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CONTENTS

Plan to Join Us at NECTFL 2013 .... inside front cover

NECTFL Board of Directors and Staff 3

A Message from the 2013 Conference Chair 4

From the Managing Editor 6

Articles

Guidelines for the Preparation of Manuscripts 8

A Checklist for Manuscript Preparation 10

Call for Articles 7, 12

NECTFL Editorial Review Board 13

Comparing nine world language teacher preparation programs within and across three states
Susan A. Hildebrandt, Anne Cumnmings Hlas, Kelly Conroy 15

Overcoming resistance to 90% target language use: Rationale, challenges, and suggestions
Jean W. LeLoup, Robert Ponterio, Mark K. Warford 45

The beliefs of African American students about foreign language learning
María Isabel Charle Poza 61

Reviews

Arabic

Berbeco, Steven. *Marhaba! An Invitation to Arabic*.(David F. DiMeo) 79

French

Blanco, José A. *D'accord! 1: Langue et culture du monde francophone.* (Eileen M. Angelini) 82

Booth, Trudie Maria. *La langue française à travers les siècles.* (Andrzej Dziedzic) 84

Bragger, Jeanette and Donald Rice. *Quant à moi: Témoignages des Français et des Francophones*. 5th edition. (Andrzej Dziedzic) 85

Coursaget, Catherine and Micheline Myers. *Breaking the French Barrier.* (Eileen M. Angelini) 87

Conditto, Kerri. Cinéphile. *French Language and Culture Through Film* (2nd edition). (Tom Conner) 90

Chinese

Li, Pengyi et al. *Everyday Chinese.* (Ximin Fang) 95
Lin, Y. *Chinese in Motion: An Advanced Immersion Course.* (Judy Zhu) 97

German

Wehage, Franz-Joseph and Gudrun Clay. *Geschäftsdeutsch. An Introduction to German Business Culture.* (Gisela Hoecherl-Alden) 99

Portuguese

De Oliveira Salde, Rejane. Revised by Marta Almeida and Elizabeth Jackson. *Bom Dia, Brasil* 3rd edition of *Português Básico para Estrangeiros.* (John F. Day) 102

Spanish

Bianco, Paola. *Conversando con literatura.* (Eileen M. Angelini) 104
De los Heros, Susana and Mercedes Niño-Murcia, eds. *Fundamentos y modelos del estudio pragmático y sociopragmático del español* (Todd A. Hernández) 106
Kershul, Kristine K. *SPANISH in 10 Minutes a Day.©* 6th edition. (Tom Conner) 108
Resnick, Melvin C. and Robert M. Hammond. *Introducción a la historia de la lengua española.* 2nd edition. (Pamela Shuggi) 112
Thomas, Scott and Gaby Thomas. *Listen 'N Learn Spanish with your Favorite Movies.* (Eileen M. Angelini) 113

Reviewers Wanted 115

Contact Information, Advertising Information, Mailing List 116

Comparing nine world language teacher preparation programs within and across three states

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Abstract

This descriptive study examines the diverse requirements and characteristics of world language (WL) teacher education programs across and within three states. Comparisons are made based on No Child Left Behind's (2002) *highly qualified* teacher criteria, states' licensure or certification requirements, and the ACTFL/NCATE (2002) program standards. This article provides a comparative overview of traditional WL teacher preparation programs at the federal, state, and university levels. The discussion explores common and diverging requirements among programs across three different states and within each state, with the goal of promoting further dialogue regarding WL teacher preparation practices.

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Teacher preparation and quality are frequent topics of debate at the federal, state, and local levels, with a variety of actors determining who can become a teacher and how. The federal push for *highly qualified* teachers (U.S. Department of Education, 2002) and state efforts to meet No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Race to the Top requirements greatly influence how institutions of higher education (IHEs) and their world language (WL) teacher education programs prepare teacher candidates to work in American schools.

The federal push for highly qualified teachers (U.S. Department of Education, 2002) and state efforts to meet No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Race to the Top requirements greatly influence how institutions of higher education (IHEs) and their world language (WL) teacher education programs prepare teacher candidates to work in American schools.

This descriptive study examines the diverse requirements and characteristics of WL teacher preparation programs within and across Illinois, Texas, and Wisconsin, surveying three universities from each state. Comparisons are made based on NCLB's *highly qualified teacher* criteria and the *American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)/National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) Program Standards for the Preparation of Foreign Language Teachers* (2002). The authors synthesize federal-, state-, and IHE-level requirements to develop a comparative overview of three traditional undergraduate WL teacher education programs within each of the three states. That is, the authors examine nine four-year undergraduate WL teacher education programs that are "characterized by a liberal arts curriculum combined with professional education courses and limited field experiences" (Hebert & Worthy, 2001, p. 899), in which a "large percentage" of the nation's WL teachers are prepared (Tedick, 2009, p. 263).

The questions that guide this study are

(1) What are WL teacher certification or licensure[1] requirements in Illinois, Texas, and Wisconsin?
  a. How does each state address NCLB's *highly qualified* teacher requirements of full state certification or licensure and proving knowledge of each subject taught?

(2) Within each state, what do three different programs require for a WL teacher education bachelor's degree?
  a. How does each program address NCLB's *highly qualified* teacher requirement of a bachelor's degree?
  b. How does each program address ACTFL/NCATE program requirements as stated in the ACTFL/NCATE Program Standards for the Preparation of Foreign Language Teachers (2002, p. 2)?

(3) How do those nine programs compare to and contrast with one another?

This study is not intended to be a comprehensive examination of all IHEs, policies, or states, nor is it an exhaustive description of all means to enter the WL teaching profession. Rather, it is a focused comparison of nine distinct IHEs' undergraduate WL teacher preparation programs across three states.

Comparing nine world language teacher preparation programs

Federal definition of "highly qualified"

Enacted over a decade ago, the NCLB Act (U.S. Department of Education, 2002) introduced the phrase *highly qualified teacher*[2] into the public sphere. That influential federal legislation passed Congress with widespread bipartisan support (Hess & Petrilli, 2006), attempting to make in-service teacher quality more uniform across states, districts, and schools and to hold IHEs accountable for new teacher quality (Huang, Yun, & Haycock, 2002). By the end of the 2005-2006 school year, all teachers of core subjects, including WLs, were to be *highly qualified*, meaning that they were to "hold at least a bachelor's degree from a four-year institution; hold full state certification; and demonstrate competence in their subject area" (U.S. Department of Education, 2003, p. 4). A 2007 evaluation of states' progress in implementing NCLB (Birman, Le Floch, Klekotka, Ludwig, Taylor, Walters, Wayne, Yoon, Vernez, Garet, & O'Day, 2007) reported that the "fairly straightforward" (p. 12) first and second NCLB requirements were being successfully implemented in all states. The third requirement, however, prompted a wider variety of implementation practices across states. NCLB officially expired in 2007, and in 2010 the U.S. Department of Education released *A Blueprint for Reform*, the Obama administration's desired reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. At the time of this writing *A Blueprint* has not yet passed through Congress, so NCLB remains the central federal educational policy.

The Department of Education has recently softened NCLB requirements and granted 33 states two-year waivers that may be renewed for an additional two years (Ayers & Owen, 2012). Those waivers allow "a chance for states to improve their systems in ambitious but achievable ways" (Ayers & Owen, 2012, p. 6), which include modifying teacher evaluation systems, among other educational practices. Illinois and Wisconsin requested waivers, while Texas did not. Regardless of waivers and ongoing policy initiatives, the *highly qualified* teacher mandate remains relevant and current.

The federal government exerts fiscal influence on states' teacher preparation and evaluation practices, and that influence in turn affects teacher preparation practices. In order to receive any federal educational moneys, states must adhere to the federal government's requirements, including NCLB (Wiseman, 2012). Race to the Top, part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, has also prompted "education reform" (U.S. Department of Education, 2009, p. 2) through a competition for federal funding. States were encouraged to make changes to their existing educational practices, including student curriculum and teacher evaluation. For example, Race to the Top compelled states to implement the Common Core standards and to link K–12 student achievement to in-service teacher evaluation systems and pre-service teacher preparation programs (Wiseman, 2012). Illinois and Wisconsin were awarded Race to the Top funds, while Texas did not apply.

State and IHE roles in WL teacher preparation

Like many teacher quality mandates, *highly qualified* is ultimately shaped downstream with states implementing federal policy. Given the localized American education system (Fullan, 2001), each state interprets NCLB teacher preparation requirements to meet local needs (Rosenbusch, 2005), with state legislatures and Departments of Public Instruction or Boards of Education operationalizing *highly qualified*'s three criteria. Examining state-level practices is difficult, however, since "[c]ategories of certificates and licenses vary widely from state to state and are difficult to navigate, align, and compare" (Ingold & Wang, 2010, p. 15).

At the IHE level, seeing how institutions are positioned between top-down policies and local demands is vital to understanding how and why programs vary (Donato, 2009). Compliance with state and regional accreditation requirements influence IHEs and WL teacher preparation programs as they define *highly qualified* through the bachelor's degree, required coursework, clinical experiences, and formative and summative assessments (Van Houten, 2009). This complex set of interactions can influence how each teacher preparation program implements federal and state requirements (Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb, Michelli, & Wyckoff, 2006).

Compliance with state and regional accreditation requirements influence IHEs and WL teacher preparation programs as they define highly qualified through the bachelor's degree, required coursework, clinical experiences, and formative and summative assessments.

There is a decidedly cyclical nature to IHE and state efforts to prepare teachers, with IHEs designing programs to meet state licensure or certification requirements. Those requirements are, according to Ingold and Wang (2010), based on "the perceived needs for and desired qualifications of foreign language teachers," which are "often based on the types of courses and preparation programs that the teacher education programs in the state have been willing and able to provide" (p. 11). For example, the quality of collaboration between the College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Education at a given IHE can influence WL teacher preparation (Donato, 2009; Oxford, 2008). As a result, each IHE may assign different responsibilities for WL teacher preparation to the College of Education and to the Department of Foreign Languages.

ACTFL/NCATE Program Standards and requirements

IHE teacher preparation programs further interpret legislative mandates and professional norms, often with the help of regional, state, or national accreditation agencies (e.g., NCATE) and content-specific teacher organizations (e.g., ACTFL). To align state and professional standards, nearly all states participate in a partnership with NCATE (Darling-Hammond, Wei, & Johnson, 2009), and "39 states have adopted or adapted NCATE unit standards as their own unit standards," with a focus on "performance-based accreditation" (p. 628). That is, teacher candidates must demonstrate competencies to earn certification or licensure, as opposed to completing seat time in teacher education and content courses. All

three states included in this study have an NCATE state partnership, with Illinois and Texas entrusting NCATE to review all programs and Wisconsin performing its own program reviews (NCATE, 2013).

Published in 2002, the *ACTFL/NCATE Program Standards* have served as a "measuring stick by which programs are evaluated" (Huhn, 2012, p. S165). These program standards were drafted as guidelines for WL teacher preparation, which ACTFL calls "the joint responsibility of the faculty in foreign languages and education" (2002, p. 2). To meet ACTFL/NCATE's (2002) six content standards, eight "Requirements for Programs of Foreign Language Teacher Preparation" (p. 2) must be fulfilled for WL teacher preparation program success:

Published in 2002, the ACTFL/NCATE Program Standards have served as a "measuring stick by which programs are evaluated."

> (1) The development of candidates' foreign language proficiency in all areas of communication, with special emphasis on developing oral proficiency, in all language courses. (2) An ongoing assessment of candidates' oral proficiency and provision of diagnostic feedback to candidates concerning their progress in meeting required levels of proficiency. (3) Language, linguistics, culture, and literature components. (4) A methods course that deals specifically with the teaching of foreign languages, and that is taught by a qualified faculty member whose expertise is foreign language education and who is knowledgeable about current instructional approaches and issues. (5) Field experiences prior to student teaching that include experiences in foreign language classrooms. (6) Field experiences, including student teaching, that are supervised by a qualified foreign language educator who is knowledgeable about current instructional approaches and issues in the field of foreign language education. (7) Opportunities for candidates to experience technology-enhanced instruction and to use technology in their own teaching. (8) Opportunities for candidates to participate in a structured study abroad program and/or immersion experience in a target language community. (2002, p. 2)

The *Program Standards* provide six content standards with detailed descriptions and definitions to further describe WL teacher program and candidate preparation. For example, to achieve national recognition by ACTFL/NCATE, Advanced-Low oral proficiency is required for teachers of commonly taught languages, such as French, German, Hebrew, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish, while Intermediate-High is for required less commonly taught languages, such as Arabic, Korean, or Mandarin. These standards and requirements form the framework by which NCATE-accredited WL teacher preparation programs across the country are evaluated (Huhn, 2012). They also serve as an effective schema by which to examine other programs, articulating what WL teacher candidates should know and be able to do as a result of teacher education.

Method and Data Analysis

Employing the frames of federal educational policy (i.e., NCLB), three state contexts, and three IHEs within each state, this descriptive study explores how each local context interprets the *highly qualified* teacher provision of NCLB, state licensure requirements, and the ACTFL/NCATE (2002) program standards and requirements to provide a synthesis of that disparate information. This study seeks to answer the following research questions: (1) What are WL teacher licensure or certification requirements in Illinois, Texas, and Wisconsin? (2) Within each state, what do three different programs require for a WL teacher education bachelor's degree? (3) How do those nine programs compare to and contrast with one another? Following Yin's (2009) principles that the "control of behavioral events" is unnecessary and that focus should be instead on "contemporary events" (p. 8), the authors adopted a qualitative approach.

Programs

Nine distinct IHEs that prepare pre-service Spanish teachers for their respective state-level certification or licensure were chosen based on convenience; that is, the authors are familiar with Illinois, Texas, and Wisconsin WL teacher preparation practices. Spanish teacher preparation programs were specifically examined since Spanish is the most commonly taught language in the United States, and most WL teacher education programs prepare Spanish teachers. Three IHEs' WL teacher preparation programs within each state were examined, identified below using a pseudonym coding system to maintain each IHE's anonymity. The three Illinois IHEs, for example, are represented as IL-1, IL-2, and IL-3. Similar coding is used for the Texas and Wisconsin IHEs. Table 1 includes general information about each university, including whether it is public or private, its size, setting, and Carnegie Classification for Undergraduate Instructional Program (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, n.d.). The number of students is described as small (fewer than 10,000), medium (between 10,001 and 19,999), and large (20,000 or more).

Table 1. Nine IHEs selected for the study

	Type	Size	Setting	Carnegie Classification for Undergraduate Instructional Program
IL-1	Public	Medium	Suburban	Professions plus arts & sciences, high graduate coexistence
IL-2	Public	Large	Urban	Balanced arts & sciences/ professions, high graduate coexistence
IL-3	Private	Small	Exurban	Balanced arts & sciences/ professions, some graduate coexistence

TX-1	Public	Large	Urban	Balanced arts & sciences/ professions, high graduate coexistence
TX-2	Private	Medium	Exurban	Balanced arts & sciences/ professions, high graduate coexistence
TX-3	Public	Medium	Exurban	Balanced arts & sciences/ professions, some graduate coexistence
WI-1	Public	Medium	Exurban	Balanced arts & sciences/ professions, some graduate coexistence
WI-2	Private	Medium	Urban	Balanced arts & sciences/ professions, some graduate coexistence
WI-3	Private	Small	Exurban	Professions plus arts & sciences, some graduate coexistence

Data Sources

Multiple data collection methods based on a qualitative approach were utilized, including document analysis and interviews (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2009). The documents collected included seven student teacher handbooks, nine IHE program information websites, and seven undergraduate advising guides. Two WL teacher preparation programs' student teacher handbooks could not be located, nor could two other programs' undergraduate advising guides. State department of education materials and their WL teacher preparation mandates to IHEs from all three states were collected, primarily from state government websites. At first glance, this summary of information from various state and university websites may seem unsophisticated and relatively straightforward. On the contrary, locating this information was labyrinthine, with information spread across various sources, including College of Arts and Sciences, Colleges of Education, and states' departments of education. Further, the information found was rarely clear-cut or easily comprehensible due to the seemingly convoluted nature of the various regulations, rules, and guidelines across and within states.

In addition to document analyses, researchers carried out interviews via telephone or e-mail with nine WL teacher education program coordinators, five WL pedagogy instructors, and five certification officers to verify archived information or to supplement information about WL teacher preparation policy at the state or institutional level. These interviews lasted approximately 60 minutes and were recorded with participant consent. Interview questions concerned certification tests, proficiency level requirements, WL teaching methods coursework, student teaching observations, and clinical hours, as well as trends in teacher education and standardization among IHEs. (See Appendix A for the

interview protocol.) The interviews were carried out to gain perspectives from the various implementation communities (Yanow, 2000).

Analysis

To answer this study's research questions, a database was created to order and document the data, allowing all researchers access to evidence and to increase reliability (Yin, 2009). The electronic database, shared among researchers in a Google-based spreadsheet and a Dropbox shared file, included IHE- and state-level documents, interview transcripts, and links to online materials from state departments of education and IHE websites. After initial data were gathered and recorded in the database, the authors individually reviewed all state and IHE information and then compared initial perceptions.

Analysis criteria based on *ACTFL/NCATE Program Standards* (2002) and their "Requirements for Programs of Foreign Language Teacher Preparation" (p. 2) were developed to answer the second research question. In this study, the requirements were used to operationalize the standards, which are subsumed within and inform the requirements. As the authors did not have access to accreditation reports completed by the WL teacher preparation programs, they were unable to use the evidence provided by IHEs' chosen assessments. Previous WL teacher education and certification literature also helped researchers further hone categories (e.g., Ingold & Wang, 2010; Rosenbusch, 2005; Tedick, 2009; Van Houten, 2009).

ACTFL/NCATE program requirements 1 and 2 concerning candidates' ongoing language proficiency were combined to form one category, since the required level of proficiency for each program was the focus. Determining formative proficiency diagnostic feedback proved difficult, so one category was used. Proficiency outcomes were measured using the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines and the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) and Written Proficiency Test (WPT), where relevant. Requirement 3, a program with "[l]anguage, linguistics, culture, and literature components" (p. 2), was addressed by examining Spanish classes required by each IHE. Because of the difficulty in determining course content from catalog descriptions, credit counts were used to examine the third requirement. Requirement 4, that a methods class specific to WL instruction be provided, and requirement 5, that field experiences in WL classrooms be completed, formed two distinct categories. Requirement 6, regarding field experiences under the supervision of an FL professional, was addressed by determining the required length of student teaching and the personnel who supervise student teaching placements. Technology and its use in instruction, requirement 7, were examined by determining if an educational technology course was required. The final category concerned study abroad requirements and was based on requirement 8.

The authors employed triangulation techniques to enhance the trustworthiness of the conclusions drawn. Triangulation compares different data points and types to continuously ensure that the conclusions are in keeping with the data's content. Merriam (2009) suggests triangulating data by "comparing and cross-checking data collected through observations at different times or in different places, or interview data collected from people with different perspectives or from follow-up interviews with the same people" (p. 216). For example, the authors compared the

information from participant interviews with information from their university's websites and handbooks, and vice versa. For the authors, triangulating the data meant that all data points overlapped and connected to yield trustworthy results.

Lastly, to further audit for trustworthiness, an external observer who was not part of the research team traced the chain of evidence. The observer examined the data, moving forward from initial research questions to the study conclusions (Yin, 2009). Then, the same external researcher traced the evidence by selecting specific conclusions and working backward to determine the particular evidence needed to support the stated conclusions, ensuring the credibility of the chain of evidence. Few areas of discord were encountered and, when misunderstandings were encountered, the researchers made adjustments to clarify the data and their reporting.

Results

Three brief, state-level educational histories of general and WL-specific teacher certification or licensure follow to answer the first research question. Each of the nine programs is described within its home state, providing a wider educational context for the specificity of WL teaching bachelor's degree, as required by NCLB. Also within each state description, the three IHEs are examined using the ACTFL/NCATE program requirements (2002, p. 2) to answer the second research question. After the contexts and programs in each of the three states are described, the nine programs across the three states are compared and contrasted to answer the third research question. Of course, in any study of educational policy, descriptions are necessarily abbreviated to meet manuscript length requirements. The authors have attempted to cover the most salient information concerning the state and IHE contexts to answer the research questions.

Illinois overview

Illinois was one of the six states to pass a "law in formal opposition" to NCLB (Shelly, 2008, p. 446). DeAngelis, White, and Presley (2010) report that *highly qualified* teacher distribution across Illinois improved with NCLB implementation, although it "has a long way to go before disparities in teacher qualifications across schools are eliminated" (p. 2). To help teachers and schools determine their *highly qualified* status, Illinois chose to implement "professional development-based high objective state standards of evaluation" (Coble & Azordegan, 2004, p. 4), in which teachers can participate in self-determined professional development activities, submitting a plan for becoming *highly qualified*. In December of 2011, Illinois was awarded 42.8 million dollars from round three of the Race to the Top grants (ISBE, n.d.). As part of that funding, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) implemented the Performance Evaluation Reform Act in January 2012, which requires part of teacher and principal evaluation be informed by evidence of student growth (ISBE, n.d.).

ISBE must approve IHEs to prepare pre-service teachers, and Illinois works with NCATE in a state partnership (NCATE, 2013). The Illinois Professional Teaching Standards were recently overhauled and will be fully implemented by

September 2013 (ISBE, 2010). The nine new standards and 159 indicators state what new teachers in Illinois should know and be able to do and will be assessed via the Assessment of Professional Teaching written test. These new standards emphasize technology incorporation and effective instruction to diverse K–12 learners. The Assessment of Professional Teaching and an accompanying content test assessing WL knowledge and proficiency have been developed to meet the third criterion of *highly qualified*, that teachers prove that they know the content they teach.

Illinois provides a rich landscape in which to analyze WL teacher education policy. An Illinois WL teaching license spans grades K–12, and in 2006 the ISBE found that 87 percent of elementary school WL teachers were deemed not *highly qualified*, along with 47 percent of middle school teachers and 28 percent of high school teachers (ISBE, 2006a, p. 21). Finding itself short of *highly qualified* teachers, Illinois has adopted the Visiting International Teacher Certificate (ISBE, 2006a, p. 65), which invites native speakers from other countries to teach languages in Illinois schools for a non-renewable period of three years. At the same time, budget cuts have hit Illinois, with K–12 WL programs reduced (Illinois Education Association, n.d.) and state foreign language grants completely cut from the budget (Illinois Arts Association, 2008). These losses to WL programs and funding have not been recovered in Illinois. The ISBE currently employs one specialist for both art and foreign language education.

WL teacher proficiency is described in the second of 10 state-level WL teacher standards: "The competent foreign language teacher understands oral communication and interacts appropriately in the target language in various settings" (ISBE, 2002, p. 92). One Knowledge Indicator concerning interpretive communication and four Performance Indicators describing presentational and interpersonal communication, along with knowledge of phonetic features of the language studied, make up Illinois's WL teacher knowledge expectations. Content tests for pre-service WL teachers are geared toward Advanced-Low proficiency, and those wishing to be certified in French, German, Hebrew, Italian, Latin, Russian, and Spanish complete 100 multiple choice questions and two constructed-response tasks that assess writing and oral skills (ISBE, 2006b). All content and pedagogy tests were developed by Pearson and are unique to Illinois (Illinois Certification Testing System, 2012).

Investigating three undergraduate WL teacher preparation programs across Illinois revealed a range of requirements to earn a bachelor's degree (see Table 2 on the next page for a summary). The following universities were selected: IL-1 (public, medium, NCATE), IL-2 (public, large, non-NCATE), and IL-3 (private, small, NCATE). Across the three IHEs, several commonalities arise. Per a state requirement, all three IHEs require 100 hours of clinical experiences before student teaching, with at least half of those hours to be completed in "diverse settings," based on the school or community center's student demographics. All three institutions encourage study abroad, but none of them requires it. Similar numbers of Spanish credits beyond intermediate classes are required, ranging from 32 to 36 credits. Oral proficiency was evaluated in all three programs using the OPI.

Table 2. Comparing three Illinois IHEs

	State-level Requirements	**IL-1**	**IL-2**	**IL-3**
Type of university and accreditation	-------	Public; state and NCATE	Public; state and non-NCATE	Private; state and NCATE
Certifications for Majors	K–12	K–12	K–12	K–12
Arts & Sciences credits for Spanish Education Major (beyond Intermediate Spanish)		35 Arts & Science credits (beyond Intermediate Spanish)	33-36 Arts & Science credits (beyond Intermediate Spanish)	32 Arts & Science credits (beyond Intermediate Spanish)
General education credits for Spanish Education Major		22 credits	17 credits	38 credits
Other WL pedagogy courses for Spanish Education Major		No	Four credits (one class)	No
WL-specific methods courses	-------	Six credits (two classes)	Eight credits (two classes)	Three credits (one class)
Technology specific course	-------	Three credits education; two WL-specific elective credits	None	None
Study abroad requirement	None	Strongly encouraged, not required	Strongly encouraged, not required	Strongly encouraged, not required
Required level of oral and written proficiency	Advanced-Low, oral and written, as measured by the Illinois content exam	Advanced-Low on OPI	Intermediate-High on OPI	Advanced-Low on OPI
Clinical experiences before student teaching	100 hours	100 hours	100 hours	100 hours
Length of student teaching	Not specified	11 weeks	10 weeks	16 weeks
WL supervisor observations	Not specified	Six	Six	Three
General supervisor observations	Not specified	No	No	Three

The ACTFL/NCATE nationally recognized programs at IL-1 and IL-3, however, require Advanced-Low to student teach while IL-2 requires Intermediate-High. Finally, all institutions require WL-specific methods coursework for graduation, ranging from three credits at the small, private university to six credits at the large, public university.

Some differences arise among the three Illinois IHEs. Education credits that are not specific to WL education range from 17 credits at IL-2 to 38 credits at IL-3. Additionally, Spanish teacher candidates at IL-1 and IL-3 are required to take a general pedagogy technology course, and IL-1 offers an elective WL-specific technology course. IL-2 requires no courses specific to using technology in instruction, although their program website explains that candidates will be prepared for pedagogical technology use. While both IL-1 and IL-2 require less than a semester of student teaching, with 11 and 10 weeks respectively, IL-3 requires a full semester or 16 weeks of student teaching. Student teachers from all three IHEs are observed at least six times, but at IL-1 and IL-2, WL specialists carry out all observations, while at IL-3 a WL specialist carries out three observations and a general university supervisor, who has K–12 teaching experience but not necessarily WL teaching expertise, carries out the remaining three.

Further differences lie in the WL teacher education program leadership. IL-1's WL teacher education specialist is tenure-track and housed within a language department in a College of Arts and Sciences, and IL-3's specialist holds a tenure-track position in a College of Education. IL-2's specialist, however, is a non-tenure-track director and is housed within a languages School and under the purview of the university's teacher education council.

Highly qualified in Illinois, it seems, may be dependent on the university from which a candidate graduates. The first NCLB criterion requiring a bachelor's degree means different things, depending upon whether a candidate graduated from IL-1, IL-2, or IL-3. For example, in IL-1 and IL-2, student teaching was less than three months long, whereas at IL-3 it was four months long. The second criterion, full state licensure or certification, is consistent across the institutions, with passing the content and pedagogical tests an integral part of the certification process. Also consistent across the IHEs is the number of clinical hours required prior to student teaching. All three IHEs specified the same minimum number of clinical hours and all teacher candidates across the state must complete at least 50 of those hours in a diverse setting. As for the third criterion, proving knowledge of the subject taught, it is met by passing the content test created by the state of Illinois, while achieving Advanced-Low proficiency on an official OPI is a requirement for those candidates at IL-1 and IL-3, which are NCATE accredited IHEs and ACTFL/NCATE nationally recognized WL teacher preparation programs.

Texas overview

Texas has a long history of educational policy, with educational concerns among the reasons cited for independence from Mexico (Texas Declaration of Independence, 1836). Texas is home to some of the largest school districts in the nation (e.g., Houston, Dallas) and continues to reform and revise K–12 teacher

certification requirements. Since 1995, Texas teacher licensing policymakers are the members of the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) (Texas Education Agency, 2012a, Board Members section, para. 1). According to the SBEC, which "oversees all aspects of the preparation, certification, and standards of conduct of public school educators," their members "recognize public school educators as professionals and grant educators the authority to govern the standards of their profession" (Texas Education Agency, 2012a, Board Members section, para. 1).

WLs, known as Languages Other than English in Texas, are not part of the core "Foundation Curriculum," which includes English language arts and reading, mathematics, science, and social studies (Texas Education Agency, 2013, Curriculum Division section, para. 2). Instead of being a core subject as in NCLB, in Texas WLs are included in the "Enrichment Curriculum," along with subjects such as fine arts and physical education (Texas Education Agency, 2013, Curriculum Division section, para. 2).

Texas WL teachers are licensed to teach students from early childhood through grade 12 (Texas State Board for Educator Certification, n.d.). To become a certified WL teacher, candidates must attend a state-approved Texas Educator Preparation Program that incorporates the state-approved standards for WL teachers (Texas SBEC, 2004). Candidates are later tested on these standards by taking a state-issued exam.

Prior to 2010, Texas used the Texas Oral Proficiency Test as a measure of teacher oral proficiency in more commonly taught languages, but the state now uses the Texas Examination of Educator Standards (TExES), a redesigned and more comprehensive exam phased in during the 2010-2011 academic year. Oral production is now one of several sections that contributes to a cumulative TExES exam score (Texas Education Agency, 2010). For more commonly taught languages, the TExES exam also includes written language proficiency measures (Educational Testing Service, 2012b, Test at a Glance section, table 1). It also covers target language instructional practices, cultural knowledge, and listening and reading skills (Educational Testing Service, 2012b, Test at a Glance section, table 1). In terms of scoring, the Spanish TExES exam, for example, is scored from 100 to 300, with 240 being the minimum passing score (Educational Testing Service, 2013, Passing Standards section, para. 1). Written and oral skills are each weighted 12 percent, so language production comprises approximately one-fourth of the exam score (Texas Education Agency, 2009). Teacher candidates of less commonly taught languages (e.g., Arabic) do not presently have a content-specific TExES exam and are required to take an OPI and a WPT. In summary, a candidate must attend a state-approved program, complete student teaching, and pass the Texas-specific exams to become certified. Any other requirements (e.g., portfolio, residence abroad) are left to the discretion of each IHE's WL teacher preparation program.

All educator preparation programs are approved by the Texas Education Agency, and many universities carry additional accreditation or organization memberships, such as that of the Southern University Conference. State program approval does not necessarily result in homogeneous programs, although all

programs must adhere to the overarching Texas standards (Texas Legislature, n.d.). Texas fully complies with NCLB's call for a bachelor's degree, full certification in the content area, and demonstrating content knowledge.

Three universities of varying sizes and contexts were selected for this sample: TX-1 (public, large, non-NCATE), TX-2 (private, medium, NCATE), and TX-3 (public, medium, non-NCATE). As seen in Table 3 (next two pages), one area of commonality is that all three institutions provide pre-service teachers with exposure to a K–12 setting prior to student teaching, though its duration and level of interaction with elementary and secondary students vary. Further, none of the three IHEs requires study abroad experiences for WL majors, though certification officers, advisors, and professors from each IHE reported promoting it to their pre-service teachers.

While these three WL teacher education programs demonstrate similar characteristics and requirements, diversions do occur (see Table 3). One significant difference is that only TX-1 and TX-2 require WL-specific pedagogy courses. TX-1 requires two WL methods courses totaling six credits, while TX-2 requires one WL methods course for three credits. TX-3 offers numerous courses in Curriculum and Instruction, as well as language content courses, but it does not offer a WL methods course. Additionally, TX-2 recommends introductory teacher education courses beginning in the first semester of freshman year while TX-1 offers teacher education courses upon admittance to the teaching program, typically spring semester of sophomore year or fall of junior year. Beginning teacher education coursework at TX-3 usually begins the spring semester of junior year.

A second area of divergence is that TX-1 and TX-2 require more clinical experiences spread over several semesters before student teaching. TX-3, on the other hand, offers a field walk just prior to student teaching, in which block courses are held in local schools twice a week for a semester. This experience is designed to expose candidates to the K–12 setting, though in a more condensed time frame.

As seen in the previous examples, Texas WL teacher preparation policies are not a prescriptive set of regulations. Rather, the requirements serve as an end goal or destination to describe the knowledge and skills that teachers should possess after WL teacher preparation programs (Texas SBEC, 2004). In terms of Texas producing *highly qualified* teachers, this preparation involves demonstrated oral and written proficiency and field experiences prior to student teaching. The three IHEs selected for this study show a good deal of variation, though all fully complied with the three requirements of NCLB's *highly qualified* teacher policy.

When compared with ACTFL/NCATE's (2002) program requirements, however, TX-3 does not offer a WL methods course. TX-1 does not offer a technology-specific course, though this experience with "technology-enhanced instruction" (ACTFL/NCATE, 2002, p. 2) may be integrated within other courses. All TX universities surveyed offer "opportunities" (ACTFL/NCATE, 2002, p. 2) for study abroad but none requires it. TX-2 most closely aligns with the ACTFL/ NCATE (2002) program requirements while TX-1 and TX-3 align less closely.

Table 3. Comparing three Texas IHEs

	State level Requirements	TX-1	TX-2	TX-3
Type of university and accreditation	-------	Public; state and non-NCATE	Private; state and NCATE	Public; state and non-NCATE
Certifications for Majors		EC–12	EC–12	EC–12
Arts & Sciences credits for Spanish Education Major (beyond Intermediate Spanish)	-------	27 Arts & Science credits (beyond Intermediate Spanish)	33 Arts & Science credits (beyond Intermediate Spanish)	24 Arts & Science credits (beyond Intermediate Spanish)
General education credits for Spanish Education Major		12 credits	41 credits	15 credits
Other WL pedagogy courses for Spanish Education Major		15 credits (four courses)	Three credits (two courses)	-------
WL-specific methods courses	-------	Yes, six credits (two courses)	Yes; six credits (one course)	No
Technology specific course	-------	Yes; two credits (two courses)	Yes; three credits (one course)	No
Study abroad requirement	-------	No	No	No
Required level of oral and written proficiency	Oral and written proficiency, as measured by Texas state exam	Oral and written proficiency, as measured by Texas state exam	Oral and written proficiency, as measured by Texas state exam; Advanced Low on OPI (per NCATE accreditation)	Oral and written proficiency, as measured by Texas state exam

Clinical experiences before student teaching	Minimum 30 hours, half of which may be completed “by use of electronic transmission, or other video or technology-based method”	72 hours of observations and lesson teaching at elementary, middle, and high school	One semester of tutoring; two semesters of half day teaching	Field walk: observations; two days/week/ semester
Length of student teaching	12 weeks	Full semester	Two semesters	12 weeks
WL supervisor observations	Minimum of three by trained field supervisor - may or may not be WL background	Five-six by mix of general and content supervisors.	Three-four depending on performance; frequent informal observations and mentor teacher feedback	Four-five by language faculty (three with formal evaluations documented)
General supervisor observations	(see above)	(see above)	N/A	N/A

Wisconsin overview

Throughout the history of Wisconsin teacher licensure, the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), university departments, schools of education, state legislators, and the Wisconsin Education Association Council have worked to further education, although recent budget controversy has detracted from collaborative efforts (Davey & Greenhouse, 2011). In regard to NCLB, Wisconsin was one of 19 states to “introduce a resolution or bill asking Congress to modify NCLB” (Shelly, 2008, p. 446), although for the 2005–2006 school year the state reported that “98.9 percent of all teachers employed in Wisconsin are *highly qualified* as defined by the state and by the federal *No Child Left Behind Act*” (Burmaster, 2006, p.1). Finally, Wisconsin applied for Race to the Top funds and split $133 million with four other states, gaining $22.7 million to improve services for young children (Richards, 2012).

Many key stakeholders supported Administrative Rule PI 34, passed by the state legislature in 2000 (for a comprehensive review of PI 34 and Wisconsin teacher licensure history, see Schug & Niederjohn, 2011.) PI 34 provisions mandate that teacher candidates must meet state-level regulations, such as a composing a portfolio and passing standardized content exams, to complete a teacher education program (Wisconsin DPI, 2010). In terms of WL teaching requirements, Wisconsin leaves most decisions up to the IHEs, which are accredited by the state. While these IHEs undergo regular programmatic reviews and some are accredited by NCATE, each IHE has some liberty to develop its own WL teacher candidate graduation requirements (see Oxford, 2008, for an example).

Comparing nine world language teacher preparation programs

A reevaluation of content testing recently occurred at the state level, and since September 2011 WL teacher candidates are required to exhibit at least Intermediate-High proficiency on the OPI or the OPI-Computer, as well as the WPT. This change from Praxis II content knowledge exams to the ACTFL proficiency tests was ultimately due to concern about the redesigned Praxis II geared toward Advanced-Low (Workgroup Report, 2011). Wisconsin stakeholders debated a move to Advanced-Low; however, after much discussion, they maintained the Intermediate-High passing score due to the potentially adverse impacts on IHEs. A higher passing score could have also led to a reevaluation and modification of WL teacher education programs and further K–12 educational implications (Workgroup Report, 2011).

It should be noted that Wisconsin supports WL education at the state level, as evidenced by hiring world and global education consultants within the DPI. In addition, the DPI has developed language-specific projects such as a WL assessment website (Educational Communications Board, 2008-2011) and a website to showcase testimonials of global perspectives in Wisconsin (Educational Communications Board, 2011).

A comparison of three IHEs highlights some of the WL teacher education nuances within Wisconsin. The three institutions selected for the study are WI-1 (public, medium, non-NCATE), WI-2 (private, small, NCATE), and WI-3 (private, small, NCATE). Wisconsin offers WL teaching licenses in grades PK–12, 1–8, and 6–12. These three WL teacher preparation programs reveal a common focus on study abroad, content-specific methods, and practicum experiences. In addition, the Spanish Education major at each institution is comprised of comparable credits from Colleges of Arts and Sciences, ranging from 31 to 43 credits, and from general education, 32 to 40 credits. As seen in Table 4 on the next page, each IHE requires teacher candidates to study abroad, although the state does not require it. All three IHEs require WL teacher candidates to complete a WL-specific methods course ranging from three to four credits taught by a specialist in WL education, but WI-1 splits the credits into two courses. In addition, WI-1 and WI-2 WL methods courses are taught by a faculty member in the Department of Foreign Languages. In the case of WI-3, the methods course is taught by an adjunct who is a language teacher in an area high school.

Perhaps the most salient difference among the three IHEs is the number and type of student teacher observation requirements. PI-34 legislation requires four observations by "[s]upervisors with teaching experience and expertise in the specialty subject matter area and at the grade level of pupils being taught by the student teacher" (Wisconsin DPI, 2010, p. 96). Each of the Wisconsin IHEs analyzed made sense of this rule differently, with WI-2 sending only content-specific supervisors and WI-1 and WI-3 dividing student teacher supervision between general and content-specific supervisors. The reality is that the interpretation of this rule across three programs leads to different opportunities for content-specific feedback.

The three IHEs examined illustrate continuity across programs in terms of how *highly qualified* was interpreted in Wisconsin. In particular, each IHE has similar requirements for a bachelor's degree and certification across programs, with comparable clinical hours, student teaching time, study abroad, and WL methods credit counts. In addition, the IHEs examined generally align to ACTFL/

Table 4. Comparing three Wisconsin IHEs

	State level Requirements	WI-1	WI-2	WI-3
Type of university and accreditation	-------	Public; state and non-NCATE	Private; state and NCATE	Private; state and NCATE
Certifications for Majors		PK–12	1–8, 6–12	PK–12
Arts & Sciences credits for Spanish Education Major (beyond Intermediate Spanish)	-------	31 credits	36 credits	43 credits
General education credits for Spanish Education Major		32 credits	40 credits	33 credits
Other WL pedagogy courses for Spanish Education Major		Three credits Second Language Acquisition course	No	No
WL-specific methods courses	-------	Four credits (two classes)	Four credits (one class)	Two credits (one class)
Technology specific course		No	No	Yes–Three credits, general
Study abroad requirement	-------	Yes–minimum of six weeks	Yes–minimum of six weeks	Yes–minimum of one month
Required level of oral and written proficiency	Intermediate-High on OPI or OPIc and WPT	Intermediate-High on OPI or OPIc and WPT	Intermediate-High on OPI or OPIc and WPT	Intermediate-High on OPI or OPIc and WPT
Clinical experiences before student teaching	100 hours	100 hours	100 hours	100 hours
Length of student teaching	Not specified	18 weeks	18 weeks	18 weeks
WL supervisor observations	Four visits by someone with experience in the subject and grade level	One	Four	Four

NCATE (2002) standards and program requirements, with the exception of WI-1 and WI-3 not meeting the recommended proficiency level of Advanced-Low to be nationally recognized. In addition, only one of the three institutions, WI-3, requires a technology specific course, although each institution does mention technology as being integrated into other courses. In sum, teacher candidates graduating from these IHEs, it seems, share similar requirements and field experiences, with differences in opportunities for feedback from a qualified WL supervisor during student teaching and the number of WL methods courses required.

Comparing IHEs using ACTFL/NCATE program requirements

The ACTFL/NCATE Program Standards (2002) and their requirements are useful for evaluating WL teacher preparation programs and have served as a means of analysis for this study. Although all nine IHEs in this study are equally compliant to NCLB, six of the nine IHEs have WL teacher preparation programs that, in one way or another, do not align with the ACTFL/NCATE (2002) program standards and requirements. The six IHEs that break with the standards and requirements do not require Advanced-Low proficiency of their Spanish teacher candidates. In addition, TX-3 does not require a WL-specific methods course, as outlined in requirement 4. Although each program may integrate technology and provide opportunities to use technology to meet requirement 7, only four of the nine require a technology course.

While there is divergence in many of the ACTFL/NCATE requirements, there is also some alignment. All nine programs provide field experiences supervised by a qualified content supervisor, at least for some observations, as described in requirement 6. In addition, each IHE offers opportunities for pre-service teachers to participate in study abroad experiences, as stated in requirement 8.

Comparing IHEs across and within states

Each of the nine WL teacher preparation programs examined is distinct because IHEs must, in a sense, craft a program to meet their individual needs and interests, based on factors such as faculty interests, resources, placements, student population, and recruitment. For example, the range of WL-specific teaching methods courses (zero to three) and credits (zero to eight) required suggests the potential for variance in teacher preparation quality, based on the university attended. For Spanish education majors, Arts and Sciences credits ranged from 24 to 43, while general education credits ranged from 12 to 41. Course offerings or study abroad requirements may also depend heavily on each IHE environment, and each IHE ultimately provides pre-service WL teachers with different opportunities for structured classroom learning in the United States or abroad. For example, all three Wisconsin IHEs require study abroad, while the remaining six IHEs only recommend it.

Several commonalities were present across all programs. In general, each program required a demonstration of oral proficiency, student teaching, a supervisory visit from a WL content specialist, and clinical experiences before student teaching. It should be noted that Wisconsin and Illinois IHEs demonstrated more commonalities to one another than did Texas's IHEs.

Differences among the nine IHEs, however, far outweighed commonalities with specific requirements differing across programs. For example, each state and program require some level of oral proficiency, but programs nationally accredited by ACTFL/NCATE require their candidates to meet Advanced-Low proficiency. Some NCATE and non-NCATE IHEs, however, may require lower benchmarks depending on the required proficiency level set by the state. All IHEs also require student teaching, although its length varies from ten weeks at IL-2 to two semesters at TX-2. Another commonality is that each IHE requires clinical experiences before student teaching. However, the experiences vary considerably from a field walk at TX-3 to 100 hours required by Illinois and Wisconsin state-level policy. Finally, student teacher supervisor visits range from four to eight observations, while visits from a WL specialist ranged from one to six. It is clear that from one IHE to another, opportunities for feedback, experiential learning, and clinical experiences vary greatly. The large variance shown in this study suggests each IHE has a distinct program that prepares pre-service WL teachers in a different way than other programs, even within the same state.

Discussion

Despite being called "fairly straightforward" (Birman et al., 2007, p. 12), the first and second tenets of NCLB's highly qualified teachers mandate proved complicated when examined closely, as did the third tenet. From our analysis, the three NCLB criteria for preparing highly qualified teachers–a bachelor's degree, state certification or licensure, proving knowledge of the subject taught–may not be so clear-cut when investigated with a specific content area in mind. The same federal polices can trickle down in different ways. At the state level and in each unique IHE context, teacher candidates seem to experience less than uniform WL teacher preparation.

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We must keep in mind, however, that *highly qualified* was intentionally left vague to assuage political disagreements during NCLB's development (Hess & Petrilli, 2006). Coburn (2006) tells us that interpreting policy vagueness is often left up to the local actors who "actively construct their understanding of policies by interpreting them through the lens of their preexisting beliefs and practices," which "shapes their decisions and actions as they enact policy" (p. 344). State WL leaders, licensure officers, and program coordinators are sense-makers, interpreting policy based on their local environments and unique contexts. This study has found substantial variability across state and IHE requirements for WL teacher preparation. Furthermore, the two levels of policy interpretation, between the federal and state levels and between the state and IHE levels, bring about complexity and differences across the nine programs. Diversity among WL teacher education programs shows us

that *highly qualified* WL teacher candidates are unique products of their particular state and IHE, even though their preparation complies with NCLB requirements.

In a sense, the federal level sets the initial parameters for educational policy, but many other entities downstream shape its implementation. Power structures ultimately determine requirements, with federal and state powers holding more sway than WL teaching professionals. NCLB regulations are high stakes, but ACTFL/NCATE's (2002) program standards may not be as of high of stakes, thus creating a major difference in the impact of the two policies. That power structure introduces a wide variety of pedagogical implications across programs and states, including required proficiency levels, types of courses taken, and mandated assessments for pre-service teachers, among others. When these nine IHEs are viewed in light of ACTFL/NCATE (2002) criteria, the authors see a good deal of variation across the programs, with few appearing to align with all of standards and program requirements.

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With increased accountability, the need for a collaborative instead of competitive framework is essential. It is oftentimes the case that WL educators from language departments and education departments in the same IHE work in isolation from another, unaware of what each other is doing. With this said, the authors return to the ACTFL/NCATE program standards that describe WL teacher preparation as "the joint responsibility of the faculty in foreign languages and education" (2002, p. 2). The same lack of awareness too often holds true among IHEs in the same state and across states. Ultimately, IHEs must find ways to continue to meet their local needs in spite of increasing pressures to standardize, test, and measure. Simultaneously, IHEs need to work together in order to balance competing local and higher level forces with the end goal of developing *highly qualified* WL teachers without recreating the wheel in each of their local contexts. This article is intended as one way to help improve communication and understanding.

The teacher education landscape is constantly changing and creating new challenges for WL teacher education programs, and presently this could not be truer. In addition to the recent modifications described in each state's context, IHEs are about to face enormous changes in teacher education accreditation. To be specific, NCATE and the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC) will soon merge to form the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) (Wiseman, 2012), and new Program Standards for the Preparation of Foreign Language Teachers are currently being developed (ACTFL, 2013). Another upcoming challenge is the Teacher Performance Assessment Consortium's edTPA, a new measure of student teachers' effectiveness that is currently being implemented in over 20 states as part of student teaching requirements (Hildebrandt & Hlas, 2013). This high-stakes assessment, developed at Stanford University, is based "around the principles that successful teachers apply knowledge of subject matter

and subject-specific pedagogy" (Teacher Performance Assessment Consortium, 2011, p. 4). WL teacher preparation programs all over the country are clamoring to understand the implications on their candidates and programs, particularly given the serious ramifications for not passing the assessment. Many states have tied the edTPA to certification or licensure requirements, while others such as Illinois have also tied it to graduation requirements. Similar to the criticisms of National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, candidates' writing abilities may confound the results of the edTPA and its implementation may leave programs at risk (Burroughs, Schwartz, & Hendricks-Lee, 2000).

With all of these changes, IHEs and programs will undoubtedly spend vast amounts of time and energy to comply with new state and accreditation mandates. Could that time and energy be better spent helping WL teacher preparation candidates meet the challenges they will face in the K–12 setting? Instead of constantly retooling their programs with each mandate, IHEs could instead focus on analyzing program outcomes, as demonstrated in their graduates' post-graduation classroom performance or from data collected during their teacher education program. With more time, WL teacher preparation programs could also take what they know about novice teacher development and create opportunities in their communities for their pre-service candidates to carry out real-world teaching. Instead, it seems IHEs and WL teacher education programs must continually focus on the mandates from above to justify and maintain their existence.

Limitations and future research

As with any study, there are limitations that must be acknowledged. This data set represents a small sample of WL teacher preparation programs across the country, and the authors recommend that further comparisons be made with a wider sample of states and greater level of detail in comparing IHEs within and across states. Investigating the teacher candidate perspective would also contribute to our current understanding of WL teacher certification policy.

This study's methodology relied partially on counting credits, which may tell little about IHE teacher education program orientation or coherence. Also, many course descriptions encountered while collecting data included verbiage about technology, although the authors counted only technology-specific courses when addressing ACTFL/NCATE's seventh requirement for "technology-enhanced instruction" (2002, p. 2).

All data were gathered by the authors, who may have relied on preexisting knowledge of state and institutional contexts. The act of writing about policy and its interpretation influences the very policy being studied, with the researchers taking an active role (Yanow, 2000). This study is no different, with each author acting as a participant observer (Yin, 2009), although every attempt was made to remain impartial. In addition, states were selected based on a convenience sample, and the selection of three programs within each state inevitably forced the researchers to explore the limited context and artifacts of the states chosen. This study does not address all states or situations. Therefore, the small number of

states selected will limit the generalizability of the findings. Finally, though many steps were taken to remove author bias, the researchers acknowledge and take responsibility for any inadvertent bias, with efforts taken to ensure each program's anonymity.

It is also worth noting that educational policy is ethereal and impermanent, with teacher qualifications influenced heavily by elections and the ebb and flow of power structures (Ryan, 2004). The impending changes to WL teacher preparation described above will surely influence the future of American teacher education and provide a robust opportunity to examine sense-making at the local level as they happen. It is necessary to better understand each local actor's beliefs and experiences to make sense of policy implementation (Coburn, 2006) as it occurs and to follow the intended and unintended effects, or washback.

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Because of the ever-changing nature of these data, the authors encourage the reader to confirm information contained within this article, particularly if attempting certification or directing a WL teacher preparation program. The information presented here is as accurate and current as possible at the time of writing. Because the information sources are varied and decentralized, any errors, omissions, or inaccuracies were unintentional, and the authors assume full responsibility.

Conclusion and Emerging Issues

WL educators, policymakers, and stakeholders between top down and local forces have yet to fully agree on how to specifically operationalize *highly qualified* as it relates to WL teachers. The varied contexts and differing agendas, along with competing interests, impact American higher education and teacher preparation practices. Donato (2009) points out that schools of education are confronted with the challenge to respond to multiple mandates and to reconstruct programs frequently to satisfy national-level and state-level professional standards. Failure to do so can lead to program sanctions, lack of accreditation or closure of the teacher education program (p. 267).

The complicated nature of policy has occurred, in part, due to questions surrounding teacher quality and subsequent student learning. With increased accountability, the localized licensure process will only receive more scrutiny and examination. Nonetheless, clear and current information on each state's licensure policy is not readily available or easily accessible in a central repository. In fact, locating and making sense of each state's educational teacher preparation policies was complicated and frequently convoluted. Given these challenges, a comparison of state IHEs as seen in this study is a worthwhile beginning. Examination of these IHEs and states has demonstrated the complicated, localized nature of U.S. WL teacher preparation programs and serves to further promote dialogue among those who care about improving WL teacher quality.

This study found substantial variability across nine WL teacher education programs across three states. With this variability, it is difficult for programs and states

to collaborate or create a unified vision of what makes WL teachers successful because of the balance needed between complying with requirements and maintaining local autonomy. Therefore, a professional, well-informed front will be necessary to continuously advance WL teaching at all levels and would aid in cross-state and cross-programmatic collaboration.

It is hoped that this article will enlighten WL teacher education program directors to the commonalities and differences at the state and IHEs levels, in an effort to further open lines of communication. That communication is now more important than ever as new directives from above will again force new program modifications. By joining forces, programs can learn from one another's actions instead of acting in isolation. Within- and across-states collaboration can alleviate some of the challenges caused by the constantly shifting landscape and reoccurring program redesigns. Open communication can also give a stronger voice to those on the ground, doing the important work of WL teacher education, and enable them to have a say in shaping the mandates instead of merely reacting to them. Successfully preparing *highly qualified* teachers for every WL classroom will require time and dedication. The authors hope that this highly charged label and its associated policies will serve as a catalyst to further investigate how WLs are best learned and taught, particularly in K–12 environments.

Notes

1. Depending on the state, the term *licensure* or *certification* can describe the process by which teachers are given permission from the state to teach at the K–12 level. For example, Texas uses the term *certification*, while Wisconsin and Illinois use *licensure*.

2. The authors will use NCLB's term *highly qualified* in italics to denote compliance with state and federal licensure policy. This term should not be read as the authors' judgment or opinion of a given program, policy, or teacher. Readers should also note that the use of highly qualified does not necessarily connote effectiveness (Palardy & Rumberger, 2008).

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Appendix A

Interview Protocol for Institutions of Higher Education

1. Which best describes the accreditation of your institution?

NCATE TEAC State-Accredited Other: ________

2. Does your institution certify foreign language education majors and minors?

Majors Only Majors and Minors Other: ________

3. In which languages?

4. I see your state currently uses the [Praxis, OPI, Pearson, State Test] for certification. Is this still accurate? Does the same exam apply to all languages?

5. In addition to the Praxis, Pearson, or OPI, does the program require passing other oral or written proficiency requirements? What is the minimum level of proficiency for each skill?

6. I see your state currently requires a proficiency level of [Intermediate-High or Advanced-Low]. Is this still accurate? Does it apply to all languages?

7. Now I'd like you to tell me a little bit more about how foreign language education majors and minors are recommended by the licensure specialist at your institution:

8. Does the sequence of study require a period of immersion (e.g., study abroad) for majors and minors? If so, how long is the minimum stay? Are native speakers held to the same requirements?

9. How many credits of foreign language methods do language education majors take? Minors (if applicable)?

10. Please describe the timing and length of foreign language methods courses and field/clinical experiences with your program.

11. Are there other practicum experiences in FL are required before student teaching? If so, please describe them.

12. How many student teaching observations are conducted by content supervisors? By general supervisors?

13. What are the requirements to be a supervisor?

14. Is a portfolio required of pre-service teachers? Can you describe this process?

15. Some states allow interpretation and flexibility for IHEs; would you prefer to see more flexibility or more standardization? Explain.

16. If states could offer more standardization among IHEs, what would that look like to you?

17. If there was anything that you could change on a state or intuitional level, what would it be and why?

18. ACTFL/NCATE's program standards tell us that 80 percent of all new teacher candidates must demonstrate Advanced-Low proficiency, be supervised by an experienced teacher, and complete a FL methods course. What are your thoughts about these program standards?

19. Is there anything else you would like us to know or would like to share?