

3-2-2022

Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching Practices for English Learners

Alanna Williamson
williama22@csp.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.csp.edu/teacher-education_masters



Part of the [Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Williamson, A. (2022). *Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching Practices for English Learners* (Thesis, Concordia University, St. Paul). Retrieved from https://digitalcommons.csp.edu/teacher-education_masters/58

This Non Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@CSP. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Teacher Education by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@CSP. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@csp.edu.

Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching Practices for English Learners

Alanna Williamson

Concordia University, St. Paul

ED 590: Conducting Research and Completing the Capstone, Cohort 037

Professor Brian Boothe, Ed.D.

Second Reader: Tosca Grimm, Ed.D.

February 19, 2022

Table of Contents

Abstract	4
Chapter One: Introduction	5
Importance of the Topic	5
Scope of Research	6
Definition of Terms	7
Research Question	8
Conclusion	8
Chapter Two: Literature Review	8
Review of the Proposed Problem	10
Review of the Importance of the Topic	10
Teacher Perceptions of ELLs	10
Negative Perceptions of ELLs	11
The Impact of CLR on Perceptions	14
Effective CLR Strategies	20
Cultural Awareness and Responsiveness	21
Linguistic Awareness and Responsiveness	24
ELLs as Independent Learners	27
Summary of Findings	32
Conclusion	32
Chapter 3: Discussion, Application, and Future Studies	33
Insights Gained from the Research	33
Applications for Professional Practice	35

Recommendations for Future Studies 36

Conclusion 37

References 40

Appendix 44

Abstract

English Language Learners (ELLs) in the United States have continually underachieved in literacy. This paper evaluated research done on the effectiveness of culturally and linguistically responsive (CLR) practices on literacy improvement for preschool to early elementary ELLs. Multiple studies were synthesized in the areas of positive and negative teacher perceptions, effective culturally and linguistically responsive strategies, and creating independent learners. The research determined CLR teaching to be an effective method for improving teacher perceptions of ELLs. It was also shown that through culturally and linguistically responsive practices, teachers can offer successful literacy strategies. The studies additionally indicated CLR practices could assist in developing self-motivated learners. While the data was promising, the majority of the studies were completed with exclusively Spanish-speaking students using limited means. Therefore, more studies must be done on the effects of CLR practices on a more linguistically diverse participant pool using a larger variety of resources.

Keywords: English learner, English language learner, culturally responsive teaching, culturally and linguistically responsive teaching, teacher perceptions, independent learner

Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching Practices for English Learners

Chapter One: Introduction

In the United States, students learning English as an additional language have been twice as likely to drop out of school as their native English-speaking peers (Soland & Sandilos, 2020). Despite this staggering statistic, training for teachers who work with multilingual students has been extremely limited (Rizzuto, 2017). As more English Language Learners (ELLs) join US schools every year, mainstream classrooms have become populated with a complex variety of cultures and languages. Teaching ELLs to read, write, and have discussions in English comes with unique rewards, but also many challenges. With such vast differences in languages and cultures, ELLs bring new ideas and ways of thinking to the classroom. However, despite teachers' efforts, English Learner (EL) students have perpetually struggled with literacy skills in the mainstream classroom. According to the latest National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) report, only four to eight percent of EL students scored at or above proficient in the English Language Arts (ELA) assessment (Whitenack et al., 2019). Additionally, most ELLs did not meet the yearly required state ELA progress goals (Soland & Sandilos, 2020). Because of these deficits, EL students are not able to share their unique perspectives with the class, instead blending into the back of the classroom, or struggling to engage in discussions and assignments with their peers.

Importance of the Topic

Every learner deserves the opportunity to thrive in the classroom. The data previously mentioned showed ELLs have not been properly included in their classroom experiences. Every EL child brings a unique culture, language, and background to the mainstream classroom. Based on data involving the effects of multilingualism on the brain, EL students are no less capable of

learning than their mainstream peers (Legault et al., 2019). In fact, learning an additional language has been shown to increase memory and critical thinking skills (Legault et al., 2019). It is the EL teacher and classroom teachers' jobs to work together to differentiate their instruction by making the most of those cultures and experiences. One way to achieve this is through the use of culturally and linguistically responsive (CLR) teaching and learning practices. This concept was first introduced by Ladson-Billings as Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) in 1995, with the intention of fostering educational success in African American students (Ladson-Billings, 1995). It was later expanded upon by Gay (2000), whose influential research expanded the approach to become "culturally responsive pedagogy" (p. 31). Since then, it has been improved upon even more to specifically focus on English Language Learners (Hollie, 2012; Hammond 2015). The research done on CLR teaching practices is critical to ensuring the best literacy outcomes for EL students in a mainstream classroom.

Scope of Research

Culturally and linguistically responsive teaching practices are an essential component to ELL literacy success. Through the abundance of research completed on CLR teaching practices, their effectiveness has been proven evident (Castro-Olivo et al., 2018; Lohfink & Loya, 2010; López, 2016). The purpose of this study was to investigate how CLR strategies can be used to improve literacy in preschool to early elementary EL students. This goal was completed through an examination and application of literature.

The analysis sought to determine how teacher preferences could affect ELL success. It also determined which strategies were proven the most successful, as well as how CLR practices created independent learners. The focus of the present study was on preschool to early elementary students, even though the research covered some studies of middle and high-school

classrooms as well. Additionally, while CLR can be used in any nation, the researcher did not investigate studies outside of the US. The present analysis investigated research done in qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods studies. However, the majority of the studies were qualitative, due to the interview-based nature of the research. While the research done was intended to apply to any demographic of ELL, the majority of the research was completed with students who spoke Spanish.

Definition of Terms

English Learner (EL) is a label which can be used to describe multiple concepts in educational fields. For example, EL programs involve teaching English as an additional language. Additionally, EL educators teach English to multilingual students, and EL learners are students who are learning English as an additional language (Callahan & Shifrer, 2016).

English Language Learners (ELLs) are students who are learning English as a language additional to what they already speak. They are provided EL services generally after completing a home language survey. English Language Learners can face unique challenges when compared to their mainstream peers. Due to these challenges, ELLs require different teaching strategies from monolingual learners (Soland & Sandilos, 2020).

Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) is a broad term which encompasses a teacher's ability to understand how students have a variety of ways they learn due to cultural differences. Teachers who use CRT value those differences and use them as a scaffold to meaningful learning. Culturally responsive teaching can include multiple types of differentiation and inclusive strategies for educators of culturally diverse student populations. However, the strategies always involve honoring the personal cultures of students and building independence in students of minority status (Hammond, 2015).

Culturally and Linguistically Responsive (CLR) is a term used to describe teaching practices specifically targeted to students who have a variety of both cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Educators who adopt CLR teaching practices use students' home languages and cultures as an asset to academic success. They believe language and culture should be valued as important tools for bridging student knowledge and classroom goals (Hollie, 2012).

Research Question

In order for EL students to reach their full learning potential, teachers must be properly equipped to educate them. This raised the question, in light of what is known about differentiation in the classroom, how can culturally and linguistically responsive teaching practices lead to higher literacy for preschool to early elementary English Language Learners? The data found will not only benefit ELLs, but help educators deepen learning for every student in their classroom.

Conclusion

Many studies have been conducted on the effectiveness of CLR teaching. Through studying this research, EL and classroom teachers can find a way to help every EL student achieve literacy in English. To consolidate the studies, a review of literature has been completed. The first section of the following literature review will cover the various perceptions of ELLs teachers have, and how CLR has affected these perceptions. The subsequent portion will investigate CLR practices which have been shown to be effective for EL students to improve literacy. Finally, the impact of CLR on student independence and literacy will be discussed.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

English Language Learners have consistently fallen short of literacy standards in the United States (Soland & Sandilos, 2020). In order to fix this issue, educators must incorporate

the most effective educational methods. Culturally and linguistically responsive teaching is a practice which is already used in many classrooms. If utilized properly, it could prove to increase literacy skills of early elementary EL students. This literature review determined the effectiveness of CLR practices on increasing literacy among ELLs. It investigated studies done using mixed-methods, qualitative, and quantitative data to reach this goal.

The research addressed three main themes of study. The first section of this literature review will cover the impacts of teacher perceptions on culturally responsive teaching, and how CLR practices created a shift in teacher perceptions of ELLs. Rizzuto (2017) and Atwater et al. (2010) found many teachers, often unintentionally, perceive ELLs in a negative way. This in turn caused instruction to weaken. Additionally, Reece and Nodine (2014), Mellom et al. (2018), Mette et al. (2016), and Trumbull et al. (2020) discovered the use of CLR practices can have a positive effect on how teachers perceive their ELLs.

The second section of the following literature review will discuss how CLR practices led to more effective teaching techniques. The strategies were divided into two areas of instruction: linguistic awareness and cultural awareness. Researchers Castro-Olivo et al. (2018), López (2016), and Lohfink and Loya, (2010) found being conscious of the cultures in the classroom and intentionally incorporating culturally relevant texts and topics could greatly increase student engagement and information retention. Additionally, Lin (2015) and Méndez et al. (2015) discovered the importance of using students' home languages alongside explicit English phonics and vocabulary instruction. Their findings demonstrated the strong impact these practices can have on multilingual learners.

Finally, the third section of this literature review will examine how CLR practices improved ELL students' academic mindsets by creating independent learners. The researchers

Kelley et al. (2015), Clark and Fleming (2019), Zhang-Wu (2017), and Borrero et al. (2013) found when using CLR teaching practices, students were more comfortable in their learning, felt more included and represented, and reported higher levels of engagement. These factors led to more independence for ELLs in their learning, and therefore higher literacy.

Review of the Proposed Problem

Despite the efforts of educators in the US, ELLs continually fall far below their English-speaking peers in literacy scores (Soland & Sandilos, 2020). This does not align with data suggesting multilingual individuals generally have increased thinking skills and better memory in comparison with their monolingual peers (Legault et al., 2019). Therefore, a change needs to be made in the education of ELLs in the US. In light of what is known about current methods of differentiated instruction, culturally and linguistically responsive teaching practices should be used to lead to higher literacy for preschool to early elementary ELLs.

Review of the Importance of the Topic

English Language Learners carry a rich wealth of knowledge and experiences which benefit any classroom. Their voices need to be heard. Culturally and linguistically responsive teaching practices can provide a bridge for ELLs to acquire English and fully participate in classroom activities (Zhang-Wu, 2017). For that reason, it is critical both classroom teachers and EL teachers are educated in CLR teaching practices. Once properly implemented, CLR practices can improve teacher perceptions of ELLs, increase the number of effective teaching strategies used, and lead to higher independence and academic mindset of EL students (Rizzuto, 2017).

Teacher Perceptions of ELLs

The way teachers view their students has always had a significant impact on how well students thrive in the classroom. According to the research identified in this literature review,

one of the many benefits of CLR teaching practices is they inspire teachers to share a common mindset about their multilingual students (Mette et al., 2016). Therefore, the first theme found in the current research of CLR is the importance of teacher perceptions. This theme is comprised of two aspects. First, many teachers approach ELLs with a negative view of their potential for learning. Without a positive opinion from teachers, true culturally and linguistically responsive teaching cannot occur, and EL students' literacy will suffer (Rizzuto, 2017). However, this theme also pointed to evidence suggesting CLR can effectively shape teacher perceptions of multilingual learners in a positive way, which has led to deeper student understanding and learning.

Many researchers have studied the impact of teacher perceptions of ELLs on their academic achievement. Their research has been divided into two categories. First, Rizzuto (2017) and Atwater et al. (2010) conducted studies into the damage from negative perceptions of ELLs and how this caused their learning to falter. Next, Reece and Nodine (2014), Mellom et al. (2018), Mette et al. (2016), and Trumbull et al. (2020) researched the impact of CLR on teacher perceptions, investigating positive outcomes. The data from these researchers demonstrated the importance of CLR for early elementary ELLs in the US, which in turn created better learning environments for the students.

Negative Perceptions of ELLs

Valuing ELL participation and contribution to learning is a key element of CLR practices (Zhang-Wu, 2017). Unfortunately, studies have shown many teachers have begun their teaching with a negative view of their ELLs (Rizzuto, 2017). Their perceptions shaped their instruction, and EL students received inferior, culturally non-responsive literacy instruction. This has been extremely damaging to ELL students' academic achievement, since they have not received the

same information and learning as their English-speaking peers. Rizzuto (2017) and Atwater et al. (2010) conducted studies on the effects of these negative teacher perceptions and presented their findings.

In Rizzuto's (2017) mixed-method study, ten different teachers' perceptions of ELLs in New Jersey were analyzed. The purpose of the study was to determine both what the view of the teachers were, as well as if their perceptions impacted their literacy instruction of the ELLs in their classrooms. The ten classroom teachers taught a range from preschool to third grade students at a linguistically diverse school. Nine of the teachers were classroom teachers, and one was a Spanish teacher. Their teaching experience ranged from three to 30 years. The students at the school came from 47% English-speaking families, and 53% Spanish-speaking families. The teacher participants were purposefully chosen to first fill out a questionnaire, and then complete eight semi-structured interviews, which lasted over the course of eight weeks. They were asked about learning expectations for ELLs, as well as the level of training they had received in differentiation and instruction of ELLs. After the quantitative and qualitative data was collected, the researchers compared the results to answer their research questions. In this study, it was found 70% of the teachers interviewed perceived their EL students in a negative way. One teacher wrote, "The ELLs play so rough. I guess it's because they just don't understand or maybe it's what they learn at home" (Rizzuto, 2017, p. 191). Additionally, many educators did not believe incorporating the students' home languages into instruction would be beneficial, or that differentiation should be required for ELLs. Unfortunately, this was not an exception, as Mellom et al. (2018) found similar results in their study. This data goes against the research which suggests EL students should be provided with culturally relevant, bilingual content (Lohfink & Loya, 2010). Instead, the teachers were using a "diluted curriculum" with their linguistically

diverse students (Rizzuto, 2017, p. 195). This research both supported the need for culturally and linguistically responsive teaching practices, as well as demonstrated the massive effects a negative perception of ELLs can have on their quality of education. Without CLR teaching, EL students were not receiving adequate literacy instruction.

As previously mentioned, a study completed by Atwater et al. (2010) supported Rizzuto's (2017) data through its analysis of two teacher perceptions of EL students. In this qualitative case study, the researchers sought to determine how the teachers used culturally responsive teaching with students they viewed as "others" in their classroom (Atwater et al., 2010, p. 288). While the term 'others' was unique to this study, the goal was still primarily to determine teacher perceptions of ELLs in a mainstream classroom. Atwater et al.'s (2010) two participants were in a program to receive a Master of Education to become science teachers. Both teachers were white females between 24 and 27 years old. The researchers were acutely aware of the possibility of misinterpretation of data, due to the nature of their research. Because of that, Atwater et al. (2010) intentionally sought to minimize this by limiting their own input into the data. For this two-part study, the participants first answered a questionnaire about their own culture and background during their first semester, then completed three interviews. After their second semester, they completed three additional interviews answering four questions. These questions asked them about their views of the importance of culturally responsive teaching, as well as their prior experience and current implementation of CRT. The teachers also provided suggestions for the preparation program they were a part of. Just as with Rizzuto's (2017) research, the authors of this study determined both of the participants had a limited understanding of the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students. Because of this, they were not able to effectively use CLR teaching practices in their classrooms and their students received insufficient literacy

instruction. By implementing CLR teaching practices into their education, these teachers could have improved their ELL students' school experiences. Additionally, strengthening their engagement and connection to the curriculum would have potentially enhanced student reading and writing abilities.

Both the study by Rizzuto (2017) and that of Atwater et al. (2010) showed discouraging results of how teachers might view their ELLs. However, they additionally shared similar limitations. Both studies utilized an extremely small pool of participants. Because of this, the data collected cannot be assumed to represent the majority of teachers in the United States. However, it did offer a glimpse into the importance of CLR teaching, and how educators need to embrace the practices for them to be effective.

The Impact of CLR on Perceptions

While negative views of multilingual learners can have a harmful impact on learning, studies have been done on the ways CLR practices can remedy this problem. By helping teachers to understand the cultures, learning processes, skills, and challenges of their multilingual students, educators are able to understand their full potential. These studies provided evidence in the benefits of CLR training and implementation for ELL academic success. Reece and Nodine (2014), Mellom et al. (2018), Mette et al. (2016), and Trumbull et al. (2020) sought to investigate specific instances where CLR benefitted teacher views of the ELLs they worked with.

A study completed by Reece and Nodine (2014) was designed specifically to determine the impact of CLR practices on the planning and teaching of preservice teachers. The researchers additionally wanted to observe how preconceived perceptions of race and socioeconomic status had an effect on preservice teachers, and to see how CLR teaching affected those perceptions. The participants of the study were one white male, aged 41, and three white females between the

ages of 20 and 22. The elementary school where the study took place was in Georgia, US, with a population which was 98% Hispanic, and 58% ELLs. Similar to the previous studies by Rizzuto (2017) and Atwater et al. (2010), this qualitative study was conducted through the use of observations and interviews with the preservice teachers. Reece and Nodine (2014) collaborated with the principal of the school to have the teachers create a two-week social studies curriculum. During the instruction, the participants found they needed to drastically alter their original plan based on the needs of their students. They did not realize in their initial planning all of the areas where pre-teaching, background building, and careful language choices would be necessary for their ELLs. These perceptions would have resulted in instruction the students were not fully able to access. Once realizing they lacked cultural relevance, one teacher was able to adjust their lesson to discuss more difficult topics and establish deeper connections with the students in their class. These connections enabled them to discuss culturally relevant topics, while also expanding the students' understanding of the content material (Zhang-Wu, 2017). This would not have been possible without the knowledge of CLR practices they had gained. During the training, all of the teachers were forced to discuss race and culture in a safe environment, which pushed them to become more culturally responsive educators.

After the study was completed, Reece and Nodine (2014) conducted a follow-up interview with two of the teachers. This was a unique element to their study when compared to other, similar research. They found one of the teachers had moved to a predominantly white school and had ceased use of any of the CLR practices, despite the fact they had ELLs in their classroom. This unfortunate situation showed the level of effort CLR practices can take. Even though this teacher did not view their ELLs as inferior or unable to achieve, they did not see the need to tailor instruction to such a small demographic of their classroom. This teacher was not

willing to continue the work, and their ELLs could have suffered because of it. The other teacher, however, was in a very diverse school and taught many ELLs and immigrant students. This participant worked to give each student a voice, even without knowing any English. They additionally began their own independent study on CLR practices to further improve their teaching. This example demonstrated the benefits CLR instruction can have on a teacher's views of ELLs if they are willing to complete the work.

Reece and Nodine (2014) determined a more in-depth CLR course for undergraduate teachers was necessary. Additionally, they realized in order for their model to work, teachers must be intrinsically motivated to continue the work on themselves and their classrooms. For this reason, Reece and Nodine (2014) believed mentoring programs could help teachers transition into pursuing CLR practices independently.

While much of the previous data in this area of research involved small participant pools, a large, multi-year study was completed by Mellom et al. (2018), which investigated the effects of CLR teaching practices on teacher perceptions of ELLs. In their study, Mellom et al. (2018) collected data using mixed-methods research. The participants of the study were 147 third through fifth grade classroom teachers from 15 rural, suburban, and urban districts in northern Georgia, US. They came from 47 elementary schools with high poverty and large ELL populations which were primarily Latino/a. Mellom et al. (2018) randomly assigned the participants into both treatment and control groups, to keep the data as accurate as possible. The research questions of this two-year study were, "What are the teachers prevailing attitudes towards ELLs?" and "How do these attitudes change in relation to their work with the Instructional Conversation?" (Mellom et al., 2018, p. 101). During the first year of the study, the experimental group received extensive training in "instructional conversation pedagogy," which

was a culturally responsive pedagogy the researchers claimed had been proven effective (Mellom et al., 2018, p. 100). This pedagogy included scheduled teacher-led conversations with small groups of three to seven students. The communication was intended to be ‘adult-like’ and lasted for approximately 20 minutes. For the second year, the participants had monthly check-ins and evaluations. The control group only received their standard professional development at their schools or through their district. The data was collected during the second year of the study primarily in the form of 26 surveys. These each consisted of eight to 12 short answer, multiple selection, and Likert questions intended to measure teacher growth. They asked about attitudes toward ELLs, student language use in the classroom, and implementation of CLR pedagogy. From this study, Mellom et al. (2018) found cultural assumptions and prejudices held a heavy influence on teacher perceptions and attitudes toward ELLs. This conclusion corresponded with the previous results of Rizzuto (2017), Atwater et al. (2010), and Reece and Nodine (2014). However, throughout the study, the teachers in the experimental group experienced positive changes. These changes correlated with the findings of Borrero et al. (2013) whose study on student self-efficacy will be analyzed later in the review of literature. Just as in Borrero et al.’s (2013) study, the teachers in Mellom et al.’s (2018) research began seeing more EL student independence, understood their ELLs better, and began allowing them to use their home language in the classroom. When compared to the control group, there was definite growth.

Another study which impacted teacher perceptions of ELLs was conducted by researchers Mette et al. (2016). They developed a district-wide professional development (PD) study which sought to answer the questions, “How do teachers perceive culturally responsive pedagogy professional development based on their job assignment?” and “What do teachers perceive as the greatest successes and challenges in implementing culturally responsive

pedagogy?" (Mette et al. 2016, p. 8). Specifically, in this study, the researchers collected quantitative data on teacher perceptions of non-white students. The participants of the study consisted of 73 high-school teachers in a large, predominantly white district in the midwestern US. Of the teachers 20 were male, 52 were female, and one did not disclose. They had a range of 1-20 years of teaching experience. Of the 73 teachers, 67 were white. The research was conducted over the course of three years in the form of 45-minute Professional Learning Community (PLC) sessions. During the PLCs, teachers read works by many authors on culturally responsive pedagogy. In order to keep the data equal across the PLCs, a common script was used. Data was collected in the form of surveys sent via email to the teachers. The surveys used 11 Likert scaled items, with teachers able to respond an answer of one to four. The data from the surveys was averaged to find a result.

According to the data, Mette et al. (2016) found the majority of teachers agreed the PD helped them alter their views of their students. However, the teachers did not believe this PD would help them close the achievement gap. Their reasons were primarily due to lack of time and unwillingness of colleagues to implement CLR practices. This outcome showed one of the main limitations to the study, which was that the teachers were mandated to participate in the program. Due to this fact, there was not the level of passion required to create actual change in teaching practices. Additionally, this study did not focus on ELLs specifically, but on culturally diverse students as a whole. Despite this, ELLs are a sub-group of culturally diverse students, so therefore the data found could still be applied to the current study. Despite the limitations of the study, it still demonstrated CLR practices can alter the perceptions of teachers toward their students.

In the following mixed-methods study, researchers Trumbull et al. (2020) sought to determine if PD on collectivism and individualism could create more culturally responsive classrooms for predominantly immigrant Latino/a students. The researchers purposefully selected seven Spanish-English bilingual teachers who worked with kindergarten through fifth-grade students. Six of the teachers were female and one was male. They had a range of five to 21 years of teaching experience, with an average of 12.7 years. Four of the teachers had immigrated to the US. Of the four, three of the teachers were Latino/a and one was German. The other three teachers were of European descent and US born. Unlike the participants of Mette et al.'s (2016) study, the subjects of this report were selected due to an expressed desire to improve their education of Latino/a students in their classrooms.

To conduct the study, Trumbull et al. (2020) created three PD workshops designed to educate teachers on collectivism and individualism and how these concepts could affect students' learning. The three workshops occurred over the course of four months, each session lasting four hours. Between sessions, the educators were given a homework assignment, which was then discussed at the following workshop. During the PD sessions, the researchers collected quantitative data in the form of pre-workshop and post-workshop questionnaires. They sought to determine the teachers' personal collectivistic and individualistic values and teaching methods. Additionally, they collected qualitative data by analyzing videotapes of the workshops, as well as conducting exit surveys of the teachers. In the end, the results of the study showed the PD was very effective. The data revealed after the three workshops, the teachers had more variety in their teaching methods. The educators also learned how culture permeates through many aspects of schooling. They understood modifying their instruction may be necessary to reach their Latino/a students. This conclusion supported the data of Reece and Nodine (2014), Mellom et al. (2018),

and Mette et al. (2016), which showed CLR training and implication positively altered the perceptions of educators toward their ELLs.

While this PD was effective, it also had limitations. For example, the subject group of the study was very small. Because of this, the PD sessions would potentially need to be altered to reach a larger sample size. Additionally, the teachers in this study already had a strong desire to change. This would not be the case with all teachers who were offered this CLR professional development opportunity. Despite these challenges, the study still provided valuable information on how CLR PD can lead to altered perceptions of ELLs, and therefore better classroom instruction.

Effective CLR Strategies

While teachers' views of their learners have a huge impact on education, it is also important that the strategies used are the most effective for this unique demographic of students. Therefore, once teachers have identified areas where they may need to alter their views of ELLs, they can begin to fully consider the different areas where their ELLs need extra support and instruction. Student support through CLR practices has been researched in the second theme of this literature review, which determined the positive effects of incorporating CLR teaching in the classroom.

The research provided encompassed many avenues of strategies. However, it can be divided into two primary categories. The first subtheme was cultural awareness and responsiveness. Researchers Castro-Olivo et al. (2018), López (2016), and Lohfink and Loya (2010) found when teachers were intentionally thoughtful about the cultures in their classroom and built on those cultures in their instruction, learning increased. Additionally, linguistic awareness and responsiveness has been proven effective. Lin (2015) and Méndez et al. (2015)

studied how intentional incorporation of both bilingual resources and explicit English phonics instruction had a massive benefit on ELL achievement.

Cultural Awareness and Responsiveness

Within the theme of effective CLR strategies, the first prevalent category in the research was the awareness and responsiveness of culture in teaching. Culture encompasses more than just superficial areas of a student's life. According to Hammond (2015), culture is "the way that every brain makes sense of the world" (p. 22). Without fully appreciating a student's unique culture, a teacher cannot effectively provide CLR literacy instruction. In the following analysis of studies, researchers Castro-Olivo et al. (2018), López et al. (2016), and Lohfink and Loya (2010) studied the impact of cultural awareness and responsiveness on literacy instruction.

In the results of a pilot study by Castro-Olivo et al. (2018), the effects of a comprehensive academic and behavioral approach were analyzed. This approach was intended to be used in school and at home. It included adaptations to support culturally and linguistically diverse students. The qualitative study focused on Latino/a ELLs who were identified as 'at risk' for reading and behavior. The participants of the study were three kindergarten students who had at least one parent who immigrated to the US. All three of the students received English language development curricula in their classrooms. The school was in a suburb of California in the US, with a population which was 58% Hispanic, 23% black, 4% Asian, 10% white, and 4% 'other' (Castro-Olivo et al., 2018). During the study, the students were given a behavioral and reading intervention. While the students received their intervention, the parents and teachers also received training. The focus of the current analysis was on the reading intervention, which lasted for 20 minutes, three days per week for two to four weeks per child. During the student intervention, the students received explicit, systematic instruction in both oral language and

reading by a trained bilingual instructor. Without this critical step of including a bilingual instructor, the intervention would not have been considered linguistically responsive to the EL students' needs (Lin, 2015). While administering the intervention, the instructor used a script to keep the data from becoming skewed. Specific CLR strategies were implemented to adapt the intervention to the specific needs of ELLs. For example, translation was used in conjunction with culturally relevant symbols and concepts to assist student comprehension, making this study linguistically responsive in addition to culturally responsive (Castro-Olivo et al., 2018; Méndez, 2015). Also, culturally relevant texts were used instead of traditional texts for the curriculum. Alongside this differentiation, the teachers were provided awareness of cultural challenges the students may have. This assisted in their understanding of their ELLs. Additionally, parents were empowered as partners in the learning during the six classes they were offered. This created a partnership between the school and families, further emphasizing the school's focus on family culture and values. The results of this study had promising effects. The participants had moderate increases in reading skills (Castro-Olivo et al., 2018). This suggested, if implemented with a larger pool of participants, true progress could be made.

López (2016) conducted a different study on cultural awareness by researching the effectiveness of CLR training and beliefs for teachers on student achievement. The purpose of the study was to determine if CLR beliefs and behaviors would be beneficial to third through fifth grade Latino/a students' reading abilities (López, 2016). Their study had many overlaps with the previous studies surrounding teacher perceptions. However, the focus of this study was on the positive effects of integration of culture on EL learning. The main finding of their research was, "teachers who use instruction that considers students' culture an asset can reduce educational disparities" (López, 2016, p. 2). Inclusive and culturally responsive teachers must

view their students' home language and culture as a strength they possess, not a deficiency. According to López (2016), there was a connection between culturally responsive teaching and the concept of high expectations resulting in high performance. This conclusion has been supported by other researchers, such as in Borrero et al.'s (2013) study of a high-achieving culturally diverse charter school, as well as Zhang-Wu (2017), who determined culturally relevant topics are critical to student success. López (2016) believed the use of culturally responsive teaching could be directly related to positive student identity and therefore achievement. The study explained how culturally responsive teaching was more than just the celebration of cultures. It instead emphasized the importance of teacher knowledge, beliefs, and behaviors in the areas of high-expectations, cultural knowledge, cultural content integration, language, and critical consciousness. Through the study, López (2016) found if teachers used students' prior knowledge and experiences in their teaching, student literacy was higher for all students, not just ELLs. Overall, this study provided clear data to support the use of culturally responsive teaching to improve EL student literacy by offering methods teachers could use to increase student outcomes.

Similarly, researchers Lohfink and Loya (2010) conducted a study to determine the effects of culturally relevant picture books with bilingual Mexican American third graders. Lohfink and Loya (2010) sought to determine the level of engagement of the students before, during, and after six whole-group book discussions through analysis of their oral and written responses. The six stories were reflective of Mexican American heritage and included text in both English and Spanish. The participants in the study were ten male and ten female third grade students, all of whom were Mexican American. The entire study occurred over a five-month period at an elementary school in Kansas in the United States. The researchers collected their

data through classroom observation, notes, video and audio recordings, and analysis of the written responses of the students. The findings indicated the students made both cultural and personal connections to the stories, heightening their overall engagement. Their conclusion was supported by Kelley et al. (2015), who similarly determined that culturally familiar tasks can increase engagement and reading performance. In addition, Lohfink and Loya (2010) found the students benefitted from the dual-language aspect of the texts, which allowed them to independently translate unknown words during the written response portion of the study. Overall, use of these CLR practices greatly benefitted the students' understanding and connection to the academic activities, thus leading to increased literacy.

Linguistic Awareness and Responsiveness

Language can play a major role in a person's identity (Hollie, 2012, p. 20). Therefore, in addition to cultural awareness, teachers also need linguistic awareness of the students in their classrooms. This means awareness of both the home language of the student, as well as some understanding of the mechanics of English (Rizzuto, 2017). Based on the research completed, it can be determined knowledge of these linguistic components is necessary for ELLs to fully reach the content alongside their mainstream peers. Researchers Mellom et al. (2018), Lin (2015), and Méndez et al. (2015) studied the effects of explicit phonics instruction in English, as well as acceptance and meaningful incorporation of students' home language on English literacy with ELLs.

Once a teacher has discovered the areas in which they can support their students, the teacher can begin incorporating ways to improve EL student literacy while still including them in the mainstream classroom. Lin (2015) studied the main areas in which 20 ELLs struggled with their English writing. The researcher conducted interviews and surveyed the students, gaining

clear insight into which areas they struggled (Lin, 2015). This research supported the idea that EL students were not being properly served in their classrooms. Additionally, the data collected provided insight into how teachers could help to improve EL students' literacy. Lin (2015) found ELLs were most often graded based on linguistic or cognitive errors, but many of their difficulties resulted from a lack of cultural understanding of American writing. Students were not given proper instruction on how thoughts are organized in an American English essay. To be responsive to this, teachers must be aware there are various language discourse traditions in the world, and ELLs might need extra, explicit instruction on what the expectations are and why they are in place. Lin (2015) also encouraged teachers to facilitate more partner work for ELLs, pairing them with native English speakers to help with editing. The writing process is challenging for all students, but for ELLs, it can be especially overwhelming. Because of this, teachers must provide a caring, supportive writing environment for their EL students. Finally, if they allow their ELLs to focus more on their ideas, and less on grammar, the EL students will become better writers overall (Lin, 2015).

Another study which demonstrated successful CLR teaching practices focused on the importance of linguistic responsiveness. In this quantitative research, 42 Spanish-speaking preschool students were selected to test the effectiveness of a vocabulary approach. Researchers Méndez et al. (2015) laid out two clearly defined research questions. Their focus was on whether dual language speaking preschoolers from low-income households would benefit from a CLR vocabulary instruction modality. To obtain the participants of the study, the researchers attended meetings at Head Start preschools, and met with families. The authors described the demographics of the participants of the study in detail. They explained how all of the students attended English-only preschool, but came from predominantly Spanish-speaking homes, with at

least one parent who spoke Spanish. None of the students had any developmental language concerns. Méndez et al. (2015) additionally provided certain scores the students needed to have received on preliminary vocabulary picture tests. The students were spread across 15 classrooms, but all part of the same preschool program in North Carolina, United States. After the 42 participants were carefully selected with the intention of being as similar as possible, they were grouped randomly into either a bilingual, culturally and linguistically responsive group or an English culturally responsive (ECR) group. Because the assignments into the bilingual group and the English-only control group were random, this study is an example of experimental research. During the study, the researchers used five vocabulary development strategies: storybooks, child-friendly definitions, repeated exposures, multimodal presentations, and culturally relevant content to teach 30 English words to the students. The strategies were implemented by six instructors who were “trained to fidelity” and followed a strict script (Méndez et al., 2015, p. 97). The instructors additionally rotated which children they worked with, to lower the chances of bias. Students were seen one-on-one in a quiet room, three times per week, for five weeks. The researchers explained in detail the methods and equation they used to analyze the data, taking into account the groups were not the same size. Méndez et al. (2015) determined young ELLs learned more English words when their home language was used in the vocabulary instruction, supporting that educators should be implementing CLR teaching practices.

They concluded their study by stating their research’s limitations. First, the sample size was very small. Additionally, they were not able to monitor what English instruction the students were receiving outside of the classroom, which could have skewed the data. Finally, the study was very short, so the long-term English advantage of the students in the CLR group was not maintained, leading to the question of how effective the vocabulary strategy would be if it went

longer. These limitations damaged the outcomes of the overall research. However, this study still provided insight into the potential benefits of linguistically responsive education (Méndez et al., 2015).

ELLs as Independent Learners

A large part of culturally and linguistically responsive teaching is creating independent learners. According to Hammond (2015), “as culturally responsive teachers, our focus has to be on shifting mindsets rather than on trying to force engagement” (p. 110). Students must exit the cycle of being told they are incapable of succeeding. Whether intentional or not, teachers often dilute curricula to ELLs (Rizzuto, 2017). Students must have academic mindsets in order to achieve in education. The ultimate goal of education is to create learners who can become intrinsically motivated to succeed. With the help of CLR practices, educators can assist ELLs in achieving this goal.

Therefore, the third and final theme which emerges from the research on CLR is its effect on student independence. When properly implemented, CLR strategies offer students content that is the correct level of rigor, mixed with needed relevance and interest. This combination creates the perfect environment for an independent learner to emerge. Researchers Kelley et al. (2015), Clark and Fleming (2019), Zhang-Wu (2017), and Borrero et al. (2013) studied the impact of CLR on English Language Learners’ independence and academic mindset.

Using culturally relevant texts is one method of culturally responsive teaching that has benefitted ELLs in the classroom. In their quantitative research, Kelley et al. (2015) studied 42 students at a middle school in the southwestern United States. Although this particular study focused on middle school students, its findings can apply to early elementary students, as culturally relevant texts have been proven to increase independence in younger students as well

(Lohfink & Loya, 2010). This school was chosen based on its high diversity and ELL population. The study sought to determine how culturally relevant reading tasks affected student reading comprehension, as well as self-efficacy beliefs. Students were given a brief demographics questionnaire, followed by the General Reading Task Self-Efficacy Scale. They then either performed a familiar or unfamiliar reading task, followed by another self-efficacy scale and various test questions. Results showed students scored an average of 6.1/10 points on the reading comprehension test for the culturally familiar texts, versus 4.9/10 with the culturally unfamiliar texts. Students additionally received statistically significant higher scores on their self-efficacy tests by reading the culturally familiar texts. These findings supported the research of Lohfink and Loya (2010), whose participants gained learning independence through the use of bilingual texts. If students are provided with CLR practices geared toward greater independence in their learning, their confidence will increase, and literacy will improve (Zhang-Wu, 2017).

Researchers Clark and Fleming (2019) sought primarily to determine the effectiveness of using culturally relevant texts, which is one of many culturally responsive teaching strategies. This qualitative study focused on the impact of these texts on students' levels of engagement and comprehension, as well as their ability to identify with their learning. To conduct their study, Clark and Fleming (2019) purposefully selected 13 preschool through third grade teachers. They were chosen based on previous data collected on them by one of the researchers throughout the year prior to this study. The teachers had participated in a year-long literature PD. The researcher determined these teachers would willingly participate in the present study. Each teacher was asked to peruse through a provided selection of texts and select stories they believed would be culturally relevant for their specific students. The former researcher then teamed together with their partner, who facilitated one interview per teacher, having no personal connection to the

interviewees. The 13 research participants came from four elementary schools of varying backgrounds, genders, and teaching experiences. The demographics of the teachers' classrooms involved in the study was also provided, showing two of the four midwestern elementary schools had a high percentage of ELLs. For the interviews, the participants discussed the impacts of the culturally relevant texts they chose for their classes. Clark and Fleming (2019) analyzed the interviews, looking for specific areas. These four areas were intended to target the capacities of identity, reading comprehension, and engagement. After looking over the interviews, Clark and Fleming (2019) found culturally relevant texts overall positively impacted students' reading development. In addition to cultural responsiveness, this study also touched on the impacts of linguistic responsiveness. EL students became more engaged in stories which included their home language and expressed excitement at being able to identify with the characters. According to the classroom teachers, this led to deeper listening comprehension. Most importantly, the students were able to take more ownership of their learning, which led to higher intrinsic motivation and achievement (Clark & Fleming, 2019). Had the content not been culturally and linguistically relatable and to the students, independence and self-motivation would have been far more difficult to achieve (Kelley et al., 2015).

Zhang-Wu (2017) similarly completed a qualitative case study of a fourth-grade classroom using culturally and linguistically responsive teaching practices. The researcher worked to answer how the teacher perceived diversity and CLR pedagogy, how CLR practices were used, and how the larger community impacted the use of those practices. Their research in turn supported the idea that when implemented, these practices created independent learners. The study took place on the east coast of the United States, which had been implementing CLR training for seven years. The participants of the study were 45 students, 70% of whom were

ELLs, and an English-speaking teacher with ten years of experience. As with many of the previous studies, the majority of these students were Hispanic or Latino/a Americans. The researcher visited the classroom once per week for one school year, on each occasion interacting with the students and meeting with the teacher. Additionally, Zhang-Wu (2017) completed two interviews with the teacher, discussing the teacher's beliefs and implementation of CLR practices. The data collected showed the teacher used multiple CLR practices. For example, they scaffolded language in the curriculum, meaning they used cognates, explicitly taught vocabulary, and encouraged students to use word parts and context clues to decipher word meaning. This led to more effective language acquisition (Lin, 2015). In addition to these strategies, the teacher was also sensitive to inequities potentially present among their students and showed awareness of the varying levels of prior knowledge around the many topics learned in their classroom. Finally, they encouraged student independence, acting as a supportive ally to students. Through the use of these practices, their students were able to be fully included, active members of their learning, reaching what Hammond (2015) believed was the goal of CLR education. Therefore, these strategies, when coupled with bilingual, culturally relevant texts, proved to be highly effective for improving literacy, which was a critical for the success of the students.

In the following analysis, Borrero et al. (2013) studied the unprecedented success of a charter school with a high percentage of ELLs in northern California. They conducted a qualitative study over the course of two years, in which time data was collected purposefully and sequentially through interviews with teachers, administration, and parents. Prior to collecting their data, Borrero et al. (2013) completed observations for two to four hours, followed by conversations with teachers and students. These interviews led to the creation of their research questions: "What makes the Bay Academy successful?" and "How is academic resilience

communicated to students?” (p. 106). The researchers then developed three focus groups consisting of three to five teachers, administrators, and parents. Each session lasted approximately one hour. To collect the data, Borrero et al. (2013) took notes and recorded the interviews. They then studied the data independently of one another before sharing their findings together. They discovered parent involvement played a huge role in developing student success. In fact, the school actually required parents to become involved to some capacity. In addition to this, the teachers instilled in students a strong sense of intelligence, purpose, and ability to be successful. This ultimately led to the students becoming self-motivated and therefore more successful in their academics.

One way the school created independent learners was through expressing the belief that every child would attend college. Each classroom was assigned a college they represented. Unlike previous schools studied which diluted the curricula for ELLs, this school provided ELLs with the same standards of success as their mainstream peers. They did not have a special English Language Development curriculum for their EL students. These high academic standards made a significant difference in the student’s overall success (López, 2016). That being said, they also strongly believed schools should not be “color blind,” instead celebrating, representing, and accepting cultural and linguistic diversity using CLR practices (Borrero et al., 2013, p. 112). For example, all students were required to take Spanish lessons, regardless of their first language. This supported Spanish-speaking ELLs in becoming more literate in their home language, while giving monolingual students the valuable skill of learning a second language. To provide extra support, the school also held after school tutoring for any student who needed it. All of these strategies blended together to develop a sense of pride and accomplishment in ELLs.

This research provided an excellent example of how using CLR practices can create self-motivated students, which will increase overall literacy in English.

Summary of Findings

Throughout the research done on culturally and linguistically responsive teaching practices, scholars have discovered incredible impacts on English Language Learners. Since it was first introduced as CRT by Ladson-Billings (1995), it has developed into an effective teaching method. However, EL students continue to fail in US classrooms. In light of what is known about differentiated instruction and CLR, these strategies should be used to increase English literacy for preschool to early elementary ELLs.

Through their qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods studies, the researchers mentioned in this review of literature discovered CLR practices can create positive perceptions of ELLs in educators by helping them embrace the benefits of multiculturalism and multilingualism in their classrooms. This can override the tendency to carry a negative view of ELLs' academic abilities. Researchers also studied the many effective strategies CLR practices include, which can be encompassed in the topics of both cultural and linguistic awareness and responsiveness. When these educational techniques are implemented, EL students are empowered to become self-motivated in their learning. The studies mentioned explored how teachers can support, but not over-scaffold, their teaching by holding their ELLs to the same high academic standards as mainstream students. This, when paired with multilingual resources and celebration of diversity, can create the perfect atmosphere for achievement.

Conclusion

The research provided in this literature review offered clear examples of the many benefits of CLR teaching practices for EL students. While many teachers may have initially

viewed being an ELL as a disadvantage, CLR practices have shifted this view to allow educators to see multilingualism as a true asset to learning. Additionally, there were many examples of the numerous effective culturally and linguistically responsive strategies for EL students. Through these positive teacher perceptions and effective educational techniques, students became independent and motivated in their learning. All of this led to increased English literacy for preschool to early elementary ELLs. This research must continue to be pursued as EL students grow as a prominent yet perpetually under-achieving demographic in the United States.

In the final chapter of this paper, the author will discuss the insights gained from the research done on CLR. In addition, the implications from this research for early elementary teachers of ELLs will be offered. Finally, suggestions for future studies on CLR and its effect on ELLs' literacy will be discussed.

Chapter Three: Discussion, Application, and Future Studies

In order for educational research to be meaningful, it must be thoroughly discussed and applied to actual teaching practice. Through this analysis, additional opportunities for new studies may be uncovered. Therefore, in the third and final section of this paper, the author will discuss three topics. First, the insights gained from the research will be introduced. Additionally, these insights will be applied to educational practice. Finally, the author will suggest future studies to address the insights and limitations exposed from the research completed.

Insights Gained from the Research

Researchers must thoroughly evaluate the literature available on CLR practices, determining areas that are critical for ELL success. The analysis of literature above brought to light multiple insights for educators to consider. Three insights will be addressed in the following section of this paper: the need for improved CLR PD for educators, increased variety of

multilingual resources, and a more linguistically diverse research base to draw from. Each insight could not only benefit educators' professional practices, but also inform future studies on CLR strategies.

The first insight gained is the extreme need for thorough CLR training for teachers. In the many surveys completed, the majority of teachers felt there was not enough training on how to work with ELLs (Atwater et al., 2010; Rizzuto, 2017). According to the research, the benefits of CLR made it evident all teachers should have some type of culturally and linguistically responsive teaching training. However, the data also showed despite the benefits it may have, the PD currently being implemented is not sufficient. It was done only with small participant pools and was highly intensive, including multiple interviews, surveys, and many hours of work. This level of time-consuming effort is not always possible for every educator. This raises the concern that there may be individuals who desire to become more experienced in CLR practices but are either not able to or not willing to put in the time and effort required. Therefore, the need for accessible, realistic CLR training is evident.

In addition to CLR training, another insight gained from the research showed the benefits of using bilingual instruction and multilingual resources. When implementing these CLR strategies, students across a range of ages and grade levels had significant gains in their learning (Borrero et al., 2013; Castro-Olivo et al., 2018; Clark & Fleming, 2019; Kelley et al., 2015; Lin, 2015; Lohfink & Loya, 2010; Méndez et al., 2015; Zhang-Wu, 2017). Students showed higher engagement and increased self-efficacy when provided content that was inclusive of their language and culture. Teachers must ensure they are using strategies which align to these findings. Therefore, while all teachers cannot be bilingual, more multilingual text options need to be available in a wider range of languages.

Finally, the studies have shown a clear lack of diversity in the populations of their participants. The vast majority of research subjects were Spanish speaking, while only a small portion spoke other languages. Even though 74.82% of ELLs in the US were Spanish speakers as of 2018, this still does not represent the entirety of the EL population (OELA, 2020). Therefore, it is important for educators to be aware of the data available on CLR teaching's effectiveness and understand it has not been studied with all of the languages and cultures represented in their classrooms. Despite the limitations to the studies completed, CLR practices have still been shown to provide extreme benefits.

Applications for Professional Practice

The insights gained can lead educators to consider how this information could be applied to educational practice. By using the information discovered, teachers can further improve their CLR instruction. This will in turn lead to higher ELL achievement. Three applications stemmed from these insights. First, administrators should develop alternate CLR PD options for educators. Additionally, schools must develop more inclusive multilingual libraries. Finally, teachers should monitor the effectiveness of CLR strategies on EL students who speak languages other than Spanish.

When considering the lack of manageable PD on CLR teaching, there are multiple ways educators and those in the educational field could solve this problem. First, school administration could apply this information by introducing volunteer or paid mentorships for EL coaching. Additionally, ensuring EL teachers are trained in CLR and then implementing co-teaching could also help to remedy this issue. Finally, a few of the studies in the previous literature review discussed undergrad training in CLR teaching practices. By thoroughly preparing undergraduate teaching students, the need for CLR PD for educators would diminish.

In addition to alternative training methods, it is important teachers be trained in the strategies proven to lead to the highest benefit for learners. The use of culturally relevant instruction in a student's home language provides EL students with the best possible learning. However, it is not possible or realistic to assume all teachers will provide bilingual instruction. Therefore, teachers must acquire a rich library of multicultural texts for their multilingual learners. Additionally, school libraries should have a higher percentage of dual-language texts so students can bring more literature home to their families. If teachers and schools had more access to multilingual stories, ELLs would greatly benefit.

As previously mentioned, the majority of studies done on CLR practices included Spanish-speaking students. This data, while useful, is not going to benefit the diverse EL students in the US as much as could be possible. Teachers can apply this important information to their professional practice by monitoring the success of their own CLR strategies with ELLs. Simply being aware of the languages present in their classrooms is the first, critical step. After that, teachers can ensure they are using CLR practices on more than just their Spanish-speaking ELLs. By making sure all students are benefitting from CLR strategies, teachers will improve the chances of literacy achievement for all of their learners.

Recommendations for Future Studies

The insights and applications provided can lead educators to determine the need for further studies on CLR instruction. This data could greatly impact EL student learning by providing a more complete body of research. Therefore, three recommendations for additional studies on CLR practices have been outlined in the following section of this paper.

The first recommendation is to find additional methods of effective CLR training for educators. When lengthy PD is not an option, alternate methods must be considered. Therefore,

this concern requires more research. Studies could be completed on the effectiveness of the methods mentioned earlier, such as mentorship or co-teaching. With the additional research completed on these topics, educators can ensure they are receiving manageable, accessible training on CLR teaching practices.

Another question which stems from the research is how bilingual education could become more accessible to every educator. While a teacher may be able to acquire texts in additional languages, they are not always available in abundance. The studies completed only observed classes who used a small number of multilingual texts. Despite this, they still had positive outcomes (Castro-Olivo et al., 2018; López, 2016; Lohfink & Loya, 2010). This can lead educators to wonder how a larger number of multilingual texts covering a wider variety of languages and cultures could have an even greater impact on learning. Through these future studies, more students could be provided with quality literacy education, which could lead to improved learning, higher confidence, and increased self-efficacy.

Finally, the research completed could lead educators to wonder whether or not CLR teaching strategies would be effective for EL students who speak languages other than Spanish. The research available on CLR strategies lacks linguistic diversity, making a conclusion on overall CLR effectiveness difficult. For this reason, more studies must be done on how CLR practices affect non Spanish-speaking ELLs. The data from such research could impact a massive amount of EL students in the US.

Conclusion

All students deserve to be offered the best possible methods of instruction, so they can learn to the best of their abilities. This review of literature sought to answer the question: In light of what is known about differentiation in the classroom, how can culturally and linguistically

responsive teaching practices lead to higher literacy for preschool to early elementary English Language Learners? Based on the research provided on the benefits of CLR teaching practices, educators can tailor their instruction to meet the needs of their EL students. The research studied offered evidence of the multitude of benefits of culturally and linguistically responsive teaching practices.

First, the previous analysis proved that teachers must have a positive perception of their EL students for literacy to improve. Rizzuto (2017) and Atwater et al. (2010) discovered many teachers hold a negative view of the ELLs in their classroom. This can be detrimental to EL literacy achievement. In order to fully and effectively educate all of their learners, teachers must view the multitude of languages and cultures ELLs possess as an asset to the classroom. According to Gay (2000), “Teachers must show students that they expect them to succeed and commit themselves to making success happen” (p. 34). While challenging, the research on CLR proved that reversing negative perceptions is possible. Specifically, training on implementing CLR teaching practices can assist in this process (Mellom et al., 2018; Mette et al., 2016; Reece & Nodine, 2014; Trumbull et al., 2020). Once teachers are able to shift their mindset, ELL literacy should improve.

In addition to ensuring altered teacher perceptions for ELLs, the studies have shown that by incorporating CLR teaching strategies for EL students, literacy increased. Castro-Olivo et al. (2018), Lin (2015), Lohfink and Loya, (2010), López (2016), and Méndez et al. (2015) found the use of culturally relevant texts, bilingual texts, building on students’ prior knowledge, and encouraging independence were all effective methods of increasing ELL literacy. Additionally, if the topics of the content were culturally relevant, all students could benefit, whether they are ELLs or not.

Finally, the use of CLR teaching increased student self-efficacy, leading to greater independence. When students' confidence in their abilities increased, they were able to improve their literacy at a faster rate (Borrero et al., 2013; Clark & Fleming, 2019; Kelley et al., 2015; Zhang-Wu, 2017). This data upholds the importance of using CLR practices in English instruction. Teachers can use the information studied to impact the way they instruct their ELLs by including culturally relevant content, bilingual content, and encouraging students in their abilities. These few changes could drastically improve an ELL's mentality and abilities at school, leading to higher achievement.

Although more research must be conducted on the positive effects of culturally and linguistically responsive teaching practices for ELLs, these studies showed there are definite benefits to incorporating them into classroom instruction. English language learners bring unique perspectives, ideas, and experiences, which must be welcomed and used as an asset in education. The pattern of literacy underachievement and ultimately not completing a high-school education must be stopped for EL students in the United States. The use of CLR teaching practices is one proven method for reducing the number of struggling students, thereby decreasing the likelihood of ELL students dropping out of school. Therefore, providing preschool to early elementary EL students with culturally and linguistically responsive instruction should lead to improved overall English literacy achievement.

References

- Atwater, M. M., Freeman, T. B., Butler, M. B., & Draper-Morris, J. (2010). A case study of science teacher candidates' understandings and actions related to the culturally responsive teaching of "other" students. *International Journal of Environmental and Science Education, 5*(3), 287-318.
- <https://eric.ed.gov/contentdelivery/servlet/ERICServlet?accno=EJ895740>
- Borrero, N., Lee, D. S., & Padilla, A. M. (2013). Developing a culture of resilience for low-income immigrant youth. *Urban Review: Issues and Ideas in Public Education, 45*(2), 99-116. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11256-012-0215-4>
- Callahan, R. M., & Shifrer, D. (2016). Equitable access for secondary English learner students: Course taking as evidence of EL program effectiveness. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 52*(3), 463-496. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0013161X16648190>
- Castro-Olivo, S., Preciado, J., Le, L., Marciante, M., & Garcia, M. (2018). The effects of culturally adapted version of “first steps to success” for Latino English language learners: Preliminary pilot study. *Psychology in the Schools, 55*(1), 36-49.
- <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/pits.22092>
- Clark, A. & Fleming, J. (2019). “They almost become the teacher”: Pre-k to third grade teachers’ experiences reading and discussing culturally relevant texts with their students. *Reading Horizons, 58*(3), 23-51.
- https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3507&context=reading_horizons
- Gay, G. (2000). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice*. Teachers’ College Press.

- Hammond, Z. (2015). *Culturally responsive teaching and the brain: Promoting authentic engagement and rigor among culturally and linguistically diverse students*. Corwin.
- Hollie, S. (2012). *Culturally and linguistically responsive teaching and learning*. Shell Education.
- Kelley, H. M., Siwatu, K. O., Tost, J. R., & Martinez, J. (2015). Culturally familiar tasks on reading performance and self-efficacy of culturally and linguistically diverse students. *Educational Psychology in Practice, 31*(3), 293-313.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02667363.2015.1033616>
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). But that's just good teaching! The case for culturally relevant pedagogy. *Theory into Practice, 34*(3), 159-165. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1476635>
- Legault, J., Fang, S., Lan, Y., & Li, P. (2019). Structural brain changes as a function of second language vocabulary training: Effects of learning context. *Brain and Cognition, 134*, 90-102. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.bandc.2018.09.004>
- Lin, S. M. (2015). A study of ELL students' writing difficulties: A call for culturally, linguistically, and psychologically responsive teaching. *College Student Journal, 49*(2), 237-250. <http://www.projectinnovation.com/college-student-journal.html>
- Lohfink, G., & Loya, J. (2010). The nature of Mexican American third graders' engagement with culturally relevant picture books. *Bilingual Research Journal, 33*(3), 346-363.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15235882.2010.529346>
- López, F. A. (2016). Culturally responsive pedagogies in Arizona and Latino students' achievement. *Teachers College Record, 118*(5), 1-42.
<http://www.tcrecord.org/Content.asp?ContentId=19369>
- Mellom, P. J., Straubhaar, R., Balderas, C., Ariali, M., & Portes, P. R. (2018). "They come with

- nothing:” How professional development in a culturally responsive pedagogy shapes teacher attitudes towards Latino/a English language learners. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 71, 98-107. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2017.12.013>
- Méndez, L. I., Crais, E. R., Castro, D. C., & Kainz, K. (2015). A culturally and linguistically responsive vocabulary approach for young Latino dual language learners. *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research*, 58(1), 93-106. http://dx.doi.org/10.1044/2014_JSLHR-L-12-0221
- Mette, I. M., Nieuwenhuizen, L., Hvidston, D. J. (2016). Teachers’ perceptions of culturally responsive pedagogy and the impact on leadership preparation: Lessons for future reform efforts. *International Journal of Educational Leadership Preparation*, 11(1), 1-20. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1103652>
- Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA), (2020). English learners who speak Spanish as a home language. *U.S. Department of Education*. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED613132>
- Reece, L. & Nodine, P. (2014). When immigrant is synonymous with terrorist: Culturally responsive teaching with English learners. *Social Studies*, 105(6), 259-265. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00377996.2014.930400>
- Rizzuto, K. C. (2017). Teachers' perceptions of ELL students: Do their attitudes shape their instruction? *Teacher Educator*, 52(3), 182-202. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/08878730.2017.1296912>
- Soland, J., & Sandilos, L. E. (2020). English language learners, self-efficacy, and the achievement gap: Understanding the relationship between academic and social-emotional growth. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, 26(1), 20-44. <http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.csp.edu/10.1080/10824669.2020.1787171>

Trumbull, E., Greenfield, P. M., Rothstein-Fisch, C., Maynard, A. E., Quiroz, B., & Yuan, Q.

(2020). From altered perceptions to altered practice: Teachers bridge cultures in the classroom. *School Community Journal*, 30(1), 243-266.

<https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1257613>

Whitenack, D. A., Golloher, A. N., & Burciaga, R. (2019). Intersectional reculturing for all

students: Preparation and practices for educational leaders. *Educational Leadership and Administration*, 31, 33-53.

<https://eric.ed.gov/contentdelivery/servlet/ERICServlet?accno=EJ1231178>

Zhang-Wu, Q. (2017). Culturally and linguistically responsive teaching practices: A case study of a fourth-grade mainstream classroom teacher. *Journal of Education*, 197(1), 33-40.

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/26612638>

Appendix

Article Tracking Matrix

Author(s)	Method	Theme 1 Sub A: Negative Perceptions	Theme 1 Sub B: CLR and Perceptions	Theme 2 Sub A: Cultural Awareness	Theme 2 Sub B: Linguistic Awareness	Theme 3: Independent Learners
Atwater, M. M., Freeman, T. B., Butler, M. B., & Draper-Morris, J. (2010)	Qualitative	X				
Borrero, N., Lee, D. S., & Padilla, A. M. (2013)	Qualitative		X	X		X
Castro-Olivo, S., Preciado, J., Le, L., Marciante, M., & Garcia, M. (2018)	Qualitative			X		
Clark, A. & Fleming, J. (2019)	Qualitative					X
Kelley, H. M., Siwatu, K. O., Tost, J. R., & Martinez, J. (2015)	Quantitative			X		X
Lin, S. M. (2015)	Mixed- Methods				X	
Lohfink, G., & Loya, J. (2010)	Qualitative			X		X
López, F. A. (2016)	Quantitative			X		X
Mellom, P. J., Straubhaar, R., Balderas, C., Ariali, M., & Portes, P. R. (2018)	Qualitative	X	X		X	
Méndez, L. I., Crais, E. R., Castro, D. C., & Kainz, K. (2015)	Quantitative			X	X	
Mette, I. M., Nieuwenhuizen, L., Hvidston, D. J. (2016)	Quantitative		X			
Reece, L. & Nodine, P. (2014)	Qualitative		X			
Rizzuto, K. C. (2017)	Mixed- Methods	X			X	

Trumbull, E., Greenfield, P. M., Rothstein-Fisch, C., Maynard, A. E., Quiroz, B., and Yuan, Q. (2020)	Mixed-Methods		X			
Zhang-Wu, Q. (2017)	Qualitative		X	X		X