The Preparedness of Preservice Literacy Teachers: Viewpoints among Literacy Teacher Educators

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Abstract

Much literature has expressed concerns regarding preparation efforts for all aspects of literacy throughout all K-12 teaching areas, yet few studies have investigated preparedness through viewpoints of those who prepare literacy teachers. The purpose for the current study was to determine how literacy teacher educators view current levels of preparation among preservice literacy teachers with the dispositions, knowledge, and skills articulated by professional literacy standards. The current study utilized a cross-sectional, survey research design among 65 survey respondents selected by purposive sampling techniques. Data were analyzed quantitatively using descriptive statistics, and results were reported in the form of frequency counts and percentages. Findings revealed areas of strength and areas needing improvement with specific aspects of the professional literacy standards. Implications from these findings were discussed, as well as limitations of the current study and recommendations for future research.

Key Words: Literacy, teacher preparation, teacher educators, preservice teachers

Introduction

Literacy comprises an extensive range of "cultural and communicative practices" (National Council of Teachers of English [NCTE], 2013, para. 1). In a 21st century environment, literacy instruction must focus upon development of: (a) foundational reading and writing skills; (b) technology skills; (c) visual literacy skills; and (d) communication, creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking skills (NCTE, 2013; Partnership for 21st Century Learning, 2015). In a technology- and globally-oriented world, concepts that underlie literacy continuously evolve, which in turn, have dramatically influenced the focus of K-12 literacy practices (Fisher & Frey, 2015; Short, Day, & Schroeder, 2016; Tompkins, 2017). Much literature has identified critical elements required in teacher preparation programs to promote success among preservice teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Darling-Hammond, Hammerness, Grossman, Rust, &

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Shulman, 2005; Grossman, Hammerness, & McDonald, 2009; Hollins, 2011). During teacher preparation, preservice teachers must develop deep conceptual understandings about subject area content and pedagogical knowledge that are appropriate for all types of learners. Preservice teachers must also learn how to become skilled practitioners who are competent with making meaningful connections between content, theory, and pedagogy. Additionally, those who prepare preservice teachers must be skilled with the teaching and learning process and know how to engender learner readiness so that preservice teachers situate new knowledge within realistic contexts.

Recently, the International Literacy Association (ILA), formerly known as the International Reading Association (IRA), released preliminary findings from a study that explored how teachers are prepared to address literacy instruction (ILA, 2015). According to this report, additional research was needed to investigate how teacher preparation programs "prepare candidates to develop students' literacy across all grades and in all disciplines" (p. 8). This assertion echoed similar sentiments voiced by an abundance of researchers who have expressed concerns regarding preparation efforts for all aspects of literacy throughout all K-12 teaching areas (Conley, 2012, Draper, Broomhead, Jensen, & Nokes, 2012; Fang, 2014; Grisham et al., 2014; Hoffman, Wetzel, & Peterson, 2016; Joshi et al., 2009; McGrail, Sachs, Many, Myrick, & Sackor, 2011; McLean & Rowsell, 2013; McTavish & Filipenko, 2016; Myers et al., 2016; Sayeski, Gormley Buden, & Bennett, 2015; Spear-Swerling & Cheesman, 2012; Wolsey et al., 2013).

A number of studies have explored the quality of literacy teacher preparation through the experiences and perspectives of preservice teachers (Bainbridge & Macy, 2008; Clark, Jones, Reutzel, & Andreasen, 2013; Conley, 2012; Grisham et al., 2014; McTavish & Filipenko, 2016; Wolsey et al., 2013), novice teachers (Beck, Kosnick, & Roswell, 2007; Clark et al., 2013; Spear-Swerling & Cheesman, 2012), as well as analyses of structural and programmatic features (Hoffman et al., 2016; Lenski et al., 2013; McGrail et al., 2011; McLean & Rowsell, 2013; Sayeski et al., 2015; Wolsey et al., 2013). At the time of the current study, however, there were significantly fewer empirical studies that examined the preparedness of preservice literacy teachers through the viewpoints of literacy teacher educators (Lacina & Block, 2011; Myers et al., 2016), who are regarded as the "internal experts" (Lacina & Block, 2011, p. 326). Discovering the viewpoints of these professionals is of equal importance (Wickstrom, Patterson, & Zeek, 2006) because literacy teacher educators play a pivotal role in assessing the competence and growth of preservice literacy teachers comprehensively and systematically (Crumpler & Spycher, 2006).

ILA and NCTE (2017) identified four evidence-based measures specific for the preparation of literacy teachers. Three of these measures focused upon teacher preparation efforts that impact preservice teachers during their enrollment in literacy courses and participation in field experiences: (a) development of deep conceptual understand-

ings of content and pedagogical knowledge, (b) provision of frequent opportunities to apply content and pedagogical understandings within authentic and supportive contexts, and (c) promotion of self-reflective and ongoing professional learning practices. The fourth evidence-based measure focused upon teacher preparation efforts more broadly and was concerned with the use of multiple benchmarks and measures to assess and monitor program admission and progression among preservice teachers.

ILA and NCTE's evidence-based measures are not novel to literacy teacher preparation and are well-aligned with an abundance of previous literature that has advocated for teacher preparation efforts focused upon development of content knowledge (Ball & McDiarmid, 1990; Darling-Hammond et al., 2005; Graves, Pauls, & Salinger, 1996; Grossman, Schoenfeld, & Lee, 2005; Hollins, 2011; Tamir, 1988) and pedagogical knowledge (Banks et al., 2005; Darling-Hammond et al., 2005; Ehri & Williams, 1996; Grossman et al., 2005; Hollins, 2011; Tamir, 1988) among preservice teachers. Moreover, much previous literature has acknowledged the value of preservice teachers participating in field-based experiences (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005; Glickman & Bey, 1990; Hammerness et al., 2005), as well as engaging with self-reflective practices (Beauchamp, 2014; Darling-Hammond et al., 2005; Hammerness et al., 2005; Hatton & Smith, 1995). As ILA and NCTE (2017) noted in their report, a substantial amount of evidence supports the inclusion of these practices throughout courses and programs concerned with literacy teacher preparation.

Through the use of identified evidence-based measures, literacy teacher educators strive to develop competence with state and national standards among preservice literacy teachers (Wickstrom et al., 2006). Because state standards vary greatly among each state's teacher licensure agencies (Cappello & Farnan, 2006; Darling-Hammond & Cobb, 1996), literacy teacher educators should ground their practices in professional standards. ILA has delineated such standards, which specify the dispositions, knowledge, and skills required among novice and experienced literacy professionals (IRA, 2010). A significant number of well-respected scholars have recognized ILA's standards as the accepted professional standards for literacy teachers (Bean et al., 2015; Grisham et al., 2014; Hathaway, Martin, & Mraz, 2016; Lenski et al., 2013; Martinez, 2011; Oslick & Lane, 2014; Washburn & Mulcahy, 2014; Wolsey et al., 2013).

At the time of the current study, ILA's standards were in the process of being revised and set to take full effect in 2020 (ILA, 2017a). As noted in Table 1, the anticipated revisions will reflect two major modifications: (1) the titling of the standards will communicate a more distinct focus towards the preparation of literacy teachers, and (2) the language of the standards will be modified to be more representative of 21st century literacy expectations (ILA, 2017b). A new standard will also be added to the revised standards. However, this standard will only be applicable to experienced teachers training to become specialized literacy professionals (e.g., literacy coach, reading/literacy specialist, literacy coordinator/supervisor). In order to reflect the shift from

"reading" to "literacy," the current study buttressed the current professional standards (IRA, 2010) with contemporary understandings of literacy (NCTE, 2013; Partnership for 21st Century Learning, 2015).

Table 1.

Current and Revised Professional Standards for Classroom Teachers

Standards for Reading Professionals – Revised 2010 (IRA, 2010)	Standards for the Preparation of Literacy Professionals 2017 (ILA, 2017b)	Brief Description of Standard (IRA, 2010)
Standard 1: Foundational Knowledge	Standard 1: Foundational Knowledge	Theoretical and evidence-based foundations of literacy instruction.
Standard 2: Curriculum and Instruction	Standard 2: Curriculum and Instruction	Instructional approaches, materials, and curriculum to support student literacy learning.
Standard 3: Assessment and Evaluation	Standard 3: Assessment and Evaluation	Literacy assessment tools and practices
Standard 4: Diversity	Standard 4: Diversity and Equity	Literacy practices that develop awareness, understanding, respect, and a valuing of differences in our society.
Standard 5: Literate Environment	Standard 5: Learners and the Literacy Environment	Creating a literate environment that fosters student development with literacy.
Standard 6: Professional Learning and Leadership	Standard 6: Professional Learning and Leadership	Professional learning and leadership with literacy as a career-long effort and responsibility.
	Standard 7: Practicum/Clinical Experiences	
—	* Only for Specialized Literacy Professionals	—

In response to ILA's call for additional research, the current study sought to address the dearth in available literature by investigating the preparedness of preservice literacy teachers through viewpoints of literacy teacher educators. Due to state-specific teacher licensure requirements (Cappello & Farnan, 2006; Darling-Hammond & Cobb, 1996), we elicited participation from literacy teacher educators affiliated with state-approved teacher preparation programs in a state located in the Southwest United States. Specifically, the following question guided our analyses: How do literacy teacher educators view current levels of preparation among preservice literacy teachers who complete their teacher preparation program?

Method
Sampling

To obtain a representative sample of literacy teacher educators, purposive sampling techniques were used. First, we accessed the list of all state-approved educator preparation programs (EPPs) and filtered it to include only university-based traditional certification programs. Next, we conducted web searches on each university's website to identify faculty members who teach literacy courses for preservice teachers. Using this information, we created a database that included the name of each EPP and the names and email addresses of affiliated literacy teacher educators. Our completed database consisted of 67 EPPs and 457 contact names and email addresses.

Instrumentation

The current study utilized a cross-sectional, survey research design. The researchers created an electronic survey in Google Forms that included closed-ended, Likert-type questions for survey respondents to indicate their viewpoints regarding the dispositions, knowledge, and skills expected of preservice literacy teachers. For each question, possible responses utilized the following five-point scale: Not At All Prepared, Slightly Prepared, Somewhat Prepared, Very Prepared, and Extremely Prepared.

To establish validity, the questions were modeled after ILA's professional standards for classroom teachers (IRA, 2010), and we conducted a pilot test with 20 individuals. The goal of the pilot test was to ensure that the electronic survey collected the intended data, was technologically-sound, and was understandable. We collected feedback from the pilot study and made minor revisions that enhanced readability of the electronic survey. The finalized survey instrument included six sections with 21 closed-ended, Likert-type questions. Reliability for the finalized survey instrument was determined using Cronbach's alpha, which was $\alpha = 0.95$.

Data Collection and Analyses

We kept the survey period open for five months. We sent invitations to participate to all contact names in our database and tracked completed responses in a separate spreadsheet during the survey period. At the beginning of each month, we sent reminder emails to individuals who had not yet participated. When the survey period closed, we had collected 65 responses, which yielded a response rate of 14.22%. We tabulated responses for each question and analyzed data quantitatively with descriptive statistics by reporting frequencies and percentages.

Findings

Survey respondents were all literacy teacher educators with one or more years of experience in preparing preservice literacy teachers. Of the 65 survey respondents,

five were male, and 60 were female. Respondents indicated a wide range of teaching certificate areas for which they prepare preservice literacy teachers, including early childhood/preschool, elementary grades (Kindergarten-5th Grade), middle grades (6th-8th Grade), secondary grades (9th-12th Grades), special education, and English language learners.

Results for each survey question are provided below by section. Frequency counts, along with percentages, were reported in numeric form, and the highest rating for each survey question was noted. Trends with frequency counts were also visually displayed.

Section 1: Foundational Knowledge

Within this section, survey respondents indicated their views of the preparedness among preservice literacy teachers with the theoretical and empirical-based fundamentals of literacy processes and instruction. This section consisted of three questions, which attained views towards preservice literacy teachers' understanding of: (1) major theories and empirical research, (2) historically shared knowledge of the profession, and (3) professional judgement and practical knowledge.

As shown in Table 2, more than half of the respondents reported that preservice literacy teachers were Very Prepared with understanding major theories and empirical research ($n = 35$) and professional judgment practical knowledge ($n = 28$). With respect to historically shared knowledge of the profession, the majority of respondents indicated that preservice literacy teachers were Somewhat Prepared ($n = 28$). Trends with reported results for these three aspects were shown in Figure 1.

Table 2.

Section 1 Survey Results - Foundational Knowledge

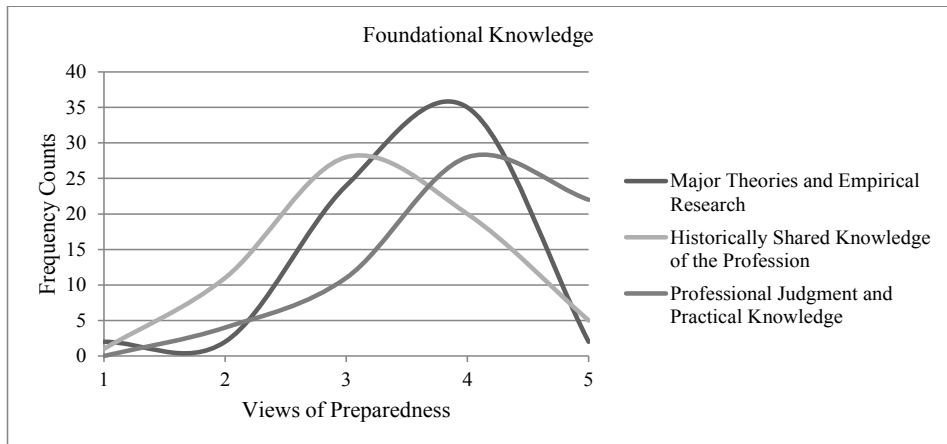| How prepared are preservice literacy teachers with:	Not At All Prepared	Slightly Prepared	Somewhat Prepared	Very Prepared	Extremely Prepared
Understanding major theories and empirical research with literacy?	2 (3.1%)	2 (3.1%)	24 (36.9%)	35 (53.8%)	2 (3.1%)
Understanding the historically shared knowledge of the profession and changes over time in the perceptions of literacy?	1 (1.5%)	11 (16.9%)	28 (43.1%)	20 (30.8%)	5 (7.7%)
Understanding the role of professional judgment and practical knowledge for improving all students' literacy achievement?	—	4 (6.2%)	11 (16.9%)	28 (43.1%)	22 (33.8%)

Figure 1. Visual display of trends with frequency counts for aspects of foundational knowledge

The values for views of preparedness are as follows: 1 = Not At All Prepared, 2 = Slightly Prepared, 3 = Somewhat Prepared, 4 = Very Prepared, and 5 = Extremely Prepared.

Section 2: Curriculum and Instruction

Within this section, survey respondents indicated their views of the preparedness among preservice literacy teachers with the use of instructional methods, resources, and an integrated, comprehensive, balanced literacy curriculum. This section consisted of three questions, which determined views towards preservice literacy teachers' understanding of: (1) the design and implementation of literacy curriculum, (2) appropriate and varied instructional methods, and (3) a wide range of print texts and digital resources.

As shown in Table 3, more than half of the respondents reported that preservice literacy teachers were Very Prepared with all three aspects: understanding the design and implementation of literacy curriculum (n = 35), appropriate and varied instructional methods (n = 33), and a wide range of print texts and digital resources (n = 32). Trends with reported results for these three aspects were shown in Figure 2.

Table 3.

Section 2 Survey Results - Curriculum and Instruction

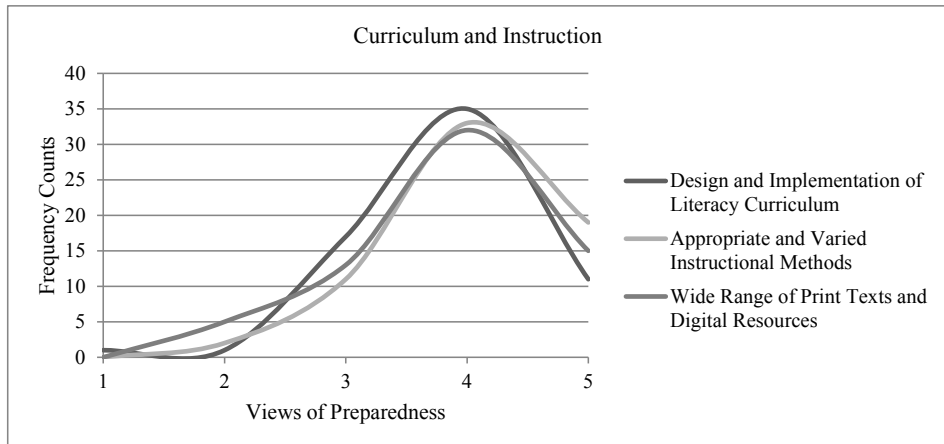| How prepared are preservice literacy teachers with:	Not At All Prepared	Slightly Prepared	Somewhat Prepared	Very Prepared	Extremely Prepared
Using foundational knowledge to design or implement an integrated, comprehensive, and balanced literacy curriculum?	1 (1.5%)	1 (1.5%)	17 (26.2%)	35 (53.8%)	11 (16.9%)
Using appropriate and varied instructional approaches with literacy?	—	2 (3.1%)	11 (16.9%)	33 (50.8%)	19 (29.2%)
Using a wide range of texts from traditional print, digital, and online resources?	—	5 (7.7%)	13 (20.0%)	32 (49.2%)	15 (23.1%)

Figure 2. Visual display of trends with frequency counts for aspects of curriculum and instruction.

The values for views of preparedness are as follows: 1 = Not At All Prepared, 2 = Slightly Prepared, 3 = Somewhat Prepared, 4 = Very Prepared, and 5 = Extremely Prepared.

Section 3: Assessment and Evaluation

Within this section, survey respondents indicated their views of the preparedness among preservice literacy teachers with the use of a variety of literacy assessment tools and practices to plan and evaluate effective literacy instruction. This section consisted of four questions, which discovered views towards preservice literacy teachers' understanding of: (1) assessment purposes, strengths, and limitations; (2) selecting,

developing, administering, and interpreting assessments; (3) using assessment information to plan and evaluate instruction; and (4) communicating assessment results and implications.

As shown in Table 4, the majority of respondents reported that preservice literacy teachers were Very Prepared with understanding assessment purposes, strengths, and limitations ($n = 27$) and use of assessment information to plan and evaluate instruction ($n = 30$). With respect to selecting, developing, administering, and interpreting assessments, the majority of respondents indicated that preservice literacy teachers were Somewhat Prepared ($n = 26$). The majority of respondents also assigned this same rating for communicating assessment results and implications ($n = 26$). Trends with reported results for these four aspects were shown in Figure 3.

Table 4.

Section 3 Survey Results - Assessment and Evaluation

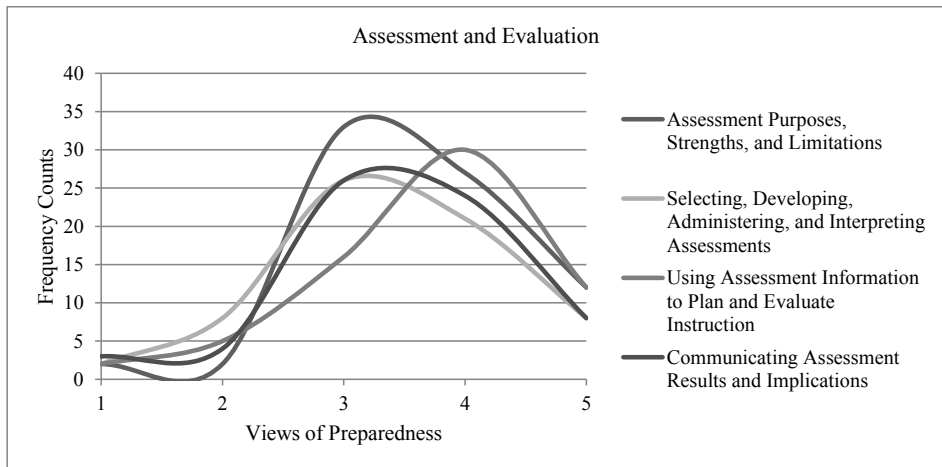| How prepared are preservice literacy teachers with:	Not At All Prepared	Slightly Prepared	Somewhat Prepared	Very Prepared	Extremely Prepared
Understanding types of literacy assessments and their purposes, strengths, and limitations?	2 (3.1%)	2 (3.1%)	22 (33.8%)	27 (41.5%)	12 (18.5%)
Selecting, developing, administering, and interpreting literacy assessments, both traditional print and electronic, for specific purposes?	2 (3.1%)	8 (12.3%)	26 (40.0%)	21 (32.3%)	8 (12.3%)
Using literacy assessment information to plan and evaluate instruction?	2 (3.1%)	5 (7.7%)	16 (24.6%)	30 (46.2%)	12 (18.5%)
Communicating literacy assessment results and implications to a variety of audiences?	3 (4.6%)	4 (6.2%)	26 (40.0%)	24 (36.9%)	8 (12.3%)

Figure 3. Visual display of trends with frequency counts for aspects of assessment and evaluation

The values for views of preparedness are as follows: 1 = Not At All Prepared, 2 = Slightly Prepared, 3 = Somewhat Prepared, 4 = Very Prepared, and 5 = Extremely Prepared.

Section 4: Diversity

Within this section, survey respondents indicated their views of the preparedness among preservice literacy teachers with use of literacy practices that develop mindfulness, consideration, and appreciation of cultural, social and ethnic differences. This section consisted of three questions, which uncovered views towards preservice literacy teachers' understanding of: (1) recognizing, understanding, and valuing diversity; (2) positively impacting knowledge, beliefs, and engagement with diversity; and (3) developing and implementing strategies to advocate for equity.

As shown in Table 5, the majority of respondents reported that preservice literacy teachers were Very Prepared with all three aspects of diversity ($n = 24$, $n = 22$, $n = 28$, respectively). Trends with reported results for these three aspects were shown in Figure 4.

Table 5.
Section 4 Survey Results - Diversity

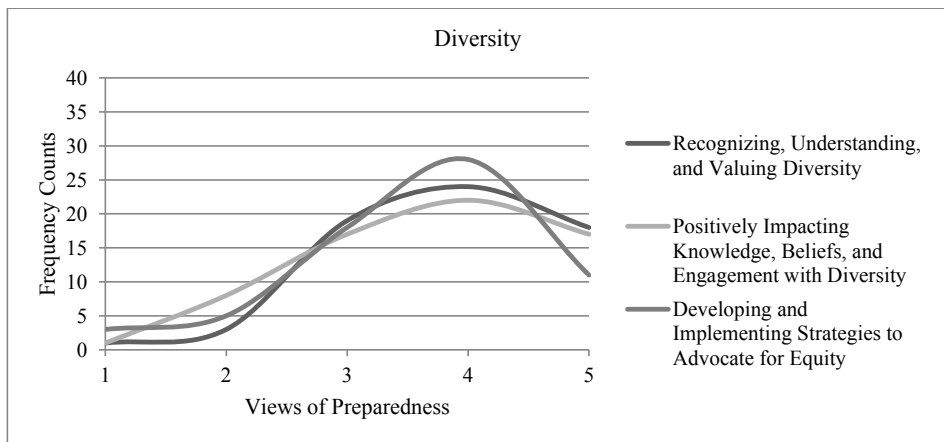| How prepared are preservice literacy teachers with:	Not At All Prepared	Slightly Prepared	Somewhat Prepared	Very Prepared	Extremely Prepared
Recognizing, understanding, and valuing the forms of diversity that exist in society and their importance in literacy learning?	1 (1.5%)	3 (4.6%)	19 (29.2%)	24 (36.9%)	18 (27.7%)
Using a literacy curriculum and engaging in instructional practices that positively impact students' knowledge, beliefs, and engagement with the features of diversity?	1 (1.5%)	8 (12.3%)	17 (26.2%)	22 (33.8%)	17 (26.2%)
Developing and implementing strategies to advocate for equity?	3 (4.6%)	5 (7.7%)	18 (27.7%)	28 (43.1%)	11 (16.9%)

Figure 4. Visual display of trends with frequency counts for aspects of diversity.

The values for views of preparedness are as follows: 1 = Not At All Prepared, 2 = Slightly Prepared, 3 = Somewhat Prepared, 4 = Very Prepared, and 5 = Extremely Prepared.

Section 5: Literate Environment

Within this section, survey respondents indicated their views of the preparedness among preservice literacy teachers with creating a literate environment that promotes literacy by integrating foundational knowledge, instructional practices, resources, and assessments. This section consisted of four questions, which revealed views towards preservice literacy teachers' understanding of: (1) designing an optimal physical environment, (2) designing a low-risk social environment, (3) establishing routines to support literacy instruction, and (4) using a variety of classroom configurations to differentiate instruction.

As shown in Table 6, the majority of respondents reported that preservice literacy teachers were Very Prepared with all four aspects of literate environment ($n = 27$, $n = 28$, $n = 33$, $n = 32$, respectively). Trends with reported results for these four aspects were shown in Figure 5.

Table 6.
Section 5 Survey Results - Literate Environment

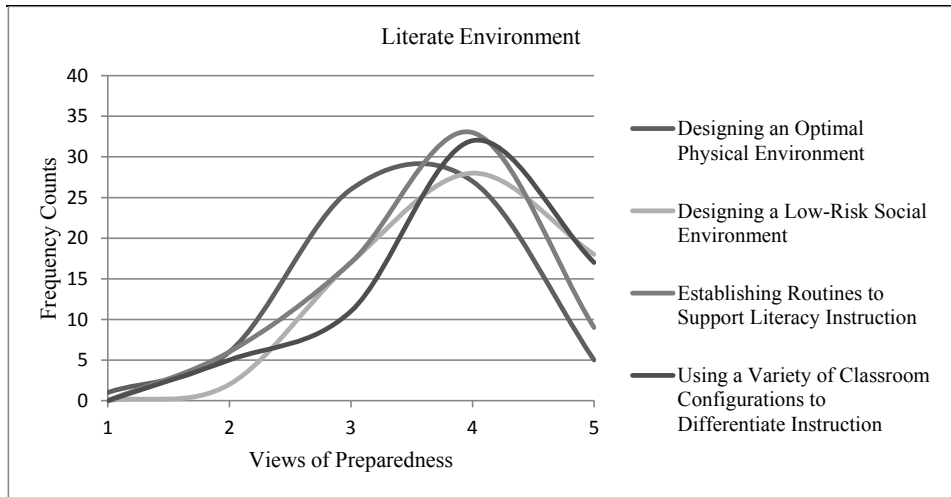| How prepared are preservice literacy teachers with:	Not At All Prepared	Slightly Prepared	Somewhat Prepared	Very Prepared	Extremely Prepared
Designing the physical environment to optimize students' use of traditional print, digital, and online literacy resources?	1 (1.5%)	6 (9.2%)	26 (40.0%)	27 (41.5%)	5 (7.7%)
Designing a social environment that is low risk and includes choice, motivation, and scaffolded support to optimize students' opportunities for literacy learning?	—	2 (3.1%)	17 (26.2%)	28 (43.1%)	18 (27.7%)
Using routines to support literacy instruction (e.g., time allocation, transitions from one activity to another; discussions, and peer feedback)?	—	6 (9.2%)	17 (26.2%)	33 (50.8%)	9 (13.8%)
Using a variety of classroom configurations (i.e., whole class, small group, and individual) to differentiate literacy instruction?	—	5 (7.7%)	1 (16.9%)	32(49.2%)	17 (26.2%)

Figure 5. Visual display of trends with frequency counts for aspects of literate environment.

The values for views of preparedness are as follows: 1 = Not At All Prepared, 2 = Slightly Prepared, 3 = Somewhat Prepared, 4 = Very Prepared, and 5 = Extremely Prepared.

Section 6: Professional Learning and Leadership

Within this section, survey respondents indicated their views regarding the preparedness among preservice literacy teachers with recognizing the significance of and engaging with professional learning and leadership throughout the duration of their teaching career. This section consisted of four questions, which disclosed views towards preservice literacy teachers' understanding of: (1) adult learning theories; (2) positive dispositions to personal literacy levels; (3) designing, facilitating, leading, and evaluating professional development; and (4) local, state, or national policy decisions.

As shown in Table 7, the majority of respondents reported that preservice literacy teachers were Somewhat Prepared with all four aspects of professional learning and leadership ($n = 26$, $n = 25$, $n = 22$, $n = 23$, respectively). Trends with reported results for these four aspects were shown in Figure 6.

Table 7.

Section 6 Survey Results - Professional Learning and Leadership

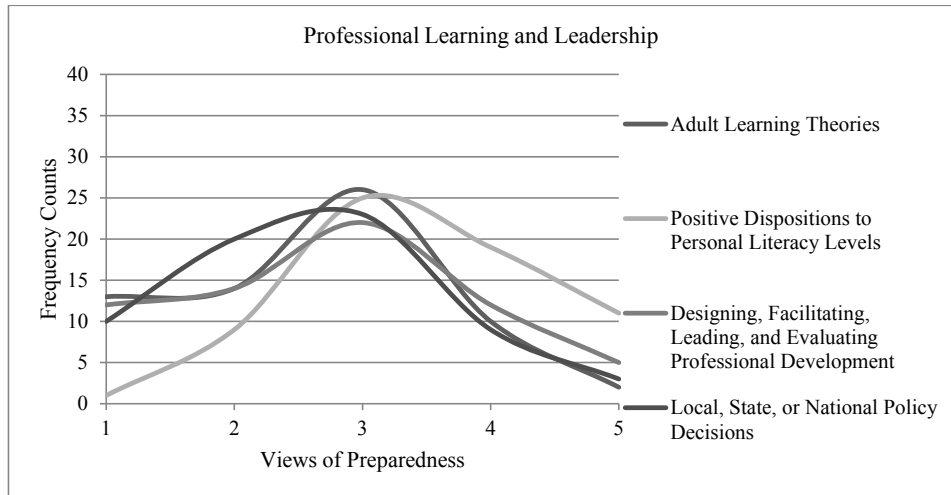| How prepared are preservice literacy teachers with:	Not At All Prepared	Slightly Prepared	Somewhat Prepared	Very Prepared	Extremely Prepared
Demonstrating foundational knowledge of adult learning theories and related research about organizational change, professional development, and school culture?	13 (20.0%)	14 (21.5%)	26 (40.0%)	10 (15.4%)	2 (3.1%)
Displaying positive dispositions related to their own literacy levels and the teaching of literacy, and pursue the development of individual professional knowledge and behaviors?	1 (1.5%)	9 (13.8%)	25 (38.5%)	19 (29.2%)	11 (16.9%)
Participating in, designing, facilitating, leading, and evaluating effective and differentiated professional development programs related to literacy?	12 (18.5%)	14 (21.5%)	22 (33.8%)	12 (18.5%)	5 (7.7%)
Understanding and influencing local, state, or national policy decisions regarding literacy?	10 (15.4%)	20 (30.8%)	23 (35.4%)	9 (13.8%)	3 (4.6%)

Figure 6. Visual display of trends with frequency counts for aspects of professional learning and leadership.

The values for views of preparedness are as follows: 1 = Not At All Prepared, 2 = Slightly Prepared, 3 = Somewhat Prepared, 4 = Very Prepared, and 5 = Extremely Prepared.

Discussion

Concerns regarding the preparedness of preservice literacy teachers among all teaching areas have been vocalized over the last several years (Conley, 2012, Draper et al., 2012; Fang, 2014; Grisham et al., 2014; Hoffman et al., 2016; Joshi et al., 2009; McGrail et al., 2011; McLean & Rowsell, 2013; McTavish & Filipenko, 2016; Myers et al., 2016; Sayeski et al., 2015; Spear-Swerling & Cheesman, 2012; Wolsey et al., 2013). Most recently, ILA (2015) expressed concerns with literacy teacher preparation and called for additional research in this area. The purpose of the current study was in response to this call and ascertain how the "internal experts" (Lacina & Block, 2011, p. 326) viewed current levels of preparation among preservice literacy teachers.

Eliciting the views of literacy teacher educators was of extreme significance because they play a pivotal role in literacy teacher preparation within the classroom, as well as within contexts beyond the classroom (Wold et al., 2011). As preservice literacy teachers advance through their respective teacher preparation programs, effective literacy teacher educators interact with them continuously to cultivate understandings with literacy required among teaching professionals. Through these interactions, preservice literacy teachers demonstrate their levels of competence, which then shape the viewpoints of literacy teacher educators concerning preparedness.

In the current study, we used ILA's professional standards for preservice literacy

teachers as determinants for preparedness, which consisted of six specific areas related to literacy: foundational knowledge, curriculum and instruction, assessment and evaluation, diversity, literate environment, and professional learning and leadership (IRA, 2010). Analyses of results produced several interesting findings, which pointed to implications for stakeholders involved with the preparation of literacy teachers. First, our findings demonstrated high levels of congruence with views of preparedness for aspects within the Curriculum and Instruction and Diversity standards. Within these two standards, literacy teacher educators reported views that were mostly high for all related aspects. This finding has suggested that literacy teacher educators feel relatively confident with the impact of their current preparation approaches for all aspects related to curriculum and instruction and diversity. Consequently, this finding is a bright spot among previous expressions of concerns regarding preservice literacy teachers' competence with bridging theory and practice (Bainbridge & Macy, 2008; Beck et al., 2007; Clark et al., 2013) and diversity (Brock, Case, & Taylor, 2013; Castro, 2010; Laughter, 2011). It is reasonable to assume that awareness and attention to strengthening how these standards are addressed during literacy teacher preparation through classroom- and text-based activities (Dyce & Owusu-Ansah, 2016; Griffith, Bauml, & Quebec-Fuentes, 2016; Kreamelmeyer, Kline, Zygmunt, & Clark, 2016) and authentic experiences in real world settings (Pappamihiel, Ousley-Exum, & Ritzhaupt, 2017; Riley & Solic, 2017; Wetzel, Roser, Hoffman, Martínez, & Price-Dennis, 2016) has had a positive impact on the preparedness of preservice literacy teachers. We encourage all stakeholders involved with literacy teacher preparation to continue promoting effective practices because the interdependence of these two standards is obvious - effective teachers of diverse learners must be skilled practitioners who utilize a theory-informed pedagogy.

Conversely, our findings revealed low ratings and little congruence with views of preparedness for aspects within the Professional Learning and Leadership standard. Over 80% of survey respondents reported views of Somewhat Prepared, Slightly Prepared, or Not At All Prepared to describe the preparedness with adult learning theories and local, state, or national policy decisions. Similarly, over 70% of survey respondents reported the same views regarding preparedness with designing, facilitating, leading, and evaluating professional development. This finding is quite perplexing, especially since literacy teachers are expected to be collaborators and leaders of professional learning among colleagues, as well as informed professionals who advocate for effective literacy practices among all learners in and out of the classroom (ILA, 2010). Rogers and Scales (2013) pointed out that while these expectations have been a focal point for decades, "little attention has been paid to the preparation of preservice classroom teachers for leadership roles" (p. 20). Based upon this finding, all stakeholders involved with literacy teacher preparation must identify ways to address this preparation program deficiency and consider ways to augment their

programs with preparation practices that advance aspects of professional learning and leadership among preservice literacy educators. Such practices may cultivate ideals related to professional stewardship (Yontz, 2013), incorporate community-based experiences with K-12 students and families in non-school contexts (Haddix, 2015), and provide opportunities for literacy teacher educators and preservice literacy teachers to collaborate in designing and implementing sessions at professional venues (Dunlap & Hansen-Thomas, 2011).

Conclusion

As with any research endeavor, there were a number of limitations to the current study. First, our sampling methods were limited to literacy teacher educators affiliated with university-based EPPs in one state. However, we intentionally set this limitation due to state-specific teacher licensure requirements (Cappello & Farnan, 2006; Darling-Hammond & Cobb, 1996) and differences with preparation for specific teacher certification routes (i.e., alternative and traditional). With this in mind, we recommend that future studies replicate our methodology to ascertain the viewpoints of literacy teacher educators on a state-by-state basis for specific teacher certification routes. After analyzing the findings from individual state analyses, it may also be interesting to compare these findings to identify significant trends shared among individual states and teacher certification routes.

Another limitation with the current study was concerned with the low number of respondents. We were disappointed in the low survey response rate, which fell below the recommended rate of 60 +/- 20 for academic studies in behavioral sciences using a conventional population (Baruch, 1999). The current study used purposive sampling techniques to create a database of literacy teacher educators affiliated with university-based EPPs in one state, which relied solely upon publically available information posted on each university's website. This raised questions regarding the accuracy and completeness of information gathered. We recommend that future studies use other, more robust sampling techniques to ensure their participant pool is current, correct, and exhaustive.

Although findings from the current study should be interpreted and generalized with caution, they do provide insights as to how literacy teacher educators view preparedness among preservice literacy teachers. Literacy teacher preparation programs are subject to a number of educational policies, state and national regulations, as well as an intense amount of scrutiny (ILA & NCTE, 2017). Despite these challenges, the primary goal is paramount - to prepare preservice literacy teachers with the requisite dispositions, knowledge, and skills required among novice and experienced literacy professionals (IRA, 2010). This is of particular importance where a digital and global world "demands that a literate person possess a wide range of abilities and competencies [and] many literacies" (NCTE, 2013, para. 1).

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