

Culturally Responsive Teaching for English Language Learners

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Abstract

This capstone project was created to support the needs of educators, school staff and faculty working with English Language Learners (ELLs) within an educational setting. ELLs are a population of students who require materials and supports in the classroom to help them achieve academic success. Research shows that Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) is a critical and beneficial framework that supports ELLs, increase academic outcomes, and promotes social emotional development. The literature indicates that educators need instruction and guidance with CRT theory and pedagogical application to build relationships and implement strategies, develop understanding and acceptance of other cultures to create a CRT classroom environment. This capstone includes a professional development (PD) that aims to inform educators about CRT and guide its application into instruction. The outcome of this PD is for teachers to have a working knowledge of CRT and a collection of resources to support ELLs within their classrooms. Ultimately, by implementing CRT practices educators will enhance ELL programs, improve learning outcomes and social emotional development. Thus, closing the achievement gaps of ELLs.

Keywords: English Language Learners, Culturally Responsive Teaching, Language Acquisition, Pedagogy.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

I am a High School Staffing Specialist in a public-school district, which is a significantly culturally diverse school district in the state of Florida. The students within my school come from many different backgrounds and speak many different languages. The majority of our students come from Hispanic and Caribbean countries, where their cultures and way of life differ immensely from the United States. These families have experienced hardships and tragedy that many of us have never had to experience and have come to the United States for a new beginning and a safe place for their families.

Problem Statement

According to the Florida Department of Children and Families (2023), 388,789 entered the state of Florida from 2019-2023 and 172,880 arrived in the year 2023. The Florida Department of Children and Families (2023), emphasizes that immigrants have come from 78 different countries last year, but the statistics show a 65% immigration rate from Cuba and a 31% immigration rate from Haiti. While majority of my students come from Haitian and Hispanic backgrounds, I also have a number of students who come from parts of Asia, such as Japan and South Korea. These students have also faced challenges and hardships from their home countries. The students at my school come from countries around the world. Regardless of where the student has come from, the cultures are equally as different, all in which have very different academic experiences and speak a variety of different languages. Cultural Responsiveness has been something that has long been considered a burden to many teachers, and seemed as unimportant. More often than not ELLs were thought to have to assimilate to a culture that was not their own in order to access curriculum. Research has shown that incorporating cultural

responsiveness into school settings and implementing Culturally Responsive Teaching into classrooms can improve learning outcomes for ELLs of all cultures.

Significance of the Problem

When working in an environment with a large population of ELLs with various learning styles and abilities teachers and school faculty should have an adequate understanding of various teaching strategies to target the needs of all students. Teaching diverse learners is a complex task with high demands for students' proficiency (Ladson-Billings, 2011). While this can be a difficult task for educators to accomplish, Culturally Responsive Teaching can help teachers to differentiate adequately and implement strategies that English Language Learners can access more feasibly. Resulting in the improvement of learning outcomes for ELLs. Culturally Relevant Pedagogy emphasizes a pedagogical framework that engages minority students with academically and intellectually enriching curriculum while validating the student's cultural identities and backgrounds (Ladson-Billings 2021).

In this capstone project, I address this issue by expressing how the implementation of Culturally Responsive Teaching can improve learning outcomes for English Language Learners and how providing school faculty with proper trainings in regard to Culturally Responsive Teaching is beneficial for English Language Learners. According to Sleeter (2012) educators have the tendency to view Culturally Responsive Pedagogy as a cultural celebration that is disconnected from academic learning. She explains that learning to teach academics through the use of culture is often confused with learning *about* culture. While this is a common misconception, it is a contributing factor to the lower performance levels of English Language Learners across all content areas and grade levels. It is important for educators to understand that if we, as educators, can learn to utilize Culturally Responsive Teaching strategies with fidelity,

English Language Learners will have a greater opportunity to improve their learning outcomes. Nykiel- Herbert (2010) stated, “One of the major reasons why minority students in general, and immigrant new comers in particular, perform poorly in schools is that their home cultures, while being ‘celebrated’, are not sufficiently utilized as a resource for their own learning” (p. 2).

Culturally Responsive Teaching is comprised of various forms of differentiation strategies that are required to modify materials for English Language Learners to access the learning effectively. These strategies focus on utilizing the culture of English Language Learners to provide a connection to the learning where students can better comprehend and engage in the material. For example, utilizing areas of the student’s culture intentionally such as language and literature into daily classroom activities through the use of culturally diverse literature sources. Making these sources available to students not only validates their culture and makes them feel welcome, it gives them sources of literature to connect to. When English Language Learners are validated and feel connected to education they are more likely to engage in academics, in this instance the academic area would be reading through culturally diverse literature sources. Bonner (2017) explains that the use of Culturally Responsive Teaching strategies combined with constructive outcomes students from diverse backgrounds have opportunities that they did not have before. Resulting in higher achievement, self-esteem, motivation and overall academic success.

Purpose

Later in this capstone project I will present a professional development (PD) to address the importance of Culturally Responsive Teaching, how Culturally Responsive teaching improves academic outcomes for ELLs and strategies that school faculty can implement throughout the school campus to ensure Cultural Responsiveness within the school setting. This

PD is created to be given to not only teachers, but entire school staff, including but not limited to teachers, administrators, guidance counselors and deans. While the PD would be beneficially at any point within the school year, I feel it would be most beneficial to hold the two session PD over the summer, before the start of the new school year. This will allow school faculty to enter a new academic school year with a fresh mind about Culturally Responsive Teaching and will allow educators the time to gather materials and create lessons that are Culturally Responsive before ELLs enter the classroom on the first day of school. The PD will start with determining the understanding of the participants. Participants will be asked to review a slide where they will rate their understanding of Culture Responsiveness and Culturally Responsive teaching from 1-4 and will hold up the number of fingers, this will help me to determine the prior knowledge and baseline of the participants. Kieran and Anderson (2019) express that for Culturally Responsive Teaching to be successful teachers must be aware of their individual biases. Without the realization of their biases and knowledge of how their cultures affect their views of other cultures teachers may be *colorblind* in the classroom and develop an opinion that Cultural Responsiveness is an unnecessary demanding that is being put on the educators/ school faculty. It will be important to eliminate this misconception from the beginning so that teachers can enter the PD with an open mind and willingness to engage in the material. To mitigate this misconception the participants will be given a survey/ questionnaire, the questions will be in the form of short answer, true or false and multiple-choice questions. The questions will focus on personal experiences and opinions that will later be reflected on as a group. Participants will be asked to work as a group to read pages 1207-1210 of Kieran and Anderson (2019) study regarding CRT and English Language Learners. Participants will be presented with statistical facts about the percentages of ELLs within local school systems, this will be open for

conversation at their tables as a brief reflection period. Additionally, participants will be given various information and tools that benefit English Language Learners within the classroom.

These materials include multicultural literature and computer-based supports. The presenter will review all materials with the group and provide rationales for why they are beneficial.

Participants will be given time to engage in the presented material in their groups and as a whole.

As a conclusion to this the presenter will ask the participants to again rate their understanding on a scale of 1-4, this will allow the presenter to gain an understanding of how much information was retained in this session.

Within session two we will focus on different strategies that the participants can use to implement Culturally Responsive Teaching and determine how these strategies will improve learning outcomes for ELLs. Montgomery (2001) created a set of guidelines that teachers should follow when preparing Culturally Responsive Teaching materials. These guidelines will be discussed in Chapter 3 and presented in the PD. Participants will be given multiple strategies such as, word walls, a new school initiative for multicultural signage, an ENL lesson planning guide. In addition, they will have access to materials that they can implement within classrooms that explain the impacts that these have on ELLs. Kieran and Anderson (2019) indicate that Culturally Responsive Teaching is an imperative instructional shift that should occur in all urban schools where teachers provide an excessive amount of differentiation and structure to close the gap on lower level academics in ELLs. By the end of session two, participants will hold a strong understanding of Cultural Responsiveness and the importance of incorporating it into the education of ELLs and be given materials and insight on how they can effectively help to bridge the gap in learning for ELLs within their schools and classrooms.

Conclusion

In the following chapters of this capstone project, I will review the research information showing the connection between Culturally Responsive Teaching and the learning outcomes of ELLs. As well as the impact Culturally Responsive Teaching has on social development for ELLs and how this contributes to the learning outcomes for ELLs. In chapter 3, I will discuss my professional development created to educate school faculty on the importance of Culturally responsive teaching and ways that teachers can access the materials necessary to implement Culturally Responsive Teaching Strategies and how this framework benefits ELLs academic outcomes. The purpose of this professional development is to emphasize to teachers the misconceptions behind Culturally Responsive Teaching and how to effectively reduce this misconception to provide Culturally Responsive Teaching with fidelity to help bridge the gap in learning outcomes for ELLs. In chapter 4 I will present my conclusions on the findings of the research, the implications for ELLs and educators, make recommendations on future research to improve the academic and social wellbeing of ELLs in our schools.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Within this chapter I will include a review of theories and studies that are related to the importance of cultural responsiveness and studies that are related to the preparation of teachers who work with English Language Learners while utilizing Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT). In addition, this chapter includes a review of theories and studies that are related to how the above strategies improve academic success for ELLs, as well as promote social-emotional development. Discussing teacher preparation and training is a critical necessity when implementing Culturally Responsive Teaching strategies, not only within the classroom, but within the entire learning community. Within this chapter, I will explore the impact that these

strategies have on two major components linked to success for ELLS. These two major components are academic outcomes of ELLs, as well as social-emotional development of ELLs. Simultaneously these two components aid in the development of the importance of incorporating Culturally Responsive Teaching in the school environment.

Culturally Responsive Teaching for Enhancing ELL Success

By reviewing influential studies and theories from multiple sources such as but not limited to Ladson-Billings, Vygotsky, Freire and Gay we examine how a culturally responsive framework such as Culturally Responsive Teaching can have an impact and improve the learning outcomes for ELLs. The theoretical perspectives of the aforementioned authors as well as others will be highlighted in the chapter can help researchers determine the importance of providing teacher preparation in Culturally Responsive Teaching and the overall implementation of this type of framework.

Research has shown that incorporating Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) within educational settings can improve the learning outcomes of English Language Learners and have a positive impact on the social-emotional development of ELLs. Nieto (2002) revealed that Culturally Responsive Teaching is an effective approach that focuses on all aspects of the student's background, such as race/ethnicity and languages. When this framework is implemented with fidelity important academic outcomes for ELLs occur, including civic engagement and critical consciousness. According to Freire (2021) critical consciousness is the ability to recognize and challenge social inequities. Freire believed that this ability should result in intervention and a feeling of self-sufficiency that is needed to challenge these social inequities. Without these abilities an individual cannot achieve a deep level of civic engagement, which I will discuss later in this chapter. Ladson- Billings (1995) described Culturally Responsive

Teaching as a research-based approach that will allow educators to meet the needs of students, and in our case ELLs, within the classroom setting by validating and utilizing the cultural backgrounds of every student within the room. Ladson- Billings suggests that the Culturally Responsive Teaching approach will lead to academic success and empower students to establish a critical consciousness within themselves to challenge the status quo. Quintero (2010) builds on the philosophical approach in Freire's Critical Consciousness and Ladson-Billings description of Culturally Responsive Teaching collectively and advises that when we incorporate the culture of the students into what they call English language teaching and learning we are no longer following the oppressive nature and perceptions of ELLs and in fact are challenging these social inequities. In return, we are allowing our students to have a voice and are validating their differences, when this happens, the classroom is enriched and students are given the ability to experience education in a way that was previously unavailable to them. Using the research-based approach of Culturally Responsive Teaching, educators and school staff can make use of their students' diverse cultures and backgrounds to create and provide a framework that focuses on the individualized needs of their students to improve learning outcomes for students and enhance students social-emotional development.

Utilizing Culturally Responsive Teaching and culturally responsive materials will improve academic outcomes and enhance the education for ELLs. Teachers will celebrate the student's differences making them feel welcome, comfortable and validated within the classroom. Clayton et al. (2021) suggests that when students have the notion in which they are unwelcome or unwanted and lack a sense of support from within their learning environment you tend to see a trend in increased drop-out rates within the English Language Learners. Gilmore (2011) explains that ELLs are often disconnected to the traditional materials of white, male Westerners because

they cannot relate to them, they often become disinterested in the curriculum. Hughes-Hassel and Rode (2007) recommend that teachers provide ELLs with curriculum and materials that they can relate to and are relevant to the students' lives. Materials that show a range of cultural and socio economical differences, emphasizing the materials that relate to individual students within the classroom offer validation and confirmation that the student is valued and welcomed within the educational setting.

While we have discussed multiple theoretical perspectives, another significant theory that is important to the inclusion of Culturally Responsive Teaching is The Zone of Proximal Development, which was a component in Vygotsky's sociocultural theory. As cited in Cole et al. (1978) Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development is "the distance between the actual development 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). In summary The Zone of Proximal Development is the gap between what a learner can do independently and what they can achieve with guidance from a more knowledgeable person, like a teacher or a peer. It represents the ideal range where significant learning can occur with the appropriate support and is the space between the learner's current abilities and their potential abilities with appropriate support. This emphasizes the notion that ELLs require learning that is driven by social interaction, the main contact in which students have during learning is their teacher and their peers.

Promoting Student Teacher Relationships

Many researchers who have studied Culturally Responsive Teaching highlight the importance of teacher-student relationships. Emdin (2016) emphasizes that a key factor to academic success for ELLs is to teach to the student not to teach curriculum directly or provide direct assessments.

In order to achieve this, teachers, need to release control to the students and allow students to express themselves and be heard, creating an environment that's based around social interactions and the voices of the students, which is monitored by the teacher to provide critical concepts and deeper thinking questions and comments to the students.

Similarly, Bachmann (2024) encourages educators to form relationships with students, especially ELLs, and claims that building relationships with students is vital to creating a learning atmosphere that is centered around socialization and cultural acceptance. When you form relationships with students they are more open to working within the classroom and are more comfortable to engage in these pivotal teaching moments. Bachmann expresses that when you create relationships with students their minds become open to you and they become more susceptible to listening to you and engaging in the content that is presented. Students also feel more comfortable to speak up and engage in these social conversations about the content because they are lacking the feeling of judgment.

Lotus Linton (2017) holds a similar view on teacher-student relationships and advises that strong teacher-student relationships are the center of a student's learning. The author goes on to explain that these relationships impact ELLs ability to process, receive and even retain information. Thus, emphasizes that the relationships we build with our students, especially ELLs affect not only their outcomes in the class today, but affect their outcomes in classrooms in the years to come and influence their feelings towards school and education as a whole.

When Culturally Responsive Teaching and teacher-student relationships are utilized collectively you create what Kieran and Anderson (2018) refer to as *Learning Partnerships*, learning partnerships are teacher-student relationships that are fostered through the incorporation of Culturally Responsive Teaching, this framework reshapes the relationships and changes the

dynamics of learning, where the learning and teaching is shared between the teacher and the student. Students are given ownership of their learning and a sense of self sufficiency in their personal learning process. Gay (2002) highlights that when creating culturally responsive learning environments teachers remove the threats that come with cultural stereotypes and a balance is created between the student's responsibility for learning and the amount of teacher support and challenge within the classroom. This creates a student-centered learning environment where teachers provide feedback that encourages academic growth in ELLs and allows them to master new skills in their own way.

When reflecting on Emdin's perspective that teachers must teach to the student, an English classroom would be a great place to incorporate this idea. Many aspects of English Language Arts are not meant to have one meaning they are meant to be interpreted based upon the reader. This is true for poetry, short stories and even song lyrics. Bachmann expresses that her favorite way to get to know her students is by having them bring in their favorite songs and analyze the lyrics in their own interpretation. When allowing ELLs to bring in songs that they love you are allowing their culture and background into the room, you are creating a culturally responsive setting while also getting to know the thought process of the students. Students are actively interpreting the music and lyrics and analyzing what they are reading without realize they are engaging in core content. As an illustration, Bachmann described a lesson that she conducted on the poem titled *The Rose That Grew from Concrete*, she expressed that two ELL students had very different views on the meaning of the poem and engaged in a healthy social debate about the meaning of the poem. As a result, listening to her students' arguments about the poem allowed them to do exactly what Emdin emphasizes, to teach to the student and to allow their voices to be heard and validated.

As described by Gay, culture refers to a system that is comprised of behavioral standards, social values, personal views and beliefs that are used to guide the order and meaning to the lives of people. Culture plays a vital part in how ELLs access education, this is because the views and beliefs of ELLs vary quite differently from the standard within our schools and classrooms and the views/ beliefs of one of our ELLs will vary quite differently from those of another. Pai et al. (2006) state “There is no escaping the fact that education is a sociocultural process. Hence, a critical examination of the role of culture in human life is indispensable to the understanding and control of educative process” (p. 6).

In summary the culture of ELLs is something that is ever lasting within each one of our ELLs, and is a vital part in the process of education for these students. Culturally Responsive Teaching utilizes culture and provides access to education through it. But developing this process is where, often times schools and teachers become stuck.

Culturally Responsive Teaching Pedagogy

Lau and Shea (2022) highlight the seven key domains in relation to Culturally Responsive Teaching principles that they feel celebrate and utilize the student’s culture to promote academic success and social-emotional development for ELLs, all in which are aligned with five Culturally Relevant Pedagogy Principles. Care, understand, listen, trust, unite, reflect, and empathize are the seven domains that are highlighted for effective Culturally Responsive Teaching for ELLs.

Care is associated with the Culturally Relevant Pedagogy of Equity and Excellence and focuses on the idea that educators that care for their students learning would also care about how their students feel towards learning. Lau and Shea claim that ELLs engagement in discussions and engagement in academics increased when they felt as if the teacher cared and encourages teachers to create relationships with students. Lau and Shea explain that teachers can provide

caring relationships while also promoting high expectations for ELLs and expresses the balance that comes with caring and holding high expectations, specifically for ELLs.

Understand and Listen are two of the seven domains that align with the Culturally Relevant Pedagogy of Developmental Appropriateness. Understand, focuses on the premise that understanding your ELLs attitudes towards learning, and prior learning processes and experience are a key concept in providing them with Culturally Responsive Teaching, Lau and Shea provide an example given by Hofstede et al. (2010), where they explain that students from cultures such as Asia, Middle Eastern and African regions that tend to be high power distance cultures are less likely to express their thoughts and viewpoints as they are culturally adapted to a teacher centered learning approach. If educators do not understand this about ELLs from these regions than we may develop a misconception of the students as passive or dependent which will continue to cause a deficit for the student. When educators understand this difference, they become more equipped and open to differentiating their instructional approaches to a more Culturally Responsive Teaching method that allows these students to access the curriculum and classroom, making a more inclusive leaning environment. Listen, emphasizes that active listening is crucial to creating mutual understanding, without this mutual understanding teacher are not able to provide meaningful feedback for students which may result in ELLs becoming discouraged towards learning. Dahlberg and Moss (2004) stress that pivotal transformation occurs for ELLs when educators listen to ELLs with the intent to identify the students struggle or area of need and create a solution to mitigate the student's barrier in their educational process.

Trust and Unite are two of the seven domains that is aligned with the Culturally Relevant Pedagogy of Teaching the Whole Child. Trust, derives from the assumption of many that all ELLs are disadvantaged and less capable than typical English-Speaking learners. These

assumptions have a damaging effect on ELLs self-confidence the way that ELLs perceive themselves as well as the way educators perceive the ability of English Language Learners. Data gathered by Jimenez- Castellanos and Garcia (2017) show that when teachers trust and invest in the abilities of ELLs, rather than automatically viewing them as disadvantaged, students' engagement in literacy activities increase. When trust-based student-teacher relationships are created ELLs academic potential improves. Furthermore, when ELLs see that they are not labeled as disadvantaged for being different and that educators trust their abilities to succeed academically, they are less likely to develop a negative perception of themselves and are given the confidence necessary for language acquisition. Additionally, the unite domain highlights the significance of connection between groups of students. It emphasizes that while student-teacher relationships are important student relationships with each other are just as important. Lau and Shea claim that this is especially important amongst our ELL population, cultures have variations when it comes to beliefs, dialects, traditions and more. For example, Hispanic culture, dialects and traditions vary greatly between Hispanic cultures, no two Hispanic cultures are fully the same and often times these varying cultures hold stereotypes and negative perceptions of each other. Similarly, Rodriquez et al. (2017) suggests that students who identify themselves as Hispanic or Latino have a range of motivations and differentiate in how they express their culture. This is supported by Rice-Rodriguez and Boyle (2006) who claim that Hispanics and Latinos have differing economic, social and cultural views/ traditions. They claim that this is due to the fact that these individuals come from differing countries despite being Hispanic or Latino, essentially creating subgroups for the Hispanic and Latino populations. This domain focuses on the intent to unite all groups of ELLs and to allow these groups to explore not only their identity but the identity of their peers and ways to navigate potential conflicts with their families or peers.

When ELLs are encouraged to make connections with their identities and communicate with peers to navigate differences and generate their own views through the use of small group learning and collaborative learning they develop teamwork skills and leadership qualities.

Mikami et al. (2017) found that when ELLs relate to their peers it was positively correlated with student success, positive classroom behavior and improved test scores.

Reflect is another of the domains found within Lau and Sheas seven domains that are critical in effective Culturally Responsive Teaching. Reflect is aligned with the Culturally Relevant Pedagogy of Identity and Achievement. Lau and Shea report that reflective and self-reflections promote ELLs ability to process emotions and cope more effectively in high social emotional scenarios. Reflect requires teachers to conduct a self-reflection to their own experiences, views, assumptions and biases to navigate how the presence of these attributes help cause the negative views towards other cultures and ELLs. It is the hopes that within self-reflections teachers are made aware of these views that they may not have been conscious of prior to their self-reflection. The consciousness of these feelings and emotions can lead to the enhancement of teacher-student communication, understanding and relationships.

While reviewing Lau and Sheas' seven domains to effective Culturally responsive Teaching is important to note that for many educators, these skills do not come naturally or are not seen as important strategies that need to be implemented. This leads to the conclusion that educators must be professionally trained in the implementation of Culturally Responsive Teaching strategies and how to create materials aligned with this framework. Without the proper training educators are not equipped to adequately support ELLs within the classroom.

Teacher Preparation

Professional teacher preparation is critical to provide ELLs with a curriculum that is geared towards their success, such as Culturally Responsive Teaching. Without the proper training educators may not be teaching the framework with fidelity or may not be utilizing the strategies at all. Based on the teacher diversity report from NCES (2021) only 41% of public-school teachers and 28% of private school teachers were trained on supporting ELLs, which is not nearly enough to provide sufficient academic support. The absence of the appropriate trainings for educators is one of the causes for low academic achievement and high dropout rates for ELLs. While the number of ELLs is continuing to increase, it is important that educators be given teaching preparations for ELLs to best support this population of students.

Yoon (2018) conducted a case study on educators in two New York public schools, the study highlights the views of teachers in relation to providing effective instruction for ELLs. One of the teachers in the study expressed that he felt it was not his responsibility to make sure ELLs were being supported, that it was the job of the ELL teacher and that he never saw himself as a person who would be teaching ELLs there for he never felt the need to research how to educate and differentiate instruction for them. Due to this mindset the teacher was unequipped to adequately teach the ELLs and no form of differentiation of Culturally Responsive Teaching was provided within the classroom.

Likewise, in Leider et al. (2024) survey teachers and found that educators felt that including ELLs within the classroom was burdensome and was too much added work for them to learn how to teach these students. Claiming that ELLs are poor academic performers and it would require too much for ELLs to achieve academic success. Leiders study, examined teachers across a wide range of states and levels and determined that 87% of the teachers within the districts

were never provided with the appropriate training crucial to teaching ELLs. Due to the fact that these teachers were not provided with appropriate trainings for working with ELLs, no forms of Culturally Responsive Teaching or differentiation was implemented, this was due to the teacher's negative views towards ELLs and the overwhelming feeling of working with students who they never anticipated to support.

Gay (2018) claims that educators' sense of professional efficiency and expectations on students are intertwined. Gay cited "Teachers who have low performance expectations for students do not feel very efficacious about their own competencies with those students. But they attribute student failure to lack of ability and poor home environments rather than to the quality of their teaching. They also spend little time helping low achieving students and may even ignore them entirely" (p.78). Thus, teachers lack of preparation when working with ELLs cause teachers to become stressed, overwhelmed and overall resentful towards ELLs causing a much larger problem in academic outcomes for students.

It is clear that there is a common trend for school districts across the nation in the area of teacher preparation for supporting ELLs. Educators across various studies have stated that they have not been effectively prepared to support ELLs within their classroom and are not comfortable in teaching them. Stairs- Davenport (2021) conducted a study of a school district, educators were asked to answer survey questions in relation to professional preparations for educators. Majority of the educators in this study reported that they felt unprepared, stressed and guilty. Expressing that they require more training in order to support ELLs.

Similar findings were prevalent in Salem et al. (2023) study of 327 teachers in a Texas school district, majority of the educators within this study suggested that they were never given appropriate trainings for working with ELLs and felt ineffective. More than half of the educators

who participated in this survey reported that they had not received any type of training in majority of the required teaching strategies for ELLs. Likewise, Gleeson and Davison (2016) conducted a study on a series of Secondary schools and their views on teaching ELLs, the study showed that more than 40% of the staff were unknowledgeable on how to effectively teach ELLs. Majority of the staff was opened to attending professional developments so that they can support ELLs within their classroom but no one within the district was comfortable enough to provide this type of training. What's more, the lack of knowledge on providing support for ELLs and Culturally Responsive Teaching within the district was so strong that even higher officials did not have the appropriate knowledge necessary to provide trainings.

Lack of teacher preparation has long been a concern in our education system, appropriate trainings are not given to educators and the information that educators are given tend to be incomplete or out of date. Howard and Milner (2013) claims that teachers across the nation are unprepared, this is in part due to the fact that our education programs are outdated and are created to service populations within our schools that are no longer in existence. Additionally, Ladson-Billings (1995) conveys that ELLs and culturally diverse populations of students are a commonality in classrooms across the United States, due to this, educators should be required to be culturally responsive in their teaching methodologies. In sum, Culturally Responsive Teaching trainings should be a required preparation course for teachers to attend on a yearly basis to ensure effective teaching practices for ELLs. As a result of Culturally Responsive Teaching ELLs will improve their academic success, social emotional development and develop a critical consciousness.

Academic Achievement with Culturally Responsive Teaching

Teaching methods and materials play a vital role in academic success for English Language Learners. According to Owens (2021) teachers must create a culturally responsive environment within their classrooms and foster an environment for ELLs that is welcoming and validating to their cultural differences in order for these students to achieve academic success and social emotional development. The Culturally Responsive Teaching framework does just that, it focuses on the student's cultural backgrounds when creating curriculum and materials that will foster academic gains. Cabrera et al. (2014) signifies Culturally Responsive Teaching as an asset that has been proven to improve academic success for the marginalized populations of students, such as ELLs. Likewise, Gay (2002, 2018) argued that using the cultural demographics, backgrounds, beliefs and languages of students has been shown to improve the academic success of ELL populations.

While 5.3 million English Language Learners attend our schools (NCES, 2024) our foundations within the school system do not support the idea that there is more than one way of teaching and more than one way of learning. Culturally Responsive Teaching provides endless possibilities for teaching and learning that will reach any student that enters the classroom. According to Lotus Linton (2017) Culturally Responsive Teaching provides ELLs with higher order thinking skills and allows students and educators to see more than one point of view. For instance, the author notes that Albert Einstein modeled an early form of Culturally Responsive Teaching through his Theory of Relativity that expressed reality is perceived differently when it is viewed through different lenses and Culturally Responsive Teaching does just that. It allows ELLs to view curriculum and content in a way that is accessible to them as an individual, allowing them to access the curriculum in a way that will effectively improve their academic

success. Lotus Linton argues that children can learn just about anything when the right approach is used, within the right environment.

Similarly, Blankstein and Noguera (2016) report that most of what a child can do is directly related to their backgrounds and where they come from, that different populations of people come with different levels and areas of intelligence. These abilities should be fostered by an education that promotes their prior intelligences and enhances it through what they know, agreeing with Linton that any child can learn almost anything. Kieran and Anderson (2019) express that individual learners cultural background is what shapes the learner and that these experiences should be utilized when teaching to the learner, especially when educators are working with marginalized groups such as ELLs.

Hammond (2015) explains that Culturally Responsive Teaching has four key themes that are critical in improving academic success for ELLs. These four themes, awareness, learning partnerships, information processing and community, align with the seven domains previously expressed in this chapter, developed by Lau and Shea. Hammond suggests that when these themes are utilized with fidelity we provide ELLs with the greatest opportunity for learning and they are linked to student academic success. According to a study by Idrus and Sohid (2023) a group of English teachers were interviewed and provided with detailed information about accommodating ELLs within the classroom. The educator's preparation was monitored as well as their application of strategies within the classroom. The following finding emerged from interviews with the teachers. Prior to utilizing Culturally Responsive Teaching strategies three out of the four English teachers were concerned about their student's willingness to participate and views on their education. They expressed that a main barrier for their students was self-esteem and self-worth and that majority of the ELLs within their classroom were low achieving

in their English class as well as other classes. In the study the authors concluded that after the implementation of Culturally Responsive Teaching strategies such as knowing your students, social- emotional engagement, collaboration and support ELLs were more engaged within the curriculum and became interested in learning. The teachers saw a rise in the self-esteem and willing to have their voices heard. Overall student's academic success improved in a short period of time with the implementation of Culturally Responsive Teaching strategies.

In correlation with this study, Seda et al. (2021) focused on the effect that a modified curriculum, such as Culturally Responsive Teaching had on newly arrived English Language Learners within a mathematics classroom. Two groups of students were identified for this study, one of these groups were taught using Culturally Responsive Teaching Strategies, such as but not limited to social collaboration, translated materials, high expectations and teacher relationships. Findings from the study indicated that the group of ELLs that were provided with the modified curriculum achieved a higher level of success in the course than the counter group. While creating a culturally responsive atmosphere is important for ELLs, it is significantly more important for newcomer ELLs. Newcomer ELLs come into this new world with a high level of sensitivity to the environment around them. This is due primarily to the emotional toll that leaving their homes and families have on these students. As well as, the stress and anxiety that comes with the culture shock that ELLs are facing upon their arrival.

Social Emotional Development with Culturally Responsive Teaching

English Language Learners from all over the world come with varying personalities and beliefs, but all share a commonality. When leaving your home country to come to a new place all ELLs enter with a high level of sensitivity associated with sadness, stress, anxiety all caused by culture shock. Lau and Shea claim in one of the seven domains critical to Culturally Responsive

Teaching that having empathy towards ELLs is related to effective literacy instruction, this empathy helps educators to understand the cultural barriers of ELLs and increase the use of the translanguaging pedagogy. Garcia (2016) defines translanguaging as the ability to move between the home languages and the newly introduced language as a tool to access and learn curriculum and literacy. Lau and Shea attest that when educators model empathy and culturally responsive strategies ELLs becomes more creative, take ownership of their learning and show an increase in academic gains. Culturally Responsive Teaching is an asset in encouraging Social Emotional Development within ELLs, it recuperates ELLs self-confidence and validity that they once had before entering a new environment.

According to Gay (2018) social emotional development is just as important as cognitive performance when referring to ELLs. Social Emotional Development in the areas of moral, social and personal developments are crucial to the functioning of all humans. Gay suggests that we should be teaching to the whole child, including social emotional development, further expressing that when ELLs develop effective social emotional skills learning experiences and academic outcomes improve.

Making time in our classrooms to support social emotional development in ELLs is critical for supporting students through Culturally Responsive Teaching. According to Hammond (2015) once an ELL perceives themselves with a negative image, educators must work to replace this self-image to disrupt the negative self-talk within the student. Hammond expresses that rather than viewing a lack of understanding or error as a failure, we must use this as a concept to teach new skills and highlight ways that this can lead to opportunities for success, when this occurs student motivation is restored and the risk taking in learning is increased. When teachers use these social emotional strategies students learning is increased. This leads to the conclusion that

Culturally Responsive Teaching requires educators to be consistently aware of the field of sensitivity in ELLs and within the way we teach marginalized populations of students within the classroom. The context of social emotional development through Culturally Responsive Teaching enhances the successful mental, cognitive and academic learning for ELLs. While Culturally Responsive Teaching is imperative to the success of English Language Learners, as I have stated before, the solution lies within the educators and the curriculum provided to these students.

Conclusion

Educators throughout the nation are required to support English Language Learners daily, these students often go unsupported and are pushed to the side. This is due to the lack of understanding in the importance of cultural responsiveness and how to implement Culturally Responsive Teaching effectively. Teachers across all districts need to be provided with reoccurring trainings in teaching ELLs. In providing educators and school staff with professional trainings related to the implementation of Culturally Responsive Teaching and how to create appropriate materials and lessons for ELLs, we create an atmosphere that allows ELLs to access the curriculum effectively and achieve academic success. As previously discussed in this chapter, Salem et al. (2023) demonstrated that when asking teachers how they felt about their ability to support ELLs within their classrooms, educators felt unprepared and ineffective in teaching ELLs. The educators felt insufficient in their abilities to effectively do their job as a teacher which made them feel resentful towards ELLs and self-conscious about their professional attributes. The result of this solution will enhance ELL programs and improve learning outcomes and social emotional development in ELLs, as well as, allow educators to once again feel confident in their professional abilities.

The suggested solution is for educators and school staff to be given professional trainings that will prepare them to educate ELLs effectively, improve social emotional development and to incorporate an educational framework that has been proven to increase academic success for marginalized populations such as ELLs. As reviewed in previous sections of this chapter, I have gained awareness on the importance of Culturally Responsive Teaching, the positive impacts that it has on academic achievement for ELLs, the positive impact it has on the social emotional development of ELLs and the lack of teacher preparation that is required to effectively implement the strategies needed. In Chapter 3, I will create and present a professional development that is designed to target the issues identified within this chapter. The professional development will offer district professional trainings for educators and school staff with a focus on Culturally Responsive Teaching and the strategies/ materials that are necessary for the effective implementation of the framework.

Chapter 3: Description of the Product and Tool

Within this chapter I will discuss the professional development (PD) that I have created to address the overarching research question: How can culturally responsive pedagogy improve learning outcomes for ELLs? This professional development was created for all school-based employees drawing from the literature review and findings within Chapter 2, which suggest that Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) can improve both academic success and social emotional learning for English Language Learners. The PD will be available for all school-based staff within the K-12 education system. This professional development was created with the intent to assist educators and school-based staff to gain knowledge of Culturally Responsive Teaching as a theory and implement pedagogical strategies.

In order to mitigate the challenges ELL students, face within educational environments across the nation it is important for teachers and staff to be properly trained to implement the CRT framework. Within this chapter I will first provide an overview of the PD plan. Subsequently, strategically develop tools and materials for students and staff which will be included in alphabetical order in the Appendix section. To increase academic achievement and social development for ELLs, implementation of this training will be provided before the start of the new school year, mid-year and at the end of the school year.

Professional Development (PD) is the ongoing process of acquiring new skills and knowledge through training, education and various methods to enhance your career and stay up to date in your field. According to Stairs-Davenport (2021) professional development is required for most educators working in public schools nationwide, however many teachers feel that they have not been given the appropriate trainings and are not prepared to work with English Language Learners. Due to the continuing lack of teacher preparation educators often report feeling unprepared to reach academic success and social development for the English Language Learners within their classrooms.

Li et al. (2021) suggests that information within the United States of America has been researched in relation to the lack of teacher preparation, especially for White monolingual educators for teaching ELLs. The authors further claim that this lack of teacher preparation is caused by various factors, such as educators' programs indiscriminating against the differences of ELLs. In relation to this, it is important to create teacher education programs that create culturally inclusive environments that foster sameness and fairness across all groups of students.

Throughout this chapter, I will describe the PD opportunity for school-based staff and provide various resources that can be implemented within the classroom and within the entire school

campus, so that educators can prepare Culturally Responsive Teaching strategies and materials for all students. This PD will train school-based staff to be culturally responsive and implement the strategies within the Culturally Responsive Teaching framework that researchers, such as the ones reviewed within Chapter 2 have claimed to be effective towards the learning outcomes and social emotional development in ELLs.

Professional Development Review

The professional development will be presented to High School staff during the summer pre planning training session. The PD will be incorporated into the rotational training sessions for all school staff within the school and will last for about 2 hours for each rotation. This will allow me to address and train all faculty members within the school. The training will be repeated at the midway point of the school year during the teacher work day in January and again during post planning at the end of the school year. These additional trainings will allow newly staffed teachers to access the same information as well as provide a refresher for previously employed staff. These follow up sessions will also allow staff to review and reflect on the strategies they have used and how they can improve on them moving forward through colleague and trainer collaboration. This professional development will include a PowerPoint Presentation. As well, participants will be provided with handouts and materials relevant to the discussion. This name professional development will be labeled as The CRT Initiative as the purpose of the PD is to educate effective CRT implementation and strengthen the academic outcomes and social emotional development for English Language Learners.

Day 1: CRT Initiative

Day one of the CRT Initiative will begin with an introduction of the presenters as well as the review of group norms and expectations. The presenters will conduct a temperature check of the

participants in which they will rate themselves on a scale of 1-5 based on their knowledge of Culturally Responsive Teaching strategies and how to effectively implement them to improve the academic outcomes of ELLs. The day one agenda (see appendix A) will be reviewed before beginning the training.

Kieran and Anderson (2019) suggest that teachers must be aware of their personal biases in order to effectively implement Culturally Responsive teaching and to encourage ELLs to utilize their cultural perspectives to strengthen their knowledge. Furthermore, Gay (2002) suggests that without the knowledge of how educators' personal experiences and culture affect the views and attitudes they have, educators may feel that incorporating cultural responsiveness into their classroom is ineffective and burdensome. Due to these findings the participants will be asked to independently answer a questionnaire (see Appendix B) that focuses on their personal experiences and cultures, this will allow the group to move through the PD with open eyes to their biases, which will make them more receptive to the importance CRT holds on the success for ELLs. Prior to exploring effective teaching strategies and materials participants will review what Culturally Responsive Teaching is, this will be accomplished by having participants work with their table group and read pages 1207-1210 of Kieran and Andersons study which provides information on Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT). Staff will be asked to complete a note taking sheet (see Appendix C) to outline important and relevant information related to CRT, followed by a group discussion which highlights key aspects based upon Kieran and Andersons study.

Strategies and Materials

Based on Yang et al. (2024) participants will be advised that when we celebrate the diversities of ELLs, we are fostering self-sufficiency that has been linked to academic achievement in

ELLs. ELLs social emotional development is critical to the implementation of Culturally Responsive Teaching, as Sheng et al. (2011) claims that the ELL population has the largest drop out rating. Lack of support and social emotional learning within the classroom environment contributes to the number of ELLs that dropout of school. Therefore, as previously stated in Chapter 2, allowing ELLs to engage in activities where they can share in class discussions will greatly improve the risk of dropout rates amongst ELLs. Presenters will review a slide that outlines the most up to date information in regard to ELL dropout rates within the school district, state and nationwide.

Ladson-Billings (2021) claims that “Culturally relevant teaching empowers students to maintain cultural integrity while succeeding academically” (p. 217). Additionally, Yuan et al. (2019) claims that Culturally Responsive teaching is important for the social development and academic outcomes of students from diverse backgrounds. Furthermore, Fu et al. (2017) suggests that effective learning outcomes take place successfully when strategies that are aligned with the student’s cultural backgrounds are incorporated into the classroom content and throughout the educational environment. CRT requires teachers to be trained and prepared to create and implement a learning environment that utilizes the student’s cultural differences to enhance their academic knowledge and social emotional development.

Nieto (2002) suggests that effective teaching of ELLs incorporates materials and information that is responsive to the diverse needs and different backgrounds of the learner. Insuring that classroom libraries are Culturally Responsive is a great way to do this, participants will be given a classroom library questionnaire about the reading materials within their classrooms, each participant will be given about 5minutes to complete this questionnaire to the best of their ability (see Appendix D). Participants will be encouraged to audit their classroom libraries using the

classroom library audit sheet (see Appendix E) upon return to their rooms. The presenter will encourage participants to compare their libraries to their questionnaires and research materials that will make their libraries a more culturally responsive environment for ELLs. The participants will be shown how to engage all students in reading activities through the use of multicultural literature that incorporates diversity and a variety of cultures for various grade levels (see Appendix F for examples). The trainer will model this read-aloud by directing the participants to independently watch the link to a video reading of the book *The Day You Begin* written by Jacqueline Woodson and prompt the participants to share information with their table partners in relation to their cultural backgrounds. Tables will be asked to designate a table leader to present the different cultures within their group. This will allow ELLs to share their experiences and cultures and create a classroom community that fosters acceptance, understanding and unity. Participants will be given a chance at a later time to practice this strategy with their table groups using the multicultural books provided.

Another component of the PD will be to train participants in the use of computer base support such as Microsoft Translator as well as Windows Voice typing Dictation. Every student within the school district is given a laptop device upon enrollment, these programs are downloaded prior to the receipt of the device and the students are given proper training by school tech support with the assistance of the ESOL Compliance Liaison. Both software's allow ELLs to utilize their native language to help them access content and materials. As previously reviewed, Lau and Shea (2022) highlight the importance of understanding ELLs and recognizing that their different cultures and languages are not a disadvantage, they express that these differences should be utilized to enhance what the learner knows. Participants will be trained on how to effectively utilize Microsoft Translator and Windows Voice Typing Dictation as a form of active

communication between the teacher and learner as well as the learner and the content (see Appendix G and H). Furthermore, participants being shown how to translate materials through Google Translate. This will allow equal access to materials for all students (see Appendix I). Participants will remain in their table groups and work with staff members who have been provided with previous training on how to download their lessons and materials onto Google Translate and translate the previously created material into the languages of individual students. Incorporating these materials and strategies will allow teachers and school staff to create an inclusive classroom that is welcoming to the diverse cultures of ELLs, for all students and create a more effective form of communication for students and families.

Day 2: CRT Initiative

Day two of the CRT Initiative will begin with an introduction of the presenters as well as the review of group norms and expectations. The presenters will conduct a temperature check of the participants in which they will rate themselves on a scale of 1-5 based on their knowledge of Culturally Responsive Teaching strategies and how to effectively implement them to improve the academic outcomes of ELLs. The day two agenda (see Appendix J) will be reviewed before beginning the training.

Another strategy that will be presented within the training will be the development of a Word Walls (see Appendix K). Word Walls are utilized to enhance vocabulary use and the understanding of high frequency words within classrooms. While these may vary across grade levels and content areas, Word Walls should be provided within all classrooms and built upon throughout the school year. They should include keywords in English while being supported by the native languages of the students within the classroom. A visual aid is highly recommended to enhance ELL comprehension. More complex words should include brief definitions in the

student's home language to guide their understanding. Participants will be given a few minutes to speak with their table about different key terms and ways they can incorporate this within their classroom, tables will be given the opportunity to share out their thoughts and ideas.

By incorporating culturally responsive materials into the classroom such as adaptive technology and culturally diverse literature sources that utilizes students' cultural backgrounds and languages students will feel welcome and comfortable in their classroom and excel in academics across all content areas. Participants will be presented with a new school wide method, this will be the incorporation of multilingual visuals and signs throughout the school campus, which will also create a sense of comfort, encouragement and community for English Language Learners (see Appendix L, M, N and O).

As previously discussed in the literature review in Chapter 2, ELLs benefit when provided with multiple instructional strategies that are focused on their needs (Irby et al., 2018). To guide participants through the implementation of Culturally Responsive Teaching I will provide them with an ELL Lesson Planning template (see Appendix P) to help guide teachers in constructing effective lessons for their ELLs. This lesson plan template will provide guidelines and offer support for teachers when creating Culturally Responsive lesson plans. One major way that this lesson template will be effective is that it includes a designated time period, prior to each lesson to present new vocabulary and present students with keywords that occur throughout lesson. This provides important prior knowledge to ELLs which will enhance comprehension on the upcoming lesson, these new terms should be added to their word wall as a way to aid ELLs throughout the lesson. It is important to remind educators that while these lesson plans are not formal and are not a requirement that should be submitted to administrators it is a good way to formulate effective Culturally Responsive Teaching lessons daily. The lesson plan template will

be reviewed and the participants will be broken into groups organized by grade level and content area. In these groups' participants will use this lesson plan template to create a Culturally Responsive lesson that can be utilized within their classrooms, presenters will rotate the room to assist and guide as needed. Before moving on, the groups will present their lesson plans and other participants will be given a chance to provide feedback or suggestions.

As a close out to the CRT initiative participants will be given a student questionnaire (see Appendix Q), that they will be asked to give to their students. This questionnaire will allow students feelings to be heard and will made educators aware of ELLs feelings towards the current level of academics they are receiving. Teachers will be advised to conduct the student questionnaire prior to the mid-year follow up training to see how the views of their ELL students have changed in regard to their academics and importance within the classroom. Participants will also be given a list of Organizations that advocate for culturally diversity and equity that was recognized by Gay (2018). Which participants are encouraged to research to enhance their knowledge of CRT and to help inform the families of ELLs about CRT and programs available to them. Before exiting the professional development, participants will be asked to complete an exit ticket (see Appendix R), this will help the presenters to revise and enhance the professional development for future trainings.

Intended Outcomes

The outcomes of the CRT Initiative PD are to develop cultural acceptance of the diverse backgrounds of ELLs within a school district that is continually expanding its ELL population and maintaining high expectations and goals for the academic success of all its students. The information provided within this PD to school faculty will provide crucial information to that will actively increase awareness of ELLs and their needs and will guide the instruction of the

teacher to insure academic success for ELLs. Within Chapter 4 I will summarize the review of research, and how the implementation of these frameworks, as well as teacher preparation increases the academic outcomes and social emotional development of ELLs. Additionally, faculty members will strengthen their understanding of English Language Learners which will lead to increased academic outcomes in the classroom and will aid in closing the gaps of academic achievement for ELLs. Culturally Responsive Teaching will allow educators to provide a safe classroom environment for all students.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

The purpose of this capstone project is was to gain understanding about how Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) can improve learning outcomes for English Language Learners (ELLs) and enhance social emotional learning. Good et al. (2010) reviews three areas in which educators show limitations. They explain that educators lack the knowledge in areas such as language acquisition, multiculturalism and instructional strategies for ELLs, such as CRT. According to Irby et al. (2018) the lack of teaching knowledge pertaining to topics such as language acquisition, culturally responsive teaching and multiculturalism, directly impacts the overall academic outcomes and success of ELLs. This creates disparities within education and results in achievement gaps for the English Language Learner population.

As previously stated within Chapter 2, Clayton et al. (2021) expresses that the development of social emotional learning for ELLs is crucial as it is a major factor in achieving adequate language acquisition. Enhanced academic outcomes for ELLs is directly related to the student's ability to develop appropriate social emotional skills. In order for students to achieve academic success and enhance their social emotional development educators should be properly trained. Without proper training in Culturally Responsive Teaching and multiculturalism educators are

unable to provide their students with the appropriate materials for success. Educators should be trained to create a culturally responsive classroom environment to build the connection and confidence of all students within their classrooms. Once teachers are able to incorporate CRT within their classrooms they will be able to understand the needs of ELLs and differentiate instruction utilizing the cultural differences of their students to ensure enhanced academic outcomes within the ELL population.

Implications for Student Learning

The literature review within this capstone has systematized many theories and studies in relation to ELLs within the education system and how CRT benefits student outcomes. These studies included influential theories from Ladson-Billings, Vygotsky, Freire and Gay to examine how a culturally responsive framework such as Culturally Responsive Teaching can have an impact and improve the learning outcomes for ELLs. As well as supporting studies from Nieto (2002), Quintero (2010), Clayton et al. (2021), Gilmore (2011) and Hassel and Rodge (2007) who all emphasize that ELLs often struggle due to the disconnection they feel towards the content. This disconnection to curriculum and peers, causes ELLs to feel uncomfortable and unwelcome within the classroom, which further enhances the disconnection between ELLs and their academics. These studies express that when a research-based framework such as Culturally Responsive teaching is implemented, educators and school staff can make use of their students' diverse cultures and backgrounds to create and provide a framework that focuses on the individualized needs of their students to improve learning outcomes for students and enhance students social-emotional development.

Studies from researches such as Bachmann (2024), Edmin (2016), Lotus Linton (2017), Kieran and Anderson (2019) and Gay (2002) highlighted the importance of teacher-student

relationships when utilizing CRT. They expressed that building relationships with students is vital to creating a learning atmosphere that is centered around socialization and cultural acceptance. When you form relationships with students they are more open to working within the classroom and are more comfortable to engage in these pivotal teaching moments. Creating these relationships allows the students to feel more comfortable in educational settings which opens their minds to you and they become more willing and susceptible to listening to what you are teaching and engaging in the content that is being presented.

In summary, the literature within chapter 2 displayed studies from researches such as Owens (2021), Cabrera et al. (2014), Gay (2002, 2018), Blankstein and Noguera (2016) and Hammond (2015), as well as many more, who all identify CRT as a way to foster academic gains. They report that most of what a child can do is directly related to their backgrounds and where they come from, that different populations of people come with different levels and areas of intelligence. These abilities should be fostered by an education that promotes their prior intelligences and enhances it through what they know, agreeing with Linton that any child can learn almost anything. They further express that Culturally Responsive Teaching requires educators to have empathy towards ELLs. This empathy is related to effective literacy instruction, empathy helps educators to understand the cultural barriers of ELLs and increase the use of the translanguaging pedagogy. When educators provide empathy towards these students and incorporate culturally responsive teaching strategies simultaneously, ELLs become more creative, take ownership of their learning and show an increase in academic gains. Empathy is a key component to the enhancement of social emotional learning amongst ELLs. Within the review of literature of the aforementioned studies we learn that Culturally Responsive Teaching is an asset in encouraging Social Emotional Development within ELLs, it recuperates ELLs self-

confidence and validity that they once had before entering a new environment. Educators must use social emotional learning, as a concept, to teach new skills and highlight ways that social emotional well-being can lead to opportunities for success, when this occurs student motivation is restored and the risk taking in learning is increased. When teachers use these social emotional strategies students learning is increased.

Implications for Teaching

While the review of the aforementioned studies, as well as others reviewed within chapter 2, indicate that CRT is critical to the academic outcomes and social emotional develop of the ELL population, the reality is that many educators are not properly trained to utilize such a framework. The literature review within this capstone identified studies from researchers such as but not limited to Yoon (2018), Leider et al. (2024), Gay (2018), Stairs-Davenport (2021) and Salem et al. (2023) who all emphasize that while professional teacher preparation is critical to provide ELLs with a curriculum that is geared towards their success, such as Culturally Responsive Teaching, studies have shown that majority of teachers across our nation feel unprepared to support the needs of ELLs within their classrooms. Educators participating in these various studies stated that they have not been effectively prepared to support ELLs within their classroom and are not comfortable in teaching them. It is crucial for educators to be properly trained to teach ELLs, as it will improve students' academic success and social emotional development.

While the literature review provided within this capstone creates a strong argument as to how and why CRT enhances academic outcomes and social emotional development for ELLs. It is important to understand that educational changes do not occur overnight. This change requires a commitment of school districts across the nation to provide educators with appropriate trainings

and professional developments on Culturally Responsive Teaching strategies and materials so that they are prepared to effectively teach ELL students from all cultural backgrounds. School districts must make a commitment to provide continuous on going supports for teachers throughout the school year when they are faced with challenges in relation to best practices within CRT and teaching ELLs. These educational changes also require commitments from the educators within these districts. Educators must be open to the idea of change and be held accountable for implementing changes that welcome ELLs into their classrooms and utilize these frameworks. Educators must maintain consistency across all content areas and classrooms to achieve the best results for the ELL population.

Recommendations for Future Research

Incorporating professional development plans related to Culturally Responsive Teaching for educators is a good start when in improving education for ELLs. But this is only just a start, moving forward greater efforts are needed to introduce and improve ENL programs across the nation as well as to increase nationwide awareness of the struggles and needs of the English Language Learner population. One recommendation is for districts to expand the accountability for school staff to incorporate CRT strategies and to continue enhancing their education with Culturally Responsive Teaching materials and strategies. As well as, fostering better working relationships with professional development trainers to guarantee ELLs are receiving best practices within their classrooms. Another recommendation for districts is to implement co-teaching classrooms within their schools that allow ENL teachers and teachers of specific content areas to collaborate with one another to ensure that ELLs are receiving the appropriate strategies and materials. ENL teachers can work with content area teachers to identify and implement strategies to make language and content accessible to all students, including ELLs,

through differentiated instruction and language scaffolding. The co teaching method allows teachers to share their knowledge, thoughts and idea with one another when planning collaboratively for instruction and assessment which will result in more effective and engaging lessons.

School districts should work on creating and maintaining relationships with organizations and programs such as Equity Alliance, Rethinking Schools, National Association for Multicultural Education and Teaching Tolerance as expressed by Gay (2018). This is crucial in ensuring that school districts are triumphant in providing academics environments that provide experiences inside the classroom which are engaging to all students and closing the achievement gaps of ELLS. Districts should promote individuals within the ESOL/ ENL department who will be responsible for holding meetings throughout the school year, with representatives from these organizations as well as teacher team leads and co teachers to receive instructional information, assistance and support in providing optimal CRT and implementation to ELLs. As well as information that will provide ELLs and their families with information that assists with educational learning and information regarding community resources.

Final Thoughts

English Language Learners are impacted by the lack of Culturally Responsive supports within schools. The lack of Culturally Responsive Teaching strategies, unfamiliarity of how to create relationships with ELLs and absence of culturally responsive classrooms prevent academic success and social emotional development for ELLs. Furthermore, ELLs confidence and self-sufficiency decrease, as well as their determination and motivation to remain in a school setting and engage in learning. The result of the implementation of CRT will enhance ELL programs and improve learning outcomes and social emotional development in ELLs, as well as, allow

educators to once again feel confident in their professional abilities. Consequently, successful implementation of Culturally Responsive Teaching is critical in closing the achievement gaps of ELLs and allowing them to enhance their academic outcomes, language acquisition and social emotional development.

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Appendix A





















Day 1 Agenda

- I. Introductions (Presenter and table groups)
- II. Review meeting norms and group expectations
- III. Temperature Check
- IV. Independent Self Reflection Questionnaire
- V. Table group Reading of Kieran and Anderson (2018) pages 1207-1210
- VI. Article Review / Q & A
- VII. Dropout Rates amongst ELLs
- VIII. Culturally Responsive Classroom Materials
 - Classroom Library Questionnaire
 - Classroom Library Audit
 - Read aloud of *The Day You Begin* by Jacqueline Woodson
 - Table Talk
 - Group Discussion
- IX. Computer Based Support
 - Microsoft Translate
 - Windows Voice Typing Dictation
 - Google Translate
- X. Review/ Q & A
- XI. Intro to Day 2 and Exit Ticket

Appendix B

Teacher Questionnaire

For each item, circle the response that best describes **YOUR** classroom, thumbs up for yes, thumbs down for no, question mark for unsure.

1. My teaching utilizes the cultural differences of students.  
2. I am aware of the various cultural backgrounds of my students.  
3. I use my student cultural backgrounds within my instruction to enhance student learning.  
4. I use Culturally responsive teaching throughout ALL subject areas.  
5. All teachers should be trained in CRT.  
6. All schools should have diverse faculty.  
7. Every student should be taught multicultural education.  
8. I differentiate my materials/ instruction individually for each student.  
9. ELLs should be given simpler/ less work than their peers.  
10. Staff attitudes of impact students in negative/ positive ways.  

Appendix C

Title of Article: _____

Author(s): _____ Date: _____

<p>Background</p> <p><i>What was the reason for this research?</i></p> <p><i>What has been determined?</i></p>	
<p>Methods</p> <p><i>What was the objective?</i></p>	
<p>Results</p> <p><i>What important information did you find?</i></p> <p><i>What surprised you?</i></p>	
<p>Data</p> <p><i>What data was surprising to you?</i></p> <p><i>Why did the authors include this data?</i></p>	
<p>Conclusions</p> <p><i>What did the authors prove about the topic?</i></p>	
<p>Next Steps</p> <p><i>What is proposed for the future as it relates to ELLs?</i></p>	
<p>Significance</p> <p><i>Why does this research matter?</i></p>	
<p>My thoughts and Questions</p>	

Appendix D
Classroom Library Survey

Answer the survey to the best of your ability as it pertains to your classroom library.

My classroom library contains books with multicultural main characters/ characters from other regions.

YES	I am unsure	No
-----	-------------	----

My classroom library represents different types of families.

YES	I am unsure	No
-----	-------------	----

My classroom library has books set in other regions (countries, states, geographic regions etc.)

YES	I am unsure	No
-----	-------------	----

My classroom library contains books in other languages relevant to my students.

YES	I am unsure	No
-----	-------------	----

My classroom library has books that represent stereotypes/misrepresentations of other cultures.

YES	I am unsure	No
-----	-------------	----

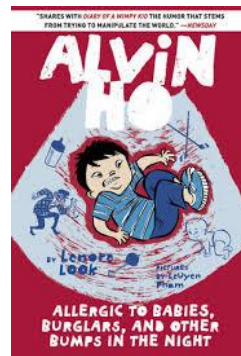
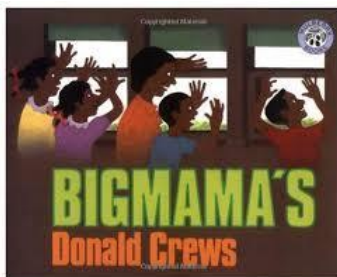
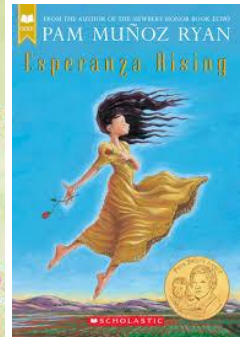
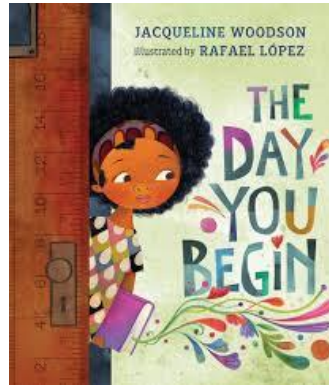
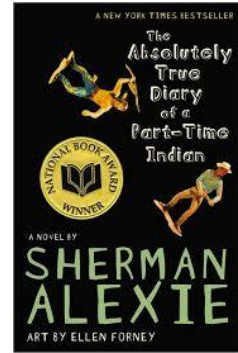
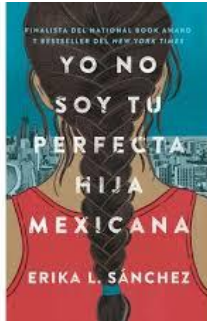
My classroom library focuses on areas of culture rather than the whole person (flags, food, festivals).

YES	I am unsure	No
-----	-------------	----

My classroom library represents the cultures of my students and the community around us.

YES	I am unsure	No
-----	-------------	----

Appendix F



Appendix G

Microsoft Translator Tutorial

Step 1: Download/ Open the App (Educator AND Student)

Download: Download the Microsoft Translator app from the Google Play Store or Apple Store

Open: Open the Microsoft Translator app on your device and the student's device

Step 2: Choose Your Translation Method

Text:

- Click the icon that looks like a "Keyboard"
- Choose the starting language or "from" language in the left drop-down
- Choose the receiving language or "to" language in the right drop-down
- Type your text and click "Translate"

Speech: ***Make sure you have a microphone or device that can listen/ hear***

- Click the icon that looks like a "Microphone"
- Choose the starting language or "from" language and the receiving language or "to" language.
- Press and hold the microphone icon and begin speaking.
- Let go of the microphone icon, and your translation will be presented.

Camera:

- Click the icon that looks like a "camera"
- Aim the camera at the text you wish to be translated
- The app will translate the chosen text into a translated image

Conversation Mode:

- Click on the "conversation icon", it should look like two people talking
- Click your chosen language and enter the conversation
- Join the conversation by clicking the microphone icon and talking, or by typing in the given text box
- If you are the conversation starter, press start, type your name, and your language then press enter
- Share the conversation code given to you by the app or the QR code with the individuals you wish to engage in conversation with.

Appendix H

Windows Voice Typing Dictation Tutorial

*****Ensure that your students have a device that is Microsoft Compatible*****

Step 1: Make sure your device has a functioning microphone as well as internet access

Step 2: Open where you would like to type.

Step 3: Hover your cursor over the text that you wish to translate.

Step 4: Activate Windows Voice Typing Dictation by clicking the Windows
Logo + H

Step 5: Begin talking into your microphone

Step 6: Pause your talking for a couple of seconds or press the microphone to pause or end the dictation.

Appendix I

Google Translate Tutorial

Step 1: Go to translate.google.com this is where you can access google translate in your web browser, you do not need to download an app

Step 2: Click “documents” at the top of the page and upload your document. You may choose documents that are in the form of PDFs, Microsoft Word or Microsoft PowerPoint

Step 3: Pick your language

Step 4: You will choose to either “download” your translation or “open” your translation. Download allows you to save the translation for later use, while opening the translation will open it for the current time only.

Step 5: Review the document to make sure the entire document was translated.

Step 6: If you chose you may click “Share” to share the translated document directly, you will choose your preference of sharing option at this time.

Appendix J

Day 2 Agenda

- I. Introductions (Presenter and table groups)**
- II. Review meeting norms and group expectations**
- III. Temperature Check**
- IV. Day 1 Review/ Q&A**
- V. Word Walls**
- VI. Quizlet**
- VII. Present New Culturally Responsive Schoolwide Methodology**
- VIII. Culturally Responsive Teaching Lesson Plan**
 - **Explain/ Review**
 - **Separate into groups based on grade level and content area**
 - **Create Group Lesson Plan**
- IX. Student Questionnaire**
- X. Exit Ticket/ PD Reflection**

Appendix K

Word Wall Examples



Appendix L



Appendix M



Appendix N



Appendix O



Appendix P
ELL Lesson Plan Template

Grade

Subject

Date

Learning Objectives:

- 1.
- 2.

Standards:

Vocabulary Terms:

Multicultural/ CRT Supports:

Student Activity

Assessment/ Check for Understanding

Notes/ Reminders:

Appendix Q

Student Classroom Environment Questionnaire

Name: _____ **Grade:** _____ **Date:** _____

Directions: Circle your response to the questions below about how your current classroom makes you feel.

1. **My classroom makes me feel safe and comfortable.**
 Never Sometimes Always

2. **My classmates make me feel comfortable**
 Never Sometimes Always

3. **My teacher makes me feel like I belong.**
 Never Sometimes Always

4. **My feelings are taken into consideration**
 Never Sometimes Always

5. **People care about me in my classroom**
 Never Sometimes Always

6. **I feel judged in my classroom by my teacher**
 Never Sometimes Always

7. **I feel judged in my classroom by my peers**
 Never Sometimes Always

8. **I learn in my classroom**
 Never Sometimes Always

9. **I am happy to be in my classroom.**
 Never Sometimes Always

Appendix R

CRT Initiative Exit Ticket

Attendee Name/ Work Location:

Overall rating of the activity

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
-----------	------	------	------

Objectives were clearly stated and appropriate

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
-----------	------	------	------

Participation and Involvement for attendees

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
-----------	------	------	------

Application value was practical and applicable to classrooms and/ or workplace

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
-----------	------	------	------

How will this training change your current practices/ what will you begin to implement?

How will this training impact student learning in the classroom?

What did you find most beneficial for students?

What would you have liked to see more of/ have more information on?