Meeting Standards 2017? A National Survey of Classroom Teacher Preparedness for Literacy Instruction

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Introduction

For years, education researchers have acknowledged the significant role that teacher preparation programs play in shaping the teaching practices of future classroom teachers (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Grossman, 1990). However, university-based teacher preparation programs have been at the center of much debate and scrutiny for over 30 years (Grossman, 2008). These criticisms originally stemmed from inequities that continue to persist in PK–12 schools, as well as chronic shortages of knowledgeable, fully qualified, and well-prepared teachers who enter and stay in the profession,

particularly at the neediest schools (Zeichner, 2014). Media outlets also exacerbated these criticisms, which eventually resulted in a significant loss of support for university-based teacher preparation programs from governmental agencies, private foundations, and policymakers.

The loss of support for university-based teacher preparation programs, coupled with negative public perceptions of the teaching profession, created the perfect storm for an "accountability emphasis" in teacher education (Cochran-Smith et al., 2017, p. 582). As a result, university-based teacher preparation programs have engaged in a number of reform efforts during the past two decades to improve teacher education and produce better-prepared classroom teachers (Bales, 2006; Cochran-Smith, Keefe, & Carney, 2018). These reform efforts resulted in the development of accountability systems, policies, and standards that shifted the focus of control from local teacher preparation programs to state and national authorities. As a result, those who are closest to the preparation of future classroom teachers, the teacher educators, are no longer the primary drivers of professional discourse for teacher education (Bales, 2006; Delandshere & Arens, 2001).

We—Laurie, Marla, Roberta, Rebekah, Amy, Delane, and Teresa— are literacy teacher educators who are committed and passionate about our work in preparing future classroom teachers for literacy instruction. However, research specific to literacy teacher education is limited (Martin, Chase, Cahill, & Gregory, 2011) and demands increased attention (International Literacy Association [ILA], 2015). Therefore, we took accountability for our part within the enterprise of teacher education and sought to address this research gap (Cochran-Smith, 2003). With ILA's (2018) recent release of a revised set of professional preparation standards for literacy professionals, we felt it was an optimal time to query the "internal experts" (Lacina & Block, 2011, p. 326) concerning their views of classroom teachers' preparedness for literacy instruction. We used a cross-sectional research design to obtain a one-time snapshot of the following research question: How do literacy teacher educators in the United States view classroom teachers' preparedness for literacy instruction? Our research enabled us to tap into the expertise of those who have the most direct knowledge of literacy teacher education and gain a preliminary understanding of ways in which literacy teacher educators may strengthen classroom teachers' preparedness for literacy instruction.

Review of Literature

Classroom Teacher Knowledge of Literacy Instruction

In a rapidly changing and globally connected world, every classroom teacher must know how to address current literacy demands (Leu & Kinzer, 2000; Short, Day, & Schroeder, 2016). Economic interdependence, global mobility, media outlets, and technology are embedded in our everyday lives and have greatly influenced forms and functions of literacy, thereby significantly altering what it means to be a literate individual (Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, Castek, & Henry, 2013; Short et al., 2016). Classroom teachers in today's classrooms can no longer focus solely on foundational reading and writing practices. Rather, literacy instruction must emphasize contemporary notions of language and literacy, such as media literacy, multimodal literacies, and critical literacy. Moreover, classroom teachers must implement effective literacy instruction

informed by research that employs "rigorous standards of replicability and clear, rigorous methodologies" (McCardle & Chhabra, 2004, pp. 4–5).

Effective literacy instruction requires specialized knowledge about language and literacy at the various stages of child and adolescent development (Johnson, Watson, Delahunty, McSwiggen, & Smith, 2011; Piasta, Connor, Fishman, & Morrison, 2009). For example, it is vital that elementary classroom teachers know how to develop a strong foundation for literacy development among young learners (Holdaway, 1979; Neuman & Dickinson, 2011) that addresses the major processes associated with language acquisition (Brown, 1973), reading (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998) and writing (Graham, MacArthur, & Fitzgerald, 2007). On the other hand, secondary classroom teachers must know how to promote content-based understandings among older learners through disciplinary literacy practices (Alvermann, 2002; Draper, 2008; Fisher & Ivey, 2005; Gillis, 2014; Moje, 2008). Thus, classroom teachers must be skilled with delivering instruction that addresses the different literacy needs of learners throughout their years of schooling.

Classroom teachers must also be flexible practitioners who know how to adapt literacy instruction in response to a wide range of diverse learning needs (Vaughn, Parsons, Gallagher, & Branen, 2016). Diverse learning needs encompass individual student factors, such as academic performance levels (Learned, 2018; Stover, Sparrow, & Siefert, 2017), cultural and linguistic differences (de Oliveira & Athanases, 2017; Musti-Rao, Cartledge, Bennett, & Council, 2015), and intellectual exceptionalities (Lemons, Allor, Al Otaiba, & LeJeune, 2016; Poch & Lembke, 2018). Diverse learning needs also encompass contextual factors beyond the student, such as education inequities in rural (Azano, 2015) and urban communities (Hollins, 2017) and variations in the socioeconomic statuses of students' households (Taylor, Pearson, Clark, & Walpole, 2000). With these diverse learning needs in mind, Morrow and Gambrell (2019) asserted, "There is no single method or approach [for literacy instruction] that is universally effective" (p. 78). Rather, education research has produced a body of evidence-based practices for classroom teachers to draw from according to the diverse learning needs of their students.

Current State of Literacy Teacher Education

Literacy-focused scholarship is replete with examples of preparation practices that prime future elementary classroom teachers to address literacy. For example, Ely, Kennedy, Pullen, Williams, and Hirsch (2014) described how the use of an innovative multimedia-based intervention (i.e., pairing a content acquisition podcast with a video of teacher-modeled instruction) provided a path to enhance literacy knowledge among preservice teachers outside of formal class time. Additionally, Wetzel, Hoffman, Roach, and Russell (2018) noted how providing preservice teachers with a wide variety of practice-based literacy experiences throughout teacher education (e.g., tutorials, internships, student teaching) reinforced their ability to "construct practical knowledge, encounter productive tensions in their work, and align their practices with that knowledge" (p. 107). Furthermore, researchers have shared findings from comprehensive reviews of literacy programming (Berenato & Severino, 2017), examinations of individual literacy courses (Martin & Dismuke, 2015), and investigations of specific teacher preparation practices (Ballock, McQuitty, & McNary, 2018) that identified ways in which literacy teacher

educators may foster more extensive understandings about literacy content and pedagogy among future classroom teachers.

There is also a growing body of literature focused on effective ways to prepare future secondary classroom teachers to address literacy. Fang (2014) emphasized the importance of literacy teacher educators shifting from "teaching generic literacy strategies to teaching discipline-specific language and literacy practices" (p. 444). Fang recommended that teacher preparation programs offer disciplinary literacy courses for cohorts of future secondary classroom teachers by content area. Within these courses, Fang emphasized a need for literacy teacher educators to promote preservice teachers' understandings of text types, literacies, and pedagogical content knowledge within the respective content area. Fang also encouraged literacy teacher educators to help their teacher education colleagues in other academic disciplines to address disciplinary literacy instruction within their content area courses. Conley (2012) further elaborated on the suggested design of a disciplinary literacy course and delineated specific learning activities that he designed in collaboration with disciplinary experts to "foreground the disciplines and provide modeling for disciplinary literacy" (p. 143). Conley first grounded the course in state curriculum standards for individual disciplines and subsequently developed evidence-based learning activities to promote the development of pedagogical content knowledge, teacher identity, and professional decision-making among preservice teachers. Along these same lines, Marri et al. (2011) described how an interdisciplinary group of teacher educators collaborated to address disciplinary literacy through an integrated set of courses. Marri and her colleagues developed and embedded a content-driven literacy approach into two required teacher education courses: an adolescent literacy course and a content-specific student teaching seminar. This approach sought to enhance preservice teachers' understandings with disciplinary literacy practices, such as embedding reading and writing into content area instruction, using research to plan and implement literacy strategies that increase students' content knowledge, modifying literacy instruction according to students' learning needs, and using diverse types of content-area texts.

Despite the increased focus on promising practices for literacy teacher education, a number of studies have pointed to deficiencies in understandings about literacy and the use of evidence-based literacy instruction among practicing classroom teachers. In the elementary grade levels, researchers have highlighted limited understandings with language structure, phonemic awareness, phonics, (Bos, Mather, Dickson, Podhajski, & Chard, 2001; Moats, 1994; Spear-Swerling & Cheesman, 2012; Spear-Swerling & Zibulsky, 2014; Washburn, Joshi, & Binks-Cantrell, 2011) and the teaching of writing (Cutler & Graham, 2008). In the secondary grade levels, researchers have revealed limitations with understandings for effective literacy instruction in the content areas (Meyer, 2013; Ness, 2009; Nokes, 2010; Swanson et al., 2016; Wexler, Mitchell, Clancy, & Silverman, 2017). Given these findings, many researchers have studied literacy teacher education more closely during the past several years in an attempt to improve how literacy teacher educators train future classroom teachers for literacy instruction (Clark, 2016; Grisham et al., 2014; Pomerantz & Condie, 2017; Wolsey et al., 2013).

Literacy Teacher Education Standards

For over 60 years, one of the premier professional organizations for literacy professionals has developed research-based standards to guide the education of future literacy professionals. In

May of 2018, ILA released its third iteration of standards, *Standards for the Preparation of Literacy Professionals 2017* (hereafter *Standards 2017*). *Standards 2017* aims to strengthen literacy teacher education by providing teacher preparation programs with a coherent, comprehensive, and explicit set of performance criteria. Organized into seven overarching standards, these criteria delineate desired dispositions, knowledge, and skills of novice literacy professionals for a variety of roles. For the role of classroom teacher, ILA developed the following six standards for three different grade-level bands (i.e., pre-K/primary, elementary/intermediate, and middle/high school): (1) Foundational Knowledge, (2) Curriculum and Instruction, (3) Assessment and Evaluation, (4) Diversity and Equity, (5) Learners and the Literacy Environment, and (6) Professional Learning and Leadership. Within each grade-level band, there are four components associated with each of the six standards (see Appendix C in *Standards 2017* [ILA, 2018] for matrices of the standards and components for classroom teachers in each grade-level band). *Standards 2017* provides teacher preparation programs with an invaluable tool to guide the development and evaluation of programming for literacy teacher education.

Methods

Sample

At the time of our study, a comprehensive listing of literacy teacher educators affiliated with university-based teacher preparation programs in the United States was not available. Therefore, we obtained a representative sample by using purposive sampling techniques. We partitioned a map of the United States into six different areas by regional accrediting organizations. We then divided ourselves into small groups to create participant pools for each area (see Table 1). To accommodate our small group collaborative efforts, we established a shared folder in Google Drive as a password-protected virtual workspace.

Table 1. Creation of Participant Pools by Regional Accrediting Organization

Areas	Researchers	States
Higher Learning Commission	Delane Teresa	Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming
Middle States Commission on Higher Education	Laurie Roberta Rebekah	Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands
New England Association of Schools and Colleges	Laurie Roberta Rebekah	Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont
Northwest Accreditation Commission	Marla Amy	Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools	Laurie Roberta Rebekah	Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia

Western Association of Schools and Colleges	Marla Amy	California, Hawaii, Guam American Samoa, Micronesia, Northern Mariana Islands, Palau

Within our small groups, we followed a systematic process to create participant pools for each area. First, we made a list of all individual states in our assigned areas. Next, we accessed each state's education agency website and generated a list of state-approved, university-based teacher preparation programs. Then, we conducted subsequent web searches on each university's website to identify faculty members who taught literacy-focused coursework that was required in the university's teacher preparation program. To cast a wide net, we performed a broad search to include faculty members affiliated with various academic departments, such as curriculum and instruction, education, English, literacy, reading, and teaching and learning. During web searches, we accessed information that was publicly available (e.g., class schedules, course syllabi) and published on departmental web pages (e.g., faculty lists by teaching areas). We retrieved relevant email addresses and added them to the area's participant pool, which was stored as a spreadsheet housed in our shared Google Drive. Once we completed participant pools for all six areas, we compiled the information into one master distribution list in Qualtrics®, which contained 2,533 email addresses.

Instrumentation

We developed our survey instrument using Qualtrics®, a web-based platform for data collection and analysis. We designed our survey instrument following Sue and Ritter's (2012) design principles for online surveys and included closed-ended items to collect demographic information (e.g., age, educational background, gender, professional status, years of professional experiences) and views of classroom teacher preparedness for literacy instruction. We pilot-tested our survey instrument among 20 experienced and knowledgeable literacy teacher educators who provided feedback for the survey's appearance, compatibility, readability, and user-friendliness, as well as individual survey items. Based upon feedback received, we made minor wording revisions to the original survey instrument.

For the survey items related to views of classroom teacher preparedness, we created separate survey sections for each of the six standards (i.e., Foundational Knowledge, Curriculum and Instruction, Assessment and Evaluation, Diversity and Equity, Learners and the Literacy Environment, Professional Learning and Leadership). Each survey section consisted of three subsections for the different grade-level bands (i.e., pre-K/primary, elementary/intermediate, middle/high school). Within each subsection, respondents rated their views of preparedness for the four related components using a 4-point Likert scale with the following options: Not At All Prepared, Somewhat Prepared, Very Prepared, and Extremely Prepared. We decided against using a forced format for this part of the survey instrument since respondents may have been involved with preparing future teachers for one or more of the components, standards, or grade-level bands.

To establish reliability, we calculated Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the entire survey ($\alpha = 0.94$) and each sub-section (see Table 2). Each of these values ranged from 0.90 to 0.99, which indicated high levels of internal consistency (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). We established

content validity by modeling survey items after the standards and components in each grade-level band published in *Standards 2017* (ILA, 2018) and implementing a pilot process among a group of experts.

Table 2. Internal Consistency of Survey Instrument

Survey Sections and Subsections	Cronbach's α
Foundational Knowledge	
Pre-K/Primary	0.90
Elementary/Intermediate	0.91
Middle/High School	0.99
Curriculum and Instruction	
Pre-K/Primary	0.95
Elementary/Intermediate	0.92
Middle/High School	0.94
Assessment and Evaluation	
Pre-K/Primary	0.93
Elementary/Intermediate	0.93
Middle/High School	0.95
Diversity and Equity	
Pre-K/Primary	0.95
Elementary/Intermediate	0.94
Middle/High School	0.97
Learners and the Literacy Environment	
Pre-K/Primary	0.91
Elementary/Intermediate	0.90
Middle/High School	0.98
Professional Learning and Leadership	
Pre-K/Primary	0.95
Elementary/Intermediate	0.96
Middle/High School	0.97

Data Collection and Analysis

We distributed our survey to all potential respondents in the master distribution list via the Qualtrics® email feature. Within the body of the email, we explained the purpose of our study, provided information regarding institutional review board approvals at each of our universities, and listed their rights as research participants. We also included a web link to access the survey instrument. Once respondents opened the survey instrument, they were required to document informed consent by providing their signature before they were granted access to individual survey items. After we sent the initial email, 48 emails bounced back as undeliverable and four individuals emailed Laurie to indicate that they did not see themselves as literacy teacher educators. We removed these 52 email addresses from our master distribution list, which reduced it to 2,481 email addresses. We kept the survey period open for three months and addressed nonresponse bias by sending two monthly follow-up reminders to participate. During the survey period, Laurie also received emails from 10 individuals who indicated their skepticism to

participate due to the frequency of phishing attempts. Laurie responded to each of the individuals, assured them of the authenticity of our study, and encouraged them to participate.

We analyzed collected data for demographics and views of preparedness with descriptive statistics (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). For demographic data, we reported frequencies and percentages. For views of preparedness, we reported responses for the four components in each survey subsection by grade-level band with means, standard deviations, and 95% confidence intervals.

Findings

Respondents

When the survey period closed, we received 205 surveys. Of these, 200 respondents provided complete demographic information. As shown in Table 3, the majority of respondents were female ($n = 168$, 84%) and between the ages of 40–49 years ($n = 77$, 38.5%). Findings also showed that almost half of the respondents had more than 10 years of experience as a classroom teacher ($n = 91$, 45.5%) and the same level of experience as a literacy teacher educator ($n = 110$, 55%). Most respondents also held doctorate degrees ($n = 177$, 88.5%), and many were employed as full-time, tenured faculty members at universities ($n = 89$, 44.5%). As literacy teacher educators, respondents indicated that they prepared future classroom teachers in undergraduate teacher preparation programs ($n = 155$, 43.7%), graduate degree teacher certificate programs ($n = 148$, 41.7%), and alternative teacher certification programs ($n = 34$, 9.6%), with more half of the respondents indicating involvement with more than one program ($n = 125$, 62.5%). Respondents also reported their involvement in preparing future classroom teachers for the different grade-level bands as follows: pre-K/primary ($n = 129$, 24.5%), elementary/intermediate ($n = 175$, 38.6%), and middle/high school ($n = 129$, 28.5%).

Table 3. Demographic Data for Respondents

Characteristic	n
Gender	
Female	168 (84%)
Male	30 (15%)
Prefer Not to Answer	2 (1%)
Age Range	
20–29 Years	—
30–39 Years	27 (13.5%)
40–49 Years	77 (38.5%)
50–59 Years	41 (20.5%)
60–69 Years	44 (22%)
Over 70 Years	11 (5.5%)
Years as Classroom Teacher	
Less than 1 Year	4 (2%)
1–3 Years	21 (10.5%)
4–6 Years	53 (26.5%)
7–9 Years	31 (15.5%)
More than 10 Years	91 (45.5%)

Years as Literacy Teacher Educator	
Less than 1 Year	2 (1%)
1–3 Years	13 (6.5%)
4–6 Years	42 (21%)
7–9 Years	33 (16.5%)
More than 10 Years	110 (55%)
Educational Background	
Bachelor's Degree	1 (0.5%)
Master's Degree	14 (7%)
Doctorate Degree	177 (88.5%)
Other[*]	8 (4%)
Employment Status	
Full-time, tenured faculty member	89 (44.5%)
Full-time, tenure-track faculty member	44 (22%)
Full-time, non-tenure track faculty member	50 (25%)
Part-time faculty member	17 (8.5%)

*In the *Other* option, respondents indicated the following: Currently pursuing doctorate (n = 4, 50%); Education specialist degree ($n = 2$, 25%); Consultant reading programs ($n = 1$, 12.5%); and Principal certification ($n = 1$, 12.5%).

Views of Preparedness

We analyzed our data to determine respondents' views of classroom teacher preparedness for literacy instruction in each grade-level band by component. To identify potential areas of strength and possible shortcomings in literacy teacher education, we arranged the mean values for respondents' views of each component from least to greatest. Below, we reported the range for the number of respondents and mean values for respondents' views of preparedness. Within each grade-level band, we also included the overall mean value for respondents' views of preparedness of all components and identified the three components with the highest and lowest mean values. As we previously stated, respondents were not required to answer all survey items, which resulted in a range of responses for each component. While this methodological approach may have limited the number of individual responses to survey items, our intention was to avoid response bias.

Pre-K/Primary

Within this grade-level band, between 111 and 152 respondents indicated their views of preparedness for components within the six standards (see Table 4). The range of mean values for respondents' views of each component was 2.66–3.20, with an overall mean value of 2.89. Thus, respondents indicated that classroom teachers who graduated from their respective teacher preparation programs were either somewhat prepared or very prepared with each component.

Table 4. Views of Preparedness for Pre-K/Primary Grade-Level Band

				95% CI	
Foundational Knowledge	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*LL*	*UL*
1. Knowledge of major theoretical, conceptual, and evidence-based components of pre-K/primary reading development and evidence-based instructional approaches that support that development.	152	2.97	0.74	2.85	3.09
2. Knowledge of major theoretical, conceptual, and evidence-based foundations of pre-K/primary writing development and the writing process and evidence-based instructional approaches that support writing of specific types of text and producing writing appropriate to task.	152	2.66	0.80	2.53	2.79
3. Knowledge of major theoretical, conceptual, and evidence-based frameworks that describe the centrality of language to literacy learning and evidence-based instructional approaches that support the development of listening, speaking, viewing, and visually representing.	152	2.91	0.85	2.78	3.04
4. Knowledge of major theoretical, conceptual, and evidence-based frameworks that describe the interrelated components of literacy and interdisciplinary learning.	152	2.89	0.84	2.76	3.02

				95% CI	
Curriculum and Instruction	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*LL*	*UL*
1. The ability to critically examine pre-K/primary literacy curricula and select high-quality literary, multimedia, and informational texts to provide a coherent, integrated, and motivating literacy program.	125	2.78	0.82	2.64	2.92
2. Planning, modifying, and implementing evidence-based, developmentally appropriate, and integrated instructional approaches that develop reading processes as	125	3.05	0.77	2.92	3.18

related to foundational skills, vocabulary, and comprehension for pre-k/primary learners.

3. Designing, adapting, implementing, and evaluating evidence-based and developmentally appropriate instruction and materials to develop writing processes and orthographic knowledge of pre-K/primary learners. — 125 — 2.81 — 0.83 — 2.66 — 2.96

4. Planning, modifying, implementing, and evaluating evidence-based and integrated instructional approaches and materials that provide developmentally appropriate instruction and materials to develop the language, speaking, listening, viewing, and visually representing skills and processes of pre-K/primary learners. — 122 — 2.93 — 0.84 — 2.78 — 3.08

| | | | | 95% CI | |
Assessment and Evaluation	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*LL*	*UL*
1. Understanding the purposes, strengths and limitations, reliability/validity, formats, and appropriateness of various types of informal and formal assessments.	121	2.68	0.77	2.54	2.82
2. Using observational skills and results of student work to determine students' literacy and language strengths and needs, selecting and administering other formal and informal assessments appropriate for assessing students' language and literacy development.	120	2.98	0.83	2.83	3.13
3. Using results of various assessment measures to inform and/or modify instruction.	121	2.93	0.87	2.78	3.08
4. Using data in an ethical manner, interpreting data to explain student progress, and informing families and colleagues about the function/purpose of assessments.	121	2.83	0.85	2.68	2.98

Diversity and Equity				95% CI	
	n	*M*	*SD*	*LL*	*UL*
1. Recognizing how their own cultural experiences affect instruction and appreciating the diversity of their students, families, and communities.	119	2.85	0.92	2.69	3.02
2. Setting high expectations for learners and implementing instructional practices that are responsive to students' diversity.	118	2.98	0.83	2.83	3.13
3. Situating diversity as a core asset in instructional planning, teaching, and selecting texts and materials.	117	2.93	0.87	2.77	3.09
4. Forging family, community, and school relationships to enhance students' literacy learning.	117	2.83	0.85	2.68	2.98

Learners and the Literacy Environment				95% CI	
	n	*M*	*SD*	*LL*	*UL*
1. Applying knowledge of learner development and learning differences to plan literacy learning experiences that develop motivated and engaged literacy learners.	116	3.05	0.84	2.90	3.20
2. Incorporating digital and print texts and experiences designed to differentiate and enhance students' language, literacy, and the learning environment.	116	2.87	0.80	2.72	3.02
3. Incorporating safe, appropriate, and effective ways to use digital technologies in literacy and language learning experiences.	114	2.74	0.86	2.58	2.90
4. Creating physical and social literacy-rich environments that use routines and a variety of grouping configurations for independent and collaborative learning.	116	3.04	0.77	2.90	3.18

Professional Learning and Leadership				95% CI	
	n	*M*	*SD*	*LL*	*UL*
1. Being readers, writers, and lifelong learners who continually seek and engage with professional resources and hold membership in professional organizations.	114	2.75	0.89	2.59	2.91

2. Reflecting as a means of improving professional teaching practices and understanding the value of reflection in fostering individual and school change.	113	3.20	0.87	3.04	3.36
3. Collaboratively participating in ongoing inquiry with colleagues and mentor teachers and participating in professional learning communities.	113	3.04	0.84	2.89	3.19
4. Advocating for the teaching profession and their students, schools, and communities.	111	2.76	0.88	2.60	2.92

As shown in Table 4, there were five components associated with the three highest mean values for respondents' views of preparedness:

1. Standard 6 – Professional Learning and Leadership, Component 2 ($M = 3.20$): Reflecting as a means of improving professional teaching practices and understanding the value of reflection in fostering individual and school change.
2. Standard 2 – Curriculum and Instruction, Component 2 ($M = 3.05$): Planning, modifying, and implementing evidence-based, developmentally appropriate, and integrated instructional approaches that develop reading processes as related to foundational skills, vocabulary, and comprehension for pre-k/primary learners.
3. Standard 5 – Learners and the Literacy Environment, Component 1 ($M = 3.05$): Applying knowledge of learner development and learning differences to plan literacy learning experiences that develop motivated and engaged literacy learners.
4. Standard 5 – Learners and the Literacy Environment, Component 4 ($M = 3.04$): Creating physical and social literacy-rich environments that use routines and a variety of grouping configurations for independent and collaborative learning.
5. Standard 6 – Professional Learning and Leadership, Component 3 ($M = 3.04$): Collaboratively participating in ongoing inquiry with colleagues and mentor teachers and participating in professional learning communities.

Each of the individual mean scores for these five components were higher than 3.00. This finding indicated that respondents believed pre-K/primary classroom teachers were very prepared to address these five components during literacy instruction.

Alternatively, there were three components associated with the three lowest mean values for respondents' views of preparedness:

1. Standard 1 – Foundational Knowledge, Component 2 ($M = 2.66$): Knowledge of major theoretical, conceptual, and evidence-based foundations of pre-K/primary writing development and the writing process and evidence-based instructional approaches that support writing of specific types of text and producing writing appropriate to task.
2. Standard 3 – Assessment and Evaluation, Component 1 ($M = 2.68$):

Understanding the purposes, strengths and limitations, reliability/validity, formats, and appropriateness of various types of informal and formal assessments.
3. Standard 5 – Learners and the Literacy Environment, Component 3 (M = 2.74): Incorporating safe, appropriate, and effective ways to use digital technologies in literacy and language learning experiences.

Each of the individual mean scores for these three components was below 3.00. This finding indicated that respondents believed pre-K/primary classroom teachers were only somewhat prepared to address these three components during literacy instruction.

Elementary/Intermediate

Within this grade-level band, between 116 and 137 respondents indicated their views of preparedness for components within the six standards (see Table 5). The range of mean values for respondents' views of each component was 2.74–3.20, with an overall mean value of 2.96. Thus, respondents indicated that classroom teachers who graduated from their respective teacher preparation programs were either somewhat prepared or very prepared with each component.

Table 5. Views of Preparedness for Elementary/Intermediate Grade-Level Band

| | | | | 95% CI | |
Foundational Knowledge	n	M	SD	LL	UL
1. Knowledge of major theoretical, conceptual, and evidence-based components of elementary/intermediate reading development and evidence-based instructional approaches that support that development.	157	3.09	0.75	2.97	3.21
2. Knowledge of major theoretical, conceptual, and evidence-based foundations of elementary/intermediate writing development and the writing process and evidence-based instructional approaches that support writing of specific types of text and producing writing appropriate to task.	157	2.74	0.82	2.61	2.87
3. Knowledge of major theoretical, conceptual, and evidence-based frameworks that describe the centrality of language to literacy learning and evidence-based instructional approaches that support the development of listening, speaking, viewing, and visually representing.	157	2.94	0.82	2.81	3.07
4. Knowledge of major theoretical, conceptual, and evidence-based frameworks that describe the	157	3.02	0.77	2.90	3.14

interrelated components of general literacy and discipline-specific literacy processes that serve as a foundation for all learning.

Curriculum and Instruction	*n*	*M*	*SD*	95% CI LL	UL
1. The ability to critically examine elementary/intermediate literacy curricula and select high-quality literary, multimedia, and informational texts to provide a coherent and motivating literacy program that addresses both general and disciplinary-specific literacy processes.	132	2.92	0.83	2.78	3.06
2. Planning, modifying, and implementing evidence-based and integrated instructional approaches that develop reading processes as related to foundational skills, vocabulary, and comprehension for elementary/intermediate learners.	131	3.13	0.75	3.00	3.26
3. Designing, adapting, implementing, and evaluating evidence-based instruction and materials to develop writing processes and orthographic knowledge of elementary/intermediate learners.	131	2.82	0.80	2.68	2.96
4. Planning, modifying, implementing, and evaluating evidence-based and integrated instructional approaches and materials that develop the language, speaking, listening, viewing, and visually representing processes of elementary/intermediate learners.	131	2.91	0.81	2.77	3.05

Assessment and Evaluation	*n*	*M*	*SD*	95% CI LL	UL
1. Understanding the purposes, strengths and limitations, reliability/validity, formats, and appropriateness of various types of informal and formal assessments.	128	2.84	0.78	2.71	2.97
2. Using observational skills and results of student work to determine students' literacy and language strengths and	127	3.08	0.78	2.94	3.22

	n	M	SD	LL	UL
needs; selecting and administering other formal and informal assessments appropriate for assessing students' language and literacy development.					
3. Using results of various assessment measures to inform and/or modify instruction.	128	3.02	0.83	2.88	3.16
4. Using data in an ethical manner, interpreting data to explain student progress, and informing families and colleagues about the function/purpose of assessments.	128	2.84	0.83	2.70	2.98

				95% CI	
Diversity and Equity	n	M	SD	LL	UL
1. Recognizing how their own cultural experiences affect instruction and appreciating the diversity of their students, families, and communities.	127	2.91	0.88	2.76	3.06
2. Setting high expectations for learners and implementing instructional practices that are responsive to students' diversity.	126	3.06	0.75	2.93	3.19
3. Situating diversity as a core asset in instructional planning, teaching, and selecting texts and materials.	125	2.98	0.80	2.84	3.12
4. Forging family, community, and school relationships to enhance students' literacy learning.	126	2.81	0.80	2.67	2.95

				95% CI	
Learners and the Literacy Environment	n	M	SD	LL	UL
1. Applying knowledge of learner development and learning differences to plan learning experiences that develop motivated and engaged literacy learners.	123	3.14	0.76	3.01	3.27
2. Knowledge of and the ability to incorporate digital and print texts and experiences designed to effectively differentiate and enhance students' language, literacy, and the learning environment.	123	2.97	0.73	2.84	3.10
3. Incorporating safe and appropriate ways to use digital technologies in	121	2.83	0.83	2.68	2.98

	123	3.13	0.69	3.01	3.25
literacy and language learning experiences.					
4. Creating physical and social literacy-rich environments that use routines and a variety of grouping configurations for independent and collaborative learning.	123	3.13	0.69	3.01	3.25

				95% CI	
Professional Learning and Leadership	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*LL*	*UL*
1. Being readers, writers, and lifelong learners who continually seek and engage with professional resources and hold membership in professional organizations.	120	2.87	0.87	2.71	3.03
2. Reflecting as a means of improving professional teaching practices and understanding the value of reflection in fostering individual and school change.	120	3.20	0.85	3.05	3.35
3. Collaboratively participating in ongoing inquiry with colleagues and mentor teachers and participating in professional learning communities.	119	3.08	0.84	2.93	3.23
4. Advocating for the teaching profession and their students, schools, and communities.	116	2.77	0.85	2.62	2.92

As shown in Table 5, there were four components associated with the three highest mean values:

1. Standard 6 – Professional Learning and Leadership, Component 2 ($M = 3.20$): Reflecting as a means of improving professional teaching practices and understanding the value of reflection in fostering individual and school change.
2. Standard 5 – Learners and the Literacy Environment, Component 1 ($M = 3.14$): Applying knowledge of learner development and learning differences to plan literacy learning experiences that develop motivated and engaged literacy learners.
3. Standard 2 – Curriculum and Instruction, Component 2 ($M = 3.13$): Planning, modifying, and implementing evidence-based and integrated instructional approaches that develop reading processes as related to foundational skills, vocabulary, and comprehension for elementary/intermediate learners.
4. Standard 5 – Learners and the Literacy Environment, Component 4 ($M = 3.04$): Creating physical and social literacy-rich environments that use routines and a variety of grouping configurations for independent and collaborative learning.

Each of the individual mean scores for these four components was higher than 3.00. This finding indicated that respondents believed elementary/intermediate classroom teachers were very prepared to address these four components during literacy instruction.

Alternatively, there were three components associated with the three lowest mean values for respondents' views of preparedness:

1. Standard 1 – Foundational Knowledge, Component 2 ($M = 2.74$):
   Knowledge of major theoretical, conceptual, and evidence-based foundations of elementary/intermediate writing development and the writing process and evidence-based instructional approaches that support writing of specific types of text and producing writing appropriate to task.
2. Standard 6 – Professional Learning and Leadership, Component 4 ($M = 2.77$):
   Advocating for the teaching profession and their students, schools, and communities.
3. Standard 4 – Diversity and Equity, Component 4 ($M = 2.81$):
   Forging family, community, and school relationships to enhance students' literacy learning.

Each of the individual mean scores for these three components was below 3.00. This finding indicated that respondents believed elementary/intermediate classroom teachers were only somewhat prepared to address these three components during literacy instruction.

Middle/High School

Within this grade-level band, between 91 and 124 respondents indicated their views of preparedness for components within the six standards (see Table 6). The range of mean values for respondents' views of each component was 2.52–3.06, with an overall mean value of 2.74. Thus, respondents indicated that classroom teachers who graduated from their respective teacher preparation programs were either somewhat prepared or very prepared with each component.

Table 6. Views of Preparedness for Middle/High School Grade-Level Band

Foundational Knowledge	n	M	SD	95% CI LL	95% CI UL
1. Knowledge of major theoretical, conceptual, and evidence-based components of academic vocabulary, reading comprehension, and critical thinking, with specific emphasis on content area and disciplinary-specific literacy instruction.	122	2.76	0.81	2.62	2.90
2. Knowledge of major theoretical, conceptual, and evidence-based foundations of adolescent writing development, processes, and instruction in their specific discipline.	124	2.52	0.81	2.38	2.66
3. Knowledge of major theoretical, conceptual, and evidence-based foundations and instruction of language, listening, speaking, viewing,	121	2.71	0.83	2.56	2.86

4. Knowledge of major theoretical, conceptual, and evidence-based frameworks that describe the interrelated components of general literacy and disciplinary-specific literacy processes that serve as a foundation for all learning.

and visually representing in their specific discipline.

				95% CI	
Curriculum and Instruction	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*LL*	*UL*
1. The ability to evaluate published curricular materials and select high-quality literary, multimedia, and informational texts to provide a coherent and motivating academic program that integrates disciplinary literacy.	105	2.71	0.91	2.54	2.88
2. Using evidence-based instruction and materials that develop reading comprehension, vocabulary, and critical thinking abilities of learners.	105	2.82	0.83	2.66	2.98
3. Designing, adapting, implementing, and evaluating evidence-based writing instruction as a means for improving content area learning.	106	2.58	0.85	2.42	2.74
4. Using evidence-based instruction and materials to develop language, listening, speaking, viewing, and visually representing skills of learners; such instruction is differentiated and responsive to student interests.	105	2.69	0.85	2.53	2.85

The values for item 4 at top of page: 123, 2.80, 0.83, 2.65, 2.95

				95% CI	
Assessment and Evaluation	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*LL*	*UL*
1. Understanding the purposes, strengths and limitations, reliability/validity, formats, and appropriateness of various types of informal and formal assessments.	100	2.58	0.83	2.42	2.74
2. Using observational skills and results of student work to determine students' disciplinary literacy strengths and needs; selecting and administering formal and informal assessments	102	2.63	0.86	2.46	2.80

		n	M	SD		
3.	appropriate for assessing students' disciplinary literacy development. Using the results of student work and assessment results to inform and/or modify instruction.	102	2.69	0.89	2.52	2.86
4.	Using data in an ethical manner, interpreting data to explain student progress, and informing families and colleagues about the function/purpose of assessments.	101	2.63	0.90	2.45	2.81

	95% CI					
Diversity and Equity		n	M	SD	LL	UL
1. Recognizing how their own cultural experiences affect instruction and appreciating the diversity of their students, families, and communities.		100	2.58	0.83	2.42	2.74
2. Setting high expectations for learners and implementing instructional practices that are responsive to students' diversity.		102	2.63	0.86	2.46	2.80
3. Situating diversity as a core asset in instructional planning, teaching, and selecting texts and materials.		102	2.69	0.89	2.52	2.86
4. Forging family, community, and school relationships to enhance students' content and literacy learning.		101	2.63	0.90	2.45	2.81

	95% CI					
Learners and the Literacy Environment		n	M	SD	LL	UL
1. Understanding theories and concepts related to adolescent literacy learning and applying this knowledge to learning experiences that develop motivated and engaged literacy learners.		96	2.91	0.78	2.75	3.07
2. Knowledge of and the ability to incorporate digital and print texts and experiences designed to differentiate and enhance students' disciplinary literacy and the learning environment.		95	2.86	0.72	2.71	3.00
3. Incorporating safe and appropriate ways to use digital technologies in literacy and language learning experiences.		92	2.76	0.83	2.59	2.93

4. Creating physical and social literacy-rich environments that use routines and a variety of grouping configurations for independent and collaborative learning.	95	2.87	0.80	2.71	3.03

				95% CI	
Professional Learning and Leadership	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*LL*	*UL*
1. Being readers, writers, and lifelong learners who continually seek and engage with print and online professional resources and hold membership in professional organizations.	91	2.84	0.92	2.65	3.03
2. Reflecting as a means of improving professional teaching practices and understanding the value of reflection in fostering individual and school change.	93	3.06	0.95	2.87	3.25
3. Collaboratively participating in ongoing inquiry with colleagues and mentor teachers and participating in professional learning communities.	91	3.00	0.93	2.81	3.19
4. Advocating for the teaching profession and their students, schools, and communities.	91	2.74	0.86	2.56	2.92

As shown in Table 6, there were three components associated with the three highest mean values:

1. Standard 6 – Professional Learning and Leadership, Component 2 ($M = 3.06$): Reflecting as a means of improving professional teaching practices and understanding the value of reflection in fostering individual and school change.
2. Standard 6 – Professional Learning and Leadership, Component 3 ($M = 3.00$): Collaboratively participating in ongoing inquiry with colleagues and mentor teachers and participating in professional learning communities.
3. Standard 5 – Learners and the Literacy Environment, Component 1 ($M = 2.91$): Understanding theories and concepts related to adolescent literacy learning and applying this knowledge to learning experiences that develop motivated and engaged literacy learners.

Two of the individual mean scores for these components were 3.00 or higher. This finding indicated that respondents believed middle/high school classroom teachers were very prepared to address these two components during literacy instruction. On the other hand, one individual mean score was below 3.00. This finding indicated that while it was one of the three highest mean values, respondents believed middle/high school classroom teachers were only somewhat prepared to address this component during literacy instruction.

Alternatively, there were four components associated with the three lowest mean values for respondents' views of preparedness:

1. Standard 1 – Foundational Knowledge, Component 2 ($M = 2.52$):
    Knowledge of major theoretical, conceptual, and evidence-based foundations of adolescent writing development, processes, and instruction in their specific discipline.
2. Standard 2 – Curriculum and Instruction, Component 3 ($M = 2.58$):
    Designing, adapting, implementing, and evaluating evidence-based writing instruction as a means for improving content area learning.
3. Standard 3 – Assessment and Evaluation, Component 1($M = 2.58$):
    Understanding the purposes, strengths and limitations, reliability/validity, formats, and appropriateness of various types of informal and formal assessments.
4. Standard 4 – Diversity and Equity, Component 1 ($M = 2.58$):
    Recognizing how their own cultural experiences affect instruction and appreciating the diversity of their students, families, and communities.

Each of the individual mean scores for these four components was below 3.00. This finding indicated that respondents believed middle/high school classroom teachers were only somewhat prepared to address these four components during literacy instruction.

Grade-Level Band Matrix

In order to have an overall snapshot of our findings across grade-level bands, we developed a matrix to display the components in which mean values were below 3.00 (see Table 7). As shown in Tables 4, 5, and 6, the range of mean values below 3.00 was 2.52–2.98. Our rationale for developing this matrix was to produce a visual representation of the components in literacy teacher education in which respondents indicated lower levels of preparedness among classroom teachers. According to this matrix, respondents viewed lower levels of preparedness in more than three-quarters of the components within the pre-K/primary grade-level band ($n = 19, 79\%$), half of the components within the elementary/intermediate grade-level band ($n = 14, 58\%$), and almost every component in the middle/high school grade-level band ($n = 22, 92\%$).

Table 7. Matrix for Views of Preparedness Below 3.0 Across Grade-Level Bands

	Pre-K/ Primary	Elementary/ Intermediate	Middle/ High School
Foundational Knowledge			
Component 1	X		X
Component 2	X	X	X
Component 3	X	X	X
Component 4	X		X
Curriculum and Instruction			
Component 1	X	X	X

Component 2			X
Component 3	X	X	X
Component 4	X	X	X
Assessment and Evaluation			
Component 1	X	X	X
Component 2	X		X
Component 3	X		X
Component 4	X	X	X
Diversity and Equity			
Component 1	X	X	X
Component 2	X		X
Component 3	X	X	X
Component 4	X	X	X
Learners and the Literacy Environment			
Component 1			X
Component 2	X	X	X
Component 3	X	X	X
Component 4			X
Professional Learning and Leadership			
Component 1	X	X	X
Component 2			
Component 3			
Component 4	X	X	X

We further analyzed data within the matrix to identify specific standards within each grade-level band in which respondents indicated low levels of classroom teachers' preparedness with all four related components. Our analysis revealed multiple standards meeting this criterion within two grade-level bands: pre-K/primary and middle/high school. Within the pre-K/primary grade-level band, these standards were:

- Standard 1 – Foundational Knowledge,
- Standard 3 – Assessment and Evaluation, and
- Standard 4 – Diversity and Equity.

For the middle/high school grade-level band, these standards were:

- Standard 1 – Foundational Knowledge,
- Standard 2 – Curriculum and Instruction,
- Standard 3 – Assessment and Evaluation,
- Standard 4 – Diversity and Equity, and
- Standard 5 – Learners and the Literacy Environment.

Although there were no standards within the elementary/intermediate grade-level band that met the above-stated criterion, it is important to note that within two standards, respondents indicated low levels of classroom teachers' preparedness with three related components. These standards were:

- Standard 2 – Curriculum and Instruction, and
- Standard 4 – Diversity and Equity.

Discussion and Implications

In an accountability era, teacher preparation programs play a vital role in ensuring that their preservice teacher graduates enter classrooms as high-quality classroom teachers (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Grossman, 1990). In particular, teacher preparation programs must sufficiently train future classroom teachers of all grade levels to implement evidence-based literacy instruction (McCardle & Chhabra, 2004) that supports students' literacy development in a technology driven, globally connected world (Leu & Kinzer, 2000; Leu et al., 2013). Although there is a growing literature base that describes promising practices in literacy teacher education, several researchers we referred to in the literature review have pointed out shortcomings in current teaching practices. Thus, much recent research has examined literacy teacher education more closely to identify effective preparation practices that promote competence with literacy instruction among future classroom teachers (Clark, 2016; Grisham et al., 2014; Pomerantz & Condie, 2017; Wolsey et al., 2013).

With the recent release of *Standards 2017* (ILA, 2018), we wanted to obtain a snapshot of how literacy teacher educators view classroom teacher preparedness for literacy instruction. We used the six standards for classroom teachers in all grade levels, along with all related components, as the framework for our investigation. Our findings have extended previous research that was limited to one course, groups of preservice teachers, or individual preparation programs and presented a wider view of preparedness from the viewpoints of literacy teacher educators across the United States. Although our findings provided a snapshot of these views for each grade-level band separately, we focused the discussion of our findings on three trends we noted across grade-level bands.

High Views of Classroom Teacher Preparedness for Reflection

With respect to components associated with the highest mean values, our findings revealed two positive trends across all three grade-level bands. First, respondents held high views of classroom teacher preparedness for Component 2 in the Professional Learning and Leadership Standard: Reflecting as a means of improving professional teaching practices and understanding the value of reflection in fostering individual and school change. For over a century, education researchers have drawn upon Dewey's (1910) concept of reflective thinking and identified various processes of self-examination and self-evaluation in which effective teachers engage in regularly to improve their teaching practices (Kagan, 1988; Schön, 1983; Van Manen, 1977; Waxman, Freiberg, Vaughan, & Weil, 1988). Correspondingly, priming future teachers to be reflective practitioners has been a hallmark of teacher education (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Ross, 1989; Smyth, 1989; Zeichner & Liston, 1987).

High Views of Classroom Teacher Preparedness for Motivation and Engagement

Second, our findings showed that respondents held high views of classroom teacher preparedness for Component 1 in the Learners and the Literacy Environment Standard:

- Applying knowledge of learner development and learning differences to plan literacy learning experiences that develop motivated and engaged literacy learners. (pre-K/primary, elementary/intermediate)
- Understanding theories and concepts related to adolescent literacy learning and applying this knowledge to learning experiences that develop motivated and engaged literacy learners. (middle/high school)

For over 20 years, motivation and engagement in reading (Guthrie & Cox, 2001; Guthrie, Klauda, & Ho, 2013; Guthrie et al., 1996; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Ivey & Johnston, 2013) and other literacy tasks (Parsons, Malloy, Parsons, & Burrowbridge, 2015; Parsons, Malloy, Parsons, Peters-Burton, & Burrowbridge, 2018) have been intensely studied and are widely accepted as separate, yet reciprocal, contributors for literacy learning. As such, literature abounds with descriptions of instructional practices and interventions that are responsive to a wide range of students' developmental needs and learning differences. Recommended instructional practices and interventions have targeted children in the elementary grade levels (Marinak, 2013; Moratelli & DeJarnette, 2014; Senn, 2012; Shaw, 2013) and adolescents in the middle and high school grade levels (Cantrell et al., 2013; Francois, 2013; Ryan, 2008; Warren, 2013). Since many respondents who participated in our study were seasoned classroom teachers with more than ten years of experience, we felt it was reasonable to presume that respondents understood the great importance of this component and made it a priority during literacy teacher education.

Low Views of Classroom Teacher Preparedness

The most pronounced trend that emerged in our analysis involved respondents' views for lower levels of preparedness. This trend was revealed in the matrix that we developed to provide a visual representation of components with mean value scores of less than 3.00. We were greatly surprised by the number of components in which respondents felt classroom teachers were not fully prepared in each grade-level band, particularly in the middle/high school grade-level band. Across grade-level bands, respondents indicated low levels of preparedness for two

competencies within each of the following four standards: Foundational Knowledge, Assessment and Evaluation, Learners and the Literacy Environment, and Professional Learning and Leadership. Even more distressing, respondents indicated low levels of preparedness for three competencies within the Curriculum and Instruction Standard and three competencies within the Diversity and Equity Standard. Since respondents held low views of preparedness with more competencies within these two standards, we examined these findings more closely.

With respect to the Curriculum and Instruction Standard, classroom teachers must "be able to develop and enact literacy instruction that reflects a deep understanding and knowledge of the components of a comprehensive, aligned, and integrated literacy curriculum" (ILA, 2018, p. 11). The three components within this standard that received low mean scores involve separate aspects of the literacy instructional process. For all grade-level bands, Component 1 in this standard focuses on a classroom teacher's ability to examine, evaluate, and select high-quality curricular materials and texts for literacy instruction. Traditionally, literacy teacher educators have addressed this component among preservice teachers within the context of required children's literature or content literacy coursework. However, there is a lack of consistency among teacher education programs concerning degree program requirements for children's literature (Sharp, Coneway, & Diego-Medrano, 2017; Tunks, Giles, & Rogers, 2015) and content literacy coursework (Draper, 2008). Component 3 in this standard focuses on a classroom teacher's ability to design, implement and evaluate evidence-based writing instruction. In the pre-K/primary and elementary/intermediate grade-level bands, this component focuses on instruction in the writing process and orthographic knowledge, whereas the focus in the middle/high school grade-level band is on promoting content area understandings through writing in the disciplines. Regrettably, much previous research has expressed concerns with writing and the knowledge of writing among preservice teachers (Lesley, 2011; Myers et al., 2016; Norman & Spencer, 2005; Pardo, 2006) and practicing teachers (Brindle, Graham, Harris, & Hebert, 2016; Colby & Stapleton, 2006; Gillespie, Graham, Kiuhara, & Hebert, 2014; Graham, Capizzi, Harris, Hebert, & Morphy, 2014; Harward et al., 2014; Korth et al., 2017; Mo, Kopke, Hawkins, Troia, & Olinghouse, 2014). For all grade-level bands, Component 4 in this standard focuses on a classroom teacher's ability to use evidence-based instructional approaches and materials to promote development of all aspects of the language arts (i.e., reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing, and visually representing skills) among students. In today's classrooms, conceptions of literacy have broadened to include skills beyond the fundamentals of reading and writing (Leu & Kinzer, 2000; Leu et al., 2013), thus prompting a major paradigm shift in literacy instructional approaches (Cervetti, Damico, & Pearson, 2006). Preservice teachers require explicit instruction in all of the language arts, as well as opportunities to observe practicing teachers address the language arts during literacy instruction in authentic school settings (Sharp & Ramirez, 2016). However, practicing teachers may not understand all aspects of the language arts themselves or implement teaching practices that sufficiently attend to all of the language arts. As a result, preservice teachers may encounter ineffective or limited models during their teacher training.

With respect to the Diversity and Equity Standard, classroom teachers must know how to "develop and engage their students in a curriculum that places value on the diversity that exists in society" (ILA, 2018, p. 14). The three components within this standard that received low mean scores had identical wording for each grade-level band:

- Component 1 focuses on a classroom teacher's awareness of their influence of their own culture, as well as their ability to appreciate the diversity represented among others.
- Component 3 focuses on how a classroom teacher embraces diversity as an instructional asset during literacy instruction.
- Component 4 focuses on how a classroom teacher cultivates relationships with others to enrich students' literacy learning.

Each of these components directly relates to the importance of classroom teachers adopting a culturally relevant pedagogy. Culture and ethnicity are highly relevant in the teaching and learning processes (Irvine, 2003); therefore, literacy teacher education must foster preservice teachers' growth as culturally responsive teachers (Nash, 2018). Unfortunately, teacher preparation programs have most commonly addressed this critical aspect of literacy teacher education by augmenting existing literacy courses and field experiences with multicultural education components (Dooley, 2008; Kim, Turner, & Mason, 2015). While these approaches have some value, they do not sufficiently provide future classroom teachers with the ability to "think explicitly about how to teach linguistically and culturally diverse learners" (Kim et al., 2015, p. 114).

Based on our own experiences as literacy teacher educators, we know firsthand how external bodies have an impact on teacher preparation programming. Mandates from state and federal legislation, teacher licensure requirements, school district needs, and university policies force program administrators to prioritize and address competing, and sometimes conflicting, directives. Such directives may restrict the number of literacy-focused courses offered in teacher preparation programs. For example, we are aware of teacher preparation programs that require preservice teachers to complete three or fewer literacy-focused courses. In these circumstances, program administrators structure their curricula to incorporate components of *Standards 2017* (ILA, 2018) into other required courses. However, the instructors who teach these courses may not be literacy teacher educators themselves and fully aware of the assumptions, beliefs, and research embedded in these comprehensive professional standards. Hence, preparing preservice teachers for literacy instruction potentially becomes a fragmented and uncoordinated endeavor.

Limitations and Future Areas for Research

Our findings presented a preliminary snapshot of how literacy teacher educators view classroom teacher preparedness for literacy instruction in relation to the standards and components delineated in ILA's (2018) *Standards 2017*. Clearly, there is room for future scholarly endeavors to further our work, and we acknowledge limitations that researchers may address in future studies. First, our sampling procedures were limited to the availability and accuracy of information we retrieved from each university's website. Our survey response rate was also very low. Only about 8% of participant pool members completed the online survey, which was well below the average reported response rate of 33% for online surveys (Nulty, 2008). In addition to participant pool issues, we recognize that respondent- (e.g., availability, hesitancy to respond) and web-based factors (e.g., receipt of email invitation) may have attributed to our low response rate. Additionally, we collected data from a single point in time and based our findings on self-reported data, which were limited to the interpretations, experiences, and views of respondents.

Despite these obvious limitations, our study contributed rich understandings concerning classroom teacher preparedness for literacy instruction from a sample of "internal experts" (Lacina & Block, 2011, p. 326) who had several years of experience as classroom teachers and literacy teacher educators. Moreover, respondents in our study were affiliated with teacher preparation programs across the United States, which furthered the work of previous researchers who used "their own courses, programs, and students as strategic research sites to address questions about teacher candidate learning" (Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2015, p. 390). Future research would benefit from the use of a larger sample of literacy teacher educators. Since a nationwide database of literacy teacher educators does not currently exist, researchers may consider collaborating with professional organizations in which literacy teacher educators maintain memberships. In addition to larger-scale studies, researchers should conduct longitudinal analyses that use a variety of research designs to examine literacy teacher education more comprehensively. For example, researchers may consider conducting investigations that identify preparation practices that cultivate deep understandings of literacy among preservice teachers and promote the generalization and maintenance of effective literacy instruction in PK–12 classrooms.

Conclusion

Findings from our study have illustrated a need for improvement in the field of literacy teacher education and provided specific areas worthy of further research. Literacy teacher educators bear a great responsibility to prepare future classroom teachers for meaningful and successful literacy instruction. This study has demonstrated there may be gaps in teacher training that need to be addressed. It is essential that novice classroom teachers possess specialized knowledge about language and literacy and enter classrooms as flexible practitioners who know how to implement effective and responsive literacy instruction based on the sociocultural context and learning needs of their students.

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