 7). Since this is the ultimate goal of standards,

creating expectations for what students should know and be able to do (CSSS, 2016; OAS, 2016), the federal financial support was discontinued, and the project ceased to progress (Schwartz & Robinson, 2000, p. 197).

In English teacher education, the history of standards for teacher preparation has two strands: the NCTE *Guidelines for the Preparation of Teachers of English Language Arts*, which predate the standards movement (and are guidelines rather than standards) and the *NCTE/NCATE Standards for Initial Preparation of Teachers of Secondary English Language Arts, Grades 7-12* (Zancanella & Alsup, 2010, p. 65). The first strand, the NCTE *Guidelines,* is published every ten years, with the first edition happening in 1986 and the last edition published in 1996. Though they are not standards, the *Guidelines* "attempt to articulate what English language arts teachers should believe, value, know, and perform in their classrooms as they work with an increasingly diverse student body." The Standing Committee on Teacher Preparation and Certification offers the *Guidelines*

> as our best sense of those skills and abilities that teachers of English language arts should be able to demonstrate as beginning teachers, based on a set of core beliefs and knowledge underpinning their actions, with the understanding that they will continue to grow professionally throughout their classroom careers. However, in keeping with the history of this committee, we have not worked to prescribe a specific curriculum for English language arts teacher preparation programs; we have not attempted to describe a set of courses or experiences all future teachers must have. Instead, what we have done, without regard to whether an English language arts teacher preparation program is offered at the undergraduate, postbaccalaureate, or graduate level, is to describe a set of program outcomes for initial teacher preparation programs organized into categories of dispositions, knowledge, and pedagogical knowledge; we also describe goals for the professional development of teachers as they gain experience in the art and craft of teaching English language arts. We believe that teacher preparation programs should help future teachers develop both the disposition for and skill in self-analysis and reflection required to engage in lifelong learning and professional development. (NCTE, 2006)

In 1996, Denny Wolfe, chair of the NCTE Standing Committee on Teacher Preparation and Certification, identified changes from the previous decade that affected the *Guidelines,*

including "increased use of standardized testing for both students and teachers." Each *Guideline* provides a fascinating look at today's classroom and the prevailing issues of the decade regarding "what students should learn and how they should be taught" and "changing ideas about how teachers should be prepared" (NCTE, 2006).

Zancanella & Alsup (2010) discuss the second strand, the *Standards for Initial Preparation of Teachers of Secondary English Language Arts, Grades 7-12,* and their importance in accreditation, in the article, *English Education Program Assessment: Creating Standards and Guidelines to Advance English Teacher Preparation (2010).* They discuss the need for more access to information about the making of standards and the ongoing evolution of the accrediting process. For instance, NCTE created new committees, such as the CEE Committee on Standards and Accreditation, in order to have more control over the profession and created an independent set of teacher preparation standards to put forth NCTE's vision. Having the *Standards* "owned" by NCTE/CEE, developed mainly due to changes in accreditation since NCTE serves as "a professional liaison between English educators and both professional accrediting bodies" (p. 67). The *Standards* provide the national specialized program association (SPA) standards for secondary English Language Arts teacher preparation. They include four strands: 1. Content Knowledge; 2. Content Pedagogy: Literature and Reading Instruction and Composition Instruction; 3. Learners and Learning: Implementing English Language Arts Instruction; and 4. Professional Knowledge and Skills that encompasses seven main standards, each with sub-elements (NCTE, 2012).

Overall, both the *Guidelines* and the *Standards* do not "prescribe a specific curriculum for English language arts teacher preparation programs," nor attempt to "describe a set of courses or experiences all future teachers must have." Instead, the *Guidelines* and *Standards* "describe a

58

set of program outcomes for initial teacher preparation programs organized into categories of dispositions, knowledge, and pedagogical knowledge" (NCTE, 2006). NCTE believes that "teacher preparation programs should help future teachers develop both the disposition for and skill in self-analysis and reflection required to engage in lifelong learning" (NCTE, 2006).

Standards Impact on English Language Arts Instruction.

After reviewing the history of the NCTE standards, it should be noted that "NCTE recognizes that no standards document in and of itself will change instruction or student learning; teachers will" (Williams, 2010); but teachers need to be "intellectually and pedagogically equipped" to use standards since curricula, textbooks, and resources, and tests must be aligned with them (Stotsky, 2005, p. 7). Therefore, standards have impacted English language arts, more than any discipline, and it has lost its way in the complicated, confusing, and corrupted language of standards-based reform (Schmoker, 2011). Without meaning to, state standards and assessments have been destructive forces to the essential goals of education: "to ensure that students can read, write, and speak effectively in and out of school" (Schmoker, 2011, p. 93). If reading, writing, and speaking are the key outputs and products of the standards, then a standards-based curriculum should allow for open and accessible learning. According to Brass (2016), the opposite is true in that the CCSS have represented English and literacy as a "closed, hierarchical field of performance indicators that facilitate the datafication, commodification, automation, and outsourcing of curriculum, teaching, and assessment" (p. 236). These three elements: curriculum, teaching, and assessment show the main ways standards have impacted instruction (Achieve the Core, 2016).

Curriculum.

The first way standards have impacted instruction is through curriculum and the outsourcing of resources. The effect of education becoming a commodity is that the standards are more likely to shape teacher development and curricula (Brass, 2016). Educators have now become customers of standards-based products and services, and as such, many view teachers as "information transmitters" where their role is simply to deliver knowledge, not have a part in developing it (Fredericksen, 2011). This has led many schools and districts to have a distrust of teachers to design curriculum to meet the needs of their students (Fredericksen, 2011). Instead of providing institutional support and recognition to teachers to help them be effective, many schools would rather resort to programs, worksheets, and workbooks-- all "based on national standards!" (Schmoker, 2011, p. 110; Fredericksen, 2011).

When developing curriculum, teachers build on the knowledge they compose; therefore, if they are not developing their curriculum, they are simply transmitting pre-packaged information to students. This has been an unfortunate effect of reform because it combines "high-stakes standardized tests with scripted lesson plans and a limited arsenal of pedagogical strategies that may make teaching a less attractive job for exactly the sort of ambitious, creative, high-achieving people we most want to attract" (Goldstein, 2014, p. 232). Likewise, many conventional approaches to teaching, according to Fredericksen (2011), support teachers when they simply deliver information to students and provide opportunities for them to practice and master skills. Teachers are often not seen to be "on-task" when they are doing external work, such as reflecting, refining, discussing, or writing about their practice. This perspective of teaching places emphasis on teachers delivering curriculum, but not on teachers developing it. Consequently, teachers receive little support and recognition for contributing to the production of

knowledge and understandings they need to be effective in their field (Fredericksen, 2011). To remedy this misinformed perspective, educators need to make the necessary external work of teaching more visible so that the public views teachers as intentional and strategic professionals who do more than transmit information and we must empower teachers to design creative curriculum and to lead school turnaround efforts (Fredericksen, 2011; Goldstein; 2014).

That is why educators "need to be active participants in the instructional decision-making process." According to NCTE's *What Do We Know and Believe about the Roles of Methods Courses and Field Experiences in English Education?* Position,

> ELA teacher candidates must show a willingness to create a match between students' needs and teachers' objectives, methods, materials, and assessment strategies for instruction in English language arts that places students' needs at the center of the curriculum. Teachers must be able to prepare objectives, select instructional methods, and use materials for whole groups, small groups, and individual learners, while also tailoring instruction to the individual needs and learning styles of students—and groups of students. Teachers must be able to articulate to administrators, supervisors, and parents the rationales for their approaches to instruction. (NCTE, 2005b)

Regarding any curriculum, standards ultimately have the goal of being expectations, but according to the *Brown Report* (2012), they are often just aspirations with good intentions. Curriculum has three levels: what is intended, implemented, and achieved. Standards represent what governments *want* students to learn, but the reality is that there are a crucial distinction and difference between the other two levels. The implemented curriculum is *what* teachers actually teach. This is not easy to monitor which is why state policies can rarely touch on such differences. The achieved curriculum, on the other hand, is what students *actually* learn, and this varies even in the same classroom with quality teachers (Loveless, 2012). Knowing these distinctions in curriculum allow teachers to view standards as just one resource, as Fredericksen (2011) asserts, that supports and empowers their designing of instruction because teachers need also to consider the needs of their students and community.

Teaching.

When it comes to implementing curriculum changes, it is important "to understand the successes and struggles teachers encounter" (Endacott et al., 2016). Implementation can have a two-fold effect of either making teachers feel marginalized with lack of agency to meet student needs, or it can make teachers feel included with support and opportunities to engage in instructional decision-making (Endacott et al., 2015). The assumption about curriculum design and standards-based reform "seems to be that teachers read the policies and then implement them," but there is a gap in understanding about how education policy documents *should* be used and how they *actually do* get used (Fredericksen, 2011). When considering how teachers actually use content standards to inform their instruction—aside from assessment purposes— the standards serve as policy documents that can influence curriculum, collaboration, and advocacy.

First, standards can influence curriculum by providing the framework and content for a course; guiding the selection of texts or curricular choices; providing rationale or objective statements in units; and providing justification for why/what is taught to stakeholders. Second, standards can help link classroom practice to a larger professional body through productive collaboration that aids in initiating conversations, or navigating disagreements. This allows groups to create a common sense of identity, a common set of tools/language, and assist in articulating purposes and goals. Third, policy documents, such as content standards, allow teachers to engage in advocacy, or social practices, that link them to a network of communities (Fredericksen, 2011). According to Achieve the Core (2016), the power of the standards is not in the standards document itself, but in what happens "between teachers and students in the classroom" when the implementation is led by the people who know best what it takes to make

change happen and views change not only a learning opportunity but also as a leading opportunity.

Uncovering the practices of how teachers use standards documents and paying attention to teachers' perceptions of their role in the development of curriculum can lead to greater effort and persistence. Therefore, the goal of standards implementation should be to have sustainability and effectiveness that promotes better teaching and learning (Endacott et al., 2016). In a qualitative study conducted by Endacott, et al. (2015), teachers often feel disregard for their expertise, "demoralized," and "insignificant," if they are not allowed to make instructional decisions (p. 425). Conversely, those teachers who felt support and that their leadership "listened" and "was invested" in the success of their teachers and the students, felt more positive in their agency and professionalism regarding implementation (p. 432). Therefore, positive perceptions of *CCSS* implementation, or reform changes in general, has a strong correlation with positive perceptions of school leadership (Endacott et al., 2015, p. 431). For there to be successful innovation during standards implementation, educators must feel respected and encouraged to find meaning and capacity during times of change-- the alternative is ambivalence and/or resistance (Evans, 2014).

In order for teachers to have more impact on instruction in regard to standards implementation, Fredericksen (2011) suggests the following: 1) expand the description of teachers' work to include more than student-teacher interactions, such as placing more emphasis and recognition on developing curriculum and not just the delivering of it; 2) use standards documents to support and assist in articulating instructional purposes and goals; 3) analyze the standards and consider its organization and support documents to ensure that it helps teachers articulate their instructional decisions; 4) treat all policy documents as active ways for teachers to

engage in their work, rather than as passive documentation that that is simply to be accepted and used; and 5) view instructional documents, such as unit/lesson plans, rubrics, etc as ways teachers leave traces of their knowledge, so allow teachers autonomy in creating these documents.

Assessment.

Assessment is one of the linked conditions of standards, but it is also the element that has most woefully misguided implementation. If teachers are to ensure that the standards guide classroom practice, then they must ensure there is close alignment of assessments to standards (Brass, 2016). Unfortunately, the alignment of high-sounding standards to multiple-choice items on assessment needs improvement (Schmoker, 2011); and according to Gates, the only way for the standards to be deemed successful is if "the curriculum and tests are aligned" (Gates, 2009, para. 47). This disparity is most evident in the unfortunate fact that teachers do tend to "focus more time on assessments than standards because stakes are attached to the test results" (Brass, 2016). In reality, any time given to teaching the standards is often taken away for extra test prep (Gallagher, 2015). So there must be reliability with assessments because any backlash against assessments will almost inevitably kill the standards (Resnick, 2001).

Overall, to reclaim English language arts and to accomplish the essential goals of education, the implementation of standards must be monitored (Schmoker, 2011). If the goals of standards are achieved, then the standards should aim to promote better teaching and learning. However, according to the *Brown Report* (2012), simply creating and adopting new standards does not raise student performance because standards do not cause improvement; rather, it is the culture and continuous development of teachers that make the difference (Fullan, 2016, p. 233; Loveless, 2012). Therefore, the instructional decisions about how the standards are taught are the

critical component in elevating student literacy skills, and this should be left up to the teacher based on their knowledge of their students (Gallagher, 2015). This focus on the teacher as curricular decision-maker recognizes that "teaching is a complex task that relies on teachers' understanding of classroom context and the needs of their students" (Goering, 2012). The success of standards then comes from teachers applying them consistently and reasonably well. Teachers must work together in teams to refine their implementation, and they must be given the time to accomplish this (Schmoker, 2011).

Standards Impact on Teacher Education

Regarding English content standards and assessment, the *CEE Methods Commission National Study: Secondary English Teacher Education in the United States* (2018) examines "challenges in English teacher education over the past two decades that have been political:" including K-12 content standards and assessment. As mentioned, standards are accompanied by legislation and accountability, so teacher preparation and teachers are "accountable for student performance on state measures to an extent never before seen" (Pasternak et al., 2018; Caughlan et al., 2017, p. 266). For example, *In the The State of State English Standards* report (2005), Stotsky shares "how a state's K-12 standards affect student achievement— which *NCLB* explicitly links student achievement (based on state standards) to teacher quality and to high-quality professional development— when they are used to guide the classroom teacher's daily lessons and annual state assessments." This effect on student achievement starts with states ensuring that "prospective English and reading teachers are prepared to teach their K-12 standards and that current teachers address those standards in the course of their professional development" (Stotsky, 2005, p. 73). Therefore, Stotsky makes the claim that

> student achievement could be more greatly affected when standards are used by the state
> to shape its teacher-preparation programs, so teacher-training programs must show where

65

prospective teachers are learning how to teach to any of the state's K-12 standards. (Stotsky, 2005, p. 77)

To follow-up that claim, Stotsky (2005) lists five criteria on how teacher preparation programs can further use standards: "1) by requiring teacher-training programs to include coursework that shows pre-service teachers how to teach its K-12 standards; 2) by requiring teacher-training programs to show that pre-service teachers are acquiring the subject-matter knowledge needed for teaching to the state's K-12 literature and composition standards in their arts and science courses; 3) by requiring student teachers to use the state's K-12 reading and English language arts standards in developing and teaching lessons in practica for licensure in any position addressing them; 4) by requiring the subject-matter tests that pre-service teachers take for licensure to be informed by the state's K-12 standards; and 5) by requiring use of its K-12 standards as objectives in professional development for teachers in reading pedagogy, literary study, composition teaching, and research processes" (Stotsky, 2005, p. 73).

Teacher Education Standards.

Teacher preparation programs must also be included in the discussion about standards because they have their own history of standards-based reform and assessment/accountability systems since *A Nation at Risk's* hope was to "make teaching a more rewarding and respected profession." One proposed solution was for teacher preparation to require high education standards that allow teacher candidates to demonstrate competence in their academic discipline (NCEE, 1983). Some of the standards that teacher preparation programs work with include the Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Preparation (CAEP) standards, which provide "quality assurance through external peer review" for institutions or specialized programs. The *CAEP Standards* are "specified standards set by organizations representing the academic community, professionals, and other stakeholders" and they include five areas: 1. Content and Pedagogical

66

Knowledge; 2. Clinical Partnerships and Practice; 3. Candidate Quality, Recruitment, and

Selectivity; 4. Program Impact; and 5. Provider Quality, Continuous Improvement, and Capacity

(CAEP, 2015). The *CAEP Standards* state that there must be

> solid evidence that the provider's graduates are competent and caring educators, and
> there must be solid evidence that the provider's educator staff have the capacity to create
> a culture of evidence and use it to maintain and enhance the quality of the professional
> programs they offer. (CAEP, 2015)

Specially, in the field of English education, the National Council of Teachers of English

developed their own specialized program assessment (SPA) standards with the *Standards for*

Initial Preparation of Teachers of Secondary English Language Arts, Grades 7-12, which

included a

> systematic content validation of the standards to ensure consensus among the
> membership that the *Standards* adequately and appropriately reflect the knowledge,
> dispositions, and abilities articulated in the *Guidelines*. Further, NCTE must ensure that
> program design and process requirements presented in the *Standards* are supported by
> research, theory, and/or precedent and are formally endorsed by the CEE membership
> and the NCTE Executive Committee. (NCTE, 2005c)

This need was realized when the NCTE Task Force on Standards and Accreditation was

created to create standards consistent with NCTE beliefs and philosophies while not exceeding

accreditation limits (Zancanella & Alsup, 2010, p. 69). Though these standards "are not

necessarily linked to the K-12 content standards the pre-service teachers will teach," they do

indicate the "content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and professional skills and

dispositions candidates need to have" (Pasternak et al., 2014; NCTE, 2012). According to the

NCTE *Standards,* candidates must "use their knowledge of theory, research, and practice in

English Language Arts to plan standards-based, coherent and relevant learning experiences"

(NCTE, 2012). Though the NCTE standards do not denote using a specific set of standards, like

the *CCSS,* it does specify the aligning of instruction and assessment to content standards. How

novice teachers "deal with the realities of this alignment to state and federal standards policies remains understudied" (Pasternak et al., 2014).

Standards are a critical issue in teacher preparation, especially in the twenty-first century (Pasternak et al., 2014). Stotsky agrees and makes the strong claim that "if both the English and education faculty in institutions of higher education are not held responsible for preparing prospective English teachers to be capable of addressing content-rich and content-specific K-12 literature standards, states may see no gains in student reading beyond the early grades" (Stotsky, 2005, p. 14). Therefore, standards-based reform impacts teacher education because there needs to be more research on "how English teacher educators are adapting to the demands of educating future English teachers for the current context." Currently, how standards and assessment impact teacher education is not a focus in scholarship as "there has been almost no research on how pre-service English teachers are prepared to address content standards in the secondary classroom" (Pasternak et al., 2014; Caughlan et al., 2017, p. 286). There was some research on how programs addressed state and national accreditation standard, but that was not aligned with the "K-12 content standards every teacher's students must meet" (Caughlan et al., 2017, pg. 286). This may be due to the historical divides between teacher education and education policy studies, but more policy research is needed in secondary English education, including "how teacher educators actually use policies and standards to teach pre-service teachers to approach them as tools to support their work" (Brass, 2016; Brass & Burns, 2011; Pasternak et al., 2014; Fredericksen, 2011). This is why it is important to consider how teacher candidates study standards: "Do they compare different standards (e.g., their state standards with those of other states or with the NCTE or INTASC standards) and discuss their history? Do they know the effect of planning with standards? Do they know how to align what they are planning with

standards?" (Pasternak et al., 2014). These questions begin the conversation about what content and pedagogical knowledge belong in an English methods course, what the realities of teaching are, and how teacher preparation is evaluated.

Evaluation of Teacher Preparation.

Education reform, especially with the efforts of *A Nation At Risk*, also focus on the evaluation of teacher preparation. This is why the field of education, which is positioned between theory and practice, must open the dialogue between educators and policy-makers to enact meaningful change in education reform. Teachers must be at the center of the conversation and asked to collaborate during the reform process (Pasternak et al., 2014; Alsup et al., 2006) instead of relying on the "network of others" who represent the "trade groups, policy entrepreneurs, philanthropists, think tanks, nonprofits, and testing companies" (Alsup et al., 2006; Brass, 2016, p. 232).

This process of evaluating or "accrediting" English education programs in the United States is often complex and confusing, with very little research that provides authoritative evidence on how teachers should be trained (Zancanella & Alsup, 2010, p. 68; NCTQ, 2016). The National Council of Teacher Quality (NCTQ) (2016) admits that "the lack of such research does not justify abandoning expectations" but rather, it should provide the impetus to address the initial recommendation from *A Nation At Risk* to improve schools, colleges, and universities by working to raise "the quality of our teacher prep programs, making them more useful, rather than abolishing or deregulating them" (NCEE, 1983; NCTQ, 2016). Therefore, accountability for teacher preparation will increase, or if former Education Secretary Arne Duncan has his way, "programs that are producing teachers where students are less successful, they either need to change or do something else, or go out of business" (NCTQ, 2016; Zancella & Alsup, 2010).

Goldstein (2014) counters stating that accountability reformers need to acknowledge that teacher evaluation systems are not a cure-all.

The purpose of accountability reports, such as NCTQ's *2014 Teacher Prep Review: A review of the nation's teacher preparation programs* is "to strengthen teacher education by rating programs on standards that measure key elements of teacher preparation program design" (NCTQ, 2016). However, "many teacher educators and others from the higher education community do not believe that an organization like NCTQ, one that is outside the academy, should have the right to review programs within" (NCTQ, 2014), especially since evaluation usually comes with the same "big business" price tag that it did with common education. Not only are student and teacher performance being evaluated, but now teacher preparation performance is being evaluated "into a standard field of outcomes and numbers" that can be governed by people outside of schools (Brass, 2016).

Others "outside of the schools" include accreditation programs, or external peer review, such as the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). Zancella and Alsup discuss the role of English education program accreditation in their article, *English Education Program Assessment* (2010) and state that "all or most of the teacher education institutions are [CAEP] accredited" (p. 69). Therefore, accrediting bodies, like CAEP, have an influence on which programs educate and graduate licensed teachers. The National Council of Teachers of English, however, works to "assist programs and program faculty nationwide as they strive to educate well-prepared English language arts teachers and simultaneously meet the criteria for accreditation" (p. 69). Regardless of who is evaluating teacher preparation, members of the NCTE Standing Committee on Teacher Preparation and Certification are "emphatic in their

belief that teacher preparation does not, and cannot, end with the completion of a teacher certification program" (NCTE, 2005b).

C. Secondary English Teacher Certification

Part of teacher certification includes assessment, which is the evaluation of someone's ability to do something, which in the field of education, means content and pedagogical knowledge. Teacher Certification is a response to the *Higher Education Act* which asks states to "report annually on pass rates on licensure tests taken by prospective teachers and how their K-12 standards relate to their teacher-preparation program standards" (Stotsky, 2005, p. 9).

Specifically, for English teacher candidate, the *NCTE Guidelines for the preparation of teachers of English language art*s (2006) urges

> the development and field testing of a set of assessments in English education that we as a profession can own and use, both to work with state affiliates in order to promote their involvement in the preparation of teachers of English language arts and to validate the content of the guidelines over time as truly reflecting what is essential for beginning teachers of English language arts to know and be able to do in their classrooms. (NCTE, 2006)

Currently, many content and pedagogy examinations for teacher certification do not reflect NCTE *Guidelines* and *Standards*, so NCTE's Assessment and Testing Study Group (2004) provided guiding principles for action to help teachers cope with the reality of standardized testing while also "critiquing current testing mandates and other forms of assessment and proposing alternatives to the current reality" (NCTE, 2005c). One aspect of teacher certification is that in many states, "individuals who can pass a subject-matter test in English are considered 'highly qualified' to teach" (NCTE, 2006). Also, the National Council of Teacher Quality's *2014 Teacher Prep Review*

> requires that high school teacher candidates pass tests that ensure their subject matter proficiency in every subject they will be certified to teach. No secondary teacher

candidate should be exempted from subject testing on the basis of completed coursework, and all such candidates should be tested before they become the classroom teacher of record. (NCTQ, 2014)

Based on this focus on assessment for certification requirements, NCTE's *Guidelines* address the profession's beliefs about "the depth and breadth of what ELA teacher candidates need to study, experience, practice, and perform in order to be effective in their own classrooms" (NCTE, 2006). The Group also proposed that NCTE should work collaboratively with assessment vendors, such as the Educational Testing Service (ETS), to improve certification tests, such as the Praxis II, to reflect more accurately NCTE's *Guidelines* and *Standards* for English teacher preparation programs (NCTE, 2005c). According to Stotsky (2005), "standards must be used to inform state assessments, teacher preparation, teacher testing, and professional development" (p. 7).

Oklahoma Subject Area Test- English.

The Certification Examinations for Oklahoma Educators (CEOE) program is a specific requirement of Oklahoma law, and it was created through a collaborative process involving a "broadly inclusive group of Oklahoma public school educators, college faculty at institutions of higher education, the state, and Pearson Evaluation systems" (CEOE, 2012).

> It is based on House Bill 1549, which required the Oklahoma Council for Teacher Preparation (OCTP) to develop and implement a competency-based teacher assessment system that includes a test of general education (OGET), tests of subject-area knowledge (OSAT), and tests of basic professional education (OPTE). (CEOE, 2012)

The CEOE tests were developed and fully implemented in 1999 with a purpose to "ensure that licensed/certified teachers have the knowledge and skills that are essential to be an educator in Oklahoma public schools" (CEOE, 2012). Unlike other testing vendors, "Oklahoma educators were involved in all aspects of the test development process" (CEOE, 2012).

The Oklahoma Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (OEQA) has completed prior alignments between the *NCTE Standards* and OSAT test framework. As of February 6, 2017, the English OSAT has been redeveloped to align with the *2012 NCTE Standards* and new *Oklahoma Academic Standards*. According to CEOE, "the test development process [is] structured to provide information for test validation at several points in the process, including the analysis of Oklahoma documents and resources in developing the test frameworks (including especially the *Oklahoma Full Subject Matter Competencies*)" (CEOE, 2012). Also, the redeveloped test provides more opportunities for candidates to "demonstrate their knowledge about how adolescents read and compose texts and make meaning through interaction with media environments," especially in the Constructed Response section. Candidate data first became available with the April 2017 score report since the administration of the redeveloped test began in February 2017.

Specifically, the Oklahoma Subject Area Test in English (107) is an assessment tool created by the Evaluation Systems group of Pearson for the Certification Examinations for Oklahoma Educators program (CEOE) and administered by the Oklahoma Commission for Teacher Preparation (OCTP). It is a criterion-referenced exam based on specified competencies aligned with Oklahoma subject matter competencies and NCTE standards. The test competencies were "derived from the *Oklahoma Full Subject Matter Competencies* as well as significant emerging national standards for subject-matter knowledge and skills of entry-level educators" (CEOE, 2012).

The OSAT English (107) measures subject matter and English pedagogical knowledge using 80 selected-response questions accounting for 85% of the final scaled score. The final subarea is a Constructed Response section which also assesses candidate understanding in

Subarea IV. Language and Literature and accounts for 15% of the final score. The OSAT is

evaluated using a scaled score where scores between 240–300 are considered passing. "The

scaled minimum passing score for the test is designed to reflect the level of knowledge and skills

required for effective teacher performance in Oklahoma schools" (CEOE, 2012). The English

OSAT has five sub-areas: 1. Speaking, Listening, and Viewing; 2. Writing Process and

Application; 3. Reading Process and Comprehension; 4. Language and Literature; and 5.

Pedagogical Content Knowledge (Constructed Response).

D. History of Changes in English Education

English education emerged during the 1880s and English teachers have always been

leaders in the reform of school programs. In fact, the National Council for Teachers of English

(NCTE) "was formed in 1911 primarily out of protest against overly-specific college entrance

requirements and the effects they were having on high school English education" (Applebee,

1974, p. ix). Since then, they have continued to advocate for curriculum and best practice

(NCTE, 2017). Therefore, the history of changes in English education spans over a century, even

though according to Fullan (2016), the history of intensive education change is only about fifty

years old. With educational reform, more constraints have been placed on teachers, curricula,

and classroom practice which has increasingly taken away the authority of teachers as

professionals.

As noted with any review of the history of educational change, change is inevitable and

frequent. For instance, many teachers assumed that the standards-based education reform, like so

many previous fads, would pass, so they went about teaching their traditional ways (Resnick,

2001, p. 78). However, it has not passed but instead accelerated in its implementation and

assessment. Therefore, reform provides healthy skepticism of educational policies because any change is inevitably accompanied by resistance or ambivalence (Schmoker, 2011; Evans, 2014).

In the article, *Reconstituting teacher education: Literacy, critical theories, and English,* Brass (2015) argues that educational reforms, in general, have largely disconnected teaching by making teachers "implementers or consumers of content and pedagogy" that is defined by 'outsiders" such as "politicians, entrepreneurs, educational psychologists, and standardized testing companies" (p. 13). Such reforms, like standardizing teacher education, undermines the visions of teaching and teacher education because teaching becomes objectified "into observable or measurable performances of discrete attitudes, skills, and dispositions" (p. 12). In addition, "the governance of curriculum, teaching, and teacher education" no longer belongs to the education professions since most of educational policy is developed by "networks of policy entrepreneurs, state governors, philanthropists, foundations, for-profit and nonprofit vendors, and edu-businesses that operate independently of states and on behalf of states" (p. 13). It is important to examine the pervasive effects that educational policies have on curricular changes, such as those occurring in secondary methods courses because it is often predicted that education reform will "dismantle public education, de-professionalize teaching, and teacher education, and privatize the public sector" (p. 13). Unfortunately, in many cases, teacher educators have simply adopted top-down reforms which Brass views as "dumbing down teachers and de-skilling teacher educators," specifically "in the areas of reading, literacy, and the English language arts" (p. 15).

Resistance.

This "dumbing down," or placing constraints on English teacher preparation, is one main reason for resistance to educational reform and why many teachers struggle with the

standardizing of instruction (Pasternak et al., 2014). The problem with standardization is the realization that anything common is always complicated by circumstances that are changing due to demographics, the environment, or other natural shifts (Fullan, 2016). For example, the *Common Core State Standards (CCSS),* in particular, have anchored an educational policy that "reconstructs much of the work of curriculum, teaching, and teacher education" (Brass, 2016, p. 230), and the "current trajectory has been narrowing the curriculum rather than broadening and deepening it" (Alsup et al., 2006).

When the standards-based reform movement began in the early 1990s, there was a natural resistance to the changes the government wanted to make in how state and local educational entities operated. Based on assumptions underlying the standards, the resistance reflected a "long-standing opposition between progressive educators and social efficiency movements" (Pasternak et al., 2014, p. 169; Alsup et al., 2006). Due to this, those who resist standardization tend to see standards as a "narrow, unitary set of goals to work towards and/or a set of best practices that will get everyone there" (Pasternak et al., 2014, p. 169; Alsup et al., 2006). However, it should be noted that the "standardization of teaching" is not a requirement of *CCSS*, but rather, it has become an unfortunate by-product of implementation due to woefully misguided information or misinterpretation about the role of standards in instructional decisions (Endacott et al., 2015).

This perspective of constrained curriculum, according to a qualitative study by Endacott et al. (2015), means that many teachers view their implementation, specifically of the *CCSS*, as "narrow and autocratic" and that it has impacted their agency and drastically restricted their professional autonomy (p. 425). Likewise, many English teachers report feeling that their creativity is "crimped" under the *CCSS* (Endacott & Goering, 2014, p. 91). This shows that

standards are driving curriculum and instruction in many schools and classrooms in unfortunate directions, another misconception and reason for resistance when it comes to standardization (Applebee, 2013). Standards do not dictate that teachers have to teach the same content, on the same day, the exact same way. Unfortunately, this has become a standardized and national approach to standards implementation that is creating serious challenges to the effective teaching of English language arts (Goering, 2012). Applebee (2013) affirms the critical nature of standards implementation and that it must happen under our best professional judgment about the dimensions of effective teaching and learning. Therefore, the misconception that teachers have no agency or autonomy in curricular design is another reason why there is often resistance. The futility of resistance comes when educators are denied commodities important for implementation: resources, time, support, collaboration opportunities, to be included in instructional decisions, and to be recognized for their professionalism (Endacott et al., 2015, p. 434). Why would teachers want to implement something they can not develop or change?

As a response to the resistance, and in order to recognize teachers as professional decision-makers, NCTE has resolved to take action on prescribed curriculum by creating *Position Statements* that affirm "the role of teachers and students in developing curricula" ("Resolution on Affirming the Role of Teachers and Students in Developing Curricula," 2010) and oppose policies and attempts at scripted curricula ("Resolution on Scripted Curricula," 2008). These resolutions provide teachers with the professional agency they need against attempts to script curriculum that seemingly impedes teachers responses, reduces their freedom, and diminishes their professional status (Endacott et al., 2015).

Both resistance and ambivalence can happen as a result of "political documents written by committees largely composed of non-educators" (Pasternak et al., 2014, p. 169). Often times,

English teachers do not have control of the programs or coursework they teach because they are

driven by external considerations (Pasternak et al., 2014). This would include the *Common Core*

State Standards (CCSS) which have represented English and literacy as a "closed, hierarchical

field of performance indicators that facilitate the datafication, commodification, automation, and

outsourcing of curriculum, teaching, and assessment" (Brass, 2016, p. 236). Unfortunately, the

effect of these outcomes is that standards have replaced educators' professional status, their

autonomy, and their expertise making them resistant to implementation (Brass, 2016).

Ambivalence.

Change can be imposed, voluntary, or initiated. Many teachers, according to Goldstein

(2014), feel like

> reform is imposed on them from outside and from above-- by politicians with little
> expertise in teaching and learning, by corporate philanthropists who long to remake
> education in the mold of the business world, and by economists who see teaching as less
> of an art than a science. (p. 231)

This is why educators often feel alienated from educational policy making and the

changes that affect them (Goldstein, 2014). In fact, some have become so accustomed to change

that they rarely think about it which can cause ambivalence— when one is not affected by

change due to its lack of personal meaning.

Ambivalence also happens when educators are not involved in decision-making and

contributions to the field are not acknowledged. Alsup, Emig, Pradl, Tremmel, and Yagelski

(2006) acknowledge that efforts to define English education and to convince a broader audience

of administrators and bureaucrats that knowledge about the teaching and learning of English are

valuable, but have been minimal and futile. Research and projects in the field, unfortunately,

have had little effect on current educational policy initiatives, including standards documents

created by English educators, like the *NCTE/IRA 1996 standards*. The historical reality and

realization that English educators have yet to systematically affect public policy aids in understanding why there is often ambivalence in efforts to standardize elements of education (Alsup et al., 2006). Even contributions from authors in the field of education, as stated by Evans (2014), have remained under-applied in school leadership. When educators feel excluded, specifically in the role of curriculum planning during *CCSS* implementation-- a theme termed as "Organizational Marginalization" in a qualitative research study by Endacott et al. (2015)-- they often view it as an affront to their professional expertise.

Thus, a response to this ambivalence, especially in this pivotal time of standards-based reform, English educators must become part of "the larger effort that creates a more just and democratic society" that enacts cultural change (Alsup et al., 2006). This, according to Fullan (2016) requires a "respect and mastery of the change process" because enacting socially meaningful change is difficult in complex times of large-scale reform, as witnessed by leaders in the field.

Meaningful Change.

Any review of educational reform history— from *A Nation at Risk* (1983) to *Goals 2000* to *No Child Left Behind* (2001) to the *Common Core State Standards* (2010)— shows that there will be circumstances that attempt to thwart educators from enacting meaningful change in their classrooms (Fullan, 2016). Embarking on instructional advocacy increases one's ownership and involvement in the promotion of the three areas that most affect meaningful change: materials, practices, and beliefs (Fullan, 2016; Schmoker, 2011; Achieve the Core, 2016). Just as English teacher educators build capacity in their teacher candidates by developing their knowledge and skills in the field, so they need to build capacity in our secondary English methods courses in the three areas that most impact instruction: curriculum, teaching (instructional approaches), and

assessment. Capacity requires consistency: in purpose, policy, and practice. This creates a shared meaning and commitment to effective change (Fullan & Quinn, 2016).

Therefore, for change, or reform, to be meaningful, it needs to represent a personal or collective meaning (Fullan, 2016). Change needs to involve "a change in practice" which can be multidimensional (Fullan, 2016). Three dimensions that can change during implementation of educational policy in any program is 1) the possibility of using new or revised materials; 2) the possibility of using new teaching approaches; and 3) the possible alteration of beliefs (Fullan, 2016, p. 28). So reviewing the educational policies that affect curricular decisions requires an understanding that almost every program change requires a change in materials, practices, and beliefs (Fullan, 2016). Therefore, the goal of any educational change is to steer curriculum [materials] and teaching [practices] by developing a guaranteed and viable curriculum that ensures students can read, write, and speak effectively [beliefs] (Schmoker, 2011). These three dimensions reveal how both standards and assessment should impact curricular decisions, such as in the secondary English methods course, thus providing opportunities for meaningful change in instructional approaches.

To enact meaningful change, which has the opportunity to improve instruction, change also needs to be viewed as an improvement— replacing something old, worse, and illogical with something new, better, and logical. This connection to the old makes change meaningful because it helps people find the familiar in the new. Ultimately, these changes have meaning when the change agents become part of the conversation, seek collaboration, accept the choice to become involved, create content, and develop their capacity— all elements needed to enact meaningful change (Evans, 2014).

Change also requires educators to be assets, not liabilities in sustaining reform programs

(Goldstein, 2014). Meaningful and effective change only happens when there are capacity and ownership among the participants. If either factor is missing, the change will fail (Fullan, 2016). Resistance or ambivalence, then, needs to embody the virtues of capacity. Since educators are in a constant state of change, they need to regard change as a learning process as they develop their knowledge, skills, and commitments. This shift occurs when educators think of change as a learning process, and they take on the role of change agent— "Every teacher is a change agent, helping students learn and grow over the course of a school year" (Evans, 1996, p. 24). Therefore, the curricular changes English teacher educators make in the secondary English methods course should also empower them to be creative, reflective, and critical advocates who lead school turnaround efforts (Goldstein, 2014; Brass, 2015).

Educators are natural agents of political and social change, but it is our choice whether we become more political and support the creation of educational policy. It is our responsibility to work toward becoming a more just and equitable society, and that involves participation in educational reform (Alsup et al., 2006). It is also our choice on how we allow educational reforms to impede our instruction. Educational policy can either "work to maintain the status quo assumptions about literature and writing," or they can promote opportunities for innovation and improvement (Pasternak et al., 2014).

When faced with change, educators need to be proactive, not disruptive, in any ambivalence and resistance that may come with imposed educational reforms. To some extent,

> the current political climate should serve as a galvanizing force, pushing the profession to clarify, for the larger society, what we believe is central to the business of teaching and learning English language arts, and to articulate those undergirding principles—and the research on which they are pinned— as a way of standing up for our discipline and its value as well as standing up for our students and their needs. (NCTE, 2006)

We do this through what the *Guidelines* suggest, publishing on the pedagogical theories

and research-based practices we use, hoping that our collective knowledge guides policymakers

and decisions in the future. English teacher educators have the content knowledge, pedagogical

knowledge, and professional skills to impact learning, so the study seeks to understand this

impact through the "planning of instruction based on ELA curricular requirements and

standards" in the secondary English methods course (NCTE, 2012).

Realities of Teaching in Today's Twenty-First Century Classroom

English educators are at a crossroads on how the field of English education in the United

States will prepare English teacher candidates in the twenty-first century. In fact, it is not

common to hear about how preparation is changing, especially in light of contemporary top-

down educational reforms, such as those aforementioned (Pasternak et al., 2014; Cercone, 2015).

In general, the *2006 Guidelines for the Preparation of Teachers of English Language Arts* states

that

> future ELA teachers [need to] arrive in the classroom with knowledge of English content
> and pedagogy, their students, the social and cultural context of the classroom, and a plan.
> During teaching, they add to their knowledge by observing and informally assessing
> students and their work; then they make connections that arise out of what happens in the
> classroom to other parts of the curriculum and to their students' lives, and they make
> judgments while in the midst of teaching that guide the directions of the class. The ability
> to flexibly implement plans to promote learning is a key skill for English language arts
> teachers, and ELA teacher candidates need to demonstrate a disposition and at least a
> beginning level of ability to do so. (NCTE, 2006)

However, the context of today's classroom is constantly changing, especially to demands

of the twenty-first century. NCTE acknowledges how these twenty-first-century demands have

"implications for how teachers plan, support, and assess student learning" (NCTE, 2013). With

the current state of education in 2017, this means teachers need preparation in how to approach

standards, assessment, and constrained curriculum (Pasternak et al., 2014). This aligns with the study by Scherff & Hahs-Vaughn (2008) about teachers reporting the lack of control over their working conditions as one of the realities of teaching they were less prepared for (Pasternak et al., 2014; Scherff & Hahs-Vaughn, 2008). In order for English education programs to address the realities of teaching, they must provide teacher candidates with practice in "planning instruction and designing assessments for reading, the study of literature, and the composing of texts that promote learning for all students" (NCTE, 2012). Unfortunately, this practice forces the K-12 student outcomes to be a focus of teacher education because "the standards seek to maximize educators' performance-- that is, raise test scores-- with less job security, more competition, and intensified working conditions driven by extrinsic reward and punishments tied to student performance outcomes" (Brass, 2016, p. 234). This is the reality of teaching, and as such, should be a part of the secondary English methods course.

Other realities of twenty-first century teaching, as noted by Brass (2015), twenty-years after Smagorinsky & Whiting's (1995) study, includes four major shifts in the ways teachers and teacher educators approach English language arts: 1) a multidisciplinary approach to English teacher education, 2) the rise of "literacy," 3) the proliferation of "critical" fields of education, and 4) the turn towards literary theories and cultural studies in the humanities" (Brass, 2015, p. 1). These four shifts show critical changes in the field of English teacher preparation and the "multidisciplinary turn" it has taken in university methods courses. English/literacy teacher education is now comprised of many legitimate frameworks of curriculum, teaching, and teacher education" (Brass, 2015, p. 10; Taubman, 2010).

In addition, the results of the *CEE Methods National Study: Secondary English Teacher Education in the United States* (2018) have revealed that "new areas of emphasis within ELA

have expanded what we have traditionally considered our discipline, and this alone urges us to reconsider how best to prepare English teachers for a changing context." That changing context includes five influential areas: 1) field experiences; 2) preparation for racial, cultural, and linguistic diversity; 3) new technologies; 4) content-area literacy; and 5) K-12 content standards and assessments (Pasternak et al., 2018; Caughlan et al., 2017, p. 291).

Gaps in the Literature

These twenty-first-century shifts in the field provide critical gaps in research, especially regarding context and content (Brady & Clift, 2006). As more recent studies are conducted, such as the *CEE Methods National Study* (2018), the opportunity to extend the research allows for "opportunities for comparative teacher education research" (Smagorinsky, ed., 2018, p. vii). Therefore, English teacher educators must position themselves as leaders in a "rapidly changing world marked by increasing cultural and linguistic diversity, globalization, social and economic inequalities, and rapid technological change" (Brass, 2015, p. 15). The field needs more research and content about how teacher educators actually use educational policies "as tools to support their work, rather than constraints to resist" (Pasternak et al., 2014, pg. 170; Fredericksen, 2011). Therefore, the next step in American education reform may be to "focus less on top-down efforts and more on classroom-up interventions that replicate the practices of the best" (Goldstein, 2014, p. 232). This study seeks to highlight what these "practices," or instructional approaches, are and how both context (one state) and content (one course) are affected, if at all, by educational policies.

<center>**III. Chapter Three: Research Method**</center>

Introduction

   The study addressed how English teacher educators in Oklahoma utilize the secondary

English methods course to prepare English teacher candidates in today's classroom; specifically

in four thematic strands: a) instructional approaches, b) inclusion and alignment to national and

state standards, c) focus on the state subject-area teacher certification assessment, and d) the

course's curricular changes made due to educational policies. Using a qualitative, descriptive,

collective case study approach, the study provided a description of how future English teachers

are prepared and what changes the course undergoes regarding curricular and political

challenges. A goal of the study was to use the description of the secondary English methods

course to identify common goals, instructional approaches, and resources unique to the context

and content in a state, especially in regard to standards-based instruction and assessment since

previous research has not shown how standards impact English Language Arts methods courses

and teacher candidate preparation (NCTE, 2005b; Pasternak et al., 2014, p. 167).

Research Questions

   The following served as the guiding question of this study: How do English teacher

educators in Oklahoma utilize the secondary English methods course to prepare future English

teachers for today's classroom? To explore this overarching question, the following questions

were considered:

   a) What instructional approach(es) does each English methods course take?

   b) How does the English methods course, if at all, address and incorporate standards

     (state: OAS-ELA and national: NCTE)?

<center>85</center>

c) How does the English methods course, if at all, prepare teacher candidates for the

Oklahoma Subject Area Test (OSAT) in English?

d) How has the course, if at all, changed due to curricular and political challenges?

Nature of the Study

The nature of the research study was a qualitative, descriptive, collective-case study that described how Oklahoma secondary English Language Arts methods courses prepare teacher candidates. The qualitative approach was appropriate for the research study because the process and product satisfy attributes of qualitative research: 1) it occurs in a natural setting (higher education classrooms); 2) has face-to-face interaction (through interviews); 3) provides accurate reflection of participant perspectives and behaviors (through member-check interviews); 4) uses inductive, interactive, and recursive data; 5) utilizes multiple data sources (a collection and analysis of secondary English methods syllabi and other course artifacts); and 6) explores both the sociopolitical and historical context (history of standards-based reform) (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). In addition, the goal of the study was to provide a "comprehensive summarization, in everyday terms, of specific events experienced by individuals, or groups of individuals"-- the teaching of the English methods course in Oklahoma (Lambert & Lambert, 2012).

The multiple case study methodology is appropriate for the study because it focused on a "how" question and had contextual conditions (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Case study methodology "provided the opportunity to explore or describe a phenomenon in context using a variety of data sources" (Baxter & Jack, 2008). It allowed valuable research in the evaluation of programs, such as different universities English methods courses (Baxter & Jack, 2008). According to Creswell

(2013), "a case study involves the study of a case within a real-life, contemporary context or setting," and it seeks to "present an in-depth understanding of the case" (p. 98). The collective case study approach (using multiple cases) was selected because it focuses on one issue: the preparation of future English teachers, bounded by a place: Oklahoma, through multiple cases: English methods courses. This approach is purposeful because it "shows multiple perspectives on the issue" (Creswell, 2013, p. 99).

It should be noted that qualitative descriptive research is "viable and acceptable," despite a general view that it is a lower level form of inquiry (Sandelowski, 2000, p. 334). Qualitative descriptive research, "one of the most frequently employed methodological approaches," though often mis-designated, is described as having the following characteristics: 1) it is categorical; 2) it is less interpretative; and 3) it does not require a conceptual or highly abstract rendering of the data-- its purpose is to produce a valued end-product, rather than an "entry point" (Sandelowski, 2000, p. 335; Lambert & Lambert, 2012). In addition, qualitative descriptive research is basic, or fundamental in that it is: less theoretical; draws from naturalistic inquiry; and may have grounded theory overtones, but "does not produce a theory from the data generated" (Sandelowski, 2000, p. 335; Lambert & Lambert, 2012). This is true of the study with its constant comparison to Smagorinsky and Whiting's (1995) initial study and the most recent *CEE Methods National Study* (2018). Overall, the qualitative descriptive approach best met the need for a research design because it is straightforward (Lambert & Lambert, 2012).

As Creswell (2013) states, it is important first to start with outcomes, so the study sought to understand better a problem (how the English methods course prepares teacher candidates for today's classroom); to document a process (of how Oklahoma English methods courses are designed); to complement quantitative data on outcomes; to better explain questionnaire data; to

provide formative feedback (in regard to approaches and collaboration needs); and to identify new trends, new ideas for action, and/or potential problems in the implementation of new policies (or to advocate for on-going consistency and fidelity) (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010, p. 44).

These outcomes aligned to the study's Conceptual Framework (Figure 1) which allowed for a deductive approach to the research because themes and codes were "pre-selected based on previous literature, previous theories, and the specifics of the research question" (Gale, Heath, Cameron, Rashid, and Redwood, 2013). Because the research questions narrowed the scope of the study and guided the data, the research followed a Framework Approach in its data collection and analysis methodology. This Framework Approach is often employed when generalizing findings into a collective description of the multiple cases, where a case is an individual interviewee, or the secondary English methods course instructor, and it includes "thematic analysis of semi-structured interview transcripts" like the study utilizes (Gale et al., 2013). In collective case studies, comparing and contrasting data is an important part of qualitative analysis, so there needs to be a method that easily aggregates data across and within cases. Since the research questions were organized by the Conceptual Framework themes, it was an appropriate method of data analysis because data must cover similar topics for categorization. "Individual interviewees may have very different views or experiences in relation to each topic, which can then be compared and contrasted within matrix output: rows (cases), columns (codes) and cells of summarized data, providing a structure which the researcher systematically reduced the data" (Gale et al., 2013).

Research Participants

The sampling in descriptive qualitative studies was purposeful with a goal to obtain rich

information (Sandelowski, 2000). The sample size for the study was criterion-based where all

cases met the following criteria: an English methods course from an approved secondary English

education program, as listed by the Oklahoma Office of Educational Quality and Accountability

(OEQA) in its Teacher Preparation Inventory (Figure 2), last updated in February 2017.

Figure 2. OEQA Teacher Preparation Inventory 2017.
Oklahoma Office of Educational Quality & Accountability (OEQA). (2017). OEQA Teacher
 Preparation Inventory 2017. Retrieved June 4, 2017, from
 https://www.ok.gov/oeqa/documents/TEACHER%20PREPARATION%20INVENTORY%202008-2009%20.pdf.

Other degree programs certifying teachers in Oklahoma that were not on this list were

excluded from the study, as well as alternative certification routes. Criterion-based sample sizes

were "useful for quality assurance" and provided a purposeful sampling strategy for the study

because the research participants all experienced the phenomenon being studied, teaching the

English methods course (Creswell, 2013). According to 2010 Title II data, from the Data

Collection Inventory provided by Caughlan et al. (2017), there are 1,085 U.S. programs

certifying English teachers, so the study provided an in-depth understanding of a potential of eighteen Oklahoma secondary English methods courses within these programs.

The unit of analysis was a secondary English methods course, defined as "primarily focusing on the representation of and teaching of ELA content" (Caughlan et al., 2017, p. 269). This is a "phenomenon that occurs in a bounded context" since the course is bound by time, place, activity, and definition (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 545). The course selection met the following requirements: a 3-hour required class in the English education degree program, offered at the bachelor's level, and housed in either the English department or College of Education during the Fall 2017 semester.

Participants were determined as the "instructor of record" of the designated "English methods course" during the Fall 2017 semester from any of the approved secondary English education programs in Oklahoma (see Figure 2). The researcher reviewed Fall 2017 course listings of the "English methods course" from these eighteen institutions and identified the instructor listed and then retrieved their contact information from the institution's online directory, or department secretaries.

The research participant list was compiled in a spreadsheet, and the eighteen research participants were then contacted via an EMail soliciting participation (Appendix A) on August 27th, 2017. From the list of eighteen potential research participants, six research participants (cases) met the sampling criteria and agreed to participate in the study by filling out the Consent to Participate in a Research Study form. Five potential participants did not meet the criteria because they did not offer a Fall 2017 methods course, and one noted that their program was suspended due to low enrollment numbers. Seven did not respond to additional email and phone

call attempts to identify research participant contact information. The last attempt for research participation from these seven institutions was made on September 20th, 2017.

Creswell (2007) recommends that three to five participants be used for case study research, so the sampling size is appropriate and provides a range representative of Oklahoma's context. The six cases in the study include four instructors from public institutes and two instructors from private, not for profit institutes. Two of the institutes are classified as small, one as medium, and three as large (Figure 3). The *Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education* (2017) use the following descriptions for each case: "for doctoral universities, the levels are based on a research activity index and for master's colleges and universities it is based on number of degrees conferred."

Attribute Code	*Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education*	*Carnegie Basic Classification Description (2015)*
Institute/ Case 1	Public, four-year, medium	(M1: Master's Colleges and Universities – Larger programs)
Institute/ Case 2	Private, four-year, small	(Baccalaureate college: diverse fields)
Institute/ Case 3	Private, four-year, small	(M1: Master's Colleges and Universities – Larger programs)
Institute/ Case 4	Public, four-year, large	(R2: Doctoral Universities – Higher research activity)
Institute/ Case 5	Public, four-year, large	(M1: Master's Colleges and Universities – Larger programs)
Institute/ Case 6	Public, four-year, large	(R1: Doctoral Universities – Highest research activity)

Figure 3. Demographic Data by Attribute Codes & *Carnegie* Classification.

Of the six cases, two programs are housed in a College of Liberal Arts; one program is housed in an Education college, but the methods course is taught by an English professor (with K-12 teaching background); one program is housed in the College of Arts and Sciences which

includes both English and Education programs; and two programs are housed in Colleges of Education.

In addition to differences in location of the programs, there were differences in the number of "secondary English methods" courses offered. One case has a three-part English methods series that includes: Teaching Literature in Middle & Junior High School, Teaching Grammar and Composition in Middle and Secondary Schools, and Teaching of English (Capstone). Two cases have a two-part series with both courses clearly delineated as either literature-focus or composition/grammar focus, and three only have one general English methods course. Of those cases that have multiple courses designated as English methods, there is a suggested sequence, but many candidates are not forced to follow the sequence. Likewise, those cases with only one general course noted that other courses serve as preliminary courses that prepare candidates for work completed in the designated Methods course. All English methods courses studied are taught face-to-face.

Therefore, the context-specific demographic data for this Oklahoma study is similar to the nationally reported data from the recent *CEE Methods National Study* (2018) which states that "75% of English education bachelor's programs have 4 or more credits of methods required, with 50% of the content-specific methods classes housed in the English department, 37% housed in education, and 14% housed in joint programs that offer methods courses" (Pasternak et al., 2018; Caughlan et al., p. 276-277).

Apparatus or Instruments

All six participants participated in each Phase of the study. During Phase I: Artifact (Syllabus) Review, research participants submitted a current (Fall 2017) "English methods

course syllabus." The researcher then aggregated data from submitted syllabi using Instrument 1. Instructional Approaches (for Syllabus Review). For Phase II of the study: Questionnaire, the researcher conducted follow-up interviews with Phase I participants by sending out Instrument 2. Questionnaire electronic surveys that address the research questions. The researcher then aggregated data from submitted questionnaires. From these Phase II responses, the researcher conducted video/online one-on-one member-check interviews with participants during Phase III: Member Check Interviews, to utilize data triangulation so that participants had an "opportunity to discuss and clarify as well as contribute new or additional perspectives on the issue" (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 556). Data triangulation was strong throughout the research process due to the framework analysis methodology because it allowed each phase to inform the previous phase so that all data was reviewed multiple times.

Instrument 1. Instructional Approaches (for Syllabus Review)

The *Instructional Approaches (for Syllabus Review)* instrument was designed by the researcher from a review of Chapter 2, Approaches to Teaching the Methods Class, in Smagorinsky & Whiting's (1995) *How Do English Teachers Get Taught* book. The chapter focused on the five main approaches to teaching the English methods class and provided an overview of each approach: 1) survey, 2) workshop, 3) experience-based, 4) theoretical, and 5) reflective. From the narrative descriptions, the researcher compiled similar defining criteria: definitions, organization/sequence, syllabus qualities, typical assignments/assessments, tendencies/attempts, goals/purposes, advantages, disadvantages, assumptions, problems, and emphasis. This instrument was used in Phase I: Artifact (Syllabus) Review in order to classify the types of approaches presented in each syllabus.

Instrument 2. Questionnaire

The *Questionnaire* was an electronic Google Form that was divided into six sections: 1) Contextual Factors- Participant/Institution, Secondary Methods Course Information, Course Syllabus Information; 2) Today's Classroom Context; 3) Instructional Approach Research Questions; 4) Standards Research Questions; 5) Assessment Research Questions; and 6) Course Curricular Change Questions. This instrument was used in Phases II and III to guide interviews:

1) Contextual Information:

    a) Participant Name

    b) Institution

    c) How many years have you been teaching the course?

    d) Secondary English Methods Course:

        i. Title

        ii. Numbers of Hours, Day/Time/Semester Meets

        iii. Context in Program (Sequence in Program; Housed in College of Liberal Arts or College of Education; Other Related Courses; Field Experience Required in Course)

    e) Course Syllabus:

        i. Are instructors at your university required to follow a syllabus template?

        ii. If so, how does that affect what is included in your course syllabus?

        iii. Are instructors at your university evaluated on how clearly the syllabus provides an accurate guide to the course?

2) Today's Classroom

a) Describe how your secondary English methods course prepares future English teachers for today's classroom.

 i. How, if at all, is that preparation for today's classroom specific to Oklahoma's unique context?

 ii. How, if at all, is that preparation for today's classroom specific to any context?

3) Instructional Approaches

a) Describe the instructional approach(es) you take in your English methods course.

 i. How would you categorize those instructional approaches (check all that apply): survey, workshop, experience-based, theoretical, reflective, other

 ii. How, if at all, are you evaluated on how well you "use a variety of methods for conveying the material?"

4) Standards

a) How does the English methods course, if at all, address and incorporate standards (state: OAS-ELA and national: NCTE)?

 i. How does your English methods course syllabus, if at all, model standards inclusion/alignment?

 ii. Describe key assignments and assessments you use in the course, if any, that help "candidates plan instruction and design assessments" that are "standards-based" (NCTE, 2012).

 iii. How do you include a critical orientation to the standards? And if you don't, why?

 iv. How do you introduce content standards? And if you don't, why?

v. "How do you have candidates compare different standards (e.g. their

state standards with those of other states or with the NCTE or INTASC

standards)" and discuss their history? And if you don't, why?

(Pasternak, et al., 2014).

vi. How, if at all, has your course changed due to new standards adoption

(OAS-ELA in Fall 2016 and NCTE in 2012)?

5) OSAT Preparation

a) How does the English methods course, if at all, prepare teacher candidates for the

Oklahoma Subject Area Test (OSAT) in English?

i. What is the sequence in the program for taking the test?

ii. What type of formal test preparation happens, if any?

iii. How, if at all, are teacher candidates aware of the competencies they are tested

on?

iv. How does assessment data inform the instruction of candidate preparation: at

the program level?

v. How does assessment data inform the instruction of candidate preparation: at

the state-level?

vi. How, if at all, has your course changed due to the new OSAT test

redevelopment (English 007 to English 107)?

6) What curricular changes, if any, have you made to the course due to educational policies?

Instrument 3. Follow-Up Member Check Interview Protocol

The researcher used the following Interview Protocol during Phase III. Follow-Up Member

Check Interview: 1) included a script of what will be said before the interview, 2) provided an

introduction about the study and the researcher, 3) confirmed informed consent, 4) reviewed of

Phase II. Questionnaire responses, 5) asked emergent question prompts from Phase II data, and

5) provided a script of what was to be said to conclude the interview, including letting

participants know how the research will proceed (Jacob & Furguson, 2012).

Research Procedure

In August 2017, the researcher sent out emails to designated instructors of the "English

methods course" from the eighteen approved secondary English education programs in

Oklahoma (see Figure 2) asking for Informed Consent to participate in the research study. Based

on accepted responses, the researcher "replied" asking participants to upload a copy of their

"English methods course" syllabus from the Fall 2017 semester, which had just started. The

participants were then assigned an attribute code that aided in "data management and provides

essential participant information and contexts" (Saldana, 2013, p. 70) based on the participant's

contextual factors, or their *Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education* (2017).

Data Collection

In descriptive qualitative studies, data collection and analysis often occur simultaneously.

"Data collection focuses on discovering the nature of specific events, so it involves minimal to

moderate, structured, open-ended, individual or focus group interviews" (Lambert & Lambert,

2012). It is directed toward discovering the who, what, and where of the event (Sandelowski,

2000, pg. 338). Therefore, data collection for the study included three phases: a review of course

artifacts, including syllabi (Phase I), as well as questionnaires (Phase II) and interviews (Phase

III) with English methods course instructors. Data were collected in Google Sheets using the

following structure: cases (rows), thematic research questions (columns) and Conceptual Framework themes (tabs). This organization method provided a structure where the researcher could systematically reduce the data by isolating responses by case, question, and/or theme (Gale et al., 2013).

Phase I: Artifact (Syllabus) Review.

During the first phase of data collection, the researcher followed a research protocol similar to Smagorinsky and Whiting's (1995) national review of English methods syllabi where each syllabus was reviewed to understand the course's 1) content (textbooks); 2) instructional approaches; 3) activities & assessments; 4) field-experience component or requirement; and 5) extent syllabus includes national and state standards (Smagorinsky & Whiting, 1995). The researcher used independent, initial, first-cycle coding to break each syllabus into these five "discrete parts, closely examining, and then comparing them for similarities and differences" (Saldana, 2013, p. 100).

1) The first syllabus reading examined the content and textbooks listed. This provided a detailed list of resources that provide insight into the theoretical, content, and pedagogical knowledge future English teachers are exposed to in the methods course.

2) The second reading utilized Instrument 1. Instructional Approaches (for Syllabus Review) instrument to classify the types of approaches presented in each syllabus: survey, workshop, experience-based, theoretical, and reflective. From this reading, the researcher gathered a more descriptive understanding of the courses, including how they are defined in their course descriptions and learning objectives. In addition, the researcher reviewed the context of the course, such as its sequence within the program and which department the course is housed.

3) During the third reading, the researcher focused on the activities and assessments listed in the syllabus. Smagorinsky and Whiting's 1995 national review listed syllabi activities such as (pgs. 31-50):

A. Situated Tasks

    a. Teaching Demonstrations

    b. Working Directly with Students

    c. Joining Professional Organizations

    d. Tying Instruction to National/State Requirements

    e. Simulating Professional Situations

    f. Analyze Professional Materials

    g. Situating Instruction in Hypothetical Situations

    h. Classroom Research

B. Reflective/Personal Expression

    a. Logs/Journals

    b. Directed Reflection

    c. Reflection on Teaching

C. Short Planning/Teaching Assignments

    a. Lessons

    b. Simulated Student Behavior

    c. Mini-Lessons

    d. Subparts of Lessons and Units

    e. Collections of Smaller Assignments

D. Comprehensive Projects

      a.   Midterm & Final Exams

      b.   Portfolios

      c.   Longer Instructional Units

E. Reports/Critiques of Outside Reading

      a.   Abstracts

      b.   Reactions to Articles

      c.   Presentations on Outside Reading

      d.   Symposia

F. Medium-Length Projects

      a.   Medium-Length Papers

      b.   Short Instructional Units

G. Literature-Related Assignments

H. Collaborative Activities

I. Discussion of Assessments and Activities

4) The fourth read reviewed any type of field-experience component or requirement, which may help to identify the course's instructional approach as experience-based. The research study did not focus on field-experience, but it represents a major part of the research in the field (Brady & Clift, 2005; NCTE, 2005).

5) Finally, the fifth reading evaluated the extent the syllabi included state and/or national standards and state teacher certification preparation. This review focused on if and which standards are included in the syllabi and how the standards align with course objectives, student learning outcomes, or assignment/assessment descriptions. One caveat offered by Smagorinsky and Whiting in regard to this focus is "for those who prepare teachers not to try to satisfy all

[standards] in a single course because in-depth concentration on a few principles seems to benefit learning more than the brief coverage of many" (1995, p. 105).

All of the research participants' syllabi were analyzed five times using independent, initial first-cycle coding to break each syllabus into these five discrete parts. The researcher then reorganized and reanalyzed the data collectively to compare them to the other six syllabi for similarities and differences in order to describe the nature of methods courses in one state. For example, the researcher copied course descriptions into a word frequency generator to identify common words listed in all of the syllabi in order to synthesize a common course definition for an "Oklahoma secondary English methods course" (Figure 6). The aim during this second-cycle coding was to identify "emergent themes, configurations, or explanations" in the network of syllabi interrelationships, especially in regard to content, instructional approaches, activities & assessments, field-experience requirements, and the extent the syllabus includes national and state standards (Saldana, 2013; Smagorinsky & Whiting, 1995).

Though there are limitations in syllabi review, syllabi give an overall perspective of what the course looks like, what the candidates will know, understand, and be able to do, "how they are assessed, and what theories the candidates are exposed to in their orientation of the field" (Smagorinsky & Whiting, 1995, p. 101). However, it should be noted that in reviewing syllabi, the attempt was to be "descriptive in order to characterize how instructors have conceived their courses and what they are having [candidates] do in them" (Smagorinsky & Whiting, 1995, p. 107). In addition, it is important that syllabi should also be considered "under development" if it places emphasis on student needs and discussions about how the class should be conducted (Smagorinsky & Whiting, 2005).

Phase II: Questionnaire.

In Phase II: the Questionnaire, the researcher sent a link to Instrument 2. Questionnaire after receiving the Phase I- Syllabus artifact. This questionnaire asked the study's research questions in an open-ended manner in order for participants to provide descriptions of their methods course that extend beyond the syllabus. The questionnaire was divided into six sections: 1) Contextual Factors questions: Participant Information, Institution, and Course/Program Information; 2) Today's Classroom questions; 3) Instructional Approach questions; 4) Standards Research questions; 5) OSAT Assessment questions; and 6) Curricular Change questions. It should take participants approximately 30 minutes to 1 hour to complete. Responses were collected and documented through the generated Google Form and then assigned an attribute code in the generated Google Sheet. This phase took place between August and September 2017.

The researcher then analyzed and organized individual participant responses into themes and questions by creating thematic "tabs," or descriptive codes, that "chunk the text into broad topic areas" (Saldana, 2013, p. 142), as designated by the Conceptual Framework (Figure 1). Question responses were then coded for "summative, salient, or essence-capturing" words or short-phrases (Saldana, 2013). This first-cycle coding happened as data were collected, not after all the fieldwork, so that the researcher could use the data from Phase II to inform the questions during follow-up interviews (Phase III). During this synthesis of information, the researcher kept track of emerging questions in order to triangulate the data. This method of data collection provided a deeper qualitative approach and allowed for member-check understandings of the context in which the course is taught.

Phase III: Follow-Up Member-Check Interview.

During Phase III, the researcher video recorded (via Zoom computer software) a follow-up interview with each participant, using designed Interview Protocols. Video/audio interviews of the participant were scheduled in November 2017 and lasted between an average of 42 minutes each. During the interviews, the researcher recorded via video and a secondary audio source to ensure the reliability of the data. The researcher typed abbreviated notes during participant responses to later aid and guided video/audio transcription. Transcription occurred in December 2017 and transcripts totaled 70 pages. Transcripts were then uploaded to a spreadsheet using the Framework Analysis method which allowed for a generalization of the findings into a collective description of the multiple cases. A 'case' was defined as the individual interviewee, and it included a thematic analysis of the semi-structured interview transcripts.

The researcher used data from Phases I and II to guide the interview in order to expand on the participant's answers, the study's research questions, and any emerging codes/themes, such as specific insight on the instructional decisions made regarding coursework and program changes (Creswell, 2013). Data analysis for Phase III was similar to Phase II, where individual responses were organized into themes and questions by creating thematic "tabs" that aligned to the study's Conceptual Framework.

Data Analysis

Data analysis in descriptive qualitative studies "does not follow a pre-existing set of rules" because the data is derived in codes generated from the study (Sandelowski, 2000, p. 338). The study followed thematic analysis using the framework analysis methodology where the codes described the case and its context using categorical aggregation to establish themes and

patterns (Creswell, 2013). After all data was collected, data were then compared and contrasted across and within cases in order to create a collective case of Oklahoma secondary methods courses. The data were analyzed in a spreadsheet where rows were the cases, tabs were the research themes, and columns were the research questions. From there, cells were created to summarize data, providing a structure that allowed the researcher to conduct first-cycle coding processes that were descriptive and provided summative phrases about the study's four themes: a) Instructional Approaches; b) Inclusion Alignment of Standards; c) Focus on OSAT Preparation; and d) Curricular Changes due to Educational Policies. Question responses were then analyzed for patterns on similarities, differences, frequency, sequence, correspondence, or causation. This data collection method provided a structure where the researcher could systematically reduce the data by isolating responses by case, question, and/or theme (Gale et al., 2013).

For the collective case-study approach, each participant's responses to the research themes and questions were analyzed separately (single-case) and then collectively (collective case) to create a description about how English teacher educators in Oklahoma utilize the secondary English methods course to prepare English teacher candidates for today's classroom. Descriptive first-cycle processes were used during single case data collection and at each research phase to record or identify passages on each theme, or question. The researcher would read through the single case data making analytic memos on descriptive passages from participants. Passages that provided interesting information to the question, or needed clarification, were highlighted for the member-check interview (Phase III).

When all of the data were gathered, the researcher reanalyzed the data by conducting second-cycle coding to synthesize participant responses into summaries that "fit into the frame"

of the Conceptual Framework analysis and provide collective and emergent themes, configurations, or explanations to each research question. Each theme was then analyzed using holistic coding to make strategic transitions and decisions based on common or contrasting ideas for each theme or question. This provided "learnings of the experience," or patterns, similarities, differences, sequence, and causation between the cases (Saldana, 2013, p. 188). The researcher isolated and copied columns of information, by research question, during the writing of the Findings to view, code, and synthesize all of the responses together. It was first determined how many participants had similar answers and then the researcher selected phrases from the responses to provide summative, descriptive, and narrative answers. This type of data interpretation developed naturalistic generalizations of what was "learned" through converged analysis (Creswell, 2013; Baxter & Jack, 2008). The written report consists of a cross-case analysis, focusing on a narrative, holistic understanding of the phenomena (Creswell, 2013; Baxter & Jack, 2008; Sandelowski, 2000).

Overall, this methodology was appropriate because it allowed for a wide variety of data forms (syllabi, questionnaire, and interview); was an exploratory technique; discerned a variety of phenomena; and was combined with first-cycle coding to serve the research study's questions and goals (Saldana, 2013, p. 189). Data collection and analysis among the three phases of the research study allowed for a broader range of information about the event, the secondary English methods course, to be collected and examined (Sandelowski, 2000). This broad range of information allowed for strong data triangulation because the interviews were guided by the first two phases of the study. Therefore, the interviews provided an opportunity for member-check to occur which allowed for a deeper qualitative aspect to the study.

Validity and Reliability

The researcher gained access through a gatekeeper, the instructor of the secondary English methods course, and recorded information through field notes and interview protocols. All data collection occurred via the internet because of the advantages of cost, time, and flexibility (Creswell, 2013). Interviews were recorded via audio and video with storage on a password-protected computer and paper copies stored securely in locked file cabinets when not in use. Research participant anonymity was masked by assigned attribute codes, linked to their *Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education* (2017).

By using multiple data sources, the study enhanced data credibility which provides a holistic understanding of the phenomenon (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 554). Data triangulation occurred in the form of member checks so that participants have an "opportunity to discuss and clarify as well as contribute new or additional perspectives on the issue" (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 556). Coding checks with the dissertation advisor aided in validity and reliability of data.

Timeline

July 2017	● **Dissertation Proposal Defense (Chapters I-III)** ● **Apply for IRB (Accepted)**
August 2017	● **Informed Consent-** Solicit participation from (18) Oklahoma English Methods Course Instructors ● **Data Collection- Phase I:** Artifact (Syllabus Review)
September 2017	● **Data Collection- Phase II:** Questionnaire
October 2017	● **Data Collection- Phase I & II:** Data Analysis
November 2017	● **Data Collection- Phase III:** Follow-Up Member Check Interviews
December 2017	● **Phase III:** Data Analysis
January 2018	● **Phases I-III:** Data Analysis
February 2018	● **IV. Chapter Four: Results and Analysis of Research Findings**
March 2018	● **V. Chapter Five: Discussion and Implications**
April 2018	● **Dissertation Defense**

Figure 4. Timeline of Research Study.

IV. Chapter Four: Results and Analysis of Research Findings

Introduction

English teacher educators in Oklahoma utilize the secondary English methods course to prepare English teacher candidates in today's classroom; specifically in four thematic strands: a) instructional approaches, b) inclusion and alignment to national and state standards, c) focus on the state subject-area teacher certification assessment, and d) the course's curricular changes made due to educational policies. Using a qualitative, descriptive, collective case study approach, the results of the study provide a description of how future English teachers are prepared and what changes secondary English methods courses in Oklahoma have undergone in response to current curricular and political challenges.

Demographic Data

The selection of participants for the research study was criterion-based where all participants met the following criteria: the "instructor of record" for a secondary English methods course from an approved secondary English education program during the Fall 2017 semester. The unit of analysis was a "secondary English methods course," defined as "primarily focusing on the representation of and teaching of ELA content" (Caughlan et al., 2017, p. 269). From the list of eighteen potential research participants (Figure 2), six research participants (cases) met the sampling criteria and agreed to participate in the study by filling out the Consent to Participate in a Research Study form. All six participants participated in each Phase of the study.

The six cases in the study include four instructors from public institutes and two instructors from private, not for profit institutes. Two of the institutes are classified as small, one

as medium, and three as large (Figure 3). The *Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education* (2017) use the following descriptions for each case: "for doctoral universities, the levels are based on a research activity index and for master's colleges and universities it is based on number of degrees conferred."

Attribute Code	*Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education*	*Carnegie Basic Classification Description (2015)*
Institute/ Case 1	Public, four-year, medium	(M1: Master's Colleges and Universities – Larger programs)
Institute/ Case 2	Private, four-year, small	(Baccalaureate college: diverse fields)
Institute/ Case 3	Private, four-year, small	(M1: Master's Colleges and Universities – Larger programs)
Institute/ Case 4	Public, four-year, large	(R2: Doctoral Universities – Higher research activity)
Institute/ Case 5	Public, four-year, large	(M1: Master's Colleges and Universities – Larger programs)
Institute/ Case 6	Public, four-year, large	(R1: Doctoral Universities – Highest research activity)

Figure 5. Demographic Data from Chapter 3.

Of the six cases, two programs are housed in a College of Liberal Arts; one program is housed in an Education college, but the methods course is taught by an English professor (with K-12 teaching background); one program is housed in the College of Arts and Sciences which includes both English and Education programs; and two programs are housed in Colleges of Education. Based on this context, participants were asked: *"Could you describe your collaboration with the College of Education/College of Liberal Arts. Do you think the location being in Education/Liberal Arts affects its content or pedagogical emphasis?"* Three participants mentioned some tensions or separation occurring because of a struggle in communication, namely distance, not necessarily due to content or pedagogical emphasis. Two participants

shared that committee work that happens in both colleges helps them to stay abreast of program happenings. And for the one participant where English and education are housed in the same college (even the same hallway), there is full participation between the programs, including course alignment and events. All participants discussed the need for strong alignment between the English content classes and the education pedagogy classes, especially in helping students fulfill degree plan requirements. But a collective understanding may be that English programs should "engage students and stretch them-- it doesn't always matter what content. For English, there is lots of different content-- it's a wide range, not a narrow range."

In addition to differences in location of the programs, there were differences in the number of "secondary English methods" courses offered. One case has a three-part English methods series that includes: Teaching Literature in Middle & Junior High School, Teaching Grammar and Composition in Middle and Secondary Schools, and Teaching of English (Capstone). Two cases have a two-part series with both courses clearly delineated as either literature-focus or composition/grammar focus, and three only have one general English methods course. Of those cases that have multiple courses designated as English methods, there is a suggested sequence, but many candidates are not forced to follow the sequence. Likewise, those cases with only one general course noted that other courses serve as preliminary courses that prepare candidates for work completed in the designated Methods course. All English methods courses studied are taught face-to-face.

Data

Data were collected via Phases. Phase I of data collection included a review of six secondary English methods course syllabi to identify how they aligned to instructional approaches to better understand how Oklahoma English teacher educators approach, identify, reflect, and incorporate

various qualities into their courses. In this first phase of data analysis, the syllabi provided an initial perspective of the what the course looks like in Oklahoma to understand the 1) content (textbooks); 2) instructional approaches; 3) activities & assessments; and 4) field-experience component or requirement English teacher candidates experience during this one selected course in their program. In addition, the syllabi were reviewed to determine 5) the extent the syllabus includes national and state standards.

Independent, initial first-cycle coding was used on each syllabus as an independent case review, and then second-cycle coding was used to aid in making a collective case explanation about the syllabi interrelationships. These descriptions provide an overview of what Oklahoma English teacher candidates will know, understand, and be able to do; how they are assessed; and what theories they are exposed to in their orientation of the field (Smagorinsky, 1995, pg. 101). In reviewing syllabi, the attempt was made to be "descriptive in order to characterize how instructors have conceived their courses and what they are having [candidates] do in them" (Smagorinsky & Whiting, 1995, p. 107). Therefore, research participants were asked: *"Are instructors at your university required to follow a syllabus template? If so, how does that affect what is included in your course syllabus?"* Three replied "no," and three replied that to some extent there might be particular elements required, but there is some autonomy. Likewise, research participants were asked: *"Are instructors at your university evaluated on how clearly the syllabus provides an accurate guide to the course?"* To which five replied "no," and one replied "yes." These questions take into consideration some of the delimitations included with using syllabi as an artifact, which is why it provided initial data that was then triangulated with the Questionnaire (Phase II) and Member-Check Interviews (Phase III).

After participants submitted their syllabus for the secondary English methods course they were beginning to teach for the Fall 2017 semester; they were sent the Questionnaire (Phase II). From the syllabus review and questionnaire responses the researcher then prepared for Member-Check Interviews (Phase III) by copying previous answers from each participant into a form that organized the interview into the Framework of research questions and themes. During this synthesis of information, the researcher kept track of emerging questions in order to triangulate the data. This method of data collection provided a deeper qualitative approach and allowed for member-check understandings of the context in which the course is taught.

Data were then analyzed across and within individual cases in order to create a collective case of Oklahoma secondary methods courses. The data were organized using a Framework Approach of data analysis, so the organization of data is descriptive summaries of the information organized by data collection phases and research question themes. The presentation of data includes a straight forward summary of the information and is organized by theme, following the Conceptual Framework, to describe the experiences of the instructors in teaching the English methods course. The data presented often stay close to the words of the participants (Sandelowski, 2000, p. 338).

Context

Getting context specific to Oklahoma allows for a collective understanding of how the English methods course has responded to the inherent political contexts in which methods instructors work-- which early researchers seldom included (Brady & Clift, 2005). Currently, the political context of Oklahoma is unique since the state is ranked 49th in the nation in teacher pay and has the highest budget cuts in the nation for public education (OEA, 2017). Due to these

challenges, Oklahoma is facing a dire teacher shortage with many qualified teachers (approximately 383 teachers per month) leaving the state or the profession (OEA, 2017). Therefore, the need for qualified teachers who are prepared for today's classroom-- either in the state or outside of the state-- is a critical issue. Since this study is corroborated by its state-specific context, it should be noted that four of the six research participants earned at least one of their graduate degrees from the same university in Oklahoma. However, all research participants listed having K-12 teaching experience outside of Oklahoma.

Findings

Content- Secondary English Methods Course

    Course Descriptions.

The secondary English methods course is often defined as "the primary location where secondary teacher candidates develop subject-matter specific pedagogical content knowledge that focuses mainly on the representation and teaching of English language arts content for students in grades 7-12" (Caughlan et al., 2017, p. 269; Smagorinsky & Whiting, 1995). To better understand this definition, the researcher reviewed syllabi course titles and course descriptions to determine the collective content of English methods course in Oklahoma.

First, there is a variety of course titles for the "English methods course" in Oklahoma, but most represent similar themes with some providing specific content-focus in either literature, composition and language, or general methods. Course titles included: Methods of Teaching English; Methods & Materials of Secondary English; Methods of Teaching Secondary English; Teaching and Learning in Secondary Schools: English/Language Arts (Methods); Composition and Language for Teachers; and Teaching Literature in Middle and Junior High School.

Regardless of the subtle differences in titles or focus, all of these courses were designated as 3-hour, bachelor-level, required "English methods courses" during the Fall 2017 semester.

Since some course titles are content-specific, the researcher then reviewed course descriptions to synthesize and create a collective understanding, or definition, of what constitutes the "English Methods course" in Oklahoma. The following figure provides a visual of the frequency of words occurring in the reviewed syllabi of secondary English methods course descriptions:

Figure 6. Wordle of Frequency of Terms in Course Descriptions.

Based on Figure 6, there is a strong emphasis on content knowledge in "literature" because its frequency occurred fourteen times in the six reviewed syllabi's course descriptions. "Language" occurred ten times which also notes its emphasis on content knowledge. "Arts" occurred nine times which might better define the integrated nature of all literacy domains in the field of English language arts. Other areas of emphasis included "instruction" which occurred eight times; "strategies" and "texts" five times; "effective" and "theories" four times; "design,"

"professional," and "management" three times; and "culture," "diverse," and "approach" two times. Of all these high-frequency words, it shows alignment to an overall purpose of "secondary English methods courses": to integrate content (literature and language), pedagogy (that is effective, designed, and uses theories), and professionalism (that centers on culture, diversity, and management).

It is in this course, according to *CEE Methods National Study* (2018), where teacher candidates should practice, reflect, and grow in their instructional practices as well as discuss the realities and constraints teachers will face in schools (Pasternak et al., 2018). These realities, as one syllabus clearly stated, include providing candidates with support and the skills needed for them to become lifelong learners who will then be active leaders. Therefore, by synthesizing some of the pertinent statements in the selected course descriptions, six Oklahoma secondary English methods courses collectively integrate the

> "pedagogical theories and practices associated with teaching secondary language arts" and "deepen [an] understanding of the theories and methods for teaching a variety of texts" so that "candidates [will] develop more fully his/her philosophies regarding instruction and student learning" through an "introduction to instructional, assessment, and management strategies that are appropriate for ELA and the developmental level of middle and high school students." Candidates "read, talk, and learn together" and "apply the best research-based strategies for adolescent learners from many diverse perspectives and then reflecting on their learning." The course will prepare candidates "to teach those skills in secondary English/language arts classes" and provide them with "appropriate strategies for encouraging student literary responses that engender discussions around social justice and critical engagement with complex issues."

Learning Objectives.

Examining course learning objectives also provides insight into goals, essential questions, and philosophies that are pertinent for English teacher candidates to know and be able to do in the secondary English methods course. After reviewing the six syllabi, it is clear that the essential question one course asks: "what does learning look like in a language arts classroom?"

is difficult to define in a succinct description. Some courses provided their learning objectives as lists of activities, others as philosophy statements, some as course outlines, and others as objective statements of what candidates will be able to know, understand, or be able to do upon completion of the course. Overall, objectives included elements of personal and professional growth that promoted being "lifelong learners, emerging professionals, and subject-matter specialists." With this comes a "range of roles assumed by ELA teachers," such as "using their content knowledge as a vehicle for teaching problem solving, teaching students how to collaborate well with others, and teaching students how to love and survive well in the world." Many objectives aligned specifically to activities, such as designing and implementing lesson or unit plans, designing and implementing assessment, discussing philosophies, participating in observations, and engaging with texts. Included in those activities and discussions were elements of diversity, culturally responsive pedagogy, and critical issues, such as social justice.

Finally, two course syllabi directly aligned learning objectives to being able to plan and cite using standards. This number aligns to what the *CEE Methods National Study* (2018) reports: "the majority of respondents indicated that their programs either distribute responsibility for teaching the standards throughout program coursework (44.83%), or center it in the ELA methods course (45.40%)" (Pasternak et al., 2018; Caughlan et al., 2017, p. 281).

Textbooks.

A comparison of textbooks shows that only one text appears in two different courses' required readings: Christenbury and Lindblom's (2017) book, *Making the Journey.* The following represents a comprehensive Reference page of course required readings in the Oklahoma secondary English methods courses reviewed:

- Anyon, J. (1981, Spring). *Social class and school knowledge.*

- Beach, R., Appleman, D., Hynds, S., and Wilhelm, J. (2016). *Teaching literature to adolescents.*

- Beers, K. & Probst, R.E. (2013). *Notice & Note.*

- Burgess, D. (2012). *Teach like a pirate.*

- Burke, J. (2013). *The English teacher's companion, 4th ed.*

- Christenbury, L. and Lindblom, K. (2017). *Making the journey.*

- Crowe, M. & Stanford, P. (2010). *Questioning for Quality.*

- Giroux, H.A. (1998). *Education incorporated?*

- Manning, M. & Bucher, K. (2013). *Classroom management: Models, applications, and cases.*

- Moore (2011). *The Other Wes Moore: One name, two fates inclined*

- NCTE, Voices from the Middle (2017, March). *Culturally Relevant Pedagogy.*

- Penniman, B. (2009). *Building the English classroom: Foundations, support, success.*

- Rowell, R. (2013). *Eleanor & Park.*

- Shakespeare, W. (2014). *The twelfth night.*

- Smagorinsky, P. (2007). *Teaching English by design.*

- Stevenson, N. (2015). *Nimona.*

- Tchudi, S.N, & Tchudi, S.J. (1999). *The English/Language Arts Handbook.*

- Tompkins, G.E. (2012). *50 Literacy Strategies: Step-by-Step.*

- Traig. *Don't forget to write for the secondary grades.*

- Wiggins, G., & McTighe, H. (2011). *The understanding by design guide to creating high-quality units.*

- Wong, H., & Wong, R. (2014). *THE classroom management book.*

- 11 assigned novels; 2 choice; chapters from 2 books on YA criticism and pedagogy; "some are widely read independently in classes in Oklahoma"

Of these texts, all but one have been published after Smagorinsky and Whiting's 1995 compiled list of texts, and two have been revised to stay updated with the changing classroom. Smagorinsky and Whiting argued that "the longevity of certain texts speak to a certain continuity in the methods course," but the texts mentioned in their 1995 research were not continued twenty years later to inform the instruction of today's classroom. One reason for this would be changes in technology that Smagorinsky and Whiting's 1995 study could not have predicted. For today's secondary English methods class in 2017, most syllabi mentioned additional resources available online. This aligns to the technology area of emphasis noted in the more recent *CEE Methods National Study* (Pasternak et al., 2018). So textbook content in the secondary English methods course is changing and growing in the field of research and publishing, especially regarding technology resources.

Another common resource mentioned in the course syllabi was the use of National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) artifacts. As one participant shared, "I don't know how long I am going to keep a Methods textbook in my class. At school, we pay attention to the costs and they are rather expensive. And now, you can find so many *English Journal* articles that do the same thing but are shorter, more precise, and practical." These peer-reviewed artifacts offer the latest in research and classroom strategies and provide national alignment of resources on prevalent and pertinent topics in the field of English education.

A. Instructional Approaches

A guiding research question for the study was: *"What instructional approach(es) does each English methods course take?"* Smagorinsky and Whiting's (1995) five approaches of teaching English methods courses include 1) Survey, 2) Workshop, 3) Experience-Based, 4) Theoretical, and 5) Reflective, but the study sought to examine potential additional approaches relevant to "today's context." Each instructional approach considers the organization, or sequence of the course; syllabus qualities; typical assignments and assessments; tendencies and attempts; goals and purposes; advantages and disadvantages; assumptions; problems; and emphasis of the course as described in the course syllabus. Research participants were asked to self-identify how they would categorize their courses on the Questionnaire and were then provided time to elaborate and share additional perspectives on their teaching approaches during the interview.

Instrument 1. Instructional Approaches (for Syllabus Review)	Survey	Workshop	Experience-Based	Theoretical	Reflective
1= Public, four-year, medium (M1)	X	X	X	X	X
2= Private, four-year, small (baccalaureate college: diverse fields)		X	X	X	X
3= Private, four-year, small (M1)		X	X	X	X
4= Public, four-year, large (R2)	X	X	X	X	X
5= Public, four-year, large (M1)		X	X	X	X
6= Public, four-year, large (R1)			X	X	X

Figure 7. Research Participants Self-Identified Instructional Approaches.

All six participants self-identified their courses as having experience-based, theoretical, and reflective approaches. In experience-based courses, there is often a focus on lesson and unit planning and implementation, which was confirmed in syllabi course descriptions and course learning outcomes. Two participants in particular (both private school cases) had specified field experience hours with candidates required to observe twenty-five to thirty hours during the course.

In the theoretical approach, there is an emphasis on theory rather than practice, so the course may rely heavily on texts, as demonstrated in the course content review of textbooks. Conversely, though theory may be a constant approach and one in which all participants self-identified as using, there seemed to be general questioning and lessening about its role in the

course and the "move from theory to practice" for some of the participants. One participant has candidates "look at the theories and ideas that shape our knowledge of effective ELA instruction," but what that looked like in practice was a blending of the approaches because "[candidates would then] write reflective papers on how the theories inform their identities as future teachers." Another participant replied that as candidates complete readings, they see their role as "illustrating the theoretical underpinnings of that work." Finally, another participant reflected on the value of theory and when was the most appropriate place to teach it in the course and even program-- "the longer I do this, the more I am coming to realize they are least interested in theoretical pieces. And in my head, I question when is the opportune time to share those with students. And I'm starting to think, in a perfect world, it is during student teaching. To first get them comfortable with all the practical and the "what if" and the organic. Teach them the best practices first." One reason for this may be that textbooks are often too theoretical. "I think it doesn't make sense to them. It's too abstract without experience. So that's the piece of the puzzle I can't figure out. When is it appropriate to have them read something theoretical [...] I just don't know where to put it."

So regarding theory as an instructional approach, it may be important for instructors to consider: "What theory do preservice teachers need?"-- and this question did not have a clear answer based on the variety of required and recommended readings listed in the course syllabi. Likewise, it may be important for instructors to consider: "When is theory best situated in learning?"-- is theory best situated in the secondary methods course where there is little field experience occurring? Smagorinsky and Whiting (1995) would argue that English methods courses should be theoretically strong so that candidates "emerge from the methods class with an understanding of how students learn, rather than emerging with a bag of tricks to use" (p. 8). In

order for this to happen, "teachers should know the theories that motivate their practice in order to make informed decisions about how to organize their classes and plan instruction" (Smagorinsky & Whiting, 1995, p. 23).

In the reflective approach, teacher candidates reflect on course readings, experiences, and the course. The focus is to have the teacher candidates understand and then articulate their beliefs about teaching, as also demonstrated in the alignment of course learning outcomes. This reflective approach is evident in the activities and assessments utilized in the course because all six cases included some type of reflective/personal expression assignment where candidates either responded to readings or lessons observations.

All but one research participant self-identified a workshop approach. In workshop approaches, the class session is devoted to student participation and activities, or small-group development. There is continuity and recursive approaches to the topics because synthesizing knowledge is a goal. Due to this, "a single course is usually insufficient in preparing candidates for all professional responsibilities" (or national standards), so there may be fewer course objectives (Smagorinsky, 1995, p. 12).

Finally, only two participants self-identified a survey approach. In survey approaches, the knowledge of the course is built from topics with the attempt to cover many issues and topics during a single semester. This approach provides more of an introduction to the range of issues in the field from a "coverage" perspective because survey courses tend to present candidates with "an abundance of parts and assume they can understand the whole" (Smagorinsky & Whiting, 2005, p. 9). Due to this, it is recommended that syllabi limit the goals of the methods course in order to provide a better focused, more coherent, holistic understanding of teaching (Smagorinsky & Whiting, 1995). According to Smagorinsky and Whiting's 1995 national survey

of syllabi, the survey approach was the most dominant approach twenty years ago; however, it was the least dominant approach reported by Oklahoma secondary English methods course instructors in 2017. This is positive since "survey approaches have the least potential for helping to prepare pre-service teachers for professional life" because the course may attempt to satisfy all of the national standards and provides a lengthy list of course objectives (p. 29). This lack of emphasis in the survey approach may be due to new and emerging approaches not addressed in the five main instructional approaches.

Smagorinsky and Whiting (1995) argue that the five main approaches will remain fairly constant, but new instructional approaches surfaced during interviews with participants-- the first being a dialogic teaching approach. When asked to *"describe the instructional approaches you take in your English methods course,"* all participants greatly emphasized discussion as a dominant approach. One instructor addressed an overall goal "to help the [candidates] build their identities as teachers and show them skills that will help them become the teacher they want to be," which situated the approaches of "inquiry, reflection, and discussion" as paramount because "[the candidates] spend a great deal of time discussing ideas to deepen [their] understanding." Another instructor indicated: "I put the teacher candidate at the center of learning. In a typical class session, I do roughly 25% of the talking. The rest of the time, [candidates] lead discussions and practice ELA strategies." In addition, another instructor mentioned the application of "ideas we discussed," another explicitly listed "student-led socratic seminars" as a strong approach, and another shared that the candidates "have discussions over various methods for teaching literature, writing, and language." Therefore, all instructors noted some element of "discussion" as an important approach to their instruction.

A second new approach not previously listed is technology. Many instructors addressed the use of online learning platforms as an extension of the course even though all courses were listed as meeting face to face. In addition, "technology" was often listed in course objectives where candidates were "expected to incorporate technology into instruction," or "make informed decisions about the use of technology." In addition, many course artifacts required electronic portfolio submissions. However, one instructor also noted the need for more technology instruction, stating "I feel like if anything is lacking, it is [the candidates'] opportunity to have online coursework. At my previous institution, it was required to have online coursework because [state] is very big in virtual schools, so they needed that experience. Here, it hasn't taken off as much or as broadly. If there were a place to add additional items, it may be through online-only course activities." This response shows that technology is a new and needed instructional approach for preparing English teacher candidates for today's classroom, especially since it is a state requirement (House Bill 1576) where Oklahoma teachers are required to have professional development covering "digital teaching and learning standards to enhance content delivery to students and improve student achievement" (OSDE, 2017).

A third new approach is one that examines the role critical literacies, which encourages active reading and analysis of texts using strategies that aid in understanding implicit messages. One instructor notes "an application of a variety of critical approaches to texts" as part of their instructional approaches. Since some methods courses are literature-based, it would be interesting to see how many other instructors also take this approach since "critical theories seemingly played little role in English teacher education in the early 1990s" (Brass, 2015, p. 5-6). With today's classroom, this approach may become more popular as English educators have more access to literary, popular, media, and digital texts in which they can "draw from literary

theories and (especially) cultural studies to reshape English language arts methods courses and classroom approaches" (Brass, 2015, p. 5-9).

Overall, Oklahoma English teacher educators examine and identify the approaches they take in teaching their methods courses (Smagorinsky & Whiting, 1995). Due to the vast purpose methods courses have to integrate content, pedagogy, and professionalism, English teacher educators need to understand and continue preparing teacher candidates for new areas of emphasis to ensure that they are prepared for today's classroom. Five influential areas that are changing in the field, as noted in the most recent study include: 1) field experiences; 2) preparation for racial, cultural, and linguistic diversity; 3) new technologies; 4) content-area literacy; and 5) K-12 content standards and assessments (Pasternak et al., 2018). The following section will examine the activities and assessments occurring in "today's" secondary English methods course in Oklahoma.

Activities and Assessments.

In general, content covered in the methods class might include: a) pedagogical content knowledge, b) teaching methods and materials, c) lesson and unit planning, and d) assessment practices. Other common areas included: e) teaching philosophy, f) subject matter, g) micro-teaching, h) classroom management, and other, including specific literacy and language content, technology, and multiple literacies (Caughlan et al., 2017). In addition, content reviewed in Smagorinsky and Whiting's 1995 study included the following assignments and assessments: a) situated tasks, b) reflective/personal expression, c) short planning/teaching assignments, d) comprehensive projects, e) reports/critiques of outside reading, f) medium length projects, g) literature-related assignments, h) collaborative activities, and i) discussion of assessments and

125

activities. The following six cases included the following types of activities and assessments in their syllabi (as aligned to Smagorinsky and Whiting's 1995 national review):

Situated Tasks include "evaluating candidates according to their performance in areas that directly tied their coursework to field experiences, teaching demonstrations, professional experiences, and other experiential experiences" (Smagorinsky & Whiting, 1995, p. 24). Two cases have an embedded field experience requirement, so one required the teaching of a lesson in the observation school and the other required attendance during the Practicum field-experience. Three cases required membership or participating in a state professional organization, such as the Oklahoma Council for Teachers of English (OKCTE), or similar professional experiences. All six cases required some type of teaching demonstration.

All six cases included some type of Reflective/Personal Expression assignment where candidates either responded to readings or lessons observations. This aligns with the Instructional Approaches chart (Figure 7) where all six cases also self-identified as having a Reflective approach to their course. In addition, all six cases required some type of planning/teaching assignment, or instructional unit plan, that was either conceptual, thematic, or content-specific. These also served as examples of comprehensive projects.

One case required a presentation on outside reading in the form of a lesson presentation at a local, Institute-hosted festival; three cases included literature-related assignments, such as critical responses to texts; and four cases required some type of collaborative activity, such as partner mini-lessons, discussion leaders, and co-leading of a novel; and all cases included discussion as an activity, as emphasized in the instructional approaches section.

From a review of all the syllabi, many activities aligned specifically to objectives, such as designing and implementing a lesson or unit plans, designing and implementing assessment,

discussing philosophies, participating in observations, and engaging with texts. Included in those activities and discussions were elements of diversity, culturally responsive pedagogy, and critical issues, such as social justice. These activities promote "lifelong learners, emerging professionals, and subject-matter specialists" and also reflect some alignment to standards, discussed in the next guiding research question: *How does the English methods course, if at all, address and incorporate standards (state: OAS-ELA and national: NCTE)?*

B. Standards

Focusing on the inclusion and alignment of national and state standards in English methods course syllabi explains how the role of policy-documents, such as standards, affect English teacher preparation. In a review of all course syllabi, there was at least some alignment to standards: NCTE, OAS-ELA, CAEP, inTasc, and/or other. Five of the six cases aligned their syllabi to the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) standards, but only one shows alignment to the state's *Oklahoma Academic Standards for English Language Arts* (OAS-ELA). Two cases have alignment with inTasc standards, one with Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) standards, and two with institutional frameworks. When asked on the questionnaire: *"How does your English methods course syllabus model standards inclusion/alignment"* five of the six noted specific standards aligned and how the course also aligns to the standards, with some syllabi providing tables and narrative descriptions. And when asked: *"How do you introduce content standards in the course? And if you don't, why?"* four participants reported that the standards are embedded throughout the course, one reported that they are introduced before the secondary English methods course, and one was unsure of the question's use of "content standards."

This application of the standards is pertinent to understand because "so little has been said about the place of standards in teacher preparation in the English teacher education research literature" (Caughlan et al., 2017, p. 287). So an emergent question for the study and during the interviews was: *"What is your understanding of how the English language arts methods course should prepare teacher candidates to address the content standards in their teaching?"* Most participants noted that candidates needed an initial awareness to the standards, "to be able to speak the language," because they "are a significant statement" that is "appropriate for early career teachers and are a guideline for teacher candidates." As one participant replied: "I can say, 'these are our expectations,' and this is what I need to know. And then eventually, I can share with them that theoretical piece." For other participants, the timing of when to introduce the standards affects the role they place on them in the course. "I [the instructor] have internalized standards, and maybe it informs the instructional choices, sequence, and material selections, but in that class, I don't make it specific. For one, for many of the students it's their first class just wrapping their minds around teaching students who don't like to read and write. What does that look like? What are you going to do? To also put content standards at that point. I have tried it. But I know it goes in one ear and out the other because it doesn't have a connection." This timing is echoed by another participant who "doesn't want to inundate them with standards they may be learning already in other EDUC courses (especially InTasc)." Therefore, for most cases, the standards get an introduction, but after that, they may implicitly guide the course with intentional focus, but are not an explicit element. Collectively, then, an understanding of how six English language arts methods course are preparing teacher candidates to address the content standards in Oklahoma is by "teaching them how to write a lesson in a unit plan and how to

organize the information they want to teach their students-- which in turn means they are going to be meeting the standards."

This understanding of the role standards play in the content course exceeds the statistics from the most recent national 2018 study where only a small number of English methods instructors approach the standards critically by providing a critical orientation of the sociohistorical or political context of standards (Pasternak et al., 2014; Caughlan et al., 2017). When asked: *"How do you include a critical orientation to the standards? And if you don't, why?"* five of the six cases stated that they do include a critical orientation discussing the standards-- with the one that does not stating "I don't think we really do and I'm not sure why." One participant who does provide critical orientation stated that "discussion is both practical (how) but also critical (why? why these standards?)" and another stated "we discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the standards." However, some mentioned that the discussion may only cover a class period early in the semester. Similarly, when asked the question posed by the *CEE Methods National Study* (2018) : *"How do you have candidates compare different standards (e.g., their state standards with those of other states or with the NCTE or INTASC standards)?"* only two participants have candidates consider which assignments from this course and previous courses align with specific standards, or they have informal discussions about the standards. However, the other participants address that this may be happening in other education coursework. Similarly, as one participant addresses, "we're asking [candidates] to do the alignment. So on their lesson plan, they say here is my focus OAS standard. They could easily say here is my focus CCSS. And then after they could include other standards tangentially. Then their student outcomes have to be aligned to those standards, and then the assessments and activities have to be aligned to [Depth of Knowledge]." Ultimately, the consensus seemed to be

on the process of how to use standards being the same, even if the numbers and organization of them are different.

For Oklahoma, critical orientation and discussions about the *Oklahoma Academic Standards for English Language Arts* (OAS-ELA) may be more prevalent because of our unique standards adoption timeline from 2010-2016 which involved adopting the Common Core in 2010, planning for full implementation in August 2014, but repealing it in June 2014. Because of this adoption timeline, it was important to ask participants *"What challenges, if any, has your course faced due to the standards/expectations constantly changing? (particularly during the 2010-2016 timeline)?"* Five participants responded that it had not really affected their course and two participants started their position of teaching the secondary English methods course right when the new standards were implemented. In general, many echoed the approach "that we should be doing our jobs in how to write good lesson plans that will meet any set of academic standards." However, three specifically discussed the organization of the standards and admitted that "the [OAS-ELA] are organized in a more helpful way which makes it easier to discuss how to implement them. And how to think about structuring a unit of study that is grounded in the standards. I think they are easier to discuss than PASS [Oklahoma Priority Academic Skills for Students]. They are certainly easier to teach, in my opinion, from CCSS and how it was organized based on experience in teaching in [another state]." Knowing the difference between the two sets of standards does provide for pertinent discussions about the role policy documents, such as standards, plays in a course's design and candidate expectations about what they "should know and be able to do."

Regarding the OAS-ELA, many of the research participants stated that they were involved in the creation or adoption of the new standards, so many cited that they were able to

provide anecdotal background about the process during standards discussions. Therefore, when asked: *"How does your English methods course, if at all, address and incorporate STATE (OAS-ELA) standards?,"* all participants answered with some type of activity, such as developing lessons and a unit, scaffolding instruction, studying a grade-level, and using them to create rubrics. One participant, in particular, addressed that "now that the new OAS standards are being consistently used in the state for-- what is this-- year two of full implementation-- that is definitely helping methods classes have an anchor text." This shows that Oklahoma English teacher educators are aware of the new standards and are emphasizing one of the five new influential areas in English methods classes: K-12 content standards and assessments.

In these interview discussions about the standards, one participant stated, "we often have to discuss Common Core because our course text only references those standards" which provided an important emergent question during member-check interviews: *"Have you found that Oklahoma not being a "Common Core" state (due to its repeal in June 2014) excludes us from many common resources or conversations?"* Two of the participants started out uncertain in their response by saying "I don't know," but then followed up by either addressing similarities between the two sets of standards or addressing funding concern due to Oklahoma losing Race to the Top federal grant money when it repealed the Common Core State Standards. Likewise, three participants stated more of a "no" answer and then elaborated that having a cross-walk document that parallels the two sets of standards and shows their similar alignments would be helpful and is now available. One participant replied "yes, in fact the textbook that we use refers to Common Core so I had to spend some time talking about that. And yes, I think it's a challenge" because it makes Oklahoma feel "special" and "different" which makes it difficult "to find a methods book-- so I end up talking to them about CCSS, and I say, even if you go to Texas, you're not going to

have Common Core." Overall, many instructors agreed that Oklahoma not being a Common Core state may be "bothersome, but not a huge deal" because "standards are standards-- a verb changes here, a clause changes here [...], but they are embedded and implied in the practices we've been using for years."

C. Focus on OSAT Preparation

The following research question, *"How does the English methods course, if at all, prepare teacher candidates for the Oklahoma Subject Area Test (OSAT) in English?"* addresses the state-specific area of licensure. All participants stated that the OSAT is generally taken the senior year, the semester before the full, or final, internship semester. Four of the six participants stated that their course has not changed *"due to the new OSAT test redevelopment (English 007 to English 107)"* which occurred in February 2016. Three participants stated that there is no formal test review, and the other three mentioned only a minimal amount of test preparation, but mainly outside of the methods course through workshops or sample tests.

One of the major redevelopments of the OSAT test was in the Constructed Response. Many participants stated that they do a similar assignment with their candidates-- "it's kind of what they have been doing. It has the lesson plan, standards, learning goal, and then we assess what happened with the student. So obviously, I am going to [keep] practicing this. I think it is a brilliant change because this is at the heart." Due to this, it has better alignment in the methods course because "we address what you do when students aren't meeting your objectives. How do you adjust? We ask them to reflect or tweak a lesson plan or do other scaffolding. We do that in the program. So I like that it is now on the OSAT, so it becomes more of a performance assessment. When an assessment meets what a program is doing."

However, because of the recent development, others mentioned needing to "get a handle on how it designed [in order to] be of a better benefit to candidates. [...] I think it is a good thing overall that the OSAT has moved to an application of the content knowledge that is based upon the OAS." Or, with the newness of the test, many stated that they have not yet been able to really aggregate their scores, so this would be an interesting follow-up question when there is at least one year's cycle of data to examine.

D. Curricular Changes due to Educational Policies

Finally, it was important to examine *"How the course, if at all, has changed due to curricular and political challenges (educational policies)?"* because Oklahoma faces major challenges in teacher preparation, including teacher shortage, retention, and mobility. So when asked: *"What are the potential benefits and drawbacks of an Oklahoma-only education system for candidates who may or may not plan to teach in Oklahoma?"* many participants saw this to be a relevant question to their students because they are indeed looking to other states upon graduation, even for their clinical field experience internships. This section will address both issues of having state-specific K-12 content standards and state-specific licensure exams.

Regarding Oklahoma having state-specific K-12 content standards through the new adoption of the OAS-ELA, many participants addressed the notion that "English doesn't change much" and that "standards are standards are standards." The emphasis should be on "teaching [candidates] to analyze context and standards and learn how to look at those as a way to build a framework and a picture of learners." Regardless of the state-- and three participants acknowledged Texas's use of different standards-- "standards aren't all that different."

Many participants referred to candidate experiences to help provide scenarios regarding this issue. One example shared was when a candidate conducted an internship in another state-- "there hasn't seemed to be an issue [with standards], that I can recall-- beyond "oh wait, their standards look different than ours"-- just more of an awareness that I can't just go to the Oklahoma standards anymore. I need to look at how this state has organized their standards." This same thinking was affirmed by another participant addressing the recursive process of using standards, "I really think [candidates] could take out an OAS and plop in an NCTE or *CCSS* standard. I really think that, although they are the vehicle, they are just the vehicle. It's no different than saying I'm going to focus on setting today instead of characterization. They know you can rotate those terms and focal points. So I think they would be okay to go to CCSS." Therefore, in general, there seems to be a collective understanding that "you're going to have reading standards, and writing standards, and literary analysis, and different genres of writing, and research, so it's not a foreign language when they see different state standards, it's just organized differently. So once [candidates] can solve that puzzle-- how are they organized and in what way-- it's not that difficult."

Regarding the organization of the OAS-ELA standards, one participant reported, "[Candidates] were so grateful for the usability of the standards. So for one thing, we're unleashing teachers to go to Texas to say 'Simplify! Simplify! Simplify!' because [Oklahoma] has done that. And another thing we've done is we haven't mandated what text our teachers should use. Throughout those readings, we need to make sure we teach teachers as professionals to make those decisions. We will give them the target, but the bow and arrow they choose, they choose. That is what standards are; they are a target, not curriculum. So I think if our teachers buy into that, they can go and speak back to standards in other states and they are prepared to use

them." So learning standards on an easier, more accessible "template" of sorts may be another benefit to having multiple perspectives and exposures on how to plan "standards-based" instruction.

Drawbacks in the form of having state-specific teacher licensure exams include having to take additional teacher licensure exams based on state requirements. For example, two bordering states to Oklahoma, Missouri, and Arkansas, use the PRAXIS exams (Texas also uses a state-specific, different state licensure exam). So, as one participant shared, "it's difficult to advise those candidates who are going to different states." In addition, the participant stated that "the PRAXIS is a perfectly fine thing and we don't have to spend taxpayers money developing our own [assessment], like the English OSAT."

These regional drawbacks, or obstacles, may also affect hiring decisions because many institutes in an area are probably feeder institutions, so they know the type of candidates they are getting. This becomes a challenge when a school does not know an Oklahoma candidate and understands that the candidate is coming into the state with different knowledge about standards and different licensure expectations-- which might deter the hiring process until their state's licensure requirements are complete. As one participant experienced, "the transition of state licensure varies from state to state, and some states make it easy and some states make it difficult." However, this works both ways with teachers coming into Oklahoma-- "not that there is a line out the door to come to Oklahoma to teach right now"-- will also have similar regional obstacles, so reciprocity, in general, is a drawback. But as one participant admitted: "we have been fairly exclusive by limiting the tests and the standards in that way." Therefore, in having state-specific licensure, Oklahoma may be creating additional challenges for already low teacher

retention, recruitment, and attrition because outside teachers potentially interested in coming into the state may be deterred by the licensure process.

When asked about the benefits of having an "Oklahoma-only education system," the responses were clear: "Benefits? I don't know. I don't see any evident benefits" and "It makes no sense to me that we think we are so different" and "Um, well, no." Upon elaboration on the topic, one participant agreed that a mentioned drawback-- establishing connections between state education programs and schools could also be a benefit-- could also be a benefit. Often institutes provide feeder opportunities between school districts, so an Oklahoma graduate may be more highly considered than a regional graduate because of the state-specific preparation. One participant also reflected that one benefit might be "that if they [Oklahoma teacher education graduates] are staying in state, it builds in them a strong understanding of who their learners are." In general, Oklahoma learners are: 17% are Hispanic, 13% are Native American, 2% are Asian, 9% are Black, less than 1% are Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, 48% are White, and 9% are two or more races, as defined by data generated from the Oklahoma State Department of Education's WAVE Student Information System which includes approximately 700,000 K-12 students enrolled by October 1, 2017 (OSDE, 2017b).

In addition to questions about Oklahoma's state-specific K-12 content standards and teacher licensure requirements, Oklahoma is facing other issues regarding alternative and emergency certified teachers. In 2017, 1,429 emergency certifications were approved by the Oklahoma State Department of Education whereas five years ago, the state issued only thirty-two emergency teaching certificates in a year (Eger, 2017). What this means is many schools are "reliant on filling vacancies with teachers who are not yet qualified because they have not yet completed the state's requirements for either a traditional or alternative certification" (Eger,

2017). Due to this, it was important to understand the impact these policies are having an English teacher preparation in Oklahoma, so participants were asked: "*How is your program addressing Oklahoma's issues on teaching shortage, retention, mobility, and increase in alternative/ emergency certificates?"* All six responded that they are aware of the issues and are currently discussing, or are on committees to address teacher recruitment and retention, but there are a variety of plans based on what different programs are doing.

One instructor mentioned starting a holistic undergraduate/graduate class that is a type of sixteen-week boot camp that targets two-degree programs: the secondary education masters and adults in higher education masters. In addition, it could be an elective credit for several English majors who are about to graduate but have mentioned an interest in becoming alternatively certified. Therefore, "it is my attempt-- and I would say our department's attempt-- to make sure [all prospective teachers] have training." Another instructor discussed similar recruitment attempts, especially in the graduate program-- "We do get a lot of graduate students who are alternatively certified who come because they have to have certain hours and college courses count. And others realize 'Shit. I'm not a very good teacher. I'm going to go back to school.'" Due to this, the participant reported that there "are more and more alternatively certified teachers in the program when once there were none." Which is why a lot of the program's courses are cross-listed as undergraduate and graduate level which means that often there are often alternatively certified teachers are taking the same courses as traditional teacher candidates which provides additional interesting perspectives on preparing English teacher candidates.

Another instructor discussed dual degree options for students, especially those "[students] coming from arts & sciences with a traditional English major. [These students] wouldn't have to take all the prerequisites to Methods course in order to take the methods course and classroom

management and the internship." Currently, this option is in preliminary discussions, but there is an awareness to "not wanting to start siphoning off our own students to that degree, but we want to be responsive to needs of arts and science majors who are wanting to teach (in addition to trying to do [our] best to fight TFA presence on campus." A second option is instead of developing a traditional Masters of Arts in Teaching, English and Social Studies program, "we've been trying to think outside of the box to help the emergency and alternatively certified teachers in the state be better prepared to do jobs." So the program is looking at doing some course for alternative and emergency certified teachers online. A goal is "we want the folks who are in classrooms (however they are certified) to be better teachers. If we can get them to take a classroom management course and use their job as an internship credit of sort, we're giving them help. Or otherwise, I'm not sure how much help they are getting."

Conversely, for those who see education as a service field, as one participant shared, "[education] is a calling more than a way to make money or a career. [Candidates] feel called to help. I think there is a large service component that motivates our students to major in teacher education. I would say that is true of a large majority of my English education majors. Some of them are going to stay in Oklahoma-- they are not going to run away because of the limitations-- but for some of them, it is an odd appeal. To make things better and educate the children in the state. That idea of calling and vocation has helped steady our numbers in decreasing enrollment of teacher education across the state;" however, the participant warned that "not all of our teacher educator students feel this way, so I don't want to paint them with this broad brush."

Other issues that affect English teacher preparation-- that extend beyond candidate preparation in the secondary methods course-- include the quality and training of cooperating teacher/clinical faculty/mentor teachers during the field experiences. These selected teachers

have significant influence on English teacher preparation, especially since many programs

require multiple field experience hours. As one participant attests,

> "I think the student teaching experience is vital. Fortunately, most of the Cooperating
> Teachers have been good, but there have been a few who I don't think do an appropriate
> job of mentoring these burgeoning teachers. I think an awareness of mentorship and
> developing strong programs that mentor your teachers instead of allowing them to twist
> in the wind. Both as student teachers and as young first and second year teachers. And
> that is tough to do because as I mentioned, the grind in high school/secondary teaching is
> very real. It is difficult to ask a secondary teacher who is just trying to survive some
> weeks to be more involved with student teachers and mentorship."

As another participant shared, we are sending teacher candidates to observe mentor

teachers who themselves are not traditionally trained which is why "one of my jobs when placing

teacher candidates into internship experiences is to find out our teachers backgrounds before we

place our students there. We don't place with alternatively certified, or obviously, emergency

certified mentors because they need to have at least three years [of experience]"-- but sometimes

there are no mentors who meet the qualifications because of the state's issues with a teacher

shortage. Because of this, one participant sought to elaborate on the changing context of

qualified teachers by providing some examples: "When you have so many alternatively certified

teachers in the state, [there is going to be] a rise in mentor teachers who were alternatively

certified, and it goes a couple of ways. I was just talking to a graduate at her school, and she said,

'my mentor teacher was alternatively certified, but she was at year seven, So she had it figured it

out.' So I don't have a problem with mentor teachers who have been alternatively certified--

unless they give the message to traditional certified that they give you a bunch of information

that's not really practical. Or, I've had alternatively certified mentor teachers who say 'tell me

more about that?' I do like co-teaching, but they need to be the guiding figure. So, I think we are

going to have a large number of non-traditional certified mentoring student teachers, and I don't

think the state has realized this-- What is that going to look like?" This provides implications for future research as the demographics of "qualified teachers" in the field is changing.

Additional issues that worry English teacher educators in the state is what happens after the candidates become certified teachers and graduate from the teacher preparation program. As much as the instructors worked to prepare them for today's classroom, the realities may be that "they may not have the privilege of working with a mentor in their classroom or within their school" because of what is happening in the state and the field-- low attrition. "That really worries me because they may be placed in contexts where they disagree with colleagues. And I hope in those situations they are actually fighting for real instruction. Where they might have colleagues who because of their background, or lack of understanding of what teaching and learning are about, will choose methods that are not the best. I think our candidates when they are out there in their schools, may feel isolated at times." Another participant speaks to this same worry, "my worry is less about [new teachers] leaving and more about other trends I'm seeing-- I hear from my first, second year, early career teachers that they are being asked to be mentors to emergency/ alternatively certified people. And I had, one of my most talented, by year three, she was running the entire department. Which is a compliment to her, but a detriment. So I feel I have to prepare them for Oklahoma because they are being forced into these mentoring roles early, and the more they know about Oklahoma standards, the demands on Oklahoma districts, are more comfortable in their own teaching than this growing number of non-qualified teachers-- you can quote me on that, I just don't think they are qualified. So I'm okay, just preparing for Oklahoma teachers and just worrying about that." This worry addresses an unforeseeable effect of Oklahoma English teacher preparation-- that we are preparing candidates to seemingly train teachers who do not earn their degrees via a traditional route.

In general, recruitment and retainment are difficult because "It's really hard to combat when all the publicity out there is so negative. I'm like, no no, don't listen to all the publicity. Teaching's great!" Participants shared the laments that their traditional route students are having because they are aware of the alternative pathways to certification. As one participant says, "We talk about what it means to be highly qualified and how this program satisfies that." And another participant shared similar approaches-- "We just try to recruit and talk to them about how they will have a better first year with better preparation, and they are more likely to be around teaching by the 5th year." So an implied part of the job in preparing English teacher candidates for today's classroom seems to be an awareness of the realities of the state's lack of resources that extend beyond teacher preparation and into the classroom and being an advocate for teacher candidates just in making the decision to become a candidate-- regardless of their end point location, or even their starting point in the program, whether it be traditional, alternative, or emergency certified.

A final, guiding question for the implications of this study was: *"What would you say is the most pertinent issue for Oklahoma English teacher preparation programs?"* All answers varied-- from, "preparing teachers for today's learners" to "awareness of different experiences that they can have in teaching" to "who will be their colleagues when they are in future classrooms," to "early career teachers are becoming the veteran in a way" to "advocacy" and finally, the "issue of funding." Funding seems to be the catalyst for positive change in all areas-- "if the support is there, the people come. And if people are here, we can continue to do and grow and get stronger as a program. Then our teaching force grows and gets stronger, and our students get better-- but without funding, none of that happens." And how does this happen, through advocacy, which was a recommendation that "statewide there should be a 1-credit course,

something about nuts and bolts-- how to write letters, how to make phone calls, how to visit your legislator" that isn't necessarily English education specific, but general to all in the field of education.

Overall, when asked the last question of the study, "*How could English teacher educators in Oklahoma better work together to provide opportunities for meaningful change to occur in how English teacher candidates are prepared?"* a collective answer was an interest to read this research because "we don't know what the others are doing. We could be gaining so many ideas. Learn from each other's experiences and just our different focuses and our different strengths." Many of the participants are the only English education faculty at their university, so many cited that they have no colleagues and no one to talk to. "Just like practicing teachers, we need to go next door and talk about your lessons." In general, many don't know what we do in this state. Many shared "there is some interconnectedness, but things are not getting better, especially in terms of alternative certification, state funding, and teacher salaries, so I would love to know what you [and others] do."

Some suggested ways to collaborate was to meet at conferences through professional affiliates, such as the Oklahoma Council for Teachers of English (OKCTE) and the Oklahoma Reading Association (ORA), since those organizations often have a shared goal of gathering together as a body who says "this is what we are going to do about teaching in Oklahoma, in the Language Arts" which provides a collective goal to bring English education teachers together to network and grow professionally. But, there has to be an action beyond attending the conference, so other suggestions included: sharing through the #ELAOK facebook group, through twitter chats with a hashtag. It was been noted that "the work that quite a few teacher leaders are doing in the state has been drawing attention to particular items through the use of social media." One

initiative that some of the research participants began was the "Open Your Arms and Teach in Oklahoma" campaign where a few English teacher educators started working in the summer of 2016 to draw attention to the Oklahoma Council for Teachers of English web page where all the English education programs are listed. Its purpose was to bring awareness-- "we just want you to be an English teacher, we don't care if it is my program or someone else's. Go somewhere near you."

Additional suggestions included advocacy efforts to tell stories of what teachers are doing-- "telling our stories in a broad way to understand what teaching is about. A lot of the public hasn't been in school since they were students or had students in school and went to open houses and things. So to better understand what a classroom looks like/feels like and the pressures kids are feeling, we can do a better job of sharing those stories broadly." Because, as one participant exclaimed, "to get invested, English educators in the state to lead the discussion on how to give [future English teachers] what they need. If we don't lead it, that discussion will either not happen or be given to people who are not as versed as we are in what needs to happen." Hopefully, this collective narrative begins to tell the story of how English teacher educators in Oklahoma are preparing English teacher candidates for today's classroom.

Summary and Conclusion

As one participant realized: "I started doing this twenty years ago-- and I never thought this [digital environments] would be a thing." Neither did Smagorinsky and Whiting in their 1995 study which is why the context and emphasis on today's classroom in 2018 have provided pertinent background to discussions English teacher educators, at least in one state, need to have in order to best prepare English teacher candidates for today's changing classroom. The "secondary English methods" course, though difficult to define by a single course title, has

similar themes with content-focus in either literature, composition and language, or general methods. A collective course description would integrate the following elements: the "pedagogical theories and practices associated with teaching secondary language arts" and "deepen [an] understanding of the theories and methods for teaching a variety of texts" so that "candidates [will] develop more fully his/her philosophies regarding instruction and student learning" through an "introduction to instructional, assessment, and management strategies that are appropriate for ELA and the developmental level of middle and high school students." Candidates "read, talk, and learn together" and "apply the best research-based strategies for adolescent learners from many diverse perspectives and then reflecting on their learning." The course will prepare candidates "to teach those skills in secondary English/language arts classes" and provide them with "appropriate strategies for encouraging student literary responses that engender discussions around social justice and critical engagement with complex issues."

Learning objectives would include elements of personal and professional growth that promoted being "lifelong learners, emerging professionals, and subject-matter specialists" and common activities would include: designing and implementing a lesson or unit plans, designing and implementing assessment, discussing philosophies, participating in observations, and engaging with texts. Included in those activities and discussions would be elements of diversity, culturally responsive pedagogy, and critical issues, such as social justice. Required course readings would vary since the context of the secondary English methods course is changing and growing in the field of research and publishing, especially regarding technology resources.

Findings in instructional approaches included an emphasis on experience-based, theoretical, and reflective approaches and a de-emphasis on survey approaches. Two new instructional approaches surfaced-- the first being a dialogic teaching approach and the second a

technological approach. There was an absence of critical literacies mentioned in all but one course, which may identify a need based on recent research. Therefore, a vast purpose of the methods course integrates content, pedagogy, and professionalism, as do the activities-- which are strongly aligned to course objectives and standards.

For most cases, content standards, both at the state and national level, get an introduction, but after that, they may implicitly guide the course with intentional focus, but are not an explicit element. Collectively, then, an understanding of how the English language arts methods course is preparing teacher candidates to address the content standards in Oklahoma is through the design of standards-based lessons and units which teaches them how to organize the information they want to teach their students. Due to Oklahoma's standards adoption timeline (from the adoption of Common Core State Standards in 2010 to their repeal in 2014 to the creation and adoption of the Oklahoma Academic Standards in 2016), many instructors provide a critical orientation and discussion to the role policy documents, such as standards, play in course and instructional design; as well as the the role standards can play in excluding a state from common resources. In general, Oklahoma not being a Common Core state may be "bothersome, but not a huge deal" because "standards are standards-- a verb changes here, a clause changes here [...], but they are embedded and implied in the practices we've been using for years."

Findings in the state subject-area teacher certification assessment were minimal with half of the cases stating that there is no formal focus on preparation for the Oklahoma Subject Area Test in English (OSAT). However, due to the test's recent redevelopment, findings on this research theme may become more prevalent with a full cycle of assessment data to examine.

Finally, the secondary methods course in Oklahoma is changing due to educational issues, such as teacher shortage, retention, and mobility. Oklahoma English teacher educators are

145

aware of these issues and are actively engaged in creating action plans to address the changing dynamic of English teacher preparation due to the emergence of alternative and emergency certified teachers. In addition, many participants only saw drawbacks to Oklahoma having state-specific K-12 content standards and teacher licensure exams and saw it as a relevant topic in their preparation. In general, there was a collective agreement that standards are similar and based on skill, just organized differently from state to state. Therefore, many did not see potential teacher mobility being an issue in understanding different standards documents. However, drawbacks to having state-specific licensure exams were noticeable with many participants seeing reciprocity as a challenge-- from both scenarios, teachers leaving the state and teachers entering the state.

Other issues that affect the course, and generally education programs, include the selection and training of cooperating teachers during the field experience, especially with the "growing number of non-qualified teachers-- you can quote me on that" in Oklahoma. Many participants expressed concerns about post-graduation teaching scenarios where traditionally trained teachers may be forced into mentorship roles because of their preparation and educational background in a field that is becoming increasingly stocked with an alternative, or emergency, certified teachers. All of these factors make recruitment and retainment difficult.

Overall, the results of the study become the suggestions for future research because in general, there is not one singular issue facing English teacher preparation in Oklahoma, but many, and English teacher educators need and want to meet collectively to assess these trends.

V. Chapter Five: Discussion and Implications

Introduction

The purpose of the study was to see how English teacher educators in one state, Oklahoma, utilized the secondary English methods course to prepare English teacher candidates in today's classroom; specifically in four thematic strands: a) instructional approaches, b) inclusion and alignment to national and state standards, c) focus on the state subject-area teacher certification assessment, and d) the course's curricular changes made due to educational policies. This study is relevant and timely based on the current educational policies that are influencing current trends in Oklahoma teacher preparation and education. The results confirm some of the research recommendations Pasternak, Caughlan, Hallman, Renzi, & Rush (2018) make in their recent *CEE Methods Commission National Study: Secondary English Teacher Education in the United States* (2018) because they advocate for further studies, like this one, "that will make our work more relevant and propose areas for further study based on current situations in English education in the United States that will move the field forward" (p. 27).

According to Brady & Clift (2005), many early researchers were often more concerned with teaching techniques than examining the context and content of methods courses, so the study extends the research focus to the context of Oklahoma and the content of the secondary English methods course. Due to Oklahoma's significant political challenges-- currently, Oklahoma is ranked 49th in the nation in teacher pay and has the highest budget cuts in the nation for public education (OEA, 2017)-- this state-specific context provided significant perspective from six English teacher educators about the role curricular and political changes have on the secondary English methods course.

The study also described how six English methods courses are situated within the larger context of the state's requirements for English language arts teacher preparation; therefore, the

study provides information about the potential of situated learning experiences English teacher candidate graduates may have in the field because "the knowledge [teacher candidates] get in school should serve as a tool for their practical work in the world" (Smagorinsky & Whiting, 1995, p. 24). Based on the findings, it is clear that English teacher educators in Oklahoma are concerned not only about how the knowledge from the methods course extends into today's classrooms, but also about how they can extend their connections with teacher candidates beyond the course to support beginning teachers' transition into the profession (Cercone, 2015). This collective knowledge is practical, meaningful, and valuable to the state's continued preparation of English teachers, especially since Oklahoma is facing a dire teacher shortage with many qualified teachers leaving the state or the profession (OEA, 2017).

Having a state-specific description of how English teacher candidates are prepared for today's classroom is pertinent because "there is little consensus across the field regarding what constitutes a 'methods' course in the United States" (Pasternak et al., 2017, p. 28). To create this description of six programs, the study utilized a qualitative, descriptive, collective case study methodology. As stated by Sandelowski (2000), "the expected outcome of qualitative descriptive studies is a straight descriptive summary of the informational contents of data organized in a way that best fits the data" (p. 339). Data were collected, organized, and analyzed using framework analysis according to the Conceptual Framework (Figure 1) and its four thematic strands, so this chapter will discuss and interpret its findings by answering the research questions:

a) What instructional approach(es) does each English methods course take?

b) How does the English methods course, if at all, address and incorporate standards (state: OAS-ELA and national: NCTE)?

c) How does the English methods course, if at all, prepare teacher candidates for the Oklahoma Subject Area Test (OSAT) in English?

d) How has the course, if at all, changed due to state curricular and political challenges?

The chapter will also discuss the study's limitations, interpretations of the findings, key findings, and recommendations for future research.

Limitations

There were limitations in creating this description that included the syllabi review phase and its short data collection cycle, considerations about how future English teachers are being prepared outside of traditional education programs, and an absence in the study's focus on the field experience. First, syllabi do not articulate revisions and program changes, nor do they detail how the course changes from semester to semester, or year to year, so the study was still limited in its collection of one semester of data. Syllabi are also limited in describing the way the course is taught, the quality of instruction, or how the course is situated in the program. This was also noted in the recent *CEE Methods Commission National Study* which stated that "syllabi tend to be idiosyncratic, they might align with an instructor's particular instructional philosophy or be dictated by a university or college [such as format restrictions]; therefore, syllabi from different instructors or institutions will vary in what they reveal about what is taught in a course" (Pasternak et al., 2018, p. 159). The study addressed this limitation by asking participants: *"Are instructors at your university required to follow a syllabus template? If so, how does that affect what is included in your course syllabus?"* in which four participants stated that there was no

specified format and two mentioned that there were certain elements that were required, but they had autonomy in how it was set up.

In addition, syllabi are limited in providing a portrait of the course, so the research study included additional qualitative data collection phases, such as the questionnaire and interview, in order to better triangulate the data and understand the thinking behind the course's design. By asking participants, *"What additional comments do you have about the Instructional Approaches you to take in your Methods course?"* participants were able to articulate beyond their syllabus more authentic answers which led to some of the major findings in the study. In addition, participants provided pertinent contextual information to better situate the course within their program. Even though the study was focused on one course, not reviewing the entire English education program at each university also provided limitations to the breadth and depth to the description of how future English teachers are being prepared.

Second, the study acknowledged that there are other degree programs certifying teachers in Oklahoma, as well as alternative certification routes, but it did not address these since the study focused on specific criterion-based sampling: an English methods course instructor from an approved secondary English education program in Oklahoma, during the Fall 2017 semester. Due to this limitation of the study, the researcher asked participants mainly about current trends in the course, not previous histories-- especially since half of the instructors were new to teaching the course within the past three years.

Third, the research did not focus on the field experience requirements that may be associated with the course, but all participants noted this as an instructional area. This limitation also extends to the role the Clinical Faculty plays in the preparation of future English teachers during the field experience. As noted in the findings, this was a pertinent issue in the field and

for the state because "when you have so many alternatively certified teachers in the state, [there

is going to be] a rise in mentor teachers who were alternatively certified," as one participant

noted. "I don't think the state has realized that we are going to have a large number of non-

traditional certified mentoring student teachers," which is evidenced by the fact that in 2017,

1,429 emergency certifications were approved by the Oklahoma State Department of Education

whereas five years ago, the state issued only thirty-two emergency teaching certificates in a year

(Eger, 2017).

Another similar concern for a participant was "who will be their colleagues when they are

in future classrooms." With Oklahoma's increase in alternative and emergency certified teachers,

the chance of candidates not having highly qualified mentors was a specific worry for at least

two of the participants: "There will be many times, I think, especially in urban settings, where

they may be the most prepared teacher there." So this limited focus on the Clinical Field

Experience component of future English teacher preparation was a limitation of the study, but it

provides area of focus for future discussion, research, and study since it was identified as a

prevalent and pertinent issue affecting at least six of the nineteen Oklahoma English teacher

preparation programs.

Interpretation of Findings - Description of the Whole

Providing a cumulative description of the six English methods course in Oklahoma

demonstrates an "understanding of how individuals, institutions, programs, and ideas are

interrelated" so that "teacher education no longer operates in isolation," especially since there are

"seldom replications of instructional content or procedures with different groups of prospective

teachers" (Brady & Clift, 2005, pg. 311). This collective description then provides English

151

teacher educators with an opportunity to expand and reflect on their own description of English teacher preparation to potentially have meaningful, theoretically motivated, and important conversations about program development, especially in response to educational reforms Oklahoma has recently enacted-- new *Oklahoma Academic State standards in English Language Arts* (OAS-ELA) and the redevelopment of the Oklahoma Subject Area Test for English (OSAT).

Program.

On a larger scale, results from the recent *CEE Methods National Study* (2018) show subject-specific methods courses have changed since the Smagorinsky and Whiting *How English Teachers Get Taught* study in 1995. For example, the default program is a bachelor's degree where "75% of bachelor's programs have 4 or more credits of methods required" (Pasternak et al., 2018; Caughlan et al., 2017. p. 276-277). In this smaller, more context-specific Fall 2017 Oklahoma study, one case has a three-part English methods series (9-course hours); two cases have a two-part series (6-course hours); and three only have one general English methods course (3-course hours). This shows that the demographic data for this Oklahoma-specific study is similar to the nationally reported data.

In addition, the *CEE Methods National Study* (2018) shows that "50% of the content-specific methods classes are housed in the English department, 37% are housed in education, and 14% are housed in joint programs that offer methods courses" (Pasternak et al., 2018; Caughlan et al., 2017, p. 276-277). This Fall 2017 Oklahoma study of six cases reports two programs are housed in a College of Liberal Arts; one program is housed in an Education college, but the methods course is taught by an English professor (with K-12 teaching background); one program is housed in the College of Arts and Sciences which includes both English and Education

programs; and two programs are housed in Colleges of Education. Based on this context, there seemed to be a collective understanding from the participants that wherever the English teacher education program was housed, it did not limit the content or pedagogical knowledge since the field of English language arts provides a wide range of content. This is supported by the responses of the participants where half noted strong alignment between the two colleges and half mentioned some tensions or separation occurring because of a struggle in communication, namely distance, but not necessarily due to content or pedagogical emphasis.

Context- Oklahoma.

As stated throughout the study, the need for qualified teachers who are prepared for today's classroom is a pertinent issue in Oklahoma because more Oklahoma educators left the profession than joined from 2010-2015 (OEA, 2017). This provided a critical context for the study to examine how English teacher candidates are prepared in response to such curricular and political challenges since poor compensation, combined with budget cuts and other challenges, have caused many qualified Oklahoma teachers to look for teaching work elsewhere. This creates a state problem because when "teachers resign each year, institutional memory is lost, and ties to the community, [or state], weaken" (Goldstein, 2014, p. 251). According to one Oklahoma professor, "we lose our investment in their training and education. We also lose their expertise to educate our children and build our future economy. As these well-prepared teachers leave, our state is forced to fill many of their jobs with emergency certified personnel without specific training or experience in education" (Cullen, 2017). This is true because in 2016, 1,500 Oklahoma classrooms were led by either a long-term substitute teacher or a teacher without proper training and qualifications (OEA, 2017).

Conversely, from the opposite perspective, Oklahoma is not necessarily attracting out-of-state teachers into Oklahoma's educational system. As one participant realized: "we have been fairly exclusive by limiting the tests and the standards in that way. Transitional paperwork is an obstacle, and state licensure varies from state to state. Some states make it easy and some states make it difficult." This awareness is vital because not only is retainment an issue, but also recruitment. Though participants were not directly asked about their enrollment trends, one participant noted that there has been a "decline, but it hasn't been substantial compared to other subject areas."

Enrollment trends in teacher preparation institutions would be an additional area of study needed in light of Oklahoma's political challenges. According to a recent survey funded by the Oklahoma Public Schools Resource Center, nearly 5,500 persons who hold a state teaching certificate are not currently working in an Oklahoma public school. Respondents reported low pay as the biggest reason given for leaving the profession, with thirty-one percent of respondents reporting that a pay increase would get them to return to the classroom. As of March 2018, Oklahoma teachers are planning a statewide walkout to bring attention to this need. However, additional challenges, such classroom management, and increasing curriculum standards, were also cited by former teachers as reasons for leaving the profession (Felder, 2018). These reasons provide even more purpose for understanding how future teachers are being prepared for the realities and constraints teachers will face in schools, such as with curricular and political challenges with standards and assessment (Pasternak et al., 2014).

Content- Secondary English Methods Course.

The findings from the study provide a state-specific description of how six English teacher educators are preparing future English teachers in the secondary English methods course.

It is in this course where teacher candidates should practice, reflect, grow in their instructional practices, and discuss realities and constraints of the profession (Pasternak et al., 2014). Therefore, the secondary English methods course, according to *CEE Methods National Study* (2018) should inquiry regarding beliefs, how to plan lessons and units, and content-specific classroom management strategies with the purpose of integrating content, pedagogy, and professionalism (Pasternak et al., 2018; Caughlan et al., 2017). By creating a description of the course, a goal of the study was to provide a collection of resources that extend beyond "our own experiences in teaching the course" in order to expand the conversation with our peers about how we go about our business (Smagorinsky & Whiting, 1995). This is supported by NCTE's Commission on English Education (CEE), who recommends that there should be a study and process to collect samples of successful candidate artifacts and assessments used by English education programs.

> Such a collection of successful candidate assessment efforts would allow English educators to share their collective wisdom and to work more collaboratively toward establishing robust and nationally recognized candidate assessment systems that can inform both individual English education programs and the profession at large. (NCTE, 2005c)

Through the examination of course artifacts and interviews with six Oklahoma English teacher educators about their course design and instructional practices, there is now a collective description of the artifacts the course(s) use to prepare English teacher candidates for today's classroom. This provides the potential to share resources to increase the collective wisdom and collaboration of the state which allows English teacher educators to learn from their colleagues and continue to grow in their teaching (Smagorinsky & Whiting, 1995).

Collectively, six secondary English methods courses in Oklahoma integrate pedagogy, theory, strategies, and reflection in order for candidates to engage in discussions around critical

issues, as described in the collective course description synthesized for all of the participants' syllabi. There is an emphasis on process-oriented, situated learning that emphasizes collaboration and discussion within each course, but this could extend to the state to prepare candidates for working in larger professional learning communities (Smagorinsky & Whiting, 1995).

A. Instructional Approaches

So, *what instructional approach(es) does each English methods course take?* In today's 2017 Oklahoma secondary English methods courses, there is an emphasis on experience-based, theoretical, and reflective instructional approaches, whereas twenty years ago, the focus was on the survey approach (Smagorinsky & Whiting, 1995). What this means is that collectively, Oklahoma English teacher candidates are receiving instruction that focuses on lesson and unit planning that transitions from theory to practice. In addition, candidates are asked to be reflective practitioners by understanding and then articulating their beliefs about teaching, as based on course readings, or experiences. The emphasis on collaboration and discussion that Smagorinsky & Whiting (1995) stress produces long-term and ongoing, recursive learning. This is evident in the workshop approach many of the courses aligned to because it is devoted to student participation and activities, or small-group development where topics are addressed with continuity since synthesizing knowledge is a goal.

Dialogic.

Since all participants greatly emphasized discussion as a dominant approach in their course design, dialogic teaching was a new approach identified as prevalent in today's Oklahoma secondary English methods classroom. Dialogic teaching "harnesses the power of talk to stimulate and extend students' thinking and advance their learning and understanding," so it

engages in the transactional situated learning that allows candidates to be involved in their learning (Alexander, 2018). The goal of dialogic teaching is to empower the student/candidate to engage in lifelong learning and active citizenship, so instructors in the course are providing candidates with tools that will help them interact, ask and answer questions, provide meaningful feedback, make valuable contributions, engage in exchanges, have opportunities for discussion and argumentation, engage in professional subject matter, and build classroom organization, climate, and relationships (Alexander, 2018). All of these are important components in teacher preparation and are evident in the participants' responses.

Technology.

Another new approach for today's twenty-first-century classroom is the emphasis on technological approaches to instruction. Many instructors addressed the use of online learning platforms as an extension of the course even though all courses were listed as meeting face to face. In fact, one participant noted, "If I feel like if anything is lacking, it is their opportunity to have online coursework. [Other states are] very big in virtual schools, so they needed that experience. Here, it hasn't taken off as much or as broadly. [...] We use Web 2.0 tools and things like that, but as far as sole-interface in an online environment, we don't do that yet." This need is echoed in the *CEE Methods National Study* (2018) that states "ELA teacher educators need to know which new literacies, new media, and technologies integrate effectively into classroom practices so that the future teachers they educate can learn to support their own students to become literate members of society" (Pasternak et al., p. 134). Not only do English teacher educators need this technological knowledge, but it is should be noted that teacher candidates are often thought to be more proficient at technology integration than some faculty, since candidates often learn to navigate course materials; download resources; communicate and blog with

classmates; submit work through an online portfolio throughout their degree program in a variety of courses (Pasternak, et al., 2018). Due to this identified approach, discussions need to continue in the state, and field, about how to best integrate technology and the content, both online and face-to-face, in the course.

Critical Literacies.

As addressed above, new literacies are important to the field, so a third new approach utilized by at least one of the research participants is the role critical literacies plays in the secondary English methods course. "Critical theories seemingly played little role in English teacher education in the early 1990s and Smagorinsky and Whiting (1995) did not identify critical approaches to English methods" (Brass, 2015, p. 5-6). The reason why literacy and sociocultural theories did not factor much into English methods courses twenty years ago is because "the critical pedagogy movement has developed over time through the work of theorists, activists, and educators who approach education with a focus on social class, racism, gender, and sexuality, language and literacy, and social change" (Brass, 2015, p. 6). Due to this, it is an important focus for today's classroom because it encourages active reading and analysis of texts using strategies that aid in understanding implicit messages. Therefore, this developing approach is critical to English education, especially in Oklahoma, because "the role language and literacy have in conveying meaning can either promote or disrupt existing power relations" (Brass, 2015, p. 6).

Though this is an approach only one instructor explicitly aligned with, it is crucial that "English education encourages practitioners to draw upon the everyday language and literacy practices of adolescents to make connections with academic literacies and to work toward empowered identity development and social transformation" (Brass, 2015, p. 6). This may be an

area where the collective knowledge of the state and the profession can continue to grow as English teachers build a collaborative network to share resources. A collective goal then, may be for Oklahoma English educators to "draw from literary theories and (especially) cultural studies to reshape English language arts methods courses and classroom approaches to literary, popular, media, and digital texts" in order to "make secondary classrooms more relevant, engaging, and politically relevant" (Brass, 2015, p. 8-9).

Overall, by sharing instructional approaches each institution takes with its course, the research can improve communication amongst English teacher educators in order to increase the variety and quality of resources shared across the state-- especially regarding new areas of emphasis, such as technology and critical literacies (Pasternak et al., 2014, p. 167). As English teacher educators reflect on their practice, they can also share and inform the practices of others in the field to ensure we are preparing our candidates for today's classroom.

Activities and Assessments.

Examining the textbooks, activities, and assessments used in six secondary English methods courses provides some perspective as to how Oklahoma English teacher candidates are being prepared, at least content-wise. The comprehensive textbook list included in Chapter Four should be shared as a resource to connect learning and center discussions within a broader context of the research. For example, "through exposure to multiple texts in a course, [candidates] are more likely to see how theories get developed and why it is important to continue to read professional material" (Smagorinsky & Whiting, 1995, p. 110). However, the list can be expanded through online resources and professional journals. The *NCTE Guidelines*

> are a reference for building effective English teacher preparation programs, and aid in engaging in conversation about what holds us together and about ongoing changes. They provide resources that ensure English teacher preparation programs are preparing English language arts (ELA) candidates to enter classrooms and succeed in our society while also

having the skills, confidence, and knowledge necessary to work for global, national, and local change. (NCTE, 2006)

These artifacts, when aligned to course learning outcomes, provide not only a state resource but a national alignment of resources.

Likewise, reviewing the activities and assessments used in Oklahoma secondary English methods courses shows an emphasis on situated tasks, such as planning/teaching assignments and teaching demonstrations. In addition, all courses required some type of reflective or personal expression assignment where candidates either responded to course readings or lesson observations. These activities align with the Instructional Approaches chart (Figure 7) where all six cases self-identified as having Experience-Based and Reflective instructional approaches to their course.

B. Standards

As outlined in the *History of Standards-Based Reform* section provided in Chapter Two, standards-based reform began in the 1990s, and like many states, Oklahoma had its own system of standards and assessment. Therefore, it adopted the *Common Core State Standards (CCSS)* in 2010 as a way to make "national" standards and expectations clear across states. Oklahoma supported a four-year *CCSS* transition plan and planned for full implementation in Fall 2014. However, Oklahoma repealed the *CCSS* in June 2014 in order to ensure that their state values were represented. After the repeal of *CCSS*, Oklahoma continued to implement its Priority Academic Student Skills (PASS) standards which were last revised in 2010 while they created the new *Oklahoma Academic Standards (OAS)* with a committee of multiple stakeholders—created by Oklahomans for Oklahomans. The new OAS-ELA were approved and ready for implementation during the 2016-2017 school year (OSDE, 2015c).

So, *how does the English methods course in Oklahoma, if at all, address and incorporate standards?* In general, six secondary English methods instructors align their course to standards: NCTE, OAS-ELA, CAEP, inTasc, and/or other. Five of the six cases aligned their syllabi to the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) standards, but only one shows alignment to the state's *Oklahoma Academic Standards for English Language Arts* (OAS-ELA). Two cases have alignment with inTasc standards, one with Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) standards, and two with institutional frameworks. This finding is similar to the 99% percent of respondents in the recent *CEE Methods National Study* (2018) who reported "addressing K-12 content standards somewhere in their program (with 45.50% reporting they are addressed in the English methods course and 44.83% reporting throughout coursework)" (Pasternak et al., 2018; Caughlan et al., 2017).

To answer *how standards are addressed in methods courses*, all participants answered with some type of activity, such as developing lessons and a unit, scaffolding instruction, studying a grade-level, and using them to create rubrics. This is similar to the *CEE Methods National Study* (2018) findings which state that 96% of "teacher candidates were required to actively apply standards in planning and teaching" (Pasternak et al., 2018; Caughlan et al., 2017). These responses show alignment to NCTE's *Knowledge and Beliefs about the Roles of Methods Courses and Field Experiences in English Education* which states that the methods course needs to *"*incorporate state and locally established standards and guidelines for the English language arts into units and lessons that reflect such interconnectedness because a knowledge of broad national and state standards should inform—but not limit— the content, processes, and skills addressed in both unit and daily instructional plans" (Pasternak et al., 2014; NCTE, 2006).

Regarding changes the course had to undergo due to the standards/expectations constantly changing (especially during the 2010-2016 timeline), participants in general noted that "we should be doing our jobs in how to write good lesson plans that will meet any set of academic standards" which shows that many instructors agreed that Oklahoma not being a Common Core state may be "bothersome, but not a huge deal" because "standards are standards-- a verb changes here, a clause changes here." The answer of "bothersome" centers mainly around the lack of resources, such as textbooks that mention OAS-ELA, or having to create supplemental materials, such as crosswalk documents to align curriculum to our standards.

These responses show that making changes to a program does require change in three dimensions-- materials, practices, and beliefs as noted by Fullan in *The New Meaning of Educational Change* (2016). Since the goal of standards is to steer curriculum [materials] and teaching [practices] by developing a guaranteed and viable curriculum that ensures students can read, write, and speak effectively [beliefs], then the research study demonstrates a collective understanding of how six Oklahoma English methods course instructors use standards to provide a way to "embed the practices we've been using for years" (Schmoker, 2011). Because teacher candidates hear about these changes through discussions on the critical orientation of standards, they are learning how (from their instructors) to become reflective and critical advocates who lead school turnaround efforts, especially since they are the ones who are getting the preparation in these areas, unlike those seeking alternative or emergency certification (Goldstein, 2014; Brass, 2015).

Overall, considering "how to teach novice teachers to deal with the realities of state and federal standards policies" makes studying content standards a critical issue for today's classroom in the twenty-first-century, and is one of the reasons why it was the most prevalent

162

theme of the research study (Pasternak et al., 2014, pg. 169). English teacher educators, especially in Oklahoma, need to continue to adapt to the demands of its current context, and continue discussions about how to "actually use policies and standards to teach pre-service teachers to approach them as tools to support their work, rather than constraints to resist" (Pasternak et al., 2014, pg. 170). This focus on standards, as examined by the study, provides evidence that candidates are prepared to implement change in a meaningful way-- at least regarding curriculum and resources. Since five of the six instructors do provide a critical orientation to the standards, this supports effective integration described in the *CEE Methods National Study* (2018) because "candidates should read them critically, discuss them as historical and political documents, return to them periodically throughout the semester to evaluate their alignment to assessments, and work with them in their planning and/or teaching assignments" (p. 169). This orientation is important because many teacher candidates may just accept their presence as status quo because of the context and time period of when they went to K-12 school (Pasternak et al., 2018). Standards have not yet ended any debates on how to best support students' learning, especially in the field of English language arts, but they have provided urgency and focus, especially in Oklahoma, on the topic of "what students should know and be able to do" (Pasternak et al., 2014). Results from the study show that beginning teachers are being taught how to negotiate the presence of standards in many ways which is especially important in today's classroom since educational policies affect so much of our practice (Smagorinsky, ed., 2018; Taubman, 2009).

C. Focus on OSAT Preparation

Because "the impact of standards and high-stakes testing on ELA methods courses is not a focus of scholarship in English teacher preparation," (Pasternak et al., 2014, p. 167) the study

sought to answer the question: *How does the English methods course, if at all, prepare teacher candidates for the Oklahoma Subject Area Test (OSAT) in English?* because it aligns expectations of what English teacher candidates should know and be able to do, at least in one state, to teacher licensure. In conclusion, three participants stated that there is no formal test review, and the other three mentioned only a minimal amount of test preparation, but mainly outside of the methods course through workshops or sample tests.

Regarding the requirement that "candidates pass high-stakes teacher performance assessments as a requirement for licensure," the National Council of Teachers of English has posted a "Resolution Opposing High-Stakes Teacher Candidate Performance Assessments" because they provide an "imminent threat to the integrity of the field of English Education and to the teaching profession as a whole" (NCTE, 2017). Though no participants referred the assessment as a "threat," a resolution from NCTE and a recommendation for further study would be to "encourage [English teacher educators] to engage in critical scholarship and teaching about teacher candidate performance assessments" (NCTE, 2017), especially since most of the research participants noted a need to better understand the new OSAT redevelopment (in February 2016) in order to prepare better and be of benefit to the candidates.

The difference in the redeveloped test (English107) is that it focuses on more than just content knowledge and now provides more content pedagogical emphasis with "application of knowledge of strategies," especially in the Constructed Response section which has a more pedagogically based prompt whereas the previous test was more literary analysis. The new Constructed Response allows for the application of content pedagogical knowledge through national standards that align to content pedagogy in literature and composition, as well as demonstrating knowledge about learners and learning. Candidates must apply knowledge to

design (plan and assess) developmentally appropriate instruction to help students achieve a specific, standards-based learning goal in English language arts that promote learning for all students through a response that incorporates standards, learning outcomes, student samples, and curriculum resources, rather than the previous more literary analysis approach to the prompt. Overall, many participants stated that they do a similar assignment with their candidates; therefore the assessment has better alignment in the methods course and meets what the program is doing because "we address what you do when students aren't meeting your objectives."

In addition, with the redevelopment of the test, many participants stated that they have not yet been able to aggregate their scores, and many noted lower scores with the redeveloped test than with the previous test. One participant said: "Now it's not good right now because we don't have a good percentage rate passing this new OSAT. Whereas we were at 100% with the old one. But that is just part of the transition I think." And another participant noted that "We're seeing our students continue to fail it. It has been a low score on the fifth subsection [Constructed Response.] Whereas before the fifth one was essential literary analysis. We always scored twenty points above the state average year after year. So that has been eye-opening with the last group that went through. And the two failed it twice. I don't know."

So reviewing the new data of the English Oklahoma Subject Area Test provides an opportunity for future study because English teacher educators can work together to aggregate data first on a program level and then compare results on a state level. When asked in the Questionnaire, *"How can assessment data inform the instruction of candidate preparation at the state-level?"* three participants were uncertain about how it could, so this opportunity allows for collaboration and the sharing of scholarship, strategies, and resources. As one participant stated, "The data can help identify strengths and weaknesses in our future teachers that can help us

165

modify and better align instruction" which would be beneficial at the state level. Likewise, another participant noted being able to aggregate the data by teacher preparation program and those taking the test for alternative certification would provide interesting data since many states set up their teacher licensure in such a way that "individuals who can pass a subject-matter test in English are considered 'highly qualified' to teach" (NCTE, 2006). This need for future research and discussion meets a goal of the study: to use the state-specific description to identify common goals, instructional approaches, and resources that are unique to the context and content in a state, especially since the OSAT is an Oklahoma-specific teacher licensure exam.

D. Curricular Changes Due to Educational Policies

Oklahoma has a unique political context-- ranked 49th in the nation in teacher pay and has the highest budget cuts in the nation for public education-- which provides many challenges to teacher preparation programs. If anything, "the severe reduction in pay and inequality of pay between Oklahoma and other states have been enough [for some candidates] to rethink education as a major because they don't think they can make a livable wage from it." This sentiment is confirmed by recent surveys that show many qualified teachers (approximately 383 teachers per month) are either leaving the state or the profession (OEA, 2017). In a survey of more than 250 former Oklahoma teachers, "about 133 teachers reported moving to Texas, and 52 more went to another neighboring state" (Hardiman, 2017). These statistics were echoed by a participant's admission that "we train the best teachers in TX." Therefore, it is becoming common that there is a pipeline of Oklahoma-educated teachers going to different states once they graduate college (Hardiman, 2017).

All of the participants were aware of these challenges, and they (or their respective programs and institutions) seemed to be proactively engaged in creating action plans to address the changing dynamic of teacher preparation in the state, especially regarding the increase in alternative certificates. As one participant reported: "we do everything we can as far as we have a representative at the state legislator. But the program, itself, the first thing we do is, well, whine, because well, we're asking "are these things [like traditional preparation requirements] important or not?" And others address it as a challenge that needs to be embraced by English teacher educators: "I would rather say 'I'm happy to lead this. I'm happy to add this to cadre of courses that I offer to make sure they [alternatively certified teachers] are getting training somewhat equal to what we are doing with traditional students,'" than the alternative option: "What I fear is a department of education, which I trust, is going to make some general methods class for all alternative teachers. Then I do not have a voice in the decision making."

But despite Oklahoma's challenges, none of the participants expressed strong feelings of resistance to change, or resistance to educational policy that was developed by "networks of policy entrepreneurs, state governors, philanthropists, foundations, for-profit and nonprofit vendors, and edu-businesses that operate independent of states and on behalf of states" (Brass, 2015, p. 13). In fact, when asked *how has the course, if at all, changed due to curricular and political challenges?* Three of the participants said "none." The other three noted changes in the course's alignment to accreditation standards. One participant noted the influence of standards (CAEP, InTasc, NCTE, and OAS-ELA) in designing the course, as well as the adoption of performance assessment requirements from the College of Education, but saw it as beneficial alignment. Another participant noted an entire revamping of the course to be in compliance with CAEP and SPA requirements. And another participant mentioned similar coursework across

167

different universities where they taught and noted that the course either absorbed "fickle policies or has a well-used Teflon shield" because their goal was to focus on "how this course can help my students be the best teachers of reading they can be which is more important than policy." Therefore, with change, like what occurred with the *OAS-ELA*, there often comes "a change in practice," as reported by the participants. And as evidenced through syllabi, these changes involved three dimensions: 1) the possibility of using new or revised materials; 2) the possibility of using new teaching approaches; and 3) the possible alteration of beliefs (Fullan, 2016, p. 28). These three dimensions reveal how both standards and assessment impacted curricular decisions in the secondary English methods course. Overall, reviewing how English teacher educators navigated changes in areas such as their materials, practices, and beliefs provided insight on how educational policies inform curricular decisions, at least at the state level (Fullan, 2016).

Key Findings

Single State Preparation.

Based on the *Interpretation of Findings* from the description of the whole, key findings of the study include an understanding that policy context matters now more than ever (Smagorinsky, ed. 2018). A state's context often creates tension that influences the content that is taught in a secondary English language arts methods course, as described above. Therefore, because Oklahoma has state-specific K-12 content standards and state-specific teacher licensure exams, there is a considerable amount of time, energy, and effort spent adhering to educational policies that promote preparing teachers for a single state. Therefore, an emergent question of the study was understanding how preparing English teachers in Oklahoma can have potential benefits and drawbacks due to its context.

Many participants saw this to be a relevant issue because many acknowledged that their candidates are looking to other states upon graduation, even for their clinical field experience internships. It was clear, however, that participants saw no benefits of having an "Oklahoma-only education system" because it makes the state different. Drawbacks include teacher mobility being an issue in understanding different standards documents, but all noted the transferability in skills regardless of which standards were used. As one participant noted: "There is your next study-- following some new Oklahoma teachers to [another state]. What are their adjustments in using the standards? Are there battles they have to fight?" and vice versa. Regarding the state-specific licensure exams, many noted reciprocity as a challenge-- from both scenarios, teachers leaving the state and teachers entering the state.

This key finding parallels the reality that Oklahoma teacher preparation programs are seemingly preparing teacher candidates for other states because of its political challenges. In a recent survey of more than 250 former Oklahoma teachers, "when asked why they left and how much the pay difference was, the respondents were collectively making $4.5 million more in their new state than they did in Oklahoma" (Hardiman, 2017; Cullen, 2017). This creates tensions because "about 48 percent of those leaving have a master's degree which makes them among the most educated, and potentially highest earning Oklahoma teachers, and we're replacing them with people who are emergency certified and have no training in education" (Hardiman, 2017; Cullen, 2017). As the research participants echoed, this is a pertinent concern not only for their English teacher candidates but for the future of education in the state and many are proactively seeking ways to recruit and retain qualified teachers and train those who are alternatively qualified. This provides additional opportunities for research because "there is little if any, research about the subject-specific content and pedagogical preparation candidates receive

in the plethora of alternative certification/licensure programs that operate in various contexts

across the country" (NCTE, 2005c).

Based on these key findings, new research questions to explore would be: *What is the role of English teacher educators in Oklahoma in preparing English teachers who were not prepared in the secondary English methods course?* Or *What is the role of English teacher educators (collectively) in providing continued training to (alternatively certified) English teachers in the state?*

As a response to these needs, one participant reported a previous effort to collaborate in Summer 2017 on the "Open Your Arms and Teach in Oklahoma" campaign which listed all of the English education programs in the state and was guided by the philosophy:

> "we just want you to be an English teacher; we don't care if it is my program or someone else's. Go somewhere near you. This attitude of working together to find folks who want to be teachers and funnel them toward closest teacher educator program has been something we've done collectively as a way to help the current situation."

This campaign was a response to the need to "bring English education teachers together to

network and grow professionally-- to do something" which models sociocultural theories of

situated learning because it shows a concern for English teacher educators to not only prepare

English teacher candidates for the knowledge learned in the methods course, but with how that

knowledge can extend beyond the course to support beginning teachers' transition into the

profession (Cercone, 2015). Therefore, the situated learning aspects of this study provide

opportunities to extend content and pedagogical knowledge in practical, meaningful, and

valuable ways to enhance the state's collective preparation, and retention, of English teachers in

Oklahoma. This aligns to the intention of the study: to first describe how English teacher

candidates are taught in the methods course and then use the data to inform practice across the

state, encouraging collaboration and long-term work that will "decrease the isolation among

teacher education researchers and support more collaborative, cross-institutional, and longitudinal research" (Brady & Clift, 2005, pg. 335).

English Teacher Educator Partnerships.

Based on conversations with the research participants, there was a collective interest in sharing the description of "how English teacher educators in Oklahoma are utilizing the secondary English course to prepare English teacher candidates for today's classroom" because all participants noted interest to read the study. When asked the last question of the study, "*How could English teacher educators in Oklahoma better work together to provide opportunities for meaningful change to occur in how English teacher candidates are prepared?"* a collective answer was "we don't know what the others are doing. Just like practicing teachers, we need to go next door and talk about our lessons." As noted by some of the participants during the end of the interview, Oklahoma English teacher educators have begun to develop a community to positively respond to change (such as addressing teacher recruitment and retention through the "Open Your Arms and Teach in Oklahoma" campaign) because a few participants gathered together to collaborate in Summer 2017: "We tried to get the English educators together. I think we could communicate better. The problem is that when everyone is just in their own institutions, we don't know what the others are doing. We could be gaining so many ideas. Learn from each other's experiences and adjust our different focuses and our different strengths." So, currently, there is not a structured effort to bring about a comprehensive understanding Oklahoma English teacher preparation programs, so the creation of a collective network has interest and potential. Because educators need to be at the foreground of conversations about change, curriculum and instruction work-- especially about how students meet the standards and

171

accomplish what they should know and be able to do, this provides the potential for advocacy (Applebee, 2013).

Therefore, next steps should include sharing evidence from one own's institution with others (among the state and nation) to create teacher educator partnerships in order for English teacher educators to expand the description of English teacher preparation to meaningful, theoretically motivated, and important conversations about program development, especially in response to educational reforms. "When research is shared with other professionals through scholarship or through collaborative arrangements there is the ability to contribute to a deeper understanding of curricula and processes in English education programs and supports the profession's ability to meet broader goals" (NCTE, 2005). This answers the call put forth by the *Reinventing Teacher Education Series* editors, Brennan, Ellis, Maguire, and Smagorinsky (2018) that there is much value in designing studies (similar to this one and the 2018 *CEE Methods Commission National Study*) because they provide important baseline opportunities for comparative teacher education research (p. vii). To be part of the conversation, educators need background about the history of reforms, and they need specific examples from their classrooms where the impact of decisions is occurring-- as described in this study. The standards have not yet ended any professional debates about how to best support students' learning, especially in the field of English language arts, but they have provided urgency and focus, as demonstrated in Oklahoma's standards adoption timeline and process (Pasternak et al., 2014).

This urgency and focus then must spur continued collaboration because cultivating collaborative cultures is key to any transformation or change. "People are motivated to change if meaningful work can be done in collaboration with others" (Fullan, 2016). This is why the field of English education, which is positioned between theory and practice, must open the dialogue

between the university and school, between bureaucratic hierarchy and community, and between educators and policy-makers in order to enact meaningful change in education reform (Alsup, Emig, Pradl, Tremmel, Yagelski, 2006).

Teachers must be at the center of the conversation and collaborate during any reform process, as many Oklahomans were asked to do during the drafting of the *Oklahoma Academic Standards*. English teacher educators, in particular, must assume leadership roles and heighten their own political awareness and activity in educational policy in order to model and encourage teacher candidates (and those in the field) to understand those roles as part of their professional responsibility (Alsup et al., 2006). As one participant noted at the end of the interview,

> "I'm really excited to read what you write because I think it can be helpful to give us information and reflection and thoughts on how to best move forward. Even though we come together in affiliate as teacher educators, we often don't take the time to sit and talk about our programs, so it will be nice to read about and hear about other programs and what's working and how we can help one another."

Hopefully, this collective narrative begins those conversations and tells the story of how English teacher educators, at least in one state, are beginning the process of advocacy and collaboration in response to state curricular and political challenges.

Research Recommendations

Based on findings from six programs in a single state, the researcher recommends the following:

Concurrent Field Experience with the Methods Course.

Though the Field Experience component of English teacher preparation was not an explicit strand of the research study, it was a prevalent instructional approach and concern for research participants. Two participants (both private school cases) had specified field experience hours (25-30 hours) required during the course, and all programs are required by the state to have

A minimum of 60 hours of diverse field experiences or its equivalent is completed by all initial candidates prior to student teaching. A minimum of 12 weeks or 360 hours of full-time student teaching or its equivalent is completed by all initial candidates prior to program completion. In advanced programs, practicum/clinical experiences are in place that adequately addresses the requirements established by their respective learned societies. (OEQA, 2017)

Since there is a minimum of 360 hours required in the field whereas the standard 3-hour course averages 45-48 contact hours, the field experience is a significant component of teacher preparation. As reported by participants, one case has a three-part English methods series (9 course hours, or approximately 135 hours); two cases have a two-part series (6 course hours, or approximately 90 hours); and three only have one general English methods course (3 course hours, or approximately 45 hours). This shows that English teacher candidates are spending more time with their clinical faculty than with content area instructors, so there needs to be more "awareness of mentorship and developing strong programs that mentor teachers" while they are in the field. In addition, there needs to be opportunities for the two components, coursework and field experience, to align so that instructors and mentors, or the university and K-12 schools, have opportunities to create partnerships where they can collaborate and discuss common practices.

These opportunities were not discussed in the study, but they do extend research recommendations about "Awareness vs. Application" proposed by the *CEE Methods National Study* (Pasternak et al., 2018). The recent study discusses ways to best prepare teachers by placing a focus on both awareness and application so that teacher candidates can connect aspects from their preparation into their teaching in meaningful ways, such as through situated learning. "Awareness of issues in the methods course primarily happens through engaging students in readings, lectures, and discussions about particular topics" (Pasternak et al., 2018; Caughlan et al., 2017). Application becomes the translation of knowledge into practice, which mainly

happens during the field experience. Therefore, teacher candidates should have time and space to implement their new knowledge into their practices which best occurs in both the methods course and the field experience (Pasternak et al., 2018; Caughlan et al., 2017). Since the field experience requirements may not be attached to the methods course, or required concurrently during that semester of coursework, a recommendation is to examine how the field experience placement can best be situated within the methods course so that teacher candidates have more opportunities to practice their content pedagogical knowledge from the course into the field.

Additionally, if taught concurrently, there would be opportunities to discuss any "doubts that the pedagogy studied [in the content methods course] could be of any use in real classrooms" (Cercone, 2015, p. 113), as well as potential problems of practice observed in the field. As noted by some of the participant's concerns, it may become increasingly difficult to place teacher candidates with quality clinical faculty, or mentor teachers, as described by Oklahoma's changing dynamics regarding teacher certification and its increase in alternative and emergency certifications. Therefore, aligning the course and field experience may allow for a forum to occur where candidates can implement practices studied in the methods course. Conversely, it may also create tension between the university and K-12 schools if the teacher candidate is not able to use the field experience to apply awareness of issues due to the conflict in teaching philosophies or school demands (Pasternak et al., 2018). This is especially true of standards because data from the *CEE Methods National Study* shows application was more common than awareness: "teacher educators have encouraged only a cursory level of awareness regarding standards at the same time that almost all teacher candidates are expected to use the standards in planning their lessons. Thus, the field expresses both adherence and resistance to the standards" (Pasternak et al., 2018; Caughlan et al., 2017, p. 290). This becomes an area of

175

professional development because English teacher candidates are expected to "actively develop as professional educators" through engagement and reflection on a variety of experiences related to English language arts (NCTE, 2012).

Additional recommendations for future research include opportunities for English teacher candidates to observe the secondary English methods course instructor in a secondary teaching setting. This could happen through partnerships established between K-12 schools and the university so that candidates have opportunities to see and reflect on strategies discussed and modeled in class actually implemented in a secondary classroom. Unfortunately, "both prospective teachers and experienced teacher educators often have difficulty translating concepts learned in methods courses into their classrooms" (Brady & Clift, 2005, pg. 331), so seeing the application of these strategies could benefit both, which also allows for continued professional development in the field.

In addition, professional development opportunities for English teacher educators, such as those found in conference attendance at the local, state, or national level, are needed. Many of these professional opportunities are limited to institutional resources and funds, so it would be beneficial to establish ways for educators to learn from colleagues in the field about areas that are changing, such as in technology and critical literacy, which were areas addressed in the findings. This could occur if English teacher educators were actively involved as members, or on the board, of professional organizations and had opportunities to plan and develop sessions that address changing and pertinent issues in the field. With fields as diverse as English Language Arts and education, there is need to continue learning about and staying abreast of current content, pedagogy, and critical issues.

Phase IV. Oklahoma English Teacher Educator Collective Network.

To date, there is not an established network of Oklahoma English teacher educators who meet together to discuss pertinent issues related to our context, Oklahoma, and content, the field of English education. In order for this to happen, the researcher recommends the following Phase IV part of the study:

The purpose of the research will be to use the state-specific description of the secondary English methods course (generated through Phases I-III of this research study) to share the common instructional approaches and resources centered around the unique context and content in a state (NCTE, 2005b). This aligns to NCTE's Belief, as stated in the *Program Assessment in English Education: Belief Statements and Recommendations* position, that there should be "arrangements with colleges, schools, and departments of education to gather cross-institutional studies of the features of English education programs" (NCTE, 2005c).

The intention of the initial research was first to describe how English teacher candidates are taught in the secondary English methods course and the proposed extension of the study will then use that data to inform practice across the state, encouraging collaboration and long-term work that will "decrease the isolation among teacher education researchers and support more collaborative, cross-institutional, and longitudinal research" (Clift & Brady, 2005, pg. 335). As these English teacher educators engage in the research study, their participation in the process will continue to aid their own knowledge, and our collective knowledge, about pertinent topics in the field which supports the goal to use the results of this study and research implications to inform the practice of all participants (Smagorinsky & Whiting, 1995).

Therefore, further research will seek to begin conversations with multiple constituencies in order to understand the multiple perspectives and approaches taken (NCTE, 2005b). Some

potential implications for multiple audiences includes bringing a broader community of stakeholders into discussions about how "educational policies often serve as barriers to good teaching and teacher education"-- such as the recent redevelopment of the Oklahoma Subject Area Test (OSAT) for English-- by informing English teacher preparation programs, state department agencies, school districts, and English teachers about the role English teacher preparation plays in "shifting the conversation of educational reform toward more generative visions of literacy and the field of English language arts" (Brass & Webb, 2015, p. xi).

The following serves as the guiding question of the proposed extended study: *How does a collective English teacher educator network in Oklahoma provide opportunities for meaningful change to occur in how English teacher candidates are prepared?* To explore this overarching question, the following questions will be considered:

a) How do collective wisdom and collaboration inform both individual English education programs, teacher preparation within a state, and the profession at large?

b) How are individuals, institutions, programs, and ideas in the field of English education interrelated?

c) How does reviewing how English teacher educators are navigating changes in areas such as their materials, practices, and beliefs provide insight on how educational policies inform curricular decisions?

d) What is the role of English teacher educators in Oklahoma in preparing English teachers who were not prepared in the secondary English methods course?

e) What is the role of English teacher educators (collectively) in providing continued training to English teachers in the state?

Goals of the proposed research include using research evidence from discussions to support English teacher candidate recruitment initiatives not only within individual institutions but at the state level. This is especially important for the state of Oklahoma which is encountering a decreased enrollment in teacher preparation programs overall (OSSBA, 2016).

The proposed research study will be a qualitative, descriptive, collective case study that will describe how a collective English teacher educator network in Oklahoma can provide opportunities for meaningful change to occur in how future English teachers are prepared. Due to the need for context, the proposed study will seek to provide an in-depth understanding of how Oklahoma English teacher educators can collaborate and use data to inform teacher preparation (including recruitment and retainment) practices across the state, encouraging collaboration and long-term work.

The sampling will be criterion-based where all cases meet the following criteria: English teacher educators, college of education instructor/professors, or college of liberal arts instructor/professors who are involved in secondary English education programs in the state of Oklahoma. Data Collection and Analysis include a review of course artifacts, recorded observations of in-person meetings and discussions, review of collaborative online meeting work/spaces, and interviews with English teacher educators. The approach to inquiry, or methodological beliefs, associated with this study includes more of a narrative, literary style of writing through interviews, observation, and analysis of artifacts (Creswell, 2013). The research follows a sociocultural, social constructivist theoretical framework because the group is vital to the learning process for all because we learn from more knowledgeable peers and will transfer our understandings through the conversations, or language, proposed in the study (Jaramillo, 1996). Also, these social experiences will shape how English teacher educators think and

179

interpret their work through problem-solving because the research seeks to emphasize "the collaborative nature of learning and the importance of its cultural and social context" (Creswell, 2013; UCD Teaching and Learning, n.d.; Jaramillo, 1996).

The proposed research study is important to the field because it begins the process of "assessing and redefining English education" by providing a state-specific portrait of English education programs that could aid a "national portrait of how English education programs are configured" (NCTE, 2005c). In addition, "little current empirical research exists about English education programs with respect to their institutionally-based curricula and field-based experiences, accreditation standings, and strengths and challenges" (NCTE, 2005c).

Final Discussion

So, *how do (six) English teacher educators in Oklahoma utilize the Secondary English methods course to prepare English teacher candidates for today's classroom?* By using content and pedagogical knowledge about theories and practices to deepen an understanding of instructional, assessment, and management strategies that are appropriate for English language arts and the developmental level of middle and high school students. Candidates read, talk, reflect, and learn together and from many diverse perspectives to design and implement standards-based lessons or units that allow them to engage with critical issues in the field.

Just as today's classroom is changing due to demands of society, the secondary English methods course in six Oklahoma programs has also experienced changes due to educational policies, such as the influence of accreditation reports, the adoption of new Oklahoma Academic Standards, and the redevelopment of the Oklahoma Subject Area teacher licensure exam. These changes, which were the focus of the research study and represented a gap in the research, seem to have been integrated into the course with little resistance.

However, the changes that were most concerning to the participants were the ones not explicitly addressed in the research study. The participants noted a strong awareness to the changing dynamic of teacher preparation in the state due to political challenges that included teacher mobility and the increased quantity of teachers becoming alternatively and emergency certified. These numbers, which have increased 3,500% in the past five years (OEA, 2017), is what seemed to be the most pertinent issue facing the English methods course (and program)--not the impact of standards or assessment. This awareness of the changing dynamic of teacher preparation affects the current (and definitely near future) experiences teacher candidates will have in their field experience as it relates to the qualifications of potential clinical faculty.

Based on the proposed further study and additional research questions proposed, the role of the secondary English methods course in Oklahoma may change more due to the demographic of students changing than due to external curricula demands of educational policy. As one participant already noted, they were experiencing a change in class attendance with students taking the course for professional hours required through alternatively certification requirements, not just for course credit through traditional certification requirements. Two others were already seeking additional outlets to address this growing need for the increased population of alternative students. As one participant stated,

> "I'm happy to lead this and add [an alternative certified section] to the cadre of courses that I offer to make sure they [alternatively certified teachers] are getting training somewhat equal to what we are doing with traditional students, than the alternative option: some general methods class for all alternative teachers. Then I do not have a voice in the decision making."

Therefore, the changes to the course may be due more to the changes in student needs rather than educational policy—though political challenges have definitely caused a need for more teachers (through alternative routes) due to the state's teacher shortage. This continued

181

discussion about future teacher preparation (outside of the context and content of the secondary English methods course represented in this study) is one that is pertinent and timely because it is not a state-specific issue, but is caused by the state's political challenges.

Reflection

In my role as researcher, I also embraced the role of reflective practitioner as I collaborated with participants and provided critical analysis on the findings from the research. I think I have learned that programs respond more to the needs of their teacher candidates than to state-specific policies. Though these policies may guide some of the dialogic discussion occurring in the course, they are implicit. I've also learned that state-specific teacher preparation only has drawbacks, and therefore, many of the instructors focus more on teacher preparation in general, not just in Oklahoma—especially since many noted an awareness that their teacher candidates are not staying the state. Due to this, reciprocity and transference of knowledge, understandings, skills, and content is essential.

Since I am an English teacher educator and English methods course instructor in Oklahoma, it was my responsibility to share my assumptions, biases, and considerations with the research participants (Athanases & Heath, 1995). I did this during the interview protocol and "positioned myself" by recognizing that my own background may shape my interpretation, so I was careful to rely heavily on the voices of the participants by using their wording-- from their syllabi, questionnaire, and interviews-- to guide the questions and report the findings. Through conversations with the participants, I was able to extend my knowledge of how I approach the course beyond my own experiences, and it is my goal to expand the conversation with my colleagues so that we can indeed have the somewhat distance-bound experience of "going next door to talk about our lessons." However, I did feel limited in those discussions because as I

bracketed out my experiences, I was not able to represent the perspective of another case and additional data that could be useful in their reflections.

Since one's interpretation is often filtered through their own experiences, I made sure to find and cite studies and methodologies to align with, such as Smagorinsky & Whiting's 1995 study *How English Teachers Get Taught*, Pasternak et al.'s *CEE Methods Commission National Study: Secondary English Teacher Education in the United States* (2018), Saldana's coding practices, Gale et al.'s framework analysis methodology, and Sandelowski's focus on descriptive research. What I valued in the research process was utilizing the structure of my Conceptual Framework (Figure 1) to focus the themes of my research questions. This allowed me to more clearly align the focus of my study throughout my literature review, data collection and analysis phases, and report of findings.

What I learned in addition to my focus on English content, pedagogy, and teacher preparation was the history of educational reform, and the tensions political challenges create in education. In particular, my thinking about the influence educational reform has had on my teaching career has become a bit more skeptical with my research, which according to Schmoker (2011) is "healthy," because I now see that more constraints have been placed on teachers, curricula, and classroom practice throughout the years-- especially in chronicling the changes from 1995 to 2018 in my review of those national studies. As Taubman (2009) states, the effects of top-down educational policies greatly affect educators, so for me, I now see more clearly how those policies inform my teaching practice, influence how and what I think and do in the classroom, how I spend my professional time, and how I am (or my program has been) evaluated. Because of my background about the history of reforms, I now feel as though I can contribute more to the conversation about educational policies because I now have research as

well as specific examples from my teaching to show how the impact of those decisions affect my course-- and others' courses.

So for me, today's classroom is still aligned to standards, held accountable by assessments, and uses curriculum and instruction to engage and challenge students-- but I strive to be a creator of the content, not just an "implementer or consumer" (Brass, 2015, p. 13). In the era of the *Common Core State Standards,* Oklahoma has shown that it is possible to include educators in policy documents because educators were a voice in the creation and decision-making of the *OAS-ELA*, which affirms my thinking that our state did follow a democratic process that involved the voices of students, candidates, teachers, and stakeholders.

Reflective practice was an implication of the study because it was my goal that the English teacher educators who participated in the study also had opportunities to become reflective practitioners through the systematic inquiry into their own instruction and course design. Through the sharing of resources, there is now an opportunity to increase the collective wisdom and collaboration of the state which also allows English teacher educators opportunities to reflect on and learn from their colleagues and continue to grow in their teaching (Smagorinsky & Whiting, 1995). For me, this potential for collaboration (through Phase IV. Oklahoma English Teacher Educator Network) is what I look forward to the most from the study because it brings application to the awareness the data presents. Caughlan et al. (2017) provide insight on "how educators achieve a balance between conceptual knowledge about (or awareness of) new ideas and application of that knowledge in teaching practices" (p. 268). Therefore, based on the first goal of the study, to share the collective description of the secondary English methods course, the continued goal will be to use that data to discuss how English teacher educators can

collectively evoke meaningful change in at least three dimensions: materials, pedagogy, and beliefs (Fullan, 2016).

Overall, this research study allowed me to develop more as an English teacher educator and as an advocate for the state. I am grateful for the opportunity to add to a collective understanding of how secondary English methods courses are conducted, at least in one state, because it has already informed my practice through my own reflection on my instructional approaches, how I introduce standards to teacher candidates, how much focus I place on the OSAT, and how my course has changed due to educational policies. This study has informed me (and hopefully others) about the role the secondary English language arts methods course plays in teacher preparation, and I now feel better prepared to "shift conversations about educational reform toward more generative visions of literacy and the field of English language arts" (Brass & Webb, 2015). Because I now know the reforms that motivate my practice, I am better able to make informed decisions about how to organize the content of my classes and plan instruction for the context of my students.

References

Achieve. (2008). *Out of many, one: Toward rigorous common core standards from the ground up* (Achieve Report). Achieve. Retrieved December 23, 2016, from http://www.achieve.org/files/OutofManyOne.pdf

Achieve the Core. (2016, June). Instructional Advocacy to Improve Practice (2016 June Webinar). Retrieved January 14, 2017, from http://achievethecore.org/page/2852/instructional-advocacy-to-improve-practice-2016-june-webinar

Adey, P. (2016). *Really raising standards: Cognitive intervention and academic achievement.* Routledge.

Alexander, R. (2018). *Dialogic Teaching.* Retrieved February 18, 2018, from http://www.robinalexander.org.uk/dialogic-teaching/

Alsup, J., Emig, J., Pradl, G., Tremmel, R., & Yagelski, R. (2006). The state of English education and a vision for its future: A call to arms. *English Education, 38*(4), 278-294.

Applebee, A. N. (1974). *Tradition and reform in the teaching of English: A history*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

Applebee, A. N. (2013). Common Core State Standards: The promise and peril in a national palimpsest. *English Journal, 103*(1), 25-33.

Assessment | Definition of assessment in US English by Oxford Dictionaries. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/us/assessment

Athanases, S. Z., & Heath, S. B. (1995). Ethnography in the study of teaching and learning in English. *Research in the Teaching of English, 29*(3), 263-287.

Baxter, P., & Jack, S. (2008). Qualitative case study methodology: Study design and implementation for novice researchers. *The Qualitative Report, 13*(4), 544-559. Retrieved from http://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol13/iss4/2.

Berliner, D. C. (2000). A Personal Response to those Who Bash Teacher Education. *Journal of Teacher Education, (51),* 358-371. doi:10.1177/0022487100051005004

Bidwell, A. (2014, February 27). The History of Common Core State Standards. Retrieved June 24, 2017, from https://www.usnews.com/news/special-reports/articles/2014/02/27/the-history-of-common-core-state-standards

Brady, P., & Clift, R. T. (2005). Research on Methods Courses and Field Experiences. In *Studying teacher education: The report of the AERA Panel on Research and Teacher Education* (pp. 309-335). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Brass, J., & Burns, L. D. (2011). Research in secondary English, 1912-2011: Historical continuities and discontinuities in the NCTE imprint. *Research in the Teaching of English, 46*, 171-186.

Brass, J., & Webb, A. (2015). *Reclaiming English language arts methods courses: Critical issues and challenges for teacher educators in top-down times.* New York: Routledge.

Brass, J. (2016). A governmentality perspective on the Common Core. *Research in the Teaching of English, 51*(2), 230-240.

Brennan, M., Ellis, V., Maguire, M., & Smagorinsky, P. (2018). Series Editors' Preface [Preface]. In *Secondary English teacher education in the United States* (Reinventing teacher Education, pp. Vi-Vii). London: Bloomsbury.

The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education. (2017). *Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.* Indiana University Center on Postsecondary Research. Retrieved January 21, 2018, from http://carnegieclassifications.iu.edu/lookup/lookup.php

Caughlan, S., Pasternak, D. L., Hallman, H. L., Renzi, L., Rush, L. S., & Frisby, M. (2017). How English language arts teachers are prepared for twenty-first century classrooms: Results of a national study. *English Education, 49*(3), pp. 265-297. Retrieved April 9, 2017, from http://www.ncte.org/library/NCTEFiles/Resources/Journals/EE/0493-apr2017/EE0493How.pdf

Certification Examinations for Oklahoma Educators (CEOE). (2012, July). Retrieved May 11, 2017, from http://www.ceoe.nesinc.com/Content/Docs/CEOE_Faculty_Guide.pdf

Cochran-Smith, M., & Zeichner, K. M. (Eds.). (2006). *Studying teacher education: The report of the AERA Panel on Research and Teacher Education*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). (2015). Introduction. Retrieved June 24, 2017, from http://caepnet.org/

Clinton, W. J. (1997, February 04). Transcript of Clinton's 1997 State of the Union. Retrieved June 22, 2017, from http://www.cnn.com/2005/ALLPOLITICS/01/31/sotu.clinton1997/

Common Core State Standards Initiative. (2016a). About the Standards. Retrieved November 26, 2016, from http://www.corestandards.org/about-the-standards/

Common Core State Standards Initiative. (2016b). Development Process. Retrieved December 27, 2016, from http://www.corestandards.org/about-the-standards/development-process/

Couros, G. (2015). *The innovators mindset empower learning, unleash talent, and lead a culture of creativity.* San Diego, CA: Dave Burgess Consulting.

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Cullen, T. A. (2017, August 19). Theresa A. Cullen: Teachers are leaving Oklahoma, and we must act now. Retrieved February 24, 2018, from http://www.tulsaworld.com/opinion/opinionfeatured/theresa-a-cullen-teachers-are-leaving-oklahoma-and-we-must/article_b0c2a94a-38a9-5223-82bf-75f1654954a7.html

Eger, A. (2017, August 24). Teacher shortage: Oklahoma hits record for emergency certifications after just 3 months. Retrieved February 25, 2018, from http://www.tulsaworld.com/news/education/teacher-shortage-oklahoma-hits-record-for-emergency-certifications-after-just/article_63d0250f-1530-56d6-937e-d45ef4410eb5.html

Endacott, J. L., & Goering, C. Z. (2014). Speaking truth to power: Reclaiming the conversation on education. *English Journal, 103*(5), 89-92.

Endacott, J. L., Collet, V., Goering, C. Z., Turner, R., Denny, G. S., Wright, G., & Jennings-Davis, J. (2016). On the frontline of CCSS implementation: A national study of factors influencing teachers perceptions of teaching conditions and job satisfaction. *Cogent Education, 3*(1), 1162997. doi:10.1080/2331186x.2016.1162997

Endacott, J. L., Wright, G. P., Goering, C. Z., Collet, V. S., Denny, G. S., & Davis, J. J. (2015). Robots Teaching Other Little Robots: Neoliberalism, CCSS, and Teacher Professionalism. *Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies, 37*(5), 414-437. doi:10.1080/10714413.2015.1091258

Evans, R. (1996). *The human side of school change: Reform, resistance, and the real-life problems of innovation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Evans, R. (2014). Change is what it means [Abstract]. Retrieved December 20, 2016, from http://www.rodelfoundationde.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Change-Is-What-It-Means_Dr-Robert-Evans.pdf

Feemster, R. (2015, April 20). Gone but not forgotten? Common Core lingers after Oklahoma's repeal. Retrieved June 17, 2017, from http://hechingerreport.org/gone-but-not-forgotten-common-core-lingers-after-oklahomas-repeal/

Felder, B. (2018, January 22). State superintendent: Survey shows need for teacher pay raise. Retrieved March 18, 2018, from http://newsok.com/state-superintendent-survey-shows-need-for-teacher-pay-raise/article/5580462

Fredricksen, J. (2011). How Educators Use Policy Documents: A Misunderstood Relationship. *Language Arts Journal of Michigan, 26*(2), 43-48. doi:10.9707/2168-149x.1801

Fullan, M., & Quinn, J. (2016). *Coherence: The right drivers in action for schools, districts, and*

systems. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Fullan, M. (2016). *The meaning of educational change* (5th ed.). New York: Teachers College, Columbia University.

Gale, N. K., Heath, G., Cameron, E., Rashid, S., & Redwood, S. (2013). Using the framework method for the analysis of qualitative data in multi-disciplinary health research. *BMC Medical Research Methodology,* 13(1). doi:10.1186/1471-2288-13-117

Gallagher, K. (2015). *In the best interest of students: Staying true to what works in the ELA classroom*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse.

Goering, C. Z. (2012, October 09). Are schools misinterpreting Common Core Standards as common teaching? Retrieved December 30, 2016, from http://www.theprogressiveeducator.com/2012/10/08/are-schools-misinterpreting-common -core-standards-as-common-teaching/

Goldstein, D. (2014). *The teacher wars: A history of America's most embattled profession.* New York: Anchor Books.

Hardiman, S. (2017, October 07). Teachers who leave Oklahoma make $19,000 more on average, OU researcher finds. Retrieved February 24, 2018, from http://www.tulsaworld.com/news/education/teachers-who-leave-oklahoma-make-more-o n-average-ou-researcher/article_922ac5ac-842a-5cbd-b313-dfacfb77c4c0.html

Higher Learning Commission (HLC). (2017). Accreditation. Retrieved June 3, 2017, from https://www.hlcommission.org/Criteria-Eligibility-and-Candidacy/criteria-and-core-components.html

IRA/NCTE. (1996). NCTE/IRA Standards for the English Language Arts. Retrieved December 23, 2016, from http://www.ncte.org/standards/ncte-ira

Jacob, S. A., & Furgerson, S. P. (2012). Writing Interview Protocols and Conducting Interviews: Tips for Students New to the Field of Qualitative Research. *The Qualitative Report*, *17*(42), 1-10. Retrieved from http://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol17/iss42/3

Jaramillo, J. A. (1996). Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory and Contributions t the Development of Constructivist Curricula. *Education,* 117(1), 133.

Lambert, V. L., & Lambert, C. E. (2012). Editorial: Qualitative descriptive research: An acceptable design. *Pacific Rim International Journal of Nursing Research*, 16(4), 255-256. Retrieved January 21, 2018.

LeCompte, M. D., & Schensul, J. J. (2010). *Designing & conducting ethnographic research* (2nd ed.). Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.

Loveless, T. (2012). How well are American students learning? *The 2012 Brown Center Report*

on American Education, III(1). Retrieved January 4, 2017, from
https://www.brookings.edu/wpcontent/uploads/2016/07/0216_brown_education_loveless.pdf

Mathis, W. J. (2010, July 21). The "Common Core" Standards Initiative: An Effective Reform Tool? Retrieved June 22, 2017, from http://nepc.colorado.edu/publication/common-core-standards

Matlock, K. L., Goering, C. Z., Endacott, J., Collet, V. S., Denny, G. S., Jennings-Davis, J., & Wright, G. P. (2015). Teachers views of the Common Core State Standards and its implementation. *Educational Review, 68*(3), 291-305. doi:10.1080/00131911.2015.1070333

McCaslin, M. L., & Scott, K. W. (2003). The five-question method for framing a qualitative research study. *The Qualitative Report, 8*(3), 447-461.

Mulcahy, D. G. (1994, November 10). *Goals 2000 and the Role of the National Education Standards and Improvement Council*. Speech presented at Annual Conference of the American Educational Studies Association, Chapel Hill.

National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). (2005a). *Understanding the Relationship between Research and Teaching.* Retrieved December 18, 2016, from http://www.ncte.org/cee/positions/researchandteaching

National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). (2005b). *What Do We Know and Believe about the Roles of Methods Courses and Field Experiences in English Education?* Retrieved May 9, 2017, from <http://www.ncte.org/cee/positions/roleofmethodsinee>.

National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). (2005c). *Program Assessment in English Education: Belief Statements and Recommendations.* Retrieved June 04, 2017, from <http://www.ncte.org/cee/positions/programassessment>.

National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). (2006). *Guidelines for the preparation of teachers of English language arts.* Retrieved June 4, 2017, from http://www.ncte.org/library/NCTEFiles/Groups/CEE/NCATE/Guidelines_for_Teacher_Prep_2006.pdf

National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). (2008). *Resolution on Scripted Curricula.* Retrieved December 18, 2016, from http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/scriptedcurricula

National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). (2010). *Resolution on Affirming the Role of Teachers and Students in Developing Curricula.* Retrieved December 18, 2016, from http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/developingcurricula

National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). (2012). *NCTE/NCATE Standards for initial preparation of teachers of secondary English language arts, grades 7-12.* Retrieved January 4, 2017, from http://www.ncte.org/library/NCTEFiles/Groups/CEE/NCATE/ApprovedStandards_111212.pdf

National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). (2013, February). *NCTE Framework for 21st Century Curriculum and Assessment*. Retrieved June 26, 2017, from http://www.ncte.org/governance/21stcenturyframework

National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). (2017). *NCTE's History*. Retrieved June 22, 2017, from http://www.ncte.org/history

National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). (2017, October 29). *Resolution Opposing High-Stakes Teacher Candidate Performance Assessments*. Retrieved March 23, 2018, from http://www2.ncte.org/statement/teacher-cand-perf-assess/

National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ). (2014). *2014 Teacher Prep Review: A review of the nation's teacher preparation programs*. Retrieved June 17, 2017, from http://www.nctq.org/dmsView/Teacher_Prep_Review_2014_Report

National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, & Council of Chief State School Officers. (2010). *Common Core State Standards.* Washington, D.C. http://www.corestandards.org/

Obama, B. (2013, January 21). *2013 Inaugural Address by President Barack Obama.* Retrieved June 24, 2017, from https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2013/01/21/inaugural-address-president-barack-obama

Oklahoma Office of Educational Quality & Accountability (OEQA). (2017). *OEQA Teacher Preparation Inventory 2017.* Retrieved June 4, 2017, from https://www.ok.gov/oeqa/documents/TEACHER%20PREPARATION%20INVENTORY%202008-2009%20.pdf.

Oklahoma Office of Educational Quality & Accountability (OEQA). (2017, July). *OKLAHOMA STATE REQUIREMENTS*. Retrieved March 23, 2018, from https://www.ok.gov/oeqa/documents/State%20Requirements.pdf

Oklahoma Education Association (OEA). (2017). *Join the Fight for Funding in Oklahoma.* Retrieved June 17, 2017, from http://fightforfunding.org/learn-more

Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE). (2015a). *Drafting Oklahoma Standards*. Retrieved November 28, 2015, from http://ok.gov/sde/newstandards

Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE). (2015b). *Eight Overarching English Language Arts Standards in Reading and Writing.* Retrieved November 28, 2015, from http://ok.gov/sde/sites/ok.gov.sde/files/documents/files/2.Eight_.is_.great_.overview.pdf

Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE). (2015c). *Writing of New Oklahoma Academic Standards English Language Arts- 2015 Frequently Asked Questions and Answers Guide.* (02 July 2015). Retrieved November 28, 2015, from http://ok.gov/sde/sites/ok.gov.sde/files/6-30-15%20ELAOAS%20FAQs.pdf

Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE). (2017a) (2017, December 4). *Education Technology.* Retrieved February 25, 2018, from http://www.sde.ok.gov/sde/education-technology

Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE). (2017b) (2017 October 1). 2017-2018 State Enrollment Percentages. Retrieved February 25, 2018, from http://sde.ok.gov/sde/documents/2017-12-12/2017-2018-state-enrollment-percentages

Oklahoma State School Boards Association (OSSBA). (2016). 2016 OSSBA Teacher Shortage Survey. *2016 Teacher Shortage Survey.* Retrieved June 18, 2017, from http://www.ossba.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/2016-OSSBA-Teacher-Shortage-Report.pdf

Pasternak, D. L., Caughlan, S., Hallman, H. L., Renzi, L., & Rush, L. S. (2014). Teaching English language arts methods in the United States: A review of the research. *Review of Education, 2*(2), 146-185. doi:10.1002/rev3.3031

Pasternak, D. L., Caughlan, S., Hallman, H. L., Renzi, L., & Rush, L. S. (2018). *Secondary English teacher education in the United States.* London: Bloomsbury Academic, an imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.

Public Broadcast Systems (PBS). (2002). *Are we there yet: Business, politics, and the long (unfinished) road to national standards.* Retrieved June 22, 2017, from http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/schools/standards/bp.html

Ravitch, D. (1996). 50 States, 50 Standards? The Continuing Need for National Voluntary Standards in Education. *The Brookings Review, 14*(3), 6. doi:10.2307/20080652

Ravitch, D. (2013, February 25). *Why I cannot support the common core standards.* Retrieved December 28, 2016, from https://dianeravitch.net/2013/02/26/why-i-cannot-support-the-common-core-standards/comment-page-1/

Republican National Committee. (2013). Resolution Concerning Common Core Education Standards. *Spring 2013,* 5. Retrieved June 22, 2017, from https://prod-static-ngop-pbl.s3.amazonaws.com/docs/2013_Spring-Meeting_Resolutions.pdf

Resnick, L. (2011). Book Review: The Mismeasure of Learning. *Education Next, Fall*(2011), 78-83. Retrieved December 31, 2016, from http://educationnext.org/files/ednext20013_78.pdf

Saldana, J. (2013). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (2nd ed.). London: Sage.

Sandelowski, M. (200). What happened to qualitative description? *Research in Nursing & Health,* 23, 334-340. Retrieved January 21, 2018.

Scherff, L., & Hahs-Vaughn, D. L. (2008). What we know about English language arts teachers: An analysis of the 1999-2000 SASS and 2000-2001 TFS databases. *English Education, 40*, 174-200.

Schmoker, M. J. (2011). *Focus: Elevating the essentials to radically improve student learning*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Schwartz, R. B., & Robinson, M. A. (2000). Goals 2000 and the Standards Movement. *Brookings Papers on Education Policy, 2000*(1), 173-206. doi:10.1353/pep.2000.0016

Smagorinsky, P., & Whiting, M. E. (1995). *How English teachers get taught: Methods of teaching the methods class*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

[Foreword]. (2018). In P. Smagorinsky (Ed.), *Secondary English teacher education in the United States* (Reinventing teacher Education, pp. Viii-Xii). London: Bloomsbury.

Stotsky, S. (2005, January). *The state of state English standards*. In Ed485523. Retrieved June 17, 2017, from http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED485523.pdf

Taubman, P. M. (2010). *Teaching By Numbers: Deconstructing the Discourse of Standards and Accountability in Education*. Florence: Taylor and Francis.

UCD Teaching and Learning. (n.d.). *Education Theory: Constructivism and Social Constructivism.* Retrieved June 22, 2017, from http://www.ucdoer.ie/index.php/Education_Theory/Constructivism_and_Social_Constructivism

United States. National Commission on Excellence in Education. (1983). *A nation at risk: the imperative for educational reform: a report to the Nation and the Secretary of Education, United States Department of Education.* Washington, D.C.: The Commission: [Supt. of Docs., U.S. G.P.O. distributor]. Retrieved December 27, 2016, from https://www2.ed.gov/pubs/NatAtRisk/risk.html

United States Department of Education. (n.d.). Progress in Our Schools. Retrieved April 20, 2018, from https://www.ed.gov/k-12reforms

Williams, J. (2010, March 10). *An Open Letter to NCTE Members about the Release of the Public Draft of the Common Core State Standards for K-12 English Language Arts.* Retrieved May 11, 2017, from http://www.ncte.org/standards/common-core/response4

Zancanella, D., & Alsup, J. (2010). English Education Program Assessment: Creating Standards and Guidelines to Advance English Teacher Preparation. *English Education, October 2010,* 65-71. Retrieved June 4, 2017, from http://www.ncte.org/library/NCTEFiles/Resources/Journals/EE/0431-oct2010/EE0431English.pdf

Appendix A

IRB Approval

UNIVERSITY OF
ARKANSAS

July 27, 2017

MEMORANDUM

TO: Lara Searcy
                             Christian Goering

FROM: Ro Windwalker
                             IRB Coordinator

RE: New Protocol Approval

IRB Protocol #:   17-07-015

Protocol Title: *How Do English Teacher Educators in Oklahoma Utilize the
                             Secondary English Methods Course to Prepare English Teacher
                             Candidates for Today's Classroom?*

Review Type: ☐ EXEMPT   ☒ EXPEDITED   ☐ FULL IRB

Approved Project Period: Start Date: 07/24/2017 Expiration Date: 07/23/2018

Your protocol has been approved by the IRB. Protocols are approved for a maximum period of
one year. If you wish to continue the project past the approved project period (see above), you
must submit a request, using the form *Continuing Review for IRB Approved Projects*, prior to the
expiration date. This form is available from the IRB Coordinator or on the Research Compliance
website (https://vpred.uark.edu/units/rscp/index.php). As a courtesy, you will be sent a reminder
two months in advance of that date. However, failure to receive a reminder does not negate
your obligation to make the request in sufficient time for review and approval. Federal
regulations prohibit retroactive approval of continuation. Failure to receive approval to continue
the project prior to the expiration date will result in Termination of the protocol approval. The
IRB Coordinator can give you guidance on submission times.

This protocol has been approved for 20 participants. If you wish to make *any* modifications
in the approved protocol, including enrolling more than this number, you must seek approval
prior to implementing those changes. All modifications should be requested in writing (email is
acceptable) and must provide sufficient detail to assess the impact of the change.

If you have questions or need any assistance from the IRB, please contact me at 109 MLKG
Building, 5-2208, or irb@uark.edu.

Appendix B

Instrument 1. Instructional Approaches (Phase I. Syllabus Review)

Instrument 1. Instructional Approaches (for Syllabus Review)	Survey	Workshop	Experience-Based	Theoretical	Reflective
Definition			Links theory and practice usually through extensive observations of secondary English classrooms and the requirement of teacher candidates to plan and teach during the methods class		
Organization/ Sequence	often follows single textbook; covers topics such as grammar, computers, writing, testing and evaluation, debate, discipline, classroom management, learning styles, objectives, lesson plans, units, research, school law, exceptional learners, multi-ethnic learners, etc;	Small group development of lesson plans; practical teaching activities; in-class collaborative activities;	Usually alternates between field experience and regular class sessions; presentations by local "master teachers," case scenarios of teaching situations		Involves students in consistent, formal reflection about the course readings, their own experiences as learners, and their own experiences in the course itself

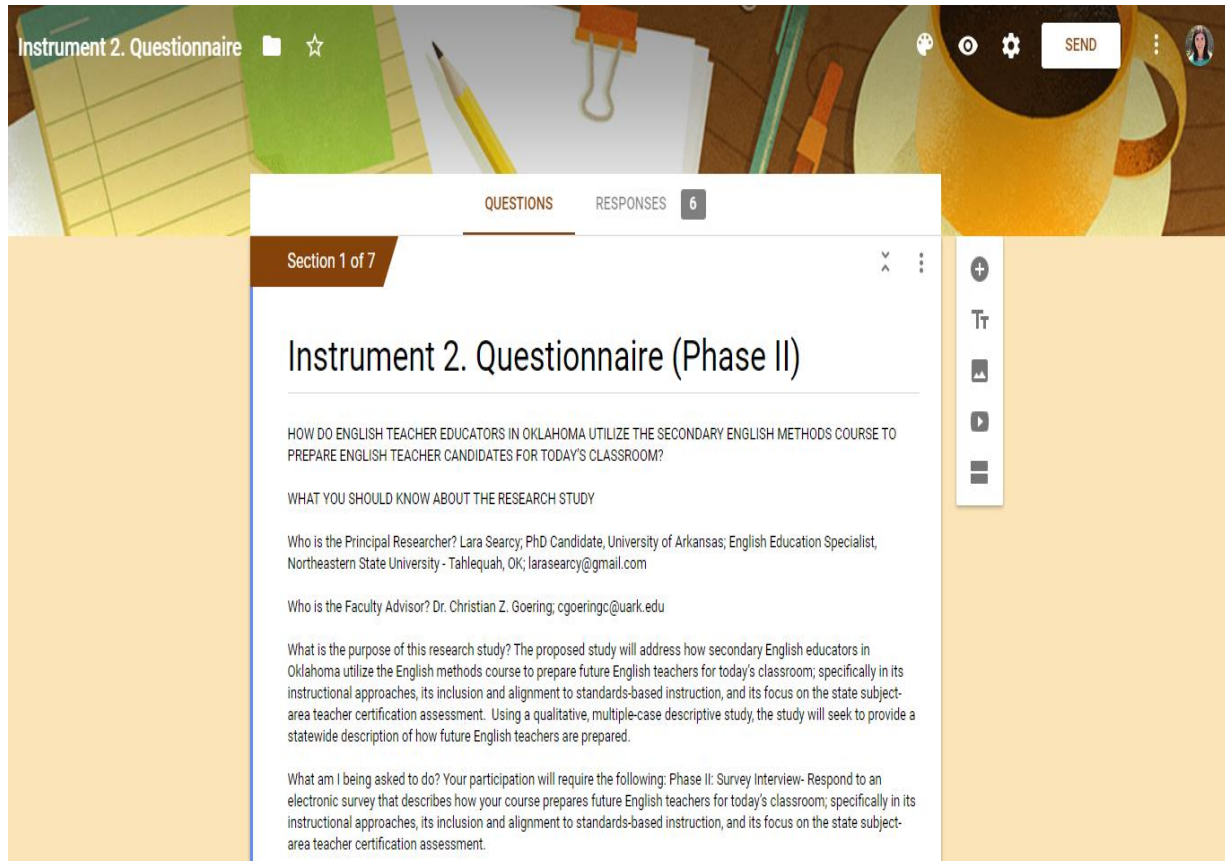|					
Syllabus Qualities	catalogue-style course description with a lengthy list of course objectives (usually extensive outline with detached and technical language) or outcomes				Often reveals the instructor's own reflective tendencies; course description articulates philosophy of teaching and learning
Typical Assignments/ Assessments	many brief assignments; rarely allows for opportunities for collaborative learning	assignments often include a large project such as a portfolio, extended instructional unit; assignments are often situated in context of larger plan; allowed for collaboration	Observation logs, contextual factor profiles	Relies on texts; writing research reports and papers on theoretical issues; developing "projects" that incorporate reports on articles; essay exams	Reading log, literacy autobiography, portfolio, memoir of educational experiences; essay about a favorite teacher; reading that values reflection; reflective activities
Tendencies/ Attempts	attempts to cover all the bases= coverage approach	Sequence class sessions; continuity among classes and building toward a concrete, synthesizing goal; topics tend to be integrated rather than isolated= recursive; attempts to move to "hands on" with feedback and revision from both instructor and peers		To involve students in the consideration of theoretical positions	Get students to understand and articulate their own beliefs about teaching
Goals/ Purpose	Provide preservice teachers with an introduction to as broad a range of issues as possible prior to their entry into the field				Reflect on the content and process
Advantages	Students will be exposed to a range of	Involves students in learning; students learn		Teacher enters profession with more	

	topics that will ultimately affect them in their careers	from multiple instructional approaches- textbook, handouts, feedback, discussion, etc.; students learn in an environment that models many of the teaching and learning strategies advocated in best practices; produce work that is practical; lessons designed to be used in teaching		than a "toolbox" of methods, but rather an understanding of teaching and learning that can inform their decisions about how to work with students	
Disadvantages	Attempts to satisfy all of the NCTE requirements, as well as other institutional sources (in a single course); often neglects to engage students in the processes of connecting knowledge and integrating understandings				
Assumptions	An understanding of the many parts will lead to a grasp of the whole	A single course is insufficient for preparing students for all professional responsibilities; assume that students learn from doing collaborative work	Practical experience benefits preservice teachers because it teaches them the reality of the classroom; teacher knowledge needs to be context-specific;	Understanding the theoretical underpinnings of different instructional approaches is of paramount importance	Reflection of one's own experiences as a learner will help teachers understand better the ways in which their own students learn
Problems	Often overwhelmed by the range and scope of expectations	Limited perspective and availability of methods of how to teach; lesson design not tested in real-word;	Quality of "master teachers" and classrooms where teachers are placed	Light in practical ideas; equipped with little in way of actual method.	Preservice teachers have trouble making the transition to pedagogical thinking; teachers often

	preservice teachers were presented with	unprepared for harsh reality of teaching students who are not collaborative			have a difficult time overcoming images from their own schooling which may limit learning; preservice teachers may replicate teaching methods they experienced as students without understanding the teacher's goals for using them, or witness ineffective teaching
Emphasis		Student participation in the activities they are being taught to teach; continuity, feedback, revision		On theory rather than practice	Preservice teachers need to have an awareness of how their own experiences should have a qualified influence on their teaching decisions, particularly when the students come from diverse backgrounds

Adapted from: Smagorinsky, P., & Whiting, M. E. (1995). *How English teachers get taught: Methods of teaching the methods class*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

Instrument 2. Questionnaire (Phase II)

The *Questionnaire* was an electronic Google Form that was divided into six sections: 1) Contextual Factors- Participant/Institution, Secondary Methods Course Information, Course Syllabus Information; 2) Today's Classroom Context; 3) Instructional Approach Research Questions; 4) Standards Research Questions; 5) Assessment Research Questions; and 6) Course Curricular Change Questions. This instrument was used in Phases II and III to guide interviews:

    1) Contextual Information:

        b) Participant Name

        c) Institution

        d) How many years have you been teaching the course?

e) Secondary English Methods Course:

    i. Title

    ii. Numbers of Hours, Day/Time/Semester Meets

    iii. Context in Program (Sequence in Program; Housed in College of

    Liberal Arts or College of Education; Other Related Courses; Field

    Experience Required in Course)

f) Course Syllabus:

    i. Are instructors at your university required to follow a syllabus template?

    ii. If so, how does that affect what is included in your course syllabus?

    iii. Are instructors at your university evaluated on how clearly the syllabus

    provides an accurate guide to the course?

5) Today's Classroom

a) Describe how your secondary English methods course prepares future English

teachers for today's classroom.

    i. How, if at all, is that preparation for today's classroom specific to

    Oklahoma's unique context?

    ii. How, if at all, is that preparation for today's classroom specific to any

    context?

6) Instructional Approaches

a) Describe the instructional approach(es) you take in your English methods course.

    i. How would you categorize those instructional approaches (check all that

    apply): survey, workshop, experience-based, theoretical, reflective, other

ii. How, if at all, are you evaluated on how well you "use a variety of methods for conveying the material?"

7) Standards

    a) How does the English methods course, if at all, address and incorporate standards (state: OAS-ELA and national: NCTE)?

        i. How does your English methods course syllabus, if at all, model standards inclusion/alignment?

        ii. Describe key assignments and assessments you use in the course, if any, that help "candidates plan instruction and design assessments" that are "standards-based" (NCTE, 2012).

        iii. How do you include a critical orientation to the standards? And if you don't, why?

        iv. How do you introduce content standards? And if you don't, why?

        w. "How do you have candidates compare different standards (e.g. their state standards with those of other states or with the NCTE or INTASC standards) and discuss their history?" And if you don't, why? (Pasternak et al., 2014).

        vi. How, if at all, has your course changed due to new standards adoption (OAS-ELA in Fall 2016 and NCTE in 2012)?

5) OSAT Preparation

    b) How does the English methods course, if at all, prepare teacher candidates for the Oklahoma Subject Area Test (OSAT) in English?

        i. What is the sequence in the program for taking the test?

ii. What type of formal test preparation happens, if any?

iii. How, if at all, are teacher candidates aware of the competencies they are tested on?

iv. How does assessment data inform the instruction of candidate preparation: at the program level?

v. How does assessment data inform the instruction of candidate preparation: at the state-level?

vi. How, if at all, has your course changed due to the new OSAT test redevelopment (English 007 to English 107)?

6) What curricular changes, if any, have you made to the course due to educational policies?

Appendix D

Instrument 3. Interview Protocol (Phase III. Follow-Up Member Check)

Hi, and thank you for agreeing to participate in the research study about the secondary English methods course in Oklahoma teacher preparation programs; specifically in its instructional approaches, its inclusion and alignment to standards-based instruction, and its focus on the state subject-area teacher certification assessment. Using a qualitative, multiple-case descriptive study, the study will seek to provide a statewide description of how future English teachers are prepared. You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a listed English methods course instructor from an approved secondary English education program in Oklahoma.

Part of my research interest is due to me also being an English teacher educator and English methods course instructor in Oklahoma. So, it is my responsibility to share my assumptions, biases, and considerations that shape my methodological choices (Athanases & Heath, 1995, p. 278). My teaching career began in 2006, so it has always been informed by educational reform-- from A Nation at Risk (1983) to Goals 2000 to No Child Left Behind (2001) to the Common Core State Standards (2010)-- whether I was aware of their influence or not. So what I value in research is the blending of English content, pedagogy, and teacher preparation. I am interested in "making sense" of what works in the English methods course since my own experiences, as well as informal conversations with peers in the profession, provide a preliminary understanding of how I teach the undergraduate secondary English methods course, but ultimately, I am interested in the experiences of others who also design the course.

Let me first confirm that you have signed the Informed Consent. For your information, data storage will be on a password-protected computer and paper copies will be stored securely in locked file cabinets when not in use. Your research subject anonymity will be masked by assigned attribute codes. Let me also remind you that your participation is voluntary and you may stop at any time if you feel uncomfortable, and (3) I do not intend to inflict any harm. Also, the study does not aim to evaluate your techniques or experiences, but rather I am trying to learn more about our state's unique context to aid in the understanding of how English teacher educators (in the English methods course) are preparing teacher candidates for teaching in today's classroom. I have planned this interview to last no longer than one hour. During this time, I have several follow-up questions that I would like to cover from the syllabus and questionnaire you submitted. If time begins to run short, it may be necessary to interrupt you in order to push ahead and complete this line of questioning.

Thank you again for your participation. Do you have any specific questions for me or about the study? My goal is to complete data analysis in the Spring and have my dissertation finished by May. At the conclusion of the study you will have the right to request feedback about the results. A goal of the study is to use the statewide description of the secondary English methods course to identify common goals, instructional approaches, resources, and to celebrate their unique context and content in a state. In addition, there may be an opportunity to publish the findings in an academic journal or conference presentation. You may contact the faculty advisor, Dr. Christian Z. Goering, cgoering@uark.edu or me, Lara Searcy, larasearcy@gmail.com if you have any questions. Thank you again.