

ELLs & Bilinguals Maintaining Pride and Use of Native Language and Culture

by

Hannah A. Newman

August 4, 2023

Supervised by

Dr. Mahmoud Altalouli

A master's thesis capstone project submitted to the Department of Education and Human
Development of SUNY Brockport in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Science in TESOL

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Abstract

English Language Learners (ELLs) and Bilingual students struggle to maintain use and pride in their native language (L1) and culture as they begin to assimilate into American society and learn English. Research identifies three main challenges faced by ELL and bilingual students as they learn English while trying to maintain their native language and culture. These challenges include difficulties in maintaining native culture, the pressure to assimilate, and the insufficient of preparation of educators in effectively teaching ELLs and bilingual students. Findings reveal possible solutions to improve the issues of ELL and bilingual student losing use of L1 and pride in their native culture such as translanguaging, code switching, and culturally responsive teaching. To help educators address these challenges, a professional development is designed for the Washington Heights Academy, inviting all educators and specialist to participate. The main objectives of the professional development are to delve into theories that shed light on the significance of finding solutions for the identified challenges, gain a better understanding of the issues at hand, engage in content-based learning and discussions with fellow colleagues, and ultimately equip educators with practical strategies to effectively support ELL and bilingual learners. Recommendations include organizing school events that celebrate the diverse cultures and languages represented by students and conducting further research that explores different pedagogies and support methods employed for ELL and bilingual learners in other countries.

Keywords: English language learner, bilingual, assimilate, translanguaging, code switching, culturally responsive teaching

Chapter 1: Introduction

New York State has a growing population of English Language Learners (ELLs) and Bilingual learners. According to the New York Department of Education in 2021, a total of 147,287 Bilingual students were in New York schools. Many of these students struggle with having to acclimate to a new place while maintaining their native languages and cultures and learning English as a new language. However, many learning environments do not always support these students in facilitating celebration or pride in their native languages and cultures (Turnbull, 2018; Watts, 2019).

Like in many states, ELLs in New York struggle to hold on to a sense of identity connected to their native culture and languages as they navigate learning English and fitting into American culture. Additionally, Miguel Abrantes Antunes a high school teacher in NY shares her first-hand experience supporting her immigrant ELL students through the hard transition of lose and change during the immigration process. She shares how NY systems are currently failing with our resources to support ELL. Educational institutions have the resources to support these learners, but are failing them when it comes to preserving native language, racial dissociation, and cultural assimilation (Antunes, 2021). The article describes the push for American or European dominance being dismissive of other culture populations and diversity surrendering to European norm (Antunes, 2021). This shows the struggle ELL learners have to assimilate and lose connection to their native language and culture with the push for American assimilation and lack of systematic support to celebrate their diversity.

In her research article, Jessica Watts (2021) explores assimilation pedagogy in the U.S. and the belief that to be successful in a school, community, or society becoming part of the dominate culture or language is key. Based on Watt's findings, assimilation pedagogy is when

students feel a shame in their own culture and language, as they are in a new environment.

Students feel the pressure to learn the “public language”, therefore using their native language less. Assimilation pedagogy can make students want to let go of their native language and culture to fit in to the dominant one around them. For many language learners, this being English and western culture. This is a pressure and a challenge that ELL and bilingual students face, and as a result lose their native language and culture.

The purpose of this project is to explore the issues of ELL/Bilingual students losing their native language and culture to assimilate into American culture and learn English. Next, Chapter 2 reviews the literature related to the challenges facing ELLs in maintaining and using their native culture as possible solutions. Chapter 3 outlines the professional development program designed to equip educators with the necessary resources and tools to gain a deeper understanding of the issue and effectively support it. Lastly, Chapter 4 concludes with implications based on the major findings of this project.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This Chapter explores research studies that focus on how educators can support language learners in learning English without losing skills or celebration in their native language and culture. Much of the research has examined student experience in language, culture, and self-identity, teacher pedagogy, cultural assimilation, and language learners. In addition to these themes, this review discusses cultural and language challenges and systemic barriers for language learners and ways to support language learners. Before discussing these themes, I first explain the Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) and Funds of Knowledge (FoK), which provide insight into the importance of educators recognizing and implementing teaching practices that incorporate and acknowledge students' cultural backgrounds.

Culturally Responsive Teaching and Funds of Knowledge

Both the theory of culturally responsive teaching (CRT) and funds of knowledges (FoK) highlight the importance of using ELL and bilingual students range of experiences, culture, and language to support students' growth. These theories suggest that a deeper understanding of students' experiences and culture, along with their incorporation into the learning environment, can yield significant benefits. Additionally, these theories are interconnected and align with the broader theme of supporting ELL and bilingual students in preserving and celebrating their native language and culture.

Culturally Responsive Teaching

Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) is a theory and pedagogy that explores a framework that focuses on the impact of systemic racism as part of American society (Ladson-Billing, 2014). It begins by stating that racism is a normal part of the framework that makes up our American society. This extends to impacts on schools and education systems. CRT looks at

how citizens and race potentially interact. This theory helps to support our understanding that our education system holds inequities that have been in place for generations. When focusing on schools and education systems, CRT plays a major role in understanding the importance of cultural response pedagogy.

Culturally responsive pedagogy is one that uses students' customs, experiences, language, characteristics, and perspectives to inform teaching practices and tools for teaching. In order to support the needs of a diverse student population, it is important to understand the role a student's culture, race, and or language play in a student's education (Ladson-Billing, 1995). As CRT helps us to understand inequities and racist policies and practices within our education system, there is a greater need for educators to incorporate students' culture into classroom learning. Additionally, Ladson-Billings stated when there are cultural connections between home and school. Students' academic performance was more successful.

For ELL and bilingual students, customs and experiences are an important part of who students are. Students come from diverse backgrounds and experiences, that might differ from the peers they will have when entering new schools in the U.S. By employing CRT, educators can fulfill a crucial role in supporting ELL and bilingual students by embracing and celebrating their cultural differences and experiences. Demonstrating to students that their unique backgrounds and cultures are valued forms an integral part of fostering personal and academic growth. Moreover, encouraging the continued use of a student's native language (L1) in the classroom setting can have a profound impact on their self-identities and overall development (Baker Wright, 2021). CRT helps educators to respond and integrate cultural aspects for students that can help them be successful. This is crucial for the success of students in supporting academic growth. When students see themselves represented in the learning and educators incorporating

race, culture, and language, they can connect with academic learning and content more successfully (Ladson-Billing, 1995). Adopting CRT as a pedagogy can transform the teaching and learning process to become student-centered, accommodating the needs of each student within a specific group. This approach involves tailoring the learning experience to align with students' cultural backgrounds, languages, and unique experiences. Instead of forcing students to conform to a one-size-fits-all teaching model, CRT ensures that learning is personalized, making it more meaningful and relevant to each individual student.

These ideas suggest that as ELL and Bilingual students enter American schools, due to inequities, students feel pressured to assimilate in a predominately English speaking environment. This can eventually lead to students losing their native language and culture. CRT suggests that there is value in using culturally responsive pedagogy to support ELL and Bilingual students learning. Furthermore, through CRT, we can understand that moving education towards fitting the students rather than students fitting our education systems has positive effects. As well as eventually leading to changing education systems on a structural level. Having a culturally responsive classroom for ELL and Bilingual students can help prevent students from losing pride in their native language and culture.

Funds of Knowledge

FoK, as described by Moll et al. (1992), encompasses the vital cultural practices and knowledge inherent in the daily routines and traditions of families. This concept emphasizes the significance of establishing connections with students and families to gain deeper insights into their culture, religion, customs, and experiences (Gonzalez et al., 1995; Johnson & Johnson, 2016). Students may possess valuable skills or knowledge acquired at home that can serve as a support system for their academic journey (Baker & Wright, 2021). Students and their families

have a wide range of experiences that can support a student's learning and academic growth. In essence, FoK can include, community work, lived experiences, and mathematical skills.

In addition, FoK can support educators making cross-cultural connections and implementing student experiences to build on what they know (Moll et al., 1992). This is particularly beneficial for ELL and bilingual students. For instance, home visits by educators can have a profound impact on a student's success. By visiting students' homes, teachers can tap into their funds of knowledge by understanding their socioeconomic background, cultural cuisine, family's religious practices, level of support for learning at home, hands-on activities students engage in, as well as the languages spoken within the household. (Gonzalez et al., 1995). All of these aspects serve as examples of how teachers can incorporate these insights about a student's funds of knowledge and establish meaningful connections to provide support in the classroom.

Through using this theory, ELL and Bilingual educators can connect to the vast cultural experiences of the students they are working with. Using these experiences and cultural aspects of students' funds of knowledge and adapting it to our own practices and realities is impactful. Better understanding a student's funds of knowledge when they enter a classroom can help build a strong foundation to further supporting them in not losing pride or use in their native language or culture (Baker & Wright, 2021). On the contrary, early implementation of language and cultural aspects in the classroom lays the foundation for language learning and academic achievement. Furthermore, it presents an opportunity to establish meaningful connections with families and parents. Building a strong relationship with parents enables educators to gain a broader understanding of a student's funds of knowledge and strengthens the connection between home and school (Johnson, & Johnson, 2016). This home-school connection plays a crucial role

in supporting and nurturing both academic knowledge and personal life connections. Moreover, a teacher's own funds of knowledge contribute to enhancing students' learning and overall growth.

Fundamentally, CRT and FoK underscore the significance of integrating a student's culture and knowledge at the core of classroom learning. By shaping the learning environment to encompass students' cultural experiences, it promotes the celebration and preservation of ELL and bilingual students' native language and culture. When students are immersed in an educational setting that supports and embraces their identities, it fosters greater success in both their academic pursuits and personal growth.

Challenges for ELL Student and Educators

There are many challenges that ELL students and educators of ELL students face when learning or teaching a new language. These challenges are related to maintaining native culture; pressure to assimilate; and lack of educator preparation in teaching ELLs and bilingual students. These challenges make it difficult for ELLs to learn English while also celebrate and hold on to their native language and culture.

Struggle to Maintain Native Culture

Holding on to native language and culture when being the minority or learning a new language and culture can be challenging. In the United States, the majority of schools the dominate language being used is English (Chao & Waller, 2021). However, the language a student speaks at home has a major impact a student's identity and even while a student is in an English speaking school. Loss of indigenous language can lead to confusion and struggle with self-identity. Various research studies explore the impact being in an English speaking school and being the cultural minority has on ELLs. For example, in their interviews with three American Indian students and families to understand their language and cultural identity in

predominately White and English speaking schools, Chao and Waller (2021) found that children spent more time in English speaking schools and away from the reservations. As result, their skills in the native language were being lost.

One of the participating students recalled her Indigenous language loss that happened when she was a child as a loss of self-identity. Her Indigenous language was not accepted in school, referred to as an “environmental allergy” resulting in her own change in identity (Chao & Waller, 2021). Similarly, Alharbi (2023), through teacher interviews and student interaction in an Arab speaking school, found a student’s learning of language is heavy influenced by the predominant language and cultural that they are surrounded by. Alharbi further explained that students from non-western cultures and languages are at a disadvantage when aiming to maintain a sense of self. These findings suggest, ELL learners in predominantly western or English speaking schools struggle to learn English while maintaining use and pride in their native language and cultural identities.

Pressure to Assimilate

ELL and bilingual learners face challenges surrounding assimilation pedagogy, environmental pressure to assimilate, and maintaining pride and use of native culture and language. Schools play an important role in student development. Schooling in the United States holds Western standards for living and speaking English at the center of focus and their foundation (Schultz, 2016). However, many programs and schools that ELL students are entering, have historically been set up to influence students to immerse in American society. This leads to students feeling pressured to assimilate to American centered culture and language (Watts, 2021). Findings reveal that one student felt shame regarding his culture and embraced his

teachers' assertions that "rapidly learning English and assimilating to U.S. culture would result in the best possible life for him (Watts, 2021, p. 4).

Furthermore, students are faced with the challenge to maintain their native culture and language in a school environment that is not set up to support their non-Western centered backgrounds or support them in academic growth (Schultz, 2016). In their semester long-case study with first-generation minority students attending a predominately White university, White and Ali-Khan (2013) found that many students felt pressure to assimilate to fit in with White peer. Students recounted the pressures to "Act White" as well as, "struggle to participate in academic English language" (Ali-Khan, 2013 p. 30). Students felt it was a struggle to learn and participate in academic conversation without being made fun of or feeling stupid because of trying to express themselves their L1. As a result, students struggle to participate in learning and begin to resist using their native language (L1) to better fit in to the school environment with their White counterparts.

Additionally, Otheguy and Erker (2020) explored U.S. and English impact on students of English vs Spanish. The analyses of interviews with 331 Spanish speaker native-born peoples, and 269 Spanish speaking Results showed that Spanish-speaking immigrants and their US-born children struggled to use English. Speaking Spanish came at the expense of using and becoming proficient in English. Therefore, language learners struggle to learn English and a new culture while also maintaining use of their own. It is challenging to develop both to a full extent.

Lack of Educator Preparation in Teaching ELLs

CCSS and NCLB Teaching Challenges

Many educators are not equipped with the tools, education, or resources of how to best teacher ELL and bilingual students. Teachers struggle to support students through academic

development and content based learning, especially when working with language learners (Szpara, 2017). Szpara's (2017) case study examined a cohort of Philadelphia teachers were interviewed and observed to gauge teachers comfort level and preparedness in supporting language learners in meeting as Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and No Child Left Behind, (NCLB) goals in connection to curriculum (Szpara, 2017). The results show that teachers did not feel prepared to support ELLs through CCSS due to challenges implementing content knowledge without supports and resources to support content language. Sharing, required time and appropriate instructional support is needed for ELLs, but CCSS does not provided guidelines on how to provide these (Szpara, 2017).

Likewise, Thelma de Jager's (2019) case study through interviewing educators to gain insight as to their level of pedagogical preparation to working with ELL and language learning students found that educators did not know how to bridge the barrier and support to make English learning and content more accessible for ELLs. Finally, for ELL and bilingual students, having educators that have not received the proper professional development, tools, strategies, and preparation to best support language learners can create more challenges for students' academic and language growth (Baker and Wright, 2021). Additionally, if educators are not prepared to support students' academic and language needs, helping ELL and bilingual students maintain use of native language would be challenging.

Preparation Program Requirements and Impact on ELLs

Teachers' lack of proper preparation and education on how to best support ELL learners can be a result of teacher certification programs, which affect student achievement. To compare requirements for teacher education programs and see to what level they required educators to have the most education surrounding teaching ELLs, Lopez et al. (2013) surveyed newly 203

certified teachers and concluded 70% of educators had received a lack of effective education and professional development when working with ELLs and found a strong connection between level of teacher program preparation to work with ELLs and student academic success rates.

Expanding on these results, Lopez and Santibanez (2018) explored the connection linked to failure of teacher certification programs to prepare teachers to support language learners, as well as the level of ELL and bilingual student achievement rates. The analyses of teacher program requirements in three states, Arizona, California, and Texas showed that failure of teacher preparation programs to properly set up educators to support with language learners did impact the level of academic success for language learners.

Therefore, incorporating ELL and bilingual professional development and training into teacher education programs is crucial. If educators do not have the tools to teach language learners academically, they will lack in the skills to support students in maintaining pride and usage of native culture and language effectively. Indeed, programs including ELL and bilingual professional development and training empower educators to create inclusive, culturally responsive, and effective learning environments for ELL and bilingual students (e.g., Ladson-Billings, 1995). This way, educators can help ELL students thrive academically and emotionally, promoting equity and success for all students.

Educator Struggles with Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Many educators struggle to support ELL students due to difference in language and cultural understanding. Sato et al.'s (2019) analyses of six Physical Education (PE) teachers' surveys, interviews, and emails showed that teachers struggled to recognize the importance of language being a tool for academic subjects. Supporting ELLs' language skills due to language

differences. Teachers felt they do not have the tools or feel comfortable implementing aspects that are relevant to student culture. One teacher said:

I really struggled to find what my Asian students want and need from me. I had to use tactical words of my object-control lessons. I was sure that many Asian students were not familiar with the terms. I asked “do you understand what this means?” Many of them were so quiet and silent and then no reaction. It makes me really anxious and nervous when they do not give any reactions to what I am saying (Helen, interview). (Sato et al., 2019)

This finding suggests that some teachers may not fully appreciate the importance of integrating students' language and culture into their instructional practices. Interviewing teacher educators can offer insights into their perspectives and competencies concerning cultural responsiveness towards students. Burden et al. (2012) found that teacher education programs inadequately prepared educators in the areas of social justice, multiculturalism, and linguistic diversity. Furthermore, teachers who participated in the study expressed feelings of unpreparedness to address the multicultural aspects of teaching.

Overall, educators feel ill-equipped with the tools and educational background to effectively teach and support multicultural and linguistically diverse groups of students. Consequently, ELL students do not receive the necessary support to succeed academically and are at a disadvantage in maintaining and celebrating their native language and culture. Due to teachers' limited preparation, they often struggle to provide the need assistance to these students.

Increasing ELLs' Celebration of Native Language and Culture

Several solutions, methods, and supports are available to enhance the celebration of ELL and bilingual students' native language and culture. These include Translanguaging, Code Switching, and Culturally Responsive Teaching. Implementing these strategies acknowledges and integrates ELL and bilingual students' culture and language into the classroom learning experience, fostering a greater sense of celebration and appreciation for their native language and culture.

Translanguaging

Translanguaging is an effective method when supporting ELL and bilingual learners in celebrating their culture and using their L1. Translanguaging is the method of using linguistic and learning resources to include a person's L1 to support them in academic growth in a language they are beginning to learn. Translanguaging is an approach that builds on language pedagogy that strengths and affirms students diverse and dynamic language practices through learning and teaching (Vogel & Garcia, 2017). Stille et al. (2016) analyzed reports and conducted in person observations from educators in 16 different school districts in Ontario to better understand teachers' current practices when teaching ELL, multicultural, and diverse student populations. Findings revealed teachers who had training on methods of translanguaging; had fewer negative assumptions about students learning abilities, had a better understanding of scaffolds and supports to strengthen multicultural learners, and were encouraged to use students L1 in the classroom to generate more learning opportunities and improve students' self-confidence. In Garcia-Mateus and Palmer's (2017) study, during an observation, a teacher was seen providing support to a student by demonstrating bilingual phonemic awareness. The teacher clarified, "The letter J in Spanish makes the same sound as the letter H in English."

In agreement with the previous research, Menken and Sanchez's (2019) qualitative data from eight New York City public schools that had an English only policy of teaching at the beginning of the study and data collection showed a change in mono-linguistic teaching practices in participating schools as a result of adopting translanguaging. The study took place over the course of a year to a year and a half. Researchers gathered data through interviews with teachers, review and observation of educational practice, and school visits. In taking part in this research study, participating schools and teachers had to attend professional training in translanguaging and teaching instruction through the CUNY Graduate Center. Further support for the method of translanguaging can be found in Garcia-Mateus and Palmer's (2017) study. The analysis of observing a 1st-grade classroom in the southwest United States over the course of six weeks, Garcia-Mateus and Palmer found that using translanguaging in the classroom provided opportunities for students to engage in multicultural learning and awareness of their identities. Students were more likely to engage in flexible bilingualism, in using their L1. As well as educators being more prepared to support ELLs and bilinguals in making connections between language and content.

These findings show with the increase of teacher professional training in practices of translanguaging and linguistic supports for bilingual students, educators shift their ideas surrounding language practices and school language policies. Additionally, translanguaging showed to support the development of cross-linguistics awareness for both students and teachers, as well as multicultural and linguistically diverse identities. Indeed, the method of translanguaging creates educational practices and learning environments that support continued use of students' native language (L1), and celebration of their culture (Wei & Garcia, 2014).

Code Switching

Like translanguaging, code switching involves the use of multiple languages during communication during communication by students and teachers in the classroom. Code switching is the practice of alternating or mixed use between two or more languages during conversation or learning (Jiang, 2014). It can be an effective method for ELL and bilingual students to enhance language development and continue to use their L1. Jiang (2014) conducted a study on the practices of code switching/mixing when it comes to students using L1 (Chinese) and L2 (English) in an ELL and bilingual program in an elementary K-5 school in the Midwestern states of the U.S. The study included 350 students: 40% African American, 25% European American, and 35% ELLs with a range of cultural and language backgrounds. Findings showed that the classroom with a mixed use of incorporating both English and Chinese in instruction helped to enhance students learning, as well as build understanding for cross-cultural connections, support students' language development, and content knowledge. Similarly, Fachriyah's (2017) analyses of class observations found positive impacts of code-switching on student interactions, engagement in learning, and ELL development. Findings also revealed that students were able to develop vocabulary, ask more in-depth questions, provide more peer feedback, use L1 along with English to aid learning and communication.

Indeed, using code-switching or language mixing offers benefits for the academic advancement of ELL and bilingual students. Incorporating elements of student's L1 into English learning process not only provides the opportunity for students to acquire new English vocabulary and content knowledge but also builds on the foundation they have established through their L1. Additionally, code switching allows for continued use of a student's L1 and opportunity for students of various language development levels to participate in learning.

Culturally Responsive Educators

The method of culturally responsive teaching is an effective way for educators to incorporate students' diverse cultures, languages and lived experiences into classroom learning. Therefore, helping to facilitate learning environments where ELL and bilingual students can use their native languages and see their various cultures celebrated. Piazza et al.'s (2015) qualitative study examined the effectiveness of culturally responsive pedagogy across the fields of special education, teaching ELLs, and multicultural literacy education. The study focused on three different schools in the Midwestern United States and showed that teachers increased visual representation for students' cultures in the classrooms, as well as more collaboration with staff and students on developing learning experiences that represented a diverse student population. In conjunction with the previous research, Elfers et al.'s (2013) analysis of classroom observations, interviews, and analyses of documents to review and examine the supports in place for general educators in four school districts found schools who put into place support and methods for classroom teachers worked more effectively with culturally diverse student populations and ELL students.

In principle, research exploring the adoption of culturally responsive strategies reveal that this approach offers advantages in aiding ELL and bilingual students. It also equips educators with more effective teaching techniques for working these students. By integrating culturally responsive methods in the classroom, teachers not only acknowledge diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds of their students but also implement tools that promote the use of their native language and ensure representation of their cultures within the learning environment.

Summary

This Chapter has shown that ELL and bilingual students encounter obstacles while striving to learn English and integrate into schools in the United States, all the while attempting to maintain their native language (L1) and celebrate their culture. The theories of Culturally Responsive Teaching and Funds of Knowledge emphasize the significance of incorporating culture, language, and diverse skills and experiences into the classroom. These approaches have demonstrated their ability to support students in their academic learning, language development, and personal identity formation

Overall, ELL and bilingual learners encounter systemic obstacles related to preserving their native culture while simultaneously feeling pressured to assimilate. Moreover, educators often lack sufficient preparation in effectively working with these students, resulting in challenges for both learners and teachers. The literature also addresses potential solutions to this issue, such as the incorporation of Translanguaging in classrooms, the implementation of culturally responsive teaching, and the utilization of Code switching to support students' use of their native language (L1) and enhance their learning experience.

In Chapter 3, I will describe a professional development (PD) session designed for all educators and school staff. The PD aims to delve deeper into the main question addressed in this capstone and offer educational opportunities for educators to broaden their understanding of the topic. Building upon the insights gathered from the literature review, Chapter 3 will focus on equipping educators with tools, resources, and proactive strategies to effectively support ELL and bilingual learners based on research findings.

Chapter 3: Description of the Product and Tools

The problem being addressed and explored throughout the capstone is, ELL/ bilingual students losing pride or use of their native language (L1) or culture, when English becomes the focus language. As stated in Chapter 2, many ELL and bilingual students face cultural and language challenges including, struggling to maintain native culture, pressure to assimilate, and lack of educators preparation in teaching ELL and bilingual students (e.g., Alharbi, 2023; Chao & Waller, 2021; Szpara, 2017; White & Ali-Khan, 2013). Research in Chapter 2 has also identified ways to expand pedagogical methods to support ELL and bilingual learners such as translanguaging, culturally responsive teaching, and code switching (e.g., García-Mateus & Palmer, 2017; Menken & Sanchez, 2019). In this Chapter, I describe a professional development (PD) that aims to provide educators with the insight and steps create an environment that facilitates pride for student's native language and cultures. Through reflection, group discussion, and exploring theory and practice, this PD will aim to provide educators with new insights and tangible resources to implement in improving their pedagogy and classroom to support ELLs.

The PD will be given to all teachers, from all subject areas, teaching at the Elementary and middle school level, grades K-8th. The in which this PD will take place is Washington Heights Academy, M366. The school is part of district 6, located in Manhattan. Washington Heights Academy has a population of 553 students, with its minority student enrollment being 98%. As well as a student to teacher ratio of averages 16:1. Teachers taking this PD include general classroom teacher, ESOL educators, and special education teachers. Participants will be engaged in learning about helping students who are new to the United States and are learning English for the first time; students who speak English at school and a different language at home; and those who are the minority in their classes both culturally and linguistically.

As discussed in Chapter 2, there is a growing number of ELL students the U.S., particularly in NY state schools (NYC Department of Education ELL Demographics, 2021). With a growing population of ELL students, it is important that all educators working with these learners are prepared to help support them in their English learning and growth. While also support students in maintaining use and pride in their native language and culture.

Agenda of Events

This professional development will take place in October of the school year. Having it in October allows for teachers to get settled into the school year and meet their students. However, it is early on in the year so that teachers can gain a better understanding on how to support ELLs and implement tools and strategies to do so early on. It will be held at the school in the gymnasium. Teachers will sit at circle tables. This will help build an environment for connection and sharing of ideas. The PD will take place over a two-hour period. It will be one session; however, it will happen annually and there will be follow up to support teachers throughout the year. Such as team and leadership check-ins, observation, and resources support.

Throughout this PD there will be a number of activities to engage in the material and learning. First, teachers will enter the room and receive a colored sticky note, that will be passed out in alternating colors. Each color will coordinate to a sticky note color placed on a circle table. Teachers will have to sit at a table with the same color sticky note that they have. This will ensure teachers are sitting in mixed up groups, rather than just with their grade team. Additionally, adding to the range of conversation and expanding on thinking during group discussions. The focus being, better understanding how to support ELL maintain pride in their native language and culture- while learning English.

Teachers should expect to connect and learn through; discussing and sharing first-hand experiences, gain insight into the theory of Culturally Responsive Teaching (Ladson-Billing) and Funds of Knowledge (Moll, et al 1992). Exploring literature and research that shows this issue. Such as, struggling to maintain native culture (Alharbi, 2023; Chao & Waller, 2021), facing pressure to assimilate (Schultz, 2016; White & Ali-Khan, 2013) and lack of educator preparation in teaching ELLs and bilingual students (Jager, 2019; Lopez et al., 2013; Szpara, 2017), as well as better understand how to support students using translanguaging (Garcia-Mateus & Palmer, 2017; Menken & Sanchez, 2019; Stille, et al, 2016), culturally responsive teaching (Elfers et al., 2013; Piazza, Rao, & Protacio, 2015), and code switching (Fachriyah 2017; Jiang, 2014).

There will be thinking questions for the group to answer on sticky notes, then do a gallery walk to read and discuss others' answers. There will be a presenters slide deck with information being shared throughout the meeting, this will be available for educators after the session (see Appendix A). All materials can be referenced in Appendices (A-Slide show presentation with information and strategies; B- Warm up activity worksheet; C-sticky note worksheet; D- Exit ticket). The intended outcome from this PD is for teachers to walk away with a better understanding of why supporting students' native language and culture in the classroom is important, why and how it impacts students, and ways in which they can help support ELLs in maintaining pride and use of their native language and culture.

Activities

The first part of the PD allows for teachers to expand their thinking by sitting with those who are not necessarily on their grade team. To expand ideas beyond ones just relevant for our grad level and or subject. The discussion board questions will allow for teachers to walk around the room and answer questions based on their first-hand experience with the issue and how they

have seen students struggle to maintain pride in native language and culture, as well as how they have possibly supported students. As discussed in Chapter 2, Chao and Waller (2021) argue being the minority culturally and linguistically has negative impacts on how students use and perceive their native language.

Participants in this PD will be learning about the focus question and discussing it with each other based on firsthand experience and a discussion board walk through. Turning and talking to better understanding research surrounding the issues as well as pedagogical practices and strategies to support ELL in relation to the focus of the PD. Teachers should expect to be active listeners, share first-hand experiences, participate in whole group, and partner discussion, explore educational theories and strategies to support students.

Summary

The outcome of this PD will support teachers in being more equipped to support students and gain a better understanding of struggles students are faced with and how they can help. Menken and Sanchez (2021) shared how crucial it is for teachers to reflect and expand on classroom practice, pedagogy, and responsiveness to support our ELL students. Furthermore, as the presented issue continues impacting ELL and bilingual learners, exploring education theories and models of teaching will be crucial. The CATESOL journal explores models of teaching to support learners. Potentially using dual language programs to help support ELL and bilingual learners in building both their native language and learning English at the same time. To continue showing importance to students' native language and aiming for students to continue being proud of their native language and culture.

Throughout the PD the learning will be discussion research, and reflection based. Teachers will have the opportunity to explore the research, share firsthand experiences, and learn

about pedagogy and strategies for teaching ELL learners English without having students lose pride in their native language and culture. As a closing exit ticket, they will have to reflect and brainstorm one way they will implement a student's language and culture into their classroom or learning to help ELL students feel seen and celebrated.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to explore and address the issue of ELL and bilingual students losing pride and use of their L1 and native culture as they enter American English speaking schools. Findings reveal challenges that arise when these students are placed in an environment that prioritizes English and Western-centered culture (Schultz, 2016). This project has identified the difficulties faced by both students and educators concerning this matter and proposed potential solutions to address the issue. The questions that guided this project were: (1) How can educators support ELL and bilingual students through facilitating a learning environment that supports students using and celebrating their L1 and native culture? (2) What theories support the understanding as to why this issue is important? (3) What challenges do ELL and bilingual students face while learning English, and acclimating to American schools? (4) What pedagogical strategies and methods can be used to support students surrounding this issue? In this Chapter, I first summarize the major findings of this project. Next, I discuss implications arising from these findings and present a set of recommendations.

Summary

Many conclusions and takeaways emerged from the questions, solutions, and research. Notably, the importance of Funds of Knowledge, impact of Culturally Responsive Teaching, and the ways in which Translanguaging can support student language and academic growth were highlighted. Indeed, a student brings knowledge a range of experiences and skill sets to the classroom (Moll et al., 1992). What stood out was how important it is for teachers to connect with students and families to better understand and gain insight into a student's Funds of Knowledge (Johnson & Johnson, 2016). By doing so, educators can effectively support students, strengthen the connection between home and school connections. This approach has the potential

to positively impact students' academic growth, their school experience, and promote pride in their native language (Gonzalez et al., 1995; Moll et al., 1992).

Another key finding is the significant impact of Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) as a pedagogical approach. CRT emphasizes the integration of students' customs, experiences, language, and cultural characteristics into teaching practices and materials (Ladson-Billings, 1995). This approach challenges the notion of one-size-fits-all teaching methods, emphasizing the importance of tailoring the learning environment to reflect the diverse backgrounds and identities of the students in the classroom. Findings also reveal that translanguaging is a pedagogical approach to support the language and academic growth of ELL and bilingual students (Vogel & Garcia, 2017). Through the process of designing the professional development (PD) and conducting research, it became evident how this approach can benefit students. It allows students to see the connection and overlap between different languages and content knowledge.

Implications for Learning

Based on the findings of this project, ELL and bilingual students will benefit from the methods of code-switching, culturally responsive teaching, and translanguaging. All three of these methods implemented and supported by their teachers during learning will allow students to use their L1 and celebrate their culture. Code-switching will give students the opportunity to alternate between languages during learning and communication. This will give them the chance to continue using their L1, providing students opportunities to connect with peers who have varying levels of language development. As their teachers work to create culturally responsive classrooms, students benefit from having the opportunity for their native cultures to be represented. Culturally responsive teaching will support students in seeing themselves

represented through their classroom learning and environment. Lastly, incorporating translanguaging into the classroom setting can facilitate the development of students' academic knowledge and language skills. Through translanguaging students can use their L1 along with English to explore content knowledge and connect with learn and sharing ideas with peers.

Implications for Teaching Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Students

This project aims to benefit teachers by providing insights into how they can better support ELL and Bilingual students in maintaining their native language and culture. The development and implementation of the professional development (PD) will allow educators to explore various aspects related to this issue. The PD includes a review of relevant theories to emphasize the importance of implementing solutions. Teachers will also gain a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by ELL and bilingual learners concerning language and culture, which is often overlooked when the focus is solely on learning content and English language

During the PD, teachers will actively participate in activities and discussions centered around potential solutions. This interactive environment allows for the sharing of ideas, personal strategies, and experiences, creating a valuable learning opportunity for educators. Teachers will gain insights into creating a learning environment and using teaching methods that foster the celebration and use of students' native language and culture. The PD will also provide teachers with a copy of Appendix A, containing a slideshow with learning content, strategies, and methods for their reference. This resource will further support teachers in their efforts to meet the needs of ELL and bilingual learners effectively.

Recommendations

Although the literature has explored many topics to supporting educators, ELL and bilingual students, there are still areas that warrant further exploration of the findings. One potential avenue is creating regular opportunities for students and educators to engage in open dialogue about the needs and challenges of maintaining language and culture. This approach can foster a strong school community and enable students to advocate for the support they require. For teachers, these interactions can facilitate checking in with small groups or individual students to provide personalized assistance. Also, further research could explore the challenges and solutions faced by ELL and bilingual students in other countries. By studying the varying methods and approaches employed in different contexts, valuable insights can be gained to better support language learners in the United States.

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Appendix A

[Google Slides Presentation](#)

Appendix C

Gallery Walk sheet

Name (optional): _____ -

Directions: you will get a 4 sticky notes. On each note there will be a few thinking questions to answer. The purpose is to connect to our learning today and learn from your colleagues. Please take the next **10** minutes to answer the questions.

Then You will walk around the room. In each corner of the room there is a piece of chart paper with a question from your sheet on it the sticky note on the corresponding chart paper. *(You may choose to include your name or not)*

<p>1)Have you ever been told to “Act White”- If so, share about the experience?</p>	<p>2)Have you ever has an ELL or Bilingual student in your class that your struggled to support?</p>
<p>3)What are ways you have or might support culturally or linguistically diverse students in your class?</p>	<p>4)Have you seen any of the challenges or concepts we have discussed so far today play out in your own teaching?</p>

Appendix D

Exit Ticket

Name: _____

Date: _____

Exit Ticket:

Directions: On the sheets being passed around, answer the questions below based on our learning today

1) What is something that you found interesting from today's learning?

2) What action step will you take this week to support ELL and Bilingual students?- surrounding our essential question