

BRIDGING THE HOME AND SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

**Bridging the Home and School Environment to Build Reciprocal, Equitable Relationships:
a Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Approach**

by

Stephanie Puente

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Supervised by

Dr. Rosa Mazurett-Boyle

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Abstract

The home literacy environment (HLE) plays a crucial role in the development of language and reading skills of English Language Learners (ELLs). Educators can leverage the benefits of the HLE for ELLs by collaborating with families to create equitable and reciprocal relationships through a Culturally and Linguistically Responsive (CLR) approach. Various research approaches have explored the influence and impact of the HLE in depth, in particular noting how the quality of the HLE and families attitude towards reading and academia impacts ELL students' academic achievements. Educators can help bridge the home and school environment by celebrating, recognizing, and valuing the different cultural heritages and languages students bring into the school community, thereby enriching the learning experience for all. A Professional Development plan is detailed as part of this Capstone project that provides key elements and steps to integrate multicultural literacies to foment a robust home literacy environment that connects to the school community. The objective is to introduce ELL families into the plan as valuable stakeholders and equal part leaders, integrating their Funds of Knowledge (FoK) to foster a multicultural school community that values world literacies.

Keywords: ELLs, Home Literacy Environment (HLE), Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Pedagogy (CLR), Funds of Knowledge (FoK), equitable relationships

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Chapter 1

The Pillars of Learning: the Home and School Environment

“La educacion empieza en el hogar,” is a phrase many Latin American children often hear growing up. The phrase seeks to underscore the importance the home environment plays in a child’s educational journey. The journey begins at home and continues once the children enter school. Nonetheless, when Latin American children migrate to the United States and enter the school system, they often feel lost, displaced, or disoriented. The habits and skills learned in their native country, which helped them succeed, might not translate well into a new environment and ensure the same level of success. The parents of English language learners (ELLs) also battle feelings of consternation as they attempt to adapt to a new home while aiding their children as they transition into a new school environment. The families of ELLs, unfamiliar with the new school system, often view schools as behemoths or difficult-to-navigate labyrinths; therefore, it is critical that school communities establish strong foundations and bridges to help families adapt and thrive. The issue being addressed, as part of this project, is the lack of connection between

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the home and school environment, which leads us to ask: How can ENL, Bilingual, and general education teachers build a reciprocal home and school literacy environment?

Problem Statement

A vital element of ELLs' academic and language journey relies heavily on literacy environments. Within the classroom, educators must create print-rich environments that are welcoming and culturally diverse. To optimize student language learning, they need strong literary environments in school and at home, which is why it is vital for school communities to connect with parents to help make this a reality. For this to be auspicious, it is essential to take a collaborative and culturally responsive theoretical approach, to shine a spotlight on the families' diversity, and to uphold its value as an asset in the language learning process of ELL students and as enriching to the overall school community.

There is a growing body of research that explores the factors and influences that shape the academic outcome of English Language Learners. Some factors aid or act as a detriment in the language development of children, notably the home literacy environment and parent's attitude and involvement in their child's academic journey. English Language Learners are a quickly growing population in the United States public school system (New York State Education Department, 2023). As exoduses of families escaping violent-plagued countries or political turmoil take hold of communities, thousands of immigrants make the journey to seek refuge in the United States (Valero & Ortega, 2020). As a result, more English Language Learners are joining our educational system. As educators, it is incumbent upon us to help these

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children succeed in school. Nevertheless, the duty of helping these children is not exclusive to the school, but extends into the community and more importantly into the home.

Extensive research has extrapolated on the importance of a positive classroom environment in a child's development, as part of this research project I argue that the influence of the home environment is equally, if not, more important than the classroom environment and should therefore be given special attention. The objective is to create an ironclad connection between the home and school environment in which reciprocity takes precedence through a culturally responsive approach to ensure English Language Learners meet their full academic potential on their journey to become multilingual members of a growingly diverse society. To achieve this goal parents, guardians, and educators must band together to exchange strategies, ideas, cultural knowledge, and experiences to create robust literacy environments that promote and celebrate learning in the home and school environment.

The lack of reciprocity, recognition, and connection between the home and school environment has a deleterious effect on the academic achievements of ELLs. A bridge must be established in which school communities partake in a symbiotic relationship with the home environments of their English Language Learner student population. To achieve this, schools must become specially trained in culturally responsive pedagogy to collaborate with families of diverse backgrounds. By deepening their understanding of different cultures, educators can leverage the funds of knowledge of English Language Learners and their families to forge a path to improved reading comprehension and academic success.

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The growing body of research on this topic consistently supports the idea of the importance of the home in providing and promoting an adequate literacy environment for children's development (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011; Ishimaru et al., (2016); Ishimaru (2019); Kohnert et al. 2020; Li, 2009). Coleman, in his research, introduced the concept of family capital to demonstrate how families and the home environment may influence a child's development (Li, 2009). In particular, the theory focuses on the physical, human, and social capital families provide to extrapolate the influence that these may have on a child's potential for language development and consequently academic success. Furthermore, Vygotsky in his often-cited research proposes the social-cultural theory to underscore the influence of the home environment and the social interactions a child partakes in to explain how these affect language acquisition and learning (González et al., 2005).

Significance of the Problem

As the number of English Language Learners continues to increase (NYSED, 2024), and the fabric of our society continues to become more diverse and multilingual it is ever more important to adapt and integrate these changes into our school practices to create reciprocity and help English Language Learners attain academic success. Historically underrepresented groups, such as the case of English Language Learners and their families, have been made to feel unwelcomed and usually powerless in institutions such as schools (Gay, 2000; Hollie, 2017; Ishimaru et al., 2016). Parents have expressed feeling unwelcomed and sharing that whatever limited communication or relationship they had with the school was in connection to report card distribution during the occasional parent-teacher conference (Ishimaru et al., 2016).

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To combat this feeling of powerlessness, parents, and families need to be welcomed into the school building to engage with the school community and play a more active role in their child's education. The cultural brokering that may take place from these initiatives that promote family engagement will enhance the learning experience of our English Language Learners and ensure academic success. We must equip our students and their families with the tools necessary to be functional members of a diverse, multilingual society. As such, it is imperative that we welcome languages other than English, celebrate cultural diversity, and use lessons and strategies that reflect our students' lived experiences allowing them equal opportunities to use their Funds of Knowledge to make meaning of their learning and deepen their understanding.

Purpose

Parents, guardians, and educators collaborating and working reciprocally can foster strong literacy environments in the home and school environment through an equitable and culturally responsive approach. The professional development designed to mitigate this problem will focus on introducing the concept of culturally responsive ideology to both parents and educators alike. Parents and guardians are not free of the harmful stereotypes that permeate public schools. As members of marginalized communities, it is possible that throughout their academic journey, they were told they were less than capable. These ideas can be transferred to their children and act as a deterring factor in the belief of what English Language Learners can accomplish. We must prevent this transfer and the continual propagation of these dangerous ideas that hinder our students and limit their academic potential.

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As part of the professional development, parents and educators will actively engage in an exchange of ideas, strategies, and cultural practices to enhance the learning experience of English Language Learners and to establish two pillars that will serve as the foundation of the learning: the home and school environment. Parents, guardians, and educators will establish a reciprocal relationship focused on respect, an understanding of cultural differences, and the shared goal of improving the learning experience of English Language Learners. By the end of the professional development, parents will view themselves as leaders and equal players in the academic journey of their children. Educators through a culturally responsive approach will utilize cultural and equitable strategies that shine and light on students' culture and funds of knowledge to create more meaningful learning experiences in the classroom.

The professional development will be delivered in two sessions one in the fall and the other in the winter. The PD will be conducted during the beginning of the school year and revisited mid-year to track progress. During the fall, families and children often feel the weight of the responsibilities and pressure they will face academically during the school year. Many parents seek opportunities to start the year on the right foot to support their children and ensure a successful academic year. By conducting the PD during the beginning of the school year, we will be able to share and connect with parents by reviewing effective practices that lead to more learning opportunities in the home environment and beyond the community. A second PD will be conducted mid-year to track progress with parents in establishing and following the routines to ascertain a robust literacy home environment. During this second PD, parents will be able to share and act as cultural brokers, in which they exchange the ideas that work best with their

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children. Also, part of the goal is to foster parent-to-parent relationships. During my research, I came across the importance of collaborative approaches. Culturally speaking, in many countries, there is an emphasis placed on the success of the community over the individual, which is a practice that should be reflected in the school community as well. Parents will be viewed as valuable assets and important stakeholders in the education of their children and the establishment of a culturally diverse and enriching school community.

Summary

There is an urgent need to reinstate the connection both cultural and academic between the home and the school environment. Without the link between these two communities, the linchpin to a child's academic success, the achievement gap will continue to grow to the detriment of our English Language Learners. All students deserve an equitable and culturally enriching education, and as such it behooves the adults in these children's lives namely their families and educators to work together to forge a pathway to their success. Immigrant families bring a wealth of knowledge, cultural traditions, and lived experiences that can only serve to enrich the school community and the learning experience of the entire student population. As part of this project, we will create opportunities for parents to act as advocates, leaders, and cultural brokers in their children's education. To achieve this, educators and parents will become deeply knowledgeable of culturally responsive ideology and practices to create robust literacy environments in the home and the school community through professional development sessions. Chapter two of this capstone project will focus on a substantial literature review that sheds light on culturally responsive theoretical practices and case studies that support the significance of the

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home environment as a major influential factor in the academic success of English Language Learners. Chapter three will delineate a highly engaging professional development that welcomes educators and parents to share ideas and to build collaborative and reciprocal relationships to foster culturally rich and robust literacy environments. Finally, the project will conclude in Chapter Four with a comprehensive review of the project, the professional development, a brief revisit to the problem, and the solution to this pending issue. An appendix with resources, links, and materials will also be provided to culminate the project.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

English Language Learners (ELLs) are a historically underrepresented and underserved population in the public school systems of the United States (Ishimaru et al., 2016; Ishimaru, 2019; Haines et al., 2022). Despite shaping the social fabric of the United States and experiencing multiple waves of immigration throughout its history, immigrants continue to face challenges in being fully accepted as part of mainstream society, as many have openly attested (Fenton et al., 2017; Haines et al., 2022; Haines & Reyes, 2023). The insidious assimilationist and monoglossic approaches inherent in many pedagogical practices are deeply entrenched in schools, which poses significant challenges to the academic achievement of ELL students (Baker & Wright 2021).

Additionally, the U.S. educational system, which at its core is discriminatory against members of nondominant communities, often overlooks the cultural value that these communities can bring to the learning experience (Gay, 2000; Hollie, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Therefore, it is incumbent upon all educators to build social awareness to spearhead the

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movement to dismantle these pernicious views and practices that act as impediments to ELL's academic success. The work requires intrepid voices and strong connections between the home and school environments in the form of collaborative, reciprocal relationships with families. Ultimately, to empower ELL families we must shine a spotlight on the value they bring to the school community and give them a platform to voice their concerns and act as experts and agents of change in the pursuit of equitable, high-quality education for ELLs (Ishimaru et al., 2016; Ishimaru, 2019).

Systematic changes must be made to accommodate ELL students and their families. There is a need to reshape the structure of schools. A community must be built with families to help ELL students succeed. Parents play an important role in this process and should be made an integral part of the team. Haines et al. (2022) attest to the importance of creating reciprocal relationships between educators and families to increase family engagement. The successful establishment of these relationships and their strength resulted in improved student academic achievement and more positive behaviors (Haines et al., 2022).

To dismantle the harmful legacy of discrimination and assimilation in bilingual education, educators must foster reciprocal and collaborative relationships with ELL families. First, educators must adopt a Culturally and Linguistic Responsive pedagogical approach to working with ELL families. Second, educators should foster collaborative reciprocal relationships by welcoming families and validating their culture and language. Third, ELL families should work with the school to learn how to be active participants in their children's education process. Finally, these practices and relationships should empower families to become

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agents of change who can influence and shape their community (Norton & Hooney, 2003).

Theoretical Frameworks

Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Pedagogy (CLR)

In the 2022-2023 academic years, New York State recorded 180,000 newcomer students, including 10,000 identified as students with interrupted formal education, also known as SIFE (NYSED, 2023). The belief that the U.S. school system is failing to meet the needs of this vulnerable population (Haines et al., 2022; Moinolnolki & Han, 2017) underscores a pressing social issue that demands immediate attention. Many of these students face significant academic challenges, emphasizing the importance of building strong links between the home and school environment to enhance the educational outcomes of ELLs. Embracing a CLR approach is, therefore, essential for effectively integrating these families into their new communities (Gay, 2000, Hollie, 2017; Ishimaru, 2019; Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy has recently gained substantial recognition and momentum, despite its origins dating back to 1995 when Ladson-Billings introduced the concept. She advocated for integrating students' cultural backgrounds into academia to address and challenge the existing power dynamics within schools (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Since then the term has evolved under a series of names including culturally relevant teaching, culturally compatible teaching, culturally connected teaching, etc., which Hollie (2017) argues dilutes the meaning and message of culturally responsive initiatives. Nevertheless, the heart of the ideology, which calls for the validation and affirmation of diverse cultural backgrounds, remains consistent (Gay, 2000; Hollie, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 1995). In this paper, I will use the term Culturally and

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Linguistically Responsive (CLR) pedagogy to encompass all discussions related to Culturally Responsive practices.

Culturally and Linguistically Responsive pedagogy is fundamental to establishing strong and meaningful relationships with ELL students and their families (Haines et al., 2022; Hollie, 2017; Ishimaru, 2019). The framework of CLR is centered on recognizing members of nondominant cultures by validating and affirming their distinct cultures, languages, and experiences (Gay, 2000; Hollie, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 1995). By aligning school initiatives and practices with this approach, educators can forge strong links between home and school environments, thereby ensuring ELL students thrive both in their education and within the broader community (Haines et al., 2022; Hollie, 2017).

Implementing systematic changes in education, following a CLR approach, requires the collaboration of various stakeholders. The key players in making these systematic changes are educators, administrators, school leaders, community members, and most importantly, the families of ELL students. The significant influx of newcomer ELL students should be embraced as a valuable opportunity for schools to assist families in adapting to a new country, school system, and language.

Part of being a CLR educator entails employing pedagogical acumen to ensure ELL students and their families feel valued and embraced by the school community. There is mounting evidence indicating that the cultural relevance of a lesson or text influences how actively engaged a child is in the learning process (Gay, 2000; Hollie, 2017; González et al., 2005; Sauto-Manning, 2010). According to Brown-Jeffy and Cooper (2011), maximizing

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learning outcomes hinges on establishing a strong correlation between the cultural context of the home community and the school environment. They also propose that culturally rich students can bring significant social capital to the school community, enriching the learning experience for all students and strengthening school-to-community ties.

Sauto-Manning (2010) also had similar findings in their research challenging ethnocentric literacy practices. Students' confidence and active participation in the classroom were boosted as a result of teachers understanding how students interacted within the confines of their community. Understanding the cultural norms of the students' community was imperative to improve students' academic achievement (Sauto-Manning, 2010). I will discuss this concept later in the paper focusing more narrowly on how the home environment helped redefine and redesign "traditional" classroom practices to reflect the students' culture (Sauto-Manning, 2010).

Funds of Knowledge (FoK)

Parents bring a wealth of knowledge and experiences that significantly contribute to creating authentic learning experiences in both the home and school environments. Building on this, the Funds of Knowledge (FoK) framework, complemented by CLR ideologies, serves as a critical foundation for uniting these environments. The Funds of Knowledge (FoK) framework, complemented by CLR ideologies, serves as the critical foundation for uniting the home and school environments. The Funds of Knowledge framework rejects the deficit view that has been historically designated to students of diverse backgrounds, in particular ELLs (González et al., 2005). Similarly, the CLR approach seeks to debunk the negative stereotypes that pervade marginalized and underrepresented groups in education (Gay, 2000; Hollie, 2017; Lazar et al.,

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2012). Moll et al. (2005) sought to draw from the local communities and households to create innovative teaching practices that brought forth the culture and resources of the students' community. As part of the study, Moll and his team collaborated with working-class Mexican families in Arizona to collect data on household dynamics and classroom practices.

Moll et al. conducted an ethnographic study aimed to shine a positive light on the home environment of working-class Latino families and to recognize them as fountains of cultural richness and cognitive resources. The FoK investigation affirmed that educators serve as a crucial bridge linking students' home environments with their classroom experiences (Moll et al., 2005). This finding underscores the significance of teachers enhancing their social and cultural awareness to enrich the learning opportunities for ELLs at home and in school environments. Educators can leverage this cultural knowledge to establish equitable and reciprocal relationships with families that connect the home and school environments.

Home Literacy Environment (HLE)

There is a growing emphasis in scholarly research on home literacy practices. The home environment is vital for children's development; it is the building ground from which children begin to develop their language and social skills (Krashen, 2003). The research contends the importance of involving families in engaging activities and implementing school-wide programs that celebrate and integrate cultural diversity into school communities (Haines et al., 2022; Haines & Reyes, 2023; Ishimaru, 2019).

Lewis et al. (2016) conducted a case study in which they analyzed the influence of the home literacy environment on the language development of children enrolled in a Head Start

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program in Pennsylvania. The case examined the impact of the home environment on the language development of 93 children exposed to Spanish since birth. The results demonstrated that the more children were exposed to language in the home, whether through reading or oral activities, corresponded with enhanced language skills in children

Li (2009) also aimed to deepen our understanding of the connection between the home environment and children's academic success through a case study analyzing home environments using Coleman's Social Theory of Family Capital. Coleman's theory posits that various forms of family capital—physical, human, and social—can determine the academic attainment of children. In his case study, Li (2009) collaborated with four Chinese immigrant families residing in Canada to examine how families and the home environment influence the language acquisition of ELL students. Li's findings affirm the strong correlation between the home literacy environment, an ELL student's language acquisition, and consequently their academic success (Baker & Wright, 2021; Li, 2009).

Furthermore, we learn from Li's research that families with higher levels of education, which connects to social capital, were able to provide more robust literacy-rich home environments and greater opportunities for language engagement. Li notes that although physical and financial capital were influential factors, the quality of a strong home literacy environment ultimately depended on how families allocated their resources. Adding that, even families with low financial means managed to leverage their community and available resources to establish a home environment that promoted literacy. An important finding was that by engaging in activities that encouraged interactions with printed text, the children's chances at language

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acquisition were improved. Ultimately, Li's case study proves that a strong home literacy environment and parents' attitudes and dispositions to assist their children as ELLs are fundamental to their language development and academic achievements.

In a study to gain a deeper understanding of the influence of HLE, Davis et al. (2015) conducted a study to explore the quality of HLE and how relevant it is to a child's readiness to enter school. Davis et al. worked with low-income Latinos with young ELL children to determine how families' understanding of home literacy and their attitudes help shape a child's academic endeavors. The study presents a unique case, given the lack of HLE studies focused on Latino families. There is a need to explore these concepts across cultures, especially in Latino students, since understanding HLE can inform educators on important curriculum, and pedagogical practices that can aid families adapt as their children work toward language development and academic success. The data showed significant variations in the HLE among Latino families. These variations must be accounted for to understand a child's school readiness and to plan appropriately to accommodate these children. Moreover, the study indicated that positive literacy attitudes led to more reading and learning opportunities at home, which optimized children's school readiness.

Various studies have demonstrated the paramount role the HLE plays in a child's language development and reading skills. Peets et al. (2022) launched an inquiry project, which questioned the relationship between the English home literacy environment and reading comprehension of monolingual and bilingual children. The study examined the home literacy practices of bilingual and monolingual students in the third grade to explore their oral language

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abilities and reading comprehension. The findings showed that home literacy practices, such as increased reading time in Spanish and English resulted in a higher rate of children's reading comprehension skills.

Peets et al. explored the reading comprehension skills comparatively between monolingual students and bilingual students to highlight differences in results based on the home environment. Kekejian et al. (2024) set out to explore the effects of language experience in the home and school environment to determine its educational outcomes on ELL. The case study aimed to compare the influence of the children's home language input with the instructional model to determine which has the greater impact on their language skills. The quasi-longitudinal study worked with children in a Spanish-English Dual-Immersion program. The data showed that Spanish-speaking children who received increased language input in their native tongue demonstrated improved educational outcomes. This finding is also supported by Kohnert et al. (2020), who found that Spanish-English bilingual children who received high levels of Spanish input in the home environment, in the form of reading or social interactions, had a significant increase in their language and reading development. Nonetheless, it must be noted that the increase in these skills was prominent during the first and second academic years, with insignificant differences observed beyond the third year (Kekejian et al., 2024).

These studies provide compelling evidence that supports the importance the home literacy environment plays on the language and reading skills of ELLs. The quality of social interactions can be key to children developing adequate communication and social skills. Parents and families who increased reading and learning opportunities in the home environment better

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equipped their children for their academic journey. For immigrant families, parents who supported their children's learning by encouraging reading at home and engaging in oral storytelling activities in their native language also witnessed significant growth in language development and reading skills. The role families play is critical and must be recognized and brought forth by the school environment as an asset to the community and ELL's learning.

Therefore, it behooves educators to establish collaborative, reciprocal, and equitable relationships with families as a response to dismantling the dominant assimilationist dynamics many schools still perpetuate today.

Sociocultural and Ethnocentricity in the HLE analyzed

In this section, we analyze the impact of sociocultural factors and ethnocentricity within the home learning environment (HLE) on children's language development and academic performance. Sauto-Manning (2010) uses a Vygotskian approach to understand the sociocultural aspect of the role the home environment plays in language acquisition in children of multiple backgrounds. In his socio-cultural theory, Vygotsky asserts that language development and cognitive skills in children are related to social activities and structured interactions within a specific community. Therefore, how parents interact with their children in the home environment can be a strong predictor of how well they will do academically. Lewis et al. (2016) research attests to this theory as their work revealed that mother-child interactions within the home were fundamental in helping children develop language and reading skills. The mothers who frequently interacted with their children and read to them witnessed faster development of communication and reading skills.

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Furthermore, Sauto-Manning uses a Vygotskian approach to debunk and challenge ethnocentric practices within the classroom to create meaningful links with students' home environments and cultural settings. From the research, it was revealed that a literacy environment might look different from a classroom literacy environment; nevertheless, it still holds significant value in a child's development and how they navigate society. The educators in the study worked with families to establish HLE and, in the process, gained valuable insights into cultural differences that might otherwise be misunderstood in a classroom. For instance, one of the teachers participating in the study learned during a family home visit that children —jumping into conversation— was a cultural practice not meant to signify disrespect; although, it may be interpreted as such in a classroom setting. As a result of these observations, classroom rules were redesigned to align with students' home literacy practices, validating their culture and experiences. Sauto-Manning emphasizes that adding or redesigning classroom practices that mirror the home environment of children of diverse backgrounds not only improved their engagement but also represents a crucial step toward shifting the traditional power dynamics within these communities on the road to fostering reciprocal, equitable relationships that connect the home and school environment.

Parental Attitudes Towards Reading

Teachers' receptiveness to modifying their practices and adopting CLR ideology is vital for the success of ELL students; however, parental attitudes also play an essential role in helping these students succeed. Chansa-Kabali, et al. (2014) also added to the landscape of research on the influence of the home environment by studying the impact of parental attitudes towards

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reading on children's early reading acquisition skills. The study, which took place in Zambia, examined the influence of the Home Literacy Environment (HLE) to determine how it supports reading and language development. Chansa-Kabali et al. worked with low-income families with elementary-aged children to gather data on parent's attitudes toward reading and how this impacted learning opportunities at home. As part of the study, Chansa-Kabali et al. created a Parental Reading Attitude questionnaire, which as the name suggests, was designed to measure parents' attitudes toward reading. From the data analysis, they found that most parents were highly motivated and expectant of their children's academic achievements, despite their socioeconomic status. The finding that low-income economic status is not correlated to low academic expectations is corroborated by Li's (2009) study, which also came to the same conclusion.

In addition, Chansa-Kabali et al. observed that many of the parents surveyed viewed attaining an education as a conduit for social mobility. Nonetheless, 62% of parents think that teaching children to read is exclusively the teacher's responsibility. Moreover, the survey also revealed that 90% of the parents regarded active parental engagement as enrolling their child in a private institution to learn how to read (Chansa-Kabali et al., 2014). Some of these responses may be attributed to cultural differences or limited resources. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that parental attitudes toward reading significantly influence the quantity and quality of learning opportunities.

Furthermore, Chansa-Kabali et al. found that parents who presented favorable attitudes towards reading typically presented more learning opportunities for their children at home.

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However, most surveyed parents strictly viewed reading as a means to an end. The data from interviews revealed that most parents viewed reading as a pathway to academic success and not as a fun, leisurely activity. Nevertheless, Chansa-Kabali et al.'s work is an important addition to the HLE research landscape because it supports the connection between a nurturing HLE and improved early literacy skills in children.

Understanding Expectations

The families of ELL students bring with them more than just cultural and language differences; they also bring different academic expectations and attitudes, which schools must recognize and work with to ascertain ELL academic success (Haines et al., 2022; Haines & Reyes, 2023). The families of ELL students come from diverse communities, each bringing their own set of unique experiences with teachers, school leaders, and institutions such as schools, which influences the roles they are expected to fulfill in their children's academic journey

The Refugee Education 2030 initiative, for instance, underscores the importance of creating awareness and understanding of the critical role families play in their children's education (Haines et al., 2022). The initiative was designed with the aim of promoting equity and inclusion for refugee families in schools. In addition, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) also highlights the significance of family participation in a child's academic achievement (Fenton et al., 2017). The ESSA encourages schools to involve families in a meaningful way in the school communities, in particular families from vulnerable communities such as low-income, disabled, or with limited English proficiency (Fenton et al., 2017).

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According to Haines and Reyes (2023), the institutional scripts of how parents and teachers are expected to behave are a factor that impedes equitable and reciprocal collaboration. These scripts implicitly set expectations and norms that take for granted the norms and routines of a school. To foment equitable relationships, educators need to collaborate with parents to help them understand and ultimately navigate the system to understand the role they are expected to play as key members of the school community and as experts in their children's education (Fenton et al., 2017; Haines & Reyes, 2023). As Ishimaru (2019) notes, schools should work with parents to build their capacity as leaders and experts in their children's education.

Parents as Cultural Brokers

Parents are the linchpins in bridging the home and school environment. Working alongside schools, parents can cultivate their roles as leaders and drive efforts toward providing high-quality, equitable education opportunities for ELLs. Ishimaru et al. (2016) have significantly contributed to the literature on the importance of parent's active engagement in the school community. Ishimaru et al., in their extensive work, analyze the impact of the home environment on children's learning and development. The study demonstrates that the deleterious effects of culturally dominant ideology can be remedied by establishing strong and culturally significant connections between the home and school environment, with parents acting as cultural brokers, leaders, and experts in their children's education.

Ishimaru et al. introduce the concept of cultural brokers to explain how school communities can leverage the ethnically diverse knowledge parents and children bring to the community to create more learning opportunities. Cultural brokers navigate different cultures,

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translating and bridging the gap between these worlds to effectively participate in mainstream society (Martinez-Cosio & Iannacone, 2007). Ishimaru et al. argue that inviting parents and families to the school as cultural brokers can help create safe spaces in which equitable family-school relationships can be fostered. Furthermore, these partnerships can contribute to shifting the dominant power dynamic by empowering parents and guardians to play an equally active role in their children's learning alongside educators (Baker & Wright, 2021; Ishimaru et al., 2016). As such, we are promoting an equitable, collaborative, and culturally responsive approach that empowers parents to be leaders and advocates.

Moreover, the work of cultural workers aids in the creation of safe spaces within the school community for ELL families by helping to decode the dominant school culture and educating families on the resources available to navigate the system and advocate for changes (Ishimaru, et al., 2016; Ishimaru, 2019). Cultural brokering entails allowing parents the space and opportunity to bring their culture, traditions, and practices into the school community. Additionally, it means encouraging and training parents to be advocates for equitable education for their children. For this to succeed, educators and parents must collaborate to ascertain equity for ELLs.

Educators play a critical role in helping establish equitable and collaborative relationships in the school community. Ishimaru et al. (2016) highlight four key components of collaborative and equitable relationships, which are, “goals of systemic change, proactive leadership roles for nondominant parents that seek a degree of parity between educators and families, strategies that emphasize relationships and capacity building, and educational change as political processes

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connected to social issues in the broader community context” (p. 857). These components can help in the process of creating culturally safe spaces for ELL families. Moreover, it empowers parents by recognizing the valuable information they bring to the school. Parents are recognized as leaders and experts in their child’s education (Gay, 2002; Ishimaru et al., 2016; Ishimaru 2019). Additionally, the process of equitable and collaborative education can encourage parents to build relationships with one another as they support each other, which Gay believes is more culturally relevant than focusing on individual families.

Building Community

Many ELL families’ cultures are centered on the community rather than the individual (Gay, 2000). On the other hand, in the United States, cultural practices tend to place more emphasis on the nuclear family and their success as a unit (Gay, 2000); therefore, it is common practice for parents to focus exclusively on their child within the context of the school community.

Various works make the case for encouraging more parent-to-parent relationships within the school community. Gay speaks of creating a mutual aid society in which members of a school community are responsible for helping and supporting one another. In many ELL families' cultures, the community's well being is prioritized over the individual. Parents participating in the school community expressed their satisfaction with the school providing a physical space for parents to get together to share resources and connect. In their country parents were accustomed to getting together to develop friendships and relations, building community, which ultimately improved the academic standing of their children (Ishimaru et al., 2016). Parents who

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demonstrate a positive attitude towards school and education have a positive influence on their children.

To foster social equity within the school community it is imperative that educators recognize the varying social factors, such as valuing communal work, and how they impact a child's chance of academic achievement (Gay, 2000; Haines et al., 2022). Various studies analyze how a teacher's perspective may ameliorate or deteriorate the possibility of establishing reciprocal relationships with parents. In a case study conducted by Haines et al. (2022), the equity issue of building relationships was brought to light. From the interviews, we learned that not building relationships with refugee families led to the continued negative stereotyping of ELL families. Moreover, the study showed that when schools failed to forge relationships or partnerships with parents, it sent the message that their role in their child's education was minimal, naturally impacting the quality of the HLE. Parents' active engagement in school activities and with the school community reinforces literacy practices at home that improve language and skills development in children. Panferov's (2010) work also confirms these findings.

Panferov worked with two ELL families to analyze the impact that family beliefs, attitudes, and involvement had on ELL education. The findings demonstrated that the quality of interactions parents had with their children at home had a positive influence on children's academic standing because they were able to transfer their communication skills practiced at home to the school environment. Overall, the study proved that active parental involvement with their children and their education leads to more positive and open experiences with the school

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community. Parents monitored assignments and supported their children in developing the skills needed to thrive in school. Therefore, emphasizing the importance of parental engagement and positive attitudes towards learning and academia as a factor for ELL children's academic success. Nevertheless, to build equitable collaborative relationships with the school, both parents and educators need to adopt a positive attitude.

Haines and Reyes (2023) worked to understand the role the teacher perspective plays in creating equitable and collaborative relationships with families with a refugee background. Haines and Reyes commence their work by first acknowledging that establishing these collaborative relationships can improve educator skills by increasing cultural awareness and responsiveness. Refugee families are in particularly vulnerable positions; therefore, the relationship established with the school can help determine their success as they work to adapt to the U.S. and its school system. Many refugee families are unfamiliar with the axiomatic expectations regarding parental involvement in schools (Haines & Reyes, 2023; Harry & Ocasio-Stoutenburg, 2020). By adopting an equitable collaboration approach educators can help families feel welcomed and supported by the school.

Nonetheless, Haines and Reyes noted that many teachers in the study expressed frustration over systematic structures that impeded the fostering of these relationships. One such impediment was the lack of coordinated and systematic focus to establish these equitable relationships, caused by shifts in administration, which consequently led to shifts in systems and confusion about specific roles. Even so, educators worked around the system to establish strong

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relationships by engaging in extra-curricular activities with parents, creating innovative ideas to have open lines of communication, and visiting the homes and communities of their students.

To engage parents and help them establish high-quality HLE, systemic changes must take place. To foster stronger capacity and relationships between parents and educators, the school must work collaboratively to create effective strategies (Ishimaru, 2019). Moreover, parents should be invited and viewed as experts and fellow education leaders to catalyze educational changes systematically (Ishimaru, 2019). Additionally, educators must adopt a CLR approach to ascertain equitable relationships in which parents are recognized as valuable assets to the school community and as key players in the richness and quality of their children's education. Being a socially equitable educator means offering occasions for deep and thoughtful issues and the empowerment of non-dominant communities (Lazar et al., 2012). This means educators may act as iconoclasts questioning the political orientations established on discrimination and assimilation (Norton & Toohey, 2003). The systematic changes in building collaborative, reciprocal, and equitable relationships with ELL families should translate into higher academic achievements for ELL students and a more enriching and culturally diverse school community that values and respects diversity.

Summary

In conclusion, building reciprocal, equitable relationships between parents and educators is vital for linking the home and school environments, which in turn supports the academic success of ELLs. As evidenced by the extensive research presented in this chapter, the home environment and parents' role are paramount in their children's education. Therefore, schools

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should work closely with parents to integrate home culture with the school community, thereby offering students more authentic learning experiences. The following chapter, will detail two sessions of Professional Development, which will support educators in establishing equitable relationships with families by following a CLR approach. Moreover, the chapter will detail how to employ parents' FoK to shine a spotlight on their culture, heritage, and languages.

Chapter 3

The literature review in Chapter 2 elucidates the importance of the home environment in the academic journey of ELLs. Vulnerable and often underserved communities need to be validated and invited to participate in mainstream society as significant contributors. Culturally and linguistically responsive (CLR) ideologies are excellent starting points to integrate non-dominant members of society and give them a platform to voice their experiences and knowledge in authentic and meaningful ways. Chapter 3 will detail a professional development session that outlines how to develop social awareness by participating in self-reflection activities in which educators and parents can address the negative perceptions they may have towards themselves and ELL communities on the path to rewriting the narrative to build equitable and reciprocal relationships that bridge the home and school environment.

The disconnect between the home and school environments and consequently nondominant and dominant cultures is due to a flaw in the system, which was designed to keep these two foundational environments apart. As more ELL families join our school communities the urgency to redesign these systems becomes ever more pressing. To help families adapt and thrive as new members of society the school needs to support these families. Schools should,

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therefore, act as a resource haven for ELL families and their children. To mitigate this flaw educators need to work with families to bridge the home and school environment by establishing equitable, reciprocal, and collaborative relationships.

Understanding and adopting a culturally and linguistically responsive ideology is the first step on the journey to building equitable relationships. The dominant society often perpetuates a negative narrative against members of the nondominant society, making parents and educators victims. When a student enters a school and is labeled as an ELL, immigrant, newcomer, or refugee there is an almost impulsive response to immediately assign that student as deficient. In my experience as an educator, a newcomer student is often viewed as having limited English proficiency, although the child is already an accomplished bilingual person. Recognizing and validating the students' language and cultural knowledge is an essential component of CLR practices.

The professional development will first focus on introducing CLR to help educators and parents confront and challenge the negative biases they bring to education. Part of the introduction will aid in unlearning detrimental deficit and assimilationist views. The second focus will involve participating in interactive activities to create works of literature that welcome and celebrate families' cultural knowledge, helping bridge the home and school environment. The activities will take advantage of ELL families FoK to create an experience in which a spotlight can be shined on the families' unique cultural knowledge, language, and experiences. As Moll et al. (2005) demonstrates in the ethnographic study, tapping into a family's Funds of Knowledge can have a positive impact on ELL students' experience with school and education.

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CLR and FoK are great tools that highlight the home environment as a fountain teeming with cultural knowledge, language, and cognitive resources (Moll et al., 2005).

Description of the Professional Development (PD)

We will divide the professional development into two sessions, with the potential for a third, which could serve as a celebration of the project's culmination. The meeting time for the PD introduction will be 11:15 am; however, parents and families will be admitted entry into the school library from 10:45 am. The time window will provide ELL families and educators with the opportunity to feel comfortable in the space and to connect in a low-stress environment. At 11:15 am the presentation will commence with a PowerPoint presentation on a Smartboard introducing CLR principles and ideology.

The presentation will make use of music, the universal language, to extrapolate the point that many cultures and languages contribute to the musical landscape, especially in Latin America. Many cultures in Latin America benefit from the seamless interchanging of music, art, and entertainment. It is customary to hear salsa from Puerto Rico, merengue or bachata from the Dominican Republic, and boleros from Mexico. Additionally, music being such a prominent part of ELL families' culture it should help make parents feel more comfortable, at ease, and willing to participate. As the music plays parents will complete a worksheet in which they identify in the lyrics examples of discrimination or negative bias. The song played will be “Han Cogido La Cosa” by renowned Colombian salsa band Grupo Niche, which makes social commentaries about what it means to be Black in Latin America. The objective is to encourage parent-to-parent

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conversations and to bring awareness to the implicit biases that are deeply entrenched in our cultures, but that ultimately are detrimental to marginalized communities.

After this activity, Ladson-Billing's (1995) foundational objective of CLR will be introduced. In the presentation, parents will learn about CLR's objective, which is to validate and affirm the home culture, heritage, and languages of marginalized communities. More recently, Gay (2002) and Hollie (2017) reinforced this work, emphasizing the importance of CLR as critical to establishing equitable relationships that uplift marginalized communities. Parents and educators will then be given an opportunity to turn and talk to explain what this means to them. With the objective clarified, next ELL families and educators will work to debunk the negative stereotypes and implicit biases they may carry, as they relate to academia.

The Problem: Addressing Implicit Bias

Many families and educators are not privy to the implicit biases they carry, which are detrimental to the academic achievement of ELLs. Deficit views resulting from decades of discriminatory and racist policies in education are to blame. A worksheet (see Appendix A) will be disseminated in which families and educators will read and identify True or False statements that represent often-heard negative phrases in academia. The purpose of this activity is to make parents and educators cognizant of their biases and to shed light on how this narrative may affect how ELL students view themselves in society and the potential they believe they have to achieve academically. With the problem identified, parents and educators will begin the laborious but rewarding work of reshaping the narrative to help ELL students succeed. In the second session of the PD, parents will have the opportunity to create literary works of art to validate and affirm

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their culture, identity, and language to contribute to the enriching learning and experience of the school community.

Next, parents will engage in an activity in which they identify home practices that contribute to a literacy-rich home environment conducive to learning that supports their children's academic journey. Li (2009) in a case study worked with families to identify innovative home practices that were conducive to print-rich literacy home environments. For instance, one family activated close captions during TV time to increase the children's exposure to language. Another family used resources from the public library to bring in more texts for the home (Li, 2009). Families may be already engaging in literacy practices that can help students transfer skills into the classroom, which leads to their successful involvement in academia (Ishimaru et al., 2016; Ishimaru, 2019; Kekejian et al., 2024). In another study, music, role-playing, and performances were identified as literacy learning, which the teacher was able to utilize to restructure classroom routines (Sauto-Manning, 2010). As elucidated by the research, the activities of the PD will focus on encouraging parents and validating the work they are doing at home to equip their children for academic success.

Additionally, educators can collaborate with parents to redesign traditional classroom practices that better reflect the home environment of ELL students. In her research, Sauto-Manning (2021) collaborated with African-American families to gain a deeper understanding of her students' culture. From the observations of the home environment practices, we learned that the nature of social interactions in the students' homes contrasts with the interactions in the classroom. Moreover, in his work with CLR practices, Gay (2002) also calls for the appreciation

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and awareness of the communication styles of different ethnic groups. In his work Gay (2002) asserts that the communication styles of most ethnic groups are “more active, participatory, dialectic, and multimodal...the role of speaker and listener are fluid and interchangeable” (Gay, 2002, p.11), which contrasts with the traditional passive-receptive style of mainstream classrooms. This newfound understanding enabled educators to redesign their lessons and classroom routines, ensuring students’ experiences and customs were validated and incorporated into lessons. The redesign resulted in students’ more active participation in classroom discussions. In the same vein, as parents identify home literacy practices, educators can learn from ELL families’ routines and norms to redesign classroom structures and routines that validate and affirm students’ cultures.

Moreover, from Kanaya and Santiago’s (2022) study, we learn that oral storytelling is a key practice in many Latino ELL families’ communities. Storytelling is important because it helps children develop cognitive and communication skills. As per Vygotsky’s social-cultural theory, students learn to interact with their community and culture by engaging in social interactions (Kohnert et al., 2020). The benefits of storytelling as a practice in the home environment were also supported by Lewis et al. (2016) case study.

The Lewis et al. (2016) investigation revealed that mothers who interacted with their children in storytelling activities witnessed more language development. Students developed oral and communication skills, which they were able to transfer to communicate effectively in the classroom setting. Furthermore, research by Kekejian et al. (2024) and Kohnert et al. (2020)

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confirmed that frequent, positive family interactions at home significantly enhance the transfer of these skills to the school setting.

The first session of the PD will conclude with a review of CLR practices that can help bridge the home and school environment. Parents will leave the PD with a list of positive affirmations (see Appendix B) and examples illustrating their contributions to the home environment (see Appendix C), affirming their culture, fostering learning, and enhancing robust home literacy environments. Educators will emerge from the PD with a heightened self-awareness of implicit bias, which will help challenge traditional practices and views. Additionally, this heightened awareness will help forge the path to more equitable and reciprocal relationships with ELL families.

The Solution: Welcoming *Leyendas*, Myths, and Folklore Stories into the School Community

As ELL families and educators delve deeper into CLR practices and recognize the harmful impacts of assimilationist policies, they can work together to cultivate a mutually beneficial relationship that enhances ELL students' confidence and academic performance. As part of the presentation, parents will participate in an activity exploring how our society benefits from the contributions of the diaspora by tracing the origins of an internationally appreciated dish –pizza (see Appendix D). This activity aims to illustrate how each culture enriches collective experiences, as exemplified by this delicious dish.

The next part of the PD will engage parents in an activity to produce a literary work that celebrates their culture and bridges the home and school environment. Parents will have the

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opportunity to write a book or record an audiobook to share a popular *leyenda* that represents their homeland and culture. Parents who share backgrounds will be encouraged to collaborate to help foster parent-to-parent relationships. As Gay (2002) notes in the work on culturally responsive practices, we must recognize the importance different cultures place on activities that foster community. Additionally, Gay asserts that community building addresses individual needs in a group context, where the success of the group serves as a measure for individual members. Therefore, as part of the PD session, parents will collaborate in drafting the *leyendas* to foster more parent-to-parent relationships that ultimately build community.

Furthermore, the activity will reinforce equitable collaboration among ELL families and educators. Similar to Gay (2002), Ishimaru et al. (2016) contend that to build equitable relationships schools need to create spaces and opportunities for parents to exchange valuable information and support one another. Moreover, Ishimaru et al. (2016) suggest that fostering parent-to-parent relationships with the shared goal of improving the school community and the learning experience of ELLs is a concept that resonates more with their culture and will therefore have a better chance at success. Ultimately, these equitable collaborative practices aid in shifting power dynamics by challenging dominant cultural practices, which place more focus on the individual.

The final session of the PD will be a cultural exchange event to celebrate the publication of the *leyendas* of Latin America created by ELL families. Parents will have the option of performing their *leyendas*, sharing orally, or presenting their book as part of a gallery walk. Providing parents with the opportunity to act as leaders in the school community helps to

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reinforce equitable collaboration as we acknowledge that they possess intellectual, cultural, and linguistic resources that enrich the community (Ishimaru et al., 2016). Furthermore, enabling parents to present their work and assume leadership roles will shift traditional power dynamics. Educators will observe as parents, experts in their culture and heritage, present their literary contributions.

Finally, the PD will culminate with parents displaying their works of literacy around the school community. Various copies of the *leyendas* will be made to give students across grades access to the material. Children will accompany their parents to display the literary work on the bulletin board across the principal's office. Additionally, copies will be available in the classroom library and the school library's learning center as audiobooks. The addition of parents' literary work, representing different cultures and languages, in the school, will help bridge the home and school environment, validating the heritage of English Language Learners (ELLs) as their stories become integral to the school community.

Summary

In conclusion, the outcome of the professional development (PD) initiative will be the integration of parent-created world literacies into the school environment. These materials will be included in classroom libraries, providing all students with access to multicultural content and various languages. This effort will also stand as a testament to the school's appreciation and respect for diversity and world languages, achieved through a culturally and linguistically responsive approach that values all cultures. The next chapter will present final thoughts, implications for student learning and teaching, and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

Introduction

The home environment plays a powerful and influential role in the academic journey of English Language Learners in particular when promoting reciprocal home-school literacy environments. Recognizing this pivotal role means that schools need to collaborate with parents to foment equitable, reciprocal relationships. As such, students will be better able to connect with their home and school environment and become even more engaged in the learning process as a result. Various researchers, as demonstrated in the previous chapters, support the idea of employing parent's FoK to drive forward ELL education and to create a multicultural school community. In addition, educators following a CLR approach can develop relationships with ELL families that respect, value, and celebrate diversity. Moreover, following CLR, students can see more relevance in the lesson and feel a welcomed part of the school community –both of which are key to students' learning and academic achievement.

Conclusions

In the Literature Review of Chapter 2, we learn about Ishimaru's (2016) extensive work on the role parents play in ELL students' education. Additionally, from Ishimaru (2019) we glean the importance parents play in the school community as cultural brokers that help bridge the home and school environment. ELL families can function as empowered leaders and advocates of change with the assistance, guidance, and support of the school community. By doing so, we are equipping more adults in ELL students' lives to shape their future for the better. The journey, however, also requires the support of a robust home literacy environment. In Lewis et al.'s work

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we learned about the different shapes home literacy can take depending on the cultural context. Moreover, González et al. (2005) ascertain that employing ELL families' Funds of Knowledge (FoK) is beneficial to ELL students' academic journey and to improving the quality of instruction in schools serving ELL students.

Implications for Student Learning

ELL students benefit from robust literacy environments, both at home and in the school community. For students of diverse backgrounds, it is key to be presented with literary materials reflective of their lived experiences. The culturally relevant material presented to students can help determine their level of engagement, and consequently their level of achievement. Moreover, when parents and educators share positive sentiments towards reading and literacy activities, within a cultural context, it helps students to adopt a similar attitude (Chansa-Kabali et al., 2014). As such, ELL students will feel more encouraged to read and partake in literacy activities that drive their learning forward. Moreover, by following a CLR approach educators can craft lessons that affirm and validate the culture, heritage, and language of underrepresented communities (Hollie, 2017). Finally, following the CLR approach also aids in the creation of equitable lessons that represent different communities, ensuring that all students feel acknowledged in the lessons thereby enriching the overall learning experience. As extrapolated in the PD sessions, making ELL families' culture the focal point and celebrating the literacies they bring can only have a positive impact on the school community and student learning.

Implications for Teachers

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By connecting the home and school environments, educators can develop more equitable and culturally relevant lessons for ELL students. To help students fulfill their academic potential, educators should ensure that students feel represented in the classroom and the lessons. An understanding of Ladson-Billing's (1995) foundational work with CLR is imperative to begin this journey. Moreover, Gay (2002) and Hollie's (2017) more contemporary contributions to the research can help teachers adopt the appropriate ideology to serve these underserved and underrepresented communities. Additionally, educators can help uplift these communities by giving them a platform to voice their lived experiences and to be agents of social change. Schools can provide powerful tools and guidance to help ELL families to become advocates on the road to receiving the high-quality, and equitable education ELL students deserve.

Recommendations

More research needs to be conducted to gain a better understanding of the influence the home environment plays in the academic journey of ELL students. The case study in Zambia presented by Chansa-Kabali et al. (2014) is an excellent example of how parents and educators influence student learning. From this case study, we learned that a parent's positive attitude toward reading generated more early literacy skills in students. However, these findings are limited and should be expanded to cover more communities across the globe. In particular, more research is needed to understand ELL Latino students in the US, and how they leverage their cultural knowledge and experiences to be an integral part of the school community as they work to attain a new language and academic success.

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Moreover, the research by Lewis et al. (2016) on the influence of oral storytelling on students' language acquisition is a prime example of a study that should be expanded upon. In many ELL families, oral storytelling is an important cultural component that helps children develop adequate literacy skills. I believe researchers should focus on exploring the different types of literacy families of diverse backgrounds in the home environment. By gaining a deeper understanding of varying literacies, teachers can employ this new knowledge to create lessons that resonate more with their ELL students. This understanding and integration of various cultures into the classroom and the school community will help establish equitable, reciprocal relationships between families and educators, which will ultimately positively impact ELLs academic journey.

Final Thoughts

To conclude, ELL students need strong literacy environments to succeed academically – both at home and in school. Not only that, but they also need the active collaboration of their families and educators to optimize their learning and advance their language acquisition skills. For the collaborative team between the parents and educators to be auspicious there needs to be reciprocity, recognition, and respect for all cultures and languages. Educators can help by training parents to be cultural brokers and equal players in their children's academic journey. In addition, parents should be welcomed into the schools and guided to act as leaders and advocates for an equitable education for ELL students.

Finally, when we empower ELL families we, by extension, empower the children. When children feel empowered, recognized, and valued they work assiduously to meet their full

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academic potential; therefore, it behooves all educators to spearhead the movement, in collaboration with parents, which will forge the path of ELL students to success.

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Appendix A

True or False Statements

1. _____ The most important task for ELL students is to learn English.
2. _____ ELL students, new to the country, should *only* be exposed to English.
3. _____ Reading and writing skills in Spanish do not help with language acquisition.
4. _____ Monolingual students are smarter than bilingual students.

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5. _____ Native English speakers are more academically advanced than non-native English speakers.
6. _____ Speaking two languages delays the academic progress of students.
7. _____ ELL students don't participate in class discussions because they are lazy.
8. _____ All ELL students can read and write in Spanish.
9. _____ Newcomer immigrant parents cannot help their children with schoolwork.
10. _____ Only the teacher can help ELL students learn English

Appendix B**Positive Affirmations**

¡Estoy orgulloso de mi language/idioma!
Mis experiencias son valiosas y me ayudan aprender
Mi cultura enriquece mi vida y mi aprendizaje
Yo puedo contribuir positivamente a mi comunidad
Yo tengo el poder de hacer un cambio para el bien en la sociedad
Si me esfuerzo y trabajo, yo puedo cumplir
Mis conocimientos de la vida ayudan a mi hijo/a aprender
Con dedicación y diligencia mi hijo/a puede obtener una excelente educación

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*La lectura es importante y nos ayuda aprender más
Mi voz cuenta en la sociedad y merece ser escuchada y respetada*

Appendix C**Home Literacy Practices**

- ✓ Listen to music and sing with a focus on the lyrics

- ✓ Discuss the lyrics and the meaning of the song

- ✓ Create a song with lyrics

- ✓ Share a story (folklore, myth, *leyenda*) during dinnertime

- ✓ Child shares an oral story during dinnertime

- ✓ Read a book together

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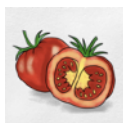
- ✓ Act out a scene from a book or historical event
- ✓ Listen to an audiobook together
- ✓ Record a voiceover of favorite book (audiobook)
- ✓ Add close captioning to television programs to increase language exposure
- ✓ Post student's work around the house (print-rich environment)
- ✓ Take-out books from the local public library
- ✓ Keep a diary or journal



Appendix D

Celebrating the Diaspora with Pizza!

Directions: Read the list of ingredients that are needed to make a pizza (toppings optional). Next, align the ingredient with its country of origin using a line.



Tomatoes

Asia: China, India,
Mediterranean



Cheese

Europe: Greece, Italy, Spain

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Olive oil

Europe: Italy



Flour (Wheat)

South America: Brazil,



Yeast

Middle East, Africa:
Iraq, Egypt

Salt

Africa: Egypt



Garlic

South America: Peru,
Ecuador, Chile

Ham

Greece, Turkey, Israel
Lebanon, Syria

Pineapple

Europe: Spain, Italy