

**PARTICIPATORY APPROACH CURRICULUM GUIDE FOR TEACHERS OF  
INCARCERATED ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS**

by

Megan C. Crowley

A Master's Thesis/Project Capstone  
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Science in Education  
Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)  
Department of Language, Learning and Leadership  
State University of New York at Fredonia  
Fredonia, New York

May 2019

State University of New York at Fredonia  
Department of Language, Learning and Leadership

CERTIFICATION OF THESIS/PROJECT CAPSTONE WORK

We, the undersigned, certify that this project entitled PARTICIPATORY APPROACH CURRICULUM GUIDE FOR TEACHERS OF INCARCERATED ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS by MEGAN C. CROWLEY, Candidate for the Degree of Master of Science in Education, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), is acceptable in form and content and demonstrates a satisfactory knowledge of the field covered by this project.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Robert Dahlgren, PhD.  
Master's Capstone Advisor  
EDU 691 Course Instructor  
Department of Curriculum and Instruction

5/17/2019  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Kate Mahoney, PhD.  
Department Chair  
Department of Language, Learning and Leadership

5/29/19  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dean Christine Givner, PhD.  
College of Education  
State University of New York at Fredonia

5/31/19  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# PARTICIPATORY APPROACH CURRICULUM GUIDE FOR TEACHERS OF INCARCERATED ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

## ABSTRACT

As the number of English language learners (ELLs) in the United States educational system, a group which includes adult ELLs that are incarcerated in state prison, continues to rise, so will the demand for effective and appropriate instruction for this unique group of students. Research has shown that instruction of adult ELLs is most effective when it tactfully includes the students' backgrounds, home cultures and languages, and actual interests or concerns in the curriculum. Further, research indicates that ELLs fare better when they are involved in creating their content and are empowered to take responsibility for their own learning and language acquisition. This curriculum project looked at the Participatory Approach as a means to empower incarcerated ELLs as they acquire English in their state-mandated educational programming. While the Participatory Approach is a method often used for adult English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, its use in a prison classroom is especially poignant given the oppressive environment. This curriculum guide is meant to aid in an ESL teacher's execution of the Participatory Approach in a prison ESL classroom and to provide flexible options supported by researched principles of second language acquisition and critical pedagogy. Future research could follow up with this curriculum guide to document its implementation to find areas of success and promise when using the Participatory Approach in a state prison's ESL classroom.

## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	1
Incarcerated Students .....	2
Relevant Curriculum in Alternative Education .....	4
Standard American English .....	8
Recidivism .....	10
Inequities in the Criminal Justice System .....	11
Purpose .....	13
Literature Review .....	16
Pedagogical Foundations .....	16
Dewey and Constructivism .....	16
Piaget and Constructivist Theory .....	17
Vygotsky and the Zone of Proximal Development .....	18
Critical Pedagogy .....	19
Culturally Relevant Pedagogy .....	20
Racial and Ethnic Identity and Biases .....	25
White Teachers and Racial Awareness .....	27
Adult English Language Learners .....	29
Conclusions .....	32
Methodology .....	34
Introduction .....	34
Conceptual Frameworks .....	36
Participatory Approach .....	36
Critical Race Theory .....	39
Audience .....	40
Procedure .....	41
Step One: Author’s Background/ Self-Interest .....	41
Step Two: Choosing a Topic .....	42
Step Three: Reviewing the Literature .....	42
Step Four: Research Critical Pedagogy .....	43
Step Five: Aligning with DOCCS Policies .....	44
Step Six: Review Adult Education Curriculum for Social Justice .....	44
Step Seven: Align with Communicative Approach of Second Language .....	45
Step Eight: Curriculum Development Process .....	48
Step Nine: Role of Student .....	49
Step Ten: Role of Teacher .....	50
Step Eleven: Identify Outcomes and Assessments .....	52
Scope and Sequence .....	53
Five Standards for Effective Pedagogy .....	53
Validity .....	54
Results.....	56

Discussion .....	75
Introduction .....	75
Significance .....	75
Limitations .....	78
Future Investigations .....	80
Conclusions .....	81
References .....	83

Participatory Approach Curriculum Guide for Teachers of Incarcerated English Language Learners

**Introduction**

English language learners (ELLs) are a growing population in the United States educational system. Over the last 15 years, there was an increase of 1.4% in the number of ELLs in the educational system, up from 8.1% in 2000 to 9.5% in 2015 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015). In New York State (NYS), this increase is echoed; in 2016 over 2.7 million students, or 8.8% of the student population, were ELLs (New York State Department of Education, 2016). Of these ELLs, the majority, or 64.9%, were native Spanish speakers (New York State Education Department, 2017). In terms of total student population in New York State, of the 2,629,970 students enrolled, 696,822 or 26% are Hispanic or Latino and 455,376 or 17% are Black or African American (New York State Education Department, 2017). These populations of students are more likely to speak a language other than English or not to use Standard American English. The purpose of this curriculum project is to provide a guide for an ESL teacher to implement the Participatory Approach for incarcerated English language learners. The goal of the curriculum guide is to support the acquisition of relevant English language by addressing pressing problems in the ELLs' lives that will ultimately aid them in their life outside of prison.

The curriculum guide centered upon on Freire's view of education that Shor (2017) described as mattering "most when it was inside a political movement which socialized oppositional consciousness" or "embedded in mass movements contending for social justice" (p. 16). This curriculum is timely in that several coordinated mass movements have taken form in response to inequities. Black Lives Matter formed to call "work vigorously for freedom and justice for Black people and, by extension, all people" (Black Lives Matter, 2019, para. 10). The

Me Too movement was founded to help sexual assault survivors, particularly low socio-economic status women of color, and implement strategies to “sustain long term, systemic change” (Me too, 2018, para. 4). The No Ban No Wall movement against political policies has gained traction to protest a ban for travelers from seven countries that are Muslim-majority and more recently an outcry against a wall along the United States and Mexico border (Houghton, 2018). These social justice movements are indicative of a move toward empowerment outside of the classroom that can be coordinated with the empowerment that stems from the implementation of a Participatory Approach inside a classroom.

### **Incarcerated Students**

Within these NYS student populations of ELLs are an additional subset of students: those that are incarcerated. In 2017, of the 87,429 inmates in custody, a total of 2,843 are ELLs. Within this population, 2,733 speak Spanish, 66 speak Chinese, 25 speak Russian, 10 speak Haitian Creole, 8 speak Korean, and 1 speaks Italian (New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision, 2017). Also noteworthy is that the U.S. Department of Justice found that about 68% of incarcerated individuals in state prisons do not have a high school diploma (RAND Corporation, 2013). Therefore, high school/GED programs would be the most relevant and common approach to educating the majority of prisoners.

Students incarcerated through the New York State Department of Corrections and Community Services (DOCCS) enroll in one of three programs in NYS: Alternative Transition Program (ATP), Alternative High School Equivalency Preparation Program (AHSEP), and the Education of Incarcerated Youth Program (IY). Incarcerated individuals that do not have a high school credential have an academic need and are required to enroll in a high school equivalency program (Corrections and Community Supervision, 2015). Students in these programs stay

enrolled until they pass the Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC), and ultimately earn a NYS Education Department High School Equivalency Diploma. DOCCS uses a HSE Competency Curriculum that focuses on reading, writing, social studies, science and mathematics, with standards that are meant to align with New York State's Common Core Curriculum. Further meeting the language needs of inmates in these programs is mandated by New York State DOCCS: "all inmates, including inmates with limited English proficiency have access to, and the ability to benefit from, all services and programs" (Corrections and Community Supervision, 2015, p. 1).

This unique population of incarcerated students are tasked with learning English, but are also navigating a school and societal system that views their current lack of English proficiency as a deficit. Further, non-native English speakers increasingly encounter a "landscape of language and cultural discrimination" and oppression (Macedo, 2017, p. 87) that has manifested over time, through a disinterest steeped "within the general xenophobia that is now shaping the national dialogue, in which language is now that last refuge where one can practice racism with impunity" (Macedo, 2017, p. 86). This practice of racist oppression has permeated the daily lives of non-native English speakers, potentially affecting their educational opportunities, their access to procedural justice, and may cause an increased likelihood of negative encounters with the criminal justice system.

Not only do Non-native English speakers encounter discrimination, they can also be targets of a structurally racist criminal justice system. As quoted by Alexander (2012), Marion Young argues that structural racism is akin to a "birdcage with a locked door" (p. 185). The current system is arranged in order to restrict the freedom of distinct groups, those that are racially different from the majority or individuals that are not White or Native English speakers.

The “birdcage” consists of interwoven wires, representing laws, institutions, practices, and policies such as racial profiling, are all interwoven with the intent to trap victims (Young, as quoted in Alexander). To those on the outside of the cage, it seems as if the victim allowed this to happen to them or made poor choices, rather than realizing or accepting the “possibility that their lives were structured in a way that virtually guaranteed their early admission into a system from which they can never escape” (Alexander, p. 184). The wire building this metaphorical cage could also be a person’s English proficiency, as not knowing English can be a factor in an arrest or incarceration.

### **Relevant Curriculum in Alternative Education**

ELLs face a myriad unique challenges, stemming from linguistic, psychological, economic, or community factors. ELLs in alternative educational programs require that the programs not only provide language instruction, but also embrace their lived experiences and current needs in navigating their life in an English-dominant country (Parrish, 2004). This need is compounded for incarcerated students. They may have, for example, an uncertain legal status that complicates obtaining employment or social services or an upcoming parole hearing that necessitates an understanding of legal jargon. Regardless of their unique situation, “immigrant adult literacy students are negotiating new territory and gaining tools in a context steeped in issues of immigration, legality, access, assimilation, and legitimacy” (Lukes, 2011, p. 35).

When working with ELLs in alternative educational programs or graduation pathways, it is imperative that their life circumstances, language goals, and previous work/education experiences are considered and integrated with the goal of creating culturally and linguistically relevant curriculum. Building on Freire’s pedagogy, Duran (2016) emphasizes that classrooms should be a place of trust for the students “by honoring learners’ past and present experiences as

well as their existing linguistic funds of knowledge” (p. 15). Current research studies on culturally and linguistically relevant teaching (CRT/LRT) practices for working with ELLs reveal that one of the greatest indicators of ELLs feeling welcome in the classroom and achieving academically was the incorporation of specific methods to meet students at their cultural and linguistic levels (Choi, 2013; Giouroukakis & Honigsfeld, 2010; Pacheco, David, & Jiménez, 2015). Choi found that the inclusion of ELLs’ diverse backgrounds and languages in the classroom, instead of ignoring them and only focusing on Eurocentric materials, could positively affect ELLs’ academic performance. Even though incarcerated students in Alternative Education Programs take the TASC, a difficult high-stakes test, Giouroukakis and Honigsfeld made note that innovative teachers are able to embed CRT and LRT into their teaching practices while still teaching to the test. The implementation of CRT and LRT within an Alternative Education Program may mitigate ELLs’ lack of English proficiency for exams that are mandated through the New York State Department of Education. Further, the relevancy of the curriculum prepares the students for the world they will encounter as minority-language speakers after their release from prison or jail.

At the time this curriculum project was written, the number of migrants crossing the U.S.-Mexico border in March 2019 was the highest total (92,607 migrants) since April 2007, as reported by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (Gramlich & Noe-Bustamante, 2019). Hate crimes in the U.S. are also at an all-time high, increasing 12.5%, or 7,175 bias motivated incidents in 2017 (the most recent year with data available) according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (2017) or about 204,600 total hate crimes according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (2017). In New York State, in 2016 hate crime incidents increased 18.9% compared to 2015 (Denvir, 2017). Such increases are of course a concern for teachers of minorities, as the

greatest percentage of hate crimes were based on religion, race/ethnicity/national origin, or sexual orientation (Denver).

While these statistics are disconcerting, it is also notable that oppression of minority communities is so deeply embedded in our society by those in power that it can even seem invisible or absurd to question its existence. Monzó (2016) stated that the internalized oppression is “especially effective because it secures the invisibility” of the state’s and society’s role (p. 163). The statistics on incarceration and encounters with the criminal justice system are clear; Hispanics are twice as likely to be incarcerated as compared with Whites (Wagner & Sawyer, 2018, para. 8). According to Krisberg, Marchionna, and Hartney (2015), there is an ever increasing “criminalization of undocumented status, more militarized control of immigrant communities, and a codified system of immigrant detention and deportation,” all of which are communities likely to consist of Non-native English speakers (p. 267).

While the home or native language of inmates is not publically available, in New York State, 49% of male incarcerated individuals are African American, 25% are Hispanic, and 23% are White (Corrections and Community Supervision, 2018). While the vast majority of the incarcerated population is born in the United States, 11% are foreign-born (Corrections and Community Supervision, 2018). The disparity of Latinx incarceration is especially distinct when considering that Latinx’s account for only about 13% of the U.S. population, but make up about 40% of the population in federal prisons (Krisberg, Marchionna, Hartney, 2015, p. 268). What is more, 13,000 people are in federal prison for violating federal immigration laws, an additional 13,000 people are held prior to their trial, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) are detaining 34,000 immigrants due to immigration violations (Wagner & Sawyer, 2018, para. 8). A factor in the disparity should also account for “accumulated disadvantage,” or the fact that the

“ways people are treated at each state of the criminal justice process are compounded along the way” (Krisberg, Marchionna & Hartney, 2015, p. 269).

While these aforementioned statistics may seem hollow or distant, research shows that the lasting effects of “exposure to the criminal justice system has profound and intergenerational negative effects on communities that experience disproportionate incarceration rates” (Sakala, 2014, para. 3). These lasting effects cannot be disengaged from the systemic racism and discrimination of Non-native speakers in the U.S. and the perpetuation of dominant language ideologies. Further, 95% of all incarcerated individuals, including ELLs, will be released from prison (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2019). Upon their release, these individuals are less likely to avoid offending again if they receive a General Equivalency Diploma (GED) or complete a High School Equivalency program while incarcerated (New York State Department of Correctional Services, 2010). The recidivism rate of those that earned a GED while incarcerated is 31% after three years and 38% for those that did not earn a GED (New York State Department of Correctional Services, 2010). Nationally, about 68% of inmates do not have a high school diploma and are racial minorities (Harlow, 2003). Uneducated or undereducated individuals in prison are more likely to reoffend, as it is more difficult for them to find adequate employment without a GED (Nally, Lockwood, Knutson & Ho, 2012). Therefore, by providing useful educational programs to incarcerated individuals, they are in turn less likely to return to prison, a key measured outcome of a successful rehabilitation through incarceration (Esperian, 2010; Nally, et al., 2012). Moreover, students that receive culturally or linguistically relevant curriculum exhibit further increases in academic success (Choi, 2013). The issue of providing culturally relevant curriculum, especially curriculum that aligns with the current needs of

incarcerated ELLs, is ever important for students in education programs while in custody of the DOCCS.

### **Standard American English**

A systematic suppression of non-mainstream English or languages other than Standard American English (non-native English speakers with an accent or speakers of African American English Vernacular), which itself is an idea of an idealized, invented version of the English language is a part of a chapter in the history of discrimination. According to Lippi-Green (1997),

Accent serves as the first point of gatekeeping because we are forbidden, by law and social custom, and perhaps by a prevailing sense of what is morally and ethically right, from using race, ethnicity, homeland or economics more directly. We have no such compunctions about language, however. Thus, accent becomes a litmus test for exclusion, an excuse to turn away, to refuse to recognize the other. (p. 64)

While progress has been made in regards to blatant prejudice, and while it is currently illegal to discriminate based on race, ethnicity, gender, etc., the suppression of language is now a means to perpetuate discrimination, often through subliminal policies or processes (Lippi-Green, 2012). This discrimination, or linguicism, or the “ideologies and structures that are used to legitimate, effectuate and reproduce an unequal division of power and resources between groups which are defined on the basis of language” (Phillipson, 1988, p. 339). Lippi-Green noted that, “Anglo, upper middle-class, and ethnically middle-American” Standard American English (SAE) speakers and mainstream institutions marginalize non-SAE speakers by convincing non-SAE speakers to buy into or justify this marginalization, refusing to accept the burden of communication with non-SAE speakers, and perpetuating a model for linguistic subordination (p. 68). Lippi-Green explained that the process of language subordination is pervasive in

mainstream institutional practices, such as the criminal justice system. This is referred to as standard language ideology (SLI), or “a bias toward an abstracted, idealized, homogenous spoken language which is imposed and maintained by dominant bloc institutions” (Lippi-Green, p. 67). Specifically, this bias will influence perceptions of the non-SAE speakers and can result in oppression, stemming from a lack of societal acknowledgement by the dominant group(s). Lippi-Green further stated that those who do not speak SAE or have accents are “misrecognized” or are “denied recognition” of their rights as members of a society. Stromquist’s (2012) research built upon this by recognizing the changing demographics in U.S. immigration and the lack of satisfactory response in U.S. systems, thus leading to an expectation that ELL populations are expected to assimilate into U.S. culture and English language dominance.

The reasoning for this misrecognition is connected to the supposed superiority of SAE, but is also linked to the idea that diversity in languages, which is a facilitator “cultural unity and national solidarity,” hinders assimilation (Baker & Wright, 2017, p. 389). However, the difference in language or accent is often not the source of the reason for discrimination (Lippi-Green, 2012). This denial of recognition relates to the assessment by Baker and Wright (2017), in which they asserted that it is not simply language that creates a conflict, but rather the unease that the language symbolizes. Romaine (2000) supported this view as well, “because languages and dialects are often potent symbols...it is easy to think that language underlies conflict,” but in instead the issue lies in the “fundamental inequalities between groups who happen to speak different languages” (as cited in Baker & Wright, p. 372). Further, Ramanathan (2013) stated that mainstream policies that push assimilation cause language groups to relinquish attachments to their minority affiliations, which “disrespects difference and serves to create contexts of dis-citizenship” (p. 165).

**Recidivism**

Education is one of the most cost-effective and implementable means of reducing recidivism. The relationship between educational programs in prisons and recidivism is tangible; inmates enrolled in educational programs are less likely to reoffend and are more likely to obtain employment (RAND Corporation, 2013). In fact, research indicates that, “correctional education improves the chances that inmates who are released from prison will not return and may improve their chances of post release employment” (RAND Corporation, p. 66). While effective programming in prisons is important, educational programs that include structure, socialization, a positive learning environment, and accommodate to the individual needs of inmates will influence success in the classroom. Moreover, approaches that do more than address academic needs, such as “social skills, artistic development and techniques and strategies to help them deal with their emotions” (Hartnett & Novek, 2013, p. 297) have been found to be especially effective for incarcerated students.

Educational approaches in a prison classroom need to relate to the reality of the students’ lives and the contemporary environment on the outside (RAND Corporation, 2013). While the classroom should be a safe, welcoming, and accepting environment, teachers cannot be color-blind or ignorant of societal inequities and discrimination. Gaskew’s (2015) words are of utmost importance in this regard:

The power imbalances created by the social constructs of racism, White supremacy, and White privilege, the same negative forces that contributed to their incarceration, and the same power imbalances that contributed to the success of their prison educators, who are carefully trying to hide this phenomenon by establishing a color-blind learning climate,

will be waiting for them with open arms upon their release, and a college education alone will not buffer them from this reality. (p. 76)

The powerful effect that education can have on an inmate's trajectory in life in prison and post release are clear. Therefore, the implementation of effective pedagogies is of the utmost importance.

### **Inequities in the Criminal Justice System**

In the United States, disparities in the demographics of those who are engaged with the criminal justice system and are imprisoned is well documented. Western (2006) noted that, "the growth in imprisonment was propelled by racial and class division, the penal system has emerged as a novel institution in a uniquely American system of social inequality" (p. 8).

Research has documented the unjust practices of policing on minorities; police may criminalize minorities over whites (Cureton, 2001). As cited in Sadler, et al. (2012), this bias is built upon a historical position of Whites against minorities in the United States; minority groups have been seen as a threat due to their race, socioeconomic, or immigrant status (Holmes, 2000). The lasting effects of contact with the criminal justice system have lasting effects on minority communities (Sakala, 2014). The connection between this system and discrimination of Non-native English speakers, paired with the underlying endurance of dominant language ideologies, are linked. During encounters with law enforcement, Non-native speakers of English may be inhibited by their lack of English proficiency. Non-native English speakers may be anxious using an unfamiliar language and even unwittingly engage in suspicious behavior such as pausing or not providing adequate details (Fattal, 2014). Also, Non-native speakers with accents in English are viewed with skepticism, may be judged as nervous, and not making sense, which can again be perceived as engaging in deception (Fattal). Law enforcement may interpret

these behaviors as providing falsehoods, and thus presume guilt and proceed with detainment or arrest (Fattal). Non-native English speakers are also at a disadvantage in situations of credibility. According to Fattal, these situations are common in interrogations, border crossings, visa interviews, and traffic stops, all of which immigrants, who are mostly Latino, may experience. These Non-native English speakers “may appear suspicious or distrustful,” especially to authorities trained to perceive deception (Evans & Michael, 2014, p. 234).

Testimonies from Non-native speakers of English may not be as accurate as those from native English speakers, especially if law enforcement did not provide many opportunities or time for free recall of witness testimony (Allison & Basquin, 2017). Moreover, there are not only linguistic biases, but also the systemic bias of middle-class Whites based on race and ethnicity. Shah, Rahman, and Khashu (2007) reasoned that, “public perceptions of dangerous and trustworthiness are impacted by race and ethnicity” (p. 269) which impacts decisions made in the criminal justice system by mostly middle-class Whites “who have relatively little contact with people of color and poor people” (p. 270). People of color are more likely to be targets of law enforcement, as they are seen as inherently violent, which then “propel them into prisons and jails” (Shah, Rahman & Khashu, p. 270).

Once engaged with the criminal justice system, Non-native English speakers’ language needs, such as translators and opportunities to use their native languages, are not often accommodated (Shah, Rahman & Khashu, 2007). This is of particular interest when Non-native English speakers are attesting to their innocence, through interrogation, polygraph tests, or providing testimony. Currently, there is “no systematic body of research exists on how Non-native speaker status influences interrogation or polygraph outcome,” and often the results of the polygraph test, an already flawed practice, do not accurately document the precise answers of

people speaking in their second language (Caldwell-Harris & Ayçiçeği-Dinn, 2009). Further, research shows that bilinguals prefer to use their second language when they want to establish “emotional distance,” but prefer their first language “when speaking to less sympathetic authorities, such as police” (Caldwell-Harris & Ayçiçeği-Dinn, 2009, p. 202). So, Non-native English speakers are forced to choose emotional vulnerability or reliability at the cost of being misunderstood when speaking with authorities.

Additionally, Non-native speakers’ interactions with law enforcement, specifically when hearing their Miranda rights, pose not just issues of comprehension, but potentially long-term legal consequences. Non-native speakers may not be able to distinguish emotional meanings of second language words, may not understand the legal jargon, and miss contextual clues and important grammatical markers (Pavlenko, 2008). This misunderstanding may be due to “the warnings’ linguistic and conceptual complexity, their use of low-frequency terms, and the lack of logical progression” but can be compounded by a Non-native English speakers’ unfamiliarity with “Miranda rights, police procedure, and the U.S. criminal justice system (p. 6). It may not be until the Non-native English speaker meets with their lawyer or is detained that they realize they misheard or misunderstood the reading of their Miranda rights, and do not know they can remain silent (Pavlenko). However, unless a suspect clearly requests a lawyer, a law enforcement official may take advantage of an inexact request, such as “Do you think I need a lawyer?”, thus ignoring a need for counsel and continuing interrogation. Pavlenko found this to be the case, stating “the suspect must unambiguously request counsel during the interrogation” which puts Non-native English speakers at a disadvantage, as they “may not know how to communicate an unequivocal request” (p. 25).

### **Purpose**

My experience as an instructor at a New York State correctional facility deeply moved me and still informs my view of education, social justice, prison reform, and critical and reflective pedagogies. As a pre-service teacher and a former instructor of incarcerated individuals, my interest in this study is prompted by the need to consider the experiences of English Language Learners (ELLs) or Non-native English speakers within U.S. institutions, especially the criminal justice system. ELLs' interactions with law enforcement cannot be viewed outside the realm of White majoritarian tales and are inherently embedded in systemically racist ideology. The development of this curriculum guide is of particular importance to teachers of incarcerated ELLs and students that are at risk of being "unwittingly complicit with dominant group ideologies" and those that are interested in actively rejecting the burden of dominant ideology too often placed on language minority students (Monzó, 2016, p. 149).

There is a need for curricula that provide a means of exploring ELLs and Non-native English speakers' life experiences and interactions with the U.S. criminal justice system, with a focus on the systemic racism and marginalization inherent this system. Through student-centered problem-posing discussions, reflection, and action using all four language modalities, ELLs can improve their English language proficiency based on areas of promise for ELLs when interacting with law enforcement or the court system. Flores and Rosa's (2015) work in raciolinguistics will act as a framework, in that minority language speakers are expected to conform with White middle-class norms, are viewed from a deviant perspective. U.S. systems, such as the criminal justice system, are not set up to accommodate Non-native English speakers even if they are disproportionately represented in those systems. In addition, ELLs' curricula should address Lippi-Green's (2012) assertion that Standard American English, the dominant

language in the U.S., is an insidious abstraction that has become a replacement for overt racism and prejudice in the United States. Further, the “misrecognition” and de-legitimization resulting from the idea of English dominance causes Non-native English speakers to question their communicative abilities and rightful place in U.S. society, including public schools (Lippi-Green, 2012). Lastly, to ensure relevant pedagogy, such curricula will challenge the status quo through critical literacy. Through Freire’s critical pedagogy, Dewey’s constructivist educational theories, and Vygotsky’s (1978) theory of development, a successful curriculum is needed in order to build students’ English proficiency, incorporate student experiences, and challenge inequities in order to not only decrease recidivism, but change the trajectory of the students’ lives (Shor, 2009).

While themes may emerge during the instruction based off of this curriculum guide, the main content will be centered on the students’ own findings and conclusions. The learning outcomes will be aligned with CREDE Standards, but ultimately be centered on identifying, addressing, and developing solutions to everyday problems the inmates face and on the correlation between Non-native English speakers’ interaction with criminal justice systems. Overall, the aim of this curriculum guide is to call attention to the language needs of Non-native English speakers’, but also their lack of membership in U.S. mainstream educational and justice systems, their oppression and marginalization via these systems, while addressing areas of possible change. Freire (1970) wrote that, “only power that springs from the weakness of the oppressed” will be sufficient to free both oppressor and oppressed (as cited in Reyes & Villarreal, 2016). The freeing of the oppressed, however, will ultimately be through the ethically based practices that value the linguistic diversity and cultural backgrounds of all peoples in the United States.

## **Literature Review**

In the previous chapter, I introduced the problem of a lack of culturally relevant pedagogy in the curriculum for New York State education programs in New York State prisons. This chapter is intended to review the literature on this topic and to understand and evaluate previous research on topics relevant to prison education, systemic racism in the criminal justice system, internalized oppression in minority language speakers, and the relation of these systems to teaching English to speakers of other languages.

## **Pedagogical Foundations**

### **Dewey and Constructivism**

John Dewey's theory of education is based on students at all levels learning from real experiences and making connections between their experiences and subsequent learning. According to Dewey, "If you have doubts about how learning happens, engage in sustained inquiry: study, ponder, consider alternative possibilities and arrive at your belief grounded in evidence" (as cited in Reece, 2013, p. 320). A student's prior knowledge and experience can be the foundation from which their academic knowledge is built, and thus that knowledge is personally useful. In regards to instruction and curriculum, Grennon, Brooks and Brooks (1993) identified five areas that constructivist educational practices and theory can align: pose problems of emerging relevance to students, structure learning around primary concepts, seek and value students' points of view, adapt instruction to address student suppositions, assess student learning in the context of teaching (as cited in Brooks & Brooks, 1999, p. 3). The benefits of implementing these principles based on constructivist theory are numerous. Students are actively involved in their learning and, thus, are able to increase their learning or academic outcomes. Constructivism promotes students' learning "how to think and understand" not just

memorization, how students can relate constructivist practices to other content-areas or settings, a personal investment in learning, and engagement in authentic learning and thus they “learn to question and to apply their natural curiosity” (Educational Broadcasting Company, 2004, p. 1). Finally constructivist promotes success in the real world by emphasizing communication skills and collaboration. Dewey’s educational theory supports a student-based curriculum built on hands-on learning connected to personal experiences. Further, a crucial point of Dewey’s idea of progressive education is that individuals have important lived experiences and can be contributing members of society; such a goal is at the forefront of any prison education program.

### **Piaget and Constructivist Theory**

Constructivist theory is also aligned with Jean Piaget (1983) and Leo Vygotsky’s (1978) educational theory contributions, as they were the foremost theorists in cognitive development. Both Piaget’s and Vygotsky’s theories provide valuable information on the way students grow cognitively, and both can be used to inform teaching. Piaget’s (1983) theory purports that the stages of cognitive development (sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operational, formal operational) build on one another and follow a discontinuous model, in that stages cannot be skipped. A student will discontinue one stage in order to move on to the next. However, it is also a continuous model because students can learn to assimilate and accommodate new information or knowledge that they are presented with, which will build on what they already know. Piaget held that all people are born with “a tendency to organize their thinking processes into psychological structures” (Woolfolk, 2019, p. 46), but as we develop we can organize structures and new information, or schemes. Piaget’s educational theory reasoned that the biological maturation, activity, social experiences, and equilibrium all interact as individuals mature, and though teachers cannot alter these biological changes, they can ensure

students have what is needed to progress through these changes (Woolfolk, 2019). According to Piaget, cognitive development is stimulated by “gathering and organizing information” (p. 46) and that people can be stimulated by organization of information, adaptation to their environment. A major catalyst, according to Piaget, is a disequilibrium or “cognitive conflict that motivated change” (p. 58). Further, cognitive development is influenced by social transmission in which we learn from others and that social communication is specific to the culture we live in and “without social transmission, we would need to reinvent all the knowledge already offered by our culture” (Woolfolk, p. 46). Instruction, under the constructivist theory, ensures cognitive development that aligns with a natural learning process and that new learning is built upon students’ constructed knowledge.

### **Vygotsky and the Zone of Proximal Development**

... the distance between the actual developmental level [of the learner] as determined by independent problem-solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. (Vygotsky 1978, p. 86)

Vygotsky’s sociocultural perspective includes a holistic view of cognitive and language development and relates to a social facet of learning. Vygotsky did not necessarily believe that the age ranges in Piaget’s theory were “natural,” but rather that our development is influenced by our interactions with others and that our mental processes take place in specific cultural settings, thus affecting cognitive development (as cited in, Woolfolk, 2019). Vygotsky also supported continuous and discontinuous developments since “changes may seem like discontinuous, qualitative leaps...Rather than appearing all at once” and that even if a cognitive change appears to be abrupt, it actually may have been developing for a long period of time (p. 55). Vygotsky’s

theory supported the idea that all students have natural abilities, but that, “the essence of cognitive development is mastering the use of psychological tools such as language to accomplish the kind of advanced thinking and problem solving” (p. 59) that they could not otherwise complete on their own. Cognitive development is independent, but students reach the next level through challenges that meet a particular phase, or a Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Students can meet such academic challenges with the aid of supports, or scaffolding. Vygotsky reasoned that cognitive development is largely based on social interactions and access to instruction in a students’ ZPD. Hence cognitive development is a co-constructed process by which “people interact and negotiate...to create understanding or to solve a problem” (Woolfolk, 2019, p. 58). When students, such as English language learners, interact with those that are more adept than themselves in English, they are in turn able to learn from them.

### **Critical Pedagogy**

In an interview, Ira Shor (2017) defines critical pedagogy in a succinct manner: “teaching against the unequal status quo and for majoritarian agency” (as cited in Shor, Matusov, Marjanovic-Shane & Cresswell, p. 6). Critical dialogue is a key component of crucial pedagogy in that students engage with their classmates and teachers about compelling themes that are directly related to their everyday lives (Freire, 1970; Shor, 2017). The themes, as they are developed by the students, are of immediate interest and address actual problems the students seek to solve (Freire, Shor).

Additionally, critical pedagogy uses a problem-posing through dialogues, which provides an invitation for students to take an activist perspective to education; students “develop as activist citizens inspired by democracy, equality, ecology and peace (the foundations of social

justice: (Shor, p. 10). Further, critical pedagogy's core of participatory deliberation shares in Dewey's *Experience and Education* (1938):

There is, I think, no point in the philosophy of progressive education which is sounder than its emphasis upon the *importance of the participation of the learner in the formation of the purposes which direct his activities in the learning process* [emphasis added], just as there is no defect in traditional education greater than its failure to secure the active cooperation of the pupil in the construction of the purposes involved in his studying. (as cited in Shor, 2009, p. 18)

### **Culturally Relevant Pedagogy**

Eighty six percent of all elementary and secondary teachers are European Americans, but only 64% of the student population is European American (Gay & Howard, 2000, p. 2). Therefore, it is imperative that mostly homogenous groups of teachers ensure minority students can access and connect to the content (Ladson-Billings, 1995; González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). Additionally, teachers often do not share cultural heritage or home languages with students, which could impact student performance. In the field of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), addressing the culture of English Language Learners (ELLs) often leads to a greater student success on exams and higher numbers of ELLs to earn a high school diploma or equivalency. Spener (1992) wrote that, "Culture is not a static set of customs...rather, it is a dynamic process of transformation and change laden with conflicts to resolve and choices to be made both individually and as a community" (para. 3). So, when implementing culturally relevant instruction into classrooms, teachers should look at the larger concept of culture, not just where the student is from but how this influences their identity and experiences.

While culturally and linguistically responsive teaching (CRT/LRT) methods are shown to increase ELL grades, there are a myriad of ways teachers can practice CRT and LRT practices in their classrooms, depending on grade level, students' home language and culture, and age level; all of these will factor in the successfulness of such methods. Also, specifically "Research shows that when you have students read culturally relevant texts, their reading proficiency is greater" (Celic & Seltzer, 2013, p. 19). If students and teachers do not share a language or culture, in order to bridge that gap, teachers can incorporate lessons and activities from their students' cultures.

The recognition of relating a student's culture to the curriculum was brought to the forefront in education through Gloria Ladson-Billings' work in the early 1990s, culminating in her *Culturally Relevant Teaching; The Key to Making Multicultural Education*. In this work, Ladson-Billings outlined a tenet of good teaching (Ladson-Billings, 1992). Also, Ladson-Billings built upon the work of anthropologists that realign the ways that the culture students bring to school can be worked into their education (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Ladson-Billings recognized the previous labels for this work: "culturally appropriate" (Au & Jordan, 1981); "culturally congruent" (Mohatt & Erickson, 1981); "culturally responsive" (Cazden & Leggett, 1981); Erickson & Mohatt, 1982), and "culturally compatible" (Jordan, 1985; Vogt, Jordan, & Tharp, 1987) (as cited in Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 159). For students that are not mainstream or middle-class or White, a traditional curriculum may not match or relate to their daily lived experiences. This disconnect also relates to the speech used at school, the language interactions the students have with teachers, and the implications of such disconnects are lack of academic success for minority students, especially African-American students. Ladson-Billings' theory of culturally relevant pedagogy further relates to Martolome's work *Beyond the Methods Fetish:*

*Towards A Humanizing Pedagogy* (1994), in which a pedagogy that treats students' "reality, history, and perspectives" (as cited in Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 160) with deference. Culturally relevant pedagogy does not simply relate to content. It connects to critical pedagogy and is built upon three foundational ideas, according Ladson-Billings: "(a) Students must experience academic successes; to (b) students must develop and/or maintain cultural competence; and (c) students must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order" (p. 160). Their development of critical consciousness is a means of critiquing inequities found in society while participating and engaging in their academics as a means to prepare them to be active citizens (Ladson-Billings).

One of the greatest indicators for ELLs to feel welcome in the classroom and achieve academically was the incorporation of specific methods to meet students at their cultural and linguistic levels. Choi (2013) found a positive correlation between the use of students' diverse backgrounds and languages in the classroom (instead of ignoring them and only focusing on Eurocentric materials) and academic performance. In the classroom studied, there was a constant effort to learn about, respect, and engage with students' specific cultures. Choi finds that culturally relevant pedagogy, especially paired with a Freirean approach improved learning outcomes for ELLs: "Student academic engagement and achievements were evidenced and observed by their active participation in learning, critical thinking/analysis skills development, and cooperative knowledge construction, instead of test scores, and these show ... CRP practices as meaningful and justifiable" (p, 17). Moreover, the teacher ensured that literacy strategies were embedded in the lessons, providing linguistic support to the ELLs. The implications of these methods, considering the increased participation and demonstration of critical thinking of

the ELLs, are that CRT and LRT have the possibility of positively affecting ELLs academic results.

Even in school districts or states that require high-stakes testing of all students, including ELLs, Giouroukakis and Honigsfel (2010) made note of innovative teachers who were able to embed CRT and LRT into their practices, while still teaching to the test. The teachers taught with purpose, were supportive of the ELLs' needs, and provided meaningful and authentic instruction. These practices were able to address the issue of ELLs' lack of preparation, or lack of English proficiency, for examinations that they are mandated to take. The high-quality CRT and LRT instruction provided an environment where ELLs could appropriately prepare for high-stakes tests. The difficulty and time-consuming nature of implementing CRT and LRT into everyday teaching practices should not deter teachers or administrative staff. Although the specific methods may not be possible for some school curricula, it was shown that teachers required to use the Common Core State Standards did successfully implement CRT and LRT while following the required modules (Giouroukakis & Honigsfel).

Pacheco, David, and Jiménez (2015) related the importance of welcoming ELLs' home language into the classroom, as a means of being linguistically responsive. The teacher welcomed all home languages in order to deepen understanding of grade-level required content, used their pedagogical training in biliteracy lessons, and worked with ELLs in all their home languages in order to provide unique and in-depth learning opportunities. Similarly, in Peersy's (2011) study, the actual practices of teachers working with ELLs are discussed. Again, the teachers employed instructional strategies that prepared the students for mainstream classrooms and academic success, through a clear valuation of their language and culture. Most importantly, the CRT and LRT were paired with best-practice teaching methods.

The implementation of successful culturally and linguistically teaching methods promote positive learning opportunities in the ELLs' classroom. Findings demonstrated that the use of culturally and linguistically responsive teaching methods are perceived positively by students, teachers, and parents. However, these teaching methods often require curricular modification, creative lesson planning, and the willingness of the teacher to incorporate the ELLs' culture and background into the class on a regular basis. Often the pressure is placed on the students to acquire English quickly and to succeed academically, especially when faced with meeting curriculum standards and high-stakes testing. The reality, as documented through these research studies, was that the burden of ELL success lies not just in student effort, but in the teaching practices employed by English as a Second Language teachers and the environment in which these students are asked to learn.

The use of culturally and linguistically relevant pedagogy can be imparted upon pre-service teachers or used by thoughtful in-service teachers. The ways in which teachers of ELLs are prepared does have an impact on student performance. (Gomez & Diarrassouba, 2014; Johnson & Wells, 2017; Lopéz, 2016). Teachers are mostly “culturally and linguistically heterogeneous,” (Gomez & Diarrassouba) thus must make an effort to connect with their ESL students and ensure that these students know that their culture and language are welcome in the classroom. This assurance does positively affect the ELL students' performance. Often, teachers had perceived that they were prepared to teach their ELLs with culturally or linguistically diverse methods, and acknowledged that knowing about their students' diverse backgrounds was imperative to meeting those students' academic needs (Gomez & Diarrassouba; Johnson & Wells; Lopéz). However, the teachers did not feel prepared to meet these needs, feeling confident in teaching content and language, but not prepared to deliver it in a

linguistically or culturally diverse manner. The preparation teachers receive prior to service was found to be lacking CRT and LRT training and teachers that did employ these methods to the best of their ability reported that it was difficult to do on a daily basis and for a myriad of backgrounds. Teacher preparedness, and their perceptions on their preparedness, do not simply ensure ELL academic success, however. Johnson & Wells found that pre-service fieldwork with ELLs as well as in-service professional development will help prepare effective ELL teachers, paired with addressing underlying factors in teacher preparation that may perpetuate racism or stereotypes and recognition of white teachers' identities (Liggett, 2008).

Monzó (2016) suggested a more inclusive approach than just relevant curriculum: exposing the ideologies of capitalism present in some classrooms in the United States and validating the experiences of Latinx or non-White parents. This relates to the concept of “funds of knowledge” outlined by González, Moll, and Amanti (2005) which views minority, working-class families in terms of their strengths, not their perceived deficits. The inclusion of the funds of knowledge approach in a classroom, would show the students and their families, that even in a country in which their language and/or culture are in the minority, they are still “competent, and have knowledge, and their life experiences have given them that knowledge” (González, et al., p. ix-x). The implementation of culturally and linguistically teaching methods present opportunities for academic achievement and second language acquisition the English Language Learners' classroom, in addition to providing a space to address oppressive capitalistic systems in society.

### **Racial and Ethnic Identity and Biases**

Members of racial or ethnic minorities' self-perceptions and understanding of other's perceptions of their race or ethnicity can play a role in their self-esteem and academic performance. Neblett Jr., Rivas-Drake and Umaña-Taylor (2012) wrote that the recognition of

others' perceptions on one's racial or ethnic group may provide shelter from a decrease in self-esteem; if experiencing "high-levels of discrimination, those with high ethnic affirmation still reported high levels of self-esteem" (p. 296). Further, if youth are taught ethnic-racial socialization, or learn "what it means to be a member of a racial and/or ethnic minority group, and help youth learn to cope with discrimination" (p. 296) they may be more academically motivated, have a positive self-concept, and feel affirmation in of their identity (as cited in Neblett Jr., et al., 2012). However, exposure to biases against one's racial/ethnic minority group may also have a negative effect. Hughes, Witherspoon, Rivas-Drake, and West-Bey (2009) found that such exposure may "contribute to low self-esteem in youth by instilling in them a sense of lack of control over their environment, leading them to disengage from academic and other pursuits" (as cited in Neblett Jr, et al., 2012, p. 297). However, overall, findings suggest that through engagement of "ethnic-racial socialization" minorities may be better equipped "with specific strategies and skills to successfully negotiate the challenges they encounter" (Neblett Jr., et al., 2012, p. 297).

While minority oppression is seemingly ever-present, Monzó (2016) purported that it is purposely meant to be internalized in order to ensure the perpetuation of the capitalist society that exploits the minorities and the working class. Monzó (2016) stated that, "internalized oppression depicts a deeply ingrained acceptance of dominant ideologies" that work to "support existing social relations of production and asymmetrical relations of power and privileges" (p. 148). Oppression of the Latinx community is so deeply embedded in our society by those in power that it can even seem invisible or absurd to question its existence. The role or complicity of society is often veiled through this internalization of oppression, thus marking its effective perpetuation (Monzó, 2016).

Valenzuela's (2008) work on internalized oppression implies that educators, who themselves have not experienced such oppression may be suspect to judgmental or negative labels or profiles assigned to their minority students. Valenzuela recommends that teachers provide a space where students and teachers can reflect and discuss their experiences with stereotypes or "the pejorative meanings that are assigned to racial and ethnic groups in the United States" and how society has built up and perpetuate such stereotypes (p. 53). Through such discussions both those who have and have not been oppressed are better equipped to recognize how all people are conditioned to oppress minorities, even if they are members of a minority group.. Valenzuela (2008) recommends addressing minority group identities in order to stem the potential for students to in turn denigrate themselves. It first falls on educators to engage students, build their awareness of such "disparaging treatments of self" (p. 54), and to generate a discourse on the process by which minority students "come to condemn the cultural and linguistic traits" in their own communities (Valenzuela, p. 54). Considering internalized oppression is embedded in our society, and thus educational systems and that research indicated a recognition of a student's minority status can increase self-esteem and consequently academic performance, educators cannot just be static in their anti-oppression or anti-racism, but actively work with students to oppose discrimination and oppression.

### **White Teachers and Racial Awareness**

The awareness of race, as opposed to not seeing race, is critical for white teachers of racial and language minority students. By ignoring the race of white people, it is in essence not naming the whiteness and thus declaring white as the norm by which all other races differ (Dyer, 2005). This standard by which others must relate puts white people "secure a position of power" in several ways (Dyer, p. 12). Further, Liggett (2008) found that white teachers find

discussing their whiteness is a new experience and a means of critiquing “the role they play in maintaining racial privilege” (p. 397). If white people see themselves as normal, not through their whiteness, then they are able to “create the dominant images of the world...set standards of humanity by which they are bound to succeed and others bound to fail” (p. 12).

In an educational context, through the exploration of whiteness, especially by teachers, one explores their privilege, power, and how “knowledge influences one’s perspectives, beliefs, and values (Liggett, 2007). Not addressing race or assuming a color-blind approach, as white teachers have been shown to do (Sleeter, 1992; McIntyre, 1997) can cause misinterpretations, a perpetuation of racism, and ignore the “system or power and advantage” embedded in institutionalized racism (Johnson, 2002, p. 154). Thus white teachers should not ignore race, their own or their students’, but instead work to dismantle socially constructed stereotypes, address racial identity, and expanding these boundaries to explore what it means to be white and to belong to the dominant culture, translates into an exploration of power, its connection to knowledge, and “how this knowledge influences one’s perspectives, beliefs, and values” (Liggett, 2007, p. 395). There are ways, however, in addition to recognition of whiteness, in which teachers can address their whiteness and reduce prejudice in their classrooms and dialogues with their minority students. First, Johnson (2002) recommended that white teachers should experience working with people of color in situations in which they have equal status, such as an immersion experience or a service learning experience. Also, teachers need to be able to reflect upon and understand their experiences as a white person engaging with communities of color (Johnson, 2002).

Educators need to create places where all students feel valued, regardless of race or home language. This is especially true of White educators of minority students. Building upon

Johnson (2002), White educators need to recognize that currently “the worldviews of those with privileged positions are taken as the only reality, while the worldviews of those less powerful are dismissed as inconsequential. (Delpit, 1995, p.xv). The acceptance or acknowledgement that racism exists in American educational institutions, along with a recognition of whiteness, is not enough (Singleton & Linton, 2006). Institutionalized racism is perpetuated not by recognition alone, but through “educators’ inaction as well actions considered harmful to students of color (p. 41). Educators, especially white educators, need to be anti-racist or “actively fight racism and its effects wherever they may exist” (p. 45). While anti-racism is not anti-white, it does require a recognition of privileges that whites have over minorities or people of color.

According to Singleton and Linton, educators can be anti-racists by including the histories of oppressed peoples, welcoming discussion of the experiences of discrimination of minority students, and to actively engage in conversations about White power and privilege (pp. 45-46). When teaching English language learners, a minority group in the U.S., White teachers need to address their experiences and actively address hindrances to their achievement via institutionalized racism. White teachers of linguistically and culturally diverse students need to take it upon themselves to address their whiteness, and thus their status of privilege so that it is not ignored and thus perpetuated in their classrooms and subsequently in society.

### **Adult English Language Learners**

While all ELLs are individuals with specific needs, ELLs in Adult Education programs need to be taught in through student-centered approaches. Adult ESL programs should be highly accessible, meaningful and relevant to the ELLs, be flexible and customizable, and focus on the language needs and interests of the adults (Duran, 2016; Lillie, 2018). Thus, adult ELLs’ access to individualized assignments and differentiated materials is to best capitalize on each students’

background knowledge and build upon their language skills. Duran (2016) emphasized this point; classrooms should be a place of trust for the students “by honoring learners’ past and present experiences as well as their existing linguistic funds of knowledge” (p. 15).

Additionally, according to Lillie, instruction and curriculum development should include or consider the following principles:

- ELL’s prior knowledge and experiences is validated and valued
- Provide active roles of ELLs
- Allow for adults to choose content and activities
- Let the ELLs control the activity direction
- Make content relevant to ELLs’ pressing needs
- Keep tasks authentic
- Use authentic language
- Provide ELLs with strategies for when not in ESL classroom
- Listen for themes from ELLs to drive content and lessons
- Continually reflect and assess and change (p. 10)

Adult ELLs are a unique subset of language learners and thus require carefully throughout pedagogies in a learner-centered environment. As adults have unique and numerous lived experiences, these should be thoughtfully incorporated into instruction so the ELLs are able to translate what they learn into their everyday lives. Incarcerated adult students, in particular, are best suited to “goal-oriented, self-directed learning” (Godin & Thomas, 1984, p. 123), which aligns well with the guidelines of the Participatory Approach to education.

The Participatory Approach is especially significant for adult ELLs (Auerbach, 1992, 1993; Peyton & Crandall, 1995; Spener, 1990) because it situates adult ELLs in positions of

control, in which each member of the class has opportunities to share in genuine dialog and to discuss their opinions and expertise. The approach is learner-centered and often the content of the class is generated by real-life issues or problems experienced by the adult ELLs. It places the language learners in a position of power and the English language practiced in the classroom is a contextualization of a current issue. The Participatory Approach allows instructional practices to cater to all levels of English-language proficiency and will include and embrace the funds of knowledge that the students possess, validating their prior experiences (Auerbach; Lillie, 2018; Motlhaka & Wadesango, 2014; Spener). Additionally, the approach encourages students to practice productive and receptive language skills in relation to problems in their community. The approach is contextual and inquiry-based, encourages student control of the content and authentic use of English language, and provide the students to practice relevant problem-solving strategies that could prove relevant in their everyday lives (Auerbach; Lillie; Motlhaka & Wadesango; Spener).

With this approach to teaching adults, it is important that the students' home languages are used in instruction. This is especially true if the adult ELLs are non-print-literate. According to Lukes (2011), in regards to students whose home language is Spanish, the students felt "It would be impossible to learn English without knowing how to read and write, and they feel a deep desire to read and write in their own language" (p. 35). Native language instruction is also important if the adult ELLs are not familiar with non-Roman script. The National Institute for Literacy (2010) argued that there are definite advantages to including native language instruction for adult ELLs; the students will not only feel more comfortable asking their teacher questions in their first language, but will also feel less helpless, reduce their feeling of marginalization, increase their standing in their community, and mitigate negative experiences in English-only

courses (p. 4). Kalmar (2001) “challenged educators to create a space for student and teachers to learn from each other and where both can set the educational agenda” (as cited in Lukes, 2011, p. 35). Implementing a learner-centered approach to teaching adults, paired with home language instruction, supports adult ELLs in learning English, provides a sense of community and fosters practical and productive outcomes (Lukes, 2011; National Institute for Literacy, 2010). Adult English language learners, a unique subset of ELLs with specific instructional needs, are best prepared to acquire English as an additional language if their experiences, culture, and language are validated; thus an adoption of the student-centered Participatory Approach is appropriate.

### **Conclusions**

This review of relevant literature aimed to address the critical needs of diverse adult English language learners (ELLs), through the use of evidenced-based teaching approaches for culturally and linguistically diverse ELLs. Additionally, the basis for building upon the knowledge and experiences students bring to the classroom was discussed through a review of Dewey (1938), Piaget (1938), Vygotsky (1978), and via Freire’s (1987) Participatory Approach. Through such constructivist pedagogies, adult English language learners are provided the opportunity to acquire English in a manner that validates their lives, cultures, and first languages. Further, through the use of culturally and linguistically relevant teaching offers ELLs, especially adult ELLs, to achieve academically as these pedagogies improve student academic outcomes. While CRT and LRT address in-class teaching practices, educators must also actively address racial and ethnic biases in society and thus in the classroom. Through critical pedagogies, educators can engage in student-centered instruction through problem-posing in order to engage in dialogue that challenges the status quo of oppression. This especially important if ELLs have White teachers, as such teachers need to address oppression and racism directly and actively.

While these pedagogies and teaching strategies are ideal for Adult ELLs, it is also necessary to consider the compounded needs of Adult ELLs that are currently incarcerated. This unique subset of ELLs has additional socio-emotional needs and very practical areas of English language acquisition to consider. Instruction to ELLs in prisons must not only prepare them for the world they will encounter after their release, aid them in their acquisition of English and obtainment of an alternative high school degree, but also allow these ELLs to engage in a dialogue that will address problems they faced prior to their conviction and issues they encounter on the inside.

Overall, this chapter intended to analyze and synthesize relevant studies to provide research-based evidence to support the Participatory Approach curriculum guidelines for incarcerated adult English language learners that will be presented by the researcher. In the following chapter, I will detail the methodology that I employed that informed the development of the curriculum guidelines.

## Methodology

### Introduction

The purpose of this curriculum project was to create a guideline for a student-centered course specifically designed for incarcerated English Language Learners (ELLs). The curriculum addressed the problem that incarcerated ELLs do not have access to culturally relevant English as a second language (ESL) instruction that will address problems they face during their incarceration, aid them as they transition back into society, and ultimately prepare them to address systems of oppression in society. This curriculum intends to prepare ESL teachers to engage in a Participatory Approach to language learning in the setting of a prison classroom in New York State (NYS). ELLs, as noted, are a growing population in the United States and this increase is also reflected in the incarcerated ELL population in NYS. These ELLs, a group with unique and varied language needs, not only must learn English while incarcerated but are also navigating a societal system that views their current lack of English proficiency as a deficit and reflects the prevalence of social injustices, from xenophobia, internalized oppression, or overt racism in social systems (Macedo, 2017).

Non-native English speakers in particular are increasingly encountering a discrimination and oppression due to their language or culture (Macedo, 2017). This practice of racist oppression has permeated the daily lives of Non-native English speakers, has impacted their education, opportunities, and has caused an increased likelihood of negative encounters with the criminal justice system, and potentially the Department of Corrections and Community Services (DOCCS).

While this oppression is seemingly ever-present, Monzó (2016) claimed that it is purposely meant to be internalized in order to ensure the perpetuation of the capitalist society

that exploits the minorities and the working class. Internalized oppression of the Latinx and Non-native English speaking community is so deeply embedded in our society and employed by those in power, that it can even seem invisible or absurd to question its existence. Monzó stated that the internalized oppression is “especially effective because it secures the invisibility” of the state’s and society’s role (p. 163). Furthermore, Fránquiz, Salazar, and DeNicolo (2011) found that harmful majoritarian tales are internalized by communities of color and are meant to benefit the dominant groups in U.S. society, but that they are social constructs that can be dismantled through purposeful instruction and presentation of counter stories. According to Hall (2016) a curriculum that uses the Participatory Approach is not only suited for ELLs, as it is actively student-centered, but also because it uses “education to challenge systems of oppression” that are “intrinsically and explicitly political and ideological” (as cited in Hastings & Jacob, 2016, p. 7).

This curriculum project seeks to provide a means of evaluating and exploring ELLs and Non-native English speakers’ experiences and interactions with the U.S. criminal justice system, with a focus on the systemic racism and marginalization inherent in this system. This curriculum project will build upon Flores and Rosa’s (2015) work in raciolinguistics in that minority language speakers are expected to conform to White middle-class norms, are viewed from a deviant perspective, and that U.S. systems, such as the criminal justice system, are not set up to accommodate Non-native English speakers even if they are disproportionately represented in those systems. This will take place through problem-posing language activities and reflection on past experiences of the incarcerated ELLs. This project is of particular importance to teachers of ELLs and students that are at risk of being “unwittingly complicit with dominant group ideologies” and those that are interested in actively rejecting the burden of dominant ideology too often placed on language minority students through a critical pedagogy (Monzó, 2016, p.

149). Additionally, this curriculum is underscored by the need to address the status quo of Non-native English speakers within the dominant structures of systemic racism and marginalization, especially with encounters with the criminal justice system in the U.S. The following chapter will detail the framework upon which this curriculum guide is built and the methodologies followed throughout its development.

## **Conceptual Frameworks**

### **Participatory Approach**

Education is powerful, and because of this power, according to Pennycook (1989) education is inherently political (as cited in Hall, 2016). English language teachers and ESL curricula cannot ignore this truism, but instead there is a need to view education through a critical lens, one that will lead to, as Hall (2016) states, “practices that will transform both the classroom and society” (as cited in Hastings & Jacob, p. 7). Paulo Freire, founder of Critical Pedagogy, a constructivist participatory pedagogy, believed that education should focus on learning, rather than on teaching; students and teachers can construct their knowledge through learning (Cattaneo, 2017). In Freire’s Critical Pedagogy, education is viewed as a tool that is able to address power relations and purports that students and teachers participate in learning together and construct and solve problems they encounter in order to address and transcend oppression and strive for liberation through the Participatory Approach (Freire, 1970). The Participatory Approach situates ELLs in positions of control, in which each member has an opportunity to engage in genuine dialogue, express their opinions, and divulge their expertise (CITE). The approach is learner-centered and real-life problems experienced by the ELLs generate the content of the classes. Additionally, this approach aligns appropriately with the needs of the student population, as it is contextual and relevant. Further, it encourages student control of the content

and thus fosters authentic use of the English language and provides the students with practice in problem-solving strategies that are applicable in their everyday lives while they are incarcerated or after their subsequent release.

The Participatory Approach was created on the premise of teaching "literacy for social change" (Spener, 1990) based on the principles of Paulo Freire's Critical Pedagogy. Originally designed for Brazilian peasants, Freire's approach addressed literacy through discussions of posed problems (Peyton & Crandall, 1995). Freire argued that "unjust social conditions are the cause of illiteracy" and that through adult education learners are able to "participate actively in liberating themselves from the conditions that oppress them" (as cited in Spener, 1990, para. 3). There are several central concepts that Freire developed as part of the approach. First, educators must reject the "Banking Concept of education" in which the teacher simply fills or deposits "information into students as they would deposit money into a bank" (Freire, 1970). This rejection then provides the opportunity for students to be involved in creating the content and themes of their instruction or learning, or to be the "subjects of their own learning" (Auerbach, 1992, p. 17). The Banking Concept, further, cannot be based on teachers freeing students or giving them knowledge. Rather Critical Pedagogy, according to Freire (1993), "makes oppression and its causes objects of reflection by the oppressed, and from that reflection will come their necessary engagement in the struggle for their liberation" (p. 33). A second tenet of this approach is that the curriculum is developed with the students based on problems they face in their daily lives. Dialogues and questioning between the students and teachers lead to an examination and discussion. After an understanding of the students' lives and problems is discussed, the teacher can then pose questions that the students consider, analyze, reflect, and act upon the posed question (Auerbach, 1992). The Participatory Approach fundamentally rejects

the passive learner. In fact, Auerbach (1992) calls upon Freire's notion that passive learning perpetuates student marginalization and submission since learners "cannot use their minds or bring anything to the learning process, and therefore become objects of instruction" (p. 16). Learning English through this approach not only creates active participants in their education, but prepares them to be active participants in democracy and to also examine society and their role in it (Nieto, 2002). This approach, which is rooted in social justice, has been adapted for non-mainstream students, such as English language learners (Auerbach; Berlin). Since the learning that takes place must come from the students' contexts the Participatory Approach, students become empowered learners in their communities, whether that community be on the outside (not in prison) or on the inside (in prison).

Addressing Paulo Freire's (1970) concept of "banking education," or the practice of oppressive domination of students through a societal apparatus, should be at the forefront of curriculum within a New York State prison. The students, persons with varied lived experiences, will not "mirror oppressive society" (p. 73), but will rather strive to foster the creative power of the students instead of attempting "to control thinking and action" (p. 77) with the end goal of disrupting the oppressive system within which they have been living. By drawing on the knowledge that these students already possess, their languages, experiences, "funds of knowledge" the students will be poised to create their own meaningful content and reject their oppression. (González, Moll & Amanti, 2005). Freire purports that a pedagogy can become "the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world" (p. 34). This transformation will ideally aid in these students' academic success, but also beyond and after their release. Through a critical pedagogy, the students will have an opportunity to recognize

and perhaps avoid oppressive practices that correlate with mass incarceration in the United States.

While the individual needs of each adult incarcerated ELL will be dissimilar, a common theme is one of disconnection with their former communities and previous lives that underlie the very practical problems they faced daily. Implementing a Participatory Approach, or Freirean Approach, would not only meet the language needs of ELLs, address the underlying oppressive frameworks at play, but would also address ELLs' social and psychological needs as well. Teaching ELLs requires consideration of their language needs; however, their backgrounds, home languages, current communities, and current challenges they may be facing should be taken into account when designing programs for incarcerated ELLs. ELLs will not have the same needs and some may have lived in English-dominant countries for years, while others may have just arrived in the U.S. Further, their professional and linguistic backgrounds may vary. Even though the ELLs enrolled in a New York State prison education program currently live under the similar conditions, they may feel that they are constantly negotiating their roles, their identities, or their cultures, while also needing to face very real life challenges. Spener (1992) wrote that, "Culture is not a static set of customs, religious beliefs, social attitudes, forms of address and attire, and foods; rather, it is a dynamic process of transformation and change laden with conflicts to resolve and choices to be made both individually and as a community" (para. 3). The Participatory Approach provides a unique and meaningful way to address the varying social, political, and emotional needs of incarcerated ELLs, while also aiding in their acquisition of English.

### **Critical Race Theory**

The necessity of valuing ELLs' experiences as part of their identity construction is

central to the theoretical framework of Critical Race Theory (CRT). CRT is an important foundation upon which this curriculum is built. Through the application of CRT, social inequities are addressed through the “deconstruction of majoritarian tales” as these tales are not adequate in relaying the experiences of non-white minority communities (Fránquiz, Salazar & Denicolo, 2012, p. 282). CRT is meant to highlight and focus on the differing perspectives and experiences that minorities, including linguistic minorities, bring to the classroom (Liggett, 2013). By valuing and validating ELLs’ experiences, CRT helps to acknowledge “that racism is endemic in our society” but that action can be taken to expose and dismantle the dominant discourse that perpetuate this racism” (Fránquiz, et al., p. 297). Not only does CRT expose racism in American social and educational structures, according to Lynn (2005) it is used to “reveal the hidden curriculum of racial domination and talk about the ways in which it is central to the maintenance of white supremacy” as cited in Gaskew, 2015, p. 69). Without directly addressing these majoritarian tales and dominant white ecologies and perspectives, not only are the stories and experiences of minorities silenced, but the status quo of racism will endure (Fránquiz, et al., p. 282). It is crucial that a curriculum for language minority students, who are part of an incarcerated minority, address these issues.

### **Audience**

The researcher selected ELLs that are currently incarcerated and enrolled in an education program through the Department of Corrections and Community Services (DOCCS) in the State of New York as the intended audience for this curriculum. The guidelines outlined in this curriculum project, however, are targeted towards ESL educators that work with incarcerated ELLs. Within DOCCS educational programming, students that are enrolled in ESL classes are entitled to “have access to, and the ability to benefit from, all services and programs” (DOCCS,

2015, p. 2). Also, DOCCS states that any inmate in custody “who does not possess a verified high school diploma or equivalency diploma, DCOS, or IEP diploma, will have an academic need” and will be enrolled in Academic Education Program (p. 2). The only way to satisfy this academic need is to earn a High School Equivalency diploma through educational programming while in custody of DOCCS. Inmates with an academic need may be enrolled in Adult Basic Education (ABE) or in a High School Equivalency (HSE) program in which they prepare to take the TASC test in English. In order to pass the TASC assessment, the ELLs need to gain proficiency in the English language (Corrections and Community Supervision, 2015).

### **Procedure**

During the course of developing this curriculum, the author took the following steps:

#### **Step One: Author’s Background/ Self-Interest**

Megan C. Crowley, hereafter called the researcher, grew up in a small town in Western New York that was not racially and linguistically diverse. The researcher’s parents, however, worked in prisons that were much more diverse and did not represent the racial profile of the towns that surrounded the prisons. In a predominantly white area, the prison was mostly housed racial and linguistic minorities. An exposure to both worlds, and experiences teaching English in New York State prisons and in Brazil (the source of Freire’s Critical Pedagogy) formed the inspiration to create a culturally relevant curriculum model that would address the disproportionate rates of minority incarceration, the language needs of incarcerated ELLs and work to help these ELLs to question and reflect on injustices in order to acquire English and promote social justice. The researcher’s views her role as an education and English language instructor also as a means to dismantle oppression of racial and linguistic minorities, but to also work to legitimizes English language learners’ culture, language, and identities through dialogue

through a critical pedagogy that ultimately empowers ELLs to transform their world.

### **Step Two: Choosing a Topic**

Initially, the researcher intended to conduct research in a New York State Prison. The nature of this research was to use qualitative and quantitative research methods. The use of a mixed approach would have enabled a thoughtful combination in order to have explored the experiences that ELLs have within the criminal justice system and the role that language, or lack of English language proficiency, played in those experiences. The study would have been framed by the transformative approach to mixed methods, as it applied “to people who experience discrimination and oppression,” depending on their ethnicity, immigrant status, or language (Mertens, 2010, as cited in Creswell, 2014, p. 106)). This approach was appropriate for the proposed research study as it used, according to Creswell (2014), “a theoretical lens drawn from social justice or power (p. 278) and had common themes of “challenging oppressive structures” and enhancing “social justice and human rights” (p. 106). The author had hoped that by interviewing and surveying inmates that were English language learners, an understanding of the role language played in their incarceration would be uncovered, and thus the underlying systemic racism or oppression could be addressed. Although it is still the goal of the researcher to conduct research with inmates as participants, the lack of approval for a Human Subjects Review led to the creation of a curriculum guideline for incarcerated ELLs.

### **Step Three: Reviewing the Literature**

The review of literature began with an assessment of the relevant literature with a focus on teaching practices and curriculum modifications of teachers working with ELLs, then looked at the role teacher, student, and parent perceptions on ELLs, then broadened to the ways in which teachers are prepared, pre-service and in-service, to successfully teach ELLs, all of which focus on

the goal of ELL academic achievement in relation to culturally or linguistically responsive methods. As the researcher progressed in the Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) Graduate program, she researched concurrent and relevant topics to Second Language Acquisition. In particular, EDU 581, Language & Learning: Sociolinguistic Considerations for Educators of ELL Students, was crucial to the development of this literature review. This course introduced the topic of raciolinguistics (Flores & Rosa, 2015), internalized oppression of minorities (Monzó, 2016), and Freire's Critical Pedagogy (1970). While researching these topics, the researcher delved more deeply into the relationship that these topics related to the discrimination of minorities not just in the educational system, but also in the criminal justice system. The researcher reviewed literature that aligned with the oppression of racial and linguistic minority ELLs and the ways that language influences encounters with the criminal justice system. In order to address these issues in a manner that would allow ELLs to acquire English, but also address the researcher's interest in prison education, the researcher developed a curriculum that would focus on incarcerated students in ESL classes. The optimum second language acquisition theories aligned with Freire's student-centered Participatory approach for adult ELLs, while also focusing on the needs of adult incarcerated learners.

#### **Step Four: Research Critical Pedagogy**

The researcher had little knowledge of Friere's work prior to their research for the literature review, although the Participatory Approach was known to be an appropriate means of English language instruction for adults (Auerbach, 1992; Shor, 1992). The researcher investigated Freire's seminal work *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) in order to gain a better understanding of the context under which Freire developed his pedagogy and theories. The researcher then broadened the research to the ways that the Participatory Approach had been

used in English as a second language instruction, as Freire's pedagogy was originally for developing literacy skills. This led to a review of Ira Shor's important work using the Participatory Approach in ESL classes and Elsa Roberts Auerbach's extremely influential work, *Making Meaning, Making Change: Participatory Curriculum Development for Adult ESL Literacy* (1992).

### **Step Five: Aligning with DOCCS Policies**

The researcher reviewed the relevant policies for ELLs under the care of the NYS DOCCS and the guidelines for all ELLs under the United States Department of Justice and rulings that set precedent for ELLs' rights. First, the DOCCS Academic Education and Program Policies Directive was analyzed, as it clearly outlines the definitions of "Language Dominance/Individuals with Limited English Proficiency" and their educational rights (Department of Corrections and Community Supervision, 2015). Further, the DOCCS Office of Cultural and Language Access Services (2019) states that, "individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) shall receive free language assistance so that they can access the same programs, services and benefits that are available to individuals who are not limited English proficient" (para. 2). All ELLs are guaranteed access to all DOCCS services, programs, and free language assistance. If they are deemed to be individuals with limited English proficiency, have an academic need, they are placed in ESL course, Adult Basic Education in English, and language assistance for testing (Language Access Plan, 2017).

### **Step Six: Review Adult Education Curriculum for Social Justice**

The researcher evaluated the needs of adult ELLs and the needs of incarcerated individuals through the lens of Critical Pedagogy and the Participatory Approach. Auerbach's (1992) work also proved to be an invaluable resource for this portion of the curriculum

development, as were Singleton & Linton's *A Field Guide for Achieving Equity in Schools* (2006), Tonda Liggett's work on English language education and Critical Pedagogy (2008, 2013, 2014) and Ira Shor's extensive work on Critical Pedagogy for Adult ELLs (1992, 2009). These resources provided a foundation and framework for the guidelines presented in this curriculum. The researcher was able to adapt the principles of these resources in order to meet the needs of incarcerated ELLs and the CREDE Standards.

### **Step Seven: Align with Communicative Approach of Second Language Acquisition**

According to the Interactionist Theory of Second Language Acquisition (SLA), language is acquired through natural, unstructured language that take place through real communication acts. (Saville-Troike, 2012). The Interactionist Theories, particularly the Socio-cultural Theory, of SLA are anchored by Piaget's and Vygotsky's educational approaches, as it builds upon constructivist theories (Lillie, 2018). Learning of English happens when ELLs construct knowledge through interactions, conversations, and negotiations of meaning when trying to get ideas across (Lillie). The interactions in English are where language learning take place, thus it is crucial to implement lessons and class structures that allow for meaningful communications. Through the Participatory Approach, based on critical pedagogy, students acquire English through communicative learning via student-centered classrooms. This approach addresses a core component of the Sociocultural Theory (SCT) of second language acquisition, that learning takes place when students engage in "complex mental functions" (Saville-Troike, 2012, p. 119). SCT embodies the tenets of the Interactionist perspective of SLA. ELLs are engaging in meaningful conversations, images, and written texts in order to solve specific problems; they need to use academic language and to navigate language in authentic situations. This is where ELLs will engage in conversations, interact with their teacher and peers, native English-speakers,

thus acquiring language that is useful and relevant to their lives. An ELL, if not understood by another student or a native English speaker, will need to negotiate their meaning in order to ensure that their ideas, problem-solving solutions, or theme suggestions are understood. Also, ELLs and native speakers may engage in negotiation of meaning in order to clarify ideas in order to continue their line of inquiry (Saville-Troike, 2012). The Participatory Approach of language learning relies on students communicating and showing comprehension through real communication acts (Lillie, 2018). In relation of this assertion, in Lightbrown & Spada (2006) Long and Porter (1985) find that “although learners cannot always provide each other with the accurate grammatical input, they can offer each other genuine communicative practice that included negotiation of meaning” (p. 152).

This approach also aligns with Sociocultural Theory in that it allows students to expand their mental functions beyond what they could do alone (Saville-Troike, 2012). The collaborative and interactive nature of a Participatory Approach to English acquisition provides opportunities for ELLs to interact with other students, and possibly with heterogeneous classrooms with ELLs of differing language proficiencies and their native English speaking teacher. When interacting through the problem-posing and reflection phases, the ELL will engage in interactions with teachers or “experts,” an interaction that relates to Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Saville-Troike, 2012). According to Vygotsky (1978), the ZPD is “... the distance between the actual developmental level [of the learner] as determined by independent problem-solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (p. 86). ELLs are able to reach their potential language development with the guidance of an expert, reaching a level they would be unable to by themselves (Saville-Troike). Additionally, SLA is fostered through heterogeneous

language proficiency groups and corrective feedback, especially when engaging with native English speakers. Also, second language acquisition, in the sociocultural view of language development, emerges from the language use and development in classroom interactions. When ELLs are given the opportunity to use language via a curriculum they developed using the Participatory Approach, they “are capable of engaging in high level content instruction with support that engages them in meaningful and purposeful tasks” which then provide “authentic opportunities to use and communicate with language” (Capitelli, et al., 2016, p. 287).

Furthermore, Vygotsky’s Sociocultural Theory views learning as not only a collaboration between students, but also between teachers and students. With the Participatory Approach, the teacher’s role is crucial to language acquisition and facilitating dialogue among students. Through this dialogue, teachers ensure the ELLs’ social interactions facilitate higher order thinking in their zone of proximal development (ZDP) (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011).

Lastly, the researcher ensured the curriculum laid the groundwork for ELLs to develop communicative competence in a learner-centered social process. The social aspect of language learning is critical in the Sociocultural Theory of SLA. The researcher built upon Vygotsky’s theory, but also Sonia Nieto’s *Language, Culture, and Teaching* (2002), which outlined the importance of “social relationships and political realities” by addressing the five concepts that challenge traditional or “banking education” models (p. 5). Nieto blends her view of the sociocultural theory with Freire’s work and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy by focusing on “*agency/co-constructed learning; experience; identity/hybridity; context/situatedness/positionality; and community*” which are integral to the theoretical foundation of this curriculum guide (Emphasis in original, p. 21). Further, the researcher reviewed Berlin’s (2005) work on the Communicative Approach to language teaching in order to

ensure that the curriculum helps to effectively use critical pedagogy effectively in a language-learning classroom. Berlin purports that the communicative approach's core elements (communicative competence, language orientations, and a student-centered classroom) all align will within the problem-posing process of naming, reflecting, and taking action (Berlin, 2005, p. 9). This curriculum guide takes into account these language acquisition elements and embeds them within the steps of the Participatory Approach.

### **Step Eight: Curriculum Development Process**

In the following step, the researcher reviewed Diane Larsen-Freeman and Marti-Anderson's *Techniques & Principles in Language Teaching* (2011) to establish an understanding of how a Participatory Approach aligns with English language instruction and how to implement such an approach. The researcher also reviewed Lawrence N. Berlin's work on ESL instruction using the Participatory Approach, but primarily focused on the book *Contextualizing College ESL Classroom Praxis: A Participatory Approach to Effective Instruction* (2005). This text provided insight into ELLs' learning needs, a framework of how the participatory pedagogy is most effective in an ESL class, and presented a review of the how the Participatory Approach aligns with student-centered communicative approaches to language instruction. In particular, Berlin (2005) provided a model of how language instruction can be effective using problem-posing (p. 109). This model situates learning in three areas: pedagogical, environmental, and societal. These areas overlap and are closely intertwined with students' learning skills, individual differences, and the diversity of experiences in the real world. Through recognition of these areas, there is an opportunity for praxis (reflection and action) to take place in an environment fostered by love, humor, and positive student- teacher relationships, which ultimately is at the heart of the Participatory Approach (Berlin). Additionally, the researcher

devolved into Elsa Roberts Auerbach's (1992) comparison of traditional teaching approaches and the Participatory Approach. This work underscored the need for the researcher to include a needs assessment, catalyst activities, and participatory tools in the Participatory Approach curriculum guide. Lastly, the researcher reviewed the School of Unity & Liberation's (SOUL) explanation of the cyclical process of reflection and action. SOUL (n.d) indicated that the this process builds upon itself throughout the class by first identifying aspects of students' lives that are not satisfactory, then providing input through dialogue or interactions, engaging in reflection, and then planning for action. This process eventually builds upon itself until the students "become more and more capable of effectively transforming their daily lives" (SOUL, n.d., p. 38).

### **Step Nine: Role of Student**

After researching and outlining the necessary components of implementing a Participatory Approach, the researcher explored the role of the student. As with other traditional classroom teaching practices, the student's role is relatively defined; they are receivers of information from the teacher and complete work as they are told. Auerbach (1992) wrote that, "the teacher is the knower and the student is the knowee" (p. 21). Instead, this researcher used Freire's alternative to the "banking education" system this above practice embodies (Freire, 1970). Not only does this role make the students "objects of instruction," but it also makes the student passive, disempowered, submissive, and perpetuates their marginalization (Freire; Auerbach). The student in the Participatory Approach, rather, is involved in all processes that take place in the classroom. The researcher did not create lessons in which the student would simply receive information, read provided texts, or complete English grammar exercises. The Participatory Approach curriculum guide outlined is built on the foundation of student-teacher

participation and mutual respect, especially considering the potentially vast differences in life experiences between the two groups. Not only is the process of acquiring English through problem-posing, communicating, reflecting, and taking action, the students are engaged in content that is culturally and linguistically relevant since they themselves co-created it. The students are part of developing this curriculum at each stage; again, it is therefore imprudent to suppose ways that these particular students (incarcerated adult ELLs) will identify as issues or important topics for discussion. Students, though, must feel comfortable in sharing their experiences, offering challenges or important life events (Auerbach). Further, the research identified the need for students to engage in the problem-posing process with the teacher; the students search for solutions to problems by answering questions. They are “describing, analyzing, suggesting, deciding, planning”, reflecting and taking action (praxis), and thus are taking steps to change their lives and thus society (School for Unity and Liberation). When students engage in topics that are intrinsically motivating, they build on their prior knowledge, and feel validated in a setting that devalues, even dehumanizes them by design.

### **Step Ten: Role of Teacher**

The researcher then explored the role of the teacher when implementing a Participatory Approach in an ESL classroom. Again, the researcher used Elsa Roberts Auerbach’s *Making Meaning, Making Change* (1992), Lawrence N. Berlin’s influential work *Contextualizing College ESL Classroom Praxis: A Participatory Approach to Effective Instruction* (2005), Kelsey Hood Cattaneo’s “Telling Pedagogies Apart” (2017), and Tonda Liggett’s “The Mapping of a Framework: Critical Race Theory and TESOL” (2013) in order to define the role of the teacher. This was necessary, as this approach rejects the traditional model of the teacher as an expert; rather, the teacher becomes a co-learner, problem-poser, facilitator, and guide for

students. In regards to second language acquisition, the teacher “contributes linguistic expertise” but also learns from the students’ experiences (Auerbach, 1992, p. 31). Cattaneo (2017) found that, since the students take on a role of responsibility for their learning and the content, the teachers are able to step away from lecturing and “play a non-expert, facilitator, or guiding role” (p. 146). Teachers do, however, continue to provide support, scaffold language tasks, and provide relevant feedback. The teacher engages in dialogues with the students and helps them to recognize problems they may be facing and then uses these problems in order to generate the content of the English language instruction (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011). During instruction, the teacher not only promotes SLA, but also helps the students to understand and find solutions to their problems, so they can then take action and reflect (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011). By helping students identify and solve problems in the classroom, the teacher should also ensure that the students can make connections to the ways that this will aid them in their futures; teachers should “create a practice ground where simulated tasks can facilitate future encounters with real events” (Berlin, 2005, p. 97). Further, the researcher included in the guide a process for created an environment where students feel comfortable to share. Auerbach found that teachers can provide a structure in the class for identifying problems, facilitating dialogue providing choices for learning, and by offering their own “experiences, knowledge, ideas, and opinions” (p. 20). Lastly, the researcher included Liggett’s (2013) assertion that teachers can in fact benefit from hearing and discussing their students’ experiences and perspectives; they need to be open to revising their “own understandings” and “question their individual beliefs and values in relation to social, political, and cultural influences” (p. 6). The researcher felt defining the role of the teacher was crucial, as it may waver from traditional teacher duties.

**Step Eleven: Identify Outcomes and Assessments**

The research acknowledged the need to assess English language acquisition and researched the assessments and outcomes for learning when using the Participatory Approach. Since meaningful communication is paramount to this pedagogy, the researcher ensured that the guide included authentic means of evaluation. English in this context is viewed “as an instrument of power necessary for active and equal participation in society” (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011, p. 222). Thus, assessments are not simply mandated tests on decontextualized vocabulary or readings, multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank questions or based on scores on a high-stakes standards-based test (TABE, TASC, or BEST). The researcher, using Auerbach’s (1992) curriculum as a guide and Berlin’s (2005) research, found that this assessment model is not compatible with the Participatory Approach. All language modalities (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) are incorporated into suggested classroom activities but are assessed during authentic use. This aligns with the “promising view of assessment” and also the foundational concept of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and Freire’s Critical Pedagogy; students’ are not objects of education, but rather are active participants whose abilities and experiences are valued (Mahoney, 2017, p. 8). Further, the inclusion of authentic and contextualized assessments in this curriculum guide ensure that the ELLs are evaluated on what they can do with language, instead of what they are not able to do and are each viewed as individuals (Mahoney). Again, the researcher uses the principles outlined by Auerbach to suggest assessment options: contextualized, context-specific, and variable, qualitative, process-orientated, ongoing and integrated with instruction, supportive, participatory, two-way, and open-minded. This curriculum guide focuses on or recommends the following: student-teacher conference, task-based oral language assessments, dialogue journal; goal-setting activities, checklist, portfolio, accomplishment poster, and self and class evaluation. The goal of assessment in this curriculum

is to ensure students are able to evaluate their language acquisition process, but based on their own conceptualization of progress. Lastly, the researcher used Cattaneo's (2017) work in order to underscore that grading in the traditional model does not apply to the Participatory Approach. Instead it is "replaced by self and peer evaluation, which shifts the educational focus from an intrinsic experience to another intrinsic one and increases student's motivation to be self-directed in the long term" (p. 146). This long-term motivation will aid the ELLs upon their release.

### **Scope and Sequence**

#### **Five Standards for Effective Pedagogy**

The curriculum guideline will provide an outline for a process that can take place many times over a course. It is intended for a class that meets several times a week for at least 12 weeks, as this ensures adequate time to develop the participatory process intended through the curriculum. The teacher will first ensure that there is adequate time for listening sessions and implementation of catalyst activities that will form the content and outcomes of the course.

The curricula followed by DOCCS for ESL Academic Programs differ from other Academic Programs, as the ESL classes do not culminate in a NYS assessment. The classes are, however, intended to provide effective English language acquisition in order to succeed in High School Equivalency or Adult Basic Education classes. Therefore, in order to align this curriculum with proven effective standards for ELLs, especially those that are "at-risk," the Five Standards for Effective Pedagogy are used. These standards were developed by the Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence (CREDE, 2019). The standards are based on "findings by educational researchers working with students at risk of educational failure due to cultural, language, racial, geographic, or economic factors" (CREDE, para. 3). These standards provide an ideal for best practices in teaching in an ESL classroom and are appropriate for all

grade and proficiency levels. Unlike traditional teaching approaches, these standards are inherently embedded during instruction, as they reflect the core components of the Participatory Approach of a cooperative, meaningful, student-centered pedagogy. The Five Standards for Effective Pedagogy are as follows:

1. Teachers and Students Producing Together
2. Developing Language and Literacy Across the Curriculum
3. Making Lessons Meaningful
4. Teaching Complex Thinking
5. Teaching through Conversation (CREDE)

The first standard ensures that learning is a joint process and is not from the teacher down to the students. The second standards enables students to develop competence in English in all instructional activities. The third standard connects the experiences and skills of the ELLs to their culture and community. The fourth standard ensures that students are developing their cognitive skills and cognitive ability while acquiring English and the fifth standard promotes engagement through dialogue between students and the teacher throughout instruction. (CREDE).

### **Validity**

This curriculum was created specifically for incarcerated English language learners in an ESL class facilitated by the Department of Corrections and Community Services in New York. While the literature review presents a comprehensive understanding of the challenges that incarcerated individuals, minorities, and minority language speakers face and the underlying system of oppression inherent in American society, this curriculum guide could be applied to any environment in which the students need to acquire English while address relevant problems in

their lives in order to transform society. This guide is generalizable in that it includes best practices for English language acquisition, effective student-centered instruction using culturally relevant teaching, while addressing pressing needs of English language learners. In the following chapter, I will present a comprehensive outline for an ESL teacher to use as a guide as they prepare to implement a Participatory Approach in their class for incarcerated ELLs.

### **Results**

The following section contains the curriculum guidelines for an English as a Second Language (ESL) class for incarcerated adult English language learners (ELLs) in New York State. Learners will acquire English language proficiency through the Participatory Approach, a communicative approach to second language acquisition. This curriculum project is meant to guide instructors through the proper application of the Participatory Approach with incarcerated ELLs in custody at a New York State prison. The Participatory Approach to education is fluid by nature and this guide is meant to explain and exemplify the tenets of the approach. It is due to the inherent nature of this pedagogy that this guide does not provide a linear sequence of lessons plans or assessments, nor does it follow a traditional approach in which a teacher transmits predetermined knowledge to the students. This curriculum guide does, however, provide a framework through which a teacher can implement the Participatory Approach in order to aid in their students' acquisition of English and empowering learning/thinking approaches to change their world. Moreover, this pedagogy guides the teacher and students to co-create the curriculum through the processes described below.

## Participatory Approach

This approach to language learning was introduced by Paulo Freire in his notable book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970). The goal of this approach is not only to address literacy and English acquisition, but to address much deeper issues, resulting in real change through thinking critically about one's reality. As students and teachers realize their place in society, they can understand the "historical, political, and social context" from which their experiences arise through a problem-posing process. Wallerstein and Auerbach (2004) succinctly state, "problem-posing becomes a powerful motivating factor in language and knowledge acquisition" (p. 9). Thus the Participatory Approach, by situating one within the larger context of society, history, and politics, and by addressing shared concerns, enables students to explore issues of power and oppression (Wallerstein & Auerbach). While the Participatory Approach may differ greatly from your past teaching practices or from methods presented in your teacher preparation program, this approach is a powerful way to uncover issues your students encounter, make language learning relevant, and create a student-centered community in your classroom. Throughout this guide, the use of 'student-centered' relates to a curriculum that is created through a negotiation between student and teacher regarding content that is relevant to your students' lives. It does not simply mean that your students monitor their own learning.

The Participatory Approach is suitable for all English language learners (ELLs) and enables them to reflect on their lives and cultivate important change, and due to the fact that your students are currently incarcerated, these principles are especially poignant. The approach involves students in their learning, giving them power and a voice. It provides a constructive means to address problems and take action. It also helps students develop skills and communicative competence that will benefit them when they are released from prison. Through the Participatory Approach, you will not only help your students acquire English, but help support a democratic process by which you and your students can address real issues and affect change in and out of your classroom.

An important step to help you get acquainted with principles of the Participatory Approach is shown in the charts below. It is helpful to address the ways in which the Participatory Approach is unique from other ends-means or traditional instructional methods, called the "banking model" according to Freire (1970). As you read about this approach, reflect on the questions in the sidebar. These questions will appear throughout these sections to emphasize key concepts.

Participatory Approach	Traditional Approach (Freire's Banking Model)
Curriculum is co-created between students and teacher.	Curriculum is implemented by school board or other outside authority.
Content is based on students' lived experiences and is fluid, based on a problem-posing process.	Content is pre-determined and acts as a blueprint for a teacher's instruction.

## Teacher Reflection

- What teaching approaches did you learn during your teacher preparation program?
- How would you describe your teaching style now? What is your role? What is the role of your students?
- Have you experienced or implemented the Participatory Approach in past learning or teaching experiences?

Assessments are based on authentic language acts, focus on students' strengths, concerns, and problems, and are developed by students and teachers.	Assessments are used to target weaknesses in English proficiency and can be created by outside authorities, such as state tests.
Teacher's role is as a co-learner and learn from students' experiences.	Teacher transmit skills and information to the students.
Students are experts on their own lives and experiences, motivated by their personal investment in content.	Students are meant to learn content from the teacher, motivated by external factors.
Outcomes of class are not predictable, and are based on students' needs, themes, reflection, and actions.	Outcomes are pre-determined and are based on how much information the teacher covers, and students on post-assessments.
Language skills are taught through content which takes the form of action for change.	Language is taught in isolation and for the purpose of assessment.

Next, the process through which the Participatory Approach is implemented is introduced. Below you will find an overview of how you will develop your Participatory Approach pedagogy, which will be elaborated upon in subsequent sections of this guide:

- First, you as the teacher will work to create an **environment** in which your students feel comfortable to share, practice English, and express concerns.
- You will be constantly **listening** for critical issues presented by your students, and discussing concerns they have.
- You can listen for **themes** organically throughout class, but you will also implement catalyst activities to provide structured activities where students can share concerns.
- This process provides a guide of how you will develop your curriculum, it is important to remember that this process is fluid and may change as the needs of your students change.
- As you identify key themes shared by students, you will work with students to identify **tools** through which they will develop English and address the themes.
- These tools will provide opportunities for you and your students to take **action** and **reflect** on their learning. Freire refers to this as **praxis** (1970). You will also be able to listen for tangential themes that emerge during the action or reflection process.
- Together with you students, **assessment** of learning and change will be identified.

Wallerstein and Auerbach's (2004) Spiral Model provides a visual for the curriculum development process. Your role as a teacher is to facilitate a cyclical process containing the following steps:

- Begin exploring the students' experiences
- Look for patterns, themes, commonalities
- Add new information and facilitate dialogue
- Engage in reflection, and plan for action
- Apply planned actions

You also need to provide the structure your students require in order to develop the experiences through which themes are developed. While it is accurate to notice that pre-determined lesson plans and assessments are not appropriate, it should also be noted that you can be prepared by constantly listening for themes, providing an atmosphere and structure that allows students to communicate openly and address issues, providing choices to address issues (tools), presenting themes to students in order to facilitate a dialoged, and being open to leaning for your students and to offer your own ideas.

As discussed previously, the Participatory Approach does require a reexamination of how learning takes place and an alteration of the teacher's role in the classroom. This deviation from the traditional teaching model may be met with apprehension by some teachers, so it is important now to clarify why you implement the Participatory Approach in your ESL class for incarcerated students. To address this, it is helpful to reflect on Auerbach's words (1992):

**“people learn best when learning starts with what they already know, builds on their strengths, engages them in the learning process, and enables them to accomplish something they want to accomplish” (p. 9).**

The rationale for using the Participatory Approach is three-fold; it aligns with adult ELLs' needs, addresses second language acquisition theory, and literacy theory (Auerbach, 1992). First, this model is appropriate for adult ELLs in that their need for experience validation is met and the content is student-centered, meaningful, and based on their actual needs. Also, adults ELLs should be able to direct their own learning, all of which are embedded in the Participatory Approach. Second, the approach enables ELLs to acquire English through interactions with native and non-native speakers, using authentic communication and receiving relevant feedback. Thirdly, the Participatory Approach aligns with literacy theory in that it provides opportunities for students to address the role of language and literacy in their communities, their relationship with literacy instruction in past experiences, and by involving the students in developing literacy for their own purposes (Auerbach, 1992).

To support your students toward acquisition of English in a meaningful way, the process of the Participatory Approach embeds these aforementioned best practices. However, each group of students will have their own knowledge and experiences and therefore the curriculum will need to be tailored to them, not created prior to the instruction. Because of the necessity of the Participatory Approach to remain fluid, specific guidelines presented below are necessary to assist in framing and implementing the approach.

- **Action:** *Read and reflect on Paulo Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed. Focus on why and how Freire developed his liberation theory of education and how it applies to ESL instruction of incarcerated English language learners.*

### Addressing Beliefs

To start, note Palmer's (1998) assertion, "we teach who we are" (p. 4). It is crucial for you to examine your internalized beliefs as you prepare to teach using the Participatory Approach with incarcerated ELLs. As noted, the Participatory Approach diverges greatly from the traditional end-means approach to teaching. This section is meant to address your deep-rooted beliefs about effective teaching and language instruction. You, as all teachers do, have preconceived ideas about how you believe students learn language, your role in the classroom, students' role in the classroom. You will be asked in this section to identify your own background, beliefs about teaching, and the role education can play in addressing oppression and racism in society. This practice not only helps to understand how deeply our experiences shape us, our views, and outlooks, but also will help you understand the role it plays in your classroom interactions. The questionnaires referenced in the following action steps are found in the end of this section.

➤ **Action:**

*Before moving on in this guide and prior to planning instruction, answer the questions on the following Teacher Beliefs and Experiences Questionnaire. (Refer to the end of the section.)*

Now that you have examined your educational experiences, the next set of questions will begin the process examining racism and oppression that are inherently tied to the criminal justice system in the United States. You will be working with ELLs within prison walls, which may be a new environment for you, but it is one that your students experience daily and have for years, perhaps. These questions are meant to help you contemplate issues of racism, internalized oppression, examine your own understandings of the criminal justice system, and perhaps any biases you may have. It is important to recognize internalized oppression and systemic racism, as prison is an environment where oppression is paramount by design. Use these guiding questions to aid in your preparation.

➤ **Action:**

*Before moving on in this guide and prior to planning instruction, answer the questions on the following Background Questionnaire. (Refer to the end of the section.)*

Next, you need to address your students' expectations and beliefs about language instruction and effective teaching. The Participatory Approach may be dissimilar from experiences they have had in the classroom in the past. Thus, it is best to first identify their views of effective language instruction. Identification of their beliefs will begin one of many dialogues between you and your students, and provide an opportunity to address expectations. After a discussion of their answers, you and your students can work to create an environment that is jointly established upon to help the students acquire English and change their world.

## Teacher Reflection

- Were you asked to consider your internalized culture and beliefs during your teacher preparation program?
- Have you worked with a multicultural class with diverse backgrounds?
- What are your thoughts or concerns about working with students in a prison setting?
- What opportunities are opened by teaching ESL in a prison environment?

- **Action:** *Administer the Student Beliefs Questionnaire. Discuss your answers, your students' answers, and any similarities or differences between them. (Refer to the end of the section.)*
- *Refer to the suggested readings on the criminal justice system in the United States. Be sure to identify key ideas in Michelle Alexander's *The New Jim Crow* that relate to education of racial and language minority students and how minorities are overrepresented in the prison system.*

**Teacher Beliefs and Experiences Questionnaire**

---

Explain your experiences in elementary, middle, and high school:

Why did you become a teacher?

Describe your teacher preparation program:

How do you believe students learn language?

How do you think language should be taught?

What do you need to know to be an effective English language teacher? Where can you acquire this information?

How can our language biases or views on language affect instruction?

Do you speak a language other than English? Did you learn in a classroom?

### Backgrounder Questionnaire

---

Were issues of race discussed in your educational experiences?

When did you first encounter law enforcement or the criminal justice system? What was the circumstance?

Have you ever felt excluded based on your gender, race, or culture?

Have you ever experienced racism? Describe:

Next, simply contemplate the following questions from the *Looking Within: Tackling Injustice in Pre-Service Education Conference* as you prepare to engage in listening sessions with your students:

- How can we maintain our integrity and humanity as educators within a sociopolitical, historical, and cultural context of institutionalized oppression and hegemony that work to preserve unequal power structures in our society?
- What are the possibilities for working toward equity and justice within an education system that reinforces and reproduces social inequalities?
- In what ways are we complicit with systems of oppression? How do we contribute to or collude with oppressive practices in classrooms, schools, and the system at large?
- In what ways are we engaged, individually and collectively, in the struggle against oppressive systems?
- What historical and current examples of resistance, anti-oppression, and liberation exist within marginalized communities and how can these tools be utilized within our role as teachers? (New York Collective of Radical Educators Conference as cited by Tansey, 2015, para. 11).

**Student Beliefs Questionnaire**

---

Explain your experiences in elementary, middle, and high school:

How do you believe you learn a language best?

How do you think language should be taught?

How does your relationship with your teacher affect your language acquisition?

What is your role in the classroom?

What is your teacher's role in the classroom?

### Roles and Expectations

As the teacher of ESL students that are incarcerated, you will need to ensure that roles are clearly defined. Not only may the Participatory Approach be new to your students, but undefined roles of teacher and student paired with an alteration of the usual teacher-as-authority or knowledge-holder may confuse your students or make them uncomfortable. Traditional instruction is based a teacher bestowing knowledge, whereas the Participatory Approach is based on a teacher as learner, listening and organizing situations where students can discover and create new knowledge and validate their lived experiences. It places the students and teachers on equal footing. This point cannot be overemphasized, for the success of this pedagogy hinges on its acceptance non-traditional approach by students and teacher. The teacher must also truly be comfortable with this non-traditional position, one of co-learner instead of one that bestows of knowledge and students as experts on their lives.

#### Teacher's Role

To begin addressing the specifics of how to these roles are internalized, we start with the teacher's role. According to Freire, you as the teacher "must be humble, so that you can grow with the group, instead of losing your humility and claiming to direct the group, once it is animated" (1971). Beyond moving beyond a traditional teacher's role, you should address expectations for the class and also the role of students. This is the beginning of the process of creating an environment in which you and your students can converse openly. It is imperative that you explain to your students, first, that the classroom may function differently that ones they have encountered in the past. Also, you may need to emphasize that, "you respect them enough to explain what you are doing and empower them as partners the classroom and their own learning" (Auerbach, 1992, p. 65).

The following guidelines will help you to understand your role in the Participatory Approach:

- **Problem-poser:** You will facilitate the process of developing and facilitating conversations or activities that uncover important issues or problems in your students' lives.
- **Co-learner:** Since the main content will be generated by your students, they act as content experts. You will learn about their lives, experiences, and needs in order to best facilitate tools for English learning.
- **Create Participatory Environment:** Your students will be able to share in an environment where they feel comfortable, safe, and validated. It is your role to develop this environment.
- **Presenting Tools:** After you have listened for common themes among your students' lived experiences, your role will be to present this information back to them in order to facilitate exploration. You will present learning activities, or tools, the students can use to further reflect and take action on those themes.

## Teacher Reflection

- Do you feel comfortable taking on the role of a co-learner instead of that of the traditional teacher?
- How have you established roles and expectations in past classrooms? Was it effective? What would you do differently?
- How can you show respect for your students in an oppressive and punitive environment? Why is this critical?

- **Member of the Group:** Just as your students' share their opinion and ideas, you will also offer your own lived experiences and opinions as a fellow-learner. (Auerbach, 1992).

### Students' Role

The students, as mentioned, may be weary of the Participatory Approach, if it is new to them. Therefore, their unique roles in this process may take time to develop. However, there are several guidelines that can be discussed as part of the process of establishing roles and expectations.

- Willingness to share their experiences with the class
- Openness to trust their teacher and classmates
- Work collaboratively with their classmates

Additionally, Wallerstein and Auerbach (2004) recommend that group norms are agreed upon during class dialogues and working sessions. The following standards may be a starting point for you to consider as you develop expectations in your classroom: listening without interrupting, not taking comments personally, understanding that conflict may occur, work to resolve conflicts, and being respectful (p. 32).

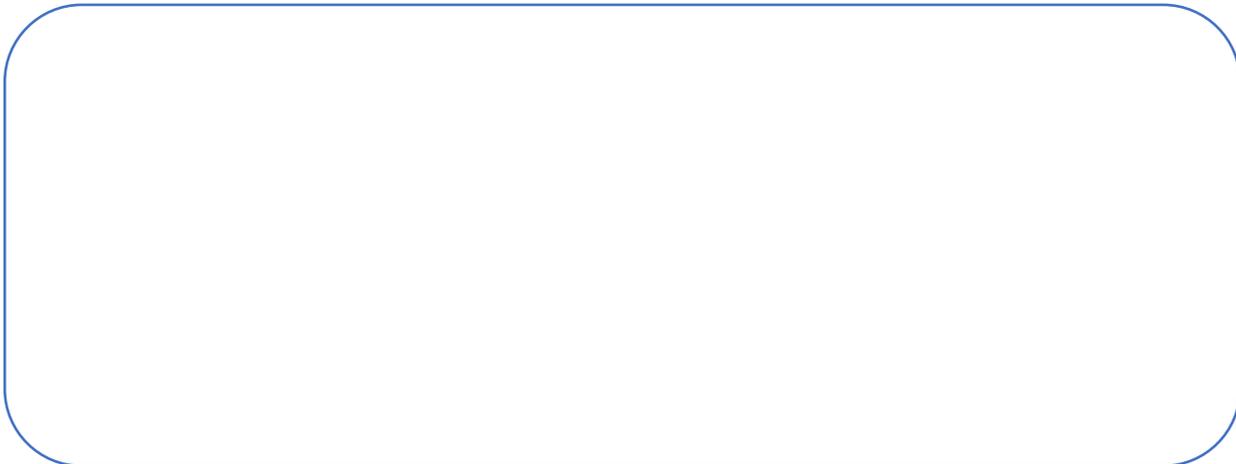
- **Action:** *Complete the following worksheet with your students. By discussing roles and expectations of both students and teachers, you will begin creating a classroom centered on respect and agreed-upon norms, while also laying the foundation of an appropriate environment for a successful Participatory Approach. Although the worksheet can be answered individually, it is recommended that you also complete the following steps:*
  - *Complete worksheet as a class, group students according to home language and proficiency level.*
  - *Create a poster or other product to document the outcomes of your discussion.*
  - *Modify or edit the poster as you progress through the class if changes to roles or outcomes present themselves.*
  - *The poster will help foster the cooperative environment and acclimate any new students to this class.*

**Roles and Expectations Dialogue Starter**

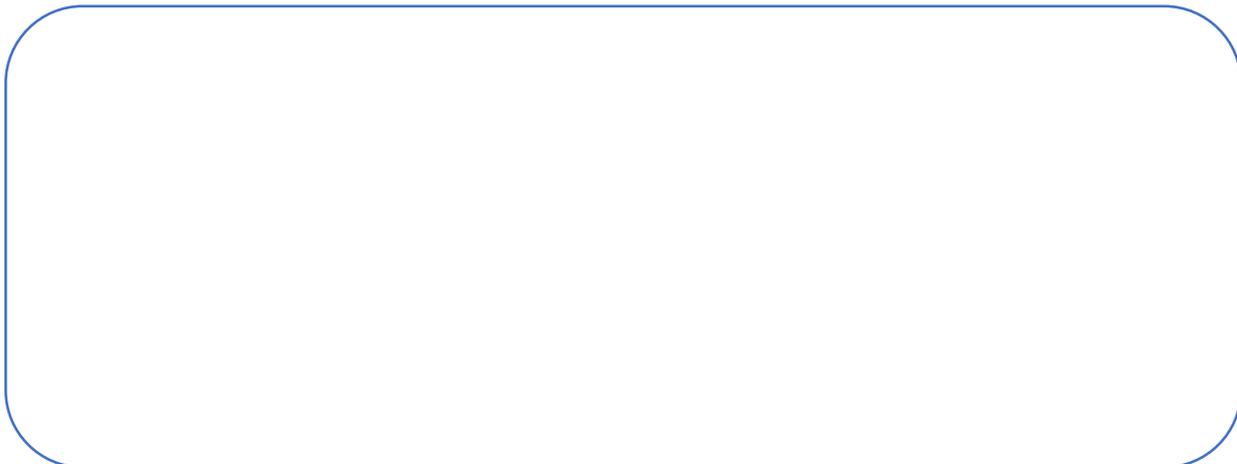
**In the space below, write your ideas of what role you think students should have in your class:**



**In the space below, write your ideas of what role you think the teacher should have in your class:**



**What kind of classroom environment do you want for this ESL class? Describe what kind of learning environment you are comfortable in.**



## PARTICIPATORY APPROACH CURRICULUM GUIDE

### Needs Assessments

Since the Participatory Approach is being used to create a student-centered ESL classroom, it is critical to evaluate the English proficiency of your ELL's as well as their personal challenges they are experiencing, this is called needs assessment. Using the Participatory Approach requires for ongoing needs assessments to be conducted with your students. First, you need to assess the actual language needs of individual students. While this will take place from the first class or perhaps based on previously administered assessments of English language proficiency, it is crucial during the listening phase and problem-posing sessions. This dynamic and adaptive process allows you to not only listen for themes for class content, individual language needs, but also help to identify factors that may affect their second language acquisition.

- **Action:** *Brainstorm a list of individual learner differences or factors that you feel may affect your students' acquisition of English. Which factors are the most likely to affect your incarcerated students? Which are the least likely? Describe any themes in your factors.*

The following are examples of ongoing needs assessments you may implement:

- Ask students to state why they need or want to learn English.
- Ask students when they use English and for what purposes.
- Ask students what they already know in English.
- Identify areas of focus that the students recognize in their English proficiency.
- Listen for linguistic areas of focus for individual students.
- Evaluate and determine usefulness of previously administered standardized assessments of your students.
- Ensure your needs assessments are on-going and change or respond as you go through the participatory cycle.

Keeping in line with the shared development of the curriculum you can include your own observations, along with you students' responses to determine their needs. Assessments in the Participatory Approach does not simply involve pre- and post-tests to gauge information acquired by a student, differing it from that of the traditional instructional approach. Use of traditional pre and post-test not only can be time-consuming, but they also do not align with the a student-centered approach in which students participate in and are actively involved in determining how they will be evaluated, but also how they can use the results of such evaluations. With a differing view of assessing progress and needs, students can become empowered and be accountable for their own learning.

Assessment or Evaluation in the Participatory Approach reflects the importance of continuous growth and opportunities to assess process over product. Due to the lack of a pre-determined curriculum and evaluation guide, you will need to embrace flexibility when determining evaluation or assessment methods and instruments. The goal of the Participatory Approach is to empower students while they acquire English,

## Teacher Reflection

- What assessments have you administered in past teaching experiences? Why were these administered? What did you learn about your students?
- Why do you think students should be involved in their own assessments or evaluation of their learning?
- How can you assess progress of second language acquisition without formalized testing?
- How will you use the information you gather from needs assessments?

evaluation will be variable, progressive, and based on content and action taken by the students. Further, you will need to consider the opportunities and resources available within a prison context. There are, however, several guiding principles you can follow:

- All evaluation should be related to the content generated by students.
- When providing feedback, ensure you include qualitative descriptions to address English acquisition.
- The evaluation should not be an assessment of a final product, but an ongoing process focused on how student is learning.
- Be sure your students are involved in the process. They can choose their own evaluation methods and reflect on their learning.
- Encourage students to have high expectations of their abilities, demonstrated through authentic and jointly decided upon evaluation.
- Be open to changing evaluations, evaluating unexpected outcomes, and highlighting areas of success that were not predicted.

While your assessment of student needs and learning progress will take place through the Participatory Approach cycle (identifying themes, reflection, and action), students will also be involved in monitoring and evaluating their learning. The following list provides examples of how students can self-monitor by setting their own goals, tracking their progress with a chart, keeping a journal, and creating a language portfolio.

## Creating the Environment for the Participatory Approach

As the teacher, it is your role to create an environment wherein students feel they can express and discuss problems or issues in their lives. By creating such an environment, you will be able to identify themes and begin the process of problem-posing, or naming, reflecting, and taking action. Berlin (2005) notes that your classroom cannot replace what your ESL students will experience when they leave the classroom or the prison. Instead, you can work to create a “safe and supportive environment that will simulate the real world” (p. 97).

First, however, you need to build trust between you and your students and create a participatory atmosphere through what Auerbach (1992) calls catalyst activities. These activities start the process of making your students feel comfortable sharing their experiences while validating their unique perspectives and allowing them to recognize their own knowledge. Students need to feel comfortable sharing in a non-threatening way, so you can begin to uncover themes. The first factor is to begin building a positive student-teacher relationship. Next, you can implement catalyst activities to create the atmosphere necessary for the Participatory Approach.

### Student-Teacher Relationship in Prison

As noted by Coggshall, Osher and Colombi (2013), developing a positive relationship can affect at-risk students’ futures, especially their future interactions with the pipeline to prison. The authors find that the following factors have significant impact:

- Develop **positive relationships** with your students, which can improve academic and social outcomes and help to students feel connected to their education.
- Make certain you have **high expectations** and develop **trusting** relationships with your students.
- Ensure your students feel **safe**, promote their **social and emotional learning**, provide **challenging** educational content, and ensure your students feel **supported** and encouraged.
- Refrain from retributive or reactive approaches to behavioral issues. Instead focus on **positive and constructive** approaches. (Coggshall, Osher & Colombi, 2013, p. 436).

### Catalyst Activities

Below you will find an example of a catalyst activity that will begin the process of students sharing their experiences while developing English proficiency. Through your initiation of this activity, your students will have a semi-structured means to express their ideas, experiences, and problems in their lives. While this activity is appropriate for all ESL classes, it is especially relevant for classes with incarcerated students as it promotes exploration of their life journey, beyond solely focusing on their current status as an inmate.

## Teacher Check-in

- How will you ensure you are not influencing your students’ responses with your own views or subliminal messaging?
- Do you feel comfortable with letting go of control of student responses?
- How can you assess that your classroom environment is conducive for the Participatory Approach?
- What other catalyst activities can you implement to create the participatory atmosphere?

- **Action:** *Facilitate this catalyst activity with your students. After students complete their timeline, you can have them interview each other on the events they included or have them present their timeline to groups.*
- **Action:** *Refer to Auerbach's *Making Meaning, Making Change* (1992) and Wallerstein & Auerbach's *Problem Posing at Work: Popular Educator's Guide* (2004) for more examples of catalyst activities.*

### My Journey

---

Create a timeline of important events in your life. You can write out your timeline in English and your home language and/or draw pictures of important events. Then discuss the questions with your teacher and classmates.

The diagram shows a timeline template with 12 empty rounded rectangular boxes arranged in three columns and four rows. The boxes are connected by thick grey lines: a horizontal line connects the top boxes of the second and third columns; vertical lines connect the boxes in each column; and a horizontal line connects the bottom boxes of the first and second columns.

- Write a short explanation of your timeline and why you choose to include the events you did. Explain why you wrote or drew your important events.

### Developing Themes

The Participatory Approach, as noted, is a student-centered method in which your students co-determine the content based on issues that emerge during the discussions and catalyst activities you facilitate. Your role is to derive themes from these discussions and activities. The content is derived from the lived experiences of the students and thus provides a means of reflection on what counts a valued knowledge. The students' experiences are validated through discussion and through exploration of identified themes through the tools discussed next. Based on the needs assessment, the teacher is to listen for commonalities that emerge from what students offer. These *themes* provide a 'way in' and a means of naming through "observation and recognition of a problem through discussions with students, thus identifying what needs to be addressed" (Berlin, 2005, p. 8).

It is important to note again that your students need to feel they can trust you and their classmates. This may take time. When developing themes, it is best to provide opportunities and activities that draw out students' participation, but still allows them to choose what to share without invading their privacy or asking them to share personal stories too soon. Consider the following as your implement activities to cultivate conversations so you can uncover themes:

- **Avoid asking direct and personal questions.** Instead, provide a fictional scenario and ask why your students think or feel about another person or situation.
- **Embed English language** exercises into catalyst activities. For example, include wh-questioning when discussing the Life Journey's activity.
- Always listen before, during, and after class to ensure you are hearing your students' true thoughts.
- Always include your **students' opinions and ideas**, instead of providing your own and asking students to reply.
- **Provide choices** for students to take control. Students can create their own questions or activities and decide how to implement them.
- Encourage students to share information about their **home language**, culture, family, traditions, etc. Your students may feel comforted by discussion these topic since they are separated from them while in prison.
- Since your students are ELLs, encourage them to include **pictures, drawings, collages, graphics** or other visualizations so they can respond even if they do not have the conversational language proficiency. (Auerbach, 1992, p. 45).
- Consider Berlin's (2005) recommendation to encourage **laughter, humor, and love** in all activities (p. 79).

Student offerings and responses are crucial in this step. While you as the teacher can provide guidance and support, the final decisions about which themes to explore is a joint process between you and the students. If you decide a theme solely on your own, you undermine the Participatory Approach and invalidate the students' power. It makes the students irrelevant in the process.

## Teacher Reflection

- How will you ensure you are not influencing your students' responses with your own views or subliminal messaging?
- What other ways can you think of to develop themes?
- How do you know you are developing the right themes?
- What are some themes that have started to emerge after the Life Journeys catalyst activity?

### Using Tools to Develop Themes and Acquire English

Following the problem-posing process to identify themes, you will further the participatory cycle by using what Auerbach calls “participatory tools” (p. 62). These tools are not a set list of mandated activities, but rather “techniques, procedures, and activities” to help cultivate the themes and engage the reflection and action cycles. Primarily, however, these tools serve the purpose of developing English proficiency and analyzing the identified issue. While the tools identified in the figure below are well-aligned with a participatory approach, they are by no means an exhaustive list of the tools you and your students can utilize to develop and explore your identified themes. As in all steps of the cycle, your students should be involved in deciding which tool will best fit with their theme to help uncover ideas, engage in dialogue, generate critical thinking, and more. The tools chosen will need to also help students develop their English language proficiency, so your role is to also ensure it aligns with their needs. The following list provides suggestions for participatory tools:

- Photo stories, songs, plays, videos
- Journal writing
- Oral histories
- Photography
- Published text
- Teacher-produced materials
- Student-produced materials
- Collaborative student-teacher created materials
- Student Writing (Auerbach, 1992, p. 62)

You may find it necessary to implement teacher-created or chosen tools in the beginning and then use more student chosen or even student created tools as students become more comfortable with the Participatory Approach and trust the process. You should, though, discuss with you students which tools would be the most appropriate means of exploring themes. As you work with your students using participatory tools, also consider the following:

- The tools need to provide opportunities to use and practice English.
- A tool is not meant to focus simply on grammar or linguistic components, but rather to have students practice using English and develop communicative competence through interactions.
- Ensure your students know that these tools, and the entire participatory process, will provide second language acquisition. They may feel that conversations or other tools listed do not fit within their view of how languages are learned.
- Tools should be meaningful, work towards addressing the named problem and provide the catalyst for reflection and action (Auerbach, 1992).
- **Action:** *As students engage with the participatory tools, keep track or take note of other themes as they emerge. Participatory tools can also be effective means of uncovering other underlying issues in students’ lives that can be developed later.*

## Teacher Reflection

- Have you allowed your students to choose their learning activities in past teacher experiences?
- What techniques, activities, or procedures have you found to be successful? Why?
- How can you ensure English language development is embedded in the participatory tools?

### Reflection and Action (Praxis)

Engaging with the participatory tools will ultimately lead to an outcome in some form. However, this is not the end-goal of the participatory cycle. Therefore, these next phases are a continuation of the cycle following problem-posing and theme generating. While the next two stages of the cycle may seem to differ, it is imperative that you view them as a paired process; this is central to Freire's Participatory Approach. Praxis, or the process of reflecting and taking action, involve communicative methods: listening and engaging in conversations. These are also central to an interactive approach to second language acquisition. Reflection and action will be based on themes, tools, and outcomes explored, which were shared experiences among the students. While specific actions may be shared, the personal reflections and internal changes that take place within students may be unique.

#### Action

Ultimately, the goal of the Participatory Approach is to provide opportunities for your students to make changes in their world and promote justice. This comes in the form of actions, which can then be the catalyst for reflecting and generating new themes and experiences from which the cycle can continue. Actions can take many forms, but students should generate the action and the reasoning behind it. However, your role is help facilitate the actions and provide a channel for engaging with the community in and out of the prison, especially in such a setting where students have limited access to resources and the outside. You should be open to non-traditional, internal, individual, collective, philosophical, or tangible action. Further, your students' choice of action may be planned or happen inadvertently. Lastly, consider Auerbach's statement that your role, "is not to impose our own views of what students should or shouldn't do, but rather to make the classroom a safe place to consider the possibilities and consequences" of taking action (p. 103). The following are some how you and your students can take action:

- Internal growth such as self-acceptance, validation, or confidence
- Confidence in and development of English language proficiency
- Engagement with community in or out of prison
- Changing in-class content, activities, roles, expectations
- Address prison policies or issues
- Develop confidence or pride in language skills, experiences, culture, or home language
- Participate in outside community by writing letters, hosting events, creating posters, writing petitions, newsletters, or articles, etc. (Auerbach, 1992; Wallerstein & Auerbach, 2004).

This list is by no means exhaustive, but is limited by the fact that your students' lived experiences, perspectives, and needs are unique. The actions they take will stem from these, therefore implementing actions taken by other classes in differing settings is not appropriate without engaging in the listening and problem-posing phases first.

## Teacher Reflection

- What are some outcomes you expected from students in your past teaching experiences?
- Have you taken action outside of your classroom before? Describe that experience.
- Are you comfortable allowing your students to decide what action to take in or outside of the prison? What are some concerns you have?

**Reflection**

Following any action, engage your students in a process of reflection on their experience. This process of praxis of taking action and reflection on that experiences provides a space for students to “celebrate achievements, analyze mistakes or disappointments, and persevere in formulating new approaches to the problem” (Wallerstein & Auerbach, 2004). As you and your students discuss any action taken, you continue the participatory process by creating new learner experiences that can then be used to pose problems and develop new themes. The figure below represents the cyclical process of the Participatory Approach. Reflection is a necessary component that is based on action, input (or experiences based on action), and then provides a new cycle of action and reflection to take place (SOUL, n.d.).

Implementation of the Participatory Approach in an ESL classroom with incarcerated ELLs promotes language acquisition, but also activism (Campbell & Barnaby, 2001). The ultimate goal is to affect change within your students and their community and provide opportunities to grow, celebrate success, identify and validate lived experiences, and analyze and address current problems. However, it also serves to make “the prison experience livable” while “providing prisoners with a collective voice to affect their lives” as such objectives key to a critical pedagogy (Campbell & Burnaby, 2001, p. 246).

**Suggested Reading List for Educator of  
Incarcerated Students Using the Participatory Approach**

- *Contextualizing College ESL Classroom Praxis: A Participatory Approach to Effective Instruction* by Lawrence E. Berlin (2005)
- *Other People's Children: Cultural Conflict in the Classroom* by Lisa Delpit (2006)
- *The Dream-Keepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children* by Gloria Ladson-Billings (2009)
- *Disposable Youth, Racialized Memories, and the Culture of Cruelty* by Henry Giroux (2012)
- *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* by Paulo Freire (1970)
- *The Impact of Race on Teaching Strategy and Classroom Discussion* by Tonda Liggett (2008)
- *The Freirean Approach To Adult Literacy Education* by David Spener (1992)
- *Courageous Conversations About Race* by Glenn E. Singleton and Curtis Lingon (2006)
- *Social Justice in English Language Teaching* by Christopher Hastings and Laura Jacobs (2016)

## **Discussion**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this curriculum project is to provide English as a second language (ESL) teachers with necessary information, ideas to consider, and a guide to use when teaching English language learners (ELLs). Specifically, this curriculum is designed for instruction of ELLs that are currently incarcerated in a New York State prison. Incarcerated ELLs have unique educational needs, but it also necessary to address their social-emotional needs. Therefore, this curriculum guide was designed in order to help these teachers implement Paulo Freire's Participatory Approach in their classes. Through the Participatory Approach, teachers can facilitate a process of problem-posing, action, and reflection that works to empower students, validate their lived experiences, culture, and language, and also facilitate acquisition of English. The guide not only includes an overview of the principles and tenets of the Participatory Approach, but also provides teachers with an opportunity to reflect on past teaching practices, internalized biases, and relevant research; after reviewing the guide, teachers will have the necessary information to further their understanding of the Participatory Approach, but also to begin implementation of the approach in their ESL classrooms in a New York State prison. In this final chapter of this thesis, I will assess the significance of the curriculum guide proposed for an ESL teacher of ELLs currently incarcerated in a New York State prison.

### **Significance**

Principally, this curriculum aims to bring the Participatory Approach of teaching English to speakers of other languages that are currently incarcerated. It is my hope that this curriculum guide will help ESL teachers have the background needed in order to implement the Participatory Approach and to aid their students in making meaningful change while developing

their English proficiency. Auerbach (1992) noted that this change may take many forms; students may gain confidence, find validation, the classroom procedures may change, students may create posters or write letters, or they may impact the lives of those on the outside. Change may be incremental, internal, or highly visible. The practical consequences of this curriculum project are of particular importance to New York State educators of incarcerated ELLs and also educators of historically oppressed racial or language minority and adult ELLs. The resulting curriculum project is significant for educators of adult ELLs, as it reinforces the necessity of this particular population of ELLs to have relevant and meaningful ESL curriculum. However, the underlying significance of this project is its promotion of social justice through implementation of a critical pedagogy that empowers and motivates students to take direct action, recognize oppression, and recognize their own value and ability to recognize their humanity. Freire (1970) stated that the “problem-posing approach to education affirms men as beings the process of *becoming*- as unfinished, uncompleted beings in and with a likewise unfinished reality” (p. 84). The inmates in this ESL class will recognize their room for growth and the ability they have to change and be the catalyst for making change in their community. Through the Participatory Approach, the teacher rejects the idea of “banking” concept of education and affirms their humanity; nothing could be more essential for inmates (Freire, p. 72).

At the time this curriculum project was written, the sheer number of incarcerated individual in the United States, 6,613,500 according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (2018) is staggering (Kaeble, Cowhig & BJS Statisticians, 2018, p. 1). While New York State has one of the lowest incarceration rates with 92,000 individuals currently locked up (Prison Policy Initiative, 2018, para. 1) there is an important need to ensure these individuals are best prepared for life after incarceration; at least 95% of all people in state prisoners will be released after

serving their time (Hughes, Wilson, & BJS Statisticians, 2004, p. 1). One crucial factor in recidivism rates is the ability to obtain an education while incarcerated. This curriculum not only provides a guide for learning English, which is invaluable for gaining employment in the United States, but also fosters a sense of empowerment and confidence in ELLs, traits that may help to keep them out of prison and to lead fulfilling lives. Further, a key to the Participatory approach is taking action and making meaningful changes in the community; by helping ELLs practice these skills in their ESL classes while in prison, they can then translate these skills to their communities on the outside and affect positive change in ways that are important to them.

Effective instruction needs to relate not just to culturally and linguistically relevant content, but also to best-practices for adult ELLs and the needs of incarcerated students. Moreover, Berlin (2005) stated that, “given the opportunity to develop in the supportive environment of effective language instruction, students’ self-transformation can then be applied to political change toward democratization and social justice in the world outside the classroom. p. 8). Berlin recognizes the impact that instruction, environment, and student self-actualization can have on society. This curriculum is significant precisely because it does not simply focus on pre-determined content or outcomes, but provides the framework for a teacher to develop an interest for learning that students can carry with them post-release. Through the practice and identification of current issues or problems these ELLs face and of “praxis” (reflection and action), they practice a recognition of issues, ways to engage in meaningful dialogue, and critical thinking on methods to affect change (Freire, 1970, p. 79). Further, through the creation of a participatory environment by the teacher, the ELLs are shown that there are supportive, accepting, and productive educational environments, even in a prison. This can better prepare incarcerated ELLs identify and gravitate towards such supportive environments on the outside.

## **Limitations**

While this curriculum guide will prove useful in numerous ways, there are limitations in regards to its implementation. Due to the inherent nature of a prison educational program, the carrying out of a Participatory Approach for English language instruction may not be able to be determined by the teacher. While there was not a set curriculum for ESL classes in New York State Prisons, other classes are geared towards acquisition of a high school equivalency diploma through successful completion of the Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC) assessment. This is a national standardized test, which runs counter to the way that a participatory curriculum is designed. Also, even though the teacher may be well-versed in possible participatory tools, teaching strategies, linguistic components, and second language acquisition theory, they may not completely align with the issues that arise from the catalyst activities. Therefore, the teacher may need to conduct further research in order to best provide resources and also to ensure that they have enough background on the issues to pose problems to their students. Additionally, there will inevitably be a limitation on the participatory tools available to the students. There are restrictions to the materials that a teacher can bring into a classroom in a prison, so this will need to be considered when deciding the tools to use in order to develop and explore themes.

A significant limitation of this study is the probability that the ELLs in a particular classroom will have vastly different life experiences, cultures, backgrounds, viewpoints, or home languages, and most importantly English proficiency. The foundation of the Participatory Approach is communication, and in an ESL class this communication should take place in English. However, if students have varying proficiency levels, the teacher will need to provide language support, differentiation, and scaffolds when needed, include home languages in activities, and ensure proper groupings so that students can engage in dialogue. While

photographs, drawings, and graphics are recommended to help provide access to classroom discussions and activities, the teacher will need to creatively engage all students and ensure interactions in English. As mentioned, the students' experiences may differ greatly. Therefore, it may take substantial time for the students to recognize commonalities in issues they are facing and to uncover shared themes, especially when considering that the process cannot be forced. The content must come from actual student concerns or problems in order to provide meaningful and relevant instruction. The teacher and students will need to understand that the Participatory Approach does not work on deadlines or through a set of mandated lessons, but rather is a cyclical process guided by student-generated content.

Lastly, the Participatory Approach is, as noted, a process that unfolds organically with teacher facilitation of dialogues and activities based on students' lived experiences in an accepting, welcoming classroom. The teacher implementing this approach will also have a role that differs from traditional educational models. This paired with the need to first develop an environment conducive to sharing and participation, one in which students will be willing to share, may take time and push comfort levels in the classroom. Fostering a participatory environment task may take time and may be more difficult than in classrooms on the outside, as a prison's environment is not meant to be welcoming. Not only may this not fit into a timeframe of an ESL class for a New York State prison, it may also be extremely difficult to convince inmates in that time that their experiences have value and are meaningful enough to be the core content of discussions. This is especially true since their backgrounds inevitably include criminal activities.

### **Future Investigations**

This curriculum project would benefit from a data collection process and examples that could be collected from actual implementation and documentation of a Participatory Approach in a prison ESL class. Auerbach (1992), for example, provided thorough and detailed examples of the Participatory Approach for adult ELLs. Wallerstein and Auerbach (2004) presented a comprehensive guide for educators working with adult ELLs, and Harnett, Novek, and Wood (2013) offered a handbook for “merging prison education and activism” (p. 1). Additional investigations could document the Participatory Approach for inmates from start to finish. However, due to the fact that content cannot be predetermined, this research will again act as a guide instead of set lessons. However, specific implementation of this approach in a prison will allow future ESL educators to learn the benefits and drawbacks of the Participatory Approach in prison, and learn from the investigator’s experiences. The research would be more applicable and specific, thus providing a clearer sense of the ways in which a teacher can best prepare to implement the Participatory Approach.

Additionally, while the Participatory Approach was originally conceived as a literacy pedagogy, this curriculum project is geared towards English language acquisition. To that end, an additional component of best practices for ESL instruction for the catalyst activities and participatory tools would be beneficial. These activities could be aligned with translanguaging practices that would ensure the inclusion of ELLs’ home languages during discussions, activities, and via participatory tools. Also, the dialogue sessions, catalyst activities, and participatory tools could be coordinated with the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) for effective English as a second language instruction. This model ensures that students are able to access instruction and have the opportunity to develop meaningful academic language. Research could

investigate the effectiveness and ways in which the SIOP model could be applied in a participatory classroom.

### **Conclusions**

There is no doubt about the importance of education and the transformative role it can play in the lives of students. However, the context in which students learn will either help to reinforce or dispel the dominance of mainstream institutional practices and the continuations of internalized oppression of minorities by the ruling class (Valdés, 1996). Perpetuating the deeply ingrained acceptance of dominant ideologies and denigration of home cultures, language, and lived experiences works “as a social process of domination implicated in maintain white supremacy within capitalism” (p. 148). However, addressing this oppression in educational practices can “create ripples” through collective action and a commitment to social justice and challenging dominant ideologies (Monzó, 2016, p. 152). Educators can be at the vanguard of this action by giving voice to those whose stories are typically unheard, helping students find value in their community resources, their languages, cultures, and experiences, by engaging in dialogue that addresses a deficit view of non-White English-speaking individuals, and through implementing a pedagogy that focuses on an empowering and transformative process. (Camarota & Aguilera, 2012; Monzó, 2016). Paulo Freire’s (1970) words affirm the transformative role education can play:

Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world. (p. 34)

This particular function of education is especially critical for students that are oppressed based on their languages, race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status, but for those that are part of a criminal justice system that targets them based on these characteristics. Racial profiling has essentially been sanctioned by the United States Supreme Court. For instance, Alexander (2010) appealed to the 2001 case of *Alexander v. Sandoval* concerning intentional discrimination based on race, color, or national origin. With this decision, Alexander (2010) concluded that, “the Supreme Court eliminated the last remaining avenue available for challenging racial bias in the criminal justice system” (p. 134). Moreover, minority language speakers also face discrimination during encounters with law enforcement, the judicial process, and in the criminal justice system (Allison, Basquin, & Gerwing, 2017; Evans & Michael, 2014; Fatall, 2014; Shah, Rahman & Khashu, 2007). Thus, instructional practices for students that are minority-language speakers and are also incarcerated cannot ignore these realities. Implementing Freire’s critical pedagogy through the Participatory Approach will provide a means for students to recognize their agency and power to affect change in their lives. The Participatory Approach will, if the students offer this as a need, provide opportunities to address their marginalization, oppression, or interactions with the criminal justice system or other mainstream institutions. The approach realigns the perception that the teacher holds the only valuable knowledge to offer. Instead, the teacher hands over power to the students; their recognition of the knowledge and value they hold, their shifting from a deficit view of themselves, their culture, language, and background, and a fostering of self-empowerment is precisely the goal of the Participatory Approach as outlined in this thesis. As noted by Freire (1970), the goal of ESL educators should be to strive for social justice, to address racism and language discrimination, and most importantly, fight alongside of the students to restore the humanity of the oppressed and the oppressors.

### References

- Alexander, M. (2012). *The new Jim Crow: Mass incarceration in the age of colorblindness*. New York, NY: The New Press.
- Allison, M., Basquin, C., & Gerwing, J. (2017). Assessing the accuracy of English-as-a-second-language eyewitness testimonies and contemporaneous officer notes using two methods. *Applied Psychology in Criminal Justice, 13*(1), 1-17. Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/317014524\\_Assessing\\_the\\_accuracy\\_of\\_English-as-a-second-language\\_eyewitness\\_testimonies\\_and\\_contemporaneous\\_officer\\_notes\\_using\\_two\\_methods](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/317014524_Assessing_the_accuracy_of_English-as-a-second-language_eyewitness_testimonies_and_contemporaneous_officer_notes_using_two_methods).
- Auerbach, E. R. (1992). Making meaning, making change: Participatory curriculum development for adult ESL literacy. *Language in Education: Theory & Practice*. Washington, DC: Office of Educational Research and Improvement.
- Baker, C. & Wright, W. E. (2017). *Foundations of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Blue Ridge Summit, PA: Multilingual Matters.
- Berlin, L. N. (2005). *Contextualizing college esl classroom praxis: A participatory approach to effective instruction*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., Publishers.
- Black Lives Matter. (2019). *About*. Retrieved from <https://blacklivesmatter.com/about/>.
- Brooks, M.G. & Brooks, J. G. (1999). The Courage to be Constructivist. *Educational Leadership, 57*(3), 18-24. Retrieved from <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/nov99/vol57/num03/The-Courage-to-Be-Constructivist.aspx>.
- Bureau of Justice Statistics. (2019). Reentry trends in the U.S. Retrieved from <https://www.bjs.gov/content/reentry/reentry.cfm>.
- Caldwell-Harris, C. L. & Ayçiçeği-Dinn, A. (2009). Emotion and lying in a Non-native language. *International Journal of Psychophysiology, 71*, 193-204. doi:

10.1016/j.ijpsycho.2008.09.006.

Campbell, P., & Burnaby, B. (Eds.). (2001). *Participatory practices in adult education.*

Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Cattaneo, K.H. (2017). Telling active learning pedagogies apart: From theory to practice.

*Journal of New Approaches in Educational Research*, 6(2). 144-152. doi:

10.7821/naer.2017.7.237.

Celic, C. & Seltzer, K. (2013). *Translanguaging: A CUNY-NYSIEB Guide for Educators.*

Published by The Graduate Center, The City University of New York.

Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence (CREDE). (2019). CREDE five

standards for effective pedagogy. Retrieved from <https://manoa.hawaii.edu/coe/credenational/>.

Choi, Y. (2013). Teaching social studies for newcomer English language learners: Toward

culturally relevant pedagogy. *Multicultural Perspectives*, 15(1), 12-18. doi:

10.1080/15210960.2013.754640.

Cogshall, J.G., Osher, D. & Colombi, G. (2013). Enhancing educators' capacity to stop

the school-to-prison pipeline. *Family Court Review* 51(3). 435-444. doi.org/10.

1111/fcre.12040.

Corrections and Community Supervision. (2015). Academic education program policies.

Retrieved from <http://www.doccs.ny.gov/Directives/4804.pdf>.

Corrections and Community Supervision. (2018). Under custody report: Profile of under

custody population as of January 1, 2018. Retrieved from [http://www.doccs.ny.gov](http://www.doccs.ny.gov/Research/Reports/2018/Under%20Custody%20Report%202018.pdf)

[/Research/Reports/2018/Under%20Custody%20Report%202018.pdf](http://www.doccs.ny.gov/Research/Reports/2018/Under%20Custody%20Report%202018.pdf).

- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Cureton, S. R. (2001). An empirical test of the social threat phenomenon: Using 1990 census and uniform crime reports. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 29(2), 157–166. doi: 10.1016/S0047-2352(00)00091-X.
- Delpit, L. (1995). *Other people's children: Cultural conflict in the classroom*. New York: The New Press.
- Denvir, B. (2017). Hate crime in New York State 2016 annual report [PDF File]. Criminal Justice Research Report. Retrieved from <https://www.criminaljustice.ny.gov/crimnet/ojsa/hate-crime-in-nys-2016-annual-report.pdf>.
- Dewey, J. (1938/1973). *Experience and education*. New York: Collier.
- Duran, C.S. (2016). “I want to do things with languages”: A male Karenni refugee’s reconstruction multilingual capital. *Journal of Language, Identity, Education*, 15(4), 216-229. doi: 10.1080/15348458.2016.1194208.
- Dyer, R. (2005). The matter of whiteness. In P. Rothenberg (Ed.), *White privilege: Essential readings on the other side or racism* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) (pp. 9-14). New York, NY: Worth Publishers.
- Educational Broadcasting Corporation. (2004). What are the benefits of constructivism? Retrieved from [https://www.thirteen.org/edonline/concept2class/constructivism/index\\_sub6.html](https://www.thirteen.org/edonline/concept2class/constructivism/index_sub6.html).
- Esperian, J.H. (2010). The effect of prison education programs on recidivism. *The Journal of Correctional Education*, 61(4), 316-334. Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23282764>.

- Fattal, A.B. (2014). Non-native English speakers may be judged unfairly in interrogations. Retrieved from <https://news.fiu.edu/2014/06/Non-native-english-speakers-may-be-judged-unfairly-in-interrogations/78769>.
- Flores, N. & Rosa, J. (2015). Undoing appropriateness: Raciolinguistics, ideologies and language diversity in education. *Harvard Educational Review*, 85(2), 149-171. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.17763/0017-8055.85.2.149>.
- Fránquiz, M.E., Salazar, M.C. & DeNicolo, C.P. (2011). Challenging majoritarian talks: Portraits of bilingual teachers deconstructing deficit views of bilingual leaders. *Bilingual Research Journal* 34, 279-300. doi:10.1080/15235882.2011.625884.
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York, NY: The Continuum Publishing Company.
- Freire, P. (1971). To the coordinator of a cultural circle. *Convergence*, 4 (1), 61-62.
- Gaskew, T. (2015). Developing a prison education pedagogy. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 2015(170), 67-78. doi.org/10.1002/cc.20145.
- Giouroukakis, V. & Honigsfeld, A. (2010). High-Stakes testing and English language learners: Using culturally and linguistically responsive literacy practices in the high school English classroom. *TESOL Journal*, 1(4), 470-499. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5054/tj.2010.240193>.
- Godin, C. & Thomas, J. (1984). The cooperative model in correctional education: Symbol or substance. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 34, 123-134. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0889-4906\(89\)90006-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/0889-4906(89)90006-9).
- Gomez, M. N., & Diarrassouba, N. (2014). What do teachers need to support English learners? *English Language Teaching*, 7(5), 89-101. doi:10.5539/elt.v7n5p89.

- González, N., Moll, L.C., & Amanti, C. (2005). *Funds of knowledge: Theorizing practices in households, communities, and classrooms*. Oxon, England: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Gramlich, J. & Noe-Bustamante, L. (2019). What's happening at the U.S.-Mexico border in 6 charts. Pew Research Center. Retrieved from <https://www.pewresearch.org/facttank/2019/04/10/whats-happening-at-the-u-s-mexico-border-in-6-charts/>.
- Harlow, C. (2003). Education and correctional programs. *Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice*. Retrieved from <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/ecp.pdf>.
- Hartnett, S.J. & Novek, E. (2013). Working for justice: A handbook of prison education and activism. University of Illinois Press. Retrieved from <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/fredoniaebooks/detail.action?docID=3414250>.
- Hastings, C, & Jacob, L. (Eds.). (2016). *Social justice in English language teaching*. Alexandria, VA: TESOL International Association.
- Holmes, M. D. (2000). Minority threat and police brutality: Determinants of civil rights criminal complaints in US municipalities. *Criminology*, 38(2), 343–367. doi: 10.1111/j.1745-9125.2000.tb00893.x.
- Houghton, A. (2018). *No ban no wall: From the Muslim ban to the migrant caravan*. Retrieved from <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/11/nobannowall-from-the-muslim-ban-to-the-migrant-caravan/>.
- Hughes, D., Witherspoon, D., Rivas-Drake, D., & West-Bey, N. (2009). Received ethnic-racial socialization messages and youth's academic and behavioral outcomes: Examining the mediating role of ethnic identity and self-esteem. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 15, 112–124. doi:10.1037/a0015509.

Johnson, L. (2002). "My eyes have been opened." *Journal of Teacher Education*, 53, 153-167.

doi: 10.1177/0022487102053002007.

Johnson, T., & Wells, L. (2017). English language learner teacher effectiveness and the common core. *education policy analysis archives*, 25(23), 1-22. <http://dx.doi.org/10.14507/epaa.v25.2395>.

Kouritzin, S. (2000). Immigrant mothers redefine access to ESL classes: Contradiction and ambivalence. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 21(1), 13-23. [doi.org/10.1080/01434630008666391](http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01434630008666391).

Krisberg, B., Marchionna, S. & Hartney, C. (2015). *American corrections concepts and controversies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1992). Culturally relevant teaching: The key to making multicultural education work. In C.A. Grant (Ed.), *Research and multicultural education: From margins to the mainstream* (pp. 107-121). Washington DC: Falmer Press.

Larsen-Freeman, D. & Anderson, M. (2011). *Techniques & principles in language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Liggett, T. (2007). The alchemy of identity: The role of white racial identity in the teaching, pedagogy of new ESOL teachers. In M. Mantero (Ed.) *Identity and second language learning: Culture, inquiry, and dialogic activity in educational contexts*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

Liggett, T. (2008). Frames of reference: The impact of race on teaching strategy and classroom discussion. *Urban Review*, 40, 386-402. doi:10.1007/s11256-008-0087-9.

Liggett, T. (2013). The mapping of a framework: Critical race theory and TESOL. *The Urban Review*, 46(1), doi: 10.1007/s11256-013-0254-5.

- Liggett, T. (2014). Deliberative democracy in English-language education: Cultural and linguistic inclusion in the school community. *Democracy and Education*, 22 (2), Retrieved from <https://democracyeducationjournal.org/home/vol22/iss2/4>.
- Lightbown, P., & Spada, N. M. (2013). *How languages are learned*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lillie, K. (2018). *Adult ELLs*. [Powerpoint Slides]. Retrieved from [https://oncourse.fredonia.edu/pluginfile.php/451797/mod\\_resource/content/0/Adults%20updated%20IN%20CLAS%20S.pdf](https://oncourse.fredonia.edu/pluginfile.php/451797/mod_resource/content/0/Adults%20updated%20IN%20CLAS%20S.pdf).
- Lippi-Green, R. (2011). *English with an accent* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Long, M. & Porter, P. (1985). Group work, interlanguage talk, and second language acquisition. *TESOL Quarterly*, 19(2), 207-228. doi.org/10.2307/3586827.
- López, F. C., (2016). Culturally responsive pedagogies in arizona and latino students' achievement. *Teachers College Record*, 118, 1-42. Retrieved from <http://www.tcrecord.org>.
- Lukes, M. (2011). "I understand English but can't write it": The power of native language instruction for adult English learners, *International Multilingual Research Journal*, 5(1), 19-38. doi: 10.1080/19313152.2011.539488.
- Macedo, D. (2017). Imperialist desires in English-only language policy. *The CATESOL Journal*, 29(1), 81-110. Retrieved from [http://www.catesoljournal.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/CJ29.1\\_macedo.pdf](http://www.catesoljournal.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/CJ29.1_macedo.pdf).
- Mahoney, K. (2017). *The assessment of emergent bilinguals: Supporting English language learners*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters
- McIntyre, A. (1997). *Making meaning of Whiteness: Exploring racial identity with White*

*teachers*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Me too. (2018). *History & Vision*. Retrieved from <https://metoomvmt.org/about/>.

Monzó L. D. (2016). “They don’t know anything!” Latinx immigrant students appropriating the oppressor’s voice. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 47(2), 148–166. <http://doi.org/10.1111/aeq.12146>.

Motlhaka, H. A., & Wadesango, N. (2014). Freirean participatory approach: Developing interactive listening skills in the English as a second language (ESL) classroom. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 5(11), 101-107. doi: 10.5901/mjss.2014.v5n11p101.

Nally, J., Lockwood, S., Knutson, K., & Ho, T., (2012). An evaluation of the effect of correctional education programs on post-release recidivism and employment: An empirical study in Indiana. *Journal of Correctional Education*, 63(1), 69-89. Retrieved from <https://www.thefreelibrary.com/An+evaluation+of+the+effect+of+correctional+education+programs+on...-a0345617815>.

National Institute for Literacy. (2010). *Adult English language learners with limited literacy*. (NIL Publication No. ED-04-CO-0121/0002). Washington, DC: Bigelow & Schwarz. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED512297.pdf>.

New York State Department of Correctional Services. (2010). Follow-up study of offenders who earned high school equivalency diplomas (GEDs) while incarcerated in DOCS. Retrieved from [http://www.doccs.ny.gov/Research/Reports/2010/GED\\_evaluation.pdf](http://www.doccs.ny.gov/Research/Reports/2010/GED_evaluation.pdf).

New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision. (2017). Language

- access plan for limited English proficient individuals [PDF file]. Retrieved from <https://dhr.ny.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/lep/DOCCS%202016%20Language%20Access%20Plan.pdf>.
- New York State Education Department. (2017). New York State public school enrollment (201617). [Data file]. Retrieved from <https://data.nysed.gov/enrollment.php?year=2017&state=yes>.
- New York State Education Department. (2017). New York State education department ELL demographics & performance, 2015-2016. Retrieved from [http://www.nysed.gov/comm/nysed/files/ell\\_demographicperformance\\_2017-ver-1516.pdf](http://www.nysed.gov/comm/nysed/files/ell_demographicperformance_2017-ver-1516.pdf).
- Nieto, S. (2002). *Language, culture, and teaching: Critical perspectives for a new century*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Pacheco, M. B., David, S. S., & Jiménez, R. T. (2015). Translating pedagogies: Leveraging students' heritage languages in the literacy classroom. *Middle Grades Research Journal*, 10(1), 49-63. Retrieved from <http://www.infoagepub.com/mgrjissue.html?i=p552f0a76413c7>.
- Pavlenko, A. (2008). "I'm very not about the law part": Nonnative speakers of English and the Miranda warnings. *TESOL Quarterly*, 42(1), 1-30. doi.org/10.1002/j.1545-7249.2008.tb00205.x.
- Peersy, M. M. (2011). Preparing English language learners for the mainstream: Academic language and literacy practices in two junior high and school ESL classrooms. *Reading & Writing Quarterly*, 27(4), 324-362. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10573569.2011.596105>.
- Piaget, J. (1983). Piaget's theory. In P. Mussen (Ed.), *Handbook of child psychology* (4th ed.). New York, NY: Wiley.

Ramanathan, V. (Ed.) (2013b). Language policies and (dis)citizenship: Who belongs? Who is a guest? Who is deported? [Special forum]. *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education*, 12(3), 162-166.

RAND Corporation. (2013). Evaluating the effectiveness of correctional education: A meta-analysis of programs that provide education to incarcerated adults. Santa Monica: CA Davis: Davis, Bozik, Steele, Saunders, & Miles. Retrieved from [https://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RR266.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR266.html).

Reyes, R. & Villarreal, E. (2016). Wanting the unwanted again: Safeguarding against normalizing dehumanization and discardability of marginalized, “unruly” English-learning Latinos in our schools. *Springer Science and Business Media*, 48, 543-559. doi: 10.1007/s11256-016-0367-8.

Sadler, M.S., Correll, J., Park, B., & Judd, C.M. (2012). The world is not black and white: Racial bias in the decision to shoot in a multiethnic context. *Journal of Social Issues*, 68(2), 286-231. Retrieved from [http://psych.colorado.edu/~jclab/pdfs/Sadler%20et%20al.%20\(2012\).pdf](http://psych.colorado.edu/~jclab/pdfs/Sadler%20et%20al.%20(2012).pdf).

Sakala, L. (2014, May 28). *Breaking down mass incarceration in the 2010 Census: State-by-state incarceration rates by race/ethnicity*. Retrieved from <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/rates.html>.

School of Unity and Liberation. (n.d.). Key principles of Freire. Training for trainers: Day one. School of Unity & Liberation. Retrieved from [www.schoolofunityandliberation.org](http://www.schoolofunityandliberation.org).

- Shah, S., Rahman, I. & Khashu, A. (2007). Overcoming language barriers: Solutions for law enforcement. New York: Vera Institute of Justice. Retrieved from [http://www.cvops.usdoj.gov/files/ric/Publications/vera\\_translating\\_justice\\_final.pdf](http://www.cvops.usdoj.gov/files/ric/Publications/vera_translating_justice_final.pdf).
- Shor, I. (1992). *Empowering education: Critical teaching for social change*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Shor, I. (2009). Critical pedagogy is too big to fail. *Journal of Basic Writing*, 28(2), 6-27. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ877253.pdf>.
- Shor, I., Matusov, E., Marjanovic-Shane, A., & Cresswell, J. (2017). Dialogic & critical pedagogies: An interview with Ira Shor. *Dialogic Pedagogy: An International Online Journal*, 5, 1-21. doi: 10.5195/dpj.2017.208.
- Sleeter, C.E. (1992). *Keepers of the American dream: A study of staff development and multicultural education*. London: Falmer.
- Spener, D. (November 1992). *The Freirean approach to adult literacy education*. National Center for ESL Literacy Education. Retrieved from [http://www.cal.org/caela/esl.resources/digests/FREI\\_REQA.html](http://www.cal.org/caela/esl.resources/digests/FREI_REQA.html).
- Stromquist, N.P. (2012). The educational experience of Hispanic immigrants in the United States: Integration through marginalization. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 15(2), 195-221. doi: 10.1080/13613324.2011.578125.
- Tansey, M. (2015, April 30). Teaching while white [website]. Retrieved from <https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/teaching-while-white>.
- Valdés, G. (1996). *Con Respeto: Bridging the distance between culturally diverse families and schools*. New York and London: Teachers College Press.
- Valenzuela, A. (2008). Uncovering initialized oppression. In M. Pollock (Ed.), *Everyday*

*antiracism* (50-55). New York: The New Press.

Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in society*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wagner, P. & Sawyer, W. (2018, March 14). *Mass incarceration: The whole pie 2018*.

Retrieved from <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2018.html>.

Wallerstein, N. & Auerbach, E. (2004). *Problem-posing at work: Popular educator's guide*.

Edmonton: AL: Grass Roots Press.

Western, B. (2006). *Punishment and inequality in America*. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation.

Woolfolk, A., (2019). *Educational Psychology* (14<sup>th</sup> ed.), Boston, MA: Pearson.