BECOMING TEACHERS OF ENGLISH-LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN TWO MULTICULTURAL COUNTRIES: NARRATIVES FROM PRESERVICE TEACHERS IN THE UNITED STATES AND MALAYSIA

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by
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ABSTRACT

This study explores the experience of becoming English teachers in two multicultural countries through narratives from preservice teachers in the United States and Malaysia. In general, the United States and Malaysia share similarities in the demographic landscapes whereby both are the multicultural countries whose populations consisted of people from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. With regards to English language, it possesses a crucial role in both countries. In the United States, it is the medium of instructions in schools. In Malaysia, it holds a status of the nation second language; compulsory to be learnt in schools from K-12. This study investigates the experiences of becoming teachers of the English-Language Learners in the United States and Malaysia where a growing number of student populations come from the diverse linguistic and cultural background while the majority of teacher population is from the mainstreams backgrounds. A narrative inquiry approach guided this study using narratives written by a total of nine preservice teachers including four from the United States and five from Malaysia. Data analysis revealed four major themes: (1) Personal development (2) Developing Relationship (3) Professional Development and (4) Pedagogical Practices. The findings indicate that there are differences in the sense of preparedness between the preservice teachers in the two countries as well as the nature of curricular experiences.
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Chapter 1

Introduction

This study focuses on the experience of learning to become teachers of the English-Language Learners in two multicultural countries namely the United States and Malaysia. The purpose of this exploratory study is to understand the preservice teachers’ preparatory experience of learning to become teachers of the English-Language Learners in their respective countries. It is based on the premise that knowledge gained from this study would afford new insights and so inform the English teacher preparation practice in Malaysia. This study employed the qualitative narrative research methodology to illustrate the phenomenon under examination. Participants of this study consisted of nine preservice teachers from both countries; four from the United States and five from Malaysia. All of them are enrolled in the teacher education program offered by the universities in their respective countries. This study begins with an overview of the background as well as the context that frames the study. It is followed by the problem statement, the statement of purpose and accompanying research questions. This chapter also included researcher’s own background that also helps to frame this study. This chapter concludes with the discussion of the propose rationale and significance of this study as well as the definitions of some of the key terminology used.

The United States and Malaysia share similarities in the demographic landscapes whereby both are the multicultural countries whose populations consisted of people from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This contributes to the richness of the
cultural and linguistic experience of the people in both countries. This study is an attempt to explore two fundamental areas in the education setting in both countries, namely the multicultural education and teacher education focusing on the preparation of the teachers of the English-Language Learners in order to understand how these two areas intersect and influence the ways teachers of the English-Language Learners are prepared in both countries. I believe that the in-depth exploration of these two areas will reveal comprehensive information that is useful in understanding the preparatory experiences of the future teachers of the English-Language Learners in the United States and Malaysia. This is crucial as my main aim is to improve the English teacher education in my country, Malaysia.

My decision to focus my lens on two areas arises based on my belief that multicultural education and teacher education are inextricably connected where the discussion on one will be incomplete without including the other. Thus, this study holds a belief that a discussion on English teacher preparation will be imperfect if the topic of multicultural education and teacher education are omitted or absence and this applies to the way I view these issues both in the United States and Malaysia. This belief has become the foundation of my study and it informs the type of literature that I choose to review and the discussion done based on the findings of this study.

As mentioned earlier, my interest in this study is based on the need to understand the preparatory experience of learning to become teachers of English-Language Learners in the United States and Malaysia. In this study, I specifically explore the preservice teachers’ perceptions of characteristics of good teachers and good teachers of the English-Language Learners in both countries. Moreover, this study explores their
perceptions of being the English-Language Learners in the United States and Malaysia. With regards to their preparatory experience, this study reveals the aspects of preparation curriculum that shape the personal and professional development regarding multiculturalism in their teacher education program in two countries. This understanding serves as a platform in suggesting instructional reform in teacher education in Malaysia especially in the aspects of English language teaching and learning and multiculturalism.

**Background and Context**

**The United States**

The preparation of the teachers of the English-Language Learners is fundamental as “many current teachers were not adequately prepared to address the cultural and linguistic differences evident in most U.S. classroom” (Rios and van Olphen, 2011, p.164). Furthermore, while over 40% of the teachers in the United States reported that they have bilingual students in their classrooms, only a mere of 12.5% of those teachers received at least eight hours of professional training regarding language diversity within the three-year period. (National Center for Education Statistics, [NCES], 2002 cited in Rios and van Olphen, 2010, p.164). This discrepancy makes English teacher preparation program critical and fundamental. Future teachers of the English-Language Learners in the United States should acquire not only the competency in teaching the subject content well but also should possess “cultural competency skills to avoid misunderstanding,
lower expectations, deficit thinking and attitudes dismissing cultural and linguistic capital” (Rios and van Olphen, 2011,p.164).

Another issue in preparing teacher of the English-Language Learners is on their ideologies regarding students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Ideologies according to Shkedi & Nissan (2006) can be perceived as “an organized set of beliefs, attitudes, ideas, opinions, assumptions, and theories supporting particular educational, social and political viewpoint” (as cited in Flores, Sheets & Clark, 2010, p.74). Ideologies are used by both individuals and groups to choose and preserve personal attitudes, purposes and goals where they provide “internal, consistent, habitual thinking patterns enabling believe and values to fit tightly together into a total, often unconscious, mental structure” (Shkedi & Nissan , 2006 as cited in in Flores, Sheets & Clark, 2010, p.74). Ideologies do “not require eternal endorsement or sanction” because they “possess a priori authority and are self-validating” (Shkedi & Nissan, 2006,p.689).

Among issue discussed in the teacher education is the ideology of the preservice teachers regarding teaching the English-Language Learners. It is mentioned how the preservice teachers’ presumptions about the students’ characteristics, the nature of curriculum and what determines good teaching are hard to be modified (Sheets et.al ,2010,p.75) even though some research suggest that they can be changed at a completion of particular coursework (Cochran-Smith 2001; Sleeter, 2001). Sheets et.al (2010) are not convinced that “extremely personal, deeply embedded ideological positions can be changed through a single diversity course” (p. 75). Work by McDiarmid (1992) and McDiarmid and Price (1990) proven this notion where it “reveals that multicultural training programs in
America seems either to make little impact on teacher-to-be or, worse, they actually reinforce minority group stereotyping” (Edwards, 2010, p.3).

The second area of concern in preparing future English teachers in the United States is the teacher’s professional identity. This is due to the fact that “much of teacher preparation involves the development of a professional identity, centering on the helping candidates develop the sense of self as teacher and refining that identity throughout their career” (Rios and van Olphen, 2011, p.165). This is where the preservice teachers develop the readiness of becoming teachers of the English-Language Learners as one of their professional identities. In order for this to happen, they need preparations that will assist them in being good teachers amidst the mass of linguistic and cultural identities of the students from diverse backgrounds in their classrooms. Cummins (2001) highlighted the connection between identity and practice where teachers’ identity is seen as concrete resources for a “continual interaction of identity development and language learning” (Rios and van Olphen, 2011, p.166). This will give impact on their approach to the curriculum and instruction in their future classrooms. The idea of professional identity is fundamental especially in dealing with identity-related issues in schools in the United States.

Related to the issue of identity, among prominent issues discussed in the teacher education in the United States is what is known as “demographic imperative”. Central to the issue is the dissimilarity between the teachers and the students in the United States. Research literature highlights that teachers and teacher educators in the United States are White, female, middle class and speak English as their native language (see Banks et al., 2005; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Nieto, 2005; Sleeter, 2001; Valli, 1996a; Villegas &
Davis, 2008; Weiner, 2002). This is in contrast with the populations of students who are getting culturally and linguistically diverse each and every day. The questions arise from this phenomenon is how can teacher education prepare these future teachers to teach multicultural English-Language Learners in their future classrooms and how can this be done in a meaningful ways that encourage commitment to the diversity beyond the cliché of educating “all children”?

Educating “all children” is a belief that “all students” should get equal access and opportunity to education without considering what those educational access and opportunity are and who they actually privileged. It is a belief that diversity should not have impact on “all students”. “All students” are assumed to be able to achieve equally if they are provided with teachers who are proficient in their subject matter. This is known as color-blindness where teachers fail “to consider their own and their students’ racial background and think carefully about how race can and does emerge in classroom learning opportunities” (Milner, 2010, p.16). It happens when teachers fail or refuse to acknowledge the pervasiveness of race, culture and language in their work as teachers for fear that thing will become complicated. This is another issue that teachers of the English-Language Learners in the United States have to grapple with. The impact of color-blindness in the curriculum and instruction in schools are students from diverse background will unable to see the relevancy of curriculum to their life as it is constructed using a “‘business as usual’ approach” (Milner, 2010,p.16). Most of the times, they are expected to assimilate into the mainstream culture and language which seems to send a powerful message that their cultural background and heritage language are insignificant or worse still are not welcomed in schools. This brings conflict to learners especially in
their struggle to maintain their identity and at the same time to excel in school as both do not seem to complement each other. Of course, it’s true that knowing English and learning it well is essential to success in schools. What needs to be challenged here is the assumption that “one must discard one’s identity along the way” (Nieto, 2010, p.271) and teachers play vital roles here to make this possible in multicultural classrooms.

Another important issue in multicultural education in the United States is how multicultural education should go beyond ‘Heroes and Holidays” approach which seems to be too superficial to really have a lasting impact on the students and schools (Banks, 1991; Sleeter, 1991). Thus, scholars like Nieto (2010), believes that multicultural education is pervasive. It should not be treated as an add-on in a form of a set period of a day or a subject area that has to be covered. It should be strong and pervasive enough to permeate everything: “the school climate, physical environment, curriculum, and relationship among teachers, and students and community” (Nieto, 2009, p. 75). Rather than being a margin, multicultural education should be made mainstream, viewed in a comprehensive way that eventually could lead to school reform. A belief that multicultural education can be implemented effectively without fundamental change in schools or a classroom is precarious as it provides an inconsequential status to multicultural education in schools. This is another challenge that future teachers have to face in learning to become teachers in United States.

The issues above provide challenges to teacher educators in preparing the future teachers of the English-Language Learners to face these challenges in their future classrooms. Future teachers need to develop awareness “of the influence of culture and language on learning, the persistence of racism and discriminations in schools and
society, and instructional and curricular strategies that encourage learning among a wide variety of students” (Nieto, 2010, p.78). This commitment is necessary in making schools a welcoming place for learning to take place among the English-Language Learners.

Malaysia

Teacher education in Malaysia is centralized where it is put under the responsibility of two government Ministries, namely the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education. The Ministry of Higher Education is responsible in training and preparing the secondary school teachers through the government–funded higher education institution while the Ministry of Education is given the task to train the primary school teachers through the Institute of teacher education.

Gaudart (1988) highlighted some of the issues pertaining the preparation of teachers of the English-Language Learners in Malaysia. It is based on the content analysis of documents and interviews with the teacher trainers in teacher training colleges and the universities, the ministry official from the Ministry of Education, the school principals, the language lecturers, the language curriculum officer and teacher educators in local universities in Malaysia. It is mentioned that among prominent concerns about the preparation of the English teachers in Malaysia is on the issue of language proficiency of the preservice teachers themselves where there was unanimous agreement among all people interviewed that the majority of the preservice teachers of the English-Language Learners in Malaysia had low proficiency in English. Some mentioned their concerns about the language ability of the preservice teachers where some of them even had a
lower language than their pupils. They also lamented of how teacher educators had to do a lot of remedial works to improve the proficiency of the English preservice teachers.

Besides, the teacher educators also complained of the time constraint in teaching the preservice teachers where they mentioned about cramming the lessons on language and methodology in a short period of time. Thus, the preservice teachers had no time for further and deeper reading on these two areas. The main reason for this to happen was the overwhelming amount of general educational theories that the preservice teachers had to learn in class where reducing them would enable for more time to be allocated to learn about the language and the methodology components.

Like teachers in the United States, teachers in Malaysia too grapple with the issue of race and language in its teacher education. As a multicultural country, the people possess multicultural and multilingual heritage, unique to their own custom, tradition and cultural legacy. Here, the teachers in Malaysia are expected to be able to utilize education as a channel to sustain the nation’s cultural heritage and foster unity among the diverse citizens. This is hoped to be achieved through nurturing the sense of pride towards the nation’s diversified culture which eventually nurture patriotism and appreciation of the country’s diversity nature. Nonetheless, the main issue in teacher education in Malaysia is, there is an absence of multicultural element at the teacher education level (Malakolunthu, Siraj, Rengasamy, 2010) How does the government expect the teachers to carry out this vision if they are not prepared to do so at the training level? Though the awareness of multiculturalism is stated in the nation’s education philosophy as well as in its’ teacher education philosophy, it is vaguely translated at the teacher preparation level. As a result, it lacks serious implementation at teacher training level in Malaysia. Thus far,
though there are efforts to add the multicultural-related subjects at the undergraduate or graduate level courses, they “were constructed as additive to education rather than infused into the curriculum and instruction” (Yusof, 2005, p.103). Research found that there was a deficit in the multicultural practices in the Malaysian schools. Among concerns stated by the teachers in the area of multicultural education were: (a) teachers did not know or understand what multicultural education was; (b) teachers did not know how to use effective multicultural education practices; (c) teachers were not motivated to learn effective multicultural education practices and; (d) teachers did not realize their full responsibilities as educators to use effective multicultural education practices. (Yusof, 2005, p.103).

Literature regarding multicultural teacher education in Malaysia distinctly showed that teachers lack clear knowledge, direction and understanding of what multicultural education is all about (Yusof, 2005; Malakolunthu, 2009). In-service teachers seemed to question the relevance of using the multicultural curriculum in their classrooms when they themselves do not know what multicultural education is. This paucity can be pinpointed to many reasons. One of them is the minimum exposure towards multiculturalism in the teacher education programs in Malaysia. Teachers were informed about the multicultural concepts and practices solely based on their own interests or through incentives of their own schools or district administrators. Cultural diversity was not a clearly defined educational issue when many of these teachers started their teaching professions. This is due the fact that the Malaysian education system does recognize the multicultural aspects of the society as being mentioned in the National Education Philosophy but failed to implement a fully multicultural education system in
its teacher education curriculum. Again, it is worth highlighting here that the teacher education system in Malaysia is a centralized system whereby a Teacher Education Division at the Ministry of Education Malaysia decides courses or subjects that should be taught to the pre-service teachers throughout Malaysia. Obviously there was no multicultural education courses offered and the effect is clearly seen now as teachers are ignorant about multicultural education and unable to use it in a multicultural classroom setting.

Another issue highlighted in the study is the misconception of the idea of what multicultural education is in the teacher education in Malaysia. Teachers reported that they did learn something about the multicultural education at their undergraduate or graduate courses but these courses were only constructed as ‘additive’ to education rather than being infused into the curriculum and instruction (Yusof, 2005). The problem of multicultural education being constructed as additive in teacher education is teachers tend to treat as merely a subject that they have to learn in order to pass the exam or obtain teaching certificates and not something that they have to internalize as crucial attribute to become effective teachers in multicultural classrooms. As a result, teachers remain less sensitive towards the issue of multiculturalism despite exposure received through the additive subject on multicultural education in their teacher education program. This makes the process of school reform difficult to achieve. Furthermore, a few teachers also reported that they had completed a course labeled as ‘multicultural education’ which was actually more of an ‘ethnic’ course which did not address the aspect of “multicultural education inclusive of people, policies, programs, processes and practices” (Yusof, 2005,p.104) .Thus, it fails to elucidate the purpose and the meaning of the multicultural
education to the teachers to enable them to make it as part of their teaching strategies in multicultural classrooms.

The deficit of multicultural element in the teacher education in Malaysia is worth investigated further. This is because teachers need to have the ability to “infuse culturally responsible and responsive pedagogy across the curriculum and throughout the school environment to ensure equitable learning opportunities for all students” (Yusof, 2005, p.107). As teachers become more sensitive of the multicultural demographic landscape of their classrooms, it will help them to plan instructional strategies that not only help students learn better but also value and respect the cultural diversity of the students in their classroom.

**Statement of the problem**

English language possesses crucial role in both countries especially in the field of education. In the United States, it is a language of communication and instructions in schools. It is a second language for learners whose first language is not English. In Malaysia, it holds a status of nation second language; compulsory to be learnt in schools. Furthermore, it is also perceived as “valuable source for individual dignity, a prerequisite for further learning in many areas of knowledge ,and a key skill needed for many occupations” (Azman, 1999,p. 303). The previous section on background and context indicates that there are significant challenges in becoming teachers of the English-Language Learners in the United States and Malaysia due to the points of intersection
among education, socioeconomic background, identities as well as the linguistic and cultural backgrounds in multicultural settings, unique for each country. Furthermore, in learning to become teachers in multicultural countries, there is also an indication that the multicultural training program during the preparatory level makes little impact on the preservice teachers in both countries (McDiarmid & Price, 1990, Yusof, 2005). These challenges could affect the overall teaching and learning processes where the ill-prepared teachers with regards to the area of linguistic and cultural variation will cause impediments to learning that eventually could curtail formal education and reduce the learners’ chances to excel in school as well as beyond school gates. Due to this concern, it is felt that this topic worth being explored and studied further.

In the United States, the question revolves around preparing the preservice teachers to meet the academic, social and linguistics needs of the multicultural English-Language Learners. In Malaysia, the fundamental issue is the ability of the preservice teachers to deal with multicultural English-Language Learners in schools without the basic foundational knowledge related to English-Language Learners and multiculturalism. All these issues require good teacher education program that able to assist the preservice teachers to become good teachers amidst the challenges of teaching English to students from diverse background in both countries. This section discusses the concerns that United States and Malaysia have in the area of English as a second language, teacher education and multiculturalism with regards to preparing their future English teachers.
Statement of purpose and research questions

The purpose of this study is to explore with the nine preservice teachers from the United States and Malaysia their preparatory experience of becoming teachers of the English-Language Learners. To explore this issue, the following research questions are addressed:

An over-arching question is:

How do preservice teachers make sense of their preparatory experiences learning to become teachers of the English-Language Learners in the United States and Malaysia?

The four research questions are:

1. What does it mean to be a good teacher?
2. What does it mean to be a good teacher to the English-Language Learners?
3. What does it mean to be an English Language Learner?
4. What aspects of teacher preparation curriculum prompted personal and professional progression towards multiculturalism for preservice teachers in United States and Malaysia?

Personal Experiences of Becoming Teacher of English-Language Learners

My background as an English teacher in my own multicultural country, Malaysia, exposes me to many struggles in teaching multicultural students in my own classrooms. My first awareness of the issue of multiculturalism was raised when I was a preservice teacher in Malaysia. Being an undergraduate at a very prestigious university in Malaysia
(University of Malaya) specializing in Teaching of English as a Second Language (B.Ed. TESL), I was confident that I was fully prepared to face all the challenges in the real classrooms. Never did I realize that the challenge that I was going to face required more than the ability to teach and be a good teacher—which were mostly what I learnt from my undergraduate classes. The truth dawn upon me the moment I stepped my feet into the school compound and realized that it was a multicultural all boys missionary school. Most of the students there were Chinese and Indian students and the staffs too were mostly teachers from diverse backgrounds. Being a Malay, female, Muslim and wearing veil (the head cover), I was conscious of my own identity and how different I was from the whole populations of the school community. I found that the issues of race and language were the two main problems that I grappled most during my practicum. The cultural and language differences sometimes caused misunderstanding which eventually contributed to ineffective lessons. I was unaware at that time that my lack of background knowledge on multiculturalism plus my anxiety as a novice teacher had brought many difficulties for me as I struggled to try to understand the students, the school community that were different from my own cultural and religious background and at the same time wanting to provide an effective teaching and learning experience to the diverse learners who were eager to learn from me. Now, as a graduate student, and reflecting on my own experience and struggle with the issue of diversity, I come to realize the importance of knowledge in multiculturalism and diversity in the teacher preparation programs as the communities in my country are getting more diverse each and every day. The absence of specific multicultural teacher education curriculum in my own country is the main reason that sparks my interested in this topic and I view my presence here as a doctoral student
as an opportunity to learn about more about this topic as I want to contribute my knowledge in this field for the benefit of the education system in my Malaysia.

The Malaysian education system is a centralized system run by the Ministry of Education Malaysia. The centralized system allows the Ministry to supervise every aspect regarding the education in Malaysia including the curriculum and instruction processes, the co-curriculum activities in schools, the teacher education as well as the teacher placement processes. My real teaching career started as I was posted at one of the boarding schools in Malaysia. Unlike my experience during my practicum, I perceived my work as less challenging as I was teaching at a good boarding school where the students were consisted of the selected all-Malay students coming from all over Malaysia. At that time, I remembered spending a lot of time writing lesson plans, creating activities for my students and marking their works and I thought that I had done a good job helping them learning English and obtaining excellent grades in the national level examination. However, in 2008, the government of Malaysia decided to accept 30 students from Southern Thailand into the school that I taught. The task of teaching English was given to me and I perceived this as the beginning of the real challenge in my teaching profession. I discovered in my first meeting with them that these students could only converse in their mother tongue (i.e. Thai) and nothing else. Teaching English to these students challenge my teaching skill and ability where I kept trying to recall all the theories and pedagogical techniques that I had been taught during my teaching training years at the university in order to understand their learning problems so that I could help them to learn English better. This is when I realize the importance of a teacher to have the
skill and the knowledge as researcher too as these challenges can be a platform for the teachers to evaluate and improve their teaching skills and abilities.

As these students complaint about their difficulties in learning the language, I suspected that their struggles in learning the language are not only due to the lack of English learning exposure that they got in their own country but also due to the different cultural background that they bring with them into my classroom. From here I realized that language and culture are interrelated and do vital play roles in the process of teaching and learning in a multicultural classroom. This has sparked my own curiosity to go deeper into this problem and has become the starting point of my real interest in the topic of multicultural education.

I believe that teachers’ absence of awareness of multiculturalism and the diversity is the main cause of difficulty and misunderstanding in the process of teaching the multicultural students. This is because many presumptions and misconceptions tend to arise due to the teachers’ minimal knowledge in this area. The perception that diversity brings obstacle to teachers and eventually becomes a potential cause of educational disadvantage is also common in the discussion on the topic of multicultural education, teacher education as well as in discussing the English language teaching and learning process. As teachers’ self-fulfilling prophecy plays a vital roles in the performance level of the students, I believe that the teachers’ positive conception of their English-Language Learners (ELLs) is fundamental here in order to enable teachers to perceive linguistic diversity not as something ‘problematic’ but as an ‘advantageous’ in the second language classrooms.
Rationale of the Study

Based on my own experience being trained as an English teacher in Malaysia and my recent reading of studies done on teacher education in Malaysia, I believe that teacher education programs in Malaysia still lack clarity as well as in implementations in dealing with the issue of multiculturalism in its education system. This poses significant challenges to teachers who take main responsibility in educating English-Language Learners. This study is my attempt to address the issue by gaining insights from a culturally relevant pedagogy designed to prepare teachers of English-Language Learners at one of the Eastern Universities in the United States, its curriculum and its preservice teachers’ perception and experience of learning to become of multicultural teachers in United States. Among these pieces of information, pre-service teachers’ perceptions and experience of learning to become teachers of the English-Language Learners is then compared to the experience of their counterparts in Malaysia. The comparison is valuable in understanding the meaning of learning to become teachers in two multicultural countries. I also believe research insights gained from my study will offer new perspectives to the Malaysian policy makers, education administrators and teacher educators; who are interested in the issue of multiculturalism and still in search for better approaches to improve the existing programs that they already have or in the process of planning or developing new multicultural programs for the future teachers. Finding from my research will contribute to improving teacher education and multicultural education in the Malaysia.
Significance of the study

This study aims to explore the experience of the preservice teachers learning to become teachers in multicultural classrooms in United States and Malaysia. My main research focus is to gain insights to improve the teacher education in Malaysia. I believe the results of my study are significant in the field of Comparative and International Education research and improving teacher education in Malaysia.

First of all, this study will benefit the research field concerning comparative and international education (CIED). I view my chance to be a graduate student in Comparative and International Education and Curriculum and Instruction fields here as an advantage as my knowledge in these two fields provides me with the ability to view various educational issues from multiple lenses and able to understand how these issues vary and interact at a local and/or global level. In addition, the complexity of carrying out a comparative study that involves two countries makes this study rare, valuable and useful as not many scholars have to the ability and the chance to carry it out successfully. Thus, I hope that my dissertation will be able to contribute not only to the field of multiculturalism and teacher education in the United States and Malaysia, but also to the field of comparative and International globally.

Secondly, my personal experience carrying out research on Malaysia makes me aware of the difficulties in obtaining recent research papers written on the issues of multiculturalism and teacher education on Malaysia. This has informed me that not many people are writing about my country and it inspires me to contribute more to the
Malaysian research field. I do hope that my dissertation would be able to fill up this deficit which eventually would lead to the betterment of the education system in Malaysia.

**Limitation of the Study**

The limitation of the study is the small number of participants from the United States and Malaysia. Only the experiences of the nine participants in this study are present in the findings. Although I have access to a lot of data from other preservice teachers in CI 280 classes, their experiences, beliefs, opinions and points of views were not investigated. Furthermore, this study utilized narratives written by the preservice teachers in both countries as data. Thus, only experiences expressed in the narratives are represented in the findings.

**Definitions of Key Terms**

*English Language Learner* – Student whose first language is other than English and is in the process of learning English

*Preservice teacher*- A person who has declared an education major but has not yet completed his/her training to be a teacher
Multicultural – relating to, or constituting several cultural or ethnic groups within society
(Concise Oxford American Dictionary, 2006, p.582)
Multilingual- in or using several languages (Concise Oxford American Dictionary, 2006, p.582)
Multiculturalism - is a realization that people from different cultures can co-exist peacefully and equitably in one country without having to resolve to a sole national culture. (Betancourt and Zaw, 2003, p.74)
Multicultural Education - purports to incorporate “the idea that all students—regardless of their gender, social class, ethnic, racial, or cultural characteristics – should have an equal opportunity to learn in school” (Banks, 2009, p.3) and that students from diverse background have better chance to success in schools if their cultural and background characteristics are put into consideration during the teaching and learning process. (Banks, 2009, p.3)
Bumiputera- Literally translated as “son of the soil” in Malaysian context. It is a term widely used to represent the Malays in Malaysia.

Chapter Summary

This chapter is consisted of several sections namely statement of the problem, rationale of the study, research questions, significance of the study, limitation of the study and definition of key terms. This study is navigated by the overarching research
question, “How do preservice teachers make sense of their preparatory experiences learning to become teachers of the English-Language Learners in the United States and Malaysia?”

The second chapter is consisted of the literature review in which the issue of multiculturalism, multicultural education, teacher education and preparing good teachers of the English-Language Learners in the United States and Malaysia are delineated in details. It provides the theoretical framework to examine the data. The third chapter provides descriptions of qualitative methods used for data collection and data analysis. Chapter four is the write up on the findings and chapter five provides discussions on the findings as well as the implications and recommendation for future research.
Chapter 2

Literature Review

This chapter synthesizes the current knowledge base on development and issues in the comparative education, the multicultural education and teacher education in the United States and Malaysia. In this chapter, I explain the concept of comparison in the comparative education as my study involves a comparative study of teacher education in two countries. It is followed by the key aspects of multicultural education and teacher education in the two countries. These aspects include sociocultural and political backgrounds of each country and the relevance of multicultural teacher education in the education systems in both countries. Lastly I include the literature written on what makes a good teacher of the English-Language Learners in both countries. Although this literature goes beyond and above the scope of my dissertation study, I believe providing background knowledge to multicultural education and teacher education in the United States and Malaysia is critical to understand the issues and research most pertinent to my dissertation study.

Comparative Education

Comparative education is defined as “a field developed broadly to the study of education in other countries” (Kelly, Altbach, and Arno, 1982, p.505). Bereday (1964), provided further explanation to the definition by asserting that comparative education is doing analytical examination of education system in other countries by having “intellectual purpose” where the main aim was “to search for lesson that can be
deducted from the variations in educational practice in different societies” (p.xi). The field of comparative education integrates multiple disciplines (e.g., political science or sociology) to examine education system in developed and developing countries where it encourages the readers to intellectually “question our education systems and to examine how societal values influence our attitudes about education and how we educate” (Kubow and Fossum, 2003). Harold Noah and Max Eckstein who are the prominent figures in the field of comparative education, offered a compact definition of comparative education where it is defined as “the intersection of the social sciences, education and cross-national study” (Trethewey, 1976, p.2). Noah and Eckstein, during the 60s and 70s tried to implement the scientific method in the comparative education field as a way to increase its’ credibility as a field of study. This is important to ensure that the comparative education field will stay relevance and useful especially to the educational policy planners, administrators, and funders (Trethewey, 1976). However, many scholars argued that the scientific method is not the answer to the credibility of the research done on comparative education as researcher should not ignore “the human and the socio-cultural element which often defies predictability” (King, 1968, p.62). Therefore, King proposed that comparative education research should consider “both rationality and half-rationality of those who inhabit schools and those who study them” (King as cited in Kubow & Fossum, 2003, p.12). On that point, the important message that can be derived here is that a comparative education research in schools provide balance perspectives on any issue that being studied where it takes into considerations the point of views of both—the people who inhabit the schools (school administrators, teachers, students) as well as the people who study them (the researchers). This is particularly crucial
especially if the comparative education research done involves two different countries with many apparent differences between both. Multidimensional perspectives from different people will be needed in providing wholesome and balance viewpoints of the issue studied which will contribute to the lucidity of the findings.

The field of comparative education values the critical inquiry ways of looking at issues or dilemma where “it can help bring the interested inquirer into a deeper examination of tension, among society, development, and education and the roles that citizen, either directly or indirectly, play in the educative process” (Kubow & Fossum, 2003, p.6). Furthermore, by looking at the educational issues from perspectives of two diverse countries, a researcher will be able to identify some fundamental factors that might be missed when viewing the similar issue within the context of his or her own country alone. (Kubow and Fossum, 2003) This is important especially if some of the missing factors are potentially useful in improving the education system in one’s own country.

One prominent characteristic of the comparative study is how it centers on the educational cross-cultural and cross-national perspectives. Spring (2008) defines “culture” as “socially transmitted behavior patterns, ways of thinking and perceiving the arts, beliefs, institutions, and all other products of human work and thought” (p.3). Culture is the element that shaped and guided human’s “beliefs, ideologies, and ways of knowing, preferences and practices” (Milner, 2010, p.1). Culture is embedded in each and every one of us where it can also be shaped by the social context of education (Milner, 2010, p.1). As culture influenced human’s ways of thinking and perceiving about work and thought, it can be derived that culture too influences education and
educational issues where these two areas should wisely be examined “in the light of culturally determined needs, objectives, and conditions” (Raivola, 1985, p.362). Comparative education open up our horizon of looking at the educational issues based on what Hayhoe and Mundy (2008) identify as “comparative impulses” (p.1). It is an attempt to understand and improve our own education system by studying others. According to Trethewey (1976), comparative education “may take the form of study of responses in other societies to problems that appear very (much) similar like the ones that you recognize in your own educational system” (p.2). It is hoped that by exploring the educational value system of other countries through the comparative method will enable researcher to evaluate one’s own culture and educational values. (Kubow and Fossum, 2003). From here, constructive steps can be taken to improvise one’s own education system where Epstein (1983) suggested that comparative education can be utilized to reform schools. This is because, he feels that comparative education not only provide deeper understanding through the process of critical questioning but also contributes to practical benefit that can be derived from the comparative study done on education system of other countries. The concept of comparison is important here where it is defined as “a process of studying two or more things to see how they are alike or different – gives attention to certain aspects through the copresence of the other” (Eckstein, 1983). Thus the process of comparison is crucial in the educational research as it challenge the researchers to be less judgmental of other foreign educational systems that they might base on their own restricted, limited as well as localized point of views. In other words, comparative education enables researchers to view and analyze
educational issues not only from the home culture standpoint, but also open up their scope of perspectives to various other cultural factors at play.

Policy and politics are intermingled with education in many ways. Another important characteristic of comparative education is how the field encourages researchers to analyze the policy and the politics aspects of the issues by asking “What kinds of educational policy planning, and teaching are appropriate for what kind of society?” (Kubow and Fossum, 2003, p.6). The discussion on policy will then reveal important information such as the appropriateness of implementing certain educational policy in certain society or country as the question of ideology will be the main underlying factor for the implementation to work. Therefore, researchers learn to be politically conscious of the political interplay that affects the education system of the society or the country that they are studying.

In short, a comparative study of a particular educational issue is one of the ways to examine the issue in depth. This is because the comparative method provides broader perspectives and sharpens the focus of the educators or researchers from different countries who view similar issues and strategies employed to address them but from different cultural, social and political context uniquely based on each country studied (Kubow and Fossum, 2003).
Concept of comparison and cross-cultural comparison

The concept of comparison is imperative in the comparative study. Raivola (1985) offers some insights into the concept of comparison where she believes that the purpose of comparison is not only for the purpose of constructing an explanatory but also it is more to be used to bracket references to which varying observation can be related.

Farell (1979) cautioned researchers that the concept of comparability should not be confused with the idea of sameness. He further explained this by quoting J.S. Mill who asserts that the process of convergence and divergence as crucial in establishing a causal relationship. Thus, he believed that “the phenomena under the comparison may be alike in all properties except one, and they may also be different in all but one of their properties” Therefore Mill believes that there is no logical reason why the comparison made should be based only on the principles of convergence (Farell, 1979, as cited in Raivola, 1985, p. 364).

Cross-cultural comparison

Culture has become a most likely subject of comparison in educational research due to its diverse nature among the communities and its effects on the teaching and learning processes. Thus, this calls for what is known as cross-cultural comparison in educational research where culture-specific values have to be recognized in analyzing individual communities’ value systems. On top of that, cross-cultural comparison “demands that a theoretical concept be expressible by a different operational counterpart, with its culture-specific features, for each culture under comparison” (Raivoli, 1995, p.
So, in short, the main function of cross-cultural comparison is to reveal institutions and their functions that are non-existent within some other culture. (Raivola, 1985, p.364) In advocating the concept of cross-cultural comparison in education, Farell (1979) exhorted that “each hypothesis concerning education calls for cross-cultural treatment” where he asserted that “a claimed relationship hold true in a given community is not particularly useful unless the nature of that relationship is understood”(Farell,1979, as cited in Raivola,1985,p.365). Here, the comparative research is being used to demonstrate the ethnocentric nature of the issue and not merely used as a tool for technical elaboration only. Cross-cultural comparison help researcher to look at issues heuristically where “it enables terms to be more precisely formulated, helps in the classification of phenomena and points to testable hypothesis”. (Raivola, 1985, p.365) However, in conducting an international cross-cultural comparison, researchers should be aware that their assumptions, their own cultural background and systems of values could cause prejudice and cultural bias in the process of gathering and analyzing the data. A systematic basis for the comparison is needed to curb this prejudice in cross-cultural research.

Nowak (1977) has illuminated five types of relations that should become a basis for the comparison of issues or phenomena in comparative educational research which relies on the concept of equivalence or correspondence. These relations are: (a) phenomenon are observed or judged in the same way in different cultures (cultural equivalence), (b) the objects of comparison (people or institution) are part of a higher level of systems that have earlier been defined as equivalents (contextual equivalence), (c) the objects have the same role in the functioning of the system( functional equivalence),
(d) phenomena correlate empirically in the same way with the criteria of variables (correlative equivalence), and (e) the phenomena under comparison derive from the same source, namely the same conceptual class (genetic equivalence).

Research comparing different cultures is complex due to the multifaceted nature of the cultures themselves. Warwick and Osherson (1977) delineate a few fundamental questions to be asked in conducting cross-cultural research where the main question is whether it is all possible to compare different social and/or cultural systems and unit scientifically. They proceeded by dividing the question into three parts namely:

(a) Do the concepts under comparison correspond? In this first question, they stressed that certain concepts have identical definitions but their meanings are construed in a different way in different contexts. They gave examples of the concepts of ‘formal education’ which can portray different situation in different cultures. (b) How is the correspondence of measurements to be assessed? Here, Warwick and Osherson (1977) again encouraged researcher to question the valid indicators for concepts that they plan to adopt in their research as most concepts are often bond with culture. The example used to demonstrate this question is on the concept of ‘age’ where in some culture it is regarded as purely chronological while in some others age is seen as a socially normative factor. (c) Can the problem of how concepts are linguistically expressed be resolved? The aspects of culture and language are inextricably related where semantic ambiguities tend to happen even within same culture, let alone between diverse cultures. Thus, Warwick and Osherson (1977) caution researchers to be aware of this aspect especially if they attempt to translate international documents into different languages. They suggested the
help of the bilingual or multilingual experts to carry out this task and also the utilization of repeated translation back and forth in order to curb fuzziness.

Hamlyn (1974) then suggested that in order to achieve some degree of understanding of foreign culture, the researchers have to (a) acquire inductively derived knowledge of human beings and their environment (b) think of ourselves in the position of those we are studying or known as empathetic observation (c) make observation of external properties and attempt to find out subjectively what significance they have for those under study and lastly (d) apply general (theoretical) knowledge objectively to the observations that they have made (as cited in Raivola, 1995, pp. 373-374). With that in mind, there is no phenomenon too different to be compared and researchers have to see comparative studies as chances to explore their research topic not only from their own cultural perspective but also from the viewpoint of other people in other countries who go through similar experience.

Indeed, comparative education field is crucial in analyzing educational issues or phenomena in cross-cultural context. This study is written with an intention of comparing the preparatory experience of learning to become teachers of the English-Language Learners where the main focus is on two countries, namely United States and Malaysia. Although it is much aware that both countries are dissimilar in numerous ways especially in the sociocultural and geopolitical contexts, it is still believed that the comparative study able to endow ample beneficial information regarding a comparison in the pedagogical approaches, planning and programs that have been carried out in each country. This is because amidst the differences, the United States and Malaysia share similar concerns about the trajectories of their teacher education programs that worthy a
comparison to be carried out. It is worth highlighted here that both countries have issues in their preparation of preservice teachers as well as with the training of the in-service teachers in the societies that are diverse in so many ways. Furthermore, both countries are concerned about the dilemmas that their schools have to face in dealing with the multicultural populations. Both countries are conscious that the teachers in their countries should be made aware, knowledgeable as well as committed to the philosophical and pedagogical principles which support equity and solidarity. It is hoped that the analysis of the phenomena in both countries is able to highlight the saliency of the teachers’ roles in multicultural societies in two different countries and how their beliefs and actions have the ability to either marginalize or empower the diverse people in the society. This eventually able to provide the better insight on how the issue of multiculturalism is embraced by each country through its unique education system.

**Multiculturalism**

Multiculturalism is a philosophical position and movement that assumes that the gender, ethnic, racial, cultural diversity of a pluralistic society should be reflected in all its institutionalized structure but especially in educational institutions, including the staffs, norms and values, curriculum, and student bodies (Banks& Banks, 1993). It is a realization that people from different cultures can co-exist peacefully and equitably in one country without having to resolve to a sole national culture. This is particularly applicable to ethnically and culturally diverse countries where the diversity sometimes can cause conflicts because “various group identities become more salient and these
groups tend to split” (Betancourt and Zaw, 2003, p.74). It is important for these diverse populations to realize that “cooperation and interdependence are essential to peaceful society” (Betancourt and Zaw, 2003, p.74-75). Society always believes that education is a panacea to many societal issues. People trust that education has the ability to bring social good. The similar believe applies to the issue of multiculturalism. For that reason, multicultural education exists.

Multicultural education purports to incorporate “the idea that all students—regardless of their gender, social class, ethnic, racial, or cultural characteristics – should have an equal opportunity to learn in school” (Banks, 2010, p.3). Banks (2010) believes that students from diverse background have better chance to success in schools if their cultural and background characteristics are put into consideration during the teaching and learning process. Besides that, multicultural education also is expected to be able to confront “not only issues of differences but also issues of power and privilege in the society” (Nieto, 2009, p.39). Therefore the central concept here is multicultural education as a philosophical concept as well as an educational process because it embodies the combination of the philosophical ideals of freedom, justice, equality, equity and human dignity. (Grant and Ladson-billings, 1997). In a nutshell, the fundamental tenet of the multicultural education is for an educational reform that centralized on the equal opportunity for everyone to be educated without prejudice.

The issues of multiculturalism and multicultural education are inextricably correlated as the discussion on one issue parallels the other. In the field of education, the role of teachers is pivotal in dealing with multiculturalism as they are the pillars that support the educational processes and enable all people—regardless of gender, class,
race, religion, language, sexual orientation and socio-economic background to gain benefit from it. Philosophically, the educational process is seen to be able to ‘free’ people from the boundary of prejudice and discrimination as both may seem to be in a vicious cycle, with one feeding the other. Apparently, this cycle can be broken through effective interventions. Multicultural education opens up the horizon for these inventions to be carried out in schools. For that reason, it bears noting that the effectiveness of multicultural education depends on the effectiveness of the teacher education program as the responsibility to carry out these interventions are put on the teachers’ shoulder. Multicultural education could not function effectively if the teachers are not tuned to think within the wavelength of the issue multiculturalism in schools. Thus, a more culturally responsive teacher education program will enable future teachers to be shaped to develop the sense of awareness towards multicultural issues where the issues of “culture and language on learning, the persistence of racism and discrimination in schools and society, and instructional and curriculum strategies that encourage learning among a wide variety of students” (Nieto, 2009, p.78) are cultivated and highlighted. This sensitivity and understanding is crucial in helping students to learn better as multicultural students do not come to schools as ‘blank slates’. Their ethnic and cultural and linguistic backgrounds do affect their worldview perspectives and perceptions towards many aspects of life including their perceptions towards education.
Multiculturalism in the United States

This section discusses multiculturalism in the American context. The demographic changes due to immigration that had taken place by the end of the twentieth century America had contributed many sociocultural and political changes in the country. According to Nieto (1992), immigration should not be seen as “phenomena of the past” (p. xxiv) as a lot of students in schools today, though they are not immigrants, have parents, relatives or grandparents who are immigrants. United States, therefore, is a living nation of immigrants even until today. Although the White tend to dominate the population of the country with 72.4% of the total population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011) there is an increase in the number immigrants by leaps and bounds where the number of first generation immigrants in the United States has quadrupled from 9.6 million in 1970 to 38 million in 2007. (Segal, Elliott, and Mayadas, 2010). In addition, the immigrants bring with them their own native languages and officially there are 39 language groups other than English spoken in the United States (U.S. Bureau of Census, 2011). The U.S. Census Bureau reported that there were the increase from 23 million people who speaks a language other than English in 1980 to 55 million in 2007 (U.S. Bureau of Census, 2011) where 34.5 million spoke Spanish. As there are growing shifts in the demographic and the linguistics landscape in the United States, it is clear that the education system in the United States needs to address these realities in their perspectives, curriculum, and pedagogy. Multicultural Education is the way the country attempts to infuse a multicultural perspective in its education system.
Multicultural Education in the United States

In United States, education is free and compulsory to all young people regardless of their background. Despite this ‘utopianism’, many students have not shared its benefits as ‘historically, both societal and schools conditions in the United States have been consistently, systematically and disproportionately unequal and unfair’ (Rego & Nieto, 2000, p.414). The most victimized students are those groups of students whose social class, race, language, ethnicity or religion differs from the mainstreams. They constantly faced with the problem of shifting between their own background culture and the mainstream culture of the United States. As a result, these groups of students struggle in schools and deficit theory such as cultural assimilation (where students from diverse background need to assimilate into the mainstream culture) is suggested to cure the failing rate among these students. The process of “Americanizing’ these students brought cultural dilemma where although immigrant families were more than happy to be American citizens they still value their own culture and language and were reluctant to be discard their cultural identity just to be ‘Americans’. Schools have projected themselves as assimilation agents in Americanizing the diverse students where they were taught using the curriculum and pedagogy that can be described as alien and different from the reality of their own life. This has contributed to the ongoing battle over preservation of cultures and language over the need to be educated as schooling only highlighted the mainstream history, knowledge, culture and language. Education in a multicultural society should represent the diversity in the world where it should neither be used “for de-legitimation of the knowledge of the subordinate groups nor the denigration of the
worth of individuals who are different” (Burns, 1980, p.4). Education, from the multicultural perspective, should instead be used as a channel to discover, understand and develop the skill to deal with diversity, changes as well as the conflict that may arise from being a multicultural society. This process of socialization is clearly mentioned by Freire (1970).

There is no such thing as a neutral educational process. Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of present system and bring about conformity to it, or it becomes the ‘practice of freedom’, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.

(The pedagogy of the oppressed, 1970, p.15)

Many have been written on multicultural education in the United States where different scholars in this field view the issue from various perspectives. One of the prominent scholars in multicultural education field is James Banks. Banks (2009) delineates the characteristics and the goals of Multicultural Education in most of his works where he posits that Multicultural Education should contain at least three aspects namely: “an idea or concept, an educational reform movement, and a process” (p.3). Thus he believes that:

Multicultural education is an idea, an education reform movement, and a process whose major goal is to change the structure of education institutions so that male and female students, exceptional students and students who are members of diverse racial, ethnic, language and cultural group will have equal chance to achieve academically in school (p.1).
Based on this standpoint, Banks (2009) proposes five dimensions as the tenets of multicultural education namely: “(a) knowledge constructions ; (b) content integration, (c) equity pedagogy; (d) empowering school culture ; (e) prejudice reduction”. (p.23).

*Knowledge constructions* suggested that teachers help students to “understand, investigate, and determine how the implicit cultural assumptions, frames of reference, perspectives, and biases within a discipline influence the ways in which knowledge is constructed” (Banks, 2009, p.21). The *content integration* describes the ways teachers utilize examples and content from various cultures to illustrate “key concepts, principles, generalizations, and theories” (Banks, 2009, p.20) in the subject areas that they teach.

The main objective here is for cultural content to be infused not contrived. The *equity pedagogy* happens when the teachers accommodate and adjust their teachings to suit the academic achievements of the diverse learners in their classrooms while the empowering school culture suggests the examinations of the practices in schools in order to construct school cultures which empower the diverse students. Lastly, the *prejudice reduction* discusses how teachers can assist students to develop positive attitudes towards various cultural and ethnic groups using specific lessons and activities in classrooms. In order to ensure that these dimensions are implemented successfully, Bank (2009) believes that educationists should view school as “social system” (p.22) where all aspects of the school are symbiotically interrelated. In order to successfully implementing the multicultural education in school, a total reformation of the school environment and strategies are mostly needed as the school needs a total support from the whole school community to make multicultural education works.
School reform

We can see that the idea of school reform seem to be the central discussion in the field of multicultural education in the United States. Tyack and Cuban (1995) interpreted school reforms as the blends of “political and institutional analysis” (p.7) where a political perspective indicates how people come together to publicize problems, device solutions and remedies and secure the adoption of policies by school boards and legislature. They believe that the understanding of actual implementation of reforms in schools—or lack of it, demanded insight into the idiosyncratic institutional character of schools. The issue of policy and politics are deeply intermingled in educational reforms where Tyack and Cuban (1995) agreed that school reforms are “intrinsically political in origin” (p.8). Conflicts in education are common where the issues such as ethnic, religion, racial, gender, language and class differences are ever presence. They strongly believe that “the politics of education has not been conducted on a level playing field”. Often times it is controlled by the policy elites (people who manage the economy) who they believed have “privileged access to the media and to political officials, who controlled foundations, who were educational leaders in the universities and in city of many kinds” where they tend to gain a disproportionate authority over education reform. Even though these policy elites claim to de-politicize the schools, in reality they never eliminate politics at all. In fact they even gain formidable powers through politics to “set the agenda of reform, to diagnose problems, to prescribe solutions, and often to influence what should not be on the agenda of reform” (Tyack & Cuban, 1995, p.8). This has contributed to the political dilemma in the issue of school reforms. In discussing the issue
of school reforms Tyack and Cuban (1995) acknowledge the difficulties of achieving “change” where it requires “not only political will and commitment but also an accurate understanding of schools as institutions” (p.10). Thus, they posit that change should be achieved “by working from inside out, especially by enlisting the support and skills of teachers as key actors in reform” (p.10). This positive kind of tinkering will work best with partnership with parents.

In the field of multicultural education, Nieto (2009) offers extensive discussion on the topic of school reform where she believes that everything that we do in school will be worthless unless it is run on two primary goals that are “to provide all students of all background the opportunity to learn through the equitable and high quality education; [and] to help students become critical and productive members of our democratic society” (p.30). In conjunction with these goals Nieto (2009) lists five specific implications that can be derived from them where (a) teachers have to believe that all students have the ability and worthy to achieve a higher level of achievement; (b) education for the young should be based on their own languages, cultures, life experiences and background knowledge; (c) teachers should prepare students with skills, capability as well as attitudes to live, to work and to communicate with people in this multicultural and diverse world; (d) students need to be informed about and provided with what is known as “apprenticeship of democracy” (p.32) to shape their critical thinking and make them productive citizens; and (e) the importance of teachers-students relationships in ensuring effective and successful schools. (pp.30-32). She also urged that the school contents be taught “with a multicultural perspective that is more reflective of our reality than the current largely monocultural curriculum” (Nieto, 2009, p.29). Here,
Nieto (2009) and Banks (2009)—through his idea of ‘content integration’—share the parallel insights where they believe that multicultural perspectives are worthy to be permeated into the curriculum in schools rather than be treated as separate one subject to ensure its effectiveness.

The other perspective of multicultural education is presented by Sleeter and Grant (2003) through their ‘social reconstructionists’ approach where teachers play major roles in the constructing positive difference in an individual lives as well in the society which has been partially treated. Sleeter and Grant (2003) decided to see multicultural education from the way students from diverse cultural and linguistic are treated in school. They take the position that “school generally operated in ways that favor the “haves” (Sleeter & Grant, 2002, p.iv). Following this argument, they synthesize five approaches to what multicultural education could mean, organizing the five approaches starting from the weakest to the most ideal namely (a) “Teaching the Exceptional and Culturally Different”; (b) “Human Relations” approach; (c) “Single-Group Studies” approach; (d) Multicultural Education” approach and (e) “Education that is multicultural and social reconstructionists”. Similar to Banks (2010) and Nieto (2010), Sleeter and Grant (2003) make the idea of school reform as the central of their discussion in the two last approaches mentioned above (i.e. in the Multicultural education approach and in the Education that is multicultural and Social reconstructionists approach) where they propose the process of reformation of the entire education process as ways to ensure the effectiveness of the multicultural education in school. Nonetheless, the reformations that they mean to be carried out in schools are more explicitly focused on “social critique and democratic citizen participation” (p. iv).
Overall, multicultural education in the United States advocates the right for all people, regardless of their race, class, gender, socioeconomic background, religion, culture, language, sexual orientation and disability for education. School should be a place where students regardless of their race, language and socio economic background receive equal opportunity to acquire knowledge. Nonetheless, as much as we want to make school as a conducive place for students to gain knowledge and to learn, it is never neutral. Students from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds are still exposed to stereotyping and assumption where the culture that they come from and the language that they speak are associated with certain assumed negative characteristics which people believe they possess. Due to that reason, scholars who advocate multicultural education propose either a mere reform curriculum or a total reform of the entire education so that multicultural education permeates the education system and curriculum rather than be seen as a separate entity – detached from the whole school system. Nonetheless, to quote Tyack and Cuban (1995), change is “difficult but essential, above all for the educationally dispossessed” (p.10). Teachers as the ‘agent of change’ need time, money as well as support from the school communities so that school reforms can be carried out successfully. Though the idea of school reforms sounds a bit like a ‘utopianism’ (Tyack & Cuban, 1995, p.10), with the collective political will, commitment and understanding from the community members, it is doable.
**Teacher Education in the United States**

The success of multicultural education in the United States depends strongly on the ways teacher perceive it and implement it in their teaching processes. How teachers address and conceptualize the issue of diversity seems to be the central of the teacher preparatory programs especially the ones which deal with the multicultural education and the ELLs (English-Language Learners). In 1973, the American Association of Colleges of Teacher education (AACTE) approved what was known as “No One Model American” (AACTE, 1973) which had become the starting point for the implementation of the multiculturally-based teacher education programs in the United States. Fast forward four years later, in 1977, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) came up with a standard of requirement for all its member institutions to focus on the topic of diversity especially in their curriculum, instructions and placements (NCATE, 1977). The standard later was improvised in 1992 where the cultural diversity and multicultural perspectives were included in four out of eighteen NCATE standards (Rego & Nieto, 2000). In 1994, the standards went through another revision where multicultural competencies became requirements for all faculties that involved in teacher education program. NCATE can be seen as an influential key player in promoting multicultural perspectives in the teacher education programs in the United States.

Literature in this field accentuates how, despite the multicultural and multilingual demographic landscape of the people of the United States, the teacher populations here are mostly consisted of White, female, monolingual and come from the
middle class background. According to National Centre for Education Information, 84% of the teachers in the United States are White while 7% are Black, 6% are Hispanic and the last 4% are from other ethnic minorities (Feistritzer, 2011). Among the essential issue related to this is on what is known a ‘demographic imperative’ of the teachers and the teacher candidates in the United States. It is defined as “the disjunction between the sociocultural characteristics and previous experiences of the typical teacher candidates and those of many of our K-12 students” (Lowenstein, 2009, p.166) especially in the urban schools. The central tenet of demographic imperative is to address the divide between the teachers and diverse students in schools. Oftentimes, the demographic imperative has been used as the reason for researchers to embark on the research on teacher education. This is due to the fact, teacher candidates are always viewed as the “deficient learners” (Lowenstein, 2009, p.166) where they only able to view diverse students – who are monolingual in their native language, come from different cultural and racial background and lower economic background, from their homogenous White perspectives. This poses challenge to the teacher educators as the responsibility to prepare these teacher candidates to teach the diverse students in schools is put on their shoulders. Considering that teacher education programs have been successful in preparing teachers to be multicultural, scholars suggest that teacher educators should reframe the way teacher candidates are trained (Ladson-Billings, 1999, Lowenstein, 2009). This can be done by positioning the teacher candidates as capable learners who possess and bring rich resources to their learning where the teacher educators could utilize these resources to shape meaningful teacher education program for these future teachers (Lowenstein, 2009,p.188).
Another point worth highlighting here is the role of teacher educators in the United States. Teacher educators do “play a pivotal role in shaping the beliefs and attitudes of future teachers” (Assaf et al., 2010, p.115). Rather than being “preoccupied with supplying students with “accurate” and “authentic” representations, offering “good realism” as a remedy to the bad stereotype that teacher candidates have” (Lowenstein, 2009, p.179), teacher educators should steer away from the chalk–and-talk “traditional methods of telling, explaining and clarifying” (Lowenstein, 2009, p.180) in attempting the multicultural topic with the teacher candidates. Cochran-Smith et al. (2004) address this issue by categorizing it in the “teacher learning question” (p.951). They delineate teacher learning into two categories namely “how in general teachers learn to teach for diversity”, and what in particular are the pedagogies of teacher preparation (for example coursework assignments, readings, discussion) that make this learning possible” (Cochran-Smith et al, 2004, p.951). Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1992; Cochran–Smith, 1997, 1999) contend that “inquiry-based teacher preparation, rather than the “training” or transmission models that prevail in many places, are the most promising approaches for preparing teachers to be lifelong learners who can work effectively in diverse settings” (as cited in Cochran-Smith et al, 2004, p.951). The “inquiry as stance” method positions teachers and their knowledge as “central to the goal of transforming teaching, learning, and schooling” (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 2009, p. 119). Thus, teacher candidates are able to use their invaluable experience and resources to guide and engage in their own learning rather than only being passive learners in their teacher education program.
Another point worth highlighted here is how teacher educators need to examine their own belief in multifaceted aspects of multicultural teacher education. This is important in ensuring that the teacher education program that they conducted will provide positive impact to the future teachers’ beliefs and attitude in dealing with students from diverse backgrounds. Vavrus (2002) stresses the importance of teacher education in shaping culturally responsive teachers in the future. He suggested that teacher educators to build a strong program conceptual framework where this framework will permit “a teacher education faculty to describe the kind of future teacher who they anticipate will graduate from their program” (p.36). Vavrus quoted Hidalgo, Chaves-Chaves, and Ramage’s (1996) theoretical framework that can be utilize to envision the characteristic of future multicultural teachers that a college anticipates to graduate from its program where these teachers are able to view their roles as (a) valuing demographic diversity as an enriching social context, (b) promoting a multicultural curriculum as a whole-school knowledge base, (c) promoting instructional strategies that structure heterogeneous, learner-centered, and critical process, (d) promoting collaborative and unifying relationships among all participants … in the education enterprise. (p.37)

According to Vavrus (2002), this framework not only able to envision a culturally responsive teachers who conceptualize diversity as an asset rather than a deficit to the schools as well as recognizing the cultural background of their students, but also able to set high achievement goals for these diverse students despite their race, ethnicity or class (Garcia 1996, 1999; Gay, 2000; Ladson-billings, 1995b).

Teacher education is fundamental as teachers are the key players for successful learning program to take place. In order for multicultural education to be
successfully carried out in schools, future teachers should receive relevant trainings that will provide them with basic tools to handle students from diverse background. Literature in this field discusses how the success of multicultural education depends on how well teachers are exposed to the knowledge and issues of multiculturalism during their teacher education years. The more comfortable teachers are with the issue of multiculturalism, the more understanding they will become towards the students from culturally diverse background. As a result, the process of learning among the culturally diverse students will become less stressful which eventually makes the teaching and learning process a valuable and priceless experience for the teachers as well as for the learners. This is the key to a successful teaching and learning process in multicultural classrooms in schools.

Preparing good teachers of the English-Language Learners in the United States

August and Hakuta (1997) mentioned how the nation does not have sufficient number of teachers with sufficient skills to teach students from linguistically diverse population. They believe that although “most teacher preparation and professional development programs are based on a growing body of knowledge regarding attributes of effective teaching for English-language learner” (p.250), more empirical research and suggestion on the effectiveness of these programs are needed in order to improve the preparation of the teachers of the English-Language Learners. August and Hakuta (1997) highlighted how recent teacher education programs and development have expanded their scope beyond the skill-based and the competency-driven curriculum to include the inquiry-based to teacher learning where “teacher reflection on practice is emphasized,
along with collaboration with colleagues in “learning communities” and methods that involve ongoing teacher learning” (p.250).

Teacher preparation is crucial in preparing future teachers for their future professions. This is even more important if the teachers have to teach students who are linguistically and culturally different from them. One question worth explored here is what makes a teacher a good teacher of the English-Language Learners. Clayton and Brisk (2010) write about how successful teachers of the English language learners in the United States are teachers who possess “positive efficacy, articulate their instructional philosophies, routinely seek opportunities to enhance their knowledge, and have high students expectation” (p. 182). These teachers also respected the cultural and background of their diverse students and “consider being bilingual and bicultural enriches students’ life” (Clayton and Brisk, 2010, p.182). It is also mentioned how good teachers of the English language learners will accept the native language responses even though they are teaching in English and will encourage the English acquisition (Garcia, 1991; Tikunoff, 1983). Good teachers of the English language learners will make the effort to arrange the curriculum into thematic units as well as providing the English language learners with opportunities for active learning and collaboration in the classrooms. (Garcia, 1991 as cited in Clayton and Brisk, 2010). Moreover, successful practices in teaching English to the English language learners include “the importance of using the native language and culture; establishing clear goals for the lessons, communication clearly when giving directions, specifying tasks, obtaining and maintaining student interest through pacing instructions, monitoring student progress and providing immediate feedback” (Brisk, 2006; Gersten and Baker, 2000, Facella et.al, as cited in Clayton and Brisk, 2010, p.182).
In their study, Clayton and Brisk (2010) explore the experience of an exemplary teacher in the immersion, bilingual context where they examined how teacher’s pedagogical strategies were influenced by the teaching context and challenges faced. The findings indicated that the four main areas that affected a good teacher of the English learners are (a) experience (b) travelling (c) learning a second language and (d) professional development. Their findings also indicated how a good teacher of the English language learners exhibited these main dispositions when teaching namely (a) sensitivity (b) kindness (c) encouragement (d) positive attitude and (e) humor. Among teaching strategies used by a good teacher of the English language learners in her preparation, planning and teaching in the diverse classrooms are (a) themes and units as foundation to access content (b) students native language and previous school experiences a fundamental elements in the teaching and learning process (c) conceptual areas of difficulty were anticipated resulting in the scaffolded learning through activities and material as well as active students’ participation (d) the use of visual tools to connect concepts with language (e) questioning technique to check understanding and continuous monitoring (f) prompting and coaching to help learners with the content and, (g) repetition of key phrases for vocabulary building.

Some of the implications suggested for the teacher preparation in transforming the preparation of future teachers of the English language learners based on this study are (a) the importance of understanding students’ background in the teaching and learning process (b) the benefit of courses in second language acquisition (c) the positive influence of the preservice teachers to learn a second language and experience cultures different from their own in ensuring effective teaching when working with the English
language learners (d) the importance of the development of the specific dispositions such as sensitivity, kindness, encouragement and humor in working with the English language learners (e) the needs courses that focus on content as well as the language demands place on the English language learners such as vocabularies that are used in other subjects such as in math or science (f) the importance of learning a second language to understand the difficulties of learning a second language and (g) the need to learn the ways to use students’ heritage language for instructional purposes.

In short, a good teacher of the English-Language Learners is a teacher who not only possesses competency in pedagogical skills in teaching the content to the English-Language Learners, but also has the sensitivity and knowledge about their cultural and linguistic background where this knowledge is used to enhance the process of learning the language among the English-Language Learners in her classroom. The role of teacher reflection and ongoing collaboration with colleagues (August and Hakuta, 1997) are also highlighted as the enabling factors in preparing teachers to become good teachers of the English-Language Learners in the future.

**Multiculturalism in Malaysia**

Malaysian society is consists of multiracial people which in 2010, numbered 28.25 million people (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2011). Of the total population, the majority 50.4% is made up of people regarded as being the original settlers of the country known as Malays or to be precise the *Bumiputera* (the sons of the soils). Other
ethnic groups in Malaysia comprise of 23.7% of people from Chinese ethnicity, 7.1% Indians, 11.0% indigenous and 7.8% of other ethnic groups (Central Intelligence Agency, 2010). Malaysia was one of the British colonies for 133 years until 1957 when it eventually gained its independence from the British Empire. Prior to the British occupancy in Malaysia, the Malay Peninsula was generally homogenous because it was consisted of a monocultural society of the Malay ethnic using *Bahasa Melayu* (the Malay language) as their mother tongue. The prominent demographic changes happened due to the immigrations at the beginning of the 20th century when there was a massive number of the Chinese and Indians from China and India brought to Malaya by the British Government to work at the tin mines and the rubber estates around Peninsular Malaysia. The Chinese were mostly worked as the tin miners and the Indian as the rubber tappers. The non-Bumiputera people have become an integral part of the Malaysian society and contributed significantly to the country’s development. (Embong, 2001) This phenomenon has changed the demographic as well as the linguistic landscape of the country forever.

During its supremacy, the British Empire practiced what is known as ‘divide and rule’ policy where the 3 main races in Malaysia were demographically separated to discourage racial unity, which the colonial government viewed as a threat. The similar ideology was applied to the schools in Malaysia where students from the different races were segregated in three different schools where each school used their own mother tongue as the medium of instruction and had different curriculum and textbooks from each other. This was done to enhance the British’s ‘divide and rule’ policy with a belief that the segregated Malaysian society would not be strong enough to revolt against the
colonial power. This policy had resulted in the segmentation of the Malaysian schools until this day which contributed to the complexity of the issue of multiculturalism in the education system in Malaysia.

**Multicultural Education in Malaysia**

The public primary schools in Malaysia are divided into two types namely the National Schools, National-types schools (or known as vernacular schools). The national schools are known as *Sekolah Kebangsaan* (SK) and the national-type schools are known as *Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan* (SJK). The national-types schools are then divided into two types namely the Chinese national-type schools (SJK(C)) and the Indian national-type schools (SJK (T)).

National schools use the Malay Language as medium of instruction. Conversely, the Chinese National-type schools use Mandarin as their medium of instruction for and the Indian National-type schools use Tamil as their medium of instruction. The existence of the different types of schools based on racial background happened based on the proposal for developing the national education system in Malaysia in 1956 which is known as ‘Razak Report’. The report proposed the national school system which would be made up of the Malay, English, Chinese and Tamil-medium schools at the primary levels, and Malay and English-medium schools at the secondary levels that utilize a standardized national curriculum despite the different medium of instructions used. The existence of the national-type schools is to show the respect for the
three dominant groups in Malaysia who have their own belief, culture and mother tongue. What binds all the schools in Malaysia is the standardized national education system in a form of standard curriculum, textbooks, year of schooling and teacher education where every aspect is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education Malaysia.

As the populations in Malaysia are getting more diverse, the existence of the national-type schools is questioned by many as they feel that “the education system that divides the students according to their mother tongue and ethnic differences is less effective means of cultivating integration and mutual understanding among students” (Ahmad and Yusof, 2010, p.83). This is due to the fact that the national-type schools only encourage racial polarization among Malaysian multicultural students where their day-to-day socialization only revolves solely around people from their own ethnic group. Thus, in 1997, the Cabinet of Malaysia has approved the concept of “Vision School” where it is one of the “Government initiative to produce a Malaysian race (Bangsa Malaysia) built on a love for the country and the abolition of ethnic differences amongst its citizens” (Keow, 2008, p.56). Vision school concept works on the principle of “people who stay together work together”. In this model, the three schools namely the national school (where the majority of the students are from Malay ethnicity), the Chinese national-type school and the Indian national-type school are clustered in one common area, in the same vicinity, shared the same school basic facilities such as school canteens, school hall and playing field and jointly organize special school events such as teachers’ day celebration or sports’ day together. Nonetheless, the three schools operated independently; with each school has its own principle, teachers and administrating staffs. It is hoped that “by virtue of the proximity and open environment … Vision Schools would help to foster racial
integration, harmony and unity among the children of the different ethnic groups by creating opportunities for them to mingle, interact, and play with each other” (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 1995 as cited in Malakolunthu, 2010).

Nevertheless, though the idea of forming this school is said to be a “timely policy intervention” (Malakolunthu, 2010, p.131) as the country is becoming more racially diverse, research conducted by Malakolunthu (2010) has deduced that Malaysian Vision School does not achieve the objective of inculcating the racial integration at the school level. Firstly, it is reported that the principals and the deputy principals of the three schools lack comprehension and commitment towards the school due to the inadequate and vague guidelines provided by the Ministry of Education on the focus and the changes that they have to bring about at the Vision School. Besides highlighting the fact that the three schools share the same compound and the being in close proximity with each other, it is reported that the principals from the three schools are unable to engage in an in-depth discussion about the mission and the vision of the Vision School. Thus, it is not inaccurate to conclude that these administrators are not fully informed about the concept of multiculturalism that should be promoted at Vision School which made Vision School different from the other regular schools in Malaysia.

Secondly, parallel to the principals’ opinion, the teachers too lack knowledge of the objective of the Vision School where most revealed their ignorant of the concept of multicultural education and also not succeeded in carrying out the culturally responsive instruction in class. This cripples the main purpose of the existence of the Vision School that is to inculcate the racial harmony among the multilingual and multicultural young people in schools. Most teachers at the Vision School are skeptical about the school’s
inspiration where many reported that they did not see any different between Vision Schools and the other regular schools in Malaysia as the curriculum, the textbooks as well as the instructional strategies are still the same. On top of that, teachers in Malaysia are minimally exposed to the issue of multiculturalism during their teacher preparation period due to the insignificance of the topic of multiculturalism in the teacher education program in Malaysia. Due to this reason, teachers in Vision School do not have the awareness towards the issue of diversity and fail to permeate it in their instructions.

Though the three schools sometimes organize the celebration of the cultural function together such as the Chinese Lion Dance or the Tamil Harvest Festival, the administrators as well as the teachers do not capitalize these events to encourage learning among the multiracial students. This is what Nieto (2009) means as she critiques the “Holidays and Heroes” approach that most schools tend to favor, thinking that it will help students from diverse background to understand each other. Nieto (2009) feels schools have to go beyond the “Holidays and Heroes” approach if they are serious in dealing with the issue of multiculturalism as she feels that that approach to be “too superficial to have any lasting impact in schools” (p.164).

Another important issue with Malaysian Vision School is on the pedagogical practices as well as the textbooks used in schools. Based on the observation on the teaching and learning, it is discovered that there is an absence of the element of multiculturalism in teachers’ interventions in classrooms. Teachers do not make any initiative to infuse any multicultural element in their teaching even though they can simply modify their teaching to include this element in their lessons. This come to no surprise as teachers in Malaysia are not trained in the aspect of multiculturalism at the
teacher education level. This issue will be discussed further in the following section.

Furthermore, the textbook used in the school also lack the element of cultural diversity in its content and the activities prepared for the students. Due to this reason, the topic on multiculturalism and racial diversity are seldom discussed during lessons.

Although the concept of Vision School is considered as a luminous idea in handling the issue of multiculturalism in Malaysia, the lack of clarity of it’s the policy has caused discrepancy in its implementations at the school levels.

**Teacher Education in Malaysia**

As the Malaysian population becoming more and more diverse, the process of teaching in a multicultural, multilingual and multi faith society poses challenges to teachers in Malaysia. Unlike in the United States, the teacher education program in Malaysia does not prepare the teachers to teach in the multicultural classrooms as there is an absence in multicultural education syllabus during the teacher training program. The teaching training programs in Malaysia still lacks the precise curriculum that addresses the multicultural education. Malaysian education system does contain some multicultural aspects in its Philosophy of Teacher Education where it stated that the type of teachers aspired by the nation are:

Teachers who have a good personal well-being, progressive and scientific oriented, ready to uphold the nation’s inspirations and preserve her cultural heritage
promises individual development and maintains a united, democratic, progressive and disciplined society.

(Philosophy of Teacher Education, Malaysia as cited in Keow, 2008, p.121)

However, the statement above does not define clearly the issue of multicultural education in a specific way and to this date, there is no specific course for multicultural education in the Malaysian teacher education syllabus. Though moral values are embedded in most subjects taught in schools where teachers are encouraged highlighting them during lessons, it is felt that teachers should be exposed to concepts in multicultural education at the training level to inculcate their awareness towards diversity to prepare them to teach in the multicultural classroom in the future.

As Malaysia is a multicultural country, it possesses multicultural cultural heritage too. Here, the teachers in Malaysia are expected to be able to utilize education as a channel to sustain the nation’s cultural heritage. This can be achieved by fostering the sense of pride towards the nation’s diversified culture which eventually nurture patriotism and appreciation of the country’s diversified culture. How does the government expect the teachers to carry out this vision if they are not prepared to do so at the training level? Though the idea of multiculturalism is clearly stated in the nation’s teacher education philosophy, it is never translated at the teacher training level as it is not seriously implemented in any teacher training program in Malaysia. Though there are efforts to add the multicultural education issues at the undergraduate or graduate level courses, the multicultural education concepts “were constructed as additive to education
rather than infused into the curriculum and instruction” (Mohd Yusof, 2005, p.103). This is documented by a study done by Mohd Yusof in 2005 on multicultural education practice among teachers in the state of Kedah, Malaysia where it was found that there was a deficit in the multicultural education practices in the Malaysian schools. Among issues stated by the teachers in the area of multicultural education were: (a) teachers did not know or understand what multicultural education was; (b) teachers did not know how to use effective multicultural education practices; (c) and teachers were not motivated to learn effective multicultural education practices and ;(d) teachers did not realize their full responsibilities as educators to use effective multicultural education practices. (Mohd Yusof, 2005, p.103).

The findings distinctly showed that teachers in this study lack clear knowledge, direction and understanding of what multicultural education is. Participants seemed to question the relevance of using the multicultural curriculum in their classrooms when they themselves do not know what multicultural education is. This stems from many gaps in the policy and practice. One of them is the absence of the multicultural education in the teacher education programs in Malaysia. It is reported that “older teachers who earned their teaching degree more than 10 years ago were not required to take any courses specifically related to multicultural education” (Mohd Yusof, 2005, p.103). These teachers were informed about the multicultural education concepts and practices solely based on their own interests or through incentives of their own schools or district administrators. Cultural diversity was not a clearly defined educational issue when many of these teachers started their teaching professions. This is
due the fact that the Malaysian education system does recognize the multicultural aspects of the society as being mentioned in the National Education Philosophy but failed to implement a fully multicultural education system in its teacher education curriculum. Again, it is worth highlighting here that the teacher education system in Malaysia is a centralized system whereby a Teacher Education Division at the Ministry of Education Malaysia decides courses or subjects that should be taught to the preservice teachers throughout Malaysia. Obviously there was no multicultural education courses offered more than 10 years ago and the effect is clearly seen now as teachers are ignorant about multicultural education and unable to use it in a multicultural classroom setting.

Another issue highlighted in the study is the misconception of the idea of what multicultural education is in the teacher education in Malaysia. Teachers from this study reported that they did learn something about the multicultural education at their undergraduate or graduate courses but these courses were only constructed as ‘additive’ to education rather than being infused into the curriculum and instruction. The problem of multicultural education being constructed as additive in teacher education is teachers tend to treat as merely a subject that they have to learn in order to pass the test or obtain teaching certificates and not something that they have to internalize as crucial attribute to become effective teachers in multicultural classrooms. As a result, teachers remain less sensitive towards the issue of multiculturalism despite exposure received through the additive subject on multicultural education in their teacher education program. This makes the process of school reform difficult to achieve. Furthermore, a few teachers also reported that they had completed a course labeled as ‘multicultural education’ which was actually more of an ‘ethnic’ course which did not address the aspect of “multicultural
education inclusive of people, policies, programs, processes and practices” (Mohd Yusof, 2005,p.104). Thus, it fails to elucidate the purpose and the meaning of the multicultural education to the teachers to enable them to make it as part of their teaching strategies in multicultural classrooms.

The deficit of multicultural education syllabus in the teacher education in Malaysia is worth investigated further. This is because teachers need to have the ability to “infuse culturally responsible and responsive pedagogy across the curriculum and throughout the school environment to ensure equitable learning opportunities for all students” (Mohd Yusof, 2005, p.107). As teachers become more sensitive of the multicultural demographic landscape of their classrooms, it will help them to plan instructional strategies that not only help students learn better but also value and respect the cultural diversity of the students in their classroom.

Preparing good teachers of the English-Language Learners in Malaysia

Researchers interested in the field of teacher preparation in Malaysia highlighted some areas that require greater attention to prepare teachers of the English-Language Learners in Malaysia. Looking at the local scenario, Md.Yunus et al. (2010) have conducted a research to examine the TESL (Teaching of English as a Second Language) preservice teachers’ teaching experiences and challenges with the school administrators, mentors, supervisors as well as the teaching and learning process during their teaching practicum. They wrote about how these experiences can be used to provide insights “in
maintaining positive aspects and overcoming the negative ones” (p.727) in preparing future English teachers in Malaysia. Research conducted by Dahan & Ghazali (2007) revealed that there are three categories of teachers of the English-Language Learners who are admitted into the teaching profession in Malaysia. They are (a) the teachers who have always wanted to become teachers and have no doubt about their decision to remain in the profession (b) the teachers who are not interested in teaching at the beginning but later on accepted it as a vocation (c) the teachers who are not interested in the profession but are forced into it and adamant with their perception about the profession even after their teaching practicum. In their findings 70.21% preservice teachers in their study belong to the first category, 19.15% in the second category and 10.64% in the third category. Those who are in the first category reported that their decision to remain in the profession as the teachers of the English-Language Learners is because teaching (a) has improved their perceptions about life and has taught them to be better person (b) has helped them to become more mature and independent (c) is a noble profession (d) has made them feel important, needed, appreciated and respected (e) is fun and enjoyable. In contrast, the preservice teachers in the third category are adamant about their detachment from the professions because they feel that teaching (a) requires a lot of preparation which includes non-teaching activities that waste their time and demand many sacrifices. Sidhu and Kaur (2010) write about the function of diary entries as a reflective tool that functioned as “communication channel between supervisor and trainee”(p.56) which they believe has some pertinent pedagogical implications in preparing the future teachers of the English- language learners. Based on their analysis of the diary entries written by two preservice English teachers in their study revealed how the preservice English
teachers need “some form of guidance and scaffolding that can help them to be more
critical and they must be equipped with the necessary skills that could help them to help
themselves better” (p. 56). Writing reflective diaries is suggested as a way to deal with
dissonance in learning to become good teachers where preservice teachers (a) have the
opportunities to take the time to reflect upon their teaching objectives and not view all the
classroom problems as personal shortfall (b) have the avenue to for gain confidence
through increased insight that allow them to critically review their day-to-day classroom
practices (c) have tool to help them look for personal solutions to problems arise during
the teaching and learning process where it helps them to be critical which leads to new
thinking and improvement and (d) have the opportunities to challenge themselves to
develop personal philosophy of teaching. Thus, this study suggested that teacher
reflective inquiry is one of effective ways to prepare good teachers of the English-
language in Malaysia.

As Malaysia always prided herself as a multicultural country, this aspect also
affects the preparation of the teachers of the English-Language Learners in the country.
Razali (1992) writes about the importance of sociolinguistics knowledge among the ESL
teachers in a multicultural, multiracial and multilingual heterogeneous Malaysian society
where she believed that this knowledge is beneficial in teaching students who come from
different culture, language habits and socioeconomic backgrounds. This is essential to
avoid stereotyping “so as not to apply any miscalculated judgments on learners from
different backgrounds” (p.88). Hassan and Selamat (2002) mentioned how this situation
is prominent regarding the English teachers’ who are teaching at the remote and rural
areas where “learners from remote and rural areas may not see the importance of learning
English; thus they lack motivation and also find it difficult to learn this foreign language” (http://www.melta.org.my/ET/2002/wp10.htm)

Mansor and Zakaria(2004) in their research on promoting cultural competence among the preservice English teachers in Malaysia through the virtual community believe that a “lifelong development of cultural competence among English teacher trainees is necessary and developmental as cultural competence is crucial in English language teaching” (p.250) .In their paper, they posit “that the acquisition of English language proficiency and pedagogical skills define the TESL profession: a competence English teacher must be competent in both”(p.254). However, they argue that a competent English teacher should be culturally competent too where they believe that a successful TESL teacher training program strongly depends “on the effective integration of the cultural, social, and human skills within its different courses; the promotion of sociolinguistic competence and cultural competence among the trainees” (p.254). They acknowledge the existence of structural, curricular, pedagogical and attitudinal (especially among the lecturers) constraints in infusing the cultural elements in the English teacher education programs in Malaysia. Among them are the examinations and the burden of adding additional culturally relevant courses in the program where they are not always welcomed due to the curricular constrain as well as their effectiveness is questionable.

In sum, the teacher preparation programs for the English teachers in Malaysia seem to focus on a few fundamental areas such as the teachers’ professional knowledge which includes pedagogical skills and English language proficiency in their programs. It is interesting to see how the idea of reflective inquiry is explored and experimented as
ways to improve the preparation of the teachers of the English-Language Learners in Malaysia. The area of cultural competence is also suggested though not implemented due to the many constraints mentioned in the literature review above.

Chapter Summary

This chapter evaluates multicultural education, teacher education and the preparation of good teachers of the English-Language Learners from two different contexts: the United States and Malaysia.

The concept of multicultural education is multifaceted as scholars in this field bring different theoretical frameworks and methodological frameworks in their works. Nonetheless, rather than seeing this as deficits, it should be seen as an advantage to understand this field better as different scholars tend to enunciate different perspective of multicultural education based on their social, racial and academic lenses which tend to shape the ways they perceive this field distinctively and unique from each other. These perspectives have enriched the research in multicultural education as the issues of race, culture; language, class, and gender are addressed in detail to enhance the process of teaching and learning in the multicultural classrooms.

As often time mentioned in the literature, successful multicultural education is difficult to be carried out if educational reform does not take place. (Nieto, 2009; Banks, 2009). School reform in the area of multiculturalism is what most schools in the United States as well as the Vision Schools in Malaysia should strive for right now where this
area is still frail at the policy level as well as at the implementation level. Malaysian Vision School is the example of how multiculturalism in education is viewed as a segmented entity where it only represents the ‘physical’ idea of multicultural aspect (i.e. the three different races have their schools in a close vicinity area and share the same facilities) but neglected the in-depth aspect of the whole meaning of multiculturalism at the instructional, curriculum and teacher development levels. The same goes to many schools in the United States where multicultural education is only implemented at the “heroes and holiday” level without much effort make it comprehensively meaningful to all students. As a result, the idea of multicultural education only stays at the ‘symbolic ‘level rather than being infused meaningfully in the education system in both countries.

This chapter ends with reviews on the preparation of good teachers of the English-Language Learners from two different contexts; the United States and Malaysia. Though contextually different, the literature reveals how teacher education programs in both countries agree on the similar issue; that is the importance of knowledge on culture and language among the preservice teachers in order to be good teachers of the English-Language Learners in the future.
Chapter 3
Methods & Methodology

Qualitative research methods are selected for this study to generate data that are rich in detail and embedded in context. The primary method of this study is narrative inquiry.

Qualitative research method is utilized in this study as it “strives to understand the meaning of actions to participants, can offer improvement of argument for practice and, hence can have greater effect on practice” (Fenstermacher, 1986, as cited in Maxwell, 2005, p. 147). Therefore, in order to improve practice, “educational research needs to emphasize the context within which the activities studied occur and the meaning of activities studied for participants” (Abrahamson, 1984, as cited in Maxwell, 2005, p. 147). Qualitative research methods are said to be able to fulfill these needs.

Qualitative research typically “is enacted in natural settings, draws on multiple methods that respect the humanity of the participants in the study, focuses on context, is emerging and evolving, and fundamentally interpretive” (Marshall and Rossman, 2011, p. 2). It grounded in the lived experience of people where human interpretations about their experiences and the experience of others are layered in a complex hermeneutic nexus. Due to this complexity, qualitative researcher tend to “view social world as holistic and complex, engage in systematic reflection on the conduct of the research, remain sensitive to their own biographies/social identities and how these shape
the study (i.e. they are reflexive) and rely on complex reasoning that moves dialectically between deduction and induction (Marshall and Rossman, 2011, p.2).

**Research Questions**

An over-arching question that I will explore in my study is:

How do preservice teachers make sense of their preparatory experiences learning to become teachers of the English-Language Learners in the United States and Malaysia?

The four sub-questions that I will explore are:

1. What does it mean to be a good teacher?
2. What does it mean to be a good teacher to the English-Language Learners?
3. What does it mean to be an English Language Learner?
4. What aspects of teacher preparation curriculum prompted personal and professional progression towards multiculturalism for preservice teachers in United States and Malaysia?

**Study Contexts**

My study focuses on the pre-service teachers’ experiences of learning to become teachers of the English-Language Learners in the United States and Malaysia and my interest lies in their narratives as data. In Malaysia, the data came from narratives written by five preservice teachers learning to become teachers of the English-Language Learners at one of the public universities there. This university is the largest university in
Malaysia in terms of size and population with 12 branch campuses, three satellite campuses, 9 city campuses and 21 affiliated colleges. Currently home to 172,000 students, the university offers more than 30 academic programs. This university consisted of predominantly Malay students which parallel to the mission of the university itself that is to “to upgrade the intellectual and educational expertise of Bumiputeras [sons of the soil] who are capable of being leaders in various educational careers, able to guide and educate a young generation who are holistic and practice life long education” (http://education.uitm.edu.my/v1/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=52&Itemid=58). The five Malaysian participants in this study are currently enrolled in the Bachelor of Education majoring in TESL (Teaching of English as a Second Language) at the main campus of the university which is situated approximately around 16 miles from Kuala Lumpur, the capital of Malaysia.

In the United States, the data came from the narratives written by four preservice teachers enrolled in the C I 280 course entitled “Introduction to teaching English to English Language Learners” at one of the universities at the east side of the United States. This university is the home to approximately 96,000 students with 24 campuses and an online World Campus. The undergraduate students consisted of 76% white while the rest are students from diverse populations including international students (http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/?q=Pennsylvania+state+university&s=all&l=5&id=214777&fvy=214777#enrolmt). Just like the participants in Malaysia, the four participants from the United States in this study are currently studying at the main campus of the university which is situated at the central part of the state of Pennsylvania.
Recruitment

My study utilizes the pre-service teachers’ narratives from United States and Malaysia as the primary data. In the United States, emails were sent out to the pre-service teachers from CI 280 class. The purpose of the email was to request for their participation in the study where they were asked to write narratives based on their experiences in C I 280 classes during spring 2011 semester. Their willingness to write the narratives signaled their consent to take part in this study. They were given approximately two weeks to write the narratives which were sent to the researcher via email. In addition, the participants were informed that follow up prompts/ questions would be sent if necessary, after the researcher had read their narratives.

Similarly, in Malaysia, an email was also sent to one preservice teacher who enrolled in ED 220 TESL course in Malaysia, requesting for a narrative on her experience of learning to be ESL teachers in Malaysia. From here, I found additional numbers of participants using “snowball” (Marshall and Rossman, 2011, p.112) sampling based on suggestion from the first pre-service teacher.

Participants

As mentioned above, the participants in this study are four preservice teachers enrolled in the CI 280 course in one of the university at the east side of the United States and five ED 220 program in Malaysia. Ed is second semester sophomore with plans to major in Secondary Education specializing in mathematics. Joanne is Secondary education major junior with option in chemistry. Jill is a junior in an Elementary
Education specializing in Special Education and Lyn is a sophomore in elementary education. In Malaysia, all the five participants; Lina, Marina, Farina, Nora and Rina are all in their third year of their study enrolling in ED 220 which is a special program for teachers learning to become English teachers at one of the higher education institutions in Malaysia. The information about the program and the education year of each participant are provided in the table below.

Table 3-1. Information about participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ed</td>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>Secondary Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joanne</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>Secondary Education(Chemistry)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jill</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>Elementary Education (Special Education)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyn</td>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>Elementary Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lina</td>
<td>Third Year</td>
<td>Teaching English as Second Language (TESL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marina</td>
<td>Third Year</td>
<td>Teaching English as Second Language (TESL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farina</td>
<td>Third Year</td>
<td>Teaching English as Second Language (TESL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nora</td>
<td>Third Year</td>
<td>Teaching English as Second Language (TESL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rina</td>
<td>Third Year</td>
<td>Teaching English as Second Language (TESL)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data collection

In the United States, prior to data collection process, a classroom participant observation was carried out weekly in the CI 280 class at one of the universities at the east-side of the United States for one and a half month during the Spring 2011 semester. Field notes and memos were written in a form of narratives based on the observation done in class. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) — in highlighting the importance of field notes in narrative inquiry (they called them ‘field texts’) – believe that writing field notes is an interpretative process “because field texts are our way of talking about what passes for data in narrative inquiry and because data tend to carry with them the idea of objective representation of research experience” thus “it is important to note how imbued field texts are with interpretations” (p. 93). Moreover, field notes and memos also are able to offer the ‘thick description’ (Geertz, 1973) of classroom context that being observed. To add to that, several maps of the class were drawn in order to complement the field notes and the memo. The maps were hoped to be able to help the researcher in making the field notes clearer and richer.

Besides, I studied the assignments completed by the students for this course (posted on ANGEL) as most of the assignments require the students to do fieldwork such as by visiting the immigrants community, collecting written work from the K-12 English-Language Learners or interviewing their favorite teachers. This is where I collected the participants written narratives in the form of short responses or reflections. The course outlines, syllabus, quizzes, examination questions, class assignments, projects, slides and other handouts are also be collected as data.
The narratives from the pre-service teachers in Malaysia were used as data to understand pre-service teachers’ perceptions of challenges in multicultural classrooms in Malaysia. The data provide some insights and visions of what teacher education in Malaysia look like from the perceptions of the pre-service teachers there. On top of that, I studied course syllabus and curriculum of the ED 220 in Malaysia. The purpose is to gain better understanding of the nature of the teacher education program in Malaysia. This is fundamental as my third research question aims at understanding the nature of program/coursework in teacher education from both countries and the data from Malaysia specifically had provided valuable platform for some instructional reform suggestions to be proposed.

As mentioned above, the preservice teachers’ narratives from both countries are used as data. These narratives come from various sources. In the United States, the data are more extensive as compares to data from Malaysia as I have the access to the participants’ CI 280 class website where with permission; I collected their course works which are mostly in a form of narratives. On top of that, I also requested the participants of this study to write their reflections about CI 280 after the course had ended. These data are then analyzed based on the three sub-questions for this research that are: (1) What does it mean to be a good teacher? (2) What does it mean to be a good teacher of the English-Language Learners? (3) What does it mean to be an English Language Learner? From here, the data are analyzed for major codes, categories and themes.

The data from Malaysia are collected much later where the preservice teachers there are prompted directly with the same three sub-questions as guides to produce their narratives of learning to become teachers of English-Language Learners in Malaysia.
Similar to data from the United States, these narratives are analyzed for major codes, categories and themes.

The excerpts of narratives from each participant are used to present the cohesion, the contrast as well as the overlapping of experiences not only between the participants in the same country but also between the participants in the two countries namely the United States and Malaysia. This is one of the important elements in narrative inquiry research where the method utilizes “retelling of stories that allow for growth and change” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p.71) not only for the participants of the study but also for the researcher who conducted the study. Thus, by presenting the voices of the preservice teachers in both countries, I participated in the process of retelling of the preservice teachers’ experiences in order to explore their growth and transformation in their journey to become teachers of the English-Language Learners. This concurrently, has enhanced my knowledge in this field which also changed many of my previous perspectives on teaching and teacher education. The rational of choosing narrative inquiry as the research method of this study is further explained in detail as below.

**Research Methods**

My study explores the preservice teachers’ preparatory experiences of learning to become teachers of the English-language learners in two multicultural countries and the way they facilitate the teacher education preparation curriculum to prepare themselves personally and professionally in the aspect of multiculturalism in order to become good
teachers of the English-language learners in their future classrooms. Narrative Inquiry method was chosen for this research because it helps the researcher to understand and inquire into experiences using the collaboration between the researcher and also the participant overtime (temporality), in a place or the series of places (place) and also in social interactions with milieus (interaction). Therefore, I believe that this method is able to contribute to the richness of the data as it allows the researcher to explore the lived experiences of the participants in details as these experiences are analyzed and portrayed in a form of narratives instead of mere ‘lifeless’ empirical reports. In the following, I provide a review of research on narrative inquiry and educational research.

**Narrative Inquiry**

The qualitative research is a field of research than is multifaceted and rich. What makes it rich is its flexibility and its’ limitless ability to branch out to so many disciplines (e.g. anthropology, sociology, theology) and its ability to freely move across these multiple disciplines in order to analyze the phenomena that the researcher is interested in. The same statement resonant for the use of qualitative research in the field of education where its’ flexibility allows the educational researchers to view their topic of interest from a multifaceted lenses and perspectives as the researchers are given the flexibility to adopt theories and adapt methodologies to suits their research questions and research plans.

This section discusses one of the methodologies in the qualitative research i.e. the Narrative Inquiry and how this methodology is well suited to carry out the study on
teacher education and multicultural education. This section begins with some background about narrative and narrative inquiry in order to provide more understanding about the method, what it is and what it does. Then, the discussion proceeds to how this method is the best option to carry out my own research on the topics of teacher education and multicultural education.

**Narrative**

The education field is massive and multidimensional. Its massiveness allows scholars to delve into it from multiple perspectives either from the administrative, the curriculum, the pedagogy, teacher education, multicultural education or any other aspects depending on their interest and background knowledge or experiences. In dealing with research in education, the topics of schools, teachers and students are prominent and inevitable as they are place and people that make up the landscape of the educational world. In relation to this, nothing is more worthy and interesting to the educational researchers than the stories about the inhabitants of this landscape namely the teachers and the students. Their stories provide the researchers with rich framework through which they can investigate the ways the teachers and the students’ experience the world depicted through their stories. This brought us to what is known as Narrative Inquiry where human experiences are depicted in a form of stories.

To quote John Dewey (1897) ‘education is a process of life’. Thus, education is life. Educators are people who really interested in life. They are the people who are interested in learning and teaching and how they take place. They are the people who are interested
in the leading out of different lives, the values, attitudes, beliefs, social systems, institutions, and structures and how they are linked to learning and teaching. According to Webster & Mertova (2007), “narrative is well suited to addressing the complexity and subtleties of people’s experience in teaching learning” (p.1) due to its ability to focus on critical life events for researchers while at the same time, exploring the holistic views which eventually provide valuable potentials for researchers in a broad range of learning areas. They proceed by acknowledging the power of the narrative in the human life where they believe that “people make sense of their lives according to the narratives available to them” (p.2). Stories are not stagnant as they are constantly being reconstructed when new events arise as “stories do not exist in vacuum and they are shaped by lifelong personal and community narratives” (p.2). Besides that, narrative too allows “the researchers to holistically present the complexity and the richness of human are experience” (p.2) as it “illustrates the temporal notion of experience, recognizing that one’s understanding of people and event changes” (p.2).

In addition to that, Dyson and Genishi (1994) posit that “we all have a basic need for story, for organizing people’s experiences into tales of important happenings” (as cited in Webster & Mertova, 2007, p.2). This is because “in narratives, our voices echo those of other in the sociocultural world, and we evidence cultural membership both through our ways of crafting stories and through the very content of these stories” (as cited in Webster & Mertova, 2007, p.2). Dyson and Genishi (1994) explain how stories are able to transform the present and shape the future so that the future will be richer or better than the past (pp.242-243). What they are trying to show here is stories can be the platform of transformation and learning where through stories, human are able to learn
from their mistakes or weaknesses and work towards the betterment of their future. The same idea echoed by Bruner (1994) where he believes that ‘life as led is un separable from life as told…life is not ‘how it was’ but how it is interpreted and reinterpreted, told and retold ’ (as cited in Dyson and Genishi, p. 36). Therefore, narrative should not to be looked upon as separate from real life but as forming meaningful connection to life. If Dewey’s equation of education to life is considered here, we can say that the stories of life can also be said as the stories of education where they tell everything about the process of teaching and learning in humans’ life. This highlights the interconnectedness between the narratives of human experience more prominently in the field of education.

Narrative Inquiry in research

Narrative is gaining more and more momentum in the field of qualitative research field. Narrative is seen as an alternative method in reporting research findings as compared to the other conventional empirical based methods. Many might be wondering how narrative can be positioned as a research method in education. To understand this, ones have to understand the basic principle of using narrative in conducting an educational research. The basic tenet of narrative as a research method is it studies problems as form of storytelling involving characters with both personal and social stories (Webster and Mertova, 2007). It contributes to the field of research in teaching and learning through its ability to frame the study of human experience. Narrative also is has the ability to touch on the social context or culture in which teaching and learning take place. As stories have the ability to unfold the complexities of characters,
relationship and settings, narratives too tend to hold the same ability to unfold and illuminate the complexities in teaching and learning.

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) believe that “experience happens narratively” (p.19) and they propose that “educational experience should appropriately be studied narratively” (p.19). As narrative and human experience is interconnected with each other, this shows that narrative inquiry is one of the methods that can be employed in carrying out research in the field of education as it is well suited to addressing the issue of complexity, culture as well as the human centeredness in research. This is due to its’ ability to capture the ‘whole story’ of the phenomena studied by the educational researchers as problems are studied in a form of storytelling which involve the characters with both personal and social stories.

Narrative inquiry is defined as “the study of stories or narratives or descriptions of a series of events” (Clandinin, 2007, p.4). Researchers who embrace the narrative inquiry as the methodology believe that story plays crucial role in understanding human experience though the kind of stories that they choose to study or the research methods used vary (Clandinin, 2007). Some researchers employ the perspective of metanarrative historiography, and critical analysis as methods where as some use sociolinguistic analytic tools to analyze qualitative data which can be in the forms of field notes or interviews. Other researchers like to use “conceptions from narrative such as plotlines, characterization theme, role, and other literary terms to analyze and make general sense of experience” (Clandinin, 2007, p.5) and some others explore it as fundamental to cognition (Schank, 1990). The narrative researcher might also investigate the impact of a particular type of narratives on experience and there are researchers who code the
narratives and translate the codes to numbers where these statistical analyses are used as predictor of the phenomenon that they are interested in (Pasupathi, 2003). As illustrated above, narrative researchers utilize narratives in some parts of their research where it is viewed as both methods as well as the phenomena of study. Narrative inquiry “requires the researcher to go beyond the rhetoric structure and concentrate more on the analytic examination of the underlying insights and assumptions that the story illustrates”. (Webster and Mertova, 2007, p.4). This has made it eligible to be labeled as a qualitative research methodology due to the attention given to “analyzing and understanding stories lived and told” (Clandinin, 2007, p.5).

In discussing narrative inquiry as one of the research method that can be employed in qualitative research, it does not mean that the usefulness of the quantitative research method is dismissed. It is just that the quantitative method is rather ineffective especially if the researcher wish to focus on the significant of the participants in the research that is carried out (Webster and Mertova, 2007, p.3). As “narrative inquiry is a set of human stories” (Webster and Mertova, 2007, p.3), it provides the researchers with rich framework through which they can investigate the ways human experience world depicted through their stories. However, we have to remember that narrative is not an objective reconstruction of life (Bell, 2002 as cited in Webster and Mertova, 2007, p.3). It is only a rendition of how life is perceived based on the respondents’ life experiences and entails chosen parts of their life.

In relating philosophical thought to the education research paradigms, the philosophers offer three major dimensions in order to understand these aspects further namely epistemology, hermeneutics and worldview. Epistemology deals with the quest
for truth where with regards to the educational research, the key issue here is the relation between “learning as a process and knowledge based on the truth or what is learnt” (Banathy, 1996, as cited in Webster and Mertova, 2007, p.5).

Hermeneutics is the expansion of epistemology and the idea of truth where it provides broader frameworks which discuss the idea of modernism versus postmodernism. (Webster and Mertova, 2007, p.6) It is said that these two ideas have greatly influenced the thinking about teaching and learning as well as on subsequent research methods. Modernism is mostly associated with the scientific understanding of truth and knowledge believing that there is only one ultimate and objective truth. Postmodernism, conversely, tends to put human at the center and maintain that there are subjective and multiple truths.

The third dimension is what is known as worldview. Henson (1992) posits that the idea of worldview revolves around the perception of reality “ based on central assumption, concepts and premises shared by members of culture and subculture and this also encompasses the stories that are told by the members of this culture” (Henson, 1992, as cited in Webster and Mertova, 2007, p.6). In the context of educational research, stories are considered as one mechanism that is used to reveal those views and perceptions. As narrative inquiry deals with human stories, this highlights the relevancy of narrative inquiry in conducting the educational research in teaching and learning.

On the issue of validity, the traditional empirical research methods have narrowed the concept of validity to the extent that they only regard test and measuring instruments as the best tools for validating research findings as they operate within the formal systems as well as focus on the empirical rigor. Conversely, narrative inquiry does not strive for
certainty in its conclusion. Rather it aims for its finding to be ‘well grounded’ and also ‘supportable’ as it retains its emphasis on the linguistics reality of human experience. (Webster & Mertova, 2007, p.4) . This brings us to one of the important tenets of the narrative research, what is known as ‘verisimilitude’ – that the result have the appearance of truth or reality. Therefore, here, the narrative research does not claim to represent the exact ‘truth’; but rather aims for verisimilitude. Thus “the conclusion of the narrative research generally stays open ended” (Polkinghorne, 1988, cited in Webster and Mertova, 2007, p.4) . In comparing between the statistical result and the research using narrative, Polkinghorne (1988) points out that the statistical results are often interpreted as important regardless whether “they have probably been selected from the chance drawing of sample elements from the population” (Polkinghorne as cited in Webster and Mertova, 2007,p.4-5) . On the other hand, in narrative research, a finding is significance if it is important. He proceeds by comparing between the qualitative research and narrative research where in the former, ‘reliability’ refers to the consistency and stability of the measuring instruments, while the latter, the attention is directed to the ‘trustworthiness’ of the field texts and also the transcripts of the interview. This resonant with the opinion of Amsterdam and Bruner (2000) where they posits that stories tend to ‘derive their convincing power not from the verifiability but from verisimilitude; they will be true enough if they ring true’ (p.30). In a nutshell, qualitative research values outcomes but tend to overlook the impact of experience whereas narrative inquiry allow researchers pay close study on the experience and try to understand and make sense of it.

The story-based approach in research grows on popularity based on many reasons. Firstly, narrative inquiry is human centered as it captures and analyzed life stories
This is due to its ability to document critical life events in details which resulting in revelation of holistic views where this quality gives the stories valuable potentials for research. Experience in narrative inquiry is perceived as something that is ever growing as human understanding of a certain thing or matter developed and reshaped continuously. Conventional research method tends to ignore the powerful insight offered by stories due to the traditional predominance of the modernists and empiricists view of research.

Secondly, though narrative inquiry method does not possess rigid structure as the other conventional methods, it still possesses a unique framework which many researchers found useful in conducting their own research. In order to understand this issue, Webster and Mertova (2007) list down four questions that serve as useful framework in exploring the background of narrative and its usefulness from a research perspective. These questions are ‘Why narrative?’, ‘what is the prominence of narrative in research?’, ‘what are the features of narrative in educational research?’ and ‘does narrative provide a means to bring to the forefront features of human centeredness in research?’

The first question is ‘Why narrative?’ The answer leads to the exploration of the importance of narrative in the context of educational research. Stories are noteworthy in the context of research due to their educational values. They are different from our day to day stories in the sense that stories in specific context as in the teaching and learning context are usually intended to help others learn — either directly about subject matter of the instructions or indirectly about the strength or shortcoming of the teaching experience itself (Webster and Mertova, 2007, p. 15). The link between the narrative with
teaching and learning as human activities make narrative inquiry valuable as an educational research tool (Webster and Mertova, 2007, p.15). As a result, the use of narrative as research method may provide a better understanding of the issues related to teaching and learning where this may help in generating more appropriate teaching tools and teaching technique to be able to make the teaching and learning experience more effective.

The second question is ‘What is the prominence of narrative in research? ‘Narrative Inquiry tends to hold low reputation in the academic community due to the perception of its lack of scientific methods. This is because as an educational research that embraces storytelling practices, it is perceived as unlikely to tell the ‘true story’ as compared to the empirical educational research. Nonetheless, Bruner (1990) who is an influential cognitive psychologist specializing in the practice of education illustrates the spread of the narrative approaches to the educational research as he constructed what he labeled as ‘cultural psychology’ in which he claims that narrative provides a basic of understanding action(as cited in Webster and Mertova,2007,p.17). Bruner does not dismiss the scientific methods as the way to understand the phenomena but, in fact acknowledges them and their contribution but at the same time also stresses on the important role of narrative in the educational research field. Another important point of view worth highlighting here is articulated by Gough (1997). He believes that the study of narrative is one of the ways of approaching a number of theoretical and practical problems in education as the narratives inter relate the worldview and the practice of the researcher and the teacher (Gough, 1997 as cited in Webster and Mertova, 2007, p.17). Hanrahan and Cooper (1995) echo the similar idea where they believe that the narrative and the narrative inquiry research
design are ‘able to offer the chance to bridge the divide between researchers and practitioners by allowing practitioners a voice in the construction of the new knowledge in the form of jointly constructed narrative’ (as cited in Webster and Mertova, 2007, p.18-19). Connelly and Clandinin (1990) further highlighted this by defining narrative inquiry as a ‘jointly developed narrative, with many participants, but told by one narrator who takes responsibility for and at the same time critiques the reality presented at each stage and as a whole’. Therefore the prominence of narrative arises due to the constraints of the conventional methods and their incomparability with the complexities of the human learning (Webster and Mertova, 2007).

The third question is ‘what are the features of narrative in educational research?’ One prominent feature of the narrative as a research method is the idea of plot in narratives. Plot helps researcher to connect elements in the research where the function of this plot is to move the researcher understanding of the situation forward either by developing or unfolding it (Webster and Mertova, 2007). Furthermore, stories allow us to observe what experience can do to people who are living in that experience. It also allows us to look at human’s journey of improving themselves and examine them as a story of experience. This subtle connection between the constructions of knowledge and the stories of experience has allowed narrative to be associated as a tool of research.

Nonetheless, some doubt the integrity of using narrative as a research data source due to the nature of constructing stories which can be rather subjective. Clandinin & Connelly (1990) caution researchers on what they identified as ‘Hollywood effect’ where the researcher have the tendency to provide the ‘happy ending’ to the narrative implying that everything ends well. Furthermore, due to the subjective nature of the narrative inquiry
and the desire to provide the happy ending to the story, the researcher can conceal or distort some of data source which eventually contributes to the Hollywood effect. Researchers who wish to carry out their research using the narrative inquiry method therefore should treat subjectivity with appropriate care and respect in order not to disparage the integrity of this approach in the research world.

In answering the question ‘does narrative provide a means to bring to the forefront features of human centeredness in research?’ again the idea of human centeredness is mentioned where narrative has the ability to highlight real life experiences of the person and at the same time “sensitive to the broader connections to the individual’s worldview” (Webster and Mertova, 2007, p.20). In discussing the complexity of using narrative as a research method, Polkinghorne (1988) believes that the reliability of the narrative inquiry depends on the trustworthiness of the notes or transcripts rather than on the stability of the measurement. Therefore, he believes that applying the measures of validity and reliability used in the more traditional approaches to narrative is not appropriate as the validity of narrative is associated with meaningful analysis than with consequences. Another aspect worth highlighted here is the issue of complexity, which again, is closely related to the idea of human centeredness in the research. Narrative provides the organizational framework to view the complexity where it allows the researcher not only to look at the human factors but also to consider how they relate to the learning theories. For example, Narrative acknowledged the importance of time in the learning process where deeper learning takes a long time to develop (Webster and Mertova, 2007). It also acknowledge the need for different strategies at the different times in the story of learning where the type of strategies needed at the initial stage of learning differ from the
strategies required at the advance stage of learning. This complexity in the learning process can only be explicated through narrative as narrative put the learners at the center of the discussion as well as acknowledging of the importance of time in their life, which eventually illuminates the real life experiences of these learners in their process of acquiring the knowledge and skills.

Webster & Mertova (2007) provide three comprehensive ways in utilizing narrative in research. First, narrative inquiry uses the techniques of description. Thus, it values scene, plot, characters and events are crucial in drawing the narrative sketches or critical events that constitutes the narrative (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Secondly, narrative inquiry is interested to study the complexity from the human centered perspectives. Therefore, it values the perspectives from students, teachers, instructors, teacher educators in the study as stories of human experiences are valuable in the research.

Lastly, the data collection techniques that inform the narrative sketches and critical events are employed such as surveys, observations, interviews, documentation and also conversations. These techniques highlight the aspect of time, place and plot of the critical events. Narrative framework provides the means in arranging and organizing the abundance of data gathered in order for them to make sense. It is the relation of narrative to the critical events that makes narrative inquiry a powerful research tool in educational research.

In Chapter five of their book on narrative Inquiry, Clandinin & Connelly(2000) discuss things that happened as the researcher enters the research field where a researcher is said to be in the midst—located somewhere along the dimensions of time, place, the personal and the social. As the researchers enter the field, they will experience the shifts
and the changes; and they will have to constantly negotiating, reevaluating, and maintaining flexibility and openness due to the ever-changing landscape at the research field.

The first thing that researchers have to do the moment they enter the field is what Clandinin and Connelly (2000) called negotiating relationships. This happens at the beginning of the research when a researcher begins her fieldwork and being introduced to the participants of the research probably by the gatekeeper. They liken the early experience at the fieldwork to ‘trying to start a car on a cold morning, and there is just enough power to turn the motor. Maybe it will catch and maybe it will not’ (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). They also talks about establishing strong bond between the researcher and the participants and caution the researcher that sometimes this process can be tenuous as the researcher sometimes will feel like an uninvited guest throughout the fieldwork.

Secondly, Clandinin & Connelly also discuss the aspect of negotiating purposes. This is when a researcher is required to explain about the purpose of her research to the participants and sometimes it has to be done over and over again. They feel that explaining one’s purpose of doing the research is a good move in a research because as the researcher explains her work, clarification and shaping of purpose will occur. This eventually helps in establishing better clarity of the research done.

Thirdly, they also talk about negotiating transition where they discuss the beginning of the research as well as the ending of the research which can be dramatic sometimes. Researchers are reminded of the importance of the beginning and the ending process of the narrative inquiry research as this processes demand trust and integrity between the
researcher and the participants. As narrative inquiry depends a lot on stories from the participants, the affective factor such as establishing a good relationship between the researcher and the participants at the beginning of the research and a good parting process at the end of it plays a major role in ensuring the smoothness of the transition process to happen.

Next, they also discuss negotiating way to be useful. Rather than merely being visitors, the researchers will feel ‘useful’ if they allowed participating in any part of the fieldwork. In relation to that Clandinin and Connelly (2000) also discuss the importance of ‘voices’, which one to be highlighted and which one should be silenced especially in writing the field notes.

Lastly Clandinin & Connelly (2000) explain getting a feel for it where they discuss the element of surprises in the study. This element is mostly related to the background that the researcher has as they enter the fieldwork where there is a sense of taken-for–grantedness if the researcher is already familiar with the field that she goes into as compares to if she is not. They also stress on the importance of being part of the landscape, being long enough and to be sensitive reader of and questioner of situations in an effort to grasp the large number of event and stories.

**Narrative Inquiry and research on teacher education**

In this section, I rationalize the reasons of choosing a narrative inquiry as a suitable method that was used in my study. In a nutshell, my research interest revolves around three main areas namely the multicultural education, teacher education, and English as a
second language where I want to understand the perceptions of becoming teachers of the English-Language Learners in two countries namely the United States and Malaysia. The interest in this topic arises due the personal and also professional reasons.

My experience teaching English to the multicultural students in Malaysia makes me aware that there is always an underlying tension exists in the multicultural classroom due to the students’ diverse culture and languages where not all teachers are able to handle it if there are not properly trained to deal with the multicultural students in schools. As a doctorate student interested in the topic of multiculturalism, I can’t help but reflect on my own experience teaching the multicultural classroom in Malaysia in looking at the multicultural education in the United States in order to see any familiarity and similarity that I can relate to. Reading the literature helps a lot as the literature on the topics of multicultural education and teacher education never fail to highlight the issue of challenges that the preservice teachers encountered in the multicultural classrooms which eventually makes me think that this issue is actually universal and transcend boundaries. According to Phillion, He and Connelly (2005), no discipline is more profoundly affected by multiculturalism than education where it permeates all level of education, from university to public schools. As multiculturalism becomes normative, multicultural education becomes fundamental too in order to be able to understand these changes and accept it as part of the landscape of today’s world.

The issue of multicultural education and teacher education are interrelated to each other. This is because the ways the preservice are trained especially in the area of multicultural education plays a vital role in determining their perceptions and level of understanding towards the multicultural students as teachers. Literatures tend to highlight
the fact that the majority of the preservice teachers are white, women and come from the middle class background. In contrast, the population of the students in the U.S schools is getting more diverse where the number is increasing from year to year. This imbalance affects the process of teaching and learning as schools teachers view these differences as obstacles and subsequently a potential cause of educational disadvantage to the students.

In his research on the millennium preservice teachers’ perceptions towards multiculturalism and cultural diversity, Castro (2010) found that the millennium generation college students are more demographically diverse and have positive attitude towards cultural diversity though some argue that this positive attitude is minimally presence as it is still masked by the teachers’ lack of understanding of many core issues in multiculturalism. Furthermore, Castro also feels that the Euro-American mainstream culture which supports the beliefs that individualism and meritocracy work hand-in-hand to achieve equality also contributes to the inability of these preservice teachers to empathize the diverse people struggle and failure in the American schooling system.

As I am interested to understand about the preservice teachers experience in becoming teachers the multicultural classrooms both in the United States and Malaysia, I believe that no method allows me to delve into an in-depth study of the aspects of multiculturalism and teacher education rather than the narrative inquiry. This is because I feel that this method allows me to venture into the in-depth exploration that focuses on the understanding of these preservice teachers’ experience rather than using the predetermined categories which derives from theories which is fundamental in understanding the challenges and the struggles faces by the teachers. Stories are the currency in the narrative inquiry method. Connelly & Clandinin (2000) highlighted how
experience happens narratively where they propose that educational experience should be studied narratively. As the learners in the multicultural classrooms too come from different place and cultural background, stories that they bring into the classroom and stories that are told by the preservice teachers in the process of teaching these students are valuable source of information in the process of understanding the complexity and also the challenges that preservice teachers encountered in a multicultural classrooms.

Though there are many empirical research done on teachers’ practices with students of diverse backgrounds in the United States, not many can be found on the ones that attempt this topic from a comparative perspective especially with other country. Coming from multicultural society in Malaysia, I can’t help but compare the issue with my own experience as a teacher as well as with my own social and cultural background. As my main aim of this study is to gather deeper understanding of the concepts of multiculturalism and multicultural education in the United States, I wish to explore these two concepts through the preservice teachers’ eyes in order to understand the challenges that they perceive they will face in multicultural classrooms. This serve as a good ground for utilizing a narrative inquiry method in my study as stories told by these preservice teachers will render better understanding on the complexity of this issue. This is related to the nature of the narrative inquiry method itself where the focus lies in the complexity from the human centered perspectives. For that reason, the perspectives from students, teachers, instructors, teacher educators in the study are gems as stories of human experiences are valuable in the research. Didion (1961) suggested that narrative fills the space between “what happened” and “what it means”. In trying to understand the complexity of this issue, the stories from the preservice teachers dealing with the multi-
faith students will be able to fill the gap between “what happened” and “what it means” in dealing with complexity of this as it has the ability to render a richer and deeper stories from the participants issue rather than the conventional empirical study done on the same study which is guided solely by theories. Therefore, I believe that the choice to opt for narrative inquiry as a method for this study is appropriate and well suited. In dealing with the comparative perspective of this issue, this study uses the concepts of multiculturalism and multicultural education in the United States as well as the narratives on the preservice teachers’ perception of learning to become teachers of the English-Language Learners in multicultural classrooms as my conceptual framework to describe, analyze and compare the current state of affairs on the same issue in my own country, Malaysia. This makes this study to become a comparative study of the two countries which is the main goal of my study.

Human responded differently to challenges and difficulties. Some see the challenges and the difficulties as obstacles that need to be avoided or eliminated while others see it as ways to know, to learn and eventually as a platform to improve their lives or their professions. Stories about struggles, challenges and difficulties never fail to attract readers as some view them as sources of motivation and self-improvement. With regards to the experience of learning to become teachers of the English-Language Learners in the multicultural classrooms, it is interesting to study how these teachers responded to the cultural, linguistics and the religious diverse background and in what ways these experience help them learn to be better teachers in the future. Amidst looking at all these areas in their preparatory experiences, I believe they are strongly related to the area of ‘teacher knowledge’ in learning to become teachers of the English-Language Learners.
Cochran-Smith & Lytle (1993) explored the ways that teacher knowledge can serve as catalyst for different forms of research that change practice. Their work involves building theory from the ground up (for e.g. using the work of the teachers) where they have a great belief in the power of teacher knowledge to transform teaching. In relation to the topic of multiculturalism, Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) concentrated more on using the preservice teachers’ own constructions of the issue of race and teaching where the student teachers’ are encourage to make sense of their own experiences by rewriting their autobiographies or reinterpret their life stories or previous experiences. By doing this, the student teachers have the chance to explore the ways in which issues of race and teaching makes sense to them. Thus, narrative is absolutely play a fundamental role here as they have become the medium for the teachers to make sense of their experience and to understand these experience better in order to learn from them which eventually able to provide betterment in their teaching professions.

Relating this to my own research, I believe that understanding teachers’ preparatory experience through their narratives will glean information that could help in preparing better English teachers in the future. This is because narratives can be one of the most constructive ways to evaluate the preservice teachers own perceptions about teaching especially if they face many challenges in their teacher education program; where the narratives act as their voices to provide insights on their preparatory experiences. Johnson and Golombek (2011) posits that “within the field of second language teacher education (SLTE), narrative has largely functioned as a vehicle for teacher inquiry, based on the assumption that such inquiry will ultimately bring about productive change in teachers and their teaching practices”(p.1). This has influenced their decision to focus on the
centrality of narratives where they highlighted the importance of teacher narratives activities as “a tool for knowledge-building and professional development practices that are working in consort to transform the professional landscape that constitutes the field of SLTE” (p.1). Kramp (2004) explains that in utilizing narrative inquiry as a method of research is the understanding that narrative is a way of knowing where this knowing is expressed in a narrative form we call stories. The decision to use narrative inquiry for this study is appropriate as it is compatible with the human cognitive repertoire as natural storytellers and ‘storytelling organisms who, individually and socially, lead storied lives’ (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990). The study of narrative is the study of the ways humans experience the world where ‘education, and educational research is the construction and reconstruction of personal and social stories; learners, teachers, and researchers are storytellers in their own and other’s stories’ (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990). Thus, narrative inquiry is the well suited method to study teacher experiences especially in understanding their preparatory experience of learning to become teachers of the English-Language Learners in multicultural classrooms in the United States and Malaysia.

Data Analysis

Discourse analysis

Johnstone’s approach to discourse analysis in her book “Discourse Analysis” (2008) is through what she called “open-ended heuristic” (p.xiv) where it is a research
method that consisted of a set of topics that researchers can consider in looking at any instance of discourse. She believes that being heuristic will enable the discourse analysts to pay systematic attention to every element and every potential meaning of any speech or writing taking into consideration every kind of context, resource of creativity and also source of limitation and constraint on creativity (p.xiv). In a nutshell, she is interested more on encouraging research to do systematic thinking about discourses from many disciplines, looking at the sources of their creativity and constraints as well as thinking about the reasons why utterances and written texts have the meanings and uses the way they do. From here, we can derived that Johnstone views discourse analysis as an ideal way to carry out research studies in humanities and social sciences due to its “interdisciplinary exploration” (p.xv) nature.

Johnstone defines the word ‘discourse’ as “actual instances of communicative action in the medium of language” (p.2). She explains that “discourse analysis” is different from “language analysis” because the analysis done in discourse analysis is not focusing on the language per se. Discourse analysis is done based on our interest in the things that happen when people relate the language that they use to their knowledge and memories about things that been uttered or written before as well as about feelings, creations, entertainment and many other things that happens in the world. Language is only an abstract system of rules or structural relationship of what words generally mean. Discourse, on the other hand, is both the language as well as the way people use the language in order to create, recreate and interpret the phenomena that happen around them (Johnstone, 2008, p.3). Thus, discourse analysis deals with not in the questions that the discourse analysts ask but in the ways they try to answer them—through analyzing
discourse where they examine the aspects of the structure and the function of the language in use. As for the word ‘analysis’, Johnstone feels that, in discourse analysis, it is useful if the analysts to divide longer stretches of discourse into parts according to various criteria where the characteristics of each criterion can be studied in detail. From here the analysts can investigate factors such as the grammatical patterns, the people who are involved in the discourse, and the topic/issue that the people are talking about and how these three factors intermingled and interrelated with each other.

As we can see, Johnstone is interested to know how words, sentences and utterances are related to meanings and how do the language change as people involve in the discourse. Therefore, it is crucial for the discourse analysts to be well-versed in the aspects of morphology (structure of words), semantics (meaning of words) as well as of pragmatics (how context contributes to meaning). Knowing a language does not only mean knowing the grammar, structure or vocabulary but also knowing how these language structures contributed to accomplish a specific purpose in social interaction. Johnstone believes that discourse analysis is able to provide answers for researchers who are interested to learn about the roles of language in human social life. This is because discourse analysis will enable researchers—regardless from which discipline they are from—to understand about human life and communication where through stories and small talks, the information about social relations, personal identity, social identity, ethnicity, gender, dominance or solidarity that happen in a particular community can be derived and learnt.

One of the points that is interesting in Johnstone’s book is her heuristic position in defining a discourse analysis. She defines heuristic as “a set of discovery
procedures for systematic application or a set of topics for systematic consideration” (Johnstone, 2008, p.10).

In relation to that, “discourse” according to Johnstone(2008) means ‘any actual talk, writing or signing’(p.29) and “discourses” are described as “conventional ways of talking that create and perpetuate system of ideology(sets of interrelated ideas),set of beliefs about how the world work and what is natural”(p.29). “Analysis” according to Johnstone consists of various ways of systematically disassembling the data or looking at them from multifaceted point of views. Discourse analysis therefore is a methodology that is said to be useful in answering many questions due to its interdisciplinary nature where the end product is not only necessarily a mere description of the status quo of a certain group of people but also can act as social critique which may lead to interventions. Johnstone talks about how the texts should be studied in an outwardly manner where the text should be used to understand their context and to reveal the reasons why the texts are the way they are and not the other way. Thus, the analytical heuristic (a set of broad questions to ask about the text that we work with) is needed in order to ensure that the data are viewed from multifaceted perspectives where the results of the analyses will reveals as much information as possible on the reasons human use language sound, looks, and works the way they do. This is how Johnstone perceived a discourse analysis should be carried out.
Data analysis for this study

This study adopted Johnstone (2008) “open-ended heuristic” (p.xiv) method in analyzing the data. It is used to analyze the narratives; breaking them up into themes and sub-themes and looking at the affective/emotional content of the narratives. The close examination of the themes and sub-themes emerged from the analysis are used as a tool for understanding the meaning-making experiences of the preservice teachers in their trajectories to become multicultural teachers and the way they make sense of these experiences.

The analysis is initiated by reading and rereading the data many times. According to Bogdan and Biklen (2002), reading the collected data many times will enable the researchers to see repeated words and phrases, patterns of behaviors, ways of thinking, and finally events repeating and standing out. This is crucial in finding out regularities, patterns, and topics embedded in the data and come up with words and phrases to highlight the emerged categories – the patterns as well as the topics that eventually will become coding categories or units (Bogdan and Biklen, 2002). This approach allows the researchers to lessen the amount of massive collected data and organize them by categories and topics, making them manageable and handy.

The repeated reading of the data enabled me to allocate the main themes and the sub-themes that emerge from the data. Specifically I examined the content in the narratives where data were read and classified based on these three prompts questions:

1. *What does it mean to be a good teacher?*

2. *What does it mean to be a good teacher to the English-Language Learners?*
3. What does it mean to be an English Language Learner?

The analysis help me to understanding the meanings of learning to become multicultural teachers have on the preservice teachers in the United States and Malaysia and how they make sense of this experience. This is because; there are various aspects of the narratives which actually can yield insight into the emotional experience of these preservice teachers. This can only be achieved through “empathic and sensitive readings of the text” (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zilber, 1998, p.155). The discussion in the experiences of the preservice teachers’ narratives provide deeper and clearer pictures of their emotion evoked with regards to challenges in learning to become multicultural teachers in both countries. This is important in discussing how they make sense of these experiences and the mechanism used in coping with emotions charges in learning to become teachers in multicultural classrooms.

Validity Issues

How do I know that the pre-service teachers are honest and comfortable with me? In order to address this issue, I only start to search for the participants after the whole CI 280 class has officially ended and the grades for that course have been awarded by the instructor. Thus, the pre-service teachers know that their opinion or responses about the class will not affect their grade for this course. In addition, my presence in their class as participant observer for the whole spring 2011 semester allows me to get to know
all the pre-service teachers. I make sure that I join different group of students during the
group discussion that they had in that class. During the discussion, the pre-services
teachers sometimes ask me to share my research interest, my ideas or my experience as a
teacher with them. This interaction contributed to them being comfortable with me as they know real intention of being in their class from the beginning.

As for the participants in Malaysia, the initial trust and comfort are developed through my contact with my ex-student who is a preservice teacher, learning to become an ESL teacher at one the universities in Malaysia. Our teacher-student connection developed during my teaching career in Malaysia, where I was her English teacher for three years during her junior high years. We still maintain the contact through phone, email and social media even long after she graduated from high school and my leave from the teaching career to pursue my doctorate degree here. Through her, I plan to contact the other participants for this study, thus she becomes the person that I depend on in providing the information about me to the potential participants of this study in Malaysia.

How do I know what the pre-service teachers write in the narratives is true?
Being a participant observer in the class gives me a privilege to observe the activities and responses that take place there where all these were documented in forms of field notes and memos. I also have the privilege to read all the responses, assignments and email communications that the pre-service teachers posted on ANGEL websites for that class. Thus, I corroborate all these information to substantiate the participants’ claims in their narratives. Thus, the perceptions expressed in the narratives that they write are accepted as true unless I encounter discrepant evidence that thwart their claims.
The validity of the narratives in Malaysia is determined by doing the follow up email correspondence with the participants where I ask them to elaborate and clarify issues or areas that in not clearly stated in the narratives that they write. I studied course outline and the syllabus of the teacher education program that the participants in Malaysia were currently enrolled in to understand the nature of the program in detail. I also utilized my own experience being trained as an ESL teacher and later on working as an English teacher for 14 years in Malaysia as an another mode to substantiate the participants’ claim in their narratives. Just like with the participants in the United States, the perceptions and opinions expressed in the narratives from Malaysia were accepted as true unless discrepancy arises.

Figure 3-3 Data triangulation for participants in the United States
Regarding the ethical issue, the question is, could my research harm the pre-service teachers who participate in this study? To minimize this fear of risk, the identities of the preservice teachers who participate in this study were kept anonymous. Furthermore, participants were aware that I am affiliated with the College of Education as a faculty. This minimizes the participants’ fear that their opinion or responses in the narratives might risk their grade for CI 280 or their ability to receive good recommendation for their residency after graduation. If they were still concerned about the risk, they were assured that they could easily refuse participation or opt out from the study.
Chapter Summary

The chapter contains an overview of the method and methodology used for the study. The research questions navigate the study towards the narrative inquiry research design. Therefore data collection procedures took the form of narratives written by the preservice teachers from both countries. In the United States, the data are more extensive as compared to data from Malaysia as I have the access to the participants’ CI 280 class website where with permission; I collected their course works which are mostly in a form of narratives. On top of that, I also requested the participants of this study to write their reflections about CI 280 after the course had ended. Ethical consideration was made to protect the anonymity of the participants from both countries. These data are then analyzed based on the three sub-questions for this study that are: (1) what does it mean to be a good teacher? (2) What does it mean to be a good teacher of the English-Language Learners? (3) What does it mean to be an English Language Learner? From here, the data are analyzed for major codes, categories and themes. The following chapter contains detailed description of the themes and sub-themes emerged from the data.
Chapter 4
Findings

The purpose of this study is to explore how preservice teachers in two multicultural countries namely the United States and Malaysia make sense of their experiences learning to become teachers of English-Language Learners in two multicultural countries. This chapter presents themes emerged from qualitative empirical findings and discussion about the data resulting from the thematic analysis of the narratives written by the participants. The voices of the participants are presented using excerpts from the narratives to provide evidence as well as to give credence and support for the analysis of the data. The data displayed from this analysis are used to answer the overarching research question, “How do preservice teachers make sense of their preparatory experiences learning to become teachers of the English-Language Learners in the United States and Malaysia?” The following sub-questions function as guides to delve deeper into the data: (1) what does it mean to be a good teacher? (2) What does it mean to be a good teacher to the English-Language Learners? (3) What does it mean to be an English Language Learner? (4) What aspects of teacher preparation curriculum prompted personal and professional progression towards multiculturalism for preservice teachers in United States and Malaysia?
Analyses of narratives form the four participants in the United States and five participants from Malaysia led to four main themes noted in Figure 4-1 below. The first theme is on personal development where the preservice teachers discuss their expectations and fears in becoming teachers. It also reveals the preservice teachers awareness and consciousness of their own identity as compared to the English-Language Learners and the ways they negotiate their roles as teachers and their roles as citizen of a multicultural country. The second theme, developing relationships touches upon the ideas of ways the preservice teachers in both countries attempt to develop relationships with their future students especially with students from culturally and linguistically diverse background. Other than that, the theme also explores the preservice teachers’ contemplative ideas of building relationship with others such as with the parents as well as with their future colleagues in schools. The third theme is professional development, where the preservice teachers in both countries discussed the idea of commitment, perseverance and support in a teaching profession. In relation to that, they also explore the role of teacher knowledge in preparing them to become teachers. Pedagogical practices, is the fourth theme and it explores and examines the preservice teachers outlook on effective instructional methods and conducive learning environment in teaching the English-Language Learners.
Figure 4-1 Themes and sub-themes emerged from the data
Theme 1: Personal development

Expectations, hopes and fears

Preservice teachers in the United States

The portrayal of expectation, hopes and fears is prominent in the narratives written by the preservice teachers in the United States. They represented the future expectations, hopes and fears in becoming teachers. In looking at the expectations and hopes, the preservice teachers in the United States write about their anticipation in going into the profession, their keenness in meeting and teaching their own students and their faith in the teacher education program that they are enrolled in. Joanne and Jill articulated this in their narratives.

As a teacher I want to make sure that I get to know my students and know “who they really are.” I don’t want them to just be people I see once a day and give them a grade. They trust me to give them the correct information and to teach them in the best way that I know possible; therefore I should try to get to know each individual student I have, so that I can come up with the best plan to teach them that I know. What works for student A might not work for student B and student C. Teaching in this manner requires that it comes from the heart and that is another attribute that I picked up from the Russians in the State College.

(Joanne, Multi-Genre Paper)

I want to provide an environment that is comfortable for learning and success. I want the students to feel free to ask for help whenever it is needed. I am willing to stay after school and help these students or do whatever it takes. It is my goal as a future teacher to help students succeed in any way possible!

(Jill, Teaching Statement)

The excerpts above from the narratives from the preservice teachers in the United States show how they hope and expect to become teachers who are not only trusted by learners but also be able to provide academic help for students to success in
any way possible. Establishing connection with the students is seen as a way to help the students to learn better in class. Joanne mentioned how students should not be treated as “people I see once a day and give them a grade” (Joanne, Multi-genre paper) but rather members of a classrooms community who depends on the teachers’ support and help to excel in school. Teaching is expected to come “from the heart” (Joanne, Multi-genre paper) rather than a mechanical process. Thus, teachers are expected to do it with care and able to affectionately connect to their students in order to offer them the comfort and the joy of learning in a democratic environment. In making that happens, teachers are expected to be fair and consistent in the way they treat and evaluate students. Joanne mentions this in her narratives based on her interview with her favorite teacher.

When I questioned him as to how he meant teachers should be consistent he said in every aspect; from how they teach, dealing with students, other teachers etc. Even if a teacher knows that a student is generally a good kid, but catches them with their cell phone out when they are not supposed to have it out, then they have to punish the student the same as any other student. This way the other students cannot assume favoritism and the student learns that they have to follow the rules like everybody else. This is why teachers should also keep the same level of expectation for all students in the amount of work they assign. Teachers should not assign so much work that only the “high achievers” in the class will be able to finish and they shouldn’t assign too little work that the “high achievers” will get bored. A teacher should know how to appropriately prompt students so as to help them get to the “answer” without overly frustrating them; which will be different for each individual student.

(Joanne, Favorite teacher Interview)

Nonetheless, there is an exception of being consistent in classroom. Ed mentions this in his narrative which is based on his interview with his favorite teacher as below.

One of the things that Mrs. S told me was that she doesn’t have the same expectations for each student. While she does have expectations that everyone will put forth their best effort and do as well as they are capable, she understands
that some people aren’t as skilled in a particular topic as they might be in another one.

(Ed, Favorite teacher Interview)

What Mrs. S means here is that having the same expectation on all students is not considered as fair as each student is unique. Expecting all students to put their best effort in their study is what good teachers should do.

On the topic of hope, the preservice teachers in the US hope they can be a person who the students can look up to as role models and examples. Teachers are seen as having the ability to influence students’ moral judgment and the way they perceive world. Jill and Joanne mention about this in their narratives.

A teacher should be someone who is an idol of the students and someone who they can look up too. There are times that children may not have a good home life so they may rely on their teacher who is in their life. We must always listen to our student’s opinions and listen to any problems that a student may have. We must not only think about the academic situations in our classrooms but also the social situations as well according to her past experiences.

(Jill, Favorite Teacher Interview)

I definitely see Mr. K as a mentor for me as a future teacher. He has such optimism for his teaching and I doubt he will ever lose it. He said that as an educator he first sees his role as a role model for students. He figures, as I do, that if you can show the students how to behave correctly by being kind, courteous, respectful, and a hard worker, then they have a higher chance of going out into the world to be upstanding citizens.

(Joanne, Favorite Teacher Interview)

The Gebber award acceptance speech helped to show that as teachers it is our duty to not only view our roles as educators but as role models.

(Joanne, Reading Memo # 4)

Teachers must realize that community building is not a set thing and happens as the classroom evolves at its own pace. I will make sure that as a teacher and when I student teach I appreciate the differences and uniqueness of each of my students, so that I can lead by example for my students. I see this as an important goal to shoot for; since I have the power as an educator to not only affects the knowledge of the leaders of tomorrow, but I also can have an impact on their moral
judgments and how they view the world. We as teachers are the ones molding the leaders of tomorrow so we better do our best to mold that “clay.”

(Joanne, Reading Memo # 4)

Most of the preservice teachers’ expectations on teachers as role models originated from their own schooling experiences. This is clearly seen in their interviews with their favorite teachers as part of the coursework of CI 280 class. The preservice teachers ‘idolized’ their favorite teachers because they have experienced the impact that their favorite teachers have left on their life as students when they were in schools. From here, they see their favorite teachers as example of how a good teacher should teach and act. They hope that they would be able to replicate their favorite teachers so that their future students will benefit from the same impact. Advices received from their favorite teachers are used as guidance to walk into the profession. One participant, Ed provided details of advice that he received from his favorite teacher which he felt is helpful in helping him to be a good teacher in future.

A lot of times, these students don’t care about school for a variety of reasons. Something may be going on at home, or in school itself that is keeping them from wanting to come here. With all of my students and with these students especially, it’s important to show them that you care about each one of them individually. I want to make sure that they know I’m there for them if they ever need to talk about something going on in their lives. Hopefully they’ll be able to open up to me with their problems, but if they don’t want to that’s their choice. You just have to be understanding that there might be problems that they face and that school might not be their top priority at the time.” This was amazing advice for an aspiring teacher like me.

(Ed, Favorite Teacher Interview)

Before going into the interview I had the idea that being an overly strict teacher wouldn’t be the best approach. Mrs. S confirmed my assumption for me saying that she finds her teaching to be most effective when she takes a more “laid back” approach. She said that being laid back makes her “approachable” and “makes class fun.” It’s obvious that the more students enjoy class, the more they’ll get
out of it. Thankfully, Mrs. S reassured this idea for me so that I will have a better approach when I finally start my career.

(Ed, Favorite Teacher Interview)

Among advices offered are teachers should be caring, approachable and fun if they expect the students to open up to them. A ‘laid back approach’ helps classroom environment to become less tense and eventually contributes to effective learning to take place. The act of connecting to the students by getting to know them individually, care about them especially if they have problems and take time to listen to their problems are some of the ways that are expected to create affective bond between teachers and students. These expectations are seen as positive ways of helping students to learn better as they enjoy being in schools where the teachers are not too serious, not too formal, a little bit ‘laid back’, approachable and ever willing to listen to their opinion and problems. These are the visions and expectations that the preservice hope that they could achieve as future teachers in the schools in the United States.

Besides being caring and approachable towards students, the preservice teachers feel that they hold a great responsibility in shaping the future generation of the country. Thus teachers are also expected to be role model to their students by showing sterling behavior.

The second expectation prominent in the narratives of the preservice teachers in the United States is on being good teachers of the English-Language Learners. This is relevant as C I 280 discusses issue of teaching English to the English-Language Learners. The narratives from the preservice teachers in the United States offer some insights on the ways they perceive good teachers of the English-Language Learners should be. As C I 280 focuses specifically on this issue, the preservice teachers use this opportunity to
explore the issues to the best that they can with guidance from the instructor of the course.

The preservice teachers in the United States seem to be a bit careful in expressing their opinion about the ways to be good teachers to the English-Language Learners. They hope that they could be good teachers to these learners by trying to understand their culture, language and background. However, their ideas seem to be at the experimental stages due to their lack of exposure and experience; being novice in this field. All four of the preservice teachers in the United States express the ways they hope to deal with this issue if they happen to have the English-Language Learners in their classroom in the future. The notion of ‘being novice’ can be seen when they use the conditional ‘if’ to express this idea in the narratives.

If I have an ESL student in my class I will try to help them through making supplementary activities and worksheets that will further their understanding of the chemistry and English language. I’m not going to be an English teacher, but I have to try and make sure the student understands the vocabulary or I’m wasting my time and theirs as well. As a professional it is my duty to help the students understand the material as I present it, not to just pass the material onto them.

(Joanne, Teaching Statement)

If I have an ESL student in my chemistry class then I will have chemistry vocabulary on the wall with their other language translation (the one the ESL student speaks). This will make the information more interesting for the other students as well. I will also have a peer tutor/ buddy for the ESL student. This will help the tutor learn the material better, teach them how to manage their time, help them develop their teaching skills and help free up my time. I will check in with ESL student a couple times a week, depending on their need, and make sure they are on track with the rest of the class.

(Joanne, Teaching Statement)

If I have an immigrant child in my class, I understand that it may take them longer to complete assignments and that as a teacher I will have to be more patient with them. As a teacher I also realize socializing with other students may be more challenging for the immigrant child.

(Lyn, Multi-genre paper)
If there is something that I could do better to help facilitate an ELL’s learning then I want to know what that is. By asking my peer teachers and people who might have more training than I do, I would be able to gather a wide variety of options that I might not have been able to come up with.

(Ed, Teaching Statement)

Another thing that I feel would help meet ELLs learning needs would to see what works best for them. If they have a hard time following with oral language, but can read English and understand it well, I would write out what I plan on talking about for my lesson each day so they can follow along at their pace. This also encourages them to see that I want them to learn and be comfortable in my classroom and hopefully help them learn the material I am teaching better.

(Ed, Teaching Statement)

Though all these ideas are at the planning levels, the preservice teachers are actually rather optimistic that they very likely are able to fulfill their jobs as teachers of the English-Language Learners if they have to do it in the future. This can be seen from the lucidity of the ideas that they express in the narratives above.

Amidst all these positive outlooks in looking at their future careers as teachers of the English-Language Learners, the preservice teachers are aware of the presumption that people tend to have on the English-Language Learners. The preservice teachers are concerned toward about the negative expectations that people tend to have towards the English language learner. This is clear in the three excerpts below.

This is very important for teachers and people to realize because a student may have trouble communicating in English but it does not mean that they are “dumb” or unintelligent. Teachers should never have seen a student as dumb or incapable but this is especially important for ELL students since at times it will be more difficult to communicate with them to try and understand what they have learned.

(Joanne, Reading Memo # 5)

ESL students may be scared to speak in the beginning for fear of looking “dumb” and incompetent. We as teachers have to make them feel safe and comfortable so that they want to take risks and learn, which was the same as when I was learning piano.
(Joanne, Teacher Statement)

Many people when they are communicating with someone that doesn’t speak their language tend to raise their voice, in thinking that will make the other person comprehend. I have learned that if I have a child in my class, who does not speak English, raising my voice will do nothing!

(Lyn, Multi-genre paper)

Joanne particularly is very concerned about not making the English-Language Learners look ‘dumb’ and ‘unintelligent’. She feels that the problem does not lie in the students’ intelligence but rather their still lack of proficiency in the new language as well as fear of being seen as ‘dumb’. Joanne suggests future teachers to consider these factors before coming to a quick conclusion (such as labeling these students as ‘dumb) in looking at the English-Language Learners’ struggle in schools. She believes that making the students feel safe and comfortable will lower the students’ apprehension level which eventually motivates them to take the risks to learn in schools. She relates this to her own experience learning piano. Lyn echoes the same concern when she observes that people tend to ‘raise their voice’ when speaking with the non-native speaker as if they were ‘dumb’. This has given her the realization to avoid doing the same action in the future as it is baseless and futile.

In their attempts to understand the English-Language Learners and to help them, some expectations expressed by the preservice teachers in the United States can be seen as a little bit ambitious. For example, Lyn writes about hiring bilingual teachers and having bilingual books in classrooms to help the English-Language Learners learn in schools.

Schools can try to hire teachers who are bilingual. This will enable students who speak another language, hopefully the same one the teacher does, to have better communication between the two. Schools can provide books in both languages,
and also books that have both languages in the book itself. Also, schools can provide labels in both languages that can be around the room helping the child understand objects, further advancing their vocabulary.  

(Lyn, Teaching statement)

She also mentions about dedicating one day of the class to discuss the culture of the English-Language Learners as ways the native and non-native students can learn from each other.

My thoughts and beliefs about English-Language Learners will transfer over into the classroom. The classroom materials I will have will be both beneficial to the ELL student as well as a native English student. Having books in both languages and maybe a day explaining the different types of ethnicities in the classroom, will allow the students to be able to understand the backgrounds of other students. If I did a day of class dedicated to a day in the life of a native Mexican, the children could learn about Mexico and the traditions there. Also choosing a book about immigrants and doing a read aloud in class, will allow me as the teacher to prompt my students and ask them questions of what they have learn.  

(Lyn, Teaching statement)

Expecting to understand the diverse students’ culture and value among popular ideas mentioned in the narratives. Ed and Lyn particularly write about understanding ‘all’ of the students’ culture and values particularly the ones belong to foreign students and the English-Language Learners as well as the idea of immersion.

This is a very important lesson for aspiring teachers. You need to understand ALL of your students cultures and values because what you might think is important in the classroom, they might not see it in the same way. You need to understand how to connect with each individual student to make them feel like they are welcome in the class, especially foreign students or ELL’s.  

(Ed, Reading Memo #1)

Understanding more about a person makes it easier to accept one. So if I had a Mexican student in the classroom, this would allow the other children to get to know more about that person. I think by implementing a multi-cultural appreciation in the classroom is a very important aspect a classroom should have. This enables the students to learn about one another.  

(Lyn, Teaching statement)
Nonetheless, Lyn confesses that some of her expectations about the English-Language Learners have changed throughout the C I 280 course. She feels that rather than being too ambitious in making them immerse in the mainstream culture in order to accelerate language learning process, there are actually other ways to help them to learn better.

Throughout my time in this class, some of my viewpoints have changed and some have grown deeper. In my reading memo 3, I spoke about whether or not written language activities should be used for beginning ELL’s. Looking back at this, I feel that at the time I thought that speaking and really immersing oneself in the atmosphere were really the most important ways for an English language learner to develop their English skills. I mentioned how without my mom, being a native English speaker, my dad probably would not have learned English as fast as he did. While this is true, throughout my time in this class, I have also realized how important it is in having written language activities. Yon, the student we studied in class, did not like to speak English that much. However, she kept a journal and started writing in English way before she spoke in English. This shows and proved to me how both are extremely important, and that we need both to be thriving learners. If one does not have the access to be able to practice their speaking aloud to someone else, or if one just is shy and does not feel the need to speak, writing activities still will enable the learner to practice and develop their English.

(Lyn, Teaching statement)

Lyn’s narrative seems to echoes Joanne’s opinion of perceiving the C I 280 course as an expected ‘tools’ that they can use to help them to become better teachers of the English-Language Learners. In Lyn’s case, C I 280 classes has helped her to change certain viewpoints about teaching the English-Language Learners. She also mentions how she also gained deeper understanding of the issue which helps her to see it from different perspectives. What happens here is, initially she only uses her personal perspective (her father is a second language learner) as the basis of her understanding of the issue. However, the C I 280 classes have changed the way she looks at the issue by providing theoretical and academic knowledge that deepen her understanding of the issue.
from a professional perspective. C I 280 course has become useful and reliable ‘tools’ that prepares Lyn to face the challenge of teaching the English-Language Learners in the future.

Ed, on the other hands, initially doubts the relevancy of this course to his field of study as he is a Math major student. He does not expect much from it and decided to “just go through the motions of another class” (Ed, The Last narratives).

As I was scheduling classes for my Spring ’11 semester at XXX University, I enrolled in C I 280 without knowing what the class was even about. It was on my semester planner and my advisor told me it was required for my major so I scheduled it without knowing what I was taking. Over winter break that year, I looked at the classes that I was taking for the upcoming semester and realized this class was titled “Introduction to Teaching English to English-Language Learners.” The first thing that came to my mind was questioning why I had to take this class. “I’m a math education major,” I thought to myself. “Why do I need to learn how to teach kids English?” While I went into this class thinking I’d just go through the motions of another class, it turned out to be one of the most valuable classes I’ve taken in my time at XXX University. (Ed, The Last Narrative)

Nonetheless, the class seems to be exceeding his initial expectations where by the end of the semester, he feels thankful for enrolling in it. Just like Joanne, Ed too views this class as ‘tools’ to prepare him to face challenge in becoming teachers of the English-Language Learners in the future.

I am very thankful that C I 280 is a part of the Education major’s curriculum. As an aspiring high school mathematics teacher, I never thought that this course would prove to be useful for my future. I thought that students, who don’t speak English well, or even at all, would have little trouble learning mathematics. I mean, after all, math is the universal language, right? This class made me realize that having ELLs in my classroom is very possible, even likely. I would not have felt as prepared to teach these students without taking this class. It is absolutely necessary for aspiring teachers to enroll in a course similar to this. These are the students that need help the most. As I have learned through this class, being new to a culture can be a difficult experience. By taking a class like this, teachers can
provide more help for these students to succeed not only in our classrooms, but in their new environment!

(Ed, The Last Narrative)

Dealing with the English-Language Learners is definitely a new experience for the preservice teachers especially if they don’t have previous experience schooling or having context with people from diverse background before. Being apprehension is normal. However, they do not seem to feel scared in having the English-Language Learners in their future classrooms. Joanne provides her rationale.

As a teacher it is my job to have the tools and know where to go for help/ support if I need it when trying to teach this student and that is what CI 280 did for me. It gave me the tools to teach ELL students by giving me the understanding of the rules, regulations and the students themselves. CI 280 is important since it helps future teachers realize that there are two sides of the coin: teachers have fears and so do students. Once teachers show students that they are individuals in a safe and caring environment then the student will see that the teacher is a loving and caring person that wants to help them learn.

(Joanne, The last narrative)

Joanne perceives fear as being “two sides of the coin” where it is understandable and acceptable for both teacher and students to experience fear and anxiety. Joanne mentions that the most important thing here is for teachers to have “tools” to handle the challenge in the teaching the English-Language Learners and to provide caring and safe learning environment for learning to take place. The specific “tools” mentioned here is the knowledge gained from the C I 280 classes which is seen as the key support that makes these preservice teachers feel prepared to teach the English-Language Learners in the future. One of the “tools” mentioned in her narrative is the reading article from the C I 280 class which helps her to develop compassion towards the struggle that the English-Language Learners have to face in a foreign land.
This reading helped me to understand and empathize with ESL students, since I read in the reading about how much work they had to put into learning English. Reading about how hard these students worked by reading at home, keeping journals, and being taught by tutors showed me that these students and their parents were really determined to become proficient in English language so they could function like others living in the USA. I can imagine how hard it would have been for me to move to a completely foreign country when I was only 7 years old. I bet I would have been scared and nervous a lot; especially if I wouldn’t have known the language of the country. It was nice to read about how helpful and committed these ESL teachers were to helping their students.

(Joanne, Reading Memo # 3)

In the narrative, rather than fear, Joanne empathizes with the struggle of the English-Language Learners. Lyn shares the same empathetic feeling towards the English-Language Learners. Unlike Joanne, her compassion towards the English-Language Learners originates from seeing the ways her father struggles as a non-native speaker himself.

Reading about how much time these students work at their English skills by reading at home, and keeping journals showed me that these students and families were really determined to become proficient in English. Since my father learned English as a second language, I was able to understand and connect with this reading more. I understand the attempt that these families have for being fluent in English, I continuously recognized this throughout the article, and reflected it on my own family.

(Lyn, Reading Memo # 3)

Lyn shows her real understanding of the struggle that the English-Language Learners have to face in the United States by relating to her own life experience of having parents who are the second language learners themselves.

My father strived to be fluent in English so he could become a successful citizen here. When my mother lived in Mexico, she had to become fluent in Spanish to be able to work there. Both of my parents being learners of some other language then their native one, made me understand this article to a better degree. I grew up in a house were on a daily bases I was correcting my father’s English, and even with almost 25 years living in the United States, I am still to this day correcting his English. Our family and friends often mock my dad for his incorrect use of vocabulary or grammar. Throughout my life, all the reading comprehension
homework and other English related homework’s I received, I would never go to my dad for help and always go to my mom because I knew he was still learning. So I know how hard is it for students to learn an additional language if my father is still having trouble so many years later with his English, and also my mother with her Spanish.

(Lyn, Reading Memo # 3)

Growing up as a child to a second language learner parent makes Lyn genuinely aware of the challenge and the difficulties of learning the second language successfully. She mentions how even after 25 years living in America, her father is still struggling with the language and oftentimes being mocked for his incorrect grammar by family and friends. This enhances her empathy towards the newcomers who she believes face the same challenge in learning the language.

Ed, unlike Lyn, has no experience dealing with any English-Language Learners in his life. Rather than fear, he is only a little bit anxious if he happens to have to deal with them in his future classroom due to his unfamiliarity with the people from diverse background. Exploring the Korean through the C I 280 class project is his pioneer attempt to get close and personal with people from other culture and language and to gain understanding of their background culture and language.

My exploration of the Korean culture here in SC has been eye-opening. It really gave me a sense of understanding of how tough it would be for ELL students, or students from a different culture, to learn effectively in a classroom in which there are languages or cultural barriers. Through talking with IR, I got a sense of the culture that Koreans bring with them to America. Along with getting familiar with their new lifestyle in America, they have to worry about keeping their own culture and traditions alive from home. There’s a sense of pressure not to lose your traditions.

(Ed, Multi-genre paper)

He tries to put himself into the English-Language Learners’ shoes in understanding their struggle by relating his own experience of trying the Korean food for
the first time. He feels that his experience trying the new food, not liking it and being able to make a choice of not eating implies choices that he has in life in dealing with multiculturalism as compared to the experience of immigrant students who have no choice at all. They either have to adjust or suffer.

I also learned a lot from my visit to Kimchi. The Korean food that I tasted wasn’t very good and I can’t see myself getting used to eating that every day. This could be a big problem for someone immigrating to any new country. I only “had” to try Korean once. If I didn’t like it, I wasn’t forced to eat it again. That would not be the case if I moved to South Korea. That kind of food is “normal” to Koreans, and I would have to either adjust or go hungry.

(Ed, Multi-genre paper)

His attempt to empathize with the English-Language Learners’ struggles does not stop here. In the reading memo, Ed again expresses his concern about the survival of the English-Language Learners in the American schools without a sufficient linguistic knowledge. This can be seen by the questions that he seems to ponder based on Pinker’s article where the English-Language Learners’ knowledge in English is liken to the one belongs to newborn babies.

I feel that this is a very helpful thing to understand when trying to teach ELL students. ELL’s have very little, if any, knowledge of the English language, just like newborn babies…One question that I have is this. Is it harder for an ELL compared to a newborn to learn English since the ELL already knows another language? Could it possibly take longer for an ELL to learn English? Are there any ways to speed up their comprehension of English?

(Ed, Reading Memo # 2)

Here, Ed seems anxious to find ways to “speed up their comprehension of English”(Ed, Reading Memo #2). This is probably due to his future role as a mathematics teacher where he feels that the proficiency in English is crucial in the process of teaching and learning it. He expresses his concern in his Reading Memo # 5 below especially with regards to the English-Language Learners’ ability to learn mathematics because the
subject requires a certain level of proficiency in English language in order to learn it effectively.

They may not need to know calculus or trigonometry, but some sort of math shows up each day. Each student needs to be able to understand how and why you do the things you do in mathematics, and the only way to understand that is through classroom communication. These every day math problems are more or less word problems that a math student might face. If the student doesn’t understand certain words in English or has trouble understanding what the problem even is, then there is no chance that they will be able to solve the problem. Yes they might be able to solve it if you give them the equation for the problem, but without meeting the proficiency standards for the English language, they would never be able to solve it on their own.

(Ed, Reading Memo # 5)

Preservice teachers in Malaysia

A similar analytical focus is done on narratives written by the preservice teachers in Malaysia. I analyze the narratives by looking at their expectations, hopes and fears in learning to become teachers of English-Language Learners in Malaysia.

One prominent idea emerged from the data from Malaysia is the expectations of teachers as exemplary figure and role models to students and society. Two preservice teachers, Marina and Farina delineate this idea in their narratives.

Next, teacher too must possess the noble attitudes and be the role model for the students. Teacher must know that the students are most likely to copy their attitude. Teacher must show the high level of patience and avoid from punishing students for small mistake. Students who are teenagers are most likely to rebel and teacher should find another way to correct the misbehavior. Showing the good attitudes and behaviors do not bound in the classroom only. It is counted on how teacher interacts outside the classroom such as with the colleagues and parents or even their friends in the social networking system. Being a teacher may look tedious but I believe that teachers’ attitudes will mold students' attitudes even not as a whole but it is still give the impact towards the attitudes growth. A good teacher must think before speaking and avoid the censored word and portray good attitudes.
Besides knowledge, a good teacher is also expected to behave very well. A good teacher is looked up as a role model by the learners. Due to that, a good teacher must portray a good behavior to the learners and mold them to be a good behaving human too. Besides portraying a particular behavior to the learners in order to educate them, a teacher must also consider his or her own behavior towards the learners.

Expecting teachers to become role models is unsurprising due to the expectation of the profession itself which put the responsible in educating the younger generations of the nation on the teachers’ shoulder. The possession of ‘noble attitude’ is expected as students are assumed to be “most likely to copy their attitude” (Marina, Narratives from Malaysia). Figuratively, Marina and Farina liken the profession of a teacher to being a mold; where the teacher is expected to have the ability to shape the students by promoting, setting and showing good examples to students. Due to this, Marina agrees that being a teacher is tedious. However, the tediousness is worthwhile if it can bring long lasting benefits to students. This is the reason why she feels that teachers should not only be good to the students in their classrooms but should also extend this morally deeds outside classrooms so that the goodness perseveres.

One idea that struck me is the attention given to the words that teacher use in class. Marina mentions how “a good teacher must think before speaking and avoid the censored word” (Marina, Narratives from Malaysia). The preservice teachers in Malaysia are very concern about words that they uttered to students in class. Lina, another preservice teacher, provides explanation of this situation in her narrative.

I know that as a teacher I can change my students’ attitude and perception about life. One word that came out from my mouth can either be a tool to motivate the
students more or a killer to them. Thus, I have to be very careful of what I say in class.

(Lina, Narratives from Malaysia)

Furthermore, her opinion on this issue is mostly related to her bitter experience in an additional mathematics class when she was a student in high schools which she says left a scar in her heart. The pain from the words uttered by her mathematics teacher is described as to be more tormenting than receiving physical pain.

This statement is made by me through a personal experience that I went through during secondary school. At that time, my classroom was filled with my friends from other classes because my Add Math teacher was doing tuition [extra class outside the school hours] for us. In front of everyone, she showed my Add Math test paper and commented on each question. I still remember each word that she used. “How can a form 5 student fail to answer the easiest question? This is basic! If she cannot even answer this, how can she answer other harder questions? And SPM (the national exam for the High Schools students in Malaysia) is only months away.” In front of my face, in front of almost everyone in my batch, I was humiliated. I know I was wrong for taking the subject for granted. It is true that what I did was wrong and she should bring me back to the right track. But does she have to scream in front of everyone to make me realize all this? Does she have to make me feel like the most stupid person in the class for not being able to answer the test? That really left a scar in my heart. That was literally putting me at the lowest point of being a student. It was more painful than the time when my History teacher hit me twice while I was standing on the table in class. Physical pain does not last; in fact I never had a grudge with my History teacher. I can still talk to him and thank him for spanking me. My Add Math teacher left a scar in my heart and that has been one of the reasons why I cannot go back to my secondary school.

(Lina, Narratives from Malaysia)

This bitter experience affects Lina’s perceptions on her own journey to become a teacher herself. The experience influences her to strongly believe that the words teacher uses and utters in class do play major roles in students’ motivation to learn in schools as well as their attitude about schools and education.

The preservice teachers in Malaysia do not expect teaching as an easy profession. In the narrative mentioned earlier, Marina expects the profession to be
‘tedious’. Lina shares Marina’s point of view where she expects the profession to be challenging and tiring.

The journey is still long for me. I plan to be in education line for all my life so I have time to improve myself. I just hope I do not get lost in the middle of the journey. Challenges can be tiring but I should use them as a stepping stone to become a better person. With help and support from my family, lecturers and friends I am sure I will be able to do it.

(Lina, Narratives from Malaysia)

Though challenging and tiring, Lina has a high expectation in her future profession where she hopes that it can be “a stepping stone” (Lina, Narratives from Malaysia) to become better person. Thus, teaching profession is seen as a way to achieve betterment in one’s life. Rina, another preservice teacher from Malaysia seems to share Lina’s expectation of seeing teaching as a challenging profession. She too has a her high-expectation on the profession where she expects a teacher to be “the most perfect person on the planet Earth” (Rina, Narratives from Malaysia).

I always have this thought that a teacher is the most perfect person on the planet Earth because they know everything. I wonder where they knew all those stuff they had been preaching in the classroom. As time goes by, I have become a grown up and I finally understand that the journey to become a teacher is full of sacrifice, hard times, strong tides, up and downs and what so ever you want to call the challenges to become a good teacher.

(Rina, Narratives from Malaysia)

In short, the preservice teachers in Malaysia visualize teachers as moral figures where they are expected to possess exemplary traits and mannerisms for students to copy and to learn from them. Teachers are also seen as figurative “molds” where their words have power to shape and change the students’ actions and perceptions about education. Being a good teacher is seen as challenging, tiring and tedious. However, it’s worthwhile as the profession is respected by the society.
In looking at their roles as teachers of the English-Language Learners, it is interesting to see how they not only view themselves as the future English teachers but also still as the ESL learners themselves.

I know that the journey of being a teacher especially in a multicultural classroom will never be easy. I am humbled by my imperfection. However, I am willing to work them out as I continue my journey as an ESL student. Every day is a new experience for me and I am still learning and improving myself.  
(Lina, Narratives from Malaysia)

Here, Lina tries to negotiate between her role as a still second language learner of English herself and her future roles as an English teacher of the English-Language Learners. This makes her aware of what she calls as her “imperfection” as teaching a multicultural classroom will require her to deal with students from diverse background who expects her to be able to teach the language well despite being a second language learner herself. Lina expressed her point of view in this issue in the excerpt below.

They might have doubts on my capability as Malay but I will prove to them that I have what it takes to be an educator. Before I can teach them to respect me, I have to respect them first and that is what I will do.  
(Lina, Narratives from Malaysia)

The issue mentioned here is her consciousness of being a Malay English teacher. Lina is implying that here is the issue of stereotyping in looking at the ability of the Malay teachers to teach English in the Malaysian society. In the excerpt above, Lina expresses her cognizance of how being Malay will make people doubt her ability to teach English. The Malays are implied to have less ability to be good English teachers in the eyes of the society. Thus, people tend to have low expectation on their ability to teach English. This is particularly prominent in the urban schools as compared to in the rural schools as mentioned in the excerpts below.
I am aware of the various challenges that I would face in teaching a multicultural classroom. I have to be better than the best to teach them because nowadays students can get smarter than their teachers. I have heard many experiences from seniors teaching in an urban school on how the students will look down on you if you are not good enough to teach them English. I might face a different scenario if I were to teach in the rural areas. The conclusion applies to both situations; competency is compulsory in order to teach. As for me, being competent in English Language and in teaching English is a must.

(Lina, Narratives from Malaysia)

Teaching English in the rural area is equally challenging too as the language is seldom used by the rural dwellers who are mostly Malays.

Teaching English in a Malaysia is quite a big challenge, especially in the rural areas. People seldom practice speaking the language so it’ll be hard for them to master the language. English is the second language in Malaysia so it’ll be totally helpful if people can speak them. So a good English teacher is probably a person who can create awareness to their students of the importance of English.

(Nora, Narratives from Malaysia)

Here, the English teachers in Malaysia are expected to be able to promote the awareness towards the importance of English in the rural area as the language is unpopular there.

With all the issues mentioned regarding the society perception towards English and English-Language Learners, it is not surprising that the preservice teachers in Malaysia experience fear in going into the professions for the first time.

As eager as I am, I still feel scared. I am not perfect so I can never please everyone. I might even hurt my students without the intention of doing so. I am aware of all these and with that I hope to give my very best to my students. Hopefully if things do not go as I plan, I will not give up easily. The journey is still long for me. I plan to be in education line for all my life so I have time to improve myself. I just hope I do not get lost in the middle of the journey.

(Lina, Narratives from Malaysia)

Lina’s uncertainty in going into the profession might be related to the lack of specific preparation subject in the teacher education program that deals with the issue of
multiculturalism for the preservice teachers. In the narrative below she mentions how she feels scared and imperfect with this situation. She even plan to figure out on her own on the way to prepare herself to be a good teacher to the multicultural English-Language Learners in her future classroom as she does not receive the appropriate support from the teacher education program that she is enrolled now.

I want my students to be better than me so I will work hard in helping them. There are hurdles for me in the journey but I will give my all in working it out. Although there is no specific subject to help me deal with multiculturalism in school, I have to work it out with my own effort. Yes, there were a few subjects that touched on the issue but only on the surface. I am willing to help my students although it will require hard work from my side.

(Lina, Narratives from Malaysia)

Just like Lina, in the narrative below, Nora too expresses her unpreparedness to teach multicultural classroom as a future English teacher. It is rather unsure from whom she will ask for help in handling multicultural classrooms in the future.

I am truly scared to teach in a multicultural classroom and of course I do not feel prepared at all. But to avoid any unwanted circumstances, I will do anything to prepare mentally and physically by asking anyone I can think of regarding their experiences in order to improve myself and planning early in dealing with a multiculturalism classroom.

(Nora, Narratives from Malaysia)

Nora true fear of teaching multicultural students is based on Nora’s personal experience witnessing the bad side of living in multicultural society where people of the difference racial group unable to tolerate and respect each other.

Multiculturalism is a serious problem. There was once a big fight in my old school where two different cultures fought with each other. They used knife and a huge parang [a long knife] to injure the other opponents and even the teachers. It only started because of a small issue where they were playing football and then this Indian fellow got hit by the ball in the head by a Malay student. When these footballers were walking out of the school, suddenly they were attacked outside the gates by a group of Indian grownups at the age of 20’s with the knives and
everything. Then came out all the Malay male students and joined the fight. When teachers came, even the teachers were hit because they are Malays.

(Nora, Narratives from Malaysia)

As there is minimal exposure of multicultural subject in their education course, it is wretched to see that the preservice teachers in Malaysia plan to opt for alternative ways in seeking support in dealing with issue in multiculturalism in schools rather than from their own teacher education program. Lina mentions how she will “to work it out with my own effort” to search ways to teach multicultural students whereas Nora plans to “do anything to prepare mentally and physically by asking anyone I can think of regarding their experiences” (Nora, Narratives from Malaysia). Nora recalls the experience of her fellow senior who struggled to teach students from diverse background due to the lack of sufficient preparation on the area multiculturalism at his teacher education level.

The teacher program that I am enrolled in now I think does not prepare us to teach in a multicultural classroom. Yes, they do provide some advices such as do not choose materials that can be sensitive towards certain culture, do not differentiate the treatment towards students of different culture and also when giving examples to students during teaching process, try to include all cultures that are present in the classroom. But these are all the things that people can think of by themselves. The program does not actually help us in any way. For example, a senior of mine who had gone for his practicum last semester was shocked to be in his new classroom. Almost all of the students in the class cannot speak either English or Malay language properly. They only know the most basic stuff like “My name is…” and how this poor senior of mine had a very rough time to both teach and handle the classroom.

(Nora, Narratives from Malaysia)

The preservice teachers in Malaysia truly feel unprepared to go into the professions due to many challenges that they anticipate that they will face as future teachers in a multicultural classrooms. Furthermore, the teacher education program that they are in now does not provide a comprehensive preparation for them to make them
feel prepared to face these challenges. Nonetheless, Lina explains it best in writing about her personal reason to become an English teacher.

My journey in learning English has its own ups and downs and that would be the reason why I feel humbled to teach it.  
(Lina, Narratives from Malaysia)

In her narrative, Lina writes a lot about the impact that her English teachers left on her and how their good teaching motivates her in her learning. This has inspired her to be good English teacher too in the future. Though she anticipates many challenges to come as a future English teacher, she feels ‘humble’ to teach it as she believe that benefit of learning English will exceed the struggle of teaching it. Thus, being an English teacher is something that she feels ‘humble’ to do as a future career.

**Mirror and Window**

**Preservice teachers in the United States**

I come up with this theme after noticing the word “mirror” and “window” used by one of preservice teachers in her narratives. It comes from the title of one of the instructor’s lesson plan for one of the C I 280 classes which originally based on a couple of literary scholars’ work. I thought that the theme “mirror and window” perfectly represent the concept of “self” and “others” in depicting the preservice teachers’ experience learning to become teachers of the English language learner in the United States.

My job here would be to teach the other students how important it is to make someone feel welcomed and accepted. I would show the other students how they
could all relate and be friends with one another. I would teach my class that it is important to learn from others and their experiences, this will allow them to have a “window” look into finding appreciation for other cultures and a “mirror” look into how they can always learn more, and may even find similarities between cultures.

(Lyn, Multi-genre paper)

“Mirror” indicates the idea of self-evaluation and self-realization and “window” depicts the idea of opening up one’s mind in looking out outside one’s world view and perceptions. It is interesting to see how the preservice teachers in the United States view their experience of becoming teachers of the English-Language Learners from the “mirror” and “window” perspectives.

The idea of self in the narratives revolves around the way the preservice teachers view themselves amidst an unfamiliar situation. This is similar to looking into one’s imaginary “mirror” to evaluate and reevaluate our perception and thinking. This metaphor is particularly relevant especially in their discussion regarding their experience in doing a class project known as a Multi-genre paper. This project requires the preservice teachers to explore the culture of the multicultural people who live at the surrounding university area. Ed, who admits that he has a very limited contact with people from diverse background before he comes to college, is shocked with the diversity that he sees in the campus.

Growing up in a small town in the middle of nowhere, Pennsylvania, I have not been exposed too much diversity at all. Just about the entire student and faculty population of my high school were Caucasian. You could literally count every minority on two hands. Coming to PS was a minor cultural shock, being exposed to a wide variety of cultures and personalities. However, I still haven’t had to immerse myself into another culture because the majority of people I met are Caucasian Americans.

(Ed, Multi-genre paper)
For the multi-genre paper, he decided to explore the Korean culture in his university town. He expressed his nervousness in starting this project alone.

This experience of going deeper into the lifestyles of the Korean society of SC was intimidating to say the least. I wasn’t sure if going places like a Korean market or Korean restaurant would draw negative attention to me because I was of a different culture. I was worried that I wouldn’t fit in and that they would be rude and indifferent toward me.

(Ed, Multi-genre paper)

The starting experience of venturing into the Korean culture has acted as a ‘mirror’ to Ed to realize that he is different. It makes him assume that he is exposed to what he calls as ‘negative attention’ (Ed, Multi-genre paper) for being different from others. The feeling of being “out of place than any moment in my life” (Ed, Multi-genre paper) makes him aware the struggle of the immigrants students face in the United States.

By just going into the Korean market and Kim Chi restaurant on Atherton Street, I felt more out of place than at any other moment of my life. This perspective helped me realize what it must be like to be an immigrant to a new country and culture. While I thought that a language barrier would be the biggest challenge for an immigrant to adjust to, there are a number of different things I haven’t even considered before this assignment. I understand that Kim Chi doesn’t perfectly represent Korean food, there wasn’t much that I even considered eating. In fact, I ordered the most “American” food on the menu and ended up hating it. Along with food differences among cultures, there is also the difference in what is or isn’t acceptable among cultures. All of these things would really make life for an immigrant difficult, including adjusting to a new school.

(Ed, Multi-genre paper)

This self-realization actually becomes a ‘window” him to empathize with the English-Language Learners who definitely feel the same way among the other mainstream students.

Little did I realize that this is the same thought process that is going on in most ELL students’ minds. It opened up my eyes to how difficult it must be for someone of a different culture to feel included in a room where everyone else is
of a similar culture. As difficult as this may be, it is amazing how these students are able to learn despite their concerns and language barriers. As nervous as I was going into this project, these kids have many more obstacles to overcome. I’m grateful I had the opportunity to experience it.

(Ed, Multi-genre paper)

The feeling of isolation is prominent all the narrative written by the preservice teachers in the United States in discussing their experience venturing into the culture different from their own. Their own consciousness has become “mirrors” that let them evaluate themselves from the perspective of others. Lyn, just like Ed, is very conscious about being different among the Korean people in her first attempt to learn about Korean culture where she decided to visit a Korean Mart in her hometown.

Throughout my immersion, I kept reflecting on how this culture and my own related and differed. While really immersing myself in the Korean culture in Great Neck, New York I couldn’t help but to keep feeling a sense of exclusion. During my experience of trying to really get involved in the Korean culture, it is sad to say, but I could not obtain the feelings of warmth or welcoming from the Korean community. The lingering thought of being an “outsider” just didn’t go away.

( Lyn, Multi-genre paper)

Feeling like an “outsider” (Lyn, Multi-genre paper) arises due to the treatment that she receives from the people around her which she describes as “stand-offish” (Lyn, Multi-genre paper).

However, again I kind of experienced the people around me to be “stand offish” towards me. When I went to try the dumpling I tried to speak to the man about how he made it and if he is also a local neighbor in this community. The man didn’t really seem to understand what I was asking, he just shrugged his shoulders and say “yeah, taste.”

(Lyn, Multi-genre paper)

Being alone in a foreign place has made Lyn extra conscious about the treatment that she receives from the people around her even though it is not necessarily true. The feeling of isolation that she has experienced has become a “mirror” in evaluating her
perception towards students from diverse background and to empathize with the struggle of the immigrant people in the United States.

I then again began to think of those immigrant students who walk into class on the first day of school. I realized how hard it is for that student, to get some stares, but no one wanting to talk to you, and being all alone without any friends around. (Lyn, Multi-genre paper)

In the narrative below, Ed concludes that his experience going into the Korean culture has opened up a ‘window’ in exploring how it feels to be different. Being different certainly uncomfortable as Ed describes his exploration into the Korean culture as “going out of my comfort zone” (Ed, Multi-genre paper).

I feel as though it is something you can’t completely understand unless you’re in the situation yourself, but being able to talk to him [a Korean student that he has interviewed] about it certainly was informative. I really enjoyed having this experience of going out of my comfort zone into the Korean community in State College. It was only for a short while, but it was definitely a great learning experience that I’ll take with me into my teaching career. (Ed, Multi-genre paper)

Jill explores the Chinese culture for her multi-genre paper. Just like Ed, she describes the experience as “uncomfortable” and “hard” (Jill, Multi-genre paper).

Nonetheless, she feels that she learns to empathize with the struggle of the immigrants have to go through especially the ones who have hard life at home.

My culture and the way that I live in the United States was hard for me to find until I started studying the Chinese culture in SC and around my home. Putting myself in situations that were a bit uncomfortable was hard but I am really glad that I got the experience. In the future I want to use the knowledge that I have gained to help my future students to be successful and learn in a way that is best for them. Creating this sense of closeness in the classroom can also be related to creating a sense of family for the students who may not have it at home. I could not imagine what it was like for immigrants to come to the U.S. but this project gave me some insights. There are so many culturally and linguistically diverse people in the U.S. and I would love to be able to study some more of them in the future!! (Jill, Multi-genre paper)
Overall, the preservice teachers in the United States value their experience exploring the cultures that are different from theirs. This experience has become the ‘mirror’ which reflects the anxiety, the discomfort and the hardship that the English-Language Learners feel of being different and being alone in foreign places. This leads them to empathize with the struggle that the people from diverse background has to face in living in foreign places especially the English-Language Learners in schools.

The notion of “window” can be perceived from two perspectives in the narratives. The first perspective comes from the English-Language Learners where it informs us about their perceptions and opinions regarding their new experience living in America and dealing with the culture and people. The second perspective is from the eyes of the preservice teachers in this study where it reveals their understanding about the people from diverse background. These two “windows” provide balance perspective in looking at the experience of teaching and learning English to the English-Language Learners in the United States.

Ed learnt something from the interview that he has conducted with the Korean student, Lee [a pseudonym] who works at the Korean Market. He is interested to learn more about his experience as the English language learner in the United States. He is taken aback by the response given by Lee when being asked about the ways he likes to be treated in classroom.

His answer to my question about how to treat ELL students or students of a different culture was pretty surprising as well. I thought that students in this situation would want the teacher to reach out to them to make them more comfortable in their new environment. But according to Lee, it is better if the teacher just treats them as a “normal” student no different from the rest of the class. It could be that, if you single someone out, then the class might make it worse on the student and make it harder for them to fit in. If the class sees that
you treat the ELL student the same way as you treat them, then they might actually be more accepting of that student.

(Ed, Multi-genre paper)

Lee rationalizes his answer by saying that it will be burdensome for teachers to pay attention to all diverse students as “the teacher can’t focus on helping each student at their own pace or nobody would learn anything” (Ed, Multi-genre paper). His answer shocked Ed who assumes that students from diverse background always need to be treated special by teachers. Lee has a good experience because he is accepted well by his friends in schools.

No, I just wanted to come in with an open mind. The kids were very accepting of me. Nobody gave me any strange looks or said anything hurtful to me. There weren’t any problems.

(Ed, Multi-genre paper)

Nonetheless, Lee experience is nothing as compares to some other immigrant kids. The same situation does not happen to Eric [a pseudonym], a Russian immigrant who was invited to give a talk to the preservice teachers in the C I 280 class. Joanne writes about this in her narrative.

Eric also spoke about how he did not feel welcome when he emigrated from Kazakhstan to America; since the kids did not really welcome him as a new comer. This made me feel sad because it must have been difficult not to know English and then being ostracized for it. Luckily Eric and many other Russians who had a tough time assimilating had the Russian Baptist community to feel that they “belonged” somewhere.

(Joanne, Multi-genre paper)

Unlike Lee, Eric is not accepted in the new community. In fact he even got remark like “Russian go home” (Field note # 1) in school. This has made his experience living in a new country not a a pleasant one for him. Fortunately, Eric has a supportive
community people who make him feel “belonged” (Joanne, Multi-genre paper). Eric experience has provided “window” to Joanne to learn about hardship that immigrant students have to face in schools as well as in the community.

Lyn, on the other hand, feels that her experience learning about the Korean culture acts both as a “mirror” and “window” in learning about the English-Language Learners. She sees her experience with the Korean culture as a ‘mirror’ that reflects her own identity as a children of an immigrant parent (her dad is from Mexico).

This made me wonder what it is like to live here for him [ a Korean guy that he meets at the Korean Mart], if he likes to be here, how he feels here, and how he feels others treat him here. This made me want to reflect on my own culture, and my experience from when I went to visit my dad’s hometown in Mexico City. (Lyn, Multi-genre paper)

The same experience acts as a ‘window “that opens up to understanding and appreciating people and their culture. Being alone among people from different culture can be a lonely experience but the being open to a new experience and being positive about it helps a person to appreciate the diversity among human being and learn some lesson from it. Lyn again relates her own experience in her narrative below.

When I thought about this man who was working here and thought about if he felt like an “outsider” living here, my trip to Mexico City, my dad’s birthplace and hometown, came to me. When I went there, I too was surrounded by a language I did not know too well. I could understand my parents when they spoke Spanish but everyone else had a heavy accent and spoke too fast. Sitting at the dinner table with everyone, I was completely lost. I just sat there quietly and smiled…My trip to Mexico allowed me to experience what a part of my heritage is that I did not know too much about before. Even though I felt like a complete foreigner or “gringa” as my friends and family called me, being there I learned so much. (Lyn, Multi-genre paper)

Unlike Ed and Joanne, Lyn’s perceptions towards people from different culture are different due to her own life experience. However, not many people have the similar
life experience as Lyn has. The multi-genre paper project has compensated the lack of experience in dealing with people from the different culture among the preservice teachers learning to become teachers of the English-Language Learners in the United States.

The multi-genre paper project is the ‘window’ for the preservice teachers to venture and gain some understanding about people from diverse background. This understanding is beneficial in learning to become future teachers of the English-Language Learners where it is hoped that it can contribute to the effective teaching and learning in classrooms. Being and feeling different is inevitable especially in multicultural classroom. Ed sees the “importance of discussing individual differences with her students instead of ignoring them in hope that no problems will arise” (Ed, Reading memo #4). The idea comes about based on the C I 280 class reading which discusses creating a community in a classroom in a literacy class.

This is where discussing differences comes in. If a teacher doesn’t acknowledge the differences amongst the students in the community, then the students might form their own opinions of others. By discussing what makes each individual different, you are also celebrating with each other what makes them special and who they are. Letting each of the students see this and express themselves in this way allows the community to build on its own. The students will be able to relate with each other and respect each other while recognizing their differences. (Ed, Reading Memo #4)

Joanne shares Ed’s opinion in dealing with the issue of differences in classrooms. Just like Ed, she believes in the benefit of discussion regarding the issue of multiculturalism in classrooms.

The reading for this memo showed how a teacher cannot just rely on the innocence of children to keep from having to discuss the touchy issues of race, color, and other differences between people. Initially children unknowingly play with each other without caring about the differences between one another, but
over time they do notice and need to learn that just because someone is different it does not mean they are inferior or anything. Students need to be taught this at an early age so that they learn how to appreciate the uniqueness of others easier. The earlier the better; since young children innately lack any initial prejudice when they first meet any other kid. This is unlike older children and adults who are constantly judging and assuming things about their peers and people they meet.

(Joanne, Reading Memo #4)

Thus, the preservice teachers in the United States believe that opening up about the issue of diversity with students is better than ignoring it or assuming that they are too innocent to understand about it. The discussions act as the mirror and window that help both parties to evaluate one’s perceptions on diversity as well as to try to understand the others who are different from them in looking at the issue of multiculturalism in classrooms in the United States

Preservice teachers in Malaysia

The metaphor of mirror and window is also applicable to the data from Malaysia too. The narratives from Malaysia mostly touch upon the idea of the ways the preservice teachers in Malaysia see themselves as Malays (the mirror) and they ways they see and learn about people who are different from them (The window).

The preservice teachers who participated in this study come from the same ethnic group, which is Malay. The reason for this is because the Malays are the mainstream race in Malaysia just like the participants in the United States who comes from the mainstream group that is White. Nonetheless, though they come from the mainstream ethnic group in Malaysia, they still feel that being Malays in a multicultural society is tough due to the high level of competition with the other races. Lina mentions
this in her narrative when recalling her experience being in a multicultural classroom during her school years.

When I was in primary school where it was a multicultural classroom, I was considered as one of the weakest student in English Language. I remember getting 79 for English and the teacher would not give me another 1 mark to give me an A. It was that hard to score. Suddenly when I was in secondary school I got the highest. I was stunned by the scenario but I learned one big lesson from it. It was harder to score English Language in a multicultural classroom because it would be much more competitive than a class which consists of one race only.

(Lina, Narratives from Malaysia)

Being a Malay student in a multicultural classroom is difficult for Lina as she was considered to be the weakest in her class. In fact the teacher seems to be unable to negotiate with her by refusing to give the one mark that she needed in order to get “A” for English. This experience has become a “mirror” that reflects the image of who she is to others where the Malays is seen as weak and not good in the English language. However, she is shock when she manages to score highest marks in English in a predominantly all-Malay classroom during her high school years. Thus, she comes to a conclusion that schooling with the multicultural students is more challenging than being with her own race. This experience has become a mirror that she uses to evaluate herself as Malay as compared to the other races in Malaysia. This is different from the ‘mirror’ in the US preservice teachers’ narratives where their ‘mirror’ reflects their cultural experiences being with people from diverse population while Lina’s ‘mirror’ reflects her academic issue of being a Malay. Furthermore, Lina also voices out her doubt on the ability of the Malay students to compete with other races in classrooms.

It was harder to score English Language in a multicultural classroom because it would be much more competitive than a class which consists of one race only. It is really my subtle way of saying that some races are much better in the subject. I know this can make thousands of people to kill me but it is true that in Malaysia,
the Malays are not always the best learners in English Language. I know a good reason for that. The Malays used English as a second language while some other races use it as their first language. That is the difference.

(Lina, Narratives from Malaysia)

The Malays are explicitly mentioned as having issue with learning English in school. Learning English is sometimes perceived as the attempt to change one’s identity and cultural values to resemble the one belongs to the native English speaker. This has caused some people to be skeptical about learning English in Malaysia. Historically, the language is brought into Malaysia during British colonialism which makes the language to be strongly linked to the colonial agenda. Though this kind of perception is rare nowadays, it still affects the process of teaching and learning the language in schools especially among Malays. Lina delineates this issue in detail as below.

Learning a language risks a person changing from the person they are to the person of the language they are speaking with. When we learn a language we not only learn how to speak, how to write and how to listen; we also learn the culture that comes with it. The Malays are known for their strong feeling about their culture and religion. To the Malays, not forgetting who you are is the strongest reminder a parent would give to their children. Hence, when a Malay is speaking English another Malay would look at them as if they did a big mistake. This of course, does not comply with all the Malays, but there are still some with the mindset that people who speak English is a person who has forgotten their roots and wants to be someone else. Again, I would stress that this does not apply to all the Malays. In fact, they are the minority. However, the minorities too have the power to make people change. The easiest way of explaining it would be the failure of PPSMI (the Malaysian educational policy of teaching science and mathematics in English) to take its place in Education. The biggest problem of the Malays is their mindset towards English Language. They are too egoistic in accepting that they need to learn English in order to find knowledge. This is a fact, even in Malaysia only UKM (one of the national universities in Malaysia) uses Malay as a medium of instruction and communication. Other universities use English as their medium of instruction and communication. That shows how important it is to understand English even in Malaysia.

(Lina, Narratives from Malaysia)
However, amidst the skepticism about the issue with people acceptance of the language, she still wants to be in the profession. Thus, she feels that it will be more beneficial to for her to concentrate on ways to improve her English and her English teaching skill in order to prepare her to become a future English teacher. Besides, she also believes racial diversity make each people different. What is more important is her responsibility as a teacher to inculcate solidarity among multicultural students in her future classroom.

Nobody is perfect. Each race has their own strength and weaknesses. That is why we should work together as a Malaysian. Hence, as a teacher I have a big responsibility in guiding my students to be a loyal citizen. In doing so, I do not need to be racist. All I have to do is to show them how working together can bring benefits rather than working alone. Hopefully, they can think and learn from it. (Lina, Narratives from Malaysia)

Being racist is seen as a deterrence factor that will hinder the multicultural society from working together. Thus, in her eyes, teachers are expected not to be racist but to become “glue” that able to bind students from diverse backgrounds to work together in the classrooms. Furthermore, she feels that the native languages of the multicultural students in the classrooms can be used as an ice-breaking tool to connect to them. She also believes that providing impartial treatment to all students in her class regardless of their racial background is the best way to handle multicultural English-Language Learners to avoid favoritism.

I have written a lot about what I will do as a teacher. I realize that the important thing is to explain how I will work it out, not what I want to work out. Anyone can give encouraging speech about being non-racist and handle a class well but the question is how? As for myself, I will show them that I am not racist through my lessons. When I am teaching them about leaders, I will not only give example from my race but from all the races. I must know who the well-known leader in each race is and how those people have contributed towards the country. When introducing myself for the first time in class I will use all four languages. I will
start off with English, then Malay, Mandarin and lastly Indian. I will tell them that I will do my best to teach them and I hope they can enjoy learning English with me. I will try my best to treat everyone fairly because students hate favouritism. I will give equal chances to each student to participate in class. I know they are not much but it is a start. I really hope I can help them and make them enjoy learning English as I always have.

(Lina, Narratives from Malaysia)

Farina, unlike Lina has seen this issue from a positive outlook. Rather than being skeptical, she believes that diversity should be seen as a strong point where people can share good values and cultures that come from each race in the country.

We are very grateful to have such a wonderful country which consists of many cultures. We should share and take into account the good values in all cultures we have. If we tolerate one another without backstabbing each other, we can actually live a harmonious life. Mutual trust is very important here. Even though realistically it is hard to develop new values among the cultures that have already existed in Malaysia for thousand years, it is important for us to try hard to educate the students in Malaysian schools.

(Farina, Narratives from Malaysia)

Rather than labeling herself according to her race that is Malay, Farina seems to concentrate more on positioning herself as a collective Malaysian citizen and a future teacher whose responsibility is to uphold the importance of living together harmoniously amidst the diversity. Diversity is seen not as a polarization factor. Rather, it is perceived as an asset that enable people from diverse background learn about each other and learn to respect and trust each other to live harmoniously in one country. Furthermore, school is seen as a place that can be used to inculcate unity among the diverse people of Malaysia and teachers are seen as the taskforce that will enable this inspiration to become reality. Farina’s perception of multiculturalism and diversity is different from Lina. This is probably due to her early exposure to multicultural environment by her parents as she was sent to a Chinese primary school rather than the Malay primary school.
Being an English language learner is difficult at the initial phase especially when there is no interest in the language and there is no encouragement in learning as well as using the language. For instance, when I was in my primary school, I never got interested in the language at all because most of my friends are Chinese and they speak Mandarin or Cantonese. They would also make me feel bad when I speak in English because I was not fluent in the language. However, when I started my secondary education, I find it interesting to learn the English language and use the language due to my very supportive friends plus the multicultural environment in the school at that time.

(Farina, Narratives from Malaysia)

From the narrative, being Malay among mostly Chinese students, Farina recalls the awkwardness of speaking English with her Chinese friends as it was not something that is admirable to do in the Chinese school.

Marina, unlike Lina and Farina, sees nothing wrong with the issue of multiculturalism in schools based on her own experience in schools. This can be seen from the excerpt below.

In my own opinion, I do not think that there is a serious issue regarding multiculturalism in Malaysian schools. Based on my own experience, students in schools do not hesitate to mingle with the different race students. Besides, they take it as the advantages for them as they can learn new traditions from them. Teachers too do not racist in teaching the students. So, what I can summarize here, there is not much issues regarding multiculturalism in Malaysian schools.

(Marina, Narratives from Malaysia)

Marina’s response toward the issue of multiculturalism in school is a common response given by people who refuse to acknowledge the issue in depth. It is like when a teacher responds “I don’t see race” when entering a multicultural classroom and believes that she should treat all students “the same”. This ‘color blind mentality’ provides notion that the topic of race and diversity should not be highlighted lest it may bring more harm than good to the students.
In the narrative below, Nora explains another challenge of teaching and learning English in Malaysia which strongly influenced by religious ideology.

To be an English learner, one has to be tough and motivated as it is the second language for Malaysians. People will always condemn and criticize English learners, including friends and families. A friend of mine belongs to a very Islamic family who does not approve of her learning English. She is not allowed to speak English at home and she goes to a religious school where even the teachers who were supposed to teach English, taught them using Malay. How can you teach English in Malay language? She did not have any chance at all to learn and practice English so she did it alone in her room. She managed to pursue her education in TESL, without her parent’s approval but managed to pass every semester, proving to her parents that she could do it.

(Nora, Narratives from Malaysia)

Even though equating language and religion strikes as a rather peculiar way to look at the issue of language teaching and learning in Malaysia, the narrative above has proven that it actually happens. It seems that the family of the girl disproves her of learning English due to their strong believe in their own religion, where by learning English will expose the girl to the teaching of the other religion which is strongly related to English (i.e. Christianity). Relating to this issue, it is worth highlighted that the earliest schools in Malaysia were founded by Christian missions to the country during British colonialism. Though proselytization of the Malays was not their main objectives, the schools were run based on the moral and tenet of Christianity. The Malays in the old days shunned English schools believing that “education via English language could lead to conversion to Christianity” (Omar, 1983, as cited in Luke, 1990, p.308). Nonetheless, after being independent from British for 55 years, it is surprising to see that there are people who still have this mentality in Malaysia and this pose another challenge to the preservice teachers in the country.
Beside religion, the issue of race and identity is pervasive in looking at the teaching of English language in Malaysia. Lina explores this issue in her narrative as below.

Learning a language risks a person changing from the person they are to the person of the language they are speaking with. When we learn a language we not only learn how to speak, how to write and how to listen; we also learn the culture that comes with it. The Malays are known for their strong feeling about their culture and religion. To the Malays, not forgetting who you are is the strongest reminder a parent would give to their children. Hence, when a Malay is speaking English another Malay would look at them as if they did a big mistake. This of course, does not comply with all the Malays, but there are still some with the mindset that people who speak English is a person who has forgotten their route and wants to be someone else.

(Lina, Narratives from Malaysia)

Lina highlights the stigma that is attached to the English language by some Malay people where using the language with each other is seen as undesirable as it implies that the person is forgetting his or her own root. This has contributed to self-conflict where she tries to negotiate between her identity as Malay and her responsibility as a future English teacher. Her consciousness about this issue makes her go deeper into the issue by trying to make sense of the ethnic–relation issue in Malaysia from her perspective as the Malay. In the narrative, Lina discusses how being Malay is a challenge even though they are the mainstream ethnic group in Malaysia.

Regarding the issue of multiculturalism, I have been opening my eyes and heart to understand this issue in Malaysia. I know not everyone in the country can accept other races besides theirs and there is a reason for it. My country has been governed by the Malays all these while with a simple reason that the land belong to the Malays. The Malays have privileges in almost every sector in the country while other races have to work hard to earn their place. This situation has caused other races to look down on the Malays because to them the Malays do not have to work as hard as them to get a place. They despise the Malays especially with the long known perception that Malays are lazy. There is debate and arguments for both sides in this issue. For all we know, it is never easy to unite different races. However, this issue has not been too heated since 13th May 1969. There
are still people who are racist in the country and as a person who is aware of it, I am prepared to face them with confidence. (Lina, Narratives from Malaysia)

The 13\(^{\text{th}}\) May 1969 mentioned in the narrative is the prominent date in discussing the issue of ethnic-relation in Malaysia. It was the date when the racial violence happened in the capital city of Kuala Lumpur between the Malays and Chinese where 196 people were killed (Mee, 1988). The interplay of force that resulted in this racial unrest among others is sharp division of wealth between the Chinese who were perceived as monopolizing economy of Malaysia and the Malays who were perceived to be poor and live in the rural. The racial riot was a result of the gradual tensions that developed between “the politically powerful Malays and economically successful Chinese” (Jamil & Ismail, 2011, p.178). The 13\(^{\text{th}}\) May 1969 has become the milestone that marks Malaysia ethnic –relation issue and has become the point of reference for all multicultural Malaysian people on what would happen if they fail to respect, understand and live harmoniously as one nation together. Lina has used this date as her point of reference too in explaining about the racial conflicts between the multicultural people in Malaysia.

Being Malay, she is aware of her position in the multicultural society where prejudice from other races is inevitable and expected as the Malay seems to receive most of the privileges in Malaysia. This surprisingly has made her to become a little critical towards her own race and this can be seen in the excerpt below.

It is impossible to write this reflective essay without honesty when discussing on the issue of multiculturalism. I hope my words will not be taken negatively as a person who despises her own race. I love my race, religion and country and because of that, I do not wish to be racist. I have learned the hard way in my life that being egoistic cannot bring me anywhere. I am not saying that the Malays should not get their privileges. I am simply saying that the Malays should not waste the opportunities given to them and the other races should accept that the
Malays have all the right in accepting the privileges. It will not be so easy on their part so we cannot expect them to easily bow on us and accept what we say. It takes time to earn respect and prove to them that the Malays are capable of guiding the nation.

(Lina, Narratives from Malaysia)

The idea of mirror and window as a representation of looking at self and looking at others is clearly seen in the narratives from the preservice teachers in Malaysia. The idea of mirror in the narratives from the preservice teachers in Malaysia can be seen from the ways they perceive themselves in the society. They can either see themselves as a representative of one ethnic group (as a Malay) or they can see themselves as being part of a collective nation (as a Malaysian). The way they see themselves influences the perception on multiculturalism as a future teacher. The idea of window comes from the way they see and evaluate people who are different from them. In looking out of the ‘window’ to see others, the feeling of uneasiness is detected in Lina’s narrative and this is mostly due to her realization about her own privilege status in the society. This has led her to be critical towards her own race and the understanding of the difficulties of being the underprivileged in a multicultural society. The other preservice teacher, Farina chooses to see it from a practical “window” and this has contributed to the optimistic feeling that racial diversity can be achieved collectively through mutual trust among diverse population and through education. Marina, conversely, sees the whole situation from a rose-tinted glass “window” which leads her to think that everything is fine with multiculturalism in Malaysia. The ways the preservice teachers in Malaysia view themselves and others are important in the process of learning to become teachers as these perceptions determined the way they will handle the issue of multiculturalism as future English teachers in Malaysia.
**Theme One Summary**

The preservice teachers in the United States used their individual experience and knowledge to make sense of their preparatory experiences learning to become teachers of the English-Language Learners. These experience and knowledge are gained through their C I 280 teacher preparation classes. Their participation in the C I 280 class projects and classroom activities as well as the discussion on relevant reading articles have kindled their critical thinking to explore the issue of teaching English to the English language learner from deeper perspectives. The preservice teachers in the United States feel prepared to become teachers as they are made aware of the challenges that they will face as future teachers of the English-Language Learners. Rather than being fear of having to deal with the diverse students, the preservice teachers in the United States express their empathy towards the English-Language Learners due to their understanding of the struggles that the learners have to go through alone in a new place. Another point worth highlighted is the influence of their former favorite teachers in shaping their dreams of becoming good teachers. The ideas of becoming role model and being impartial to their future students dominated their hopes and expectation as future teachers.

The preservice teachers in Malaysia share the same dreams of becoming role models to their future students just like their counterparts in the United States. Teachers should possess high moral values that can be examples to students. However, they struggle in their process of making sense of their preparatory experience learning to become teachers of the English-Language Learners in Malaysia due to several issues. The
first issue is on the insufficiency of their teacher preparation program in preparing them to teach multicultural students in Malaysia. This has caused fear and apprehension where they don’t feel prepared to teach students from multicultural background. What make this more fearful are their unpleasant experiences dealing with multicultural issues which enhance their apprehension in going into the profession unprepared. The second issue is their struggle with the issue of their own identity as Malays which strongly related to the issues of culture, society, language and religion in Malaysia. There is a hint of inferiority of being Malay English teachers in a multicultural society. This also shapes the preservice teachers’ sense making process regarding their preparatory experience of becoming teachers of the English-Language Learners in Malaysia.

Theme 2: Developing relationship

Establishing relationship with students

Preservice teachers in the United States

The second theme emerged from the narrative is establishing relationship with students. It is among concerns expressed by the preservice teachers in the United States. This is because they believe that building relationships with students will enable them to create a more learning-friendly environment which will eventually benefit the students. One of the ways that can be used to establish the relationship according to these
preservice teachers is by being individualized in looking at each student in the classroom.

Joanne highlights her point on the teaching statement that she wrote for the C I 280 class.

I will be a responsible teacher and teach every student in my classroom, not just the ones that seem more eager to learn than the others. This will be accomplished by trying to get to know each and every student and seeing them each as unique individuals.

(Joanne, Teaching Statement)

Getting to know each and every student will avoid the teacher from favoritism as it is easy for teachers pay more attention to students who shows their eagerness as compared to the ones who are quiet and reserve in the classrooms. Furthermore, it helps teacher to establish bond with students which eventually contributed to a comfortable and conducive environment for teaching and learning. Jill mentions this matter in her narrative where she highlighted the role of parents in achieving the same goal.

I believe that it is especially important to build a strong relationship between the teacher and the student so that they feel comfortable to interact and learn in all contexts. Parents must also build a relationship with their children to provide help to them when necessary and to help them work along with their teachers to fulfill their goals.

(Jill, Last Narrative)

In establishing positive relationship with the English-Language Learners, Ed learns that teachers should not single them out as this will make it harder for them to fit in. This is based on his short conversation with Lee, a Korean student that he meets at the Korean Market.

I thought that students in this situation would want the teacher to reach out to them to make them more comfortable in their new environment. But according to Lee, it is better if the teacher just treats them as a “normal” student no different from the rest of the class. It could be that, if you single someone out, then the class might make it worse on the student and make it harder for them to fit in. If the class sees that you treat the ELL student the same way as you treat them, then
they might actually be more accepting of that student. This is a tough situation
for a teacher to handle, and having this information thanks to Lee is a big help.
(Ed, Multi-Genre Paper)

In discussing ways to establish relationship with the English-Language
Learners, Joanne realizes that the sense of closeness is crucial in developing comfortable
learning environment.

After doing this project I have come to realize that there is a way to teach English-
Language Learners. We must build a sense of closeness and make the children
feel comfortable for them to succeed. Building bonds with these children will
allow them to realize that we are there to help them with anything that they need.
(Jill, Multi-genre paper)

Besides closeness, the idea of feeling “safe” (Joanne, Teaching Statement) is
also mentioned in the narratives in the United States. The excerpt from Joanne’s narrative
below explains what she means by the word “safe”.

The students need to be comfortable with one another so that they work well in
their chemistry lab groups. This will also help the ESL students since they leave
the general education room a lot at times and sometimes do not get to get to know
the other students as well as they should. Inclusion is what adds to a student’s
comfort and helps them feel safe and happy to learn. I will also try to connect
with the students by going to school functions and having conversations with my
students. If the students feel comfortable with one another, they should feel
comfortable with me so that they feel “safe” and know that I care more about
them than their grade.

(Joanne, Teaching statement)

The safety mentioned in the narrative above is the emotional safety; where the
connection established between teacher and students will enable this to happen. This is
particularly important especially in dealing with the English-Language Learners as they
don’t have a lot of chances to mingle due to their learning schedule that requires them to
be separated from the general classrooms. This rapport building between teacher and the
language learners will provide self-worth to the learners as it makes them feel important to the teacher’s eyes even though they are different.

**Preservice teachers in Malaysia**

The narrative below illustrates the way the preservice teachers in Malaysia feel that the connection should be established.

In addition, a good teacher too must willing to help students even though the matter is not about education. Students sometimes may have the personal issues and it is normal for the teenagers. A good teacher must be aware with facial expression or body movement presented by students and they can guess if the students are encountered with problem.

(Marina, Narrative from Malaysia)

Marina feels that teachers not only should be concerned about their students’ education but also their emotional state. Making the effort to learn about their personal problem is one of the ways for the teachers to establish relationship with students. In order for this to happen, Marina believes that teachers should be caring enough for the students to trust them.

It means that the teacher is not just being trusted by the students but the teacher too is considered as caring. It is not the matter of bribing to be voted as the favourite teacher but it shows that the teacher really aware of the students and indirectly, they will feel the sincerity from the teacher. The benefits can be seen through the enhancement of the students – teacher relationship, students will like the lesson more and students know where to find help. Even though, it is true that problems should not be handled by the teacher and it should be the counselors’ responsibility as they have more knowledge and skills to handle it. However, teachers can help it for the beginning point and if they cannot handled it, it will be better if the students are sent for counseling session conducted by the training counselor.

(Marina, Narrative from Malaysia)
Marina, however, feels that though students trust them, there is a limit in the ability of the teacher in handling students’ problem. Thus, she believes that teachers should rely on the help of the school counselor if they are unable to handle the problem themselves.

Remembering students’ name is another way to establish relationship with students. Nora believes that it is the simplest way for teachers to get to know their students.

They should get to know their students, their background and try to tackle these students in different ways. I know it’ll be hard because if a teacher has a hundred students to teach, it is impossible to get to know all the students. The least they can do is show that they care even by remembering their student’s names. Some teachers nowadays do not bother to try remembering their student’s names. They give excuses like “There are so many of you” and trust me, this is simply an excuse. I have a teacher that remember the names of all three hundred and sixty students of hers and another who remembers the names of the students for the whole batch of form three students. These teachers told our class that remembering names is the first step of building a relationship and a teacher has to be in a relationship with their students or else students will find it hard to take the teacher seriously because the teacher does not even bother to care.

(Nora, Narrative from Malaysia)

Overall, the preservice teachers in Malaysia believe that ways that teachers can establish relationship with students are through being sensitive not only towards their academic achievement but also their emotional state of being. Other than that, teachers too should make the effort to remember the students’ names in order to build rapport with their students. Lastly, the role of school counselor is also highlighted as ways to provide further supports to students.
Responding to individual needs and differences

Preservice teachers in the United States

As the society becoming more diverse today, teachers need to understand that in many schools, the students too come from different cultures and background. The teachers need to be aware that these students come to school bringing with them their cultural values which influence the way they perceive school and education. Their cultures and languages too determine their identity where they hold on to it as it determine their self-value in their community. Understanding the issue of culture and language in dealing with the English-Language Learners is important as this will make the process of teaching and learning easier. Respecting their uniqueness can lead to better communication and relation between teachers and students.

The preservice teachers in the United States write extensively on the importance of considering the individuals needs and differences of the students especially regarding the English-Language Learners in their narratives. Most of them agree that teachers should take into consideration the individual needs of each student as they are different from each other like “snowflake” (Joanne, Teaching Statements).

CI 280 has definitely helped me develop a belief and pedagogy about teaching ESL students. I did not even have a pedagogy for teaching ESL students before this class! I believe that each and every student has something special to offer to the classroom since each everyone is as unique as a snow flake. Each student is special and deserves the opportunity to learn at their maximum efficiency. (Joanne, Teaching Statement)

According to Joanne, the awareness towards each student’s need is important so that teachers can plan lessons that enable them to reach all students, not only for a few.
Teachers have to be aware of each and every one of their students, so that they can teach every one of their students and not just a few. In this way teachers will be able to quickly identify if a student needs extra help with their learning.

(Joanne, teaching Statement)

Furthermore, living in a multicultural country, it is necessary to be aware of the diversity of students that the teachers will meet in their future classrooms. Jill recognizes the critical needs for conducive learning environment for the students from diverse background.

English-Language Learners are becoming more and more prevalent in schools of all areas today. To be a good teacher, I feel as though it is necessary that we are able to understand these students and help them to succeed just as if English was there first language. Supporting these students and providing a comfortable learning environment is critical to successful learning. They may need additional aid but if we guide them in the right direction they will learn.

(Jill, teaching Statement)

Jill touches upon the idea of helping the English-Language Learners to succeed “just as if English was their first language”. In other words, she is hoping that she will be able to help the learners learn to succeed in their learning amidst the language barrier that the English-Language Learners have in classrooms. The question here is, how? The excerpt below explains the approach that she believes will help the English-Language Learners to be successful in schools.

In the future, I think that it is beneficial to keep track of the student’s progress to see where they have advanced and where they need help. Co-teaching and collaboration between teachers can be very important. It is also important to allow students to speak English as well as their native language.

(Jill, The last narrative)

Recognizing students’ native language is one of the ways that enable teachers to value their identity, cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Students from different cultural and linguistic background are unique from each other including the ways they
response to instructions and to their teachers. This is further explained by Lyn in the excerpts below.

Being able to see different aspects of the word “culture” was extremely beneficial when learning about English-Language Learners. It helped us realize why English-Language Learners might not understand something explained in a certain way, and allowed us, as the teacher, to develop different teaching styles. This class taught me the importance of teaching with labels in the classroom and demonstrating everything I do with my class, and how that is crucial in helping an English language learner comprehend.

(Lyn, The last narrative)

Lyn believes that “individualized instruction” (Lyn, The last narratives) can help the English-Language Learners to learn effectively as teacher teaches in way that is comprehensible to the learners.

If I had a student that was an English Language Learner, I would treat this student the same as I would treat my others, but I would more so, help this child individually as well as make sure I am teaching in a way he/she would be able to understand. This is because I strongly believe in individualized instruction and I believe that all students have the ability to learn. Just because a student may not share the same language as others, doesn’t mean that this child wouldn’t learn English, and then learn the subject material. I will always have faith in all my students, and set high expectations for them because I know if we work together we can make anything happen.

(Lyn, Teaching statement)

The preservice teachers are aware of the fact that responding to the English-Language Learners individual needs and differences may sound easily said than done. Ed anticipates that challenge is “to teach a class where you have only a couple of ELL’s and not “hold back” the students who know English as their first language” (Ed, Reading Memo # 3). Jill shares Ed’s concern about the complexity of teaching the English-Language Learners where she believe that scaffolding is one of the method that can be used to help them learn better.
Scaffolding these children is very important to their success. I also agree that understanding these students is very complex. Sometimes it is hard to understand what these children already know and what they need help with.  

(Jill, Reading Memo # 3)

Although there are challenges, Jill and Joanne uphold the English-Language Learners’ right to learn just like others. With proper backings; this is seen as doable and possible.

English-Language Learners can be quite a challenge but they deserve to learn just the same as any other students. Reading these articles and discussing different strategies can be very beneficial for us as future teachers. These students need a strong learning environment and plenty of positive support.  

(Jill, Reading Memo # 3)

I knew that all students should learn, despite the fact that everyone is different, that everyone is equal and can learn to get along with one another. We learned different ways to do this, through seeing different activities we can do with students from class; such as having students share their cultures and learning about different cultures from around the world.  

(Joanne, Reading Memo # 3)

**Preservice teachers in Malaysia**

The preservice teachers in Malaysia provide various responses in looking at the way to response to students’ individual needs and differences. Lina feels that there is no different between students of the different races in Malaysia in their purpose of learning.

I have thought[taught] different races in Kumon and from my point of view, they were all the same. No one race is more troublesome than the other. In fact, I saw one similarity. They were all there to learn and improve themselves.  

(Lina, Narrative from Malaysia)

In the narrative below, Nora, conversely did not see the issue from the racial diversity perspective, but from the needs and differences of students from different level
of proficiency in English perspective. Nora mentions several methods that can be used to address the issue of language learners’ different proficiency level in a classroom. One of them is scaffolding.

A good teacher also knows how to scaffold. Even though students are streamed into classes according to their academic achievement, it does not mean they can grasp certain lessons or subjects at the same time as their other classmates. Some students might get left behind without the teacher even realizing. A good teacher can give time to their students if they needed it. I’m not talking about extra classes or extra attention but the least they can do is make sure that everyone understood by asking questions, carrying out pop quizzes or creating activities that require students to pour out what they have learnt. This helps teachers to monitor their students’ progress instead of just coming to teach and wait till the examination result is out.

(Nora, Narrative from Malaysia)

Rina, on the contrary, believes that teachers can respond to the English-Language Learners individual needs and differences by drafting suitable lesson plans. She discusses the importance of adapting the lesson to cater the needs of students from different levels of proficiency and how scaffolding may not be a suitable solution to address this issue.

It is the teachers’ responsibility to mold the lesson plan according to the students’ needs and try to make it as interesting as possible to attract them. Here in the Faculty of Education of XXX, we learn to adapt ourselves in any kind of teaching situation. Like I had mention earlier about the difference of students’ needs, we are being reminded about adjusting our pace of teaching to such needs. Sometimes the students need more of guidance and sometimes they refuse to be scaffold due to their advanced knowledge.

(Rina, Narrative from Malaysia)

The other perspective that has been mentioned with regards to responding to the individual needs and differences of the students is on the issue of their socioeconomic background. Students from the different socioeconomic background have different needs especially in learning English. Marina explains this issue in her narrative.

As English is the second language for students in Malaysia, it is hard to predict whether English is being accepted widely among the secondary school students.
Even though all Malaysian already aware and know that English is crucial for their job world, some people are just unfortunate because they are not being exposed to the usage and benefits of English. For the students in the urban area, it is not considered as the huge problem as they can find and exposed to indirectly through film, games and song. The toughest is for the students in the rural area with parents who are uneducated, do not receive the advantages of technology and come from the low socioeconomic status family. Some of them do not have the interest in English because they do not being exposed to the excitement. In fact, they do not know what are the advantages of learning it as they believe they will not use it because the poverty will be the boundary for them to pursue their study in the tertiary level.

(Marina, Narrative from Malaysia)

Among issues touched upon by Marina in her narrative is the low socioeconomic status family background which is strongly related to the state of poverty among the English-Language Learners in the rural areas. She mentions how students from the low socioeconomic group have low self-efficacy in thriving for academic excellence due to poverty. Marina sees this as challenges that she has to face in becoming a teacher of the English-Language Learners in Malaysia.

Disciplining

Preservice teachers in the United States

This section addresses the dimension of discipline in understanding the ways the preservice teachers in the United States make sense of their preparatory experience of learning to become teachers of the English-Language Learners. The narratives show that the preservice teachers receive most of their information about discipline during their interview with their favorite teachers. Ed, Joanne and Lyn write about what they learn from their favorite teachers regarding discipline and disciplining.
It’s important that they like you and respect you. You don’t always have to be the bad guy and be strict with them. Things will always get easier as you gain experience. Don’t give up and don’t doubt yourself if you have a rough start because you will become more comfortable.

(Ed, favorite Teacher Interview)

The interview allowed me to tap into Mr. K’s psyche to see how he controlled his classroom and made a prime learning environment. I remember him as being authoritative as a teacher and fair with his punishments and judgments.

(Joanne, Favorite Teacher Interview)

Ed’s favorite teacher discusses the importance of earning respect from the students. Thus, teachers are not expected to always be “bad guy” or “strict” (Ed, Favorite teacher interview). Ed’s favorite teacher believes that disciplining will come easily as teachers gain experience. On contrary, Joanne views her teacher, Mr.K as “being authoritative as a teacher and fair with his punishments and judgments” (Joanne, Favorite teacher interview). She elaborates further in illustrating what she means by the statement. The keyword that Mr. uses to explain his style of disciplining is to be “consistent”.

Lastly, Mr. K urged for teachers to be consistent. When I questioned him as to how he meant teachers should be consistent he said in every aspect; from how they teach, dealing with students, other teachers etc. Even if a teacher knows that a student is generally a good kid, but catches them with their cell phone out when they are not supposed to have it out, then they have to punish the student the same as any other student. This way the other students cannot assume favoritism and the student learns that they have to follow the rules like everybody else.

(Joanne, Favorite Teacher Interview)

Lyn’s favorite teacher, just like Ed’s, stresses upon the idea of respect. Mrs.W draws the attention to the fact that misbehaved students should be treated with respect where teachers should avoid making misbehaved students embarrassed.

When I asked how she dealt with discipline problems that might occur in the classroom, one great piece of advice she told me was to try and not raise your voice. As I read this, I suddenly remembered that I never heard Mrs. W scream at someone. She always managed her tone, she added, “All children are different and must be treated individually and with respect. They will know if you respect
them or not - I promise you. And if you do, I guarantee you that you will earn their respect in return. Although you are working with them as a team to teach them, remember you are there to teach them, guide them, work for them, love them, motivate them, inspire them, and make them feel safe at all times. Remember to speak to the child who is misbehaving on the side - Don't draw attention to the misbehavior. Speak to him/her not in front of the entire class so it is less embarrassing as you will earn his/her respect as well as not to disrupt others.”

(Lyn, Favorite Teacher Interview)

Preservice teachers in Malaysia

The preservice teachers in Malaysia do highlight some ideas on disciplining that they feel will help them as future teachers in Malaysia. Lina, Farina and Nora provide their point of view on discipline and disciplining from their perspectives. The excerpt below is taken from Lina’s narrative.

Competency and high moral character. No matter what subject I am teaching, if I do not have these two qualities I will not be qualified to be a teacher. A morale person would not look down on people. They will treat people with respect no matter how the student behaves. It does not mean that I have to let the students get away when they do a mistake. It simply means that I shall treat them like human and not embarrass them although they make mistakes. This statement is made by me through a personal experience that I went through during secondary school.

(Lina, Narrative from Malaysia)

Lina has a bad experience being embarrassed by her teacher in front of her classmates for scoring low marks in her Additional Mathematics paper in school. She has used this experience as a guide to avoid doing the same thing when she becomes teacher one day. Her friend, Farina perceives disciplining as not pampering the students or being ‘soft’ with them.
Another point that will be elaborated is affection. A good teacher will apply moral values in daily life to leave a meaningful mark or effect towards the learners. The affection that a teacher portrays in class will either motivate or demotivate the learners to learn. Somehow, a good teacher need to show affection in a way that makes the learners feel motivated to learn and not to be too pampered until the lesson is not in the appropriate direction. There is a fine line in showing affection to the learners. For instance, a teacher who shows affection towards the learners may either end up making the learners feel very excited to learn in the classroom or feel the teacher is not strict enough which makes them do whatever inappropriate things they like.

(Farina, Narrative from Malaysia)

What Farina means here is teachers have to be show their affection moderately because overindulge students with affection will contribute to ineffective classroom management where students are said to be able to do whatever they like. Nonetheless, teachers should not be too strict in class too, according to another preservice teacher, Nora. Being too strict is said to be unsuitable for today’s classrooms.

Being a good teacher to me is being able to communicate with their students and have a connection with them. Feeling is important. Students do not want a cold hearted person with no feeling to be their teacher. This is not like the old days anymore where teachers can bring canes to school to hit students or scare them by scolding.

(Nora, Narrative from Malaysia)

In short, the preservice teachers in Malaysia believe that disciplining can be carried out by treating students with respect, being moderate with affection in classrooms and by trying to connect with students through good communication rather than inflicting physical punishment such as caning or hitting the students.
Establishing Relationship with others

The preservice teachers in the United States

Most of the ideas on establishing relationship with others comes from the communications that the preservice teachers have with their favorite teachers, the reading articles in C I 280 classes as well as their own vision of the ways that they plan to establish the connections with the others in the community. Lyn receives a good advice from her favorite teacher on this topic.

She [Lyn’s favorite teacher] also mentioned to keep looking to learn from others. I thought this was really insightful. She said observe colleagues and don’t be afraid to try new things. I really liked this response because change can be frightening, but as a teacher one has to acknowledge that if the class does not comprehend one way of teaching, that you have to change your instruction so the students can learn. She said at times, things are hectic, but if you need those extra five minutes to regroup ask for it, your friends, family, and coworkers are all there. I can see why she included that. At times, when one is first starting a job, one might think they can handle it and do it all, but she is making it a point here to really tell me, there are people around you that can help you out and to not forget this.

(Lyn, Favorite teacher interview)

Connecting to others is seen as the ways teachers can get emotional and professional supports from others. Lyn’s favorite teacher, Mrs. W feels that there are so much that teachers can learn from other teachers especially if they are trying new things in class. Moreover, she also highlights the fact that teaching is a hectic job and establishing relationships with friends, family and coworkers is important as they are able to provide supports sometimes whenever the going gets tough.

Besides learning about this from their favorite teachers, the preservice teachers also visualized the kind of relationships with others that they wish to establish when they
become teachers. Ed feels that strong connections with the parents are imperative. He explains this point further in the excerpt from his teaching statement below.

Lastly I feel that having a strong relationship with my students’ parents is also important. On the first day of class I will send home a letter letting them know what my goals are for the upcoming school year and what I hope to teach them effectively. I will also let them know how they can get in contact with me if they have any questions or concerns. I’ll let them know when the “meet the teacher” night for the school will be and encourage them to come out to the event. One of the biggest things I will try to do, however, is call parents when their kids are doing something good in my classroom. So many times parents will only get calls to let them know what their child is doing wrong. I want to “flip the script” on that philosophy and tell them about how well they are doing in my class or what good thing they might have done in class. Reinforcing the students when they do something well will really encourage them to enjoy coming to school and wanting to succeed.

(Ed, Teaching statement)

What is interesting here is the way Ed wants to “flip the script” (Ed, Teaching statement) in establishing relationship with his students’ parents. He wants to avoid the normalcy of teachers only make the initiative to contact parents when their kids do something bad in school. Ed hopes that this inspire good relationship between parents and teacher and will make students feel motivated to learn.

Another way of establishing relationship with parents is by involving them in most of the activities that happen in school. Jill believes that by seeing this collaboration, it will enable the students to see that they can rely on both the teachers as well as their parents in helping them with their process of learning.

Although the teacher can provide all of these wonderful learning experiences to their children it is also important that the parents become involved in what their children are learning and how they are progressing. I think that it is helpful to send home newsletters to the parents to keep them updated of everything that is going to be coming up in the near future. It could include assignments, assessments, topics being studied, etc. I also believe it is important to involve parents in activities such as parent teacher conferences and even just class parties or activities. Keeping in contact with the parents is extremely important.
Students need to know that they can ask their parents and teachers for help at all times.

(Jill, Teaching Statement)

The preservice teachers in Malaysia

Living in a multicultural society, the preservice teachers in Malaysia are more concerned about the way they should establish relationship with people from different ethnicities. Marina writes extensively about this in her narrative.

Throughout this class too, I am aware that what our custom and tradition accept may considered as unacceptable for the other race. The essential part in mingling with people from different race is we need to be sensitive and avoiding the taboos. I believe in 'when in Rome, do as Romans do' and this concept may avoid people from label us as racist. It is not the matter it is acceptable in our custom or not, but when mingling with culturally different people, we need to take care of the sensitive issues as it will make the relationship worsen.

(Marina, Narrative from Malaysia)

Marina feels that, living in a multicultural country, people need to adapt and mingle well if they wish to establish good relationships with each other. In relation to the process of teaching and learning process, she wants to use English as medium that will enable her to connect to students of different races.

Most of the students in Malaysia learn Malay language and English. As I am a future English teacher, I will always use English as it will be the win-win situation. For the example, it is unfair for me to speak in Malay to a Chinese student. So, English will be the best medium of communication among us. However, if the student cannot understand me, may be Malay Language will be the saviour. Then, I personally think that, even though we are culturally different, if we really engaged in the term respect, it will not be the issue. We need to treat people equally regardless of their race and culture. It will not just strengthen the bond however we can learn so much new things from the culturally different people and it is the advantages for us.

(Marina, Narrative from Malaysia)
English and Malay languages are seen as ways teachers can use to establish relationship with students from diverse background in Malaysia. It is seen as a bridge that enables communications and relationship to be formed between people of different races. Moreover, knowing the native language of the diverse students is seen as a bonus in Malaysian classrooms. Lina recalls her experience teaching the Chinese students while pondering about this issue.

However, it does occur to me that knowing their mother tongue would help me a lot in teaching them. I have had two naughty 5 year old Chinese boys. Every time they arrive, full attention needs to be given to them or else the place would turn over with their hyper attitude. They would scream as loud as they can and run all over the class. I cannot blame them, they are children and being playful is their nature. My friend handled them very well. She took Mandarin as her third language and was able to speak a bit of Mandarin. She spoke to them in Mandarin and they were awed by her. They became obedient and did their work and even said to her, “Teacher next time you teach me again”. It was a different scenario when I had to teach them. They would not listen to me at all and kept saying curse words in Chinese which I understood perfectly. This incident shows how similarities can unite and earn respect. It reminded me of my lecturer’s experience during her practicum. She was sent to a Chinese school where all the students do not understand any English word. The thing that helped her survive was her Mandarin class. She was able to converse with them in Chinese and help them to learn English. For this reason, knowing a bit of Chinese and Indian Language will definitely help me a lot in teaching a multicultural classroom. No doubt on that.

(Lina, Narrative from Malaysia)

From the excerpt, Lina highlights the needs for the third language for the preservice teachers in Malaysia where the two relevant languages are Mandarin or Tamil as they are the second and third biggest diverse populations in Malaysia. Knowing these languages will enable teachers to establish relationship not only with the students but also with their parents.

Being concerned about the issue of race in developing relationship with others, Farina believes that establishing a relationship with the senior teacher will enable her to
rely on their experiences in dealing with this issue. Farina writes about this in the last paragraph of her narrative.

I am raised in a multicultural environment, by the time I am going to start teaching different cultured or different linguistically students, I should have understand the situation and prepared to teach with the help of knowledge and experience of senior teachers. I will be positive in everything I do in order to achieve the main mission of my teaching which is to educate the students appropriately.

(Farina, Narrative from Malaysia)

Thus, the preservice teachers in Malaysia are very concerned about establishing relationship with students from diverse backgrounds rather than with others such as their parents or the community. The role of senior teachers is fundamental too in helping them to adapt to the new experience of teaching multicultural English-Language Learners.

**Theme Two Summary**

Ideas of establishing relationships with students, their parents and the other teachers emerged in the narratives written by the preservice teachers in the United States. A good relationship with students is said can be achieved through the comfort and safety that teachers offer in class. With regards to teaching English to the English-Language Learners, they see the needs for teachers to make the effort to understand the needs of individual students as they come from diverse background which make them unique from one another. This includes acknowledging their mother tongues and using them in class. The preservice teachers also acknowledge the roles of parents as well as their future colleagues in providing supports to help them to become good teachers. In the area of discipline, the preservice teachers in the United States acknowledge the role of teachers
as disciplinarians. However, rather than embarrassing the students, it can be done in the subtle, impartial and democratic ways based on discussion, mutual understanding and even humor.

Establishing relationship with students is important to the preservice teachers in Malaysia. However, not much is written on the attempt to connect to students’ parents or with other teachers. Showing genuine concern about the well-being of the students in class as well as outside classroom and remembering their names are among attempts perceived able to connect teachers to their students. They are also aware about the special needs that each student has. This special need is not only related to the students’ learning process but also related to the students’ demographic, economic and sociocultural background which can influence their overall learning process. Knowing students’ mother tongues is also highlighted as one of the ways to establish connection with multicultural students. In disciplining, embarrassing students as well as inflicting physical pain are not the effective ways to discipline them according to the preservice teachers in Malaysia. However, pampering students in order to become popular and not being strict with them are not the best options either. The role of counselor is recognized as alternative to handling students with serious problems.
Theme 3: Professional Development

Commitment

Preservice teachers in the United States

How do the preservice teachers in the United States perceive the idea of commitment in being teachers? The narratives show that the participants get the ideas of commitment based on their own experience learning with their favorite teachers in school. The interviews with their favorite teachers reveal some of these perceptions. Jill recalls her schooling experience learning with her favorite teacher, Mrs. K who she describes as “never give up on me” (Jill, Favorite teacher interview) amidst her struggle to learn in her elementary years.

Mrs. K was my third grade teacher at Riverside Elementary School [pseudonym] in Mount Pleasant Pennsylvania where I grew up. As a child, I struggled to read and was always very shy in class, which led teachers to believe that I was unable to do the work that was placed before me. As other teachers in the school tried to push me to the side, Mrs. K was right there to help me. She never gave up on me and she helped me to work toward many goals that would eventually lead to success.

(Jill, Favorite teacher interview)

Lyn shares the same experience as Jill in describing the commitment that her favorite teacher, Mrs.W shows in her English class.

Mrs. W demonstrated her passion for teaching, her knowledge on specific content areas, and her easy-going personality on the first day of class. She was extremely animated while she taught. This was not over the top, to make her students not want to listen to her, but she just showed that she loved being a teacher. Through her funny little songs that she would sing on top of desks about grammar rules, that we would sing aloud as a class until we remembered them, or through her consent effort she showed to us even if she was tired, she never looked like she did not want to teach us.
Lyn feels Mrs. W commitment has helped to ease her struggle in learning English.

This learning environment she created for me was extremely effective. I despised English class my whole life. I have a learning disability that has to do with a problem I have with processing information. I never enjoyed reading because it was challenging for me. English class was always one of those classes I did not like to participate in. However, because of these traits Mrs. Werner displayed, I grew to enjoy going to English class. She would help me one on one, understand the material we were reading or edit my papers with me afterschool, and this changed how I viewed English class. I quickly began to love going to her class. (Lyn, Favorite teacher interview)

The commitment is also seen in a form of time spend to help students to learn during school time and also out of the school time. It is also seen from the effort that the teachers make to establish relationship with parents so that learning activities prevailed even when students are at home.

Mrs. K was always a very personable teacher who believed in all of her students and their dreams. She gave us so many opportunities in her room to express ourselves and she always had activities planned that made learning enjoyable. She always went the extra mile to help any student in need and was always willing to put forth any time that was needed. She tutored me after school in areas that I struggled in and always provided the encouragement that I needed. She also contacted my mom and would send extra activities home for me to do in the areas of struggle. (Jill, Favorite teacher interview)

According to the above narrative, the time and efforts given to the teaching activities are the indicators of committed teachers. Moreover, they also said to try their best to provide supports and encouragement especially to students who struggle in their lessons.
She believes that providing a comfortable environment for learning is very important for students of all ages as well as giving the encouragement they need for success. Putting a lot of time and effort into our jobs is very important for the future of our students. Hands on activities and visible demonstrations always seem to help a lot of students move forward when they are struggling.

(Jill, Favorite teacher interview)

Hence, the preservice teachers in the United States perceive the teachers’ perseverance, efforts in and out of classroom as well as their time sacrifice as the sign of teachers’ commitment towards their professions.

**Preservice teachers in Malaysia**

This section presents the perception of the preservice teachers in Malaysia in looking at teachers’ commitment. Although they do not have the chance to interview their favorite teachers like their counterparts in the United States, the description is made based on their own personal experience learning in schools.

All my life I have been working hard to achieve one aim and that is to be a great teacher to the English-Language Learners. Being a teacher alone has given me a huge responsibility but being an English teacher means so much more than that. When I was in school, every day I watched my teachers working so passionately with patience and effort to make us human. They taught me not only to be good on paper, but also to be humane. Their endless sacrifices and hard work touched me and inspired me a lot.

(Lina, Narrative from Malaysia)

Lina writes about the passion and the patience that her former teachers showed in class. She describes her teachers as doing “endless sacrifice and hard work” (Lina, Narrative from Malaysia) which becomes the inspiration for her to be good teachers of the English language too. Lina believes that her teachers endless sacrifice and
perseverance has helped her to become ‘human’ and “humane”. This is due to the fact that she has been a troubled student in school.

No matter how I behaved, whoever standing in front of me will give their attention and pull me back to reality which was to focus in class. I have been a troubled student and yet they tried hard to help me. They never gave up on me. (Lina, Narrative from Malaysia)

What is interesting here is Lina views the troubles that she has caused in schools as Karma that will come back to her when she becomes a teacher herself. She promises to show the same commitment, patience and perseverance that her former teachers had shown to her when circle comes back to her.

I know that one day when I stand in front of the classroom there will be someone who will put me into trouble. A student who will not be interested in learning, who disrespects me and test my patience. This is what people call as karma. I know my karma as a teacher will not be easy since I was not a good student before. However, like what I have been taught, I will be patient with them and teach them with love. No matter who is sitting in front of me, I will make sure that each and every one of them will learn something from me. If they cannot learn English from me, at least I hope they can learn some qualities in being human from me. I will not let them feel how I used to feel. They are not losers if they cannot score a subject. They mean so much more than that and I will tell them that and make them believe in themselves. (Lina, Narrative from Malaysia)

Sincerity in teaching is another point that is relevant in looking at teachers’ commitment. Sincerity should be unpretentious and motivational. Lina hopes that she will be able to replicate similar sincerity that her former teachers have shown to her when she becomes a teacher in the future.

Being sincere in teaching would be the best approach in handling the students. If I am sincere, the students will be able to see it. I do not have to tell them that I am sincere. They will know it from the way I bring myself in class. That was pretty much how I felt with all the teachers that motivated me. They were really sincere in teaching. (Lina, Narrative from Malaysia)
In discussing the topic of sincerity, Rina particularly mentions the importance of it especially in multicultural classrooms like Malaysia.

A good teacher, in my humble opinion, is a person who honestly shares his or her knowledge with the students and cares for the students without any discrimination of race, ethnicity, religion and any physical attraction. In general, a teacher must be very determined to provide the pathway of success for the students.

(Rina, Narrative from Malaysia)

In a nutshell, the preservice teachers in Malaysia perceive teachers’ commitment as being passionate about the careers, showing patience with students especially the troublesome ones and being sincere in imparting with their knowledge.

**Teacher knowledge**

**Preservice teachers in the United States**

The C I 280 has become the source of knowledge for the preservice teachers in the United States in learning to become teachers. The class project, assignments, discussions as well as the class readings enrich their knowledge and prepare them to face the challenge as future teachers. The preservice teachers in the United States value the knowledge gained in the CI 280 class. Jill is grateful for the class as she perceives it as the source of her knowledge in learning to become a teacher.

After taking CI 280, or teaching English to English-Language Learners, I gained a wealth of knowledge that has helped me to prepare for my future career as a teacher in multicultural classrooms. Through the readings, the project, and the class discussions, we were engaged in the information and challenges that were placed before us. We read many influential and educational articles that encompassed important topics for my future career. The multi-genre project that we did was very educational and enjoyable. This project allowed us to be part of a different culture for a short period of time while gathering information to
document and share with the class. The classrooms discussions and the knowledge base of the professor were very helpful and allowed me to take notes and gain ideas for my future teaching. The professor was very helpful and engaged us in learning that will be necessary for the future with all of the different cultures that are coming about in all areas. I definitely recommend this class to all students who are going to be teaching in the multicultural world in the future!

(Jill, The last narrative)

Jill added:

I am actually doing my pre-student teaching in Johnston County [pseudonym] this semester and I have four ELL’s in my class. I have put a great deal of knowledge from CI 280 to good use and I am continuing to learn. I am glad that I had some background knowledge or I would have been lost because it is still a struggle.

(Jill, The last narrative)

The class activities and projects expose the students not only to the education system in the United States but also about the education systems and cultures of the home countries of the multicultural students from Korea, China and Russia.

Finally, through my interview with Lee [pseudonym], I got to hear about the differences in education systems between Korea and America. It was great to listen to somebody who had experienced both types of education systems, and someone who was an ELL student himself. I feel as though it is something you can’t completely understand unless you’re in the situation yourself, but being able to talk to him about it certainly was informative.

(Ed, Multi-genre paper)

I was very grateful for Lin’s [pseudonym] presentation. Chinese culture has always been the one that I felt connected to but Linda’s presentation gave me a nice window into the culture. The presentation helped me to see the similarities that the American and Chinese culture share; such as the school systems, how discipline is stressed, and the amount of respect is shown toward elders. I never knew that there were so many nationalities inside China. I think Linda said that there were 47 of them in total and that they were unique and different from one another.

(Joanne, Quick Write, 1/27)

Eric [pseudonym] was a gentleman who visited our class to answer questions we had about the Russian community in State, College. He moved here when he was 9yrs old which was the in the year 1998. Religious persecution was the main reason for him to move here, like many other Russians. He is a Baptist and Baptists in that part of the world are hated and have to practice their religion in
secrecy. I was surprised to hear that there was still religious persecution going on over there since it is not covered in the media like the Middle East.

(Joanne, Multi-genre paper)

Another area that the preservice teachers in the United States have to the chance to explore is on the regulations that apply to the English-Language Learners. It is known as Pennsylvania English language Proficiency Standard (PA ELPS). It proves to be a valuable knowledge to them.

The PA ELPS helps teachers understand the many steps and levels to language development, so that they can better understand their ELL students and maybe even see their other students in another light.

(Joanne, Reading memo #5)

Joanne finds the knowledge learnt on the regulation makes her more confident to have the English-Language Learners in her future classroom. She even applies the knowledge from other teacher education class in understanding the issue of teaching the English-Language Learners.

I felt this class did prepare me to be a teacher. The class had us read and understand standards and regulations when it comes to teaching ELL students, which was good since we should know everything we can about our students to help them excel in the classroom and essentially life. If students feel like they are excelling in the classroom then they are more likely to feel like they can excel in other aspects of their lives. Even though I have the aspirations to be a high school chemistry teacher there is nothing keeping a school district from putting an ELL student in my classroom.

(Joanne, The last narrative)

As I learned in SPLED 400 special education students are given supplementary classes, tutors and whatever else they would need to aid them in being successful students; therefore the same approach should be taken for ESL students, and any student for that matter.

(Joanne, Teaching Statement)

Beside the knowledge about the regulation, the reading articles for the class motivate these future teachers to explore the issues in English language teaching.
especially regarding the English-Language Learners. The reading explores multiple topics relevant to prepare them to be future teachers of the English-Language Learners. In the excerpts below, the readings done for the class have stimulated Joanne and Ed to think about their future students and the ways they can adapt the knowledge to be used in their future classrooms.

This reading was very helpful and I loved reading about the techniques used to help the younger kids learn their new language but a new question I have is “how can I do the same for older students (in high school)” without making them feel inferior and dumb? Since I will be a high school chemistry teacher I want to figure out how I can help an ESL student learn their new language while learning Chemistry? Good thing the sciences and math are international in most ways.  

(Joanne, Reading memo #3)

Over the course of this semester, some of my thoughts and ideas regarding ELLs have changed because of the insight I gained through C I 280. With that being said, however, some of the ideas I’ve already had in place about teaching in general have been strengthened because of the class. One opinion of mine that has changed because of this class is the topic brought up in reading memo one, which dealt with the Geertz article about Balinese cockfights. This reading really taught me how important it is to understand each student’s culture and what makes them who they are. Finding out more about who they are will not only help me find the best way to teach them but would also show them that I care about them and make them comfortable in my class. Before reading this article, the thought of reaching out to get to know my students didn’t really cross my mind. Now it is something I plan on doing in my classroom.

(Ed, Teaching Statement)

This response below is given based on the Pinker and Bissex article on language acquisition in babies:

These articles helped me to realize that language is a thing that we start learning to use the second we enter the world. If this is so then I was wondering how I can make it easier for an ESL student in my class if they weren’t “born” into English. It must be extremely difficult to learn English if you were born into the world hearing French or some other language.

(Joanne, Reading memo #2)
Beside the reading articles in class, the class projects and the activities done in CI 280 are viewed as sources of knowledge for these teachers to use in their future multicultural classrooms.

We also got the chance to display some of our own cultural artifacts with the class, which taught me a way to allow children to share their cultures with the class in the future. Allowing students to express themselves and where they are from is very important. Through small group work and reading responses we were allowed to freely express our opinions as well as learn viewpoints of others. Oral and written transcripts allowed me to view the way that others communicate. I also learned the differences between oral and written language. My favorite parts of the class included the multi genre project and the discussions about teaching ELL’s in the classroom. I loved the project because it gave me the chance to study the Chinese culture and community and the way that they do things.

(Jill, Multi-genre paper)

The preservice teachers in the United States find CI 280 classes to be useful sources of knowledge in understanding issues regarding the English-Language Learners. The class activities, discussions, projects help them to explore the issues in depth rather than learning about it only from the surface level.

**Preservice teachers in Malaysia**

The preservice teachers in Malaysia seems to be more focus on competency of the teachers where teachers must be able to possess knowledge not only in “what to teach” (Lina, Narrative from Malaysia) but they must also know “how to teach” (Lina, Narrative from Malaysia). Furthermore, teachers are expected to possess knowledge not limited to the content area that they teach in class per se. Lina and Marina write about this in their narratives.
As for me, being competent in English Language and in teaching English is a must. Sometimes people forget that in teaching, besides knowing what to teach you must also know how to teach. The approach that we use in teaching can change a dull and boring classroom into a lively and exciting classroom. Knowing what to teach only is not enough.

(Lina, Narrative from Malaysia)

For me, to be a good teacher does not deal with the knowledge that the teacher possess solely. I do agree that abundance of knowledge is paramount and it is not limited to the subject taught only. However, the vast and broad knowledge make the teacher looks diligent as students always regard teachers as source of information.

(Marina, Narrative from Malaysia)

The knowledge that teacher possess is perceived as an asset to become be good teachers. Farina elaborates this point in detail in the narratives below.

A good teacher is expected to have the knowledge of what he or she is teaching as well as the general knowledge. Without knowledge, a teacher is not efficient enough in delivering his or her lesson plan. Notice that I stress on the teaching knowledge and the general knowledge. It is essential for a good teacher to have the general knowledge in order to relate the input of a lesson to the real world. In this way, the learners will be able to see the relevance of learning a particular lesson and will be able to digest the input of the lesson clearly. Besides that, the lesson would be more interesting than usual. This shows that if a teacher have adequate teaching knowledge and general knowledge, the lesson’s input will be delivered very well and this makes the teacher a good teacher.

(Farina, Narrative from Malaysia)

One important point that Farina highlighted here is on the importance of research in teaching the English-Language Learners.

An English subject teacher needs to think positively regarding the learners and accept them as who they are as in their prior ability in the language and also their background knowledge regarding the language. A good English subject teacher should not disregard the learners’ low ability in using the English language or even assuming that the learners should already know this and that at a particular stage of learning. A teacher must do a research on the learners’ overall ability in using the language so that they know where and how to start a lesson. Besides that, a teacher must also consider doing research on the learners’ background as in family background, social background, education background, culture and so on. This will make the teacher understand the learners more and will not generalize them all in a negative way.
Though research is seen as crucial, the idea of learning too many theories is unappealing to the preservice teachers in Malaysia. Lina complains about this in the excerpt below. She feels that knowledge that comes in form of theories per se is inadequate as it is not meaningful. It has to be supplemented with practical even before the preservice teachers go for their teaching practicum.

Knowledge will make much more sense if it was taught in context. Students will not be sitting on the bench with a big question of, “Why do I have to learn all this? When do I use it in real life?” I know all this because that was the question I posed every time I was in Physics and Additional Mathematics class. There was one course in TESL that taught me how to teach in context. It was creative writing. I think Creative Writing was the most significant subject I have ever learned and it was much more meaningful than Methodologies classes. In Creative Writing, I actually learned how to teach without having to learn all the theories. What do theories do to us? We can learn theories on our own but without using them, they will not be in our heads. It will come and go like the wind. This is one of the biggest problems that I see in our education course. We were taught of theories all the time with only so little time to work it out in real life. We were not given chances to practice what we learn. The only time that we can use them is during our practicum. That would be too late. We need practices to learn, not only theories. We should be great during our practicum, not great because of the practicum. The practicum should be our stage to perform, not our stage to practice.

Lina laments about the minimal chance given to the preservice teachers in Malaysia to try the theories learn in their teacher education class. She sees it as a setback of the teacher education at her institution. In a word, the preservice teachers in Malaysia see competency as crucial where teachers have to possess not only the knowledge in subject that they teach, they also have to have pedagogical knowledge in order to become good teachers. Other than that, English teachers must have the ability to carry out research so that they can learn more about their students. However, theories are seen as
burdensome if they are complemented with practical as practices are seen as better way of learning to become teachers as compares to learning about the theories in isolation.

**Theme Three Summary**

Showing strong commitment and passionate about teaching are perceived as the characteristics of good teachers by the preservice teacher in their process of making sense of their experience learning to become teachers in the United States. The preservice teachers learn about these mostly through theirs interview with their favorite teachers whose teaching leave strong impact on them until now. The preservice teachers see strong commitment in their favorite teachers through their perseverance in dealing with students especially the one with special needs. This commitment affects the students’ perception about learning and can be motivational factor for students to excel in their learning. In the area of teacher knowledge, a whole rounder teacher preparatory program that includes every important aspect that future teachers need to know in going into the profession is seen as beneficial. This includes knowledge not only on the subject content and the pedagogy but also on rules, regulations and law related to the students and their learning process. This knowledge helps the preservice teachers make sense of their learning experience in becoming teachers of the English-Language Learners in the United States.

The preservice teachers in Malaysia try to make sense of their experience learning to become teachers by relating to their old experiences as students when they were in schools. They use these experiences as guidance to understand their own
trajectories in becoming teachers. The teacher education program that they enrolled in mostly prepares them in the competency in subject content area and in pedagogy knowledge but not so much on field experience. This has made the theories learnt in their teacher education classes look isolated as they are not complemented with practical. The other area that is mentioned is on teacher research. It is seen as a channel to learn more about the students’ social, educational and cultural background which is a useful experience in learning to become teachers.

**Theme 4: Pedagogical practices**

**Instructional methods**

**Preservice teacher in the United States**

Instructional methods are techniques that teachers use in the process of teaching in classrooms. Being future teachers, it is expected for the preservice teachers in the United States to be concerned about this area in their teacher education years. Therefore, the narratives contain insights of examples, ideas and hope of instructional methods that they have experienced themselves, have seen practiced by other teachers or have hoped they will be able to carry out in their future classrooms. Some techniques mentioned are applicable to all students and some are specific for the English-Language Learners.
There are many teaching techniques mentioned in narratives of the preservice teachers in the United States. Among points highlighted is on the use of technology in teaching. This is when the idea of ‘change’ been brought up where teachers should be ready to face challenges not only with students but also with the advancement of the technology that is happening in the classrooms nowadays. Ed writes about the way his favorite teacher successfully adapts to this change based on his interview with her.

Technology has also played an important role in Mrs. S’s class. Back in my senior year, I remember taking notes from an overhead projector that placed the notes on the wall. Since I’ve graduated, my high school bought and installed “smartboards” for each of the classrooms. There was one installed in Mrs. S’s room during my senior year, but she never wanted to use it. She had a hard enough time getting on the internet at her computer so there was no way she was going to use the new piece of technology. Sure enough, however, when I went back to see Mrs. S over Spring Break, she was bragging to me about how good she is at Power Point presentations on the smartboard. When I asked her what happened to the overhead she had she said, “I threw it in the closet. This is much more fun to use and I’m getting good at it!” I asked her why she decided to give it a try and her response was “The kids really seem to like it better. It is very interactive and you can do a lot of different fun things with it. It doesn’t really affect the quality of my instruction, but they seem to like it better so I do it.” Again, this is just a great example of Mrs. S’s willingness to change her teaching methods over time. She knew she wasn’t good at using newer technology, but she swallowed her pride and was willing to learn with the help of a few younger teachers. She does it because her students like it better, showing how she lets the students have an input on how the class is run.

(Ed, Favorite teacher interview)

Besides the readiness to change to adapt to the advancement of the technology, teachers must be ready to evaluate the way they teach their subject content yearly. Lyn and Joanne explain about this based on their interviews with their favorite teachers.

She [Lyn’s favorite teacher] also mentioned to keep looking to learn from others. I thought this was really insightful. She said observe colleagues and don’t be afraid to try new things. I really liked this response because change can be frightening, but as a teacher one has to acknowledge that if the class does not
comprehend one way of teaching, that you have to change your instruction so the students can learn.

(Lyn, Favorite teacher interview)

The second piece of advice he gave was that a teacher should change their lesson year to year so that they do not get bored teaching; because if you are bored then your students are most likely bored as well.

(Joanne, Favorite teacher interview)

Lyn and Joanne explain how the change in instructional method can affect the ways students perceive the lesson. Without change, lesson will be meaningless and boring. Change is expected to be constant as it happens throughout a teachers’ career.

This point is clearly explained by Ed’s favorite teacher, Mrs.S in the excerpt from the narrative as below.

Mrs. S also told me that her teaching style had changed throughout the years to make her classroom more effective. “It definitely has changed since I first started teaching. As a new teacher, I tried to be strict and structured with my lesson plans, but I learned with experience that it really doesn’t help to be like that.” Her ability to change gears and switch her teaching style to benefit her students really shows the quality teacher she is.

(Ed, Favorite teacher interview)

The role of teaching materials and the teachers’ ability to improvise them when necessary is delineated in excerpt from Joanne’s teaching statement below.

Having an abundance of materials can be extremely helpful but if they are not in the budget we must learn to improvise. Many activities can be done, simply by using everyday household objects that are rather inexpensive. A wide variety of activities will hold the interests of the children and keep them focused on the learning task at hand. Doing the same things over and over again can become repetitive and boring and the students will lose interest.

(Joanne, Teaching Statement)

Lyn writes about the variety of types of reading materials that can be used in classrooms especially with the English-Language Learners in her reading memos and teaching statement.
Students were exposed to a wide variety of reading materials including children’s literature, newspapers, children’s magazines, dictionaries, their own writing journals, and environmental print such as posters and word walls. Showing these things to ELL fosters their understanding and usage of the English language. Like using pictures to build the basic English oral vocabulary that beginning ELL’s need.

(Lyn, Reading Memo #3)

She sees that by having variety of reading materials will encourage the understanding and the level of usage of the English language among the learners. Lyn is personally fond of using globe in a multicultural classroom where much knowledge can be gained by looking at the globe. In encouraging target language usage, Lyn also feels that labeling objects in classrooms with English and the students’ native language is crucial in encouraging the English-Language Learners to learn language effectively.

Another classroom material that I think is vital is a globe. One can learn so much by viewing a globe, and this also connects back to the cultural idea, in which we can trace back to the different parts of the world our ancestors have come from. Also having all objects in the classroom labeled in both English and the other language is critical in helping an ELL. I believe that it is so important to display a positive multi-cultural environment in the classroom for many reasons; however, one strong reason is that children will not tease one another as much if they appreciate the differences and understand that they also do have similarities with their peers, even if it may seem otherwise at first.

(Lyn, Teaching Statement)

Nothing is more important than making students realize that what they learn classroom is relevant to their real life. Linking the class projects to the real life situation will enable students to see the relevance of the learning done in their classrooms. Joanne and Lyn write about this based on the information gained from the interview with their favorite teachers.

He [Joanne’s favorite teacher] brought more to the classroom by having us do projects to relate Physics to everyday life, which sparked inspiration by letting us have fun with learning.

(Joanne, Teaching Statement)
She [Lyn’s favorite teacher] also explained to the class why what she was teaching us, would be important for us and beneficial in life. This is very important because many students in high school think what they’re learning is irrelevant, but because she explained to us for whatever we were learning, how this will be useful to us in the future; it captured the student’s attention and enabled learning to occur.

(Lyn, Teaching Statement)

With regards to teaching English, the preservice teacher acknowledges the challenge of teaching the skill of reading and writing to the English-Language Learners. Thus, scaffolding and teaching according to context are some of the methods suggested to handle the challenge.

I found it interesting to learn that reading and writing are more cognitively challenging than reading and listening. Scaffolding these children is very important to their success. I also agree that understanding these students is very complex. Sometimes it is hard to understand what these children already know and what they need help with. I also believe that context plays a very key role just as we discussed in class. Making connections between the language and the literary development can be done more easily if we look at the context in which it is involved or being used.

(Jill, Reading Memo #3)

The four basic skills namely listening, speaking, reading and writing are important in English language learning process. Lyn tries to understand this matter from her preservice teacher’s eyes as below.

Both listening to a native speak the language and trying to speak back as well as reading and writing are crucial in learning a new language. From a teacher’s perspective, we wanted to find out how they used written language activities to support both written and oral language development, especially in English. From the students, we wanted to examine the ways in which they responded to the teachers’ practices and to discover any idiosyncratic written language practices they brought to the classroom as they approached the task of learning both written and oral English.

(Lyn, Reading Memo #3)

In the excerpt below, Lyn is inspired to dig deeper into the topic of teaching the reading skill by an article written by Bissex.
Also in the Bissex excerpts, there are interesting questions that are asked. When does a person begin to read? Is it reading faces? There has to be recognition and interpretation here just as in print reading. Or is it when a child can repeat the story while turning the pages? The author’s questions make the reader more intrigued and wonder as to what is the correct answer. From a teacher’s point of view I think that a child “reads” when he can make out the sounds of printed words and understand there meaning. As a teacher who would be deciphering what level a child is in reading, to judge the child’s skill one would have to see how many correct words the child would be able to read and compare it to the other peers.

( Lyn, Reading Memo # 2)

The C I 280 classes encourages these preservice teachers to explore many instructional ideas in teaching English to the English-Language Learners. The reading materials for the class have functioned as stimulators that encourage the preservice teachers to think about the issue critically. The excerpts below show some of the examples of ideas that they have I feel that this is a very helpful thing to understand when trying to teach ELL students.

ELL’s have very little, if any, knowledge of the English language, just like newborn babies. As a teacher, you have to realize that it will take these students a long time to fully understand and be able to communicate in the English language. You can help these students by teaching through examples and identifying what you mean when you say things. Not only is it hard for an ELL to understand what you are trying to teach, but it will be hard for them to keep up with the lesson as they continue to try and understand everything you are saying. If you continuously use pictures and examples to relay meanings of words and sounds, it may be easier for the student to connect with what you are trying to say in teaching the skill of reading effectively.

(Ed, Reading Memo # 2)

In the excerpt below, Ed feels that by using examples and pictures to represent meaning of words and sounds, it will enable the teach reading effectively. Jill echoes the same idea in her narrative which is strongly influenced by the reading article by Bissex. It is also based on her own experience learning to read when she was small.
Reading can be described in many different ways for different people. Some people like to be read to, others like to read themselves, and others like to see what they are reading through things such as images. Everyone learns in a wide variety of ways and can interpret ideas on many different levels. I really liked the part that stated, “It is a passage taken by small steps through a territory we may no longer remember” (Bissex. 119). I believe that this statement is very true. As I was reading this I tried to think back and remember the ways in which I used to learn to read but I can’t come up with one clear answer. I learned from people reading aloud to me and from looking at the words and pictures that flow across the pages of many books. When I began to struggle to pictures helped me to work through those times. Reading is like a maze and many children find a different way to the end or to success. Just like Paul, I believe that I learned best from associating words with real life images. I also think that this is very beneficial for children who are trying to learn English. If they do not understand a word we can point to it and help them to literally and physically understand what the word means.

(Joanne, Reading Memo # 2)

Joanne also believes that language learning skill that students use to learn their native language is applicable in helping them to learn the second language. This again, is based on her experience teaching reading to a Chinese boy.

If they know the skills from their native language they will be able to successfully learn a second language. I worked with a young Chinese boy last semester and he was an English language learner in the first grade. He had prior comprehension and language skills from his native language and was eager to learn whatever anyone had to offer him. I would point to objects and define the word for him and he would then point to it and repeat the word over and over again. He eventually began to put the words together and started to form complete sentences although he struggled with words that needed to be in a different tense.

(Joanne, Reading Memo # 3)

Ed and Joanne share the same opinion about the use of the English-Language Learners’ native language to teach reading. He calls it “read-a-longs” method. Ed stresses that drilling into learning grammar and spelling are not part of learning how to read.

These kids aren’t being “drilled” with instruction on how the English language is used correctly and how to spell words. Instead, they are learning through interaction with their teachers and with their fellow students, most of whom are also ELL’s. Through read-a-longs with their teachers, the students were able to connect certain words and familiarize them with words of their native language.
With much practice, they went from only being able to understand a few words to wanting to read because they enjoy listening to and understanding the stories.

(Ed, Reading Memo # 3)

In the excerpt below, Lyn touches upon the imperative of the skill of writing in learning English. This comes from her knowledge from the C I 280 classes as well as from her own background experience. Lyn sees the skill of writing as the best skill to supplement the discrepancy in the speaking skill among the English-Language Learners.

Throughout my time in this class, some of my viewpoints have changed and some have grown deeper. In my reading memo 3, I spoke about whether or not written language activities should be used for beginning ELL’s. Looking back at this, I feel that at the time I thought that speaking and really immersing oneself in the atmosphere were really the most important ways for an English language learner to develop their English skills. I mentioned how without my mom, being a native English speaker, my dad probably would not have learned English as fast as he did. While this is true, throughout my time in this class, I have also realized how important it is in having written language activities. Yonsu, the student we studied in class, did not like to speak English that much. However, she kept a journal and started writing in English way before she spoke in English. This shows and proved to me how both are extremely important, and that we need both to be thriving learners. If one does not have the access to be able to practice their speaking aloud to someone else, or if one just is shy and does not feel the need to speak, writing activities still will enable the learner to practice and develop their English.

(Lyn, Teaching Statement)

In looking at the skill writing, one of the methods discussed in the narrative is what is known as journal writing for ESL classes.

What I thought was most helpful, however, was the writing and sharing of the students’ journals. They wrote about what they did over the weekend or places they went, and were able to form sentences in the correct tense and even were able to put the preposition “to” before the place they went to. They were able to make sense of a rule of grammar they didn’t even know because they’ve learned so much in a short period of time.

(Ed, Reading Memo #4)

I loved reading about how the teachers developed lesson plans and activities to help the ESL students. For instance I loved when the one teacher had the students write a root word and then had them write the
present, past and future forms of that word. I also liked the teacher’s push for shared journal time and having the other students question the student who was reading. I felt this was very good for the student reading and the students listening/questioning, since it helped them practice synthesizing questions and answers at a quicker pace and to practice writing. This journal sharing time probably also gave the students more of a “community” feeling in the classroom, since they could relate to each other better once they learned about one another from their journals. (Joanne, Reading Memo #3)

By having kids share their culture and uniqueness with one another through sharing journal entries and projects we can help kids create a learning community in which everyone has the same opportunity to learn and be happy. (Joanne, Reading Memo #4)

Ed mentions how the journal writing and sharing activities enable the English-Language Learners to learn many aspects of the language in a short time. Joanne writes about how the journal writing encourages the integration of the four basic skills in English like listening, speaking, reading and writing. Furthermore, the journal sharing session contributes to communal spirit between the English-Language Learners in class that makes the classroom a happy place to be.

Preservice teachers in Malaysia

The preservice teachers in Malaysia write about various instructional methods that they observe as students during their schooling years as well as the ideas that they learn from their teacher education program. Among points highlighted are instructional methods that are destructive for learning. Lina mentions how “drilling and traditional lecture” (Lina, Narrative from Malaysia) are the bad examples of instructional teaching
methods which can make learning dull. This is because “students will not be attracted to the teaching and learning session in which the teacher still uses the conservative method or called as chalk-and-talk method” (Marina, Narratives from Malaysia). Lina writes that drilling is not suitable method to be used for teaching English due to the nature of the subject.

Maybe it was the nature of the subject itself. In English class we did not have to memorize formulas, we did not have to make experiments to remember a theory and we do not have to count ridiculous figures to get an answer. We simply just express ourselves through words.

(Lina, Narrative from Malaysia)

Memorization is another destructive method that should not be used in teaching English in school. Teaching English using memorization technique though it might sound strange, tend to happen. The simplest example is, rather than teaching the tenses in context, teachers simply ask students to memorize the tenses and test their memory on their ability to remember the past tense and the past participle verbs in English. Memorization is commonly used in preparing students for exam.

The use of technology is the second point highlighted by the preservice teachers in Malaysia. Marina mentions how “the expansion of technology assists teachers a lot,[and] make the lesson interactive” (Marina, Narrative from Malaysia). The new technology in education field encourages the teachers to be innovative and willing to try something new. Marina writes about this in her narratives as below.

Firstly, students will easily get bored when they have to listen to the lesson while their pair of eyes need to gaze at the whiteboard during the teacher is teaching. It will be bored and not suitable for the current situation. Do not hesitate to take the risk and try something new. Teacher will not know whether that particular method is acceptable or not and why not give a try. If it is clearly unacceptable, improvise and change the method based on the previous experiment. Furthermore, after the
recess time, students will be slightly lazy and sleepy, so teacher can use the video to attract their attention.

(Marina, Narrative from Malaysia)

Another point that Marina has brought up is on the use of set induction in English teaching. She mentions some activities that can be used as set induction for English lessons.

A good teacher must realize that set induction part is the most powerful segment in which it will help to activate students' schemata and attract students’ attention. Another activities that teacher can try will be using song, group discussion and role-play. It will not just allow students to feel the amusement but indirectly, it help them to sharpen their listening, speaking, reading and writing's skills. Songs and videos must be appropriate and students are most likely to feel attracted.

(Marina, Narrative from Malaysia)

The role of teaching materials in teaching English is mentioned in the narratives. Nora writes about the unlimited sources of teaching materials available if the teachers are creative enough to use them in class.

Using as many materials is also a proof of a good English teacher. Using information from the same resource such as the text book primarily is not smart as it is limited. Language is present everywhere and there are so many sources that can be used such as magazines, poems and story books. Good movies can also help as students will be engaged to the movie and they can use their hearing sense. Teaching language using as many senses as a teacher will result in a better interest and usage towards the students as it involves more than just reading. A good teacher will not only teach the students but also learn some in the process. In order to get the students to learn and work hard, teachers should also work hard to learn, obtain materials, and provide explanation and tips for the students.

(Nora, Narrative from Malaysia)

English grammar is seen as important in the process of learning the language. Marina writes about the connection between the students' speaking skills and their proficiency in English grammar.

In addition, an English learner too must know how to communicate in English. For the beginner, it may be hard for them. However, with several practices, it will be easy. We must bear in mind that communicate means the receivers can
understand the message while the speakers able to convey the message. It does not mean that the sentences need to be grammatically correct until there is no word comes out because of too afraid of making mistake. As time goes by, we can brush up the grammatical features and manage to use it well. It needs practices to make the second language to be almost perfect.

(Marina, Narrative from Malaysia)

She believes that students should not be made to think that their grammar has to be perfect in order to speak in English as this will cause apprehension. This will encourage them to practice without worrying about making mistakes in grammar which eventually help them to speak better.

In a nutshell, the preservice teachers opinions on instructional methods to teach the English-Language Learners are mostly based on their experience as students in school. Among issues highlighted are the destructive ways of teaching English, the roles of teaching materials, the role of technology in education as well as the use of grammar in determining the speaking proficiency of the English-Language Learners in Malaysian classrooms.

Learning Environment

Preservice teachers in the United States

Learning environment is imperative in ensuring effective teaching and learning activities in schools. The preservice teachers in the United States write extensively on this topic based on their own experience as students, their interviews with their favorite teachers as well as their knowledge from the CI 280 classes.
One of the prominent ideas mentioned in the narratives from the United States is on the importance to create safe and comfortable learning environment in the English classrooms for the English-Language Learners. Ed writes about this in his reading memo based on the reading article that he has to read for the C I 280 class.

I really liked what Nita [pseudonym] said about creating a community in her classroom. She started off by saying that you need to make the students feel safe and comfortable in the classroom in order for them to discuss anything openly. She also said that she discovered the importance of discussing individual differences with her students instead of ignoring them in hope that no problems will arise. I feel as though she hit the nail on the head with these two comments when it comes to creating a literacy learning community.

(Ed, Reading Memo # 4)

Joanne provides similar comments based on her reading on the same article.

Nonetheless she defines the word “safe” as “emotionally, physically and mentally” (Joanne, Reading Memo # 4) safe.

We have to learn and know how to create an environment in which kids feel safe emotionally, physically, and mentally so that they can have the best environment to learn in.

(Joanne, Reading Memo # 4)

What Joanne means by safety in her narrative is the idea of protecting the English-Language Learners from discrimination that may happen in schools.

If a child feels that there is prejudice or hatred of any kid in the classroom, that will only make them retract and retain nothing of what is being taught of them; since they are more concerned with being picked on and their safety.

(Joanne, Reading Memo # 4)

In making the diverse students feel safe, another alternative is to encourage communal feelings among the learners. This contributes to comfortable learning environment among these diverse learners as they learn to accept and respect the differences amidst the diversity of its members.
If a teacher is trying to build a community atmosphere in his or her classroom, it is essential that the students are comfortable in the classroom. In situations where there is diversity amongst the classmates, this is even more important. People aren’t going to speak their minds or contribute to conversations if they are not comfortable with the people in the group. Often times, people who are different from one another aren’t comfortable around each other. By creating a welcoming environment for all students, they will be more likely to set aside whatever differences they have and be comfortable sharing their thoughts and ideas amongst the group.

(Ed, Reading Memo # 4)

Jill, in her narratives acknowledged the fact that creating comfortable learning environment in a multicultural classroom is not an easy task.

We as future teachers must put forth a great deal of effort to make a sense of “community” in our classrooms and provide the best learning environments possible for our students. The two European American Elementary Teachers from the article seemed to face great challenges when they were put to the test. Providing a sense of comfort to these students can be much more difficult than it seems. This sense of community can be defined in many ways. We must try to incorporate different classroom practices and build relationships that will support these students and help them fulfill their goals of learning literacy. Making plans of how children will learn to read and write can be quite a challenge and can vary from student to student. Allowing these children to feel comfortable and immerse themselves in the culture around them will increase their learning abilities. Teachers must be right alongside these children and help them every step of the way.

(Jill, Reading Memo # 4)

Lyn agrees with Jill on the adversity of creating a sense of community among the students from diverse background.

Teachers often have a hard time creating successful environments because of the different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Many teachers also find that cultural differences can block the formation of positive relationships. However, if we understand the nature of the community building process, we will be successful. I really liked how Nita, one of the teachers who was an European American, explained how her classroom should be. She stated that, “making certain that each student feels like he or she belongs in to the group and has something important to contribute” is vital.

(Lyn, Reading Memo # 4)
Nonetheless, Lyn learns something valuable in creating a sense of community in a classroom from stories in the reading article.

I like how Nita phrased this because she points out that she is going to create her classroom to be the “group”, and since these children are in the classroom, which is the group, she is going to make them feel united as a whole and emphasize group achievement. The second part explains their significance in this group. Rita shows how she would like each member, or student, to have a role in the group. This role is something that shows their contribution

*(Lyn, Reading Memo # 4)*

Lyn believes that working together will eventually makes the English-Language Learners learn to accept each other amidst their differences. Working together too will lessen the apprehension especially among the English-Language Learners in learning the new language. She writes about this in her teaching statement.

The need to make sure the class feels as if they are one whole group is extremely important. This united feeling allows the students to not be scared in the classroom. If students are frightened to speak and not asking questions, their learning will not be met to the highest degree it can.

*(Lyn, Teaching Statement)*

She added:

I believe that it is so important to display a positive multi-cultural environment in the classroom for many reasons; however, one strong reason is that children will not tease one another as much if they appreciate the differences and understand that they also do have similarities with their peers, even if it may seem otherwise at first.

*(Lyn, Teaching Statement)*

Creating a sense of belonging to a “group” *(Lyn, Reading memo # 4)* and providing role to each member of the group is one of the ways community building can be achieved in diverse classrooms. This will contribute to the comfortable and safe environment in a classroom which motivates learning.
The other factor that contributes to conducive learning environment is the teachers’ characteristics and traits themselves. This is because the sense of welcoming that teacher shows to students do influence the atmosphere of the class. Lyn discusses this point in her multi-genre paper. Her opinion is inspired by the article that she has read written on Bali cockfighting by Geertz (1973) and her own experience visiting Korean Church.

As like the foreigners in the Geertz reading, I seemed to be unnoticed. I received a couple stares but no one said anything to me. I then again began to think of those immigrant students who walk into class on the first day of school. I realized how hard it is for that student, to get some stares, but no one wanting to talk to you, and being all alone without any friends around. It made me become aware about how important a teachers job is. It is my responsibility to greet the new student with a friendly warm welcoming. I now understand how this can change the whole atmosphere in the classroom.

(Lyn, Multi-Genre paper)

Ed writes on similar idea in his narrative based on her interview with her favorite teacher.

One of the reasons why Mrs.S was such an effective teacher was her teaching style. She described her teaching style to me, saying “I feel like I’m a very laid back person in nature, and that’s how I am when I teach. I try to be approachable to the students and make classes fun.” Teachers like this create a welcoming classroom environment that students want to be in. When you are approachable as a teacher, students will be comfortable coming to you for any questions or concerns they might be having in the class or in their lives. She wasn’t the “authority figure” that some teachers try to be. Instead, she was just another person like the rest of the class that made it easy to talk to.

(Ed, Favorite teacher interview)

Being approachable and welcoming are crucial in helping students feel comfortable with the teacher. They help to banish the gap between students and teacher where teacher is not perceived as an authoritative figure in class. Another aspect that helps to create a comfortable learning environment is through humor.
Thirdly teachers need to have a sense of humor. If a teacher does not have a sense of humor then they will most likely over react to silly things that their students do and won’t be able to think on the same level as their students. Fourthly besides changing your lessons from year to year, a teacher also needs to make their lessons fun for them to teach. He couldn’t stress it enough, that if a teacher does not have fun teaching their lesson, then their students will pick up on their lack of enthusiasm for teaching which creates in students a lack of enthusiasm for learning.

(Joanne, Favorite teacher interview)

Mrs. W demonstrated her passion for teaching, her knowledge on specific content areas, and her easy-going personality on the first day of class. She was extremely animated while she taught. This was not over the top, to make her students not want to listen to her, but she just showed that she loved being a teacher. Through her funny little songs that she would sing on top of desks about grammar rules, that we would sing aloud as a class until we remembered them, or through her consent effort she showed to us even if she was tired, she never looked like she did not want to teach us. When I asked about some of her motivational strategies she used, she mentioned to try to always stay energetic and to be “unpredictably fun.”

(Lyn, Favorite teacher interview)

As far as discipline goes, I think Mrs. S handles it in a unique, but effective way. “I try to use humor to diffuse any sort of problems in the classroom. I have a squirt bottle with water that I’ll spray them with if they are acting up. It’s a way to have a little fun but let them know when they’re doing something wrong.”

(Ed, Favorite teacher interview)

In the above narrative, Humor is not only used to inject fun into the learning environment, it is also subtly used to discipline the students so that the whole exciting learning environment is not disrupted by teacher riling up in front of the other students in class. Thus, humor is considered as a vital that helps to create positive learning environment in classrooms.
Preservice teachers in Malaysia

In Malaysia, communication is perceived as an important element in creating a conducive learning environment in Malaysian classrooms. Marina writes about the importance of two-way communication in classroom as a solution to teacher-centered teaching process.

Secondly, I will apply what I have learned throughout this course. Despite I am the one who do the talking part in the class, I will ensure that there is always two ways communication. It will be unfair for me to conquer the class as students have their opinions and they have the right to voice it out. In addition, two ways communication too will let the students to feel welcome to participate in the lesson and the anticipation will avoid the class from being boring. The advantages of two ways communications will be the students will build their self-esteem to talk and stated their opinion, teacher knows and can evaluate whether the students understand the topic discussed and it will help students to love the subject.

(Marina, Narrative from Malaysia)

Marina added that teachers’ personalities can influence the learning environment. Teachers are expected to look presentable in class. They should come to class full of energy so that the class will be fun and energetic too. Messy and tired looking teachers demotivate students and makes learning environment lack zest.

Teacher must realize that students will set their eyes on you for the whole lesson so teacher needs to dress up properly. It does not necessarily to the teacher to be beautiful or handsome, it is just a bonus, however, and students will be less attracted when they see the teacher dresses messily. Some teacher looks so exhausted and enters the class with the oily face. If teacher who is the manager for the class do not have the enthusiastic, you can easily guess how the students feel. For female teacher, natural make-up with the light lipstick and natural compact powder will conceal their tiredness. Students too will be ready for the lesson. In addition, during the lesson, teacher must always aware and need to know how to attract the students' focus. Teacher must be lively, enthusiastic and sense of humor will make the class runs interestingly. Students are human and they have feeling so, the sense of humour may encourage them to engage in the lesson. Besides, teacher too must walk around and do not seat at the chair so that students will be fresh and energetic as they need to do their eyes exercise as their eyeballs
need to follow the same direction as the teacher moves. However, teacher needs to beware as too much movement will give another disadvantage.

(Marina, Narrative from Malaysia)

Marina feels that, to be a good English teacher, she “must create the interesting ambience and make the English classes happening” (Marina, Narrative from Malaysia).

Nora, another preservice teacher from Malaysia stated that English class should never be made boring. English teachers should provide interesting learning environment to the class by being creative in their pedagogy. She provides the detail explanations in her narrative as below.

Another thing that is in a good English teacher, they will never teach a class in a boring situation. English is a language and the obvious way to learn is to speak and listen of course. So creating fun activities like role playing, acting, singing might get students to learn English without them realizing that they are actually learning. Students are tuned to feel bored when they have to face the book all day during school so why waste the whole period to do the same like other subjects? Good English teachers will never allow English lesson to be a quiet one. It should be filled with discussions, conversations and laughter. The quiet students will be encouraged by teachers to speak. How? By prompting questions or even have a sharing experience session. Students will gain more confidence and teachers will know more about their students.

(Nora, Narrative from Malaysia)

The experience of having fun and interesting former English teachers influence the way the preservice teachers perceive of good learning environment for conducive English language class. Lina recalled her own experience enjoying her English class when she was schooling in a boarding school in Malaysia.

Being in such a place, there was only one class that could make me happier than anyone in the school. That was to be in English class. English was the only subject that made me anxious, I was waiting for it every day. I will be the first to arrive in class and the one most eager to answer any questions posed by my teacher. All my English teachers were my best friend and I loved everything about them. Although all the teachers were dedicated and good, they can never beat our English teachers. If there was an award for the best teacher it would be an honour to give each and every one of them the award. I am not saying this because I aced
the subject. Even if I was not the scorer of the subject I would still feel the same way about them. English was the only subject that gave us a space to breathe after being suffocated in other subjects. In English class we not only learned English but we actually enjoyed what we were doing. That was the key word, enjoy.

(Lina, Narrative from Malaysia)

She added:

Because our English teachers were so free-spirited, we did not feel that learning was stressful. Maybe it was the nature of the subject itself. In English class we did not have to memorize formulas, we did not have to make experiments to remember a theory and we do not have to count ridiculous figures to get an answer. We simply just express ourselves through words. We watched movies, listened to songs and talked all the time. It was the only time that made me feel like I was alive and breathing.

(Lina, Narrative from Malaysia)

Among aspects that have been highlighted in the narratives above is on the characters of the English teachers and the type of activities done in the classrooms that contributes to the conducive learning environment in Lina’s English classes when she was in school. Her teachers are described as approachable and friendly. The activities done in the classes such as using songs and movies are the types of activities which are able to attract the English-Language Learners to enjoy the lessons more. Lina even mentions that her English classes are the only time that makes her feel “alive and breathing”( Lina, Narrative from Malaysia) to show how she enjoyed the less stressful environment of the English class as compared to the other subjects in school.

To sum up, a lively, fun and positive learning environment is strongly depended on the creativity and the hard work of the teachers. Being innovative in creating fun and lively English class through varieties of activities used in learning the language is able to inject motivational learning atmosphere in classrooms. Teachers must supportive and approachable in helping the students to learn. As a result, students become
more energetic and motivated to learn the language not only because it is beneficial for their life but also because it is such an enjoyable and supportive place to be in school.

**Theme Four Summary**

The idea of change is predominant in the narratives from the preservice teachers in the United States. This is particularly prominent in looking at the aspect of instructional methods that teacher can use in classrooms. The change towards technology, pedagogy, and mind set are mentioned as ways to improve one’s instructional skills. Skilful teachers are expected to be able to adapt accordingly so that their instructional methods are relevant, interesting and fun to the young students. In the aspect of relevance, the lessons in classroom too are expected to be relevant to the real life situation. Thus, the instruction should utilize methods that enable students to see the pertinence of lessons in class to their life. In the aspect of learning environment, a safe and comfortable place to learn is when students from diverse background recognize their differences and see it as asset that can be used to learn about each other. This contributes to communal togetherness between the English-Language Learners. Besides, the positive learning environment too comes from teachers who are approachable, welcoming and fun as these characters influence the ambiance of the classrooms to be fun and lively too. These are some of the key aspects that help the preservice teachers in the United States make sense of their own experience learning to become teacher of the English-Language Learners.
Similar to the preservice teachers in the United States, the preservice teachers in Malaysia agree that change is important in improving teacher’s instructional skills. The old fashion style of teaching such as teacher centered, chalk-an-talk, drilling and memorization are seen as outdated instructional methods. Teachers need to learn to adapt to the new ideas and technology so that their instructional method will not be boring and outdated. This will contribute to conducive learning environment. Two-ways communication is another point mentioned in the narrative. Passive instruction or one way communication in classroom is seen as unhelpful as it hinders students’ active participation in the learning process. Conducive learning environment also comes from the personalities of the teachers. Being creative and funny enable teachers to inject interest in the learning environment where it makes students become more relax. In short, these are some of ideas that will help the preservice teachers make sense of their process of learning to become teachers in Malaysia.

Summary of Findings

The findings been presented in this chapter attempt at addressing the three sub questions of this study. They are: (1) what does it mean to be a good teacher? (2) What does it mean to be a good teacher to the English-Language Learners? (3) What does it mean to be an English Language Learner? The analysis of the narratives written by the preservice teachers in the United States and Malaysia reveals five major themes : (1) Personal development (2) Developing Relationship (3) Professional Development and (4)
Pedagogical Practices. Thus, the findings are organized and discussed according to the above themes. They are interwoven within the narratives in each country as well as between the narratives from both countries. The preservice teachers in the United States and Malaysia explore their new experiences based on their regional background which is very much influenced by the culture, language, society and religion within their own country. Undoubtedly, their narratives reveal many patterns which are unique and worth being explored in order to learn how they make sense of their experience of becoming teachers.

The first theme of personal development explores the preservice teachers’ process of understanding their own experience and development in learning to become teachers in two countries. As their experiences are regionally and culturally bound, each narrative tends to be different. However, there are aspects that are found to be intersected in their narratives. In expressing their expectations, hopes and fears, the preservice from the two countries share the same perception that teachers should be role models to students. Teachers should possess benevolent and morally characters so that they can become examples for students to look up to and learn from them. This is because of the expectation of the society where teachers are seen as having the responsibility of preparing the future generations. Thus, the sense of obligation is imbedded in the narratives from the two countries. In discussing fear, the preservice teachers from both countries share similar apprehensions of going into the profession for the first time as well as having to deal with students from diverse background as novice teachers. However, in the area of multiculturalism the preservice teachers in the United States are reported to feel more ready to face this new experience due to the knowledge gained from
their teacher preparation courses as compares to their counterparts in Malaysia who received none.

Another subtheme under the personal development is what I call as mirror and window. It actually discusses the way the preservice teachers in both countries see themselves (mirror), see others (window) and the way the preservice teachers perceived others look at them (mirror and window) in their process of learning to become teachers of the English-Language Learners. The preservice teachers in both countries share similar views that being different are definitely unpleasant and they recite various stories in demonstrating this point. On this point, what makes them different is their sense of selfhood. The preservice teachers in the United States do not grapple with the conflict of identity as White English teachers as compares to the Malaysian preservice teachers who experience inferiority issue in becoming Malay English teachers. The preservice teachers in Malaysia struggle with their own sense of self and self-worth issue in wanting to prove their capability amidst the perception of the society who doubts their competency.

The second theme touches upon the important of developing relationship with students and with others. In looking at the aspect of developing relationship with students, the preservice teachers in both countries agrees on the need to respond to the students’ individual needs and differences. The preservice teachers in the United States focus more on developing sense of closeness with students by offering a comfortable and safe environment in class especially for students with special needs. In Malaysia, the preservice teachers write about getting close to students not only limiting to in the classroom but also outside it when teachers are expected to deal with students’ non-academic problems. The preservice in Malaysia acknowledge that regional social issue
such as poverty do affect the students’ academic motivation and these students need individual needs and attention to strive in school. Parents, colleagues and senior teachers are people mentioned by the preservice teachers in both countries in discussing establishing relationship with others. Colleagues in schools are said to be able to provide emotional supports in the profession. In the aspect of discipline, preservice teachers in both countries agree that embarrassing students is unacceptable as disciplining should be carried out with respect.

Regarding the theme of professional development, the preservice teachers in The United States and Malaysia see the aspect of commitment as a fundamental characteristic of good teachers. Commitment seems to be paralleled with the act of perseverance and the sacrifice that teachers make. Commitment to one’s job is fundamental especially in a teaching profession as it can bring great impact to the young people’s life. This is particularly true if teachers have to deal with students with special needs in learning including the English-Language Learners. Besides commitment to one’s job, the role of teacher knowledge is another factor that contributes to professional development. Teacher knowledge in the narratives revolves around the preservice teachers’ field experience and effective activities in their teacher education program. What is outstanding is the way the preservice teachers in the United States value their heuristic teacher education program that provide chances for them to use experience in their process of learning to become teachers as compares to the preservice teachers in Malaysia who lamented that their teacher education program is mostly theory-laden with minimal opportunity for real experience. One prominent idea in discussing teacher knowledge is the area of teacher research. The preservice teachers in the United States
reported to gain so much from activities in CI 280 class such as the interview with their favorite teacher and exploring people’s culture in doing the multi-genre paper project. Narratives from Malaysia however only mentioned it in a form of idea.

Lastly, theme four explores the area of pedagogical practices in classrooms. One common point mentioned by the preservice teachers in both countries with regards to the instructional methods used in class is the willingness for teacher to change. Effective teachers are seen as the ones who are willing to change accordingly when the need arises. This is particularly relevant in discussing the use of technology in educations. The preservice teachers in the United States highlighted the need for instructional method that use real life situation so that the students will be able to relate the lesson to their real life. In Malaysia, the preservice teachers mention instructional methods such as drilling, memorization, traditional lecture and chalk–and-talk as destructive to learning as teachers are expected to be creative. In relation to creativity, the preservice teachers in both countries write about creating conducive learning environment for effective learning to take place. The preservice teachers in the United States write about creating safe and comfortable learning environment with the help of approachable, welcoming and fun teacher. The preservice teachers in Malaysia stressed on the need for two-way communication so that the class will become less passive due to the teacher dominated classroom environment.

In short, the themes reveal the intermingled discourses of becoming teachers in two countries which, though demographically similar, are contextually unique from one another. These contextual aspects such as the issues of culture, identity and power aid our
understanding on how preservice teachers make sense of their preparatory experience learning to become teachers of the English-Language Learners in the United States and Malaysia. This will be further discussed in Chapter 5.
Chapter 5
Discussion

This chapter discusses the major findings from the analysis of the preservice teachers’ written narratives and the re-storying of how the preservice teachers in the United States and Malaysia make sense and experience becoming teachers of English-Language Learners in their respective countries. In this chapter, I review the purpose of the study that leads up to this chapter. I then address the major findings that emerged in Chapter 4 based on the research questions and delineate how those findings lead up to implications related to fields of teacher education and multicultural educations in the two countries. I proceed by making a recommendation for future research in these two fields.

Review of the study

This study is navigated by the overarching research question, “How do preservice teachers make sense of their preparatory experiences learning to become teachers of the English-Language Learners in the United States and Malaysia?” The following sub-questions function as guides to delve deeper into findings from data analysis in Chapter 4:

1. What does it mean to be a good teacher?
2. What does it mean to be a good teacher to the English-Language Learners?
3. What does it mean to be an English Language Learner?
(4) What aspects of teacher preparation curriculum prompted personal and professional progression towards multiculturalism for preservice teachers in United States and Malaysia?

Data for this research were gathered from nine participants in two countries in the forms of narratives. The participants are four preservice teachers enrolled in the CI 280 course in the United States and five preservice teachers enrolled in ED220 program in Malaysia. The preservice teachers’ narratives from both countries are used as data. In the United States, the data are more extensive as compared to data from Malaysia, as I have access to the participants’ CI 280 class website, where with permission; I collected their course works which are mostly narratives. On top of that, I also requested that the participants of this study to write their reflections about CI 280 after the course had ended. These data are then analyzed based on the three sub-questions for this study that are: (1) What does it mean to be a good teacher? (2) What does it mean to be a good teacher of the English-Language Learners? (3) What does it mean to be an English Language Learner? From here, the data are analyzed for major codes, categories and themes. The four themes emerged from the analysis are: (1) Personal development (2) Developing Relationship (3) Professional Development and (4) Pedagogical Practices.

Addressing the Research Questions

In this section, I address the major findings in Chapter 4 and discuss how some of the findings help me to understand how the preservice teachers in the United States and Malaysia make sense of their preparatory experiences of becoming teachers of the
Research Question 1

What does it mean to be a good teacher?

The first research question for this study is “What does it mean to be a good teacher?” The answers display multiple experiences, reflections and stories from the preservice teachers in the United States and Malaysia. Teachers in both countries see the aspect of commitment as a characteristic of a good teacher. Commitment is depicted as the perseverance in facing challenges in the profession and the willingness to go beyond being a mediocre teacher by showing a high level of determination in helping the students to learn. This is particularly significant when the teacher has students with special or individual needs that require extra attention from her.

Hamachek (1999) wrote “Consciously, we teach what we know; unconsciously, we teach who we are” (p.209). This quote shows the impact that teachers have on students in the classroom. The preservice teachers in the United States and Malaysia agree that perseverance makes a good teacher. Jill, a preservice teacher in the United States indicates:

“Mrs. K was my third grade teacher at Riverside Elementary School [pseudonym] in Mount Pleasant Pennsylvania where I grew up. As a child, I struggled to read and was always very shy in class, which led teachers to believe that I was unable to do the work that was placed before me. As other teachers in

English-Language Learners. These major findings become a platform to discuss implications and future recommendation to prepare teachers in a culturally diverse society.
the school tried to push me to the side, Mrs. K was right there to help me. She never gave up on me and she helped me to work toward many goals that would eventually lead to success”.

(Jill, Favorite teacher interview)

The preservice teachers in Malaysia use their own past experience as students to describe the same matter. Lina explains:

“All my life I have been working hard to achieve one aim and that is to be a great teacher to the English-Language Learners. Being a teacher alone has given me a huge responsibility but being an English teacher means so much more than that. When I was in school, every day I watched my teachers working so passionately with patience and effort to make us human. They taught me not only to be good on paper, but also to be humane. Their endless sacrifices and hard work touched me and inspired me a lot”.

(Lina, Narrative from Malaysia)

The profession of a teacher requires more than teaching content in a classroom. They realize that unconsciously their characters give great impact on students’ lives and the way they perceive life. Perseverance is one of the qualities that a good teacher should possess according to the participants in both countries.

Secondly, the preservice teachers in both countries made reference to the importance of a teacher to be an advocate and an ally to his/ her students in order to create a close relationship with them. In the United State, this advocacy is shown through offering a safe and comfortable learning environment where students are treated fairly and respectfully. Joanne and Ed clearly illustrate this point in their narratives below.

ESL students may be scared to speak in the beginning for fear of looking “dumb” and incompetent. We as teachers have to make them feel safe and comfortable so
that they want to take risks and learn, which was the same as when I was learning piano.

(Joanne, Teacher Statement)

I really liked what Nita [pseudonym] said about creating a community in her classroom. She started off by saying that you need to make the students feel safe and comfortable in the classroom in order for them to discuss anything openly. She also said that she discovered the importance of discussing individual differences with her students instead of ignoring them in hope that no problems will arise. I feel as though she hit the nail on the head with these two comments when it comes to creating a literacy learning community.

(Ed, Reading Memo # 4)

This opinion seems to be in line with Tom (1984) when he mentions that “in order to establish a more “democratic” relationship between teacher and students, the teacher must surrender some authority to students. The end result is a cluster of individual—teacher and students—all of whom have approximately equal authority for establishing the goals toward which teaching is directed” (p.82)

In Malaysia, the closeness between teacher and students is established through the teacher’s initiative to remember the student’s name and showing concern not only in the academic matter but also on other issues such as their problems outside classrooms. Nora illustrates this point in her narrative below.

They should get to know their students, their background and try to tackle these students in different ways. I know it’ll be hard because if a teacher has a hundred students to teach, it is impossible to get to know all the students. The least they can do is show that they care even by remembering their student’s names. Some teachers nowadays do not bother to try remembering their student’s names. They give excuses like “There are so many of you” and trust me, this is simply an excuse. I have a teacher that remembered the names of all three hundred and sixty students of hers and another who remembers the names of the students for the whole batch of form three students [Form three is equivalent to grade 9 in US school]. These teachers told our class that remembering names is the first step of building a relationship and a teacher has to be in a relationship with their students or else students will find it hard to take the teacher seriously because the teacher does not even bother to care.
This situation is contextual to Malaysia due to the culture of the society that puts its high trust on teachers as guardians to their children. Society and parents see teachers not only as educators but also as one of the influential figures in their children’s lives. In the old days, Malaysian parents were known to personally send their child to the teacher at school with a note that the teacher could do anything to the child if he was stubborn in his learning, with the exception of making him blind or breaking his bones in order to make him learn. The intensity of trust given to teachers makes the profession honorable in the eyes of society. Thus, teachers are not only expected to teach their children well in school but also expected to act as their second guardian.

Unlike in the United States where the closeness between teacher and students is developed in a democratic environment, teacher-students relationships in Malaysia are still guided by the tenet that teachers possess a power and a control over developing the students in a desirable direction, appropriate to what the society and the nation wants them to be. Thus, the nation depends on the teacher to foster desirable outcomes for students for the benefit of the country. This is clearly shown when most of the earliest politicians elected in Malaysia were ex-teachers as the society believed that teachers had the capabilities to do good in society as well as to become role models. This issue brings us to the next prominent idea in the narratives from the preservice teachers in the United States and Malaysia: teacher as role model.

Preservice teachers in both the United States and Malaysia both believe that good teachers are role models. The participants write about how teachers should possess
a morally moral behavior, as students tend to look up to them and, “idolized” them, and view them as a source of inspiration.

A teacher should be someone who is an idol of the students and someone who they can look up too. There are times that children may not have a good home life so they may rely on their teacher who is in their life. We must always listen to our student’s opinions and listen to any problems that a student may have. We must not only think about the academic situations in our classrooms but also the social situations as well according to her past experiences.

(Jill, Favorite Teacher Interview)

I definitely see Mr. K as a mentor for me as a future teacher. He has such optimism for his teaching and I doubt he will ever lose it. He said that as an educator he first sees his role as a role model for students. He figures, as I do, that if you can show the students how to behave correctly by being kind, courteous, respectful, and a hard worker, then they have a higher chance of going out into the world to be upstanding citizens.

(Joanne, Favorite Teacher Interview)

These viewpoints come as no surprise, considering the special position that teachers hold in any society. The narratives from the preservice teachers in the United States discuss the influence that their favorite teachers have on them in learning to become future teachers. Most of their perceptions and opinions about teaching have initially been shaped by their former favorite teachers who have left a great impact on them on the ways they view the whole profession.

The Malaysia preservice teachers express similar ideas. Their former favorite teachers are seen as examples of what teachers and teaching professions should be.

Next, teacher too must possess the noble attitudes and be the role model for the students. Teacher must know that the students are most likely to copy their attitude. Teacher must show the high level of patience and avoid from punishing students for small mistake. Students who are teenagers are most likely to rebel and teacher should find another way to correct the misbehavior. Showing the good attitudes and behaviors do not bound in the classroom only. It is counted on how teacher interacts outside the classroom such as with the colleagues and
parents or even their friends in the social networking system. Being a teacher may look tedious but I believe that teachers’ attitudes will mold students’ attitudes even not as a whole but it is still give the impact towards the attitudes growth. A good teacher must think before speaking and avoid the censored word and portray good attitudes.

(Marina, Narratives from Malaysia)

Besides knowledge, a good teacher is also expected to behave very well. A good teacher is looked up as a role model by the learners. Due to that, a good teacher must portray a good behavior to the learners and mold them to be a good behaving human too. Besides portraying a particular behavior to the learners in order to educate them, a teacher must also consider his or her own behavior towards the learners.

(Farina, Narratives from Malaysia)

The perception of teachers as role models comes from the fact that teaching is always seen as a moral craft from a moral stance. The moral stance is “a disposition towards what is good or valuable and how one ought to live in the world” (Ochs and Capps, 2001, p.45). It is engrained in community and tradition where “human beings judge themselves and others in relation to standards of goodness: they praise, blame, or otherwise hold people morally accountable for their comportment” (Ochs & Capps, 2001, p.45). In short, moral stance acts as set of standards that are used to make moral judgment for “social roles, practices, and the good life in relation to person and community” (Ochs and Capps, 2001, p.45).

Charles Goodwin (2007) provides explanation in looking at different types of stances in human activities. He believes that human interactions requires participations frameworks that “consequential for a range of phenomena central to the organization of human interaction, cognition, and affect”(p.70). Therefore, Goodwin (2007) believes that these interactions generated different types of stances. Goodwin (2007) framed these stances into several categories such as instrumental, epistemic, cooperative, moral as well
as affective. Tom (1984) offers an explanation on teacher as a role model from a teaching perspective. He mentioned that the word moral here is not restricted to the questions of right or wrong in actions or behavior but more towards a “conception of moral that frequently measuring behavior against personal or social code of ethic” (p.78). Teaching as a moral craft is an “implicit or explicit introduction of desirable ends” (Tom, 1984, p.78) that involves “explicit criteria by which behavior is judged to be right or wrong, or maybe implicit in the choice of position or course of action instead of another” (Tom, 1984, p.78). Teaching act, according to Tom (1984) after all is “a social act involving at least two people and usually carrying out the sanction of public institution” (p.79). Thus, the desirable ends of being a teacher is very much related to the social moral situations that require a rightness of conduct as well as possessing the moral valuations in a specific social setting. This shapes the widespread perception of a teacher as a role model in the society.

In looking at this all the above discussion, a good teacher is a teacher who has strong dispositions. Carroll (2012) defines dispositions as “engine of performance in teaching, linking inner values and commitments with action in the context of practice” (p.38). A good teacher according to the preservice teachers’ in both countries is a teacher who possesses a strong disposition not only in her teaching but also in behavior towards students, parents, colleagues and community. Moreover, a good teacher is guided by values such as perseverance, consistency, fairness, responsibility and caring to establish relationships with students where these values have a great impact on students’ development and motivation which ultimately also affects the teachers’ professional and personal growth. This is how the preservice teachers in the United States and Malaysia
perceive an idea of a good teacher where these perceptions help them to make sense of their own preparatory experience learning to become teachers of English-Language Learners.

**Research Question 2**

**What does it mean to be a good teacher of the English-Language Learners?**

The second research question is “What does it mean to be a good teacher of the English-Language Learners? It drew responses that put more focus on the issue of teaching English to the English-Language Learners. The findings on this issue can be found under the theme “Responding to individual needs and differences” The preservice teachers in the United States write about the need for teachers to get to know the culture of the students in order to attend to their learning needs effectively. Ed highlighted this issue in his narratives.

Over the course of this semester, some of my thoughts and ideas regarding ELLs have changed because of the insight I gained through C I 280. With that being said, however, some of the ideas I’ve already had in place about teaching in general have been strengthened because of the class. One opinion of mine that has changed because of this class is the topic brought up in reading memo one, which dealt with the Geertz article about Balinese cockfights. This reading really taught me how important it is to understand each student’s culture and what makes them who they are. Finding out more about who they are will not only help me find the best way to teach them but would also show them that I care about them and make them comfortable in my class. Before reading this article, the thought of reaching out to get to know my students didn’t really cross my mind. Now it is something I plan on doing in my classroom.

(Ed, Teaching Statement)
This is where discussing differences comes in. If a teacher doesn’t acknowledge the differences amongst the students in the community, then the students might form their own opinions of others. By discussing what makes each individual different, you are also celebrating with each other what makes them special and who they are. Letting each of the students see this and express themselves in this way allows the community to build on its own. The students will be able to relate with each other and respect each other while recognizing their differences.  
(Ed, Reading Memo #4)

Understanding learners’ cultural background is important because the English-Language Learners bring different cultures and values to classroom which sometimes can be misunderstood for something negative such as passivity or “dumb”. Joanne and Lyn commented on this issue in their narratives.

This is very important for teachers and people to realize because a student may have trouble communicating in English but it does not mean that they are “dumb” or unintelligent. Teachers should never have seen a student as dumb or incapable but this is especially important for ELL students since at times it will be more difficult to communicate with them to try and understand what they have learned.  
(Joanne, Reading Memo # 5)

ESL students may be scared to speak in the beginning for fear of looking “dumb” and incompetent. We as teachers have to make them feel safe and comfortable so that they want to take risks and learn, which was the same as when I was learning piano.  
(Joanne, Teacher Statement)

Many people when they are communicating with someone that doesn’t speak their language tend to raise their voice, in thinking that will make the other person comprehend. I have learned that if I have a child in my class, who does not speak English, raising my voice will do nothing!  
(Lyn, Multi-genre paper)

Ramirez and Castaneda (1974) wrote how the diverse students’ child-rearing practices influence their learning in schools. They suggested that “rather than expect families to do all the changing, schools too needed to change by responding to the different ways of learning that children bring to school” (Ramirez & Castaneda as cited in Nieto, 2009,p. 148). Thus, teachers have to be ready to adapt to the needs of the
students from diverse background by try to understand their struggle from their point of view.

The narratives from the preservice teachers in the United States reveal that they understand this issue well and are prepared to face it in future. This is due to the exposure given in C I 280 classes through the class readings, the discussions that focus specifically on this issue as well as a class paper project that requires students to explore a culture different from their own.

I am very thankful that C I 280 is a part of the Education major’s curriculum. As an aspiring high school mathematics teacher, I never thought that this course would prove to be useful for my future. I thought that students who don’t speak English well, or even at all, would have little trouble learning mathematics. I mean, after all, math is the universal language, right? This class made me realize that having ELLs in my classroom is very possible, even likely. I would not have felt as prepared to teach these students without taking this class. It is absolutely necessary for aspiring teachers to enroll in a course similar to this. These are the students that need help the most. As I have learned through this class, being new to a culture can be a difficult experience. By taking a class like this, teachers can provide more help for these students to succeed not only in our classrooms, but in their new environment!

(Ed, The Last Narrative)

The experience being “different” among people from different culture causes them to empathize with struggle that the diverse students have to face in the American classrooms. Nieto (2009) writes how when teachers share “solidarity with, and empathy for” (p.234) their student, it can bring a lot of differences to their life. This is because “solidarity and empathy mean having genuine respect for the students’ identities—including their language and culture—as well as high expectation and great admiration for them” (p.234) Thus, the preservice teachers in the United States believe that a good teacher of the English-Language Learners is a teacher who is able to adapt to change with
regards to the different needs of the English-Language Learners in class. Ed expressed this point in the excerpt from his narrative below.

Another thing that I feel would help meet ELLs learning needs would to see what works best for them. If they have a hard time following with oral language, but can read English and understand it well, I would write out what I plan on talking about for my lesson each day so they can follow along at their pace. This also encourages them to see that I want them to learn and be comfortable in my classroom and hopefully help them learn the material I am teaching better.

(Ed, Teaching Statement)

On top of that, classroom environment too is seen as vital in ensuring effective English lesson to take place. The preservice teachers in the United States also write about the importance of inculcating the sense of community in a diverse classroom where students see the diversity as a chance for them to learn about each other and from each other in a safe and comfortable environment. This can bring the sense of respect towards differences where it is seen as an asset rather than a deficit in the process of learning.

Teachers must realize that community building is not a set thing and happens as the classroom evolves at its own pace. I will make sure that as a teacher and when I student teach I appreciate the differences and uniqueness of each of my students, so that I can lead by example for my students. I see this as an important goal to shoot for; since I have the power as an educator to not only affect the knowledge of the leaders of tomorrow, but I also can have an impact on their moral judgments and how they view the world. We as teachers are the ones molding the leaders of tomorrow so we better do our best to mold that “clay.”

(Joanne, Reading Memo # 4)

The Malaysian preservice teachers in this study write about the challenges of becoming a good teacher of the English-Language Learners. The history of English language in Malaysia has made it a very delicate matter especially with regards to education. English is a language brought to the country during the Colonial period of the
British in Malaysia. It becomes extremely superior in the social life of the elites Malays, Chinese, and Indian in Malaysian society, “mainly because it was the language of a colonial rulers and the system of education using English as medium was one of the most coveted education system by the majority of the Malaysian urban population” (Puteh, 2006, p.160). Malaysia gets her independence from the British in 1957. English schools in Malaysia still use English as their medium of instructions until their conversion to Malay medium in 1970. Lina, a preservice teacher from Malaysia wrote:

They might have doubts on my capability as Malay but I will prove to them that I have what it takes to be an educator. Before I can teach them to respect me, I have to respect them first and that is what I will do.

(Lina, Narratives from Malaysia)

The lack of self-esteem being a Malay English teacher has a historical explanation to it. English used to be the language of the elites who live in the urban areas (towns). During the colonial period, the urban areas were not dominated by the Malays based to “divide and rule” colonial policy where the three main races (Malays, Chinese and Indians) were economically segregated according to their occupations. The Malays were mostly resided in the villages where they worked as farmers or fishermen, the Chinese were in town as they involved in business and worked at the tin mines and the Indian were at the rubber estates as they worked as rubber tappers. Most Malays at that time received their education from Malay School or Islamic “Madrasah” which used Malay and Arabic as medium of instructions. Being educated in the Malay settings brought up the perception that Malays were not good in English and sadly this perception still exist today. On the issue of identity, Bayliss and Vignola (2007) provide factors influencing the identity of non-native preservice teachers of English who are thrust into
teaching the language. These factors include the their (a) level of proficiency with the target language and student home language (b) confidence and efficacy (c) quality of preparation program (d) degree of school level support (e) degree of cultural knowledge and (f) ability to continually improve classroom instruction. Thus, “a constant realization of their limitations in the use of English may lead to a poorer self–image, which may further deteriorate language performance, and in turn may lead to cumulatively stronger feeling of inferiority” (Reves and Medgyes, 1994, p. 364). Due to this reason, Bayliss and Vignola (2007) suggested that the teacher preparation program of the future teachers working with the English-Language Learners must (a) include the nexus of identity and language (b) consider identity development (c) include ways for future teachers to monitor social, linguistic, and academic interactions with student identity development as the new learners of English.

Looking at all the issues delineated above, it is understandable why the preservice teachers in Malaysia are very conscious of their identity as Malays. Though considered as mainstream race in Malaysia, they grapple with the issue of identity where even the preferential policy (a policy that provides more advantage to the Malays) could not help to diminish the self-esteem issue. Lina admitted about this in her narrative:

Regarding the issue of multiculturalism, I have been opening my eyes and heart to understand this issue in Malaysia. I know not everyone in the country can accept other races besides theirs and there is a reason for it. My country has been governed by the Malays all these while with a simple reason that the land belong to the Malays. The Malays have privileges in almost every sector in the country while other races have to work hard to earn their place. This situation has caused other races to look down on the Malays because to them the Malays do not have to work as hard as them to get a place. They despise the Malays especially with the long known perception that Malays are lazy. There is debate and arguments for both sides in this issue. For all we know, it is never easy to unite different races. However, this issue has not been too heated since 13th May 1969. There
are still people who are racist in the country and as a person who is aware of it, I am prepared to face them with confidence. 

(Lina, Narratives from Malaysia)

The stereotyping towards the Malays as not good in English, a pampered race and lazy has been embedded in the multicultural Malaysian society which make the issue of multiculturalism a delicate one in Malaysia to handle. Based on the data (refer to the theme Mirror and Window in Chapter 4), the preservice teachers express their awareness of this issue and hope that their teacher education program is able to prepare them to face this challenge.

Regarding that issue, looking at the ED220 curriculum, it is clear that the program put minimal stress on the area of multiculturalism in its syllabus. According to the follow up communication with one of the preservice teachers in this study, the subject EDU 438 Multicultural Counseling is offered only as an elective course for the preservice teachers who choose counseling as their minor while CTU 551 Islamic and Asian Civilization and CTU 553 Ethnics Relations are taught as ordinary subjects where the preservice teachers understanding are tested through examinations. Putting these subjects only as elective minor or subjects that preservice have to take to pass the exams speak for itself regarding the seriousness of the institution in preparing the preservice teachers in the area of multiculturalism. Nieto (2009) affirms how “a true multicultural approach is pervasive” (p.75). It has to permeate the institution and it is a process that is ongoing and dynamic. With regards to teacher education, Nieto (2009) writes again that the teacher education program should prepare the preservice teachers to “develop awareness of the influence of culture and language on learning, the persistence of racism and discrimination in schools and society, and instructional curricular strategies that
encourage learning among a wide variety of students” (p.78). Looking at the challenges now, Malaysia could not afford to have a teacher education program that put the importance of the multicultural issue as marginal; they tend to cause more harm than good to the future teacher based on the findings of this study.

In short, the preservice teachers in both countries have a different point of views on the characteristics of good teachers of the English-Language Learners. Though United States and Malaysia are two multicultural countries, the dissimilar point of views between the preservice teachers in the two countries are strongly influenced by the differences in the historical, cultural, political and social contextual backgrounds, unique to each country.

Research Question 3

What does it mean to be an English Language Learner?

In becoming good teacher of the English-Language Learners, it is important for the preservice teachers to understand who the English-Language Learners are. The narratives from the preservice teachers in the two countries reveal their understandings about the English-Language Learners. The preservice teachers in the United States write about their personal experiences with people from different cultures. Joanne had experience of travelling abroad to Russia and she was rather familiar with the culture. Jill’s grandmother has a foster daughter who is from China. Lyn’s father is from Mexico. Ed is the only one who never truly experienced being with people of the different culture,
due to his background of growing up in a predominantly white community. Ed’s background influences his perception towards the people from diverse backgrounds where Ed expressed his anxiety about meeting people from diverse backgrounds alone for the first time, lest he “wouldn’t fit in and that they [the Korean people] would be rude and indifferent” (Ed, Multi-genre paper) towards him.

Growing up in a small town in the middle of nowhere, Pennsylvania, I have not been exposed too much diversity at all. Just about the entire student and faculty population of my high school were Caucasian. You could literally count every minority on two hands. Coming to PS was a minor cultural shock, being exposed to a wide variety of cultures and personalities. However, I still haven’t had to immerse myself into another culture because the majority of people I met are Caucasian Americans.

(Ed, Multi-genre paper)

This experience of going deeper into the lifestyles of the Korean society of SC was intimidating to say the least. I wasn’t sure if going places like a Korean market or Korean restaurant would draw negative attention to me because I was of a different culture. I was worried that I wouldn’t fit in and that they would be rude and indifferent toward me.

(Ed, Multi-genre paper)

The multi-genre class project has allowed these preservice teachers to explore the culture of people from diverse background and gain experience from it. The preservice teachers reported to feel more confident to teach the English-Language Learners after they had completed the course.

By just going into the Korean market and Kim Chi restaurant on Atherton Street, I felt more out of place than at any other moment of my life. This perspective helped me realize what it must be like to be an immigrant to a new country and culture. While I thought that a language barrier would be the biggest challenge for an immigrant to adjust to, there are a number of different things I haven’t even considered before this assignment. I understand that Kim Chi doesn’t perfectly represent Korean food, there wasn’t much that I even considered eating. In fact, I ordered the most “American” food on the menu and ended up hating it. Along with food differences among cultures, there is also the difference in what is or
isn’t acceptable among cultures. All of these things would really make life for an immigrant difficult, including adjusting to a new school.

(Ed, Multi-genre paper)

Little did I realize that this is the same thought process that is going on in most ELL students’ minds. It opened up my eyes to how difficult it must be for someone of a different culture to feel included in a room where everyone else is of a similar culture. As difficult as this may be, it is amazing how these students are able to learn despite their concerns and language barriers. As nervous as I was going into this project, these kids have many more obstacles to overcome. I’m grateful I had the opportunity to experience it.

(Ed, Multi-genre paper)

The reason for this to happen is the C I 280 classes exposed them to much knowledge about the English-Language Learners. The talk given by the Russian immigrant named Eric (pseudonym) in one of the C I 280 classes revealed how racism is very much present in schools. At school somebody asked Eric to go home to Russia. (Refer to theme Mirror and Window for details on Eric). They also learnt that the biggest problem that Eric had when he first came to the U.S. was finding a place where he felt he “belonged” after being ostracized in school. In his exploration on the Korean culture, Ed learned something about a Korean English language learner. Lee (pseudonym) who is an English language learner reported to prefer not being “singled-out” in class and wanted to be treated as “normal”. Joanne writes about how the English-Language Learners are not “dumb” or “unintelligent” (refer to the expectations, hope & fears theme in Chapter 4 for details) even when they are being quiet in class. The preservice teachers in the United States describe the struggle and the difficulties of the English-Language Learners trying to survive amidst the language barrier issue, in a culture different from theirs while at the same time trying to hold on to their own culture and tradition. These understandings comes from their opportunities to be close and personal with people from diverse
background which allow them to understand what it means to be an English language learner in the United States. These understandings help the preservice teachers in the United States make sense of their preparatory experience in becoming teachers of English-Language Learners.

English is the second language in Malaysia and it is taught in schools from K-12. All students in Malaysia are English-Language Learners. In looking at the meaning of being an English language learner in Malaysia, the preservice teachers in Malaysia explore this issue from the Malaysian perspective. Marina writes about English-Language Learners in rural Malaysia:

As English is the second language for students in Malaysia, it is hard to predict whether English is being accepted widely among the secondary school students. Even though all Malaysian already aware and know that English is crucial for their job world, some people are just unfortunate because they are not being exposed to the usage and benefits of English. For the students in the urban area, it is not considered as the huge problem as they can find and exposed to indirectly through film, games and song. The toughest is for the students in the rural area with parents who are uneducated, do not receive the advantages of technology and come from the low socioeconomic status family. Some of them do not have the interest in English because they do not being exposed to the excitement. In fact, they do not know what are the advantages of learning it as they believe they will not use it because the poverty will be the boundary for them to pursue their study in the tertiary level.

(Marina, Narrative from Malaysia)

Marina highlighted one of the fundamental issues in English teaching in Malaysia: the low English proficiency among students in the rural area. Students in rural are at the disadvantage point due to poverty and lack of motivation in learning as mentioned in the narrative. What worsens the problem is the shortage of the number of the English teachers in the rural areas. The demographic and socioeconomic factor of the
rural area makes teaching the English-Language Learners there been a challenging experience by the preservice teachers. Conversely some Malaysian English teachers prefer not to teach in the urban areas either. The narrative below tells more. Lina wrote:

I am aware of the various challenges that I would face in teaching a multicultural classroom. I have to be better than the best to teach them because nowadays students can get smarter than their teachers. I have heard many experiences from seniors teaching in an urban school on how the students will look down on you if you are not good enough to teach them English. I might face a different scenario if I were to teach in the rural areas. The conclusion applies to both situations; competency is compulsory in order to teach. As for me, being competent in English Language and in teaching English is a must.

(Lina, Narratives from Malaysia)

English teaching in Malaysia is still very much dominated by socioeconomic issues. As novices, the preservice teachers perceive this as challenges that are difficult for them to handle. Only the ones who persevere enough and care enough about the profession are able to handle this issue. This can only happen if they are prepared to do this at the teacher education level.

Research Question 4

What aspects of teacher preparation curriculum prompted personal and professional progression towards multiculturalism for preservice teachers in United States and Malaysia?

The answer for this last research question is embedded in all the previous discussions in this chapter. However, the focus is more on the topic of multiculturalism as
this is the area that I am concerned about regarding the teacher education in the two countries.

The purpose of this section is to discuss the CI 280 course in the United States and EDD 220 in Malaysia with the aim of learning what personal and professional progression towards multiculturalism the preservice teachers in the two countries have gained from the courses. In this section, these three perspectives are discussed in detail, based on the literature by scholars in the fields of multicultural education and teacher education. In this discussion, I tend to focus my lens more on the CI 280 course in the United States, as I had the chance to be a participant observer in the class for the entire Spring 2011 semester. One of the purposes of this study is to have an in-depth understanding about CI 280 course in order to improve the teacher education in my country, Malaysia. Being a comparative study, it is relevant to highlight that Arnone and Torres (2003) wrote how a pragmatic dimension of carrying out a comparative study is “to discover what can be learnt that will contribute to improved policy and practice at home” (p.6). My discussion on the ED 220 is based on the program information from the University, the analysis of narratives from the preservice teachers in Malaysia as well as from the follow-up online conversation with one of the preservice teachers in Malaysia.

The CI 280 course is an attempt to balance the content knowledge with the issue of unity and diversity in the teacher preparation program. The title of this course is “Introduction to teaching English to English-Language Learners” and as the title indicates; it is an introductory course of teaching English to the learners whose first language is not English. Therefore, the content areas covered in this course are on the area of English language teaching where future teachers develop their understanding on
knowledge about the language system as well as on the process of acquiring multiple languages and literacy skills.

On the other hand, ED 220 is a Bachelor of Education course focusing on Teaching of English as a Second Language (TESL) in Malaysia. It is a 5-year program preparing students to become future English language teachers in Malaysia. Due to this reason, the curriculum structure covers the areas that are considered relevant in preparing future English teachers in Malaysia which consists of the content knowledge (English language), pedagogy, technology, literature, linguistics, testing and evaluation, psychology, sociology, communication and learning the third language[ the language that you learn after learning your second language]. Looking at the subject offered for every semester, we can say that the program covers the entire major areas fundamental in preparing the preservice teachers in Malaysia to become teachers of the English-Language Learners.

In looking at the implementation of the teacher education program in the two countries, what makes CI280 different is the way the content area (teaching English language) is tackled using the sociocultural perspectives. Sociocultural theory posits that learning process does not happen in vacuum. Each learner possesses his own cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds that he brings to classroom that influences the way he perceives the overall teaching and learning experiences in general. The similar phenomenon happens in the teacher education program where the future teachers come into the program from diverse background too. Although discussion on ‘demographic imperative’ is rampant in the teacher education field where most teacher candidates enrolled in the teacher education programs are described as white, female and middle
class; they are still different in the sense that they bring with them different background experiences and knowledge which are unique for each and every one of them.

Acknowledging our own unique experience is the first step to open up to the other people’s life experience. The process of self-reflection allows us to analyze and acknowledge our own experience that brings to a realization that people are unique in their own special ways. We can be different amidst the similarities and be similar amidst the differences. Cultural and linguistic similarities and differences are part of the life experience and it should not be ignored as they determine the way we view our world.

In ED 220 in Malaysia, the subjects that are related to culture are *CTU 551 Islamic and Asian Civilization* and *CTU 553 Ethnics Relations* which are offered during the first and second semester of the program. The first subject deals with Islamic civilization, the history of it and the Islamic values pertinent to the people of Malaysia. The second subject does deals with the issue of ethnicity and race in Malaysia. Nonetheless, these subjects provide minimal help to the preservice teachers in the process of learning to become teachers of the English-Language Learners as they are taught at the surface level. Lina mentioned this issue in her narrative.

I want my students to be better than me so I will work hard in helping them. There are hurdles for me in the journey but I will give my all in working it out. Although there is no specific subject to help me deal with multiculturalism in school, I have to work it out with my own effort. Yes, there were a few subjects that touched on the issue but only on the surface. I am willing to help my students although it will require hard work from my side.

(Lina, Narratives from Malaysia)

The excerpt above confirmed how the two subjects are taught only at the surface level where at the end of the semester their knowledge is tested through examination. The
preservice teachers do not have the opportunity to explore the people that they are studying or reflect on their experience getting to know them as the chances are not given. There is no indication of how they could apply the knowledge in the real life situation if they have to teach multicultural students. This is the factor that makes this course looks meaningless to them. Their dissatisfaction are expressed in their narratives where they lamented of experiencing the feeling of lost, lack of confidence and scared in teaching the multicultural students. Nora and Lina, two preservice teachers in Malaysia enrolled in ED 220 mentioned their apprehension in becoming English teachers in multicultural classrooms as illustrated below.

I am truly scared to teach in a multicultural classroom and of course I do not feel prepared at all. But to avoid any unwanted circumstances, I will do anything to prepare mentally and physically by asking anyone I can think of regarding their experiences in order to improve myself and planning early in dealing with a multiculturalism classroom.

(Nora, Narratives from Malaysia)

As eager as I am, I still feel scared. I am not perfect so I can never please everyone. I might even hurt my students without the intention of doing so. I am aware of all these and with that I hope to give my very best to my students. Hopefully if things do not go as I plan, I will not give up easily. The journey is still long for me. I plan to be in education line for all my life so I have time to improve myself. I just hope I do not get lost in the middle of the journey.

(Lina, Narratives from Malaysia)

Multiculturalism is a serious problem. There was once a big fight in my old school where two different cultures fought with each other. They used knife and a huge parang [a long knife] to injure the other opponents and even the teachers. It only started because of a small issue where they were playing football and then this Indian fellow got hit by the ball in the head by a Malay student. When these footballers were walking out of the school, suddenly they were attacked outside the gates by a group of Indian grownups at the age of 20’s with the knives and everything. Then came out all the Malay male students and joined the fight. When teachers came, even the teachers were hit because they are Malays.

(Nora, Narratives from Malaysia)
Nora mentioned how “multiculturalism is a serious problem” (Nora, Narratives from Malaysia) presumably in schools as the incident that she mentioned in her narrative happened in her former school. Here, we can see that the harm has already escalated from a mere prejudicial racial idea to a more physical violent act between students from different races as illustrated Nora’s narrative. This is the problem when the multicultural aspect of education is only implemented at the surface level in school or at the teacher education level where it becomes ineffectual. Nieto (2009) argued how multicultural education should be seen from the context and the process of education rather than “as an add-on or luxury disconnected from the everyday lives of students” (p.67). Regarding this study, the theory-laden multicultural subjects without the chance to experience and reflect on the issues make them become the add-ons in the ED 220 program where the preservice teachers feel that they are pointless and do not help to prepare them for their future career as teachers in multicultural classrooms. What is dismaying about the theory-laden issue is the fact that it does not only involve the multicultural subject in the ED 220 but also involves almost all subjects taught in the program. Lina mentioned this in her narrative.

Knowledge will make much more sense if it was taught in context. Students will not be sitting on the bench with a big question of, “Why do I have to learn all this? When do I use it in real life?” I know all this because that was the question I posed every time I was in Physics and Additional Mathematics class. There was one course in TESL that taught me how to teach in context. It was creative writing. I think Creative Writing was the most significant subject I have ever learned and it was much more meaningful than Methodologies classes. In Creative Writing, I actually learned how to teach without having to learn all the theories. What do theories do to us? We can learn theories on our own but without using them, they will not be in our heads. It will come and go like the wind. This is one of the biggest problems that I see in our education course. We were taught of theories all the time with only so little time to work it out in real life. We were not given chances to practice what we learn. The only time that we can use them
is during our practicum. That would be too late. We need practices to learn, not only theories. We should be great during our practicum, not great because of the practicum. The practicum should be our stage to perform, not our stage to practice.

(Lina, Narrative from Malaysia)

All the issues mentioned above have strongly influenced the Malaysian English preservice teachers personally and professionally in making sense of their preparatory experience learning to become teachers. The idea of not having adequate preparation to teach multicultural classrooms and the fear towards diversity seems to be prominent in the narratives. These two issues seem to be strongly related to the nature of their teacher education program that favor theory rather than practice especially with regards to the multicultural-based subjects. This has resulted in subjects especially the multicultural-based subject to be perceived as detached from their real life experience. One consequence of teaching multicultural-based subject merely at the surface level is what is known as ‘color–blindness’ among future English teachers in Malaysia. The next paragraph highlighted the issue of ‘color-blindness’ where it illustrates the ways CI 280 course helps to eliminate this issue through its curriculum.

The main objective of CI280 is to provide future teachers with knowledge of teaching English to the English-Language Learners. On that point, one issue that is outstanding in discussing the pedagogy for the English-Language Learners is what is known as ‘color blindness’. It is a persistent notion that teachers “avoid recognizing race and how race operates on individual and systematic levels in education” (Milner, 2010, p. 14). The English-Language Learners are students whose native languages are not English and come from diverse social and cultural backgrounds. Color blindness hinders teachers
from understanding that race matters in education and it also hinders teachers from recognizing the intersections between race and educational practices and their influences in the teaching and learning process in the classrooms. When this happens, teachers then fail to relate or choose to ignore other fundamental issues such as opportunity gap, linguistic barriers and lower assessment outcomes that can be the marginalized factors to certain groups of students. Thus, color blindness is risky especially in teacher education as teachers are ‘blinded’ from realizing the nexus between race and education and how both shape situations in schools as well as in the society.

In dealing with color blindness, future teachers have to be prepared to possess knowledge, skills and abilities that enable them to function effectively in a multicultural classroom. One way of doing that is through teacher education that “dealt with the presence of race and culture” (Milner, 2010, p. 146) in its program where future teachers learn to discard the color, culture and diversity blindness ideology in learning how to teach. The question is, how do we do this? Sleeter (2001) poignantly asserts that teacher educators should “research backwards” to gain insight into issues about preparation of teachers. In “researching backwards” teacher educators have to focus on the successful teacher practices in the K-12 classrooms, and then, from here, adjust and reform the teacher education curriculum, pedagogy as well as the learning experiences (especially during the student teaching) so that similar success will be gained when these candidates become teachers.

In C I 280, the ‘researching backwards” aspect can be seen in one of the coursework assigned to the students where the teacher candidates were asked to interview their favorite teachers. The purpose of doing this is for the teacher candidates to learn
how their “favorite teacher built a successful learning environment,” as well as to gain pedagogical insights for their future classroom instruction.

Before going into the interview I had the idea that being an overly strict teacher wouldn’t be the best approach. Mrs. S confirmed my assumption for me saying that she finds her teaching to be most effective when she takes a more “laid back” approach. She said that being laid back makes her “approachable” and “makes class fun.” It’s obvious that the more students enjoy class, the more they’ll get out of it. Thankfully, Mrs. S reassured this idea for me so that I will have a better approach when I finally start my career.

(Ed, Favorite Teacher Interview)

The interview allowed me to tap into Mr. K’s psyche to see how he controlled his classroom and made a prime learning environment. I remember him as being authoritative as a teacher and fair with his punishments and judgments.

(Joanne, Favorite Teacher Interview)

Student teachers had the opportunities to explore the world of teaching through the eyes of their favorite teachers and the aspects that influence and shape their instructions. This is a teacher education version of ‘researching backwards’ where teacher candidates first identified the teachers who they consider successful based on their own experiences as students in their favorite teachers’ classrooms. Through interviews, the teacher candidates moves backwards to trace and track the professional routes that their favorite teachers had passed through in their processes of becoming teachers.

Their favorite teachers’ narratives offer valuable insight of the aspects that shape and influence their favorite teachers’ teaching trajectories and who they are now. This is beneficial especially to future teachers where they still struggle with the fear and anxiety in going into the profession for the first time and at the same time trying to be good and effective teachers. Teaching students from culturally and linguistically diverse background definitely adds more challenges to new teachers. Researching backwards by
interviewing the successful teachers regarding their teaching experiences (especially teachers who have experience teaching the ELLs) is one of the best ways for the novice teachers to learn from the professional teachers as part of their preparation to be future teachers in diverse classrooms. It is hoped that the sharing sessions would provide beneficial insights and professional supports that ensure that the excellence in teaching prevails.

In Malaysia, the race and ethnic issues are perceived as delicate and emotional. Attaching the issue of education to the issue of race and culture will put the issue of multiculturalism as central rather than marginal which is not applicable to the national agenda of the country that seeks to promote unity rather than diversity. What it means here is, rather than highlighting the diversity, the Malaysian education system focuses more on the factor of integration through education. The Razak Report that is the first educational policy in Malaysia (1956) clearly emphasizes this:

> We believe further that the ultimate objective of the educational policy in this country must be to bring together the children of all races under a national education system in which the national language is the main medium of instruction, though we recognize that progress towards this goal cannot be rushed and must be gradual.

(Razak Report, 1956: Para 12:3 in Jamil, Razak, Raju & Mohamed)

The element of unity is the foundation of the national education system in Malaysia where all students are the same regardless of their race to emphasize unity in the multicultural society. This same philosophy is reflected in the teacher education program in Malaysia where preservice teachers learn to treat all students the same
regardless of their racial, cultural or economic background. This eventually contributes to the color-blindness in the teaching and learning process. As the country getting more diverse, teachers lament about inadequately prepared to teach students from different race and ethnic background. (Refer to multicultural teacher education in Malaysia in Chapter 2) Though there are efforts to add the multicultural education issues/subjects at the undergraduate or graduate level courses, the multicultural education concepts “were constructed as additive to education rather than infused into the curriculum and instruction” (Mohd Yusof, 2005, p.103). This becomes the deficit to the teacher education in Malaysia as teachers are left alone to struggle with the issue of race and culture due to the color-blindness of the education system. The need to have the ability to learn about the background of the diverse students is expressed by the preservice teacher from Malaysia in this study illustrated below.

An English subject teacher needs to think positively regarding the learners and accept them as who they are as in their prior ability in the language and also their background knowledge regarding the language. A good English subject teacher should not disregard the learners’ low ability in using the English language or even assuming that the learners should already know this and that at a particular stage of learning. A teacher must do a research on the learners’ overall ability in using the language so that they know where and how to start a lesson. Besides that, a teacher must also consider doing research on the learners’ background as in family background, social background, education background, culture and so on. This will make the teacher understand the learners more and will not generalize them all in a negative way.

(Farina, Narrative from Malaysia)

Here, Farina expresses the “needs” of the English teachers to be able to think positively about the learners’ diverse linguistic, family, social, education and cultural backgrounds. Nonetheless, these “needs” are difficult to be fulfilled without proper and adequate supports from the teacher education programs that they are enrolled in. If these future
teachers are not adequately prepared to face issues of diversity in schools as mentioned by the preservice teachers in this study (see page 231), fear of diversity will ensue among future Malaysian teachers. This is damaging to a multicultural country such as Malaysia where racial unity is one of the main objectives in its nation building trajectory.

I believe there are many areas that the teacher education in Malaysia can improve upon preparing its future teachers of English-Language Learners. The following paragraphs highlight fundamental areas from the C 1280 course in the United States that I believe are useful in improving the teacher education in Malaysia. Being a participant observer in the class for the entire Spring 2011 semester reveals some fundamental ideas that I strongly feel will enable improvements in the preparations of the teachers of the English-Language Learners in my own country. Among ideas discussed here are the aspects of teacher learning, teacher collaboration and the role of self-reflection and evaluation in teacher education.

The task of preparing future teachers is a critical task where the teacher education program should provide the teacher candidates with a comprehensive understanding of teaching and learning that enables them to support their career development throughout their teaching profession. This aspiration can be achieved through multiple ways. One of them is through what is known as teacher learning. The idea of teacher learning is proposed by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) where they explored the ways that teacher knowledge can serve as catalyst for different forms of research that change practice. They defined ‘teacher research’ as “systematic, intentional inquiry by teachers about their own school and classroom work” (p. 23). They elucidate the definition by clarifying the three terms namely the words systematic, intentional and
inquiry. By systematic, they refer primarily to ordered ways of gathering and recording information, documenting experiences inside and outside of classroom and making some kind of written record. It also refers to ordered ways of recollecting, rethinking and analyzing classroom events for which there may be only partial or unwritten records. By intentional, they believe that teacher research is an activity that is planned rather than spontaneous, though they do not mean to suggest that important insights about teaching are only generated when planned. This is because they hold the opinion that ‘to learn deliberately is to research’ (Boomer, 1987, p. 5 cited in Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993).

By inquiry, they suggest that the teacher research stems from or generates questions and reflects teachers’ desires to make sense of their experiences—to adapt a learning stance or openness towards classroom life.

CI 280 course utilizes teachers’ views and perspectives about teaching diverse students as a channel for the future teachers to gain knowledge and experience about teaching. This can be seen from the types of coursework administered as well as the class activities conducted with them. For instance, at the beginning of the semester, during week one, they have to write their own autobiography where they explained about their cultural and linguistic background, their experiences dealing with multiculturalism, their vision as future teachers and their professional expectation of what CI 280 would do to help them in their future trajectories as teachers. By writing their own biographies, the teacher candidates were given the chance to open up to the topic of multiculturalism as they relate to their own experiences to that issue. This is in line with Cochran-Smith & Lytle’s works that mostly involve building theory from the ground up (for e.g. using the work of the teachers) where they have a great belief in the power of teacher knowledge to
transform teaching. In relation to the topic of multiculturalism, Cochran-Smith and Lytle are committed in using the pre-service teachers’ own constructions of the issue of race and teaching where the student teachers’ are encouraged to make sense of their own experiences by rewriting their autobiographies or reinterpreting their life stories or previous experiences. Student teachers bring their life experiences, personal beliefs and academic expectations to their teacher education classroom. These are the aspects that influence the way they perceive their teacher education experience. By writing the autobiography, the student teachers have the chance to explore the ways in which issues of race and teaching makes sense to them and how their understanding of these issues enables them to become better teachers in the future, especially in teaching the English-Language Learners.

The second idea that is prominently outstanding in the CI 280 course is the idea of collaborative and sharing. CI 280 proposes the idea of teacher learning in its course objectives, found under the instruction and professionalism section. The objective is for future teachers to learn about “collaborative, co-teaching models for serving English-Language Learners” (CI 280 Spring 2011 Syllabus, p.2). In practice, the idea of cooperative and collaborative can be seen through the pedagogical technique used to operate the class. Physically, the student teachers are divided into small groups where each group is consisted of 4 to 5 people. The small group layout allows maximum interaction between the group members. To complement that, most of the activities/tasks intended for the class are collective rather than individual so that the group sitting position can be utilized for many group works and group discussions to take place. Furthermore, what is important is the underlying intention that underpins the whole group
work activities. As the teacher candidates work together, they develop the sense of cooperation between group members as they share their confusion, their anxiety, their fear and their successful moments in dealing with new experience of learning about different culture and language and learning to become teachers in those diverse environments. The basic tenet of teacher knowledge and teacher learning is that teachers share their experiences and knowledge among themselves in order to support each other as well as to improve their own teaching techniques especially in challenging classrooms such as multicultural classrooms.

Teacher collaboration can act as one of the mechanisms that future teachers can use to fall back on or support them when they face challenges in the classrooms. Among these challenges is in teaching students from diverse cultures and backgrounds. Teachers’ own experiences as well the other teachers’ experiences can act as the supports that teachers need in facing challenges in their profession. Cochran-Smith & Lytle (1993) have acknowledged this collaboration as ‘teacher research’. The idea of teachers as researchers makes sense especially to people who are familiar with the teaching profession. It is one of the most constructive ways for teachers to evaluate their own teaching and use the knowledge that they gain from the self-evaluation process not only to improve their own teaching but also to share it with the other teachers so that the benefits can be multiplied.

Although many teachers do a lot of self-evaluation processes to improvise their own teachings, teachers’ knowledge and experiences are seldom recognized where their “roles as theorizers, interpreters, and critics of their own practice” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993) are often ignored. Therefore, teacher research is the apparatus that all
teachers can use to face challenges in their profession as the knowledge and the experiences that they have are shared among themselves. The idea that teachers learn from other teachers is vital as this can serve as a networking platform for teachers to share knowledge, findings, and experiences as well as encouraging and supporting one another in their work amidst all the challenges in the present-days teaching professions.

The idea of teacher collaboration and teacher research is attempted in the CI 280 course throughout the semester. Small groups sitting position in the class encourages group discussions and disseminates the concept of sharing and cooperation among group members, which actually is a good starting point to introduce the idea of teacher collaboration. The majority of the activities conducted in CI280 class mostly require collective contributions rather than individual efforts where student teachers participate in small group discussions, group presentations and group writing regarding the issues of teaching the ELLs. As these future teachers compare notes and involved in the group activities, they indirectly are exposed to the idea of teacher collaboration and ‘teacher research’ that is extensively proposed by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993).

In an effort to make the CI 280 class a learning community where the class becomes rich sources for teaching and learning for the future teachers, the sharing and the collaboration process is not limited within the four walls of the classrooms. Among other ways this idea is cultivated is through the sharing- of- knowledge sessions with the guest speakers invited to the class. The instructor had invited a few guest speakers to the class to talk about issues regarding the teaching of the English-Language Learners where the guest speakers share many insights regarding their knowledge on diversity, culture, language, instructional methods and their own experiences as English-Language Learners
themselves. The findings from this study shows how the preservice teachers learn a lot from this session where the chance to ask questions to the guest speakers is another learning platform to learn and be critical about topics related to multiculturalism.

The teacher inquiry process shapes teachers to be cognizant to many challenging issues in teaching profession including in the area of diversity. Teacher inquiry encourages teachers to pay attention and to be critical to issues that “not only to what is included in a world view but also what is left out or silenced” (Giroux, 1984, p.35). Future teachers can learn to be critical by examining many unexamined common assumption about language, culture and power. With regards to CI 280 course, it definitely has provided a successful forum for future teacher to practice the teacher inquiry skill to prepare them for their professions as teachers. Students practice their teacher-inquiry skills when they are involved in the Q&A sessions with the guest speakers and also through the group and class discussions.

The teacher candidates also learn to problematize the issues of diversity through the issues highlighted in the reading materials used in this course as they were encouraged to provide critical responses (oral and written) to those reading materials which mostly deal with the areas of diversity, multiculturalism and bilingualism. The main intent for the reading response activity is to have the future teachers to “use others’ research to uncover their own imperative frameworks and to explore the implications of these connections in ways that are tentative, evolutionary, and personal” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993, p.74). As student teachers read, they begin to view the issues of race, language and culture from the multicultural education scholars’ eyes and construct the dilemmas based on these issues in relation to teaching. This is one of the ways the
teaching inquiry process can be instilled in the student teachers where they are trained to question and analyze every issue deeply rather than hastily make a premature conclusion and assumption when challenges—in this case regarding the issue of diversity—arise. This is one valuable skill for teachers to have as it is fundamental to have future teachers who are responsive and sensitive to the issue of diversity in schools and societies. As this happens, future teachers will feel that culturally responsive teaching is possible to achieve.

**Temporal dimension in CI 280**

Being a participant observer in the C I 280 class provide me with the opportunities to trace changes in perceptions and experiences among the four participants enrolled in the course in the United States from the beginning until the end of the course through their narratives. In Narrative Inquiry, this idea is known as the ‘temporality’ where focus is given on temporal nature of people’s experience. Here, experience is perceives as “events as happening over time; each event or thing has a past, present as it appears to us, and implied future” (Clandinin and Rosiek, 2007, p.45). This continuity in experience suggests “that every experience both takes up something from the present moment and carries it into future experiences” where “event, people, and objects under study are in the temporal transition and narrative inquirers describe them with a past, a present, and a future.” (Clandinin and Rosiek, 2007, p.69) Another description of the concept of temporality in narrative inquiry is its ability to represent the “transformation of lived human experience” (Clandinin and Rosiek, 2007, p.46). Drawing
on the idea of temporality allows researchers to not only concerned with life as it is experienced in the present but also with “life as it is experienced in continuum” (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p.19) where the telling of stories of who we are and who we are becoming offer “plotlines for the futures” (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000).

In this section, I argue that the sense of temporality is crucial in understanding the preparatory experiences of learning to become teachers. Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) mentioned about how “every experience both takes up something from the present moment and carries it into future experience” (p.69). Thus, the C I 280 course can be considered as the preservice teachers’ “present moment” that will determine the “plotlines” of their future stories in becoming teachers of the English-Language Learners.

The purpose of this section is to briefly illustrate the temporal transitions among the four preservice teachers in the United States, observed in the narratives produced in the C I 280 classes. The main goal is to trace the development of personal and professional ideas regarding their experiences learning to become teachers of the English-Language Learners through their narratives which are observed chronologically. It is worth noting that three of the narratives here were written as the assignments for the C I 280 course and the one written in October was written in response to the request by the researcher. The preservice teachers also had written other narratives in class namely Reading Memo and Quick Write but they were not included here as they contain mostly responses based on the course readings or activities done in class. Table 5-1 below illustrates the temporal dimensions derived from the narratives written by the preservice teachers in the C I 280 course.
Table 5-1. The temporal dimensions in the narratives of CI 280 students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ed</td>
<td>• Explore Korean culture</td>
<td>• Learn the importance of ‘change’</td>
<td>“This class made me realize that having ELLs in my classroom is very possible, even likely. I would not have felt as prepared to teach these students without taking this class”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Feel awkward being with people from diverse background due to growing up in predominantly white community.</td>
<td>• Learn the idea of respect and care</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Uncomfortable to go out from his comfort zone.</td>
<td>• The importance of humor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Positive expectation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jill</td>
<td>• Explore Chinese culture</td>
<td>• Learn about perseverance</td>
<td>“After taking CI 280, I gained a wealth of knowledge that has helped me to prepare for my future career as a teacher in multicultural classrooms”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Admit feeling uncomfortable and difficult exploring new culture</td>
<td>• Teacher as a role model</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The sense of community is important in providing comfortable learning environment to the ELLs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joanne</td>
<td>• Explore Russian Culture</td>
<td>• Teacher being authoritative but fair and consistent</td>
<td>“CI 280 is important since it helps future teachers realize that there are two sides of the coin: teachers have fears and so do students”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Had previous experience travelling to Russia</td>
<td>• Relating lessons in classroom to real life situation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Learn that some Russians students being ostracized in this country.</td>
<td>• Being organized</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Humor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Positive expectation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lynn</td>
<td>• Explore Korean Culture</td>
<td>• Being knowledgeable</td>
<td>“Being able to see different aspects of the word “culture” was extremely beneficial when learning about English language learners.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Nervous and feeling alone.</td>
<td>• Easy going</td>
<td>“This experience also changed my views and made me want to become an ESL teacher”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Feel like the Koreans being “stand-offish” towards her</td>
<td>• Respect students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Feel out-of-place even with the Mexican side of her family.</td>
<td>• Relating lessons to real-life situation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Being organized</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Conductive learning environment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Not to leave English learners behind</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The need to respect the native language of the ELLs where teachers can incorporate both languages in the English lessons so that ELLs feel that teachers appreciate their language.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In understanding the idea of temporality in this study, it is worth if the nature of each narrative written by the preservice teachers in the CI 280 is explained in detail. This
is important to delineate the temporal transitions that the preservice teachers had gone through from the beginning until the end of the C I 280 course.

Multi-genre paper is the first project that the preservice teachers in the United States had to do for the C I 280 class assignment. It required them to explore the culture of people culturally and linguistically different from them. Based on Table 5-1 above, 3 out of 4 preservice teachers in this study experienced discomfort in exploring the culture of other people who were different from them except for Joanne who had previous experience travelling to Russia. In the narratives, Ed and Lyn described how it felt to be different and how it felt to be alone among people who are culturally and linguistically different from them. This led them to empathize with the new immigrant students who most probably experience the same or maybe worse experience than they did in the United States.

The second assignment required them to interview their favorite teachers. The preservice teachers highlighted the knowledge that they gained and learnt from their favorite teachers such as the ways to teach as well as the ways to become good teachers. They perceived this knowledge as beneficial and valuable in embarking on their future professions as new teachers.

The third assignment was the teaching statement papers where the preservice were required to connect the knowledge learn from C I 280 to their understanding about teaching. In this paper, the four preservice teachers had the chance to illustrate their emerging understanding about many issues concerning teaching and learning English while relating them to their own experiences of learning to become teachers of English-Language Learners in the C I 280 class.
The last narrative was the narratives produced after the semester had ended based on the request by the researcher in order to understand their perceptions about C I 280 in preparing them to become teachers of the English-Language Learners in the future. This request was made in October, five months after the course officially ended. As illustrated in Table 5-1, all four preservice teachers in this study had provided encouraging feedbacks where they believed that the C I 280 classes had successfully readied them to teach the English-Language Learners in their future classrooms.

The temporal transition of the four preservice teachers in this study is best summarized by Figure 5-2 below.

![Temporal Transitions of CI 280 Preservice Teachers](image)

Figure 5-2. The temporal transitions of the C I 280 preservice teachers.
In highlighting the idea of temporality in this study, Table 5-1 and Figure 5-2 illustrated the development of the preservice teachers’ experience in learning to become teachers of the English-Language Learners in the C I 280 class. Except for Joanne who had previous experience socializing with the people and in the culture that she had chosen to explore for the Multi-genre paper assignment (the Russian culture), all the other three preservice teachers expressed their anxiousness, feeling out-of-place, alone and conscious of being different among people who did not share their culture or speak English as their first language (please refer to Chapter 4 for details). Nonetheless, amidst all these hardships, the preservice teachers wrote about being able to empathize with the English-Language Learners after this experience as now they could personally understand how it felt to be culturally and linguistically different in such a foreign place.

The second assignment required them to interview their favorite teacher from schools. The preservice teachers in this study had a chance to explore some pedagogical aspects that shape their favorite teachers to become who they were. This knowledge was crucial as most novice teachers shape their teaching identities based on their observation on their previous favorite teachers in schools. The favorite teacher interview is also strongly related to the idea of ‘researching backwards’ as proposed by Sleeter (2001) where the preservice teachers have the chance to trace the plotlines of a successful teacher (in this case, their favorite teachers) so that similar success will be gained when they become teachers.

The last assignment for the semester was writing the teaching statements where the preservice teachers were asked to link the knowledge learnt from C I 280 to their
emerging experience learning to become teachers of the English-Language Learners in the future. Here, the preservice teachers expressed their understanding on various aspects of the knowledge gained from the class. For example, Ed highlighted the aspects of pedagogical and instructional strategies in teaching the English-Language Learners effectively, Jill mentioned about the importance of community building in diverse classrooms, Joanne underlined the affective stance in dealing with the English-Language Learners and Lyn dealt with the issue of respecting English-Language Learners native language and incorporating them in the lessons in class. Looking at their unique responses at this stage, the preservice teachers in this study seem to have developed their own personal and professional stances in the ways they plan to handle their future multicultural classrooms; unique to each of the students. These stances are beneficial, as I believe that they have the ability to offer predictable visions of the type of teachers of the English-Language Learners that these preservice teachers will become in the future. Therefore, I argue that studying the temporal dimension in the preservice teachers’ narratives is crucial in understanding the preparatory experience of the preservice teachers learning to become teachers as it has the ability to predict the type of teachers that the preservice will become one day based on the responses given in the narratives. Moreover, it has the ability to reveal the transitional and transformation journey of learning to become teachers in a more accurate manner as each preservice teacher’s experience is followed chronologically through the narratives written for the course. This knowledge is fundamental especially to the teacher educators who wish to evaluate the course in order to evaluate its’ effectiveness and relevance in order to adjust or reform the teacher education curriculum or syllabus in preparing better teachers in the future.
Conclusion

The CI 280 course is an attempt to incorporate the culturally responsive teaching pedagogy into a teacher education program. A culturally relevant teaching pedagogy is a teacher education course that upholds the areas of race, culture and language as it upmost concerns in assisting students from culturally and linguistically diverse background to learn. Research literature and scholars in this field suggest that “learning opportunities can be hindered when teachers fail to consider their own and their students’ racial backgrounds and think carefully about how race can and does emerge in classroom learning opportunities” (Milner, 2010, p.16). It is very much sought after recently partly due to some of the State’s policy requirement for student teachers to enroll in the multicultural-based teacher education course in order to seek initial teaching licensure. Another reason for the relevance of the culturally relevant teaching skill is due to the immense demographic changes in the populations of the United States nowadays. As the demographic landscape of the country is getting more diverse due to immigration and population mobility, it is important for the teacher education field to reflect and infuse the aspects of culture, language, religion and faith in training the future teachers of the country. This is fundamental as future teachers have to be trained to be suit the demographic changes in the future communities of the United States that are anticipated to be more diverse and more multicultural. The preservice teacher enrolled in CI 280 reported to feel prepared in teaching the students from diverse background due to the pervasive approach of this course in making the issue of race, language and culture as central rather than marginal. This has contributed to the positive outlook personally and
professionally regarding their preparatory experience in becoming teachers of the English-Language Learners.

As for the ED 220, there are many areas that the program can learn from the implementation of CI 280 in the United States especially regarding the seriousness of implementing education that is multicultural in its English teacher education program. Though the program has done a good job in providing the good content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge to the preservice teachers, it needs some revamps in the area of multiculturalism in preparing the ESL teachers for their future professions. Thus, multicultural subjects should not be treated as add-on or theory-laden but must be made pervasive and meaningful by complementing them with field experience and students reflection on the issue. Another issue that is worth highlighting here is on the need to utilize the temporal dimension in looking at the teacher education program in Malaysia. This study has revealed how viewing the program from the temporal dimension in understanding the preservice teachers’ experience is beneficial as it has the ability to reveal the pre-service teachers development in detail as well as offering the future picture of the type of teachers that they will become one day. It is time for the teacher education in Malaysia especially regarding the preparation of the teachers of the English-Language Learners to realize that issue of race, language and culture are inextricable. Ignoring these issues by practicing a color-blind pedagogy will make the issue precarious just as illustrated by narratives written by the preservice teachers in this study.

Saha and Dworkin (2009) posit that “people are made into teachers; they are not born to be teachers” (p.6). Their point here is the recruitment and the preparation of teachers should become the concern of the government and the institutions that trained
and certified them in order to produce quality teachers. They also added that “a person has never really become a teacher; in the definite sense of the word…teachers are always in a state of becoming, where new knowledge, new skills, and new classroom challenges are in a constant state of flux” (p.6). In discussing challenges in multicultural and multilingual English classrooms, a culturally relevant teacher education program is a timely effort that will enable future teachers to face this challenge well-prepared— where the aspect of multiculturalism and multilingualism are viewed as assets rather than liabilities in the process of fulfilling the needs of the diverse populations to be educated in the environment where their cultures and languages are appreciated rather than ignored. The teacher candidates’ “state of becoming” experience will ensure that the teachers of tomorrow are teachers who are not only well-equipped with a solid content and instructional knowledge, but also possess strong cognizance in the aspects of diversity, multiculturalism and multilingualism that ever ready them in assisting students from diverse background to be successful in their education trajectories. This is the hope that I have in the teacher education in the United States and Malaysia.

Implications and Recommendations

Based on the findings and the discussion, this section provides implication and recommendation for future instructional and the professional development in teacher education in Malaysia. The purpose of this study is to explore the experience of becoming teachers of the English-Language Learners in two multicultural countries
namely the United States and Malaysia. The road to become teachers of the English-Language Learners in the United States and Malaysia is full of challenges and most of these challenges are very contextual and unique according to the sociocultural and historical background of each country. Some of the issues highlighted in the findings are very much related to the historical, cultural and even policy of the country which makes them delicate and unique. As they are delicate, the recommendation made here is more related to the instructional aspect of teacher education, as I feel that it is something that is more tangible and feasible as compared to recommendations made on reforming something as complicated as the policy.

Based on the findings, the preservice teachers in Malaysia struggle with several issues. The first issue is on their lack of confidence in becoming teachers of English-Language Learners. This is due to the low self-esteem that they have regarding their own identity as Malaysian. This issue is embedded in the cultural and historical contexts of Malaysia due to perception that the society have on the Malays. In order to handle this issue, I would like to recommend that teacher-education programs place more emphasis on the field experiences rather than theories. This is because the more experience that the teachers have, the less apprehensive they will become as they have the opportunities to involve in many teaching experiences that will heighten their level of confidence in facing their future profession as teachers of English-Language Learners. The findings from the United States have shown how field experience helps students empathize and understand students who come from different background than them. This is not to say that learning theories in teacher education is a bad practice, per se. However, it will be more effective if the theories or the issues learned from the textbook or the
reading articles in their teacher education classes could be complemented by going out and experience them so that the learning will be more meaningful and useful. Thus, I recommended that the teacher education programs in Malaysia incorporate the field experience in subjects taught in their teacher education classes I believe that this could help students relate their learning in class to the real situations that happens in the real classrooms in schools.

Secondly, the preservice teachers in Malaysia reported how the multicultural related subjects learned in the teacher education program are taught at a surface level and their understanding is only tested through examinations. This does not come as a surprise as Malaysian education system is still very much exam–oriented. Moreover, the preservice teachers in Malaysia voice their anxiety of not being prepared well enough in the multicultural areas in their teacher education program which makes them unprepared to teach in multicultural classrooms. Regarding this issue, rather than having one or two multicultural based subjects that are badly handled and taught in the teacher education program, it is more effective if the element of multiculturalism be permeated in the whole program so that it does is not become an add-on, as is what happens right now. This can be done by making it a central issue rather than a marginal one where the issues of culture, language and ethnicity are discussed in a conducive learning environment in the whole teacher-education programs rather than been separated and compartmentalized. This inclusive approach will make the learning more meaningful as it is not seen as detached from the whole teacher-education program.
Future Research

This section highlights the future research based on this study. As we can see this study involves preservice teachers from two different countries, namely United States and Malaysia. The data collection process as well as the communication with the preservice teachers from the two countries was done from the United State using e-mail. I have the chance to observe the C I 280 classes for the whole spring semester 2011 and have had an access to the C I 280 electronic group where I could read all the electronic postings and their assignments. However, I don’t have the same privilege with the preservice teachers in Malaysia and was only able to access their course syllabus and narratives. For a future research, this study will be more thorough if the same amount of attention could be given to in collecting data from Malaysia just how it was done while collecting data from the United States. This will require the researcher to be present in the teacher-education classes in both countries.

Secondly, the participants for this study are consisted of the preservice teachers who come from the mainstream group from both countries. In the United States, the participants are all White and in Malaysia the participants are all Malays. In the future, it would be interesting to see if the same study is carried out with the diverse groups from both countries. In the United States, the participants can be the African, Latin or Asian American. In Malaysia, study can be carried out with the Chinese, Indian or the other ethnic groups there.

Thirdly, as this is a comparative study between the two multicultural Western and Eastern countries, the same study can be replicated to be used to study the teacher
education between two western multicultural countries or two eastern multicultural countries. The findings will be the platform to understand about the variety of multicultural teacher education from various multicultural countries. This will add knowledge to the field of comparative and international education with regards to the field of multicultural teacher education and teacher education of the English language learner globally.

In the area of qualitative research, finally I would like to recommend research that traces the temporal transitions of the preservice teachers learning to become teachers of the English-Language Learners in Malaysia where their experiences are recorded in detail until they completed their teacher education program. This is fundamental as this study reveals how the idea of temporality in research especially in a narrative research is able to highlight the experiences as well as issues that preservice teachers faced at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the their teacher education courses or programs. The detailed affords understanding a prediction of the type of teachers they will become one in the future. Moreover, this method can be used to evaluate the current teacher education programs where problems can be identified based on the detailed information provided by the study. I believe that studying the Malaysian preservice teachers’ experiences from the temporal point of view will provide an in-depth and systematic understanding of each stage of learning that the preservice teachers have to go through in their teacher-education program and how these stages shape their ideas and dispositions as future teachers in Malaysia.
References


CI 280 syllabus, spring 2011. United States


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Department of Statistics, Malaysia (2011). Key statistics. Available from:


ED 220 Teacher Education syllabus. Malaysia


Hanrahan, M. U., Cooper, T. J., & Burroughs-Lange, S. (1995). "Aye, it's delicious, but that's no'how y'make porridge!" Personal writing for learning in a science education PhD.


Appendix A

Informed Consent Letter

Implied Informed Consent Form for Social Science Research
The Pennsylvania State University

Title of Study: Challenges perceived in multicultural ESL classrooms: Narratives from pre-service teachers in United States and Malaysia

Principal Investigator: Khairul Aini Mohamed Jiri
102 Palladino Hall
White Course Apartments
University Park, PA 16802
(814) 441-6208; kbm5107@psu.edu

Advisor: Dr. Youb Kim
155 Chambers Building
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(814) 867-2731; yzk1@psu.edu

1. Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this research study is to explore challenges the pre-service teachers in United States and Malaysia perceived they will face in multicultural ESL classrooms. Also of interest is how teacher education program at Penn State prepares the pre-service teachers to face challenges teaching students from
culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The main goal of this study is to gain deeper understanding of the culturally relevant teacher education program at Penn State with the aim to improve the teacher education in Malaysia.

2. **Procedures to be followed:** You will be asked to write narratives based on the prompts sent via email. You need internet access and email account to participate in this study as responses and narratives will be sent to the researcher using her PSU email.

The participants in the United States will be asked to:

- Write narratives explaining your perceptions and experiences being in the CI280 class for spring 2011 semester after the course had ended.
- Submit the major assignments/works that you had completed for CI280 course. These assignments are the Learning Portfolio and the Teaching Statement.
- Respond narratively to three questions related to teacher and teaching profession via email.

The participants in Malaysia will be asked to:

- Write narratives explaining your experiences learning to become teacher in Malaysia by providing responses to three questions related to teacher and teaching profession.
3. **Duration**: You will be allocated two weeks to write the narratives based on the prompts sent to you via your email account. For participants in the United States, the response to the three questions via email will take around 1 hour to be completed.

4. **Statement of Confidentiality**: Your participation in this research is confidential. The prompts for the narratives do not ask for any information that would identify who the responses belong to. The data will be stored and secured in Khairul’s password protected computer file and thumb drive that will be destroyed in 2017. Pseudonyms will be used to protect your identity and only Khairul will have access to this information. In the event of any publication or presentation resulting from the research, no personally identifiable information will be shared because your name is in no way linked to your responses.

5. **Right to Ask Questions**: Please contact Khairul Aini Mohamed Jiri at (814) 441-6208 with questions, complaints or concerns about this study.

6. **Payment for participation**: You will receive USD40.00 for your participation. Participants in United States will receive:

   1. USD30.00 for the first narrative that you submitted
   
   2. USD10.00 for the email responses that you provide to the three questions regarding teacher and teaching profession.
Participants in Malaysia will receive:

1. USD10.00 for the narrative that you provide to the three questions regarding teacher and teaching profession.

2. A souvenir from Penn State (postage charge and souvenir equivalent to USD30.00)

7. **Voluntary Participation:** Your decision to be in this research is voluntary. You can stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer.

You must be 18 years of age or older to consent to take part in this research study. Completion and return of the narratives implies that you have read the information in this form and consent to take part in the research. Please keep this form for your records or future reference.
Appendix B

Determination of Exemption Letter

Date: February 15, 2012
From: The Office for Research Protections - FWA#: FWA00001534
Stephanie L. Krount, Compliance Coordinator
To: Khairul Aini Mohamed Jiri
Re: Determination of Exemption

IRB Protocol ID: 390000
Follow-up Date: January 30, 2017
Title of Protocol: Challenges perceived in multicultural ESL classrooms: Narratives from preservice teachers in United States and Malaysia

The Office for Research Protections (ORP) has received and reviewed the above referenced eSubmission application. It has been determined that your research is exempt from IRB initial and ongoing review, as currently described in the application. You may begin your research. The category within the federal regulations under which your research is exempt is:

45 CFR 46.101(b)(1) Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices, such as (i) research on regular and special education instructional strategies, or (ii) research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.

Given that the IRB is not involved in the initial and ongoing review of this research, it is the investigator's responsibility to review IRB Policy III “Exempt Review Process and Determination” which outlines:

- What it means to be exempt and how determinations are made
- What changes to the research protocol are and are not required to be reported to the ORP
- Ongoing actions post-exemption determination including addressing problems and complaints, reporting closed research to the ORP and research audits
- What occurs at the time of follow-up

Please do not hesitate to contact the Office for Research Protections (ORP) if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you for your continued efforts in protecting human participants in research.

This correspondence should be maintained with your research records.
Vita Khairul Aini Mohamed Jiri

EDUCATION

Pennsylvania State University 2009-2012
PhD Candidate in Curriculum & Instruction and PhD Candidate in Comparative and International Education (dual title program)

National University of Malaysia 2003-2006
Masters of Art by Research (English Language Studies)

University of Malaya 1989-1995
Bachelor of Education (Teaching English as a Second Language)

EMPLOYMENT

English Teacher May 1995-2009
Federal Islamic Residential School Labu, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia

Part–time English Lecturer 2007-2008
Islamic Science University of Malaysia (USIM), Nilai, Malaysia

PUBLICATION AND PRESENTATIONS


MEMBERSHIP IN PROFESSIONAL ORGANISATION

NAME National Association for Multicultural Education
CIES Comparative and International Education Society