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EDUCATION PROGRAM**

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TEACHER SELF-EFFICACY IN A MULTICULTURAL ALTERNATIVE
EDUCATION PROGRAM

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

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New York

by

Angela M Trowers

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Approved Date_____

Angela Trowers

Michael Sampson, Ph.D.

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ABSTRACT

TEACHER SELF-EFFICACY IN A MULTICULTURAL ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM

Angela M. Trowers

“We have different religions, different languages, different colored skin, but we all belong to one human race” –Kofi Annan

As the United States embraces cultural diversity, educators need to feel a sense of preparedness to effectively master culturally responsive teaching which is vital to students' academic growth and development. Drawing on the interpretivist-constructive paradigm and self-efficacy theory, this narrative inquiry study, examined teacher's beliefs, attitudes and perceptions, with regards to their culturally relevant pedagogy and the impact on their multicultural students' academic achievement and social success. Eight teacher candidates, seven females and one male (Caucasian), who teach at a multicultural alternative education program in New York State participated in two interviews, one face to face and the other a follow-up through email. NVivo transcription service was used to transcribe the data. Hand coding and analytic memos assisted in analyzing the rich, thick experiences of the teachers in their multicultural classrooms. Six major themes emerged from the analysis of the data, cultural proficiency, cultural challenges, educational attributes, instructional strategies, cultural beliefs and cultural competence. The findings revealed that teacher participants believe they would have accomplished a greater level of self-efficacy in their multicultural classrooms, if the challenges that inhibit their performance, were non-existent and that they value their

students shared cultural knowledge, experiences, accomplishments developed despite of the challenges. This study proved to be purposeful and meaningful because it highlighted how the teachers' self-efficacy is being challenged due to the numerous issues shared in the findings. This research could help other alternative education teachers learn how to better withstand the challenges they might face while implementing their best practices. The study shared the limitations, delimitations, recommendations for future research, and recommendations for practice.

Keywords: **Alternative Education, English Language Learner, Culturally Responsive Teaching, Multicultural Education, Multilingual learner, Self-efficacy, Self-perception.**

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The goal of this doctoral study was to determine how the perceptions of eight pedagogues are influenced by an understanding of the effects of the diverse cultural backgrounds of English language learner (ELL) and/or multilingual learner (ML) students on their academic performance, as well as to describe some of the instructional approaches that these teachers implement in their classrooms to meet the needs of ELL/ML students in their alternative high school setting.

Implementing proficient and adequate instruction in today's diverse and multicultural classroom has become an educational challenge and requires immediate attention. Today, educators are being implored to educate and deliver instruction that is equitable to the diverse learners that they meet in the classrooms. Roekel (2008) highlighted that it is imperative to invest in America's future through the provision of high-quality education programs and services to ELLs since they are the fastest growing student population group in the United States. It is somewhat comforting that the NEA is keeping track of this phenomenon in unison with educators being implored to be culturally responsive in their instructional practices (Brisk, 2007; Gay, 2010; Paris & Alim, 2017). The need for further research on teacher self-efficacy, attitudes and perceptions in delivering culturally relevant teaching (CRT), stems from the fact that there is at least one English language learner in every classroom, and a teacher's cultural readiness and effectiveness to meet their academic needs is called into question (Gay, 2004; Paris & Alim, 2017).

According to Alsubaie (2015), in a democratic multicultural system, the approaches to teaching, learning and educational programs should be embedded in culture, schooling, and education. Hence, educators need to adapt a new approach to how they will meet a child's individual unique needs (Clark, 2018). From a traditional perspective, Alsubaie (2015) posits that students in the multicultural classrooms must learn how to circumnavigate unfamiliar people, cultures, and languages, and so they will be at a shortfall academically. Hence, teachers must create a trajectory that could lead students towards successful academic success as they navigate their unfamiliar learning environment. Undoubtedly, their self-efficacy could influence their style and depth of pedagogy that is expected to be culturally relevant.

A teacher's cultural awareness could be challenged when providing instruction to multicultural students. For example, all English as a New Language (ENL) teachers need to be cognizant when identifying the cultural background of their learners, because this cultural identification is a necessary bridge to closing the achievement gap in their students' academic success. Culture is a bedrock to learning and success in literacy. Laden-Billings (1994) postulates that culturally responsive teaching is teaching that recognizes the key elements of students' cultural development. An important role of one's self-efficacy is to help with their self-assessment and preparation in providing the best practices in the multicultural classroom. Hence, this study found out how the teacher candidates are applying their self-efficacy, attitudes and perceptions in cultivating culturally relevant best practices that translate to their students' diverse needs and helping them become proficient learners.

A teacher's knowledge base and experiences could propel their level of self-efficacy and in turn transcends to the quality of learning that students could experience. Bandura (1977, 1986, 1997) maintains that self-efficacy is the degree to which an individual feels confident in his/her ability to successfully engage with and complete a given task. For example, a teacher in the multicultural classroom who is confident in their understanding of the nuances and challenges that accompany the newcomer in their learning environment will engage with the newcomer and provide the best suited instruction for their unique need with experience and confidence.

According to self-efficacy theorists, individuals who exhibit high self-efficacy are more likely than not to demonstrate resilience in the face of challenges than are individuals with low self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1997, 2006; Guskey, 1988). Research have shown that pedagogical skills which are grounded in a clear understanding of students' racial, cultural and linguistic background could assist the teachers in meeting their individual academic needs, thus channeling them to greater academic proficiency (Banks & Banks, 2010, 2016; Catto, 2018; Evans, 2017; Gay, 2010, 2013; Gomez, 2013; Strickland, 2018; Yilmaz, 2016). If the teachers create these dynamics in the diverse and multicultural classroom, then the students will have the inclination to articulate their learning from their own perspectives and world knowledge.

Context and Background

As reported by the U. S. Department of Education (2017), all students have the potential to attain challenging academic goals providing they receive high quality instruction. It is evident that today's students need all the essential support they can get to become productive, informed, successful and self-sufficient citizens of the United States.

Also, the educator plays an instrumental part in the acquisition of a thorough education of all learners, and self-efficacy on the part of both the learner and the instructor is important. The concept “self-efficacy” is well documented throughout linguistic literature as the degree to which individuals feel confident in their ability to successfully engage with and carry out or complete a given task (Evans, 2017; Gorski, Davis, & Reiter, 2012). Individuals with high self-efficacy are more likely to exhibit persistence in the face of difficulty than are individuals with low self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997).

New York State is an example of a place with people from numerous cultural backgrounds, a diversity of traditions, and a variety of values and beliefs. Supporting all of today’s students as they strive to be successful, productive, and informed citizens is one of the most important issues facing our country today. It is common knowledge that educators must be the strongest supporters of students’ identities and civic liberties in this culturally responsive era. When teachers show support and empathy to their students, this student/teacher relationship can encourage and create a culture of excellence in students. There are some vital signs that are relevant to engagement in literacy instruction, which are instrumental to closing the gaps of cultural responsiveness: achievement, rigor, and relationship in the classroom (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2014).

In one statistical report by the U. S. Department of Education, high school students who have access to the full range of content courses are 57% black and 65% Hispanic. These two minority groups are at a disadvantage and are marginalized when compared to their white counterparts (71%) who are on a better trajectory for college and career readiness and success. In New York City, the poverty rate stands at 19.6% (United States Census Bureau, 2017). ELLs are included in this demographic in the New York

City public school system. Short and Fitzsimmons (2007) assert that enrollments of students in middle and high schools are expanding and English is not their primary language. Torlakson (2012) maintain that ELLs are already struggling with language acquisition barriers and the difficult vocabulary embedded in the demanding academic content.

Research has shown that opportunities for early literacy will place learners on a successful path to academic proficiency (Mills, Pajares & Herron, 2006). However, many ELLs come to the U.S as adolescents or adults and learning English at an older age proves to be more difficult in relation to if they came during their elementary years. According to Fagella-Luby, Ware and Capozzoli (2009) adolescent learners have been a cause for concern because they are not adequately prepared to meet the challenges that accompany learning literacy. It is necessary for educators to exhibit empathy and a multicultural friendly environment towards the population they are mandated to educate. Almost one in four American students live in conditions of poverty, as is evident from the statistics put forward by the U.S. Department of Education (2007).

Statement of the Problem

Due to the literacy crisis throughout the United States coupled with the rapid population growth of multicultural students in the classrooms, teachers are being challenged to meet the academic needs of their students and put them on a successful path to accomplish their goals. Literacy experts suggest that the implementation of culturally responsive teaching practices could remediate some of the challenges (Gay, 2010). To date the implementation of culturally responsive teaching has been piecemeal at best. There has not been a set of best practices to address the issues faced when

teaching multicultural students and the teachers are not fully prepared to address these challenges when they arise. Studies have shown that teachers are not adequately prepared to teach in a culturally responsive manner (Muniz, 2019). Research has also documented what the culturally responsive teacher should do to reach their multicultural students (Gay, 2004, 2010). However, teachers do not believe they have all the answers, but one possible solution is collective teacher efficacy (Bandura, 1993, 1997; Hattie, 2016). Educators who believe in their united capability to influence student outcomes, can exponentially increase students' academic achievement to greater levels (Bandura, 1993; Eells, 2011; Hattie, 2016).

Collective efficacy is defined by Bandura (1997) as "a group's shared belief in its conjoint capability to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given levels of attainment" (p. 477). Collective efficacy is in first place when it comes to influential factors on student achievement (John Hattie, 2016). There is researched based evidence that supports Hattie's perspective through the work of Rachel Eells (2011) on the meta-analysis of studies relating to student achievement and collective efficacy. Her study revealed that teachers do believe that their ability to work collectively has a positive association with their students' achievement (Eells, 2011).

A major challenge is that students are from various cultural backgrounds and they also have diverse literacy needs (Cardenas & Cardenas, 1977; Coady, Harper & de Jong, 2015; Khong & Saito, 2014). Another challenge is inadequate professional learning experiences (Muniz, 2019). Some researchers maintain that professional development opportunities could better prepare the teachers to meet the instructional challenges in

their classrooms, but it would not be adequate due to the nature of the challenges (Coady, Harper & de Jong, 2015; Gay, 2010).

I have been teaching for a total of 17 years in New York City public schools system and for the past eight years, I have solely taught MLs in an alternative education program. I have learned about the depth of challenges facing teachers who teach English language learners in the alternative education program. I also realized how important it is to build a culture of literacy for my students to succeed. This study examined teachers in an alternative education program who teach a combination of adolescents and older adults. In comparison to teaching younger learners, it is more challenging to teach learners 17 through 65 years for the following reasons:

1. Learning a second language at an older age is more difficult for older learners because they have passed the period of mastering their first language.
2. The level of text difficulty of the major content areas is much higher, particularly when the new language taught proves to be a challenge for the older learners.
3. Balancing work, school and family obligations.

In the face of cultural responsiveness, it is pertinent to shed light on how teachers are preparing their students to respond to complicated text, engage with their peers, and respond to classroom instruction (Meltzer & Hamann, 2005). Meltzer and Hamann (2005) carried out extensive research where they examined “adolescent literacy and adolescent ELL literatures” (part 1) and focused on “content-area teaching and learning strategies that support literacy development” (part 2). They maintain that with the challenges accompanying the increasing population of ELLs in the American school system, it is necessary to provide professional development for the teachers who are

responsible to instruct them. A teacher's professional best practices should be designed to inform academic literacy tasks because this will create a chance for all adolescents to be engaged and motivated in becoming proficient literacy learners.

Through the use of audio-taped interviews this study investigated how eight teacher candidates' self-efficacy plays a role when teaching their ELL/ML students' academic growth in the alternative education multicultural classroom. The results from the data could help teachers, literacy coaches and administrators, create, design and implement equitable instruction that could help every student reach their learning proficiency and potential.

Statement of Purpose

The PI have reviewed literature published over the past decade (2010 - 2020) and it found no study conducted in New York City that has examined the self-efficacy of teacher candidates in a multicultural alternative school setting and their culturally responsive perceptions. The purpose of this narrative study was to shed light on how teachers perceive themselves in the diverse multicultural classroom when providing instruction to their students who are classified by the New York State Department of Education (NYS DOE) as ELLs/MLs. There are numerous studies that investigated teachers' perceptions, attitudes, self-efficacy and cultural responsiveness when teaching English language learners and other diverse learners (Catto, 2018; Evans, 2017; Fitchett, Starker & Salyers, 2012; Gomez, 2013). This research has added to existing literature which looks at the instructional practices related to the connection between ELL teachers' self-efficacy, perception, motivation, and engagement with students in their multicultural literacy classrooms. The results from the data could help teachers, literacy coaches and

administrators, create, design and implement equitable instruction that would help every student reach their learning proficiency and potential. This study sought to find out how the teachers who teach in alternative education settings assess their pedagogy, and use their self-assessment to create instructional activities, that are impactful on their students' academic performance, proficiency and learning experiences.

This research asked the participants how prepared they felt in terms of their self-efficacy and preparation in providing culturally relevant instruction to their students who are in an alternative education program. An examination of the participants' self-efficacy, perceptions of their potential successes, and what they deem to be challenges was examined to acquire, in their own voices, a deeper understanding of their lived experiences (Geertz, 1973; Lichtman, 2013). Purcell-Gates (2004) implores ethnographic researchers to ask questions such as why, how, what is happening, and what does it look like. Ethnography seeks to explain, describe, and provide insight into human behavior (Mack et.al 2005; Purcell-Gates 2004).

The researcher in this study provided a thorough description of behaviors relating to teachers and their multicultural students. Researchers contended that the preparation of teachers to educate students from diverse backgrounds proved to be an ongoing challenge in the discipline of teacher education programs in universities, colleges, and ultimately the K-12 schools today (Evans, 2017; Gay, 2010; Gorski, Davis & Reiter, 2012). An examination of teachers' abilities and self-efficacy to effectively and efficiently teach students who culturally and linguistically need to be further researched (Alsubaie, 2015; Evans, 2017; Fitchett, Starker & Slayers 2012; Gay, 2010, 2013). Evans (2017) contemplates the effectiveness of teacher education programs with regards to their

influence on teacher candidates' self-efficacy and the frequency with which it has been measured nationwide.

According to Au (2014), there are large numbers of multi-linguals in the United States, and with this influx of new immigrants enrolling in school districts throughout the United States, there is a great need for educators to re-think how multicultural education can be applied in the classroom. Research of how to bridge the gap between struggling ELL adolescents/adults and literacy is especially relevant in New York City, one of the major cross-roads of the world, and the home to many adolescent/adult immigrants entering the United States over the decades. Delpit (1995) suggests that culturally diverse children are underserved when teachers underestimate their own cultural literacy abilities and disregard the wealth of knowledge that multicultural students bring to school.

Teachers' experience and confidence can alert them when a student needs intervention. Should this event arise, the experience teacher can create opportunities for their students to apply their prior cultural knowledge which can cultivate greater academic growth. There are studies which document the effectiveness of interventions and their role in the improvement of reading literacy (Edmonds et al., 2009; Fisher & Ivey, 2006; Kim et al., 2016). However, this study explored how teachers are applying their self-efficacy and cultural experiences in the classroom to influence the academic success of their students. An example of a teachers' experience is detecting or diagnosing whether or not a student should receive intervention to meet their social, emotional, and academic needs.

This study answered whether culturally responsive pedagogy in conjunction with teacher self-efficacy offered some concrete solutions towards academic accomplishments

and the literacy crisis facing multilingual adolescents (Fagella-Luby, Ware & Capozzoli, 2009; Fisher & Ivey, 2006; Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007; Torlakson, 2012). This determined how the teacher candidates applied their culturally relevant best practices and self- efficacy in cultivating proficiency in their students to be college and career ready and in turn become self-sufficient citizens.

Research Questions

The research questions that will guide this study are:

- How do teachers perceive their cultural proficiency and self-efficacy when teaching multicultural students in an alternative education program?
- How do teachers who teach in a multicultural classroom perceive themselves when incorporating multicultural instructional activities and strategies?
- How do teachers experience and sense of cultural competence impact their students' academic performance and experience?

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Since the 1990's, the concept "collective teacher efficacy" was introduced by Albert Bandura and it is rooted in his self-efficacy theory (1993; 1997). The shared beliefs by a group that they possess the ability to achieve high levels of success represents collective teacher efficacy. Therefore, collective teacher efficacy is a key contributor and driver of teacher teams that are successful. The teacher candidates in this study expressed that they function as a collective team when mitigating their challenges in classroom and the wider school community. They are aware that their individual efficacy is absolutely important, but when they combine their efforts, they are more

productive and are able to foster and positively impact their students' academic achievement.

In more recent years, John Hattie (2016) elaborated on the impact of collective teacher efficacy on students' academic competence at his annual visible learning conference in Washington D.C. He posits that when teachers make a collective effort to achieve and more importantly believe that they can do so, then their collective force becomes the number one influence on student achievement. The teachers in this study have alluded to this standpoint in their interviews. They shared that due to their inadequate opportunities to formal professional development, they collectively depend on each other and work as a team to share instructional ideas and best practices.

Many studies on teachers' implementation of disciplinary approaches to literacy in subject-area teaching have been grounded in theories of teacher self-efficacy (Bennett, 2013; Boardman, Boelé & Klingner, 2017; Hillman, 2015; Fitchett, Starker & Salyers, 2012). Teacher self-efficacy is informed by Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory and has emerged as the central role of self-efficacy as the cement that binds an individual aspiration to be successful. Self-efficacy is referenced by researchers, linguists and authors to explain how an individual might feel as it relates to their degree of confidence and their ability to proficiently master a task (Evans, 2017; Gorski, Davis, & Reiter, 2012). Individuals with high self-efficacy are more likely to exhibit persistence in the face of difficulty than are individuals with low self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997).

Multiple factors influence self-efficacy, including prior experiences and achievements. For example, a teacher who attends graduate school and is taught by an experienced professor, by watching the professor's successful actions, can ultimately

learn through affective reactions. Research has shown that when a teacher engages in professional development, for example, professional learning communities, their self-efficacy can influence their teaching practices (Pelayo, 2012; Matthews & Crow, 2010; Vogt & Shearer, 2011). When examining teachers' implementation of disciplinary literacy in their subject-area classrooms, the self-efficacy with which they approach this work is a core conceptual lens that guides work in this area (Siwatu, 2007; Strickland, 2018).

Bandura's theory of self-efficacy has been at the core of several research studies that examine teacher pedagogy in the classroom. Self-efficacy is that driving force behind one's confidence in believing that they can achieve success (Bandura, 1997, Evans, 2017; Faust, 2011; Gorski, Davis & Reiter, 2012). Self-efficacy is a self-evaluation tool that has influence on human experience. Hence, the core purpose of this study was to investigate how teachers' self-efficacy in a multicultural alternative education program promotes their students' academic achievement. Strickland (2018) posits that a teachers' multicultural self-efficacy is related to their feeling of readiness to teach students who are from diverse cultural backgrounds.

This perspective is supported by Mills, Pajares and Herron (2006) who maintain that instructors of language should promote confidence in their students starting from an early age, as this would develop their ability to comprehend all kinds of materials later on. Other researchers believe that teacher effectiveness is pertinent to preparing ELLs and getting them to their grade level literacy proficiency while simultaneously bolstering their academic performance (Dockrell, Stuart & King, 2010; Duguay, Kenyon, Haynes, August, & Yanosky, 2016; Marulis & Neuman, 2010; Moeller, Ketsman, &

Masmaliyeva, 2009). Proficiency in literacy will create a better trajectory for language minority students who are entering a new society, school, and/or workplace (August & Shanahan, 2006; August, Shanahan & Escamilla, 2009).

Educators are expected to be trained and equipped to support the development of literacy in our youngsters so that they will become proficient in facing the challenges that accompany college, career, and community. Considering data shared by a Pro-Literacy (2017) report, the United States welcomes approximately two million immigrants every year. The nation is faced with the task of providing learning opportunities for these English Language Learners (ELLs) who are taught English as a New Language (ENL) each year. Teacher self-efficacy is at the center of whether they feel competent or not to meet the literacy needs of the rapidly growing diverse and multicultural classroom (Gorski, Davis & Reiter, 2012).

A teachers' self-efficacy can help in making valuable judgments as to when a student needs intervention so that they can read and write at grade level. This confidence and professional judgment can also contribute to their proficiency in the classroom. Hence, it is pertinent for pedagogues to be aware that early intervention is a necessary factor in the development of literacy in non-native speakers and those students who are native speakers but lack the basic reading and writing skills for their literacy development (August & Shanahan, 2006; Clark, 2018). Banks (2016) posits that multicultural literature should be embedded in a teachers' lesson plan to better educate all students, since the students are inclusive of a global village and it is necessary to differentiate the curriculum being taught. Fisher and Frey (2018) posit that student learning will be more effective when teachers and administrators eliminate the concept of retention and provide

resources for early intervention that is age-appropriate and is culturally sensitive.

There have been many studies conducted to examine the effectiveness of interventions that improve oral and reading literacy for struggling learners, such as students with severe disabilities and English language learners who are k-12 (Denton, Wexler, Vaughn & Bryan, 2008; Deshler & Hock, 2006; Dockrell, Stuart & King, 2010; Edmonds et al., 2009; Fisher & Ivey, 2006; Fisher & Frey, 2014; Kim et al., 2016). However, the use of diverse and multicultural interventions in the literacy curriculum is one of growing importance, as the newly revised P-12 NYS ELA Learning standards, which include specific standards for multicultural and diverse learners, was rolled out this year, 2020. It is important to note that teachers in the alternative programs are expected to teach their students at the same level of proficiency as the teachers in traditional schools, as they are expected to cultivate success in their students regardless of their diverse needs and backgrounds.

Key Terminology/Definition of Terms

The key terms used in this study are defined below.

Alternative Education- Alternative education is derived from the notion that all individuals can be educated and should be given the opportunity to get an education (Morley, 1991).

English Language Learner (ELL) - This term is used throughout this research paper and is applicable to a person who engages in the process of language acquisition and has a first language other than English.

Culture: The set of beliefs, attitudes, and values that define a person or group.

Culturally Responsive/Relevant Teaching- Culturally relevant teaching is a trajectory through which students will be empowered to expand and explore their knowledge and opportunities as they strive for academic excellence (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1994).

Multicultural- Relating to or including many different cultures in a multicultural society.

Multicultural Education- Multicultural education incorporates the idea that all students, regardless of their gender, social class, and ethnic, racial, cultural characteristics should have an equal opportunity to learn in school (Banks & Banks, 2010).

Multilingual learner (ML) - students that are learning the language of instruction juxtaposition learning academic content that is rigorous.

Self-Efficacy- Self-efficacy is the belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action needed to produce achievements (Bandura, 1994).

Teacher self-efficacy- A teacher's belief in his/herself ability to teach a subject matter effectively.

Self-Perception- How people see themselves in regard to a specific task.

Summary

The literature review, methodology, and analysis of data and findings are further discussed in chapters two, three, four, and five respectively. Lichtman (2013) implores qualitative researchers that it is extremely important to be self-reflective and notice how one's own assumptions and reaction to a situation might affect what they notices and how they writes their report.

To reiterate, a teachers' self-efficacy in the multicultural classroom can propel EL learners to feel more successful, competent and confident in their ability to communicate in their second language resulting in increased learning and self-motivation. Educators should make it their business to promote the best practices that could benefit adolescents as they strive to become literate and be valuable contributors to society at large. A teacher's self-efficacy is a major contributor to his/her professional growth.

According to Guskey (1988) teachers who exhibit a high level of self-efficacy tend to be receptive to professional development and implementing instructional practices that are in keeping with the academic changes in time. Part of the function of the classroom is to provide the necessary academic tools for students to develop confidence in their acquisition of knowledge and not feel inadequate and insignificant compared to their more proficient peers. The current researcher found out how teacher candidates are aspiring to provide equitable educational opportunities to foster their students' success.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This related literature serves to highlight studies depicting a wide range of research that is aligned with the questions and focus of this study. A key focus was to enquire about the perceptions, attitudes, and self-efficacy of teachers in an alternative school program who provide instruction to English language learners from diverse cultural backgrounds. Another purpose is to add to the body of knowledge regarding perceptions held by those pedagogues who work with the beginner ELLs' population and to report their self-perceived understanding of the students' cultural background and its impact on their academic performance.

This review also focuses on the importance of literacy as a necessary vehicle in preparing ELLs/MLs in becoming self-sufficient American citizens. Further discussion exhibits the relevance of multicultural education, cultural relevant pedagogy, and self-efficacy which serves as an essential trait and the theoretical framework of this study. The review also presents relevant research related to the need for cultural relevant teaching and closing the achievement gap of English language learners in literacy. As people interact socially among diverse cultures, their attitudes and perceptions become intertwined, hence, cultures can be adopted consciously or unconsciously. An individual's culture can impact their learning and proficiency in literacy, which is the bedrock for college and career readiness and high - stake tests.

The Importance of Literacy and Theoretical Framework

Luque et al., (2018) defines literacy as a transport that promote an understanding of one and an acceptance of the other. This ideal is closely aligned with Bandura's self-

efficacy theory, which states that if an individual believes that they can do their best at a task, they can become better at it and produce a positive outcome as a result (Bandura 1977, 1986, 1997). Again, this theory speaks to the fact that literacy is where language and learning are created between teachers and students who are in continuous contact in achieving academic success through reading, writing, listening and communication (Keefe & Copeland, 2011). According to Keefe and Copeland (2011) literacy is that social contract that all groups of people are entitled to free and fair opportunities in learning to read and write despite their needs for support or not. Literacy encompasses the potential exhibited by an individual to read and write proficiently.

However, literacy is more than just reading and writing. Literacy is that ability learners grasp to think critically and problem-solve when they encounter difficult literature, situation or environments. Hence, the teacher of literacy must be equipped to impart knowledge to their students, especially those who are from multicultural origins. The teacher candidates in this study shared the various instructional strategies they employ in preparing and engaging their students for academic success. They believe that they are capable of putting their students on a trajectory to be literate but acknowledge that collective teacher efficacy more so than individual teacher efficacy is likely to be more effective in impacting students' literacy skills. These teachers must multitask as they concentrate on both the content they impart in concert with how they differentiate the instruction to meet the diverse academic needs of their learners. Undoubtedly, if they merge their collective efficacy through professional learning communities (PLCs), then this would be a meaningful way of providing instruction and foster culturally responsive teaching.

This study is rooted in Bandura's (1997) theory of self-efficacy because self-efficacy has been at the core of several research studies that examine teacher pedagogy in the classroom. Self-efficacy is that driving force behind one's confidence in believing that they can achieve success (Bandura, 1997, Evans, 2017; Faust, 2011; Gorski, Davis & Reiter, 2012). Self-efficacy is a self-evaluation tool that has influence on human experience. Hence, the core purpose of this study is to investigate how teachers in an alternative education program, self-efficacy promotes their students' academic achievement in the multicultural classroom. Multicultural self-efficacy proves to have a strong relation to teachers' feelings of how prepared they are to teach multicultural learners (Strickland, 2018).

This perspective is supported by Mills, Pajares, and Herron (2006) as they maintain that language teachers should encourage confidence in their students' capacity from the early stages of language instruction so that they can comprehend all kinds of input. Also, teacher effectiveness is pertinent to preparing ELLs and getting them to their grade level literacy proficiency while simultaneously bolstering their academic performance (Dockrell, Stuart & King, 2010; Duguay, Kenyon, Haynes, August, & Yanosky, 2016; Marulis & Neuman, 2010; Moeller, Ketsman, & Masmaliyeva, 2009). Proficiency in literacy will create a better trajectory for language minority students who are entering a new society, school, and/or workplace (August & Shanahan, 2006; August, Shanahan & Escamilla, 2009).

Educators are required to be trained, certified, and equipped to support the development of literacy in our youngsters so that they will become proficient to face the challenges that accompany college, career, and community. Considering data shared by a

Pro-Literacy report (2017), the United States welcomes approximately two million immigrants that come every year. The nation is faced with the task of providing learning opportunities for these English Language Learners (ELLs) or English as a New Language (ENLs) each year. Teacher self-efficacy is at the center of whether they feel competent or not to meet the literacy needs of the rapidly growing diverse and multicultural classroom (Gorski, Davis & Reiter, 2012).

A teachers' self-efficacy can help in making valuable judgments as to when a student needs intervention so that they can read and write at grade level. This confidence and professional judgment can also contribute to their proficiency in the classroom. Hence, it is pertinent that pedagogues are aware that early intervention is a necessary factor in the development of literacy in non-native speakers and those students who are native speakers but lack the basic reading and writing skills for their literacy development. Fisher and Frey (2018) posit that student learning will be more effective when teachers and administrators eliminate the concept of retention and provide resources for early intervention that is age-appropriate and is culturally sensitive.

There have been many studies conducted to examine the effectiveness of interventions that improve oral and reading literacy for struggling learners. For example, students with severe disabilities and English language learners who are k-12 (Denton, Wexler, Vaughn & Bryan, 2008; Deshler & Hock, 2006, Dockrell, Stuart & King, 2010; Edmonds et al., 2009; Fisher & Ivey, 2006; Fisher & Frey, 2014; Kim et al., 2016) have been researched. However, this spring 2020, the newly revised P-12 NYS ELA Learning standards are being introduced and they intend to use diverse and multicultural interventions in the literacy curriculum. Culturally responsive educators are mandated to

include these standards in their daily student engagement routine. It is common knowledge that educators must be the strongest supporters of students' identities and civic liberties in this culturally responsive era. There are some vital signs that are relevant to engagement in literacy instruction, which are instrumental to closing the gaps of cultural responsiveness, achievement, rigor and relationship in the classroom (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2014).

The History of Educational Reform and Laws in America

It is well documented that the United States is a nation that have been putting reform measures in place to address the social, economic, cultural and academic challenges that daunt an individual obtaining a strong educational foundation. Education is a vital avenue through which individuals can be independent and self-sufficient. It is less burdensome on a nation to adequately provide for its citizens if the majority is educated. A country will always benefit from a literate population because they can efficaciously contribute nation building.

In 1983, under President Reagan's administration, the education secretary Terrel H. Bell, reported that the nation is at risk and needed urgent reform. As the historical map for educational reform transcends throughout the years, it has not reached its fullest potential to date (2020). A restructuring of the English learning standards has now seen the implementation of New York State Next Generation ELA Standards. Its main goal is to be more inclusive for all learners regardless of their race, ethnicity, religious, and racial backgrounds, gifted and talented, at risks, economic and social status. History has documented provisions for United States public schools must be more inclusive and nurturing. Warder (2015) highlighted that past educational leaders saw the need for

cultural inclusion and they wanted trained professionals to teach and the nation saw one of the highest literacy gains. It is evident that attempts have been made to build classrooms around inclusion but much work still needs to be decades later. It is also noteworthy that inclusion promotes success in learning because collectively individuals learn from each other, and more importantly, everyone has a right to a sound education.

In 2001, President George Bush signed the landmark No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB Act, 2002). He articulated that the quality of the nation's education directly impacts everyone, students, families, and citizens. He thought an overwhelming number of children in America were being divided by illiteracy and low self-esteem. Education policy makers are cognizant that with the constant changing demands in a competitive world, children must become literate to master the complex skills at school and work and should not be left behind (see; No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Pub. L. No. 107-110, 115 Stat. 1425, 2002).

In a 2010 U.S. Department of Education policy brief, President Barack Obama stated that "every child in America deserves world-class education." According to the president, the U.S. was leading the world in college completion a generation ago, and currently the U.S. stands at number 11 in the world. He maintains that by that by 2020, the U.S. must be the leader once again (see U.S. Education Policy Brief -Diverse Learners, 2010).

It is important to note that the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was first passed in 1965 and it represented the education law of the nation. This act (ESEA) marked a long-lasting commitment that the nation will ensure equal opportunity for all students. Under this act, states were authorized to create programs that

could address the social and economic challenges of their struggling readers and raise their academic outcomes. Then on December 10, 2015, President Obama reauthorized ESSA as Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The new law builds on key areas of progress in recent years, made possible by the efforts of educators, communities, parents, and students across the country. ESSA replaced the previous reauthorization of ESEA, known as the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, enacted in 2002. ESSA was fully operational in school year 2017-18. It is evident that the nation's schools, colleges and universities are diverse more than ever before and actions to accommodate cultural sensitivity and inclusivity are paramount.

According to Banks and Banks (2010) "U.S. schools are more diverse today than they have been since the early 1900's, when many immigrants entered from Southern Central and Eastern Europe" (p. 233). For many years, different U.S government administrations have sought to create a framework for the best education that the U.S. as the leading nation in world can provide for its citizens. This challenge is embedded in a curriculum design that favors American perspectives and concepts. However, with the onset of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's, today the instructional curriculum and literature are more culturally inclusive. Indeed, some progress has been made, however there is more work to be done regarding teacher perceptions, attitudes and their professional development in ensuring that students are receiving culturally relevant instruction (Gay, 2010, 2002; Gorski, Davis, & Reiter, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2017; Rajagopal, 2011; Siwatu & Starker, 2014).

Multiculturalism and Multicultural Education

Multicultural education was born out of historical struggles that led to the 1960's civil rights movement where there was the need for freedom, social freedom and economic equity (Alghamdi 2017; Au, 2014; Banks & Banks 2016, 2010). In this age of multiculturalism and diversity, educators have been seeking the most beneficial ways to implement their best literacy practices in the classroom. For every child in the multicultural classroom to receive equitable instruction and learning, the teacher needs to have profound knowledge and understanding of the nuances that surround multiculturalism (Gorski, Davis & Reiter, 2012). Hence, the need for the educators adopting a culturally responsive role, has become relevant in multicultural education.

Strickland (2018) posits that culturally responsive teaching falls under the umbrella of multicultural education and is pertinent to instructing students from diverse cultural backgrounds. Multicultural education is discussed in this paper because the concept concurs with the notion that the best education that students can attain is provided by educators (Strickland, 2018). Besides, multicultural education is a necessary vehicle for literacy and learning to come to fruition for diverse learners in the classroom.

Banks and Banks (2016) maintain that multicultural education is intended for students to develop positive self-confidence and can identify with other diverse cultural groups. Currently, multicultural education includes activities that engage students in school programs that promotes social justice and fosters diversity (Matthews & Crow, 2010). Banks and Banks (2016) postulate that there must be nurture, support, and affirmation of the identities of students from cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and religious groups that have been marginalized. Clark (2017) asserts that "literacy is the key to

personal, school, and community success” (p.3). Educators should explore how the curriculum can be balanced and aligned to the content and instructional strategies employed in the multicultural classroom (Banks, 2016, 2010, 2006; Matthews & Crow, 2010; Vogt & Shearer, 2011).

Multicultural education is geared at providing the skills, attitudes and knowledge to function proficiently within their immediate community, the mainstream cultures, and across cultures (Banks & Banks, 2016, 2010; Banks, 2006; Yilmaz, 2016.). Banks and Banks (2010) postulates that “multicultural education incorporates the idea that all students regardless of their gender, social class, and ethnic, racial, cultural characteristics should have an equal opportunity to learn in school” (p. 3).

Alghamdi (2017) postulates that it is relevant for educators to be in keeping with the diverse populations entering their jurisdiction and how to meet their diverse learning needs. According to Matthews and Crow (2010), multicultural education is considered a process in nature, and is cemented in the principles of equality, equity, freedom and social justice. Banks and Banks (2010) maintain that multicultural education is intended for students to develop positive self-confidence and can identify with other diverse cultural groups. Currently, multicultural education includes activities that engage students in school programs that promotes social justice and fosters diversity (Matthews & Crow, 2010).

Alternative Education Program and Its Role in the U.S.

Alternative education is defined as any public elementary or secondary school that fosters the academic and social needs of students who are unable to accomplish their goals in the mainstream school environments and provides them with nontraditional

education (Aron, 2006; Matthews & Crow, 2010). Drawing upon the work of Aron (2006), a majority of alternative schools are thought to provide educational services that are of a lesser quality in comparison to their counterparts in the traditional K-12 school system. They are similar in their characteristics such as flexible schedules, smaller student teacher ratio, and modified curricula. The adolescents in these programs are usually failing academically or may have learning disabilities, social emotional and behavioral problems, and are prone to tardiness or poor attendance. They are provided with an opportunity to achieve in a different setting and use different and innovative learning methods for example, vocational training in a skill, or internship where they get on the job training.

According to a recent report shared by McFarland, Cui, and Stark (2018), over the past 40 years there has been a decline in the enrolment of 16–24-year-old students who have received a high school diploma. The statistics reveal that there is a decline from 14.3 percent in 1974 to a 6.5 percent in 2014. High school completion rates peaked to 77.1 percent in 1969 and have gradually declined to 69.9 percent (Aron, 2006). Undoubtedly a wealth of challenges remains in closing the achievement gap for adolescents. However, if they are exposed to well-crafted literacy in the classrooms, they could have a better chance to be successful. Adolescent English Language Learners (ELLs) carry multicultural perspectives and need to be taught how to think creatively and thrive independently. Educators need to create a learning trajectory for these students to understand how other cultures are viewed and how to adapt in a diverse cultural context, such as an immigrant student who comes from another country and must adapt to the multicultural experiences in the United States.

Culturally Responsive Teaching

In her extensive work on culturally responsive teaching, Geneva Gay (2004) documented that for equity to be obtained in education there are some features that should be present in the diverse and multicultural classroom environment. Some of the features or domains are: multicultural content; pluralistic classroom climates and learning environments; teacher attitudes and expectations toward diversity; building community among diverse learners; caring across cultures; use of multiple teaching techniques that are congruent with the cultural backgrounds, values, experiences, and orientations of different ethnic groups; developing personal efficacy and an ethos of success among diverse students; and using culturally informed assessment procedures to determine learning needs, knowledge acquisition, and skill proficiencies (p. 214).

An additional attribute of a quality curriculum is being culturally responsive, meaning educators can develop curricula with standards-based content, and make these curricula comprehensible and accessible to students by relating to their cultural lived experiences that take to the classroom (Catto, 2018; Edwards & Edick, 2013; Rajagopal, 2011). The informational text that our students are introduced to should be culturally relevant. It behooves educators to make a vested effort in ensuring that our students can activate schema with the text they are reading. As noted by Gonzalez, Moll and Amanti (2005), the wealth of knowledge accumulated by the families of minority students in reference to their cultural practices can be transferred in the curriculum, and teachers can learn those cultural practices and relate to their students' skills and prior knowledge. Banks and Banks (2010) posit that "teachers and students, by looking within themselves, can come to see that everybody is cultural and multicultural, including themselves"

(p.51).

Although there are multiple studies that have examined the need for professional development in response to a more culturally relevant pedagogy, and to ensure that the needs of students from diverse backgrounds are being met, more research is needed to fully address multicultural education (Au, 2014; Banks & Banks, 2016; Gunning, 2016). Diversity and education creates an avenue that will allow readers to become cognizant of diversity and multicultural education in their own lives (Au, 2014).

One meaningful way that educators in the multicultural classroom can achieve this objective is by collaborating with librarians, parents and literacy administrators in deciding the best instructional resources that are culturally relevant (Gay, 2013, 2010; Evans, 2017). According to McIntyre (2011), educators must provide a platform for students to demonstrate ownership of their learning as they interact as a reader with literary and nonliterary texts, and other assigned activities in a sociocultural context. As noted in the work of Golden (2017), it is a requirement of culturally responsive pedagogies to move beyond across-the-board expectations about learners and put more emphasis on local meaning-makings. Ten years prior to Golden's work, Siwatu (2007) shared that a culturally responsive pedagogue should include the following four elements when providing instruction:

1. The use of students' cultural knowledge (e.g., culturally familiar scenario, examples, and vignettes), experiences, prior knowledge, and individual learning preferences as a conduit to facilitate the teaching-learning process (curriculum and instruction).

2. Incorporation of students' cultural orientation to design culturally compatible classroom environments (classroom management).
3. Providing students with multiple opportunities to demonstrate what they have learned using a variety of assessment techniques (student assessment).
4. Providing students with the knowledge and skills needed to function in mainstream culture while simultaneously helping student maintain their cultural identity, native language, and connection to their culture (cultural enrichment and competence).

Alvermann and Moje (2013) postulates that there is a need for an Adolescent Literacy Model (ALM) that will help our young people connect to the text that they are interacting with. Educators must provide a platform for students to ownership of their own learning as they interact as a reader with literary and nonliterary texts, the assigned activities in a sociocultural context (McIntyre, 2011). Therefore, the curriculum, the instruction and assessment should be aligned in this culturally responsive era (Ginsberg & Wlodkowski, 2015; Rebore, 2014; Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995). There should be a synthesis of learning environment, tasks, cultural norms, and identities: for example, schools, families, peer groups, and academic content areas (Catto, 2018; Edwards & Edick, 2013; Gay, 2010; Hollie, 2015; McIntyre, 2011; Tracey & Morrow, 2017).

In a study conducted by Catto (2018), a major finding highlights that students' engagement, confidence, and motivation were significantly improved due the combination of their home languages and cultural experiences. Catto (2018) shares how the participants from Mexico and Guatemala were able to activate schemata through

making text to world, text to text, and text self-connections, as they were able to draw upon real life experiences with their family and friends from their home countries. This is an effective instructional practice that will orient students towards literacy and learning, and it is also a culturally responsive practice. According to Banks and Banks (2010), all stakeholders in the learning community should find meaningful and purposeful ways to incorporate their cultural experiences so that there can be multicultural learning taking place.

An essential function of the multicultural classroom is to provide the necessary academic tools that have an additional diverse component (cultural relevance) for students to develop confidence in their acquisition of knowledge and therefore not to feel inadequate and insignificant to their more proficient peers. It is noteworthy that educators continue to foster the development of knowledge and skills, as well as nurture the diverse emotions and relationships that are present in the classroom. Hence, culturally relevant teaching is a trajectory through which students will be empowered to expand and explore their knowledge and opportunities as they strive for academic excellence (Gay, 2010; Paris & Alim, 2017).

Moeller, Ketsman, and Masmaliyeva (2009) pointed out in the discussion of their study about the essentials of vocabulary teaching, that it is best for educators of multicultural English Language learners to be equipped with the knowledge of what, why, and how students best learn in the literacy classroom. They maintain that teachers should clearly articulate and illustrate to students, parents, and other constituents why there is a need to employ the best suited pedagogical practices designed to increase language proficiency efficiently and effectively (Moeller et al., 2009). There must be on

going dialogues between education stakeholders so that essential and effective learning can take place in the best interest of all students.

Barriers/Challenges to Effective Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

The ELL Information Center shared that, over three decades, the U.S. population has grown by nearly 30 million immigrants, of both authorized and unauthorized status, who have settled here in the U.S. in search of the American dream for their families. Many of the parents of the ENLs are not capable of communicating to their children in English to reinforce the learning that commenced in the classroom.

Cárdenas and Cárdenas (1977) postulate that English language learners, whose cultural backgrounds are indifferent to students in the mainstream culture, tend to experience failure and frustration due to negative perceptions that society demonstrates with regards to their academic abilities, achievement and successes. Undoubtedly this scenario cultivates an environment that is susceptible to low academic performance and expectation ENLs.

Researchers have concurred that many of the current ENL classrooms across the United States comprise students from varying countries of origin, and educating them is challenging (Coady, Harper & de Jong, 2015; Khong & Saito, 2014). ELL students come to the classroom with varying degrees of English speaking and writing. The ENL teacher will have to get to know their learning profiles, their academic strengths and areas that needs improvement, and assess their growth and proficiency. In their study, Khong and Saito (2014), highlight and emphasize the challenges that teachers face in educating students of cultural and linguistic backgrounds. They maintain that some researchers emphasize that having better training, professional development and teacher education

programs for preservice teachers will solve the challenges, however, they debate that these solutions will not be enough due to the vast reality of what teachers face during instruction. The teachers of limited proficient students face unique challenges in imparting the content in a particular context as it relates to adopting the U.S. way of learning, because the learners learn differently in their societies (Banks & Banks, 2010; Gay, 2010).

In relation to the challenges faced by teachers in the ENL classroom, Keengwe (2010) explains that a teacher's attitudes, biases and lack of cultural prowess create a hindrance to the productivity of their students. For example, when educational professionals develop low expectations towards their students, they become judgmental towards students' literacy abilities, language and cultural backgrounds, country of origin, and cultural identity and ethnicity. Teachers should be cognizant about their own poor judgments that can contribute to unwanted challenges in the classroom. It is essential for teachers to commit to serving their students without bias and interact with them from a sincere cultural lens and perspective.

Khong and Saito (2014) posit that to completely rectify the challenges that ENL teachers face, it is essential for educators, local and central administrators, academics, local communities, and lawmakers to collaborate in this venture. It is evident that a teacher's self-efficacy would be challenged as well, and this study is contributing to the conversation.

Bandura (1997) posits that an individual's behavior is inferred from their cognitive processes and perceptions. When teaching a class, a teacher's behavior could be influenced by the thoughts and perceptions that is being internalize from prior group

encounters in the classroom. For example, a teacher who believes that students who are from a specific region in the world, are better at reading and writing in comparison to learners from other parts of the world. Hence, the teacher who have the perception that a particular group of ELL student will perform at a higher rate than those from another region, might be influenced in the way they teaches both groups.

New York State Department of Education and Diversity in Schools

Governments should be responsible for providing equitable educational opportunities for all its citizens (No Child Left Behind Act, 2002). However, the United States is faced with the daunting truth of low literacy rates as the nation has been trying to meet the needs of its increasingly multicultural and diverse citizens. An example of this low literacy success can be found within the data coming out of New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE), the nation's largest public-school system. McGill-Frazen (2011) maintained reading comprehension was a high priority at the national level. Moreover, schools should be held accountable in bringing children and adolescents up to grade level proficiency. New York City's public-school chancellor Carranza is on a mission promoting his vision "Equity and Excellence for All" throughout the schools. His four pillars that he hopes to promote equity and excellence for all are: supporting high-quality instruction, empowering parents, investing in the workforce, and making the school system fairer (Veiga, 2018).

In September of 2017 the New York Board of Regents adopted the newly revised P-12 English Language Arts Learning Standards to ensure that New York State has the best learning standards for our students. Its full implementation will be required of schools starting September 2020 for its multicultural and diverse students. This new

initiative is geared at strengthening the capacity of educational leaders and learners of the 21st century. The New York State Education Department is responsible for creating learning standards for all learners P-12.

The literary scholars, education policy makers, parents, educators, and other stakeholders hold the belief that all students in New York State classrooms should be competent in all language-based competencies in order to become proficient communicators, both orally and in writing to meet the increasingly diverse ways and with increasingly diverse audiences. The relevant skills and expected competencies for students are included in the New York State's English Language Arts and Literacy Standards. It is noteworthy that the NYS Education Department is making efforts to include standards that could benefit diverse learners. It is the goal of NYS education policy makers to ensure and promote equal opportunities for all learners to access advanced literacy alongside promoting and capitalizing on linguistic and cultural diversity.

MLS/ELLS and the Achievement Gap

In their 2016 International Literacy Association (ILA) featured article, Goldman, Snow, and Vaughn raised concern for adolescents who have shown a stagnant performance in graduating from high school. They posit that, for over 35 years, U.S. high schools have failed in providing 21st century literacy instruction for success in the major content areas (Goldman, Snow, & Vaughn, 2016). Clark (2017) asserts that “literacy is the key to personal, school, and community success” (p.3). Educators should promote literacy through the content area in an effort to enable students to reach their maximum potential.

Leko and Mundy (2012) posit that it is important for secondary educators to be adequately prepared to meet the needs of struggling adolescent readers. Hence, it is also essential for adolescent learners to be prepared to meet the literacy challenges that accompanies learning in their academic and social life. With respect to reading comprehension in literacy, the statistics is there to justify this claim. A report card shared by NAEP, indicated that “fewer than third of eight graders read and write at a proficient level” (Heller, Calderon, & Medrich, 2003). As cited in the work of Proctor, Dalton, and Grisham (2007) the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) results of 2003 exposed the daunting issue of reading achievement in the United States: “37% of students in Grade 4 and 26% of students in Grade 8 could not read at a basic level” (p. 72). ELLs are expected to learn the reading skills that meet the proficiency levels outlined in the English Language Arts (ELA) Common Core State Standards. With this new phenomenon taking shape 14 years after the NAEP 2003 report, matters are only further complicated for ELLs, because the context and content of literacy requirements have only proven to widen the achievement gap (Van Roekel, 2008, p. 2).

It becomes necessary for educators to craft meaningful language acquisition and reading strategies to prepare these students to be college and career ready. They will need to develop their own sense of motivation to get through their language acquisition challenges. ELLs contribute to what Short and Fitzsimmons (2007) call “the adolescent crisis” because they struggle with the discourse of reading and writing in new language. It is well-known that there are a wide range of strategies to support their literacy development; it shouldn’t be ignored that learners have diverse learning profiles.

Many of the ELLs are coming from diverse educational backgrounds which poses a problem for how instructional materials are designed to meet their learning needs. Those students with learning disabilities might not be able to learn from a strategy that might work for another student. Literacy researchers have shared great concern that the wide variations in language acquisition for ELLs, often have serious “implications for teachers, instructional leaders, curriculum designers, administrators, and policymakers at all levels of government” (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007).

Teacher Self-Efficacy, Perceptions and Effectiveness

Bandura (1997) highlighted in his work that a teacher with high self-efficacy is one that is confident and self-motivated. When teaching students from culturally diverse backgrounds, a teacher’s perception may determine the degree of efficiency with which he or she implements his or her “multicultural teaching practices” (Strickland, 2018, p.39). Again, Bandura’s self-efficacy theory (1997, 1986 & 1977) is an appropriate framework in which to evaluate teacher perceptions and effectiveness in relation to cultural diversity in the classroom. With the growth of cultural diversity, it behooves teachers to envision themselves as responsible for promoting and fostering students in becoming prepared for college and career readiness. This phenomenon of how prepared teachers are in meeting the demands of providing culturally relevant instruction that is inclusive of students’ cultural identities, is well documented in research through instruction (Doran, 2014; Edwards & Edick, 2013; Evans, 2017; Faust, 2011; Fisher & Frey, 2018; Fitchett, Starker & Salyers, 2012; Gay, 2010 & 2002; Gomez, 2013; Golden,

2017; Gorski et al., 2012; Gorski, 2009; Gunning, 2016; Hollie, 2015, Irizarry, 2017; Pelayo, 2012; Strickland, 2018).

The quality of learning that students acquire in the classroom will have an impact on their adaptation on the world sphere. Hence, educators need to help students construct a career path that is sustainable and can lead to them to self-sufficiency and success. This is one way that educators can bring about equitable and formidable change in the diverse and multicultural environment. Cultural diversity is at the core of today's classroom, and both the teacher and the students should create meaningful interactions, that will allow for cultural acceptance and respect (Ladson-Billings, 2014; Strickland, 2018).

Pelayo (2012) conducted a qualitative case study on early childhood teachers' beliefs, knowledge, and practices and how these changed over time. The results indicated that there was a direct impact on the improvement of students' outcomes due to culturally and linguistically responsive professional development. Educators should explore how the curriculum can be balanced and aligned to the content and instructional strategies employed in the multicultural classroom (Banks & Banks, 2016, 2010; Matthews & Crow, 2010; Vogt & Shearer, 2011).

Evans (2017) carried out an extensive research on the self-efficacy of culturally responsive teaching in Hawaii, specifically, teacher candidates' culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy beliefs, their demographic relationships, and their own perceptions of factors that might have an impact on their beliefs. The mixed methods study looked at 175 teacher candidates over a four-year period and was grounded in the self-efficacy theory. The participants in the study were given the opportunity to examine and acquire insight about some areas of culturally and linguistically responsive competencies, for

example; curriculum and instruction, classroom management, student assessment and cultural enrichment and competence. Base on the body of research noted above, it must be noted that a teachers' self-efficacy coupled with their perceptions can influence their level of competency in the classroom and in turn impact students' literacy proficiency.

This literature review has shown that inadequate professional development in ELL instructional strategies adversely impact teachers' self-efficacy due to the fact that they lack knowledge in the best practices that can promote students outcomes. It is notable that collective teacher efficacy can close the achievement gap and turn out high levels of achievement for students (Bandura, 1993, 1997; Eells, 2011; Hattie, 2016). Teachers' confidence and effectiveness are strengthened when they collaborate with each other in teams as they meet for planning sessions and other community engagements.

The Benefits of Professional Development and Learning Communities

In her study conducted about the perspectives of U.S. school administrators regarding their professional development plan targeted to remediate the needs of teachers who are underperforming, Zepeda (2016) concludes that teacher effectiveness is relevant in the classroom because when the teacher underperforms, the students are at a disadvantage. She contends that teacher effectiveness refers to the ability of a teacher to improve the academic gains of a student as measured by standardized achievement examinations. Zepeda's study revealed that school administrators should possess qualities needed to ensure that their teachers are supported and become proficient. A culturally proficient literacy teacher can assist and cultivate his/her students' own self-awareness and the cultural awareness of others around them. For example, the lessons can be

designed to reflect the similarities and differences of the unique cultures and human experiences that are present in the classroom.

There are numerous pedagogues who aspire to create and promote rigorous lessons and are conscientious of the diverse needs in their classrooms. However, their determination to cultivate success in the students they instruct are deterred by the customs of the teacher education programs. According to LaDuke (2009) the courses offered in multicultural education programs, often do not create an opportunity for teachers to advance their self-efficacy and culturally relevant skills necessary in becoming effective professionals. Commitment to understanding students

Gaps in Extant Literature

Due to the large number of multi-linguals in the United States and the influx of new immigrants enrolling in schools throughout the United States, there is a great need for educators to re-think how they apply multiculturalism in the classroom (Au, 2014; Banks & Banks, 2016, 2010). According to the U.S Census Bureau (2008), by year 2042, there will be at least a 50 percent increase in ethnic minorities (cited in Banks, 2010). As was mentioned earlier, to date, there has never been a study conducted in New York City that has examined the self-efficacy of teacher candidates in a multicultural alternative school setting and their culturally responsive perceptions. In this narrative study, the researcher will investigate how comfortable teachers are in teaching alternative education programs and how they employ self-efficacy when teaching their culturally diverse population of students.

This study is important because it can provide insight into teachers' perceptions, attitudes, competency and self-efficacy in the multicultural and diverse classrooms. It is

important to take note of teachers' perspectives towards embracing multiculturalism in their classroom, because this knowledge can help to determine if a teacher needs to be professionally developed, as they might lack confidence and need to be encouraged in creating a meaningful and purposeful multicultural environment that incorporates everyone cultural experiences (Catto, 2018; Gay, 2010). Freire (1993) postulates that educators who are teaching beginner level literacy students should provide meaningful and purposeful pedagogy through the stance of the learner which include their home literacy environments. As pointed out by Purcell-Gates (2013), "this learner stance assumes that all students bring with them to formal literacy instruction sociocultural constructed bodies of knowledge that can be productively built upon by teachers" (p.70).

In their pre-experimental study of preservice practitioners' professional dispositions, Fitchett et al., (2012) examined if there was a relationship between teacher candidates' culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy and an innovative culturally responsive teaching model in a social studies methods course. They shared that the participants exhibit greater willingness to work in communities that are diverse. Their findings further indicate that preservice teachers who are immersed and taught in a culturally responsive teaching environment, demonstrated more self-confidence in their abilities to employ culturally relevant teaching. The sociocultural instructor-learner relationships in the alternative adolescent classroom will be valuable to the research that exists on the challenges experienced by educators who are not-equipped to meet the social, emotional, and academic needs of the students they teach (Au, 2014; Banks & Banks, 2016; Gay, 2010; Luque et al., 2018).

In a recent study conducted by Luque et al., (2018), it is reported that further research is needed to investigate the dynamics of the multicultural ELL educators' instructional practices and learn about their views as it relates to honing their craft while fostering the needs of diverse and multicultural students. The study posits that it is a major challenge to overcome to accomplish academic success in education. For example, they highlighted that none of the participants had a conducive environment for their students to learn, as they had to move around in finding areas that were available to teach (Luque et al., 2018). In this circumstance that they describe, the teachers' self-efficacy was challenged. Certainly, the Luque et al., 2018 study provided insight into the teaching profession as well as education as a social institute in the United States. In keeping with their findings, the current researcher hopes to add to knowledge in the field, through exploring the perspectives of multicultural pedagogues in an alternative setting. A research on how to bridge the gap between struggling adolescents/adults in an alternative program who are from multicultural and diverse backgrounds, is an appropriate vision for the implementation of a multicultural curriculum.

Summary

As mentioned earlier, this study investigated how eight pedagogues in an alternative education program are supporting students from diverse backgrounds in their classrooms. The researcher wants to know how their self-efficacy impacts the way they engage and prepare students to meet the demands of the 21st century. Also, how do they ensure that students are engaged with rich and inclusive curriculum materials that meet their students' needs from a culturally responsive stance? Hence, Bandura's (1994) theory of self-efficacy is an appropriate framework for this study, as it refers to one's

strong sense of self-efficacy and how this strength of self-efficacy, will motivate their level of accomplishment at a given task. An individual's perception of a challenge will influence how the challenge is being approached and solved. In addition, students need to be adequately prepared in becoming lifelong problem solvers to unexpected changes and challenges.

Today, educators in New York are expected to commit to the task of providing the highest level of preparation to students at each level of the learning continuum. Hence, teachers must perceive themselves as capable to promote and cultivate academic success in their students. Teachers should envision themselves as an excellent medium to ensure equity and excellence in students. Self-efficacy is the belief in one's ability to influence events that affect one's life and control over the way these events are experienced (Bandura, 1994). Students tend to imitate the style and behaviors of their teachers. For example, a teacher who exhibits their best instructional practices to their students, these patterns will transcend to their students' learning habits. The academic success cultivated by teachers in their students, will place them on a trajectory to problem solve and think critically.

Students should be prepared to create a self-sufficient life so that they can become global change agents. One can achieve as much as they is taught (Bandura, 1977). A teacher's belief in their own capabilities to assist a student in mastering academic tasks can result in the students' successes or failures, as well as their intellectual ability in a favorable or unfavorable manner. Teachers should self-assess their pedagogy quiet frequently, in order to make the necessary changes according to our changing times. Bandura posits that self-efficacy is not a trait that some people possess, and others do not.

Instead, it is the ability to exercise and strengthen one's self-efficacy, regardless of their past or current environment.

It is imperative that teachers are being prepared to impart knowledge and skills that are changing so rapidly in the field of literacy. Also, there is the need to be more inclusive in meeting the needs of the fast growing and diverse population that is in New York City school system. The ever-changing literacy demands must be in keeping with our changing society in the areas of technology, our economy and our labor markets. Hence, our teachers must be prepared to meet the learning needs of our multicultural learners. Bandura explains that it is only through the mastery of our thoughts, motivations, emotions and decisions juxtaposition the guidance and examples set by role models, individuals can be cognizant of their ability to shape the world.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

Multiple scholarly research have documented the need for culturally relevant pedagogy in the face of increased multiculturalism in the classroom. Pratt-Johnson (2006) maintains that the demands on teachers and what they are expected to do in today's classroom are indeed greater than before. With the increased demands in teacher accountability, this study sought to interview eight teachers' perceptions and attitudes with regards to these demands and what they are doing to achieve successful student outcomes. In 2006, Pratt-Johnson questioned whether teachers were culturally competent to instruct and interact with the ever increasing linguistically and diverse population in the multicultural classrooms.

Thirteen years later, a study carried out by Muniz (2019) revealed that there is a need for teacher preparation programs and professional development systems to sufficiently prepare educators to effectively carry out culturally responsive teaching practices in schools nationwide. Other researchers have also documented that there is a need for continuous professional development that will promote teacher self-efficacy, proficiency and cultural competence in the multicultural classroom (Siwatu, 2007; Siwatu & Starker, 2014; Strickland, 2018). The participants in this study shared that there is not enough purposeful and meaningful professional development that can adequately prepare them for the students that they teach. They also emphasized that they are the ones creating authentic culturally relevant pedagogy daily. This perspective is discussed in chapter 4.

A goal of this narrative study was to contribute to the research field as well as provide valuable suggestions and recommendations that educational practitioners may use when crafting their instructional resources and executing their practices. This study aimed to contribute to the depth of knowledge relating to teacher self-efficacy in the multicultural alternative learning environments in the United States and worldwide. In addition, the findings intend to provide a deeper understanding of how educators may improve upon their culturally responsive pedagogy.

This dissertation evolved out of the researcher's desire to capture, analyze, and discuss the perceptions of pedagogues in an alternative school setting concerning the challenges faced by multicultural students in relation to their success in learning English and content area materials to meet the standards of college and career readiness. The central goal of this research was to identify teachers' perceptions in relation to multicultural students and to determine how these perceptions are influenced by their understanding of their own cultural background and how it influences their multicultural students' academic growth and performance in the multicultural and diverse classroom. Another important goal of this research was to highlight the pedagogical approaches that teachers in an alternative program use in relation to their multicultural populations to successfully meet their needs. Hence, the study's research questions:

- How do teachers perceive their cultural proficiency and self-efficacy when teaching multicultural students in an alternative education program?
- How do teachers who teach in a multicultural classroom perceive themselves when incorporating multicultural instructional activities and strategies?
- How do teachers experience and self-reported sense of cultural competence impact

their students' academic performance and experience?

Due to the large number of multi-linguals in the United States and the influx of new immigrants enrolling in schools throughout the United States, there is a great need for educators to re-think how they apply multiculturalism in the classroom (Banks & Banks, 2010 & 2016; Au, 2014). To date, there has never been a study conducted in New York's sub-urban region that has examined the self-efficacy of teacher candidates in a multicultural alternative school setting and their culturally responsive perceptions.

The pseudonym Success Adult Learning Center (SALC) is used throughout this study in replacement of the official name of the research site. The participants are given fictitious names (Julia, Jamie, Mary, Lauren, Mark, Barbara, Rhonda and Lola) for the chief purpose of protecting their confidentiality (Seidman, 2012). Success Adult Learning Center (SALC) is one of the adult learning programs that is a part of a larger school district in Long Island. SALC provides general literacy development to thousands of immigrant and non-immigrant students throughout Long island and neighboring communities. The mission of SALC is to empower adults to reach their highest potential as learners, parents, and citizens through education and technology. This program helps prepare both literacy students and English Language Learners (MLs/ELLs) who did not attend a traditional high school and/or transitional high school or did not complete grade school here in America, with obtaining a high school equivalency diploma.

Qualitative Research Approach

The qualitative research approach as posited by Creswell (1994), "begins with assumptions and the use of interpretive/theoretical frameworks that inform the study of research problems addressing the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a human or

social problem” (p. 44). Narrative inquiry will allow the researcher to focus on understanding the relevance of the knowledge gained and shared through storytelling.

Study Design

A qualitative research approach was used for this study. The principal investigator believed that this approach was most appropriate to immerse in the data collection process, meeting with teachers for interviews and collecting their thoughts on multiple occasions, as well as hand coding the data (Creswell, 2007; McDowell, 2018). During the data collection and analysis phases, the researcher documented “ongoing conversational interviews and wrote extensive field notes” (Chan, 2009, p.115).

This qualitative narrative study emphasized the collection of data in a story format and personal lived experiences of the teacher candidates in their multicultural classrooms. In a past research done by Luque et al., (2018) they were able to listen to the participants tell their stories in its organic form and from a personal place. The researchers retold the participants lived experiences about roaming from one place to the next to provide instruction to their ENL students. The participants in this study shared that they are relocated to a new building that they share with another organization due to their original building being destroyed by Hurricane Sandy in 2012. This is one challenge they are currently faced with (shared space). This matter is discussed under the theme cultural challenges in chapter 4.

Luque and colleagues extrapolated thick and rich first-hand data for readers (Geertz, 1973). The current researcher deducted from the episode being described that the teachers’ self-efficacy was challenged. In keeping with their findings, the current researcher adds to knowledge in the field, through the exploration of the perspectives

shared by the multicultural pedagogues in the SALC alternative setting. A study on how to bridge the gap between students in an alternative program who are from multicultural and diverse backgrounds is an appropriate vision for the implementation of a multicultural curriculum.

This research intended to gain understanding of the importance of the teacher participants lived experiences in the multicultural classroom, as well as their self-efficacy in delivering instruction to students in the alternative education school setting. It is pertinent to consider the three commonplaces of narrative inquiry, which are temporality, sociality, and place (Clandinin, Pushor & Orr, 2007).

Interpretivist-Constructivist Paradigm

As a concerned researcher and teacher, the quality of instruction given to MLs/ENLs by teachers who might be struggling with self-confidence as it relates to their pedagogy in the multicultural classroom came into question, and hence this study was being born. According to Thanh and Thanh (2015) the interpretive paradigm allows researchers to envision the world through the participants lived experiences and perceptions. They further contend that the researcher who employs the interpretive paradigm, could use their experiences during the research process to construct and interpret the evidence collected when seeking to answer the research questions (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). The researcher who models a constructivist process should ensure that it is inclusive and respects the social and moral values of learners.

An example of the views of Thanh and Thanh (2015) was evident in the pre-experimental study of preservice practitioners' professional dispositions conducted by Fitchett et al., (2012). In this study they examined whether there was a relationship

between teacher candidates' culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy and an innovative culturally responsive teaching model in a social studies methods course. The experiences they gathered from working with the participants, highlighted that the participants demonstrated a greater willingness to work in culturally diverse communities. The findings from their study indicated that the preservice teachers who are immersed and taught in a culturally responsive teaching environment, were more confident in their abilities to employ culturally relevant pedagogy. It is noteworthy that the sociocultural instructor-learner relationships in the alternative adolescent classroom will be one of immense value to the research that exists on the challenges experienced by educators who are not-equipped to meet the social, emotional and academic needs of the students they teach (Au, 2014; Banks & Banks, 2016; Gay, 2010; Luque et al., 2018).

Other experts in the field postulate that educators who are teaching first language learners literacy, should provide meaningful and purposeful pedagogy through the stance of the learner which include their home literacy environments (Freire, 1993). As it relates to the interpretivist-constructivist paradigm, Purcell-Gates (2013) posits that “this learner stance assumes that all students bring with them to formal literacy instruction sociocultural constructed bodies of knowledge that can be productively built upon by teachers” (p.70).

Methodology

This study sought to analyze the data derived from the culturally relevant teaching through the narratives of the teacher participants from their self-reported perceptions and self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1997 & 2006; Evans, 2017; Gorski, Davis & Reiter, 2012; Luque et al., 2018; Strickland, 2018), and connected this data to their current

teaching practices in their multicultural classroom (Banks & Banks, 2006, 2010 & 2016). Self-efficacy is a self-evaluation tool that has influenced human experience. Hence, the core purpose of this study was to investigate how eight teachers self-efficacy, in an alternative education program, promotes their students' academic achievement in the multicultural classroom.

Experts in the field posit that an additional attribute of a quality curriculum is being culturally responsive (Evans, 2017; Gay, 2010, 2013; Gomez, 2013; Paris & Alim, 2017). This means educators can develop a curriculum with standards-based content and make this curriculum comprehensible and accessible to students by relating to their cultural lived experiences that they take to the classroom (Gay, 2010; Gomez; 2013; Rajagopal, 2011; Siwatu & Starker, 2014), for example, scenarios that are familiar to them. This study intends to dig deep into the narratives of the educators from the perspectives of their students' culture. It is relevant to examine how the teachers make meaningful and purposeful cultural connections to their students in the classroom.

The PI maintains that the informational text that our students are being introduced to should be culturally relevant (Gay, 2013; Ginsberg & Wlodkowski, 2015; Muniz, 2019). McAlpine (2016) posits that "narratives incorporate temporality, a social context, complicating events, and an evaluative conclusion that together make a coherent story" (p.33). A narrative account allows the researcher to document the sequential events of the participants in its most natural form. This method provides a lens for other researchers to examine the data and live through it vicariously as the researcher experienced it (McAlpine 2016; McDowell 2018).

This study utilized a narrative research perspective to answer these research questions:

- How do teachers perceive their cultural proficiency and self-efficacy when teaching multicultural students in an alternative education program?
- How do teachers who teach in a multicultural classroom perceive themselves when incorporating multicultural instructional activities and strategies?
- How do teachers' experience and self-reported sense of cultural competence impact their students' academic performance and experience?

It is important to note that a researcher's sequential documentation of evidence in a narrative research does not mean one event affects the other (McDowell, 2018). The PI believes that the narrative approach best fits this study because it captures and details perspectives from the eight participants in an organic and personal lens about their teacher/instructor role in their multicultural classroom. Creswell (2007) posits that when a researcher wants to capture the detailed stories or life experiences of a small number of individuals the narrative research is best suited.

Research Site and Population

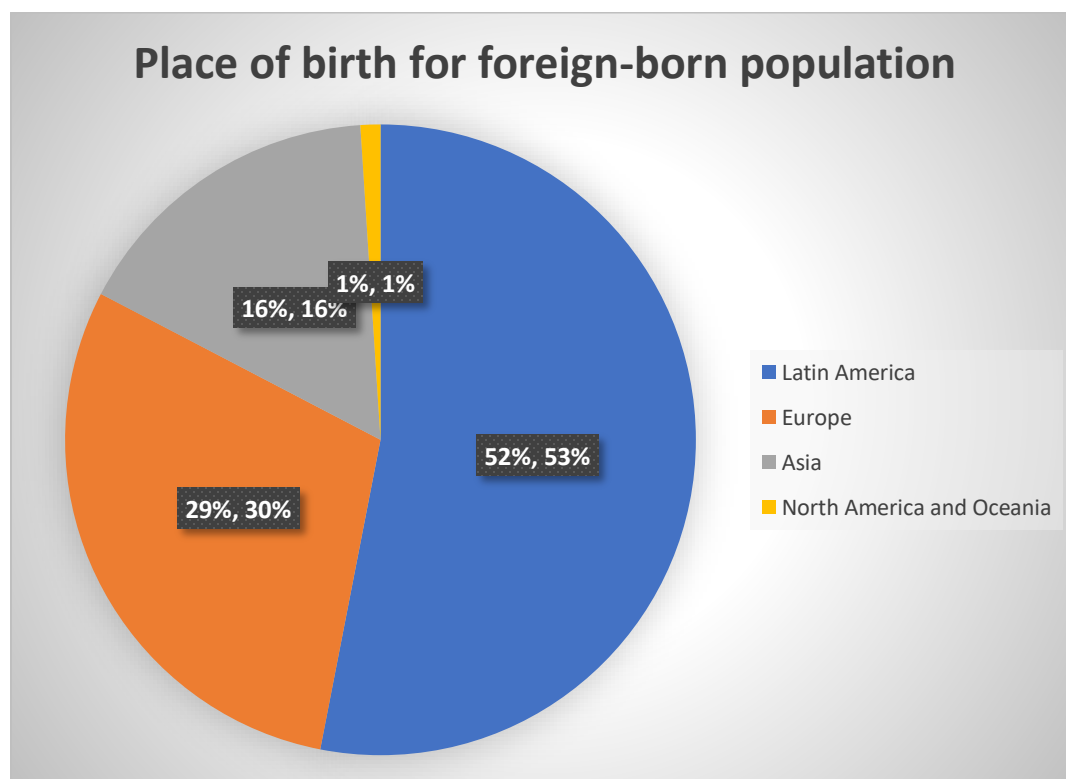
The target sample was teachers who teach in an adult education program which is part of a larger Unified School District with a K-12 student population of over 3,620 (Data.nysed.gov, 2018-2019). SALC is currently housed in another location, which is also a smaller shared space, due to the site's original location being severely damaged by hurricane Sandy on October 29, 2012. The current location is next to the major township buildings.

According to data shared by U.S. Census Bureau (2018), the general population

of which SALC is a part is between 38,000 to 40,000. Approximately 65% of the population ranges from 18 to 64 years, with a median age of 45.7 years. The residents have a median household income of \$96,869. Race and ethnicity is broken down as follows; whites 77%, Hispanics 12%, Blacks 6%, Asians 3% and other 2%. With regards to educational attainment, 51.2% holds a bachelor's degree or post grad degree, 43% graduated from high school or college. Of this population, 12.9% are foreign born. The place of birth for foreign-born population is shown in **figure 3.1** below. The diagram shows that 52% Latin America, 29% Europe, 16% Asia and 1 % North America and Oceania.

Figure 3.1

The Place of Birth for Foreign-born Population



Source: U. S. Census Bureau (2018).

It is necessary to show this culturally diverse data because it depicts the

approximate percentage of multicultural students that the teacher candidates provide instruction. During the interview, the PI asked each participant question 9: “What are some of the culture and languages represented in your classroom?” They shared that majority of the students are from Latin America. Here is an example from one of the interviewees (Barbara).

What are some of the culture and languages represented in your classroom?

Barbara: OK. All right. I know most of the time I've taught in this school, even though we were in a different building. So, the different cultures and countries that are represented, a lot of times that depends on what's going on in the world. So here we've always had a lot of South-Central Americans and a lot of Nicaraguans. That's our biggest population and it has been consistent. Now we have mostly I would say we pretty much have a lot of Hondurans and Guatemalans. And, of course, Brazilians, Peruvians, Dominicans, Salvadorians. It's almost all Spanish speaking in the night, though, all the morning classes are much more diverse than the evening classes.

This program falls under the jurisdiction of the New York State Education Department and is also funded through grants from this department, and provides free classes at several locations, to help students earn their High School Diploma, through Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC) or National Education Diploma Program (NEDP). The gender breakdown of students 18–65 years old at SALC is 70% female and 30% male.

According to data shared by the SALC program coordinator January 15, 2020 the racial composition is 12% Asian, 63% Latino/Hispanic, 10% Black, 4% European

White, and 2% other race/ethnicity. English Language Learners (MLs/ELLs) comprised 43% of SALC students and 27% are students with disabilities (SWDs).

Participant Demographics

The participants were given a preliminary survey (see Appendix D) which were eight questions, to gather demographic data (age, race, ethnicity), highest degree earned (doctorate, masters, bachelors, professional certificate), years of teaching experience in general as well as years in adult education (1-3 years, 4-8 years, 9-12 years, 15- 19 years, 20+ years) and levels taught(Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced, Basic Education, TASC and NEDP). Data about the participants' age, race, education and years of experience were included to create rich, detailed descriptions and give background knowledge about them. Table 3.1 below provides a summary of the eight participants' characteristics.

The eight participants are Caucasian, seven females and one male. There is no diversity in race and ethnicity amongst the participants. As was mentioned earlier, 77% of the general population in SALC's educational district is white. However, the student population that they teach is very diverse because they are foreign-born and are mainly from Latin America (see figure: 3.1 above).

As the conversation develops around culturally responsive teaching, the argument about demographic gaps between the instructors and their multicultural students become relevant. In the 50-state survey study done by Muniz (2019), highlighted that the instructional population is mostly white, female, middle-class, and speaks mainly English (monolingual). Muniz argues that this trend is overwhelmingly likely to provide instruction to students who are of a different ethnicity, race, socio-economic and

language group. The description above regarding the research population depicts that the teacher candidates in this study, race, ethnicity, socio economic status and language group do not reflect any similarities in the student population that they provide instruction for.

Table 3.1*Summary of Female and male Characteristics of Teachers*

Characteristics	Females n = 7 Caucasian	Male n = 1 Caucasian
Higher degree earned:		
Masters	6	0
Bachelors	0	1
Professional Certificate	1	0
Year as teacher:		
1 – 3	0	0
4 – 8	0	1
9 – 12	0	0
15 – 19	0	0
20 +	7	0
Year in Alternative Education:		
1 – 3	1	0
4 – 8	0	1
9 – 12	0	0
15 – 19	3	0
20 +	3	0
Levels Taught:		
Advanced	1	1
Intermediate	1	0
Beginning	2	0
Basic Education	1	0
TASC and NEDP	2	0

Note: Years as a teacher and years in Alternative Education may overlap as years as a teacher may be same as years in Adult Ed.

The teachers are highly educated and certified. Six of the eight participants each hold a master's degree, while one holds a professional certificate and the other hold a bachelors. The participants shared that their educational background has influenced their students' academic interest in some way.

Two of the participants (Mark and Julia) have two to four years of teaching experience and the other six participants (Jamie, Mary, Lauren, Barbara, Rhonda and Lola) have over 15-20+ years of experience in alternative adult education. The PI believes that highlighting the vast experience of the participants in this study is instrumental to the creation their own culturally relevant teaching experience in their multicultural classroom. Policymakers and researchers have long been questioning; Does teacher experience has an impact on teacher experience and student achievement? An example of this concern is depicted in the work of Kini and Podolsky (2016), where they reviewed 30 studies in the United States that analyzed the effect of teaching experience on student outcomes. Below are four results from the reviewed data.

- Teaching experience is positively associated with student achievement gains throughout a teacher's career.
- As teachers gain experience, their students are more likely to do better on other measures of success beyond test scores, such as school attendance.
- Teachers make greater gains in their effectiveness when they teach in a supportive and collegial working environment, or accumulate experience in the same grade level, subject or district.
- More experienced teachers confer benefits to their colleagues, their students, and to the school as a whole (Kini & Podolsky, 2016).

Participants

The participants are observed yearly as well as they are required to have 14 professional development hours yearly. The professional development hours can only be provided by a district approved provider. The curriculum is based on the NYS Common Core Standards, but there is no mandated curriculum, because the teachers can choose instructional materials that meet the needs of their students. Hence, they do not adhere to the Danielson's Framework (2013) but some aspects of it.

The eight teacher participants were given a pseudonym as follows; Julia, Jamie, Mary, Lauren, Mark, Barbara, Rhonda and Lola. The use of pseudonyms will protect the identities and names of the participants involved in the study (Creswell, 2013).

Convenient sampling was used to solicit eight teacher participants that was involved in this narrative study. It is important to note that the researcher included teachers who were willing to participate, as they might have the same concerns as the researcher regarding the challenges and expectations to prepare these multicultural and diverse learners to become college and career ready in the most competent and confident manner.

The eight trained teachers were chosen on the premise that they are currently teaching students at one or more of the main levels (Beginning, Intermediate and Advanced, Basic Education and NEDP). It was prudent that for the teacher candidates to be providing instruction to multilingual learners, because this interaction would allow them to share their lived experiences in the multilingual classroom. Once the students move through these basic levels, they move on to the teachers who prepare them for the high school equivalency diploma (HSE). Two participants, Lauren and Mary teach at the Basic Education, TASC and NEDP levels.

It is necessary that instruction is provided at these academic levels to meet the needs of the rapidly growing population of multicultural students in New York, preparing them to become self-sufficient citizens (Nyerere, 1967). In his work about education for self-reliance, Nyerere wrote “only when we are clear about the kind of society we are trying to build, can we design our educational service to serve our goals” (Nyerere, 1967, p.3). It is important for teachers to be placed at their appropriate skill level to master their teaching techniques at that level, as being proficient at a class level, could ultimately transfer better educational service to the students (Kini & Podolsky, 2016). The participants provide instruction to students for all reading and language levels, as well as social studies, science and mathematics. Since teachers are expected to be masterful and successful in their craft, they should be competent and successful in providing instruction to a wide and diverse population of students in multicultural classrooms (Pratt-Johnson, 2006). The researcher solicited the participation of eight teachers of MLs for the interview process. The participants were selected on the following criteria: (a) They should be teaching MLs over the past two years, (b) They should be certified to teach MLs and (c) They should be assigned to SALC.

Background of the Students that the Participants Teach

Multilingual learners/English Language Learners enrolled in this alternative program are expected to learn English, keep focused on earning their diplomas and become self-sufficient citizens. The students in the assigned level classes are 17- 65 or older. The students are enrolled into the program through formal registration and testing. Approximately 300 to 400 students are enrolled yearly. There is rolling admissions to the numbers are subjected to change year to year. They pay a fee of \$45.00 in cash or money

order. Students have the option of attending day or evening classes. Day classes are scheduled from Monday to Friday 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Evening classes are scheduled Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. The students enjoy a wide range of opportunities for example, comprehensive guidance and counseling services which caters to students' educational, vocational and personal needs.

Students are assessed prior to instruction and after having acquired 40-60 instructional hours (40 for night, 60 for day). The test used for Adult Basic Education students is the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) form 11/12. Each student takes a locator test and is then placed in an appropriate testing level. The levels are categorized as Easy, Medium, Difficult and Advanced. ESL students are assessed with an oral exam (BEST Plus), followed by the BEST Literacy test which assesses the students' reading and writing.

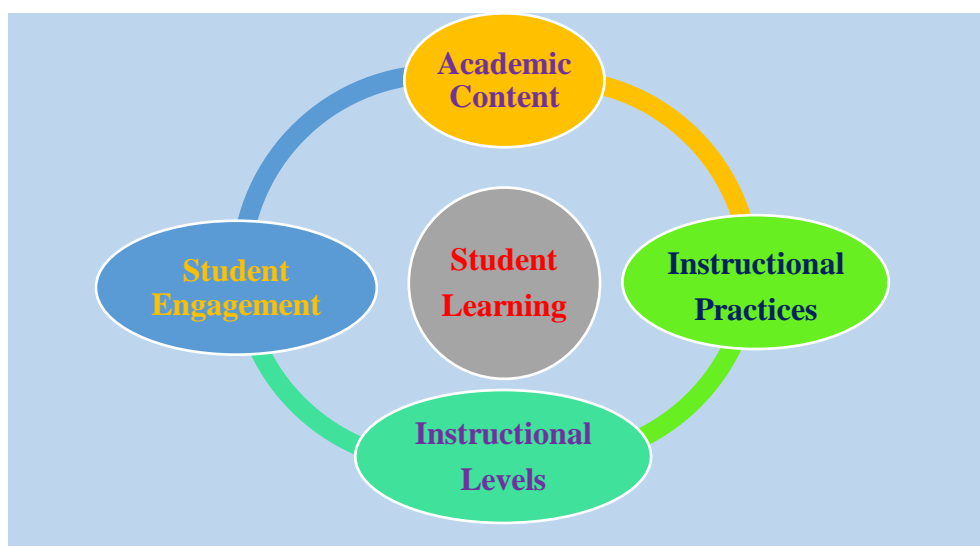
Once the students move through the beginning, intermediate and advanced levels of learning, they can earn a high school equivalency diploma the National External Diploma Program (NEDP) or the Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC). The NEDP is a nationally acclaimed program which has opened new pathways for many students 18 years and older. The students can enroll at any time throughout the year and it offers flexible scheduling. Students are expected have a mastery of skills through one to one appointment, meaning one teacher to one student. An advisor is available both daytime and evenings. For TASC, the teachers are responsible to provide instructional programs individually designed to respond to each students' academic needs in the subject areas covered. Some students are successful in achieving their HSE diplomas and are now gainfully employed.

Participants Instructional Core

Currently, the United States is challenged with finding sustainable solution to the low literacy rate. It is noticeable that the nation has high expectations for its citizens and has been trying to meet the social, economic, and academic needs of its rapidly growing multicultural and diverse citizens (Au, 2014; Banks & Banks, 2016). An example of this low literacy success can be found within the annual data coming out of New York State Education Department (NYSED), hence, it is necessary to find solutions to improve the academic needs of students so that they can strive towards excellence. The instructional core of SALC is as follows (see Figure 3.2): Academic Content: What are teachers teaching in our classrooms? Teacher Practice: What strategies and practices are teachers using in our classrooms? Student Engagement: What are the students doing in the classrooms? Levels Taught: Are the students being taught at their level of competency?

Figure 3.2

The components of The Instructional Core used by the Alternative School Program (Success Adult Learning, SALC).



Procedures

The researcher employed the steps below in the process for the participants' recruitment. A sample of the recruitment documents and other relevant documents are listed in the Appendices. Please see:

- Appendix A- Saint John's IRB Approval
- Appendix B - Principal Contact Letter
- Appendix C - Teacher Consent Letter
- Appendix D - Teacher Demographics Survey
- Appendix E - Interview Protocol
- Appendix F - Interview Follow up Questions
- Appendix G - NIH Certificate
- Appendix H - CITI Certificate

Step 1. A recruitment letter was handed to the prospective participants. This letter detailed the relevant aspects of the research study and provided a concise and precise explanation for all prospective participants to ask follow-up questions directly to the researcher.

Step 2. To secure the commitment of all the prospective participants, the researcher met face to face with the participants to answer any concerns that they had prior to signing the consent forms and follow-up interview questions. All participants agreed to answer their follow up questions via email.

Step 3. The informed consent form, interview guidelines and a request for possible interview dates/times were discussed face to face with each participant.

The researcher obtained the NIH and CITI certifications (see Appendices G and H). It is essential for researchers to be trained and certified to conduct research involving

human participants. The rights and privacy of participants must be respected and protected. The letter of consent for participation by human subjects is one way of demonstrating respect and protection for the participants' rights, as to whether they want to participate and complete the interview process or withdraw from the research. The data collection process began immediately after Saint John's IRB approved the study (see Appendix A). The researcher used face-to-face interviews for data collection, allowing for direct participation. The choice of the location was given to the participants because this provided a sense of comfort for the participants. According to Seidman (2012) a safe space should be designated by the participants for all interviews. They chose to do their interviews on the school premises as this was safe, comfortable and convenient for them.

Data Collection

The study lasted from December 2019 to February 2020. After Saint John's approved the IRB giving the PI permission to commence the data collection process, the PI reached out to the school's program coordinator to make arrangement to visit the school and meet the participants. The participants' face to face interviews were audio taped. Their participation in the study involved two hours of their time, 45-60 minutes for each of the face to face interviews and 60 minutes for the follow-up interview. The interviews were held two weeks apart, over the duration of six to seven weeks. To collect participants' data on demographics and teaching experience, paper surveys were given to each participant prior to the start of their interview.

Interviews were used to get a snapshot of teacher self-efficacy in a multicultural alternative education program in a suburban Long Island school district in New York. The participants' beliefs and perceptions, self-efficacy and teacher quality, was captured

through semi-structured interview questions. The questions were grouped under headings for example; Background, Personal and Professional Career, Perceptions and Success Strategies. Additionally, they answered some follow-up questions to ensure that all necessary and relevant information was documented. Before the interview process took place, the participants received a written document soliciting their consent to participate in the study. This document explained the purpose of the research and the interview, their role in the process if they agree to participate, the nature of the interview with regards to time, place and convenience, as well as how their confidentiality will be respected and the data they share will be stored and then destroyed within three years.

Once the recordings were completed, the tapes were transcribed by NVivo transcription service. Each teacher candidate was given the opportunity to review the transcripts of the audiotapes and approved the transcriptions. It must be noted that no changes were made to the transcripts by the participants. The PI assured the participants that their responses to the interviews will be kept confidential and under no circumstances would their name or identifying characteristics would be included in the study. Because the IRB stipulates that the confidentiality and anonymity of human subjects must be protected, each teacher was given a pseudonym, Julia, Jamie, Mary, Lauren, Mark, Barbara, Rhonda and Lola (Seidman, 2012).

The confidentiality of their responses to the interview questions were respected through the application of pseudonyms as mentioned above throughout the research process. All materials were locked away for example; data (audiotapes and interview transcriptions) and consent forms were kept separate to ensure that their name and identity would not become known or linked to any information that they have shared.

Teacher candidates' participation in this study was voluntary. They were given time to refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without consequence. In terms of the interview process, they had the right to skip or not answer any questions they prefer not to answer. However, all the participants answered all the questions asked by the PI. The data from interviews and analytic notes were gathered at SALC after school hours. The data derived from this narrative study may help other researchers understand the study better, through its implications and whether there is a need for further research. Using analytic codes, the data was categorized into themes for findings and discussions in relation to the research questions.

The Interviews

Guest et al., (2017) posits that “qualitative researchers often have to decide whether to collect data using focus groups or individual interviews” (p. 693). The PI choose interviews because one goal of this narrative study was to understand how the participants think about their self-efficacy in the multicultural classroom. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) state that in qualitative research, one goal of interviews, is to comprehend how individuals think. Interviews for this study took place in two ways. The first was face to face (Appendix E), and the second was through email response where all the participants opted to complete ten questions (Appendix F).

The PI met with the participants at SALC after school hours for the participants that teach during the day classes (9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.) and before school hours, for the participants that teach during the evening classes (6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.) according to their convenience. It was necessary to assure the teachers about the confidentiality in their responses, and interviews were held in a comfortable environment and that the

participants felt safe. The PI implored the participants not to divulge any information about their students' immigration status and/or any other confidential information. This request is in keeping with (CITI Certification Training, see Appendix H) protecting the privacy of the immigrant students taught by the participants, hence demonstrating cultural sensitivity. An audio-recorder was used during the personal interviews juxtaposition research note taking, to ensure that all information was accurately recorded. Researchers over the years used audio-recording to transfer the recorded data from audio to text. This process is deemed most appropriate to amplify the data's transferability.

When conducting the interviews, the researcher followed the steps suggested by Lichtman (2013). The introduction: The PI asked for permission from the participants before the start of each interview. They were informed about the duration time for the interview and the confidentiality statement.

The Body: The PI started with a grand tour question (Lichtman, 2013). This type of question is necessary as one would say, "break the ice" because this encourages a sense of comfort for duration of the interview process. It was important for the interviewer (researcher), to exercise care in not interrupting the interviewee (participant). The PI asked probing questions where necessary so that the relevant data emerged. The act of respect and empathy was encouraged during the process. Before closing, the interviewer asked the interviewee if there was any other concerns or questions that they might want to share. None of the participants shared any additional information on the spot. The participants were also asked to share any reflection that they may have within two weeks. One participant Jamie did share a reflection.

Closing: The PI thanked each interviewee for participating in the process and offered assurance that the information would be kept confidential. Thankfully, there was no information given in these interviews that caused a dilemma for the PI (Lichtman, 2013; Hoskins & Stoltz, 2005). Please see Appendix E for an example of the interview protocol and Appendix F for the follow up interview questions.

Data Analysis

According to McDowell (2018) the narrative inquiry process calls for the analyzing of data similarly to other methods of qualitative research. This process is vital to highlighting the themes that will emerge from the data as they answer the research questions of the study. Creswell (2013) posits that the first step a researcher should take in analyzing data is organizing the documents used to collect the data. It is wise for researchers to follow the advice of experts, because this will add to a study's authenticity. Maguire and Delahunt (2017) posits that for a qualitative research to be credible is dependent on how the data is being analyzed.

According to Clandinin and Caine (2008) the researcher is expected to maintain confidentiality of the participant data as this is a core value of research ethics. For example, the researcher used interviews to collect data. Hence, it was necessary to make sure that all data including recordings were organized in special folders and placed in a locked safety deposit box in the researcher's home. The computer used to upload and download the data is encrypted with a password.

The PI is aware that in qualitative research, data analysis could pose one of the most difficult challenge, and it is also a critical component of the writing process Bernauer at al., (2013). Transcribing the data could be very time consuming. Hence, the

researcher used the transcription company NVivo to transcribe and process the interviews of all eight interviewees (McDowell, 2018). The PI made sure that only pseudonyms were on each of the audio. It was important to ask NVivo to sign a nondisclosure agreement for the protection of the teacher candidates' confidentiality. The company transcribed the interviews at an accuracy of 90% and the turnaround time was in minutes. To ensure total accuracy and authenticity of the transcription, the PI downloaded the transcribed audio interview into word, and then listened to the audio of the recording of each of the participant's interview juxtaposition reading back the text transcription.

Coding the Data

Coding is a process wherein large sets of qualitative data, that is retrieved from interviews, focus groups, observations and field notes, are condensed into smaller pieces of data that is meaningful and purposeful (Braun & Clark, 2006; Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). The PI chose to apply a blend of the old and new way of analyzing data when NVivo transcription service was used for transcribing the data (**new**) and hand-coded the transcripts (**old**) searching for the themes and sub-themes.

The PI concurred with Creswell (2013) as he sees the same process of coding and categorizing the data whether a researcher uses hand coding or a computer. The PI chose to hand code the data in the old fashion way, because it lends to in-depth interaction with the data when coding for the themes. This interaction was beneficial during the writing process as it assisted in meaningful interpretation of the data, which added to depth of knowledge and thick description (Geertz, 1973).

The PI used theme coding for the themes and sub-themes as shown in Appendix I for the second cycle of coding in Microsoft word. The final 'umbrella' themes are shown

below in figure 3.3. Descriptive coding was used by the PI throughout the responses of all the participants' responses. The responses to each of the interview questions were color coded by words, phrases or sentences that appeared significant to answering each of the research questions. As the data was coded, similar patterns evolved and the PI categorized them. This process was done for each of the interview questions. For example, codes were assigned to the participants' years of teaching experience and educational backgrounds. Then they were grouped into sub-themes, and then to the larger theme educational attributes and then examined to see if it answered the appropriate research question. The PI also made note of any significant variations that might not have occurred within the data for all the participants, for example, racism and shared space that are notable challenges, but were not mentioned by most of the participants.

Background

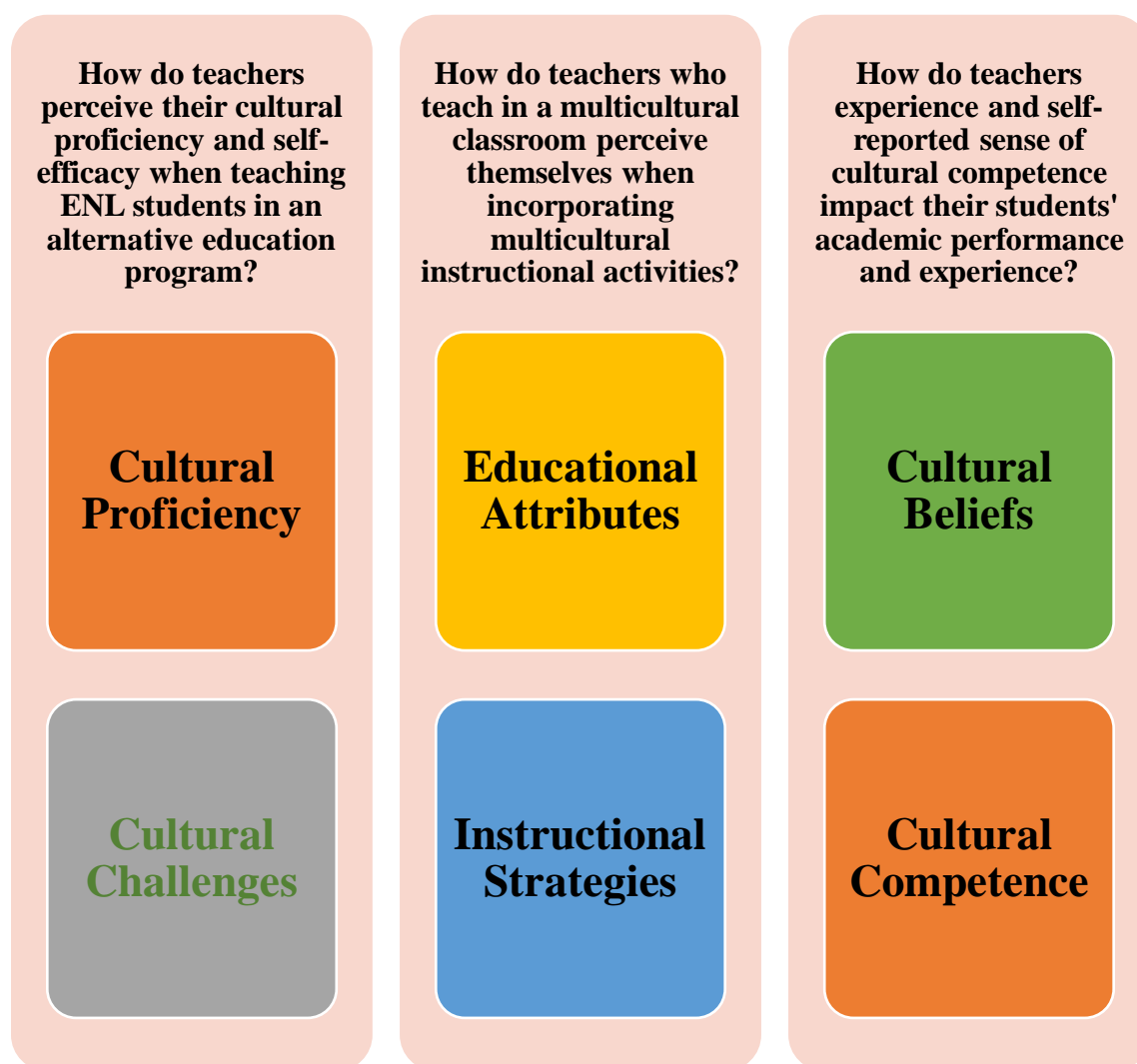
In qualitative research analysis, the coding of themes is a tenet of the process. According to Saldana (2012) researcher's analytic lens must be worn because this is an act of analytic coding. During this narrative analysis, the researcher used hand coding and then Microsoft word to identify the emerging themes from the data (McDowell, 2018). The themes depicted in figure 3.3 below will help educators and researchers to re-examine the depth of knowledge that is needed for both teachers and students to work collaboratively in achieving academic success.

Bernauer et al., (2013) posits that reading and re-reading is the first step to analyzing interview transcripts. The PI read and re-read numerous times and hand-coded the data using various colors for different themes and sub-themes. The PI followed the six-phase guide provided by Braun and Clarke (2006) which proved to be a very useful

framework, due to the fact that, the PI is a first-time researcher, and the analysis process proved to be a challenge. The six steps are; Step 1: Become familiar with the data, Step 2: Generate initial codes, Step 3: Search for themes, Step 4: Review themes, Step 5: Define themes, and Step 6: Write-up the analysis. Figure 3.3 below highlights the final themes that emerged and are detailed in chapter 4, after the above steps were executed by the PI. The themes are discussed in relation to the study's three research questions.

Figure 3.3

Key Themes that Emerged in Relation to the Three Research Questions



Researcher Feedback

It was imperative for the PI to secure continued trust with the participants, and so each participant received a secure email version of the interview analysis, to check for any misinterpretations. It was pertinent to send the email document via their personal email address and not their schools' email address. The participants were invited to participate in an additional follow-up interview in which they reflected on the completed analysis.

The researcher feedback is extremely relevant to the validity of the process. Lichtman (2013) postulates that we are learning about real people, for example, “what they think, how they feel, what motivates them, and what challenges they face” (p.274). It was pertinent for the researcher to be cognizant in making sure that the views and perspectives of the participants were being interpreted and communicated clearly. Lichtman (2013) advises that using direct quotes is an acceptable way to not only add voice to the participant, but to also present their perspectives in the most natural and purest forms.

Utilizing a Narrative Explanation

According to Golden (2017) narrative analysis “offers a means of acknowledging and documenting the tensions that are often present as people work to negotiate their identity” (p. 358). Depending on the content of a study, the format used for a narrative explanation may differ among researchers (McDowell, 2018). In this study, the PI applied narrative inquiry and interviews which are two qualitative research methods (Heilmann, 2018). The participants were encouraged to provide reflections about the

interview process before closing the interview. Jamie shared her reflection about the process. Here is an excerpt from her reflection:

I have been thinking a lot about our conversation a week ago. I have been thinking about the fact that my experiences in life, having traveled, been married to a native Filipino, and having grown up in A diverse NY town all make me able to work with, teach, and inspire immigrants trying to reach new goals and learn English.

I know I can interact, or even teach people who are different from me because the only thing different about us is our language and the place we were born. I believe Social proficiency is just like any other thing one would self-assess or evaluate - and being a professional at a skill or skill set is something that develops over time if one is dedicated and willing. I do not believe one is born with it, nor possess it because of their skin tone or mother tongue. I also do not think being born in a culture or language other than English automatically makes one better qualified to teach. Native language proficiency should be looked upon as valuable and mastery should be looked at as a professional asset. Maybe another question to ask is, what kind of progress or success do my students display? My classes are full year after year and there are often waiting lists to get in. These are a couple of ways I know I can reach my students where they are. Another question I ask: Could we better diversify faculty and staff?

Do doctors and lawyers think about their social proficiency when taking on clients or patients? Aren't they trained to do a job no matter who is on the other end? Is there something in the world or US suggesting that multicultural students aren't getting the education they need? How do I perceive my self- efficacy when teaching multicultural students? I prepare to succeed in the classroom where I model what I want from my students. I study, research, practice, ask questions, read, and talk in order to bring to life concepts in the classroom. I treat my learners as equals and with respect. I learn as much or more about life from them as they learn English from me. It is a natural win/win situation.

Results from Heilmann's study revealed that student participants, reflections about the research methods were "insightful and encouraging, as students effectively employed the narrative inquiry method and also realized the transcript would benefit from a member check" (p.8). The above reflection shared by Jamie provided a deeper understanding of who she is as an educator. Jamie's reflection was instrumental to the data analysis process, and it added depth to the data shared during the face to face interview and follow-up interview. The PI was able to recognize that she takes her role as an educator seriously.

Presentation of Findings

Lichtman (2013), shares that the researcher might design a wonderful study and collect relevant data, but it is imperative to communicate the findings in a concise and precise manner that will contribute to the study's success. The researcher used the

narrative approach to the present the findings. A visual representation of the themes and sub-themes that emerge throughout the data were highlighted as shown in figure 3.3.

To add depth and voice to the presentation, the researcher included parts of the dialogues appropriate to support the themes as shown in chapter 4 (Creswell, 2013; Lichtman 2013). Clandinin, Pushor, and Orr (2007) highlight eight elements of narrative research that the researcher should adhere to when presenting their narrative. These elements are:

- justification
- naming the phenomenon
- describing the methods
- analysis and interpretation
- positioning
- uniqueness
- ethical considerations
- representation

The PI used tables and other diagrams to display results from the data (Creswell, 2013; Miles & Huberman, 1994). A narrative description of the findings in relation to the research questions is showcased juxtaposition visual representations of themes. Using a narrative approach, the PI wanted the participants' stories to remain true, hence dialogues and accurate quotations between the PI and the participants are included (Creswell, 2013).

Potential Research Bias

Working in New York City as an educator in a diverse school system, it became eminent to conduct a study as this to contribute to the wealth of literature that already exists. The PI have gained unique insight into the performance of some students when participating in the scoring process of the New York State English Language Arts examinations since 2005, in addition to providing instruction to both young scholars and adult learners for the past 17 years. Although the researcher have observed improvement in performance each year, MLs/ENLs have a long way to go. Their rapid infiltration into the system does not make teaching them any easier (August et al., 2009; Muniz, 2019; U.S. Department of Education, 2017).

The researcher is cognizant of some of the challenges that this population struggle with, for example, learning a new language (English), adjusting to their new environment (Urban and sub-urban New York), and learning new academic content (different content from their homeland). With these experiences, researcher bias came into play, but it is incumbent that the researcher exercises neutrality juxtaposition reflexivity (Lichtman 2013). Lichtman states “the researcher must be able to acknowledge how their thoughts, experiences and personal biases may affect their research and their interpretation of meanings” (Lichtman, 2013, p.165). From reading the literature on qualitative research, the PI is aware of applying reflexivity when analyzing the data. It was when the PI started the actual analysis process, the realization of the degree of concentration it took to remain neutral, came to the forefront. The PI had to be reflexive so as not to compromise the analytical lens of the process. In the words of Porter (2019) “I considered myself a reflective person but it wasn’t until this study that I have formally defined my position

and lens” (p. 63). It is pertinent to apply reflexivity and neutrality throughout the entire research process (Lichtman, 2013).

Internal Validity and Reliability

Lichtman (2013) maintains that reflexivity “concerns itself with the impact of the researcher on the system, and the system on the researcher” (p.165). This perception is factual as there is a mirror-like relationship that is being developed. It is a fact that relationships are being created “between the researcher and who and what is being studied” (Etherington, 2016 & Lichtman, 2013). For example, the PI’s role as a researcher is influenced by experiences as an ESL teacher working with MLs/ELLs. The PI personally know that some of them have never been to a formal school before arriving in the United States. These students are labeled SIFE learners, who are students with interrupted formal education. The researcher is fortunate to meet other educators in this specific area of literacy who often express the need for an examination of the strategies stipulated by scholars for educators to implement in the classroom.

Based on the information above, the assessment of the reliability of this study’s findings, required the PI to make judgments about the ‘soundness’ of the research in relation to the application and appropriateness of the methods undertaken, and the integrity of the final conclusions. Qualitative research is frequently criticized for lacking scientific rigor with poor justification of the methods adopted, a lack of transparency in the analytical procedures, and the findings being merely a collection of personal opinions subject to researcher bias, such as accounting for personal biases which may have influenced findings. Clandinin and Huber (2010) posits that “narrative inquiry follows a

recursive, reflexive process of moving from field (with starting points in telling or living of stories) to field texts (data) to interim and final research texts” (p.436).

Triangulation is another technique that is used to improve the reliability and validity of research. According to Creswell and Miller (2000) triangulation is defined as “a validity procedure where researchers search for convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form themes or categories in a study” (p. 126). The PI also checked for data consistency between the demographics survey questions, personal interviews, emailed interviews and the PI’s reflective notes, paying attention to details. Bogden and Biklen (2007) maintain that to acquire a broader perspective and deeper understanding of the participants’ point of views is to use data from multiple sources.

External Validity

Validity in qualitative research is dependent on the competence and skills of the researcher. Because narrative studies are subjective in nature, researcher bias can infiltrate the findings in a researcher’s final report. Therefore, it is critical that researchers pay keen attention to put measures in place to ensure the reliability and validity of their research question(s). The PI of this study ensured the reliability and validity of the study, through application of reflexivity which ultimately reduced researcher bias (Lichtman, 2013).

In qualitative research, the PI must avoid assumptions about the participants own biases and perceptions regarding their pedagogy in the multicultural ENL classroom. The PI is aware of the depth of literature that exists and had to be cautious not to interject thoughts and feelings exhibited in previous research around teacher self-efficacy when teaching multicultural students. The researcher was cautious when interpreting the participants’ responses to the interview questions to ensure the study’s authenticity and

reliability. The researcher intend to share the interpreted data with the participants before it is published or shared with other readers.

A summary of clarifying statements was utilized by the PI to ensure that the participants' points of view were accurately interpreted. To monitor personal biases, perceptions, emotions and biases, the PI kept a journal of reflective notes. Member-checking was another technique applied during the process, wherein the PI shared summaries of the findings with the participants to clarify any misconceptions and ensure an accurate account of their stories (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

Summary

After the researcher carried out the actual interviews, the data was transcribed and coded into appropriate sub-themes and themes. The thick and rich description (Geertz, 1973) of the participants lived experiences, were deduced throughout the interviews, and provided interpretation of the themes. Chapter 4 details the major findings of the data. The analysis of data explained the research questions that the study sought to investigate, through the drawing of relevant conclusions from the themes that immerged. The findings are presented in relation to the theoretical framework and literature. Chapter 5 provides the implications for theoretical practices in the field of literacy as well as provide recommendations for future research studies. Education scholars should be unwavering in the fight to commit to multilingual learners' education, empowerment and the equality of all students that they are introduced to in society. As an educator and PI of this study, it is intended that the findings will forge a positive impact on quality of learning provided to generations to come.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The purpose of this chapter is to present the findings related to the research questions that drive this qualitative study (Creswell, 2013) embedded in the theoretical framework of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). The three research questions are:

RQ 1- How do teachers perceive their cultural proficiency and self-efficacy when teaching ENL students in an alternative education program?

RQ2- How do teachers who teach in a multicultural classroom perceive themselves when incorporating multicultural instructional activities and strategies?

RQ3- How do teachers experience and self-reported sense of cultural competence impact their students' academic performance and experience?

Qualitative research encompasses “the collection, analysis and interpretation of data that are not easily reduced to numbers” (Anderson, 2010, p.1). This narrative inquiry study allowed the PI to gain insight through the data collected, into the lives of seven (7) females and one (1) male multicultural educator in an alternative education program (SALC). This chapter addresses the central research questions and their related themes that impact the teacher candidates' self-efficacy. These data relate to the teacher candidates' social and professional behaviors as they interact with their multicultural students.

The study focused specifically on their self-efficacy in relation to their personal and professional career, cultural competency and perceptions, as well as instructional and success strategies (see figure 4 below). It also took into consideration how they apply their professional competencies juxtaposition their teaching strategies towards improving

their students' academic success empowering them towards self-reliance and becoming independent contributing citizens. The challenges they encounter when carrying out their instructional practices were also examined. The report of the analysis of data is presented using dialogues, charts and tables to make its comprehension concise and precise.

Figure 4.1

Factors Relating to Participants Self-Efficacy



Description of Participants' Personal Background and Professional Career

Prior to the start of this study, I the PI, did not know any of the teacher participants. Their ages range from twenties through sixties. The PI believes that providing a description of the participants' background and professional career shared through the conversational interviews, will highlight relevant literature about their experiences, strategies and competencies in their multicultural classrooms at Success Alternative Learning Center (SALC). The participants are referenced to under fictitious names (Seidman, 2012). The participants maintain that their stability and years of experience at SALC wedded with academic competencies foster their ability to teach with competency and proficiency in their multicultural classroom (Gay, 2010; Ginsberg

& Wlodkowski, 2015; Pratt-Johnson, 2006). According to Kini and Podolsky (2016), “teachers’ effectiveness increases at a greater rate when they teach in a supportive and collegial working environment, and when they accumulate experience in the same grade level, subject, or district” (p.7). Meet the participants;

Julia:

Julia is in the age group of 55-64 and has been a teacher in the NYC public school system and SALC for a total of 29 years. She is currently teaching the intermediate level students at SALC less than three years. She shared with the PI that she was drawn into teaching multicultural students out of empathy. She shared that:

I married someone from a different culture. My husband is from Mexico. He had very bad experiences in the school system when he came to this country. I have a great deal of compassion for immigrants who must come to this country and have to become proficient in this language. I also for the past decade have been trying to learn Spanish myself just because I want to, and I think it's important for me to be in the shoes of people who are trying to learn another language and it's very difficult for me. It is extremely challenging. And knowing that and knowing the background of my husband and his family, I was just drawn to this profession it was just a calling for me.

After college, Julia started out at the young age of 20 in the cosmetics industry, but she desired more and that’s one reason she chose teaching as a career. She went to SUNY Old Westbury to get her teaching certification. She has a double minor in English and Theater. She then acquired a master’s degree from Queens College where she majored in Reading and Communications. Julia has taken classes in using authentic

materials to teach adults English as a second language and grammar for ESL teachers. Julia maintains that her personal and professional background and experience have contributed tremendously to her teaching competence in the multicultural classroom at SALC.

Jamie:

Jamie is in the age group 45-54 and has 27 years of teaching experience. Since 2004, she has been solely teaching adult learners at the TASC and NEDP levels. She holds a broad range of experience working with young adults and adults. Right out of college, she went to Kentucky and worked with adults building after school programs for teens. She also worked as a Peace Corps volunteer in the Philippines, where she worked directly with teachers all over the island of Luzon to help them teach their students English. She was involved in providing professional development for the teachers. She said this:

I wanted to be a journalist but, I was encouraged by some of my professors and other people in my circles to become a teacher. They told me that once I combined my personality and the curriculum, I will be good.

She hopes to pursue a doctorate, but she believes the classroom is where she belongs right now.

Mary:

Mary is in the age group 55-64 and has been teaching for 26 years. She shared that she started out as an elementary school teacher in a Lutheran school where the children knew one culture and they were mostly white. The environment was small with 10-15 students. It was one level for each grade. She taught first grade for many years.

Afterwards, she moved to teaching fifth grade. During this time, she and her husband adopted a child (son) from Chile. She transitioned into teaching ESL at night. This was convenient because her son was from Chile and being an ESL teacher was helpful. In her own words “It was two nights a week, and then I made arrangements for my child, so this was still good for me to keep my hand in ESL.” Her undergraduate degree is in social studies and psychology. She also shared:

Every person in the whole world had a psychology degree when I graduated from college. But I always wanted to teach. So, I went back to school to get my teaching certificate.

She went to Teacher Corps which was designed to allow individuals to get a stipend juxtaposition earning a master’s degree in education. She is currently teaching the TASC and NEDP level students at SALC.

Lauren:

Lauren is in the age group 55-64 and has been teaching adults for 30 years. She shares that she never taught the K through 12 level. She teaches the Basic Education level students during the evenings from 6 through 9 p.m. She has a bachelor’s degree in English literature and a master’s degree in Adult Education and Human Resource Development. She started out as a volunteer at the young age of 21. During her years as a volunteer, she mentioned that; “I just kind of got thrown into different situations as my career progressed.” She loves to read and her love for reading drew her to volunteer as a reading teacher at Literacy Volunteers for America and subsequently got hired. She volunteered while she was still in college. Her passion for literature and imparting it to people, shaped her teaching career. Currently, besides being a teacher, she is also a

curriculum developer and a professional development coordinator at SALC. Lauren conducts workshops in social emotional learning in her colleagues' classrooms.

She shared that she never gave any conscious thinking about this career, but she knew that she liked the classroom. She said that, "I'm never tired when I go into the classroom." She looks forward to what they have to share and her students always bring good energy to her classroom during the evening classes. Her students usually work all day and then attend school in the evenings. She has high expectations for her students because they attend classes to accomplish their goals. She shared this story as a substitute teacher:

They put me in as a sub, and I remember I taught verbs. I was teaching verbs to Polish people and they all went away. They all went out for coffee and never came back. And I went to the director and I started crying like I screwed something up. And I had a wonderful director who told me, it's not brain surgery, nobody died. You were awful. You'll get better.

Mark:

Mark is the only male teacher and is in the 25-34 age group. He provides instruction to the advanced level students during the evening classes 6-9 p.m. He has at least 4 years of teaching experience and the same at the alternative education level. He graduated from Stony Brook College in 2015 with a bachelor's in linguistics. He developed an interest in other languages and just wanted to help people learn English. He shared that he was able to help others learn English at SALC and that's how he got his first teaching job. He said this:

When I thought about teaching overseas for a while, I originally intended to go to Japan and teach. Things didn't work out with that in the end. So, I just decided to teach here.

Barbara:

Barbara is in the age group 65-74 and has been teaching adults for over 30 years. She attended Dowling College located at Oakdale, Long Island and when this college went out of business, she completed her degree at CUNY, City College. She wanted to become a social worker before she decided to go with teaching. She pursued her bachelor's degree in sociology and a master's degree in Community Health Education, from Adelphi University. She shared that this degree is not about teaching English, but the community health aspect relates to the adult students she teaches. For example, helping them to access health care, taking their citizenship test and driver's license.

In her younger years after graduating college, she worked as a clerk. She holds certification in English as a Second Language. She shared that the economy wasn't good and finding a job was difficult. She stopped working for a while and raised her children. In 1988, her husband got a job in Puerto Rico, and they migrated there to live and work for one and a half years. While living there, she worked as an ESL teacher in a Catholic high school. Since then, she developed an interest in teaching ESL. After returning from Puerto Rico, she started working at SALC as a beginner ESL teacher. She got the teaching position when her husband who worked at SALC introduced her to the program.

She stated:

I knew about this program because my husband used to teach here and then I got an opportunity. I applied for the position and that's all, I got my job. We think networking basically.

Rhonda:

Rhonda is in the age group 65-74 and has been teaching for over 40 years at different grade levels. After graduating St. John's University in 1973, her teaching career transcends from teaching a kindergarten class at a school in Queens, then pre-school, proceeded onto fifth grade instructing special education learners. Next at a middle school for a couple of years and finally at SALC, for the past eighteen years. She teaches the beginning level students in the morning sessions. When I asked, what drew you into teaching? She had this to say:

I love that question. I love that question because if my sister were here, she would be laughing. When I was 5 years old, I self-taught myself to read and I used to love to take words from that book, write it on a chalkboard that I had in my house and do word families with my sister who didn't even know the alphabet at the time. But I would make her repeat the words. And so, I acted like the teacher and she was the student.

Her parents' cultural background drew her into teaching ESL. The past experiences of her parents working long hours and then going to school to learn English motivated her to teach adult English learners at SALC. She witnessed first-hand the difficulty that immigrants face and this was the motivating factor that placed her in the multicultural classroom.

Lola:

Lola is in the age group 45-54 and has been teaching for 27 years. She taught children for two years prior to working at SALC where she now teaches adult learners at the advanced level since past 25 years. She teaches during the morning sessions. Her first degree is in English Literature and Communications. She shared that she was interested in social work, but afterwards, she decided to try teaching English as a second job, hence she went on to pursuing a master's degree in TESOL. Lola shared a deeper reason for her interest in teaching ESL. She had this to say:

I'm a child of immigrants. My parents were immigrants to this country. So, I myself as a child, had an experience. We moved to Israel and I had to learn Hebrew. I did not understand the language and then subsequently, after two years, I had to come back here (USA) and learn how to read in English. So, I had experience as a child, as a second language learner, and being the child of second language learners.

This section expounds on the findings from the data that emerged from the combined responses of the teacher candidates during the interviews and follow-up questions. Evidence of some of the raw data is shown in tables 4.1 and 4.2 below as well as Appendix J.

Table 4.1*Teacher Candidates Responses regarding Interview Questions on Perceptions*

Questions	Responses
Do you believe there are any expectations or stereotypes associated with the students you teach? Please explain.	Sometimes positive or negative stereotypes come out in discussions/conversations. Students have certain opinions or preset stereotypes about each other. Students are like regular people and we do have preset notions and conceptions. For example, students from country A are brilliant in comparison to students from country B. Conversations around export resources from countries represented in the class, students actually believe that the main export product is drugs. Students feel offended but behave polite. Some cultures have high expectations of their children in terms of their education. Students from some cultures express their emotions freely while other cultures may suppress them. Attitudes about people with different sexual orientations. Anti-Semitism that people bring with them from their own countries. Antipathy or prejudice against the African American students from the Hispanic students.
Do you feel that there are any expectations or stereotypes associated with your own pedagogy that interfere with serving your students? Please explain.	Some participants believe that there aren't any clear-cut stereotypes that would interfere with their teaching. If anything, it's an issue not of culture, but self-esteem. Some students many times, have a low self-esteem, so, it's difficult for them to realize their goals. Participants try to foster self-esteem to build their confidence. There are expectations for example; the level of education that they have in their home language, will impact the proficiency regarding learning a second language in this case it is English. Participants try to look at the students as individuals.
Do you believe that your personal and professional competencies impact the quality of instruction provided to your students? If so, how so?	Participants state that they have multicultural, multi-ethnic and multilingual students that benefit from their higher-level studies and educational backgrounds in TESOL, Foreign Language, English Literature and Communications, Linguistics, Special Education, Community Health Education, Theatre and Adult Education. The combined professional competencies help, with the best practices shared among teachers, builds excellent teaching strategies for reading, writing and discussion that impact their students' success. Like trying to develop lessons that are like hit the different types of learning styles like kinesthetic auditory and visual. Participants try to hit the different components in each lesson. I like the listening, speaking, writing, reading.

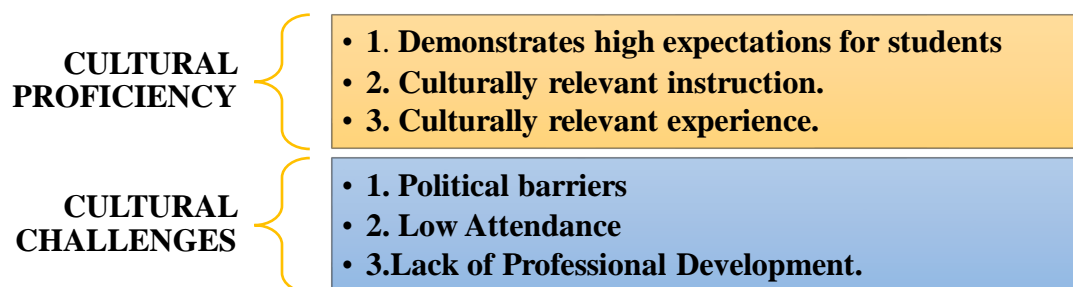
Table 4.2*Teacher Candidates Responses regarding Interview Questions on Success Strategies*

Questions	Responses
What are some strategies you use, or some things you do, to make cultural connections to your students?	Cooperative learning assignments centered around their culture. Dialogues, dramatizations and re-enactments of cultural events. American events for example; Thanksgiving. Other cultural events from students' home countries, how they celebrate birthdays. Learn about their foods, dance, dress etc.
How is your coach and administrators, supportive or not supportive of managing your personal and professional roles in the classroom?	With the budget constraints administrators are supportive in buying classroom materials. Administrators support cultural events and activities. However, they share that there is need for culturally relevant professional development.
If you had the opportunity to give another ENL teacher wishing to pursue a career in teaching ENL students from multicultural backgrounds teaching advice, what would it be?	Participants suggest incorporating different methods into teaching in order to make it interesting for the students. The main goal is that you want students to be comfortable. If you're teaching ESL, you want them to be comfortable with themselves. Enjoy teaching students from different backgrounds. Be culturally sensitive and empathetic to students' religion, way of life, norms. Try not to have stereotypes respect all students.

The PI included thick descriptive excerpts to highlight the findings from the participants' interviews. This description corroborates the data extrapolated during the analyzing and coding of themes used to explore the three research questions.

Figure 4.2

Emerging Themes, Sub-themes and Findings in Relation to Research Question 1



Research question 1- How do teachers perceive their cultural proficiency and self-efficacy when teaching ENL students in an alternative education program?

The PI's first research question examined teachers' perceptions of their cultural proficiency and self-efficacy when teaching ENL/MLL students in an alternative education program. Two major themes and relating sub-themes evolved from the analysis of the conversational interviews.

RQ1 Theme 1: Cultural Proficiency

- **Demonstrates high expectations for students:**

Ponterotto et al. (1998) posited that teachers who have a high cultural awareness, find cultural diversity as strength, and feel the responsibility to address multicultural issues in the curriculum juxtaposition the teaching and learning process. The students taught by the participants are both documented and undocumented. Regardless of their immigration status, all the participants expressed that they have high expectations for their students, and that while some learn at a different pace, they work hard and do accomplish much. Their

responses echoed each other's, as they collectively believe that their students can acquire knowledge despite their racial, cultural, social and economic backgrounds. This was Mark's take on expectations:

There are expectations, I just try to think of each student differently. I kind of get a sense of the students' intellect and their capacity for learning a new language. Just for example, I've seen different levels of English from certain countries that could be higher and lower. For example, a student from, say, Sweden is like way more likely to be very proficient in English than someone from say Japan. And I kind of studied that in college a little bit. A student from a certain country I may expect them to have a harder time with learning. It's an individual thing. You know, everyone is different.

Mark however does believe that all his students are able to succeed, but it is important to differentiate the learning to meet each student where they are at.

The NEDP is a program that differentiates learning and assessment for SALC's students. Mary and Jamie teach students who are part of this program and they noted it as one of their best strategies and testing accommodations that build students' path to success. They also highlighted that students who would like to move on to college sooner than others, take the TASC examinations, while others are enrolled in NEDP. Students who are not good at one shot testing, are placed with an assessor in the NEDP. This is a longer process, but students work at their own pace. They take parts of the test as many times necessary, until they successfully complete their diplomas. Julia and Lauren shared that if teachers have high expectations for their students, it is essential to model that expectation.

Barbara, Rhonda and Lola believe that while students will potentially experience some form of limitation in their lifetime, they could still accomplish their goals.

Culturally relevant instruction

Studies have shown that there is a wide demographic gap between teachers and the students they teach resulting in a dire need for culturally responsive teaching in the multicultural classroom (Alsubaie, 2015; Au, 2014; Banks & Banks, 2010, 2016; Edwards & Edick, 2013; Gay, 2010, 2013; Muniz, 2019; Paris & Alim, 2017). Muniz (2019) eloquently states that “a teaching workforce that remains overwhelmingly female, white, middle-class, and monolingual is increasingly likely to teach students who are of a different race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, language group” (p. 6). The view above is true in relation to the eight participants of this study and the students they teach. However, they believe that their instructional practices and resources do meet most of the academic needs of their students and are indeed culturally relevant.

According to Noordhoff and Kleinfeld (1993), it is essential that an instructional design should be connected between academic subject matter and diverse students' backgrounds. Teachers must demonstrate an understanding of the multicultural classrooms and communities that they co-exist. Analysis of the participants' strategies yielded their understanding of what culturally relevant instructional practices look like in their multicultural classrooms.

Jamie was excited to share how she used culturally relevant materials to inspire her students' active learning and engagement. In her words:

I'm always working on something called Stone Soup. It's the book Stone Soup where, you know, the idea of not having food. The people would go into a village

and they trick people into feeding them. So, I took the idea and use it. We have a lot of cultures here and everybody makes a different kind of soup. So, I said, well, let's cook together. We have the small kitchen here, and students bring in vegetables or the things that you would add to a soup. I start with the base of teaching a recipe and how you would add things, you know. But anyway, then it becomes this idea of learning the math, learning the words, learning different cultures. They're sharing the different cultural ingredients and what people like and their interests.

Based upon the information shared, it was noticeable that some of the participants implemented specific instructional practices that provided a more meaningful connection to what is deemed culturally relevant teaching than others. For example, Lauren states:

I kind of use books and materials that talk about cultures. Then I ask them to talk about their cultures or I write about it or, you know, we talk, we do a lot of talking.

This approach is different from Jamie's who utilized hands on learning. However, the difference in teaching styles, could be that, Lauren's students are at the Basic Education Level, and that's the only level she teaches. At this level the students are preparing to take the TASC examination. The content would resemble the American style of literature since that is how the examination is structured. During the analysis process, it became clear that while the participants shared that they incorporated culturally relevant resources in their best practices, this was also an area that they wanted to improve in.

- **Culturally relevant experience**

In their study, Noordhoff and Kleinfeld (1993) examined the issues that involved teaching multicultural students. They posit that when designing instruction, there should be a connection between the academic content taught and the students' diverse

backgrounds. In other words, there should be culturally relevant experience embedded within the multicultural classrooms. The teachers of multicultural students should plan their instruction so that they can learn from their students, their communities and their own practical experience. A culturally responsive experience speaks to the similarities and differences both teachers and students exhibit. Even though it is necessary for both entities to find new ways of understanding and bonding with each other, it is also a challenging feat. This view is evident from the data in this study.

Julia shared that one of her culturally relevant moment was a negative one and that she was very upset after the encounter. This is what she shared:

Okay, there's a negative one actually I could share. And it was memorable because I was very upset by it. I was teaching. It was my conversation class and there's a big coffee pot. And the students started like with this screaming over me, in front of me. How do you want your coffee? Do you want coffee? And I was really shocked and I thought. Maybe it's different in another culture and that this is something that is accepted. And I am a sensitive person I took it to heart. I made a joke of it. I said excuse me you're taking orders and you don't ask the teacher how she wants her coffee. This young man from country A, said excuse me, "you want coffee?" and I said no thank you. Then I shared it with a couple of my co-workers. They said that this situation has happened to them too. And they suggested that I do address it in terms of talking about the rules. And I did. So later on, when the students were going to be presenting, I suggested a reminder that when we're in groups and speaking a lot at once that's fine, but when there's one person speaking, we're all going to be listening to that one person.

She recounted how one female student from country B apologized twice to her on behalf of her classmates. Julia said:

I was surprised that the students didn't realize that their conduct was rude. I was really surprised that they didn't get that it was rude. So, I will not forget. That was not a good experience for me because I'm a very polite listener when someone's presenting, I would never do that to someone else.

However, when she responded to the follow up questions, this was her response to this question: How can Multicultural awareness training help you work more effectively with diverse population? She stated:

I remember an activity as an undergrad many years ago where the class was separated into 2 groups and were each given rules based on a "made up" culture to follow. When it came time to interact, it was clear that another culture could easily be offended by something we might consider innocuous or even good manners. It was eye opening. It is important to develop sensitivity to all cultures.

Julia could easily recognize that her student who shouted "you want coffee" during her class was not aware that his actions could have offended someone and more importantly his teacher. Julia expressed how angry she was at her student's behavior, but it is evident that she did not exercise cultural sensitivity. Her consultation with her colleagues and applying their advice was a start in resolving the cultural situation before it escalated. This is an example of exercising cultural proficiency during a culturally relevant experience.

Throughout the examination of the data, participants shared various ways of providing and sustaining culturally relevant experience. They emphasized how they

learned from their students about their culture through the yearly cultural events that they have within their classrooms or the broader school community. These events are structured according to content for example; vocabulary drills, listening, speaking, reading and writing. The students prepared for their social and cultural celebrations using cultural resources and planned classroom instruction. Overall, the participants expressed that they have many different celebrations for example, social and cultural events like students' birthday, Valentine's Day, Three Kings Day, The Day of the Dead, Multicultural Food Day, and other special cultural holidays.

Jamie and Julia shared that their students demonstrated for their classmates how they celebrate birthdays in their homeland. They emphasized that the students are actively engaged when their classmates shared their cultural music and special treats. This they said is one way they got to experience their students' cultural norms, social attributes, and talents. Rhonda shared this:

We do a Multicultural Food Day, you know, like a party where we ask people to bring their food from their countries. We do those kinds of things all the time. I did a project with the students where each one of them got to talk about their countries.

Theme 2: Cultural Challenges

Political barriers is one of the challenges shared by the teacher candidates that hinder documented and undocumented adult learners in becoming self-sufficient and competent adults. It is a known fact that ESL teachers are among the few people in the United States that work closely with immigrant students (ESL Teacher Edu.org, 2017). ESL educators are also among the few people that meet them within their first weeks of

entering the country. Unfortunately, politicians are the policymakers, and they are probably unaware of the challenges faced by these new comers. The ENL/ML teachers are charged with making the students feel comfortable in their multicultural classrooms. According to an article shared by ESL Teacher Edu.org (2017), there are increased enforcement by ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) officers working in the United States. This knowledge is imparted to students and their families through their local government representatives. Students' free access to basic education have proven to be more of a threat rather than an asset in becoming contributing citizens.

During the interview session, the PI referred to the consent letter where it was highlighted that the participants should not share any personal details about their students' immigration status and or personal information. However, it was necessary for the participants to share the main challenges faced by their students and as a result, impact their functionality in the classroom.

Funding- SALC is funded by New York State and the program faces yearly budget cuts. Participants shared that they are constantly writing grants to get the necessary funds to carry the functioning of the school. Lauren is the chief grant writer and this is one way she believes that she demonstrates empathy for her students. Participants share that this is one reason for their lack of professional development opportunities, because they sacrifice paying professional development to purchase instructional resources for students. Throughout the interviews, each participant expressed that they were able to purchase the instructional resources necessary. Barbara stated:

Oh, I'd say she's supportive of us providing, you know, within our budget constraints, providing us with materials and what we need to do our jobs.

Shared space is another important challenge brought to light during the interviews had to do with the change in location and sharing space. Teacher participants shared that they are not able to display their students' work and show off their cooperative learning projects as they used to at their previous location. They were more comfortable especially when they were working on long term projects. Participants emphasized that due to lack of space, they have to share their kitchen area alongside testing students. One participant summed up how they are affected by limited space/shared space.

So that puts like kind of a damper on how much you could physically. We're very limited here. Like we can't leave anything. We can't make a bulletin board and leave it here because of our space limitations like we rent here. We're tenants. So, we can't leave any things up.

- **Low attendance**

As was mentioned in chapter 2, rolling admissions is one of the features of an alternative education program. The students enjoy the freedom of attending school/classes according to their preferred schedule, especially if they work. During the seasons when temporary jobs become available, students automatically choose work over their education, due to the financial and economic challenges they face.

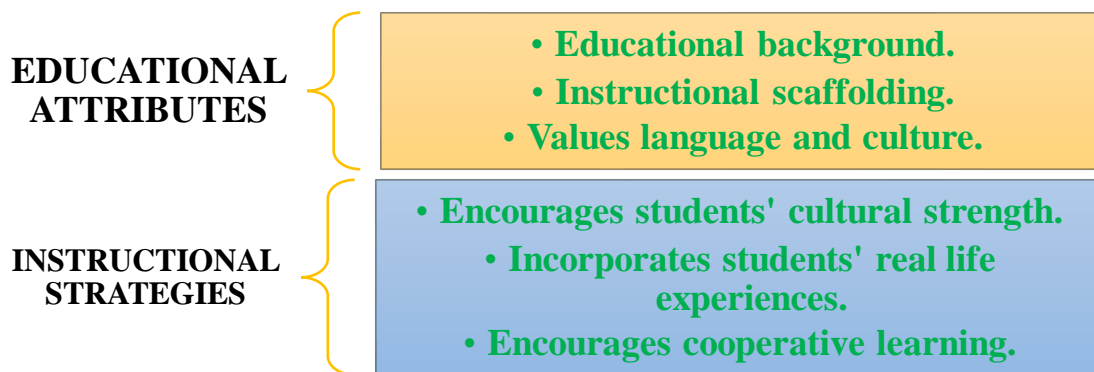
- **Lack of Professional development**

During the interviews, the participants shared that one of the challenges that they face, is lack of relevant and appropriate support through professional development that is

geared to culturally relevant instruction. It was evident through their sighs or facial expressions, that they sincerely desire immediate professional development. They have been turn-keying information to each other. When asked about coaches and administrators support or lack thereof, none of the participants shared how they have received adequate professional development. They were careful not to speak explicitly about the need. One of the requirements of the district is that they have a specific number of professional development hours each school year. They felt that the professional development should be culturally relevant. Some participants felt that they could get professional development to build knowledge relating to how they could improve their culturally relevant teaching.

Figure 4.3

Emerging Themes, Sub-themes and Findings in Relation to Research Question 2



Research question 2- How do teachers who teach in a multicultural classroom perceive themselves when incorporating multicultural instructional activities and strategies?

RQ2 Theme 3: Educational Attributes

- **Educational background**

As the conversational interviews developed, the participants were eager to tout how their areas of specialization during their undergraduate and graduate years in college/university, impacted their role as an instructor for their students. Mary stated:

I surmise that my undergraduate degrees in psychology and sociology, which is what I really like, I'm a person who likes to talk to people and help people.

Her degree in education assists her in how she imparts her knowledge to her students.

Julia, smiling and using confident body language, talked about her master's degree in reading and first degree in theatre. She believes that this combination supports her as she can detect reading difficulties in some of her students and provide appropriate support.

She also includes roleplaying in the classroom based on her knowledge of theater.

Although Julia has over 20+ years of teaching history, she is a relatively new teacher to adult education and the alternative setting. She thought it was necessary to be proactive and take courses that assisted her in teaching grammar and using authentic materials to impart her knowledge in her multicultural classroom. This is what she had to say when I asked: What is your educational background and how does it relate to your teaching career?

So, in college I majored in Rhetoric and communications with a double major in English and theater. I have a theater background and I did a lot of Community Theater for several years, so I bring a lot of drama into the classroom with role playing. And I'm not afraid to be silly and to make the students laugh and to make myself look silly. After that I got my teaching Certification from Queens College

and then I went onto Queens College for my master's degree in reading. And I also took two classes at the New School one using authentic materials to teach adults English as a second language and the other one was called grammar for ESL teachers.

Instructional scaffolding

Van de Pol and colleagues postulated that “in education, scaffolding refers to support that is tailored to students’ needs” (Van de Pol et al.2015, p.616). Scaffolding students’ learning will lead to greater accomplishment (Proctor et al.2007). When difficult content is scaffolded, students’ comprehension will be enhanced because a lesson that is structured will make learning more comprehensible and relatable. The participants believe that the quality of daily instruction, has some degree of positive bearing on their self-efficacy and confidence in their classrooms. They highlighted how scaffolding makes their instructional practices more meaningful for their students. They believe that their ability to proficiently connect with their students’ depth of knowledge, has an impact on their students’ achievement. A teacher’s interaction with their students impacts their achievement (Praetorius et al. 2012; Van de Pol et al.2015).

Haynes (2015) shared four (4) strategies for scaffolding instruction for English Language Learners. They are:

1. Connect new information to prior experiences and learning.
2. Pre-teach academic vocabulary.
3. Use graphic organizer to make lessons more visual.
4. Support EL writing by using sentence frames. (Haynes, 2015).

One valuable teaching strategy that the participants concurred with, is the daily inclusion of conversation circles, where they utilize a graphic organizer (5Ws and 1H) to break down information in smaller parts. Scaffolding is an essential learning support for ENL learners (Haynes, 2015; Praetorius et al. 2012; Van de Pol et al.2015). During the conversation circles, the students can access their prior knowledge, utilize academic vocabulary, write their thoughts using graphic organizers and speak using sentence starters. The data revealed that participants believe that learning about life skills is culturally relevant, in that, they should know how to navigate life in the United States. They shared that scaffolding, role play and conversations around life skills, provide a transparent model for students to remember, connect and apply the content learned. Mary shared that she emphasizes to her students the importance of understanding how to access basic amenities in the US. In her words: How do you go to the grocery store? How do you get your driver's license? She maintains that it is important that students are comfortable knowing basic survival skills when living in the United States.

Values Language and culture

Language and culture are complex, and teachers of English language face challenges when they conduct their classes. Valuing diversity in the classroom emerged as an instrumental core value in the multicultural classroom, and this view point was echoed by the teacher participants.

Lauren shared this perspective:

I think everybody has to have their culture valued. And I think that you have as a teacher, be aware of where each person is coming from and what they bring to the class. So, what is their educational experience? What is it that people look at you

as, oh, she can't learn or things like that? I think that's very, very important. Just the biases, cultural biases you know, when someone speaks with an accent, right away, people think they're not intelligent.

Collectively, the participants believe that it is crucial to promote cultural diversity and awareness because the teacher's experience is to help somebody who is coming from a different background and their culture must be respected.

Theme 4: Instructional Strategies

- **Encourages students' cultural strength**

Julia encourages her students' cultural strength through sharing menus and roleplaying dining at a restaurant in their country. Students are required to explain how a specific dish is prepared. Julia emphasized that:

Teachers can learn a great deal by structuring the class with multiple opportunities to work in small groups and make presentations on a regular basis. I once learned that I had an accomplished flamenco dancer in the class who was willing to perform spontaneously for everyone.

Other participants include similar instructional ideas.

- **Incorporates students' real-life experiences**

Julia incorporates students' real-life experiences through social-emotional learning. Discussions are more likely to come alive when the teacher shares a personal encounter. She shared how her granddaughter was being hospitalized with a virus over the Christmas holidays last year, and that she felt terrible as she watched her grandchild struggling. She was amazed to hear one of her students sharing about his son being hospitalized with the same virus. This is one example of a real-life experience that both

the student and teacher connected with and this was also a form of modeling for the rest of the class to join in the conversation. Even though both the teacher and her student are from different cultural backgrounds, they could identify with a common denominator, a sick family member.

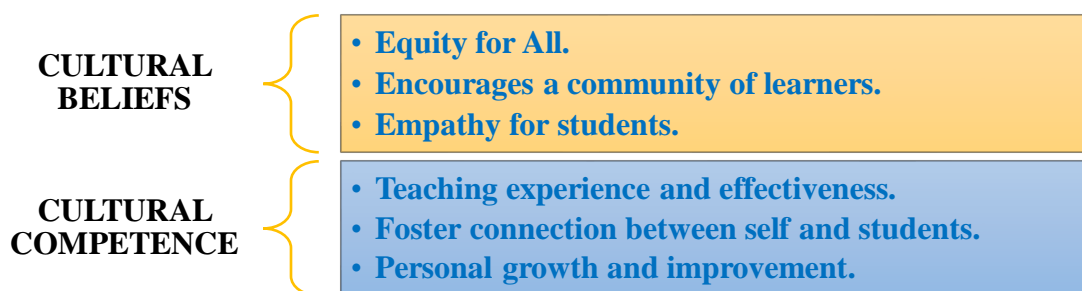
- **Encourages cooperative learning**

Cooperative learning proved to be a challenge for the teacher candidates initially, one reason cited was the fact that they are adults. They pointed out that the students' behavior indicated that the teacher should be upfront and pour information into them. This might have been their expectation because this is the way they were taught in their home countries. However, how the classroom looks and functions in the United States is new to them. The participants shared various strategies they used to encourage their adult students to learn cooperatively. Mary shared that as time went by, she had them sit in a circle, gave them a sheet of paper, gave them a question to write their response, and everyone is expected to cooperate and share. Fortunately, this activity worked out. Julia on the other hand, includes activities that allows the students to talk to each other and work on projects. The group members each have a responsibility and must do their part. She shared that:

Teachers can learn a great deal by structuring the class with multiple opportunities to work in small groups and make presentations on a regular basis. I once learned that I had an accomplished flamenco dancer in the class who was willing to perform spontaneously for everyone.

Figure 4.4

Emerging Themes, Sub-themes and Findings in Relation to Research Question 3



Research question 3 - How do teachers experience and self-reported sense of cultural competence impact their students' academic performance and experience?

RQ3 Theme 5: Cultural Beliefs

- **Equity for All**

Schools should ensure inclusive teaching practices in the multicultural classroom (Alghamdi, 2017; Au, 2014; Edwards & Edick, 2013; Paris & Alim, 2017). A lack of positive classroom climate or pleasant encounters in the multicultural classroom, will be counterproductive. A recognition for all cultures is well-documented by numerous researchers (Alsubaie, 2015; Banks & Banks, 2016). Julia uses what she calls *equity sticks* in her classroom. She passionately shares that she recognizes that all students must feel included, safe, warm and comfortable at all times in her classroom. This notion is embraced by the other participants.

- **Encourages a Community of Learners**

Students are from diverse countries hence; it is pertinent to have team building activities that will promote a community of learners within the school environment.

Lola's take on core beliefs of the multicultural classroom encapsulates the views of her colleagues. She stated:

This is the classroom where I think all the learners come in order not only to learn English, but to learn about each other. The activities or conversation that we have bring out their cultural traditions, backgrounds, customs and beliefs related to their food. I think that's what makes it very interesting for many students to learn from each other. I will tell them that I'm learning many times more from them than they are from me in terms of the subject matter that I'm teaching. So, it makes for a very interesting dialogue and interchange of ideas. And we always try to foster that the respect for each other in terms of ideas and their own personal beliefs. So, it's more like a mosaic than the melting pot. You know, they're here to learn about America and this country and our customs here. But at the same time, we learn and many times it comes out, I think in our classes we know pretty much daily about different customs and cultures.

- **Empathy for students**

The participants shared different ways that empathy is shown to their students. Julia takes into consideration that her students work and they also share family responsibilities. At times, students will arrive after her mini-lesson is complete. She always model the writing on the board for students to see upon arrival and they can get to work right away, without feeling excluded. Writing is one of the areas that her students shared to her that they most help. Attending to her students' academic needs speak to her instructional strength.

Theme 6: Cultural Competence

- **Teaching Experience and effectiveness**

The participants in this study overwhelmingly cited the students as the motivators of their career. They also believed that to be an effective teacher they should be aware of the cultural differences present in their classroom. Jamie had this to say:

Naive is one thing, but ignorance is another. How can one honestly not be aware of cultural differences in the classroom? Time, food, dress, and language are some of the first cues that tell us we are from all over the world.

Julia holds that cultural experience and effectiveness strengthens cultural competence.

She states that:

I develop a community of learners from day 1 with team building activities that consist of circle formation, learning names and greetings, asking questions and listening to the answers. These activities are woven into the current themes of learning throughout the term. I make mistakes and can laugh at myself. This sets a tone for comfort and risk taking in the class. Classroom methods need to incorporate more technology as digital literacy is of prime importance in most career choices and in daily living.

- **Foster connection between self and students**

When asked in what ways do you get to know your students? The participants excitedly shared that they usually start their first class by giving assignments around biographies and throughout the school year since new students are constantly enrolled. The teachers model their own biographies and share with their students. They share their likes and dislikes with the students and the students share their own. The classrooms

conversations around previous jobs and family values were cited as ways that the participants foster connection between self and students.

Jamie gave her account and stated:

It's not unheard of to spend a day with a couple students on a break time. When we have a school break, we go into Chinatown and have lunch or go dancing with a certain group like that's what you do. You know, that's what I do. It's fun.

- **Personal growth and improvement**

When the PI asked the teacher candidates: Are there any areas that you would like to improve on when it comes to teaching your multicultural students? Their responses showed that they were cognizant that they do need some personal growth and/or improvement to carry out their jobs effectively. The participants shared different ways in which they could develop professionally. Here are some of their critical reflection of how they could improve when teaching their multicultural students.

Speaker: Are there any areas that you would like to improve on when it comes to teaching your multicultural students?

Interviewee Jamie:

Well, of course it is personal. I mean, I've been trying to learn Spanish for my whole entire life... it doesn't work like that unless you're living in a language it doesn't happen, you know. But I think that would always bridge a little gap. But another area I think it's difficult for me to manage conversation techniques and in a class of 20 people, because there's so many people who want to say something. I really am challenged as a human being with that. So that's something I'd like to improve upon. Okay, so handling conversation techniques.

Interviewee Lola:

Yes. Okay. I'm a very structured person and I like to follow a schedule. I prepare my lessons daily. There are times where we go in two different directions or digress. And I think I must learn to loosen up the very structured part of my class, even though many students appreciate the structure, knowing what they're going to learn, but also at the same time, have them converse more using the English language.

Interviewee Mark:

Oh, I'd like to improve on them for life. So, I would like to use maybe culturally relevant videos to support my students. Having culturally relevant materials is a good idea. Yeah. More multimedia.

Interviewee Rhonda:

I think maybe learning a little bit more about other cultures in depth. You know, we learn a lot from our students on a daily basis, on a yearly basis, but maybe learn a little bit more in depth about religions and customs. So that's what I would like to improve on, a little more in-depth knowledge.

Interviewee Barbara:

Well, there's always room for improvement. I think it would be good if we could do a little bit more with understanding with the students, understanding each other's culture a little bit more, because sometimes not always, but they come with certain prejudice and it's sometimes tricky to learn how to work with those kinds of issues. We can always use help with that. Yeah, I think that that's basically it.

Other Findings and Self-Efficacy

Racism: Throughout the interviews, most of the participants were careful not to bring up racism as a challenge in their classrooms. The topic of race often creates uncomfortable circumstances in all aspect of human relations. Even when asked about the stereotypes that could interfere with the quality of their pedagogy, most shared about their students' low self-esteem, and was quick to mention that there is no stereotypes about race. While racism did not emerge as one of the dominant themes, one participant's perspective is worth mentioning. Lauren shared her struggle, when asked; what are some of your core beliefs of the multicultural classroom? She stated:

Well, I believe everybody has value and everybody brings knowledge to the classroom. Everybody has experience that only they can speak to. I do believe that I'm culturally sensitive... so I really believe racism has no place in my classroom. But I also believe that some students say things that they're not aware of.

She believes it is wise not to confront the students who might say something offensive, because they might walk away and never return to her class. She stated:

So, I think you also must if somebody says something, you must leave space for them to come back. Like you can't completely you know, you must know when you can confront them, you can't confront them in such a way where they're going to shut down and walk out and never come back.

She shared that she is an ESL educator who is from a privileged background. The way she views things is informed by her experiences. She highlighted this perspective:

You must get to give them space to understand what they're saying and come back from it like you can't, you know. So, it must be tempered with understanding that everybody can make mistakes, but also understanding that I can say that because I come from privilege. So, it's different for me. It's like, you know, for me as a privileged person, you know, to be white to you... I can have certain views. But at the same time, I must really realize that my views are informed by my own experiences.

SALC's structure: Barbara shared the multi-faceted aspects of what she believes to be a significant deterrent to performing her duties. She states:

It's like follow through is very difficult because for one, because of how our school works, especially in the beginning level, the attendance is not consistent. So, what every lesson must be self-contained. Because we have like open enrollment and the students are not obligated to come any specific days or times. So, if we plan something for on Monday, that doesn't mean the same people are going to be here on Wednesday to finish whatever projects. So that and that limits the kind of long-term projects that we could do just because of that. You know, how the school is organized so that. Right. You know that that's another kind of problem as far as doing any long-term things.

Summary

This study examined how teacher participants believe that they can successfully master (self-efficacy) the task of teaching their multilingual students and usher them to academic success. This study's findings revealed that the participants have had to balance various challenges alongside their best practices in their classroom. It can be concluded

that while a teacher believes that they had the potential to master their instructional craft in the multicultural classroom, undoubtedly, there are challenges to combat. The challenges that emerged from this study and are discussed above, will take great efforts at the national, state, city and other local levels, in finding a sustainable solution for both students and educators to function proficiently. The general view of participants is that adults learn differently than children and their stakes for learning are different too. This study shed light on an alternative education learning program in New York, with specific focus on teacher self-efficacy from the perspective of culturally relevant instruction provided to their multicultural students within their classrooms. Six themes evolved from the analysis of data, and the findings will be interpreted in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this qualitative narrative inquiry study was to identify how teacher candidates are applying their understanding of self-efficacy, attitudes and perceptions in communicating culturally relevant education practices, and how these practices impact their students' academic proficiency and experience in their multicultural classrooms. This chapter provides a general discussion of the qualitative findings related to the literature on self-efficacy and culturally relevant teaching, the themes that emerged from the data, the gaps in literature that may be relevant to decision making by political leaders for education, other teachers, and teacher education programs. The chapter concludes with findings related to gaps in literature, a discussion of the limitations, delimitations, recommendations for future research, recommendations for practice and a conclusion.

The PI transcribed the eight participants interview into NVivo transcription and manually hand-coded the transcription to identify the themes and sub-themes. The themes with the strongest emotions, connections and point of views to the research questions are discussed.

RQ1- How do teachers perceive their cultural proficiency and self-efficacy when teaching ENL students in an alternative education program? **Cultural Proficiency and Cultural Challenges.**

RQ2- How do teachers who teach in a multicultural classroom perceive themselves when incorporating multicultural instructional activities and strategies? **Educational Attributes and Instructional Strategies.**

RQ3- How do teachers experience and self-reported sense of cultural competence impact their students' academic performance and experience? **Cultural Beliefs and Cultural Competence.**

General findings

This study embodies the participants' lived experiences through the retelling of their personal encounters and cultural connectedness to their multicultural students. The study's result captures the ideologies of the participants' sense of self-efficacy when interacting with their multicultural students (Strickland, 2018; Singh, 2011; Siwatu & Starker, 2014). Participants ardently told of how they are culturally informed through relationships with either their parents, a spouse, a child or an extended family member who are immigrants (Brisk, 2007; Catto, 2018; Edwards & Edick, 2013). They highlighted that their prior cultural knowledge, bond and experiences established cultural sensitivity and empathy for people who originate from multicultural backgrounds and in this instance, it is their multicultural students (Au, 2014; Banks & Banks, 2016; Doran, 2014; Evans, 2017; Gay, 2013; Strickland, 2018; Yilmaz, 2016). Participants expressed self-confidence how their cultural background experiences shape their cultural competency and self-efficacy in the classroom (Evans, 2017; Faust, 2011; Kini & Podolsky, 2016).

Self-efficacy is the theoretical foundation of this study and there were various elements that relate to this theoretical perspective. Analysis of the data collected from the conversational interviews revealed that the participants believed that they have the capability to carry out "the course of action required to manage prospective situations"

(Bandura, 1997). Self-efficacy provides an individual with the conception that they can measure skills, effort, determination and endurance in the face of challenges encountered.

Although the participants' educational attributes may vary in some instance, each of the six themes were dominant factors in explaining their concept of self-efficacy in their multicultural classroom. Despite highlighting the trials encountered when instructing students, participants joyfully expressed that they manage to bring out the best in their students. They categorized this ability as teacher effectiveness and self-efficacy (Bennett, 2013; Faust, 2011). Participants shared that they often self-evaluate their work and revisit teaching approaches that were not successful. They implicate that the creation of professional development opportunities could only supplement their competency, proficiency and self-efficacy because they could compare what they are currently doing to the updated standards mandated by educational experts (Birman et al., 2000; Browne et al., 2016; Yilmaz, 2016; Zepeda, 2016).

A teacher's self-efficacy and reflection are valuable self-evaluation tools that should be used to sustain their level of confidence in the classroom (Bandura, 1977; Gay, 2010). The teachers indicated in both the open-ended follow-up questions and their interviews that they could become more effective in planning and delivering the types of interaction and activities that will be the most beneficial in their multicultural classroom (Paris & Alim, 2017; Pelayo, 2012).

Cultural Proficiency and Self-Efficacy

Every teacher in this study expressed strong self-efficacy as they shared how their self-confidence and competency are contributing factors that positively impact their students earning diplomas despite the vast differences in age, learning profiles and

cultural origins. Even though there are some students who did not acquire a diploma, they have successfully accomplished other goals such as, getting their United States citizenship, a New York state driver's license, and/or become gainfully employed also contribute to the participants' self-efficacy. These accomplished goals are being realized through the application of the literacy/English they learned at SALC.

However, a teacher who is culturally proficient, is one who is capable of effectively interacting with people who differ from them (Delpit, 2006; Gay, 2013). When issues arise in a culturally diverse setting, the culturally proficient individual could quell the problem before it escalates (Khong & Saito, 2014). It must be emphasized that the participants teach students who are ages 18 through 70 and providing instruction to students with such a vast age difference is challenging. Due to the generational gap between the old and young, at times conflicts do arise and they must be resolved quickly. Some participants believe that their experience in the multicultural community extend their understanding of the social indicators for example, ethnicity and socio-economic status that could impact the educational freedoms for their ELL/ML students.

Cultural Challenges and Self-Efficacy

The findings of this study partly harmonize with the findings of previous studies. Cultural challenges certainly impact the quality of instruction provided to students whose culture and backgrounds are indifferent to the culture of mainstream society (Banks & Banks; Cardenas & Cardenas, 1977; Coady, Harper & de Jong, 2015; Gay, 2010; Khong & Saito, 2014). Some of the challenges documented by researchers show that students, who come to the classroom, bring with them varying degrees of abilities, achievement and successes. These variations make it difficult for the teachers to reach them. Even with

providing differentiated instruction, it is still a mammoth of task for teachers to reach them effectively. The participants of this study shared other challenges that are not documented broadly in other studies, probably because this study looks at alternative education teachers versus teachers of K-12 students.

A major challenge declared by the participants is that the students of this alternative education population are older and they have families to support. The teachers are affected by their students' inconsistent attendance to classes, whether it is because of their immigration status, socio-political barriers and economic disparity. Participants strongly feel that their self-efficacy is being compromised because they are not able to provide valuable continuous learning for their students. However, they believe that if they receive specific professional development to deal with these unique additional challenges, then they could better implement strategies to alleviate these challenges when they arise. Culturally responsive educators must be sensitive to the unique barriers that impact immigrant adult students and their families. Collective teacher efficacy could be a valuable medium in the absence of professional development, since teachers can pool their best practices and abilities to achieve student outcomes (Eells, 2011; Hattie, 2016).

If teachers are expected to provide culturally relevant teaching, then the students need to be present in their classrooms consistently for this to be productive. This is where education policymakers need to intervene and provide the necessary social, economic and political resources to assist the students who attend alternative education programs taste success. Insufficient funding for SALC is one of the contributory factors that undermines the teachers' self-efficacy, in that, they must sacrifice getting professional development for students' instructional resources. Hence, this economic challenge is also a political

barrier, and when both are combined only creates additional hindrances to both the participants and their students. While all of the participants expressed that they do have a degree of self-efficacy, they also acknowledged that it is pertinent to take ownership of identifying the challenges when they evolve and strategize how to appropriately resolve them to benefit their multicultural students, across all race, ethnicity and age demographics.

Educational Attributes and Self-Efficacy

In this study the participants emphasized that their educational attributes support their capacity and/or ability to teach their diverse background students effectively. One participant cited her studies in Theatre and English as an asset in effectively blending the English content with role-play to her students. Another shared that her bachelor's degree in English literature and a master's degree in Adult Education and Human Resource Development are perfect in fostering her capabilities to instruct her students. Other participants shared educational attributes or background in Foreign Language studies and English as a Second Language. Throughout the interviews some shared that they traveled and/or lived in other countries and learned their culture. They profess that these attributes shaped and helped their self-confidence in teaching other peoples. Some currently have roots in other cultures besides the American culture, for example, they are living in current relationships with family and friends who are immigrants.

Instructional Strategies and Self-Efficacy

Participants hold the notion that when they execute their instructional strategies effectively, their self-efficacy is boosted. An example is when their students are engaged and are actively participating in their sharing cultural contributions and connections (for

example, food, cultural events, heritage) through instruction. Active engagement is one example of how educators can easily assess their self-efficacy. Their ability to get students to understand a given task validates their level of self-efficacy. They especially feel validated when the students celebrate their own achievements and their classmates. In addition, when students acknowledge each other's cultural heritages and experiences, participants express that this positive exchange can only foster a true partnership in cultural sensitivity. Collectively, all participants expressed with great emphasis the relevance of appropriating meaningful instructional strategies and differentiated techniques to meet their students' needs. An important point highlighted by the participants is that the students are of different age groups, and they do have different needs.

Additionally, it was deduced from the data that students display a deep variation of learning needs because they speak other languages and they come with variation in their learning experience. Hence, some may need more time to process learning with regards to time and/or semantics. Some participants outlined that teachers' roles need to be defined as facilitators and resource connectors. Others maintain that students' need to take more ownership of their goals and the steps toward attaining them. Hence, cooperative and independent learning strategies are used to foster and cultivate the spirit of owning their learning. Students are provided with options of choosing to work independently or in groups on specific classroom projects. All participants cite that their students are motivated to achieve their goals when given activities that promote the inclusion of all students.

While some teachers admitted that it is essential to include more culturally relevant instructional resources and strategies in their lessons, they felt that the resources they have been using thus far, do provide the content that students need. Participants shared that they use an assortment of instructional strategies that make cultural connections parallel to different learning styles are used to meet the needs of students. Some of the teaching strategies are cooperative learning activities that represent the use of roleplaying, visuals, photos, maps, films, reproduction of cultural events, graphic organizers for scaffolding of difficult text and content.

Cultural Beliefs and Self-Efficacy

The quality of school life is valuable to a students' well-being. Everyone has value and should be treated with respect and should feel included within the school community. There was no difference in what motivated the cultural beliefs of the participants. Collectively, they emphasized the need for cultural inclusivity, empathy and sensitivity. They specifically name personal issues that students have and they were not aware of until came to light during a class discussion. Some of the issues shared were; a deeper understanding of the politics in their native country and how they are affected by poverty and gangs. They emphasized that understanding of cultural differences in their multicultural classroom could sharpen their cultural sensitivity regarding students' experiences, crisis, trauma, systems, expectations, marriage, birth, death, food, and religion are some of the areas they could always learn more about.

The culturally responsive teacher should be cognizant of the various forms of communication that other cultures maintain. The participants in this study are all Caucasian, hence, the possibility lies that how they communicate linguistically to

students and how students respond, could be misinterpreted as bad manners, when it is a sign of respect. Some participants shared that students referred to them as “teacher” instead of their first or last names. It is necessary for the teachers of diverse background students be educated about their cultural beliefs regarding students’ verbal and non-verbal communication, for example, vocabulary usage, eye contact and body movements (Delpit, 2006; Muniz, 2019).

An interesting revelation from the data is the biases and stereotypes that students have about each other. Participants shared that some students have deep antipathy for each other. Case in point, when students would agree with each other that another country’s export resource is drugs. Some participants shared that there are stereotypes about religion, gender roles and sexual orientations. Other students’ cultural beliefs about one country being better than another base upon their socio-economic status in the world. Muniz (2019) also emphasized that multicultural educators must train their students to be responsible in identifying and addressing any forms of mistreatment encountered such as bullying, injustices and prejudices.

Cultural Competence and Self-Efficacy

Kini and Podolsky (2016) posit that “a central value of our public education system in the 21st century is the notion that all children can learn” (p.3). It could be argued that a teacher is more productive in the classroom at the beginning of their teaching career. Another argument could be that as teachers go through the years, they gain experience and a plethora of knowledge that is significant to imparting content to their students. With the exception of one participant (Mark) who has four years of teaching experience, the remaining seven participants all women, acknowledged that their

numerous years of experience in the multicultural classroom at SALC has contributed to their self-efficacy and cultural competence. They concur with the notion that all students can learn (Kini & Podolsky, 2016).

The participants in this study overwhelmingly cited the students as the motivators of their career. Their students' presence in the classroom promotes their cultural competence and self-efficacy, for example when the students are performing well and they comprehend the lesson. Research shows that self-efficacy is the driver behind an individual's belief that they are competent to achieve success (Bandura, 1997; Evans, 2017, Strickland, 2018).

An emphasis was placed on participants views about inadequate professional development, and that despite this inadequacy, they manage to support and share best practices with each other to their students benefit. Professional development could create a medium for teachers to evaluate their own practice and become more effective in their classrooms. Porter (2019) posits that "it is important to recognize the barriers to critical reflection in order to bring about a change or better understanding of one's experiences compared to new and existing schemas" (p.42).

Summary of Themes in Relation to Research Questions

Readers might ask, how did this study contribute to the extant body of research? Overall it presented information about teachers who know exactly what they need to do their job effectively but feel that more should be done lessen the challenges, barriers and hindrances that interfere with their capabilities to reach students. Their self-efficacy in other words is being challenged and eventually impact students' academic experience and

performance in their multicultural classrooms. There is a combination of challenges which are explicitly or implicitly stated. Challenges are represented as follows:

1. **Inadequate funding for the program.**
2. **Absence due to:**
 - Students giving up their education to work when a seasonal job becomes available
 - Students being targeted by ICE due to lack of legal documentation.
 - SALC's program structure - class schedule.
3. **Lack of professional development opportunities**

Overall, the participants answered all the open-ended questions and follow-up questions asked. Some had a lot to share more than others, but for the most part they had similar reactions and little differences in perspectives. Regarding research question 1, six participants felt like they had enough years of experience that strengthened their cultural proficiency and self-efficacy as they impart knowledge to their students, but they could have produced better outcomes for their students if there weren't so many challenges. The other two participants, even though not having as many years as their colleagues, alluded to the fact about the challenges impacting instruction and hinders productive academic chances for their students. Undoubtedly, where there are challenges, outcomes are undermined.

Concerning, research question 2, all the participants assumed that their educational attributes and backgrounds coupled with their instructional strategies are apt to the manner with which they incorporate activities. Take for example, the re-enactment of cultural events, dramatization and roleplaying, scaffolding of difficult content using

graphic organizers, multimedia, and other culturally relevant resources. They believed that their higher learning prepared them linguistically to teach the English language. In general, participants highlighted that for the most part they include the four different components of learning in each lesson (reading, writing, listening and speaking). Some participants eloquently shared how they prepared and differentiated for their visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners. They make it their responsibility to prepare lessons that are culturally inclusive and sensitive.

However, they believed that there is room for improvement in terms of culturally relevant classroom methods and resources. They believed that the incorporation of more technology and culturally relevant reading materials will bolster the teaching and learning experience that suit their multicultural students. They shared that:

Teaching methods should be adapted and continually be adjusted to meet student needs especially when it is a diverse group because this makes learning richer.

Research question 3, examined the impact of participants cultural beliefs and competence on their students' academic performance. Participants mentioned that there are occasional cultural conflicts that might arise during class discussions. They highlighted the importance of modeling cultural acceptance for students to emulate. If students feel that they are being treated with equity, empathy and equality, then they will channel their focus on their academic goals rather than the bias, stereotypes and other distractions that seep into the classroom. One of the participants stated:

I think that's very important when the students see us accepting and being friendly and good to people from other cultures and other backgrounds and other races, that's a good model (Barbara).

SALC is a small school where the teachers and their students function like a close-knit family. The teacher candidates believed that they have provided to the best of their ability, culturally relevant instruction that meet the diverse academic needs that the students bring to the classroom. They emphasized that while some might not have gone to college, many have become essential workers and are now self-reliant citizens (Nyerere, 1967).

They cautiously anticipated that in the years to come, there will be suitable and current professional development for all multilingual/multicultural educators (Gorski et al., 2012; Irizarry, 2017; Pelayo, 2012; Siwatu & Starker, 2014). They maintained that a teachers' self-confidence and self-efficiency could be strengthened by providing formal training and professional development concerning quality culturally responsive pedagogy (Fitchett et al., 2012; Hollie, 2015). It is appropriate to foster more multicultural and diversity training, as training in these specific areas will sharpen the teacher candidates craft within the classroom and teacher education programs.

This study highlights an important reason for education policy makers to ensure that pre-service teacher programs are geared towards providing and educating their students with the tools necessary for the 21st century next generation of learners. In addition, the appropriate professional development for all teachers who teaches multicultural students especially those in the alternative education classrooms. A teacher's feeling of preparedness and confidence to impart knowledge to students from diverse cultural backgrounds are connected to their multicultural self-efficacy (Strickland, 2018). Undoubtedly collective teacher efficacy could help teachers feel

prepared and competent in carrying out their practice (Bandura, 1993, 1997; Eells, 2011; Hattie, 2016).

Gaps in Literature

One of the noticeable differences in the results of this study, as compared to previous studies, is the direct emphasis on the challenges that interfere with teacher self-efficacy in the multicultural alternative education program versus teacher self-efficacy in traditional mainstream schools. A comparison of this study could be made with a 50-state survey study conducted by Jenny Muniz's in 2019. Muniz's study provided data that is pertinent, comprehensive, valuable and timely as it relates to the benefits of cultural responsiveness in the multicultural classrooms. However, the sample population did not include alternative education pedagogues.

An inclusion of data from the voices of alternative education teachers could have provided profound insight from a broader perspective about teacher's feelings, attitudes, perceptions and self-efficacy. It must be highlighted that the teachers of the multicultural alternative education community felt that their self-efficacy could be stronger if they were getting the tools necessary to combat the challenges faced by the students they serve. If the students are free from the social, economic, political and cultural biases, then it is possible that their teachers could perform with higher competence and self-efficacy.

Many of the adult learners come to the United States with skills and competencies, but they do need English to move forward. Undeniably, there is usually an eagerness in these students where once they achieve their diplomas, they want to further advance their education. Unfortunately, they are faced with continuous social and economic biases. Hence, there is a need for higher education programs to be sensitive to

the non-traditional adult learners. Participants shared that although they have high expectations for their students to move on to college after achieving their diplomas at SALC, there is an underlying hesitation that they will be enrolled in college to further their dreams, because of their prior knowledge of past students' struggles pursuing higher education.

In his 2017 study, Chen documented that non-traditional adult students (NALs) are eager to participate in higher education, but they are faced with minimal opportunities “to successfully engage in postsecondary education due to the youth-centric collegiate culture serving as a barrier to both entry and success for NALs” (Chen, 2017, p. 2). These barriers to inclusion and diversity must be broken for adult learners to be valuable to the economic, social and political process in the United States and worldwide.

One profound gap in literature revealed during the conversations with some of the participants, speaks to inadequate funding and inequitable opportunities for marginalized adult students. The level of bias experienced by multicultural adult learners could be undermining the possibilities for them attaining equity for educational opportunities. The present study points to the urgency with which the federal, state and local governments must answer to and provide suitable funding for alternative education programs. The data retrieved from this should bring awareness to teachers, administrators, authors, and other researchers in the field of education. This funding could be channeled towards developing equitable educational opportunities for students who are enrolled in alternative education programs across the United States. This action could allow for greater security of students to attend school, achieve their educational goals and become self-reliant contributing citizens.

Providing that appropriate actions are being taken, the teachers who teach this population could see improved and consistent attendance, since students would not feel threatened by inequitable measures. The teachers could also reach more students if there are targeted professional development to meet the social and academic needs of their adult multicultural students. Further research is certainly needed for the teachers who service this population especially that these students need to function in this culturally diverse society in a successful manner.

Findings Related to Literature

This year marks 27 years since Noordhoff and Kleinfeld (1993) carried out a study where they examined the issues that involved teaching culturally diverse students and they questioned how teachers were being prepared to teach in the multicultural classrooms. Today, education scholars, practitioners, educators and researchers are still questioning the degree of effectiveness with which teachers are carrying out their practice, and/or meeting the academic expectations of students from diverse backgrounds. The results of this study showed that despite teachers' conscious beliefs about their best instructional capabilities and competence, there are dominant challenges that continued to hinder their best efforts.

Throughout the interviews, the consensus amongst the participants is that more must be done immediately towards building stronger confidence in the teachers who teach (ages 18-70+) ELL/ML learners from diverse and multicultural origins. Despite the great school spirit that exists at SALC, the participants express that their competency could peak if district administrators acknowledge that the social, economic and political barriers erected are counterproductive to the success of SALC's students and teachers.

The adult learners in alternative education are deterred from taking advantage of the limited education opportunities available to them because of the socio-economic and political challenges meted out to them.

Most of the teacher candidates shared that they have high expectations for their students and try to effectively steer them on a path to success. However, there is a dominant perspective shared and it relates to well documented literature about barriers to effective culturally relevant pedagogy (Banks & Banks, 2010; Gay, 2010). One participant shared that the expectation is to see each student differently. The participant expressed that he is aware that his students come with different abilities to read and write. Keengwe (2010) cautioned that teachers' attitudes, biases and cultural insensitivity often-times act as a barrier to them effectively reaching their students, hence, the students are not able to be productive. As the interview went on, he mentioned that he gets a sense of the students' intellect and their capacity for learning a new language.

The literature also shows that teachers own poor judgment towards students high or low literacy abilities can create unwanted cultural conflicts in the classroom thus exacerbating the pre-existing challenges. It is possible for one's self-efficacy to be weakened if their cultural competence is compromised. To assume that a student from country A is more likely to be more proficient than another student from country B, is a clear example of cultural bias. Every teacher must interact with their student from an equitable lens. This participant also shared that he learned in college that certain countries have disparities in learning English and this could be higher and lower. Research also showed that an individual's behavior is inferred from his/her cognitive perceptions (Bandura, 1997).

Limitations

There are several limitations to this study and they must be highlighted. First, it is pertinent for educators in the field of literacy to continue research with regards to multiculturalism and culturally relevant teaching. It is not realistic to interview every pedagogue in every classroom throughout New York State, however, the results of the data produced could be effective in steering educators that serve multicultural student population in both alternative and non-alternative settings on a positive trajectory for fruitful teaching and learning.

Second, due to the small size of this study, the results should be generalized with caution. This study took place in only one alternative school program in a sub-urban NYS region and thus is limited by the characteristics of the entire New York State geographical region. Additionally, even though this study could be generalized to other alternative education settings in suburban school districts in the United States, its replication using teacher candidates in the metropolitan school districts in New York and throughout the U.S could bring about valuable data that could be used in professional learning communities and professional development. Third, the exclusion of administrators, who could provide valuable insight in relation to the administrator/district leadership connection to the school/classroom environment. They could give their first-hand knowledge and experience regarding the students' academic growth and cultural experience in the classroom.

Fourth, the eight participants are Caucasian and represent the racial structure of the geographical region. A study that have diverse participants would probably provide a broader and deeper perspective regarding the assessment of cultural knowledge.

Numerous studies have documented that teacher education programs need to attract a more diverse representation of pre-service teachers (Bangura 2018; Keengwe, 2010; LaDuke 2009; Muniz, 2019; Porter, 2019; Siwatu 2010). This factor limits the generalizability of the study. Finally, when using self-reported data, there will be biased responses, where participants may not have provided an accurate assessment of their multicultural awareness interactions or their self-efficacy. Participants may have under- or overemphasized their level of cultural interactions and self-efficacy.

Delimitations

There were also some delimitations to this study. First, exclusion of classroom observation as one method of collecting data, limited the scope of the present study. Its inclusion could have strengthened the analysis of teacher interaction with students in an authentic setting, hence, provide valuable data for best practices in the classroom. Second, more schools could have been targeted to make demographic comparisons among school teachers that serve multicultural students in alternative programs in New York state. Since self-efficacy theory holds that an individual's self-efficacy increases with positive feedback, an inclusion of SALC's administrator(s) in the study could have provided a broader dimension to the extant literature about teacher self-efficacy. Finally, the research questions were only restricted to this study. Considering the above delimitations, generalizing the findings must be done with caution.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study represents the voices of the participants as they do want people to learn about their hard work on behalf of their students who come to them with various cultural and social impediments, but together they persevere towards success. This study have

contributed to the gaps in literature relating to teacher self-efficacy in the multicultural alternative education community.

Further research needs to be done to investigate how pedagogues are coping in the multicultural classrooms as they strive to reach all their multilingual learners and break down social, economic, political and cultural barriers (Alghamdi, 2017; Alsubaie, 2015; Au, 2014). All teachers regardless of their race, need to be trained to be multi-culturally efficacious in any situation they find themselves. Education programs should provide preservice teachers with more opportunities to explore different cultures and in various settings and forms (Bangura, 2018; Ginsberg & Wlodkowski, 2015; Fitchett et al., 2012; Fisher & Frey, 2018; Keengwe, 2010).

In addition, one important factor would be for preservice teachers to receive professional guidance from their tertiary institutions to apply their learned knowledge in culturally relevant planning and instruction. According to Muniz (2019), “a major investment in developing culturally responsive educators, one that goes beyond providing one-off courses or workshops” (p. 7). She posits that professional teaching standards must be established with focus on teacher preparation and development in present systems and this is a trajectory for leaders to take immediately. This perspective supports the views of the participants when asked what advice they have for pre-service teachers.

Participants shared:

Enjoy teaching students from different backgrounds and be culturally sensitive and empathetic to students’ religion, way of life and norms. Make your students comfortable.

The participants do mean-well in their advice, but the pre-service teachers will need the training before they can carry out their advice. Therefore, researchers must continuously share their findings regarding the immediate need for teacher preparation programs to meet the expectations of culturally responsive pedagogy (Bangura, 2018; Coady et al. 2015; Doran, 2014; Edwards & Edick, 2013; Evans, 2017; Gay, 2013; Gorski, 2009). Bangura (2018) maintains that “although many teacher education programs ascribe to promote and celebrate diversity, many traditional teacher preparation programs rarely focus on multicultural courses” (p.38).

Recommendations for Practice

The conclusion to this study highlights the findings into some recommendations for practice. This study shed light on an alternative education learning program in New York, with specific focus on teacher self- efficacy from the perspective of culturally relevant instruction provided to their multicultural students within their classrooms. Hence, more focus should be given to how building and district administrators are supporting teachers who teach in the alternative programs under challenges that are imminent due to program design, lack of funding, socio-economic and political mandates for their students.

The teacher candidates in this study, shared that the alternative teaching environment is valuable to the broader education process and society, hence recognition should be given to the alternative education community for its masterful contribution in supporting students achieve their goals. They feel that this expectation would not be possible without the educators who teach them and put them on a trajectory for their goals to be realized. They also desire that there will be appropriate and ongoing

professional development for current teachers' multilingual teachers. They emphasized that a teachers' self- confidence/self-efficiency could be strengthened by providing formal training and professional development on the topic of quality culturally responsive pedagogy.

It is hoped that there will be more multicultural and diversity training, as training in these specific areas will sharpen the teacher candidates' craft. It is evident that society's demographics is constantly changing, hence the education system must adapt to the cultural evolution it faces. It can be argued that diverse populations are constantly evolving globally. Hence, future research is necessary to explore how teachers are imparting knowledge and what needs to be done in meeting the academic demands of today's multicultural classrooms for K-12 and beyond students. In 2017, Paris and Alim published their most recent work that invite educators to apply the term culturally sustaining pedagogy, where educators are expected to sustain students' cultural heritage and home language as they cultivate their cultural identity.

For Paris and Alim's vision to be sustained in this rapidly growing multicultural/multilingual society, it is imperative for education policy makers to give priority in preparing culturally competent teachers, who will exert high self-efficacy when teaching their students and eventually impacting their academic proficiency. It is with relevance that the curriculum, instructional resources and professional studies be entwined into one cohesive thread for all involved in the teaching and learning process. In addition, it is critical for all students to receive equitable educational opportunities so that they will have a fair trajectory in becoming proficient learners and successful citizens.

The transformation of schools into professional learning communities is one way that schools could sustain culturally relevant practices. School leaders must create standards that sensibly transform schools into embracing the rapid demands of the 21st century. Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2006) believe that principal leadership is linked to teachers' self-efficacy, where the principal inspires a common sense of purpose among teachers.

According to Tschannen-Moran, school leaders play a significant role in establishing the norms and structures that allow for schools to develop and operate as professional learning communities. The PI suggests that collective efficacy be a key focus in professional development seminars where teachers can combine their abilities which subsequently could be transferred to their students and build their academic strength.

Conclusion

To conclude, this study provided insight into the lives of teachers who teach adult students in an alternative program, highlighting their success strategies that move their students to a path of achievement, but more importantly, the challenges that they encounter and how these challenges impact their self-efficacy when carrying out their duties. This study also supports literature that is presented through decades of research regarding the need for concrete and structured professional development that is culturally relevant, as well as for teacher preparation programs doing their part in training college level students to meet the needs of today's multicultural students.

New York being a city for immigrants, does provide a sense of safety for some students who fall in this category. However, some steps are necessary in advocating for

equity so that students who attend alternative education programs can realize their dreams and experience being a valuable contributing citizen. An essential goal of alternative learning programs is to provide a schooling to marginalized individuals who needs a second chance to realize their purpose in life, for example; pursue further education and become gainfully employed. If the positive effects of adult education is considered by government politicians and education policymakers, then more urgent steps must be taken to create a trajectory to free and fair education opportunities, so that adult learners could feel a sense of inclusivity.

This study reveals that there is a need for a task force to be created to assess the current situation with regards to all forms of disparity facing immigrant learners (childhood to adulthood) and then put feasible measures/standards in place that will promote alternative adult education that is sustainable and equitable. It is pertinent that this established task force ensure that the exacerbating inequities that are currently in existence, be totally eradicated. In addition, teachers of this population are expected to teach efficiently and effectively, even though their students are undertaking social-emotional, cultural and political challenges.

Undoubtedly, this is a factor that would interfere with a teacher's self-efficacy and cultural competency. It is hoped that the data retrieved from this study, brings awareness to policy makers, educators, authors, and other researchers in the field of education, concerning insufficient preparation of educators to meet the requirement of culturally relevant teaching (Muniz, 2019). The challenges highlighted should not go unnoticed because the participants are the drivers of culturally responsive instruction, and

if they are not sufficiently prepared, then they cannot function effectively in serving their students.

On a personal note, the PI have now increased her knowledge base through the plethora of information obtained through the execution of this study. The PI have learned about other researchers, authors and educators with both similar and different interests in the field of education. Additionally, it is intended that the findings will contribute to the development of needed programs that will benefit students at all levels of education. The PI hope to continue researching hot topics in literacy that will be beneficial to educators as they strive to find solutions to the challenges faced in the classroom.



Appendix A

Saint John's IRB Approval

irbstjohns@stjohns.edu
Tue 12/17/2019 12:17 PM

Angela M. Trowers; sampsonm@stjohns.edu

Federal Wide Assurance: FWA00009066

Dec 17, 2019 12:17 PM EST

PI: Angela Trowers
Dept: Education Specialties

Re: Modification - IRB-FY2020-80 TEACHER SELF-EFFICACY IN A MULTICULTURAL
ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM

Dear Angela Trowers:

The St John's University Institutional Review Board has rendered the decision below
for TEACHER SELF-EFFICACY IN A MULTICULTURAL ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION
PROGRAM.

Decision: Approved

Sincerely,

Raymond DiGiuseppe, PhD, ABPP
Chair, Institutional Review Board
Professor of Psychology

Marie Nitopi, Ed.D.
IRB Coordinator



Appendix B

Principal Contact Letter

Dear Principal _____,

My name is Angela Trowers, and I am a doctoral candidate for the Department of Education Specialties, The School of Education, Saint John's University.

As part of my doctoral dissertation, I would like to interview a few of your teachers regarding their experiences, perceptions and self-efficacy in their diverse and multicultural classrooms.

If they agree to be a participant in this study, they will be asked to do the following:

1. Take part in an interview describing their experiences, perceptions and self-efficacy as teachers of students in their multicultural classrooms.
2. Take part in a follow-up interview to the previous interview, via telephone call or email.

Their interviews will be audio taped. Participation in this study will involve approximately two hours of their time, 60 minutes for the face to face interview and 60 minutes for the follow-up interview via telephone call or email. **I must note that extended times will be granted for an interview session, should the participant desire to express their views in a longer time frame.** The interviews will be held two weeks apart.

There are no known risks associated with their participation in this research. Although they will not receive any compensation or direct benefit, the results of this study may assist the researcher in promoting a greater understanding of teachers' self-efficacy, perceptions and attitudes as they relate to cultivating proficiency in their multicultural students and prepare them for college and career.

Confidentiality of the research will be strictly maintained through the application of pseudonyms throughout the research process. All physical documents or files related to this study will be stored in a locked file cabinet at the researcher's home. Consent forms will be kept separate to ensure that their names and identity will not become known or linked to any information that they have provided. **Their responses to the interviews will be kept confidential and under no circumstances will their names or identifying characteristics be included in the study.**

Data about participant's age or race may be included to create rich, detailed descriptions and give background knowledge about the participant. The interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed into text by a transcription service. This service will be required to sign a non-disclosure agreement. The researcher will then hand code the written transcript to identify patterns and themes within the interview and across interviews with other participants. **Participants are not allowed to divulge information about their students' immigration status and/or any other confidential information. They have the right to review the audiotape and request that all or any of the tapes be destroyed. All data will be retained for three years and then destroyed.**

Participation in this study is voluntary. They may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without consequence. In terms of the interview, they have the right to skip or not answer any questions they prefer not to answer.

If there is anything about my study you may not comprehend, or if you wish to report a research-related problem, you may contact me, Angela Trowers at (646) 823-7149 or at angela.trowers05@stjohns.edu, or my mentor, Dr. Michael Sampson at (917) 268- 1515 or at sampsonm@stjohns.edu. You may also contact the University's Institutional Review Board at St. John's University, Dr. Raymond DiGiuseppe, Chair at digiuser@stjohns.edu, 718 990 1955 or Dr. Marie Nitopi, at (718) 990-1440 or at nitopim@stjohns.edu.

I greatly appreciate your support of this study.

Sincerely,

Angela Marie Trowers
 Doctoral Candidate, Department of Education Specialties

_____ Yes, I give the researcher permission to conduct research on school premises.

_____ No, I do not give the researcher permission to conduct research on school premises.

You have received a copy of this consent document to keep.

Agreement to Participate

 Principal PRINT

 Date

 Principal's Signature



Appendix C

Teacher Consent Form

You have been invited to take part in a narrative inquiry research study that I am conducting for my doctoral dissertation at St. John's University. It is titled: **Teacher Self-Efficacy in a Multicultural Alternative Education Program**. My mentor is Dr. Michael Sampson, **Department of Education Specialties, The School of Education, Saint John's University**.

The purpose of my research is to explore your experiences, perceptions and self-efficacy in your diverse and multicultural classroom. This study will determine your cultural proficiency and self-efficacy when teaching students in a multicultural classroom in the alternative education program. It will also examine how you perceive yourself when incorporating multicultural instructional activities and strategies. More importantly, how your experience impact the confidence of your students regarding their academic performance and experience, as well as your own professional growth.

If you agree to be a participant in this study, you will be asked to do the following:

1. Take part in an interview describing your experiences, perceptions and self-efficacy as teachers of students in your diverse and multicultural classroom.
2. Take part in a follow-up interview to the previous interview, via telephone call or email.

Your interviews will be audio taped. *Participation in this study will involve approximately two hours of your time, 60 minutes for the face to face interview and 60 minutes for the follow-up interview via telephone call or email. I must note that extended times will be granted for an interview session, should you desire to express your views in a longer time frame. The interviews will be held two weeks apart.*

*Confidentiality of the research will be strictly maintained through the application of pseudonyms throughout the research process. All physical documents or files related to this study will be stored in a locked file cabinet at the researcher's home. Consent forms will be kept separate to ensure that your name and identity will not become known or linked to any information that you have provided. **Your responses to the interviews will be kept confidential and under no circumstances will your name or identifying characteristics be included in the study.***

*Data about your age or race may be included to create rich, detailed descriptions and give background knowledge about you. The interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed into text by a transcription service. This service will be required to sign a non-disclosure agreement. The researcher will then hand code the written transcript to identify patterns and themes within the interview and across interviews with other participants. **You are not allowed to divulge information about your students' immigration status and/or any other confidential information. You have the right to review the audiotape and request that all or any of the tapes be destroyed. All data will be retained for three years and then destroyed.***

There are no known risks associated with your participation in this research. Although you will not receive any compensation or direct benefit, the results of this study may assist the researcher in promoting a greater understanding of teachers' self-efficacy, perceptions and attitudes as they relate to cultivating proficiency in their multicultural students and prepare them for college and career.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without consequence. In terms of the interview, you have the right to skip or not answer any questions you prefer not to answer.

If there is anything about my study or your rights as a research participant you may not comprehend, or if you wish to report a research-related problem, you may contact me, Angela Trowers at (646) 823-7149 or at angela.trowers05@stjohns.edu, or my mentor, Dr. Michael Sampson at (917) 268- 1515 or at sampsonm@stjohns.edu. You may also contact the University's Institutional Review Board at St. John's University, Dr. Raymond DiGiuseppe, Chair at digiuser@stjohns.edu, 718 990 1955 or Dr. Marie Nitopi, at (718) 990-1440 or at nitopim@stjohns.edu.

I greatly appreciate your participation in this study.

Sincerely,

Angela Marie Trowers
 Doctoral Candidate, Department of Education Specialties

Enclosed is a copy of the consent form that you may keep. Please return the original copy, signed and dated, to PI at the contact meeting with your signature indicating that you agree to participate.

Agreement to Participate

 Participant's Print and Signature

 Date

 Researcher's Print and Signature

 Date



Appendix D

Teacher Demographics Survey

Introduction

Thank you for taking time to complete this brief demographic survey for my doctoral dissertation from St. John's University titled: Teacher Self-Efficacy in a Multicultural Alternative Education Program.

I appreciate your participation.

Sincerely,

**Angela Marie Trowers
Doctoral Candidate, Department of Education Specialties**

1. What is your gender?

- Female
- Male

2. Please indicate your race/ethnicity.

- African American
- Asian/ Pacific Islander
- Caucasian
- Hispanic
- Native American
- Multi-racial

3. Please indicate your age range?

- Under 12 years old
- 12-17 years old
- 18-24 years old
- 25-34 years old
- 35-44 years old
- 45-54 years old
- 55-64 years old
- 65-74 years old
- 75 years or older

- 4. What is your highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?**
- Bachelor's Degree
 - Master's Degree
 - Master's Degree
 - Professional Certificate
 - Doctorate Degree
- 5. Please indicate the number of years that you have been teaching?**
- 1- 3 years
 - 4- 8 years
 - 9- 14 years
 - 15- 19 years
 - 20 + years
- 6. Please indicate the number of years you have in your current school?**
- Less than 3 years
 - 3 years
 - 4- 8 years
 - 9- 14 years
 - 15- 19 years
 - 20 + years
- 7. What core subjects do you teach? (Please select all that apply).**
- English as a Second Language
 - English Language Arts
 - Literacy
 - Mathematics
 - Social Studies
 - Science
 - Technology
- 8. What levels do you teach? (Please select all that apply).**
- Beginning
 - Intermediate
 - Advanced
 - Basic Education
 - NEDP
 - TASC



Appendix E

Interview Protocol

Part I: Introduction to Interview

Thank you for participating in this interview! Because your responses are important, and I want to make sure to capture everything you say, I would like to audio-record our conversation today. Do I have your permission to record this interview? [If yes, thank the participant, let them know you may ask the question again as you start recording, and then turn on the recording equipment].

I will also be taking written notes. I can assure you that all responses will be confidential and only a pseudonym will be used when quoting from the transcripts. The audio-recording will be labeled with a pseudonym and will be sent directly to a transcription service. This transcript will be used to inform my dissertation and will potentially be used as research for an article that I hope to publish from the dissertation work. Do you have any questions about the interview process or how your data will be used?

As you know, I am a doctoral student at Saint John's University. Through my research, I'm interested in answering the question: how do teachers perceive their cultural proficiency and self-efficacy when teaching multicultural students in an alternative education program? My hope is that this study may provide insight that encourages other pedagogues in the field to evaluate their self-efficacy and teaching proficiency when working with multicultural students in the multicultural classrooms throughout the United States and worldwide. A self-evaluation of one's work can lead to higher self-efficacy.

This interview should last between 45 - 60 minutes or longer. During this time, I have several questions that I would like to ask you. If time begins to run short, it may be necessary to interrupt you in order to push ahead and complete this line of questioning. If you have questions during the interview, please feel free to ask them. You may also stop the interview at any time. Please know that I hope this will be more of a conversation than an interview; my questions will be used to guide the conversation rather than frame or limit it. Do you have any questions before we begin? [If yes, answer the questions. If no, ask consent to record again] Do I have your permission to record this and begin?

Part II: Interview Questions

Background

1. How long have you been teaching?
2. What first drew you into this alternative education program?
Follow up if needed: Have you always taught?
3. When did you decide to pursue a career in teaching?

Personal and Professional Career

4. Please briefly tell me a little bit about yourself and your teaching career so far?
5. What is your day like in the classroom?
6. What is your educational background and how does it relate to your teaching career?
7. Can you describe your classroom? (Example; classroom rules and routines)
8. What some of your core beliefs of the multicultural classroom?
9. What are some of the culture and languages represented in your classroom?
10. In what ways do you get to know your students?
11. What is your most memorable culturally relevant experience?

12. Are there any areas that you'd like to improve on when it comes to teaching your multicultural students?

Perceptions

13. Do you believe there are any expectations or stereotypes associated with the students you teach? Please explain.
14. Do you feel that there are any expectations or stereotypes associated with your own pedagogy that interfere with serving your students? Please explain.
15. Do you believe that your personal and professional competencies impact the quality of instruction provided to your students? If so, how so?

Success Strategies

16. What are some strategies you use, or some things you do, to make cultural connections to your students?
17. How is your coach and administrators, supportive or not supportive of managing your personal and professional roles in the classroom?
18. If you had the opportunity to give another Multicultural teacher wishing to pursue a career in teaching multicultural students teaching advice, what would it be?

Part III: Closing

Everything you've shared has been so helpful, thank you for taking the time to speak with me. As I mentioned during the recruitment for this study, I'd like for you to take a bit of time either later today or when it feels right to you in the next week to journal your thoughts after our interview. This can include any additional insight that you wish to share, for example, your feelings on sharing this information, or anything else. Please submit that to me in the next week, I'll follow up with you closer to a week if I haven't heard from you. If you do not mind, and with your permission, may I follow up with you

in the next week with anything else that comes to mind? Again, thanks. I will be back in touch with you when I have the transcripts of our conversation. I will email them to you for your review and to see if there is anything more you would like to add. Thank you again for your time, this has been very helpful to me.



Appendix F

Interview Follow-up Questions

Dear Participant:

Thank you for your participation in this study. Please see the follow-up questions to the previous interview below. You can indicate your choice of how you will conduct this process.

- Telephone
- Email

Agreement to Participate

Participant's Print and Signature

Date

Researcher's Print and Signature

Date


1. Do you find teaching a culturally diverse student group rewarding?
2. Do you believe that your teaching methods needs to be adapted to meet the needs of culturally diverse student group?
3. In what ways do you think the teachers' role need to be redefined to address the needs of students from culturally diverse backgrounds
4. As classrooms become more more culturally diverse the teacher' job becomes increasingly challenging. Why is this?
5. In what ways can teachers learn a great deal from students with culturally different backgrounds?
6. How can Multicultural awareness training can help you work more effectively with diverse population?
7. State your views; Regardless of the racial and ethnic makeup of the class, it is important for all students to be aware of multicultural diversity.
8. State your views; To be an effective teacher, one needs to be aware of cultural differences present in the classroom
9. Identify ways that the school culture (e.g., values, norms, and practices) are different from my student's home culture.
10. Tell how you can develop a community of learners when your class consists of students from diverse backgrounds.

Appendix G
NIH Certificate



Appendix H

CITI Certificate



Completion Date 06-Aug-2019
Expiration Date 05-Aug-2022
Record ID 32664710

This is to certify that:

Angela Trowers

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

Social & Behavioral Research - Basic/Refresher (Curriculum Group)
Social & Behavioral Research (Course Learner Group)
1 - Basic Course (Stage)

Under requirements set by:

New York City Department of Education

CITI
Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative

Verify at www.citi-program.org/verify/?wa5d72d97-e4b6-4866-baf9-5e80d930b102-32664710

Appendix I

Example of Data Analysis of the Interview between Rhonda and the PI.

Rhonda teaches at the Beginning Level.

Interview	Analysis of Data
<p>Do I have your permission to record this and begin? Yes. Thank you.</p> <p>How long have you been teaching? .I should have had that number ready. Over twenty-five years. I graduated St. John's in 1973. so. Well, over 40 years, 40 years. But different grade levels different. I started out teaching the first kindergarten class in a school in Queens. Then I did preschool and then fifth grade special ed. Then a middle school for a couple of years and then just ESL for adults. So that's been my career.</p> <p>Thank you.</p> <p>What first drew you into this alternative education program? I think the fact that my parents were immigrants and they self-taught themselves. They came in 1948 to the United States and I know it had challenges and there were very few ESL classes and they were at night. But my parents worked all day and they were tired at night and they worked six days a week. So, it was very difficult. So, I think that was a motivation. And I just love people. And an opportunity came along and I took it.</p> <p>Thank you so much.</p> <p>When did you decide to pursue a career in teaching? I love that question. I love that question because if my sister were here, she would be laughing when I was 5 years old. I self-taught myself to read and I used to love to take words from that book, write it on a chalkboard that I had in my house and do word families with my sister who didn't even know the alphabet at the time. But I would make her repeat the words. And so, I acted like the teacher. She</p>	<p>Tertiary Education</p> <p>Teaching Experience</p> <p>Adult Education Experience</p> <p>Empathy for immigrants through own family experience</p> <p>Overcoming challenges</p> <p>Embrace teaching profession since childhood</p>

Interview	Analysis of Data
<p>was the student. So, when I was five years old. I don't know why other than I just knew I loved it. Yeah.</p> <p>Wow. Wow.</p> <p>Well, thank you so much.</p> <p>Please briefly tell me a little bit about yourself and your teaching career so far.</p> <p>I'm married for 48 years. I have two adult children, one of whom is a science and history teacher in Queens. I started teaching in nineteen seventy-five in Queens. As I said before, with a kindergarten class. And the little ones are so adorable. So that was a great, you know, a great experience. And after that I did preschool. And then from there I went to a school in Freeport, New York, where they had an inclusion class, special ed and regular kids. And that was an eye opener. That was a great opportunity to see how well that works. And then I went over to the because of budget cuts, I went over to the middle school, which that out of all my teaching. I did not, that was my least favorite age group. Kids are really finding their way in the world. They're not kids. They're not adults. And so that was very challenging. Nice, but challenging. And then after that, an opportunity came to come to the Adult Learning Center, and I took it. And I've been here for 18 years and I loved every second of it. I would do it for free.</p> <p>Thank you.</p> <p>What is the day like in the classroom?</p> <p>We begin with the date and I tell them each day I'm so happy I'm always, I'm so happy to be with you. Thank you for coming. And then we usually have a few conversational questions. Where are you from? How do you spell your last name? Today, for example, we reviewed a question, how about you? I said, I like pizza. How about you? And I explained how that's really an expression. And it really means. Do you like pizza, too? So, we did several examples and they seemed to enjoy it so much. And so, we do conversation questions for about 15 minutes. I always ask</p>	<p>Married, career woman, life-time teacher</p> <p>Changes in the level of teaching</p> <p>Challenges led to change from middle school to Adult Education</p> <p>Create warm and welcoming environment</p> <p>Encourage communication through discussion</p> <p>Encourages community</p>

Interview	Analysis of Data
<p>them, how was your evening yesterday? You know, just to let them speak to me a little bit. And then we begin the lesson. I use a great grammar book, grammar in context, and we do that for about an hour and a half. Then we have a break and then we do a dictation. Sometimes we do a little word game just to break it up. And then I'll usually ask them, what did you learn today, you know? Tell me, what do we do today? Tell me one thing that you learned today that you didn't know yesterday. So that's it that the morning goes very quickly. Very quickly. Yeah.</p> <p>Okay. Thank you so much.</p> <p>What is your education about growing and how does it relate to your teaching?</p> <p>OK, I have a Bachelor of Science from St. John's in Elementary Ed Nursery through sixth grade and then I have some credits from Queens in methods and material towards my masters. How does that relate to my teaching career?</p> <p>So long ago that I believed through the classes that I took a Queens College, the methods and materials classes, they helped me to formulate my lessons, to gather materials for that lesson and to base the lesson on the needs of the population of the class, not to, you know, to challenge them, of course, but not to overburden them with material that was too difficult and to really cater to their needs and their lifestyles. You know what? They're working vocabulary. And things of that nature.</p> <p>Thank you.</p> <p>Can you describe your classroom for example your rules and routines? you did touch on that a little.</p> <p>Maybe my classroom rules are respect each and every student. That's first and foremost for me to respect each and every student and for the students to respect each other. There is never any foul language. There's never. Any imitation of anyone or any ethnic group.</p>	<p>Instructional resources</p> <p>Oral assessment- Instructional strategy</p> <p>Instructional Planning and preparation</p> <p>Meeting student needs</p> <p>Encourages respect for all.</p> <p>Fosters a culture of no stereotypes</p>

Interview	Analysis of Data
<p>Those would be our rules. I would say we are allowed to eat in the classroom. It's kind of informal with that we had break time, I should say. Our routine is really conversation first, followed by a formal grammar lesson which I explain and give numerous examples of. And then we proceed to the. Exercises related to that lesson. Followed by dictation using the vocabulary we used in that lesson. And then questions and answers always questions and answers every few minutes from the students. Anything and everything. I'm always happy to repeat it a million times I tell them so. And then we do oral assessment. Yes. Yes, definitely oral assessment.</p> <p>What are some of your core beliefs, your core beliefs of the multicultural classroom?</p> <p>That every culture and every student is unique and special and should be respected and regarded with dignity. That's my core belief and I believe the belief of this school. I mean, we're very multicultural here and we enjoy that multiculturalism.</p> <p>Thank you.</p> <p>What is some of the languages and culture represented in your classroom?</p> <p>Oh, that's such an awesome question. Some of the languages are Chinese, Polish, Russian, Spanish, French, Creole. Once we had an Italian student, once a Korean and Taiwanese and Pakistani.</p> <p>Thank you.</p> <p>In what ways do you get to know your students?</p> <p>At the beginning of the year, we usually write. I usually have them write a biography about themselves. I sometimes put a few questions on the board that they can elaborate on in their bio. And I also love for them to include a map of their country and the flag of their country. And then we have about two weeks where all the students read their bio to the class and people can ask questions and then we display it all around the room. It's really quite interesting and lots of times in the past I have</p>	<p>Structured routine</p> <p>Teaching strategy-Oral assessment and repetition</p> <p>Values and embrace all languages and cultures</p> <p>Diverse cultures represented</p> <p>Embraces Cultural identity</p> <p>Encourages students' cultural strength and experience.</p>

Interview	Analysis of Data
<p>taken their pictures and put it with the bio, which is really cool.</p> <p>That's very nice.</p> <p>Thank you.</p> <p>What is your most memorable, culturally relevant experience?</p> <p>My most memorable. I have a few memorable, culturally relevant experiences. One would be a student named Argentina who really came to us, and I would say she has many learning disabilities. Failure to retain even the slightest detail about a lesson. When she first came. And now suddenly she knows numbers, she knows colors. She knows. Greetings. And this has been an awesome experience because it's been challenging and yet extremely rewarding to see her smile and be proud of her accomplishments.</p> <p>And the students, her classmates just love seeing her achievement. Another very memorable experience was a student who came here who didn't speak a word of English. Chinese student work seven days a week in a Chinese restaurant and used to record my voice concerning an idiom lesson. He would memorize the entire story. And then on Friday, when we had computer class, he would tell me. He would recite the entire story back to me word for word. That to me, I thought, was an awesome achievement for somebody who came here not knowing the word of English. And since then, that was 17 years ago. Every year for my birthday, he comes to this school and he has since opened his own business. And so that's memorable.</p> <p>Also, one other thing I'd like to say that was very interesting a long time ago, I did summer school and there was a little girl from another country and physically we looked very different. I looked different from her and we were coming outside to the playground. And I said to her, come on, you know, hold my hand. We're going outside. And she called me mommy. And she said, Oh, I called you mommy. I said. He said, well, that was quite a</p>	<p>Believes her low achieving student can succeed</p> <p>Recognition of achievement within the classroom</p> <p>Provide opportunity for learning</p> <p>Recognition of student's hard work</p> <p>Academic success lead to self-reliance</p>

Interview	Analysis of Data
<p>compliment coming from a sweet, smart young lady like you. She was only like seven years old. And she said, but you look so different from my mommy. And she said to me, you look so different from my mommy. And I said to and I've kept this in my heart the whole time. I said, you know what? Sometimes we look different on the outside. Maybe I have a blue shirt on, and you have a gray shirt on. You know, a word. You have hearings on an idol. But inside with the same insight, we won't have the same heart, the same parts. And so, she, like, looked at me and just hugged me. And that, to me, was the answer to world peace right there. So those three were my most memorable experiences, for sure.</p> <p>Thank you.</p> <p>Are there any areas you would like to improve on when it comes to teaching multicultural students?</p> <p>I think maybe learning a little bit more about other cultures in depth. You know, we learn a lot from our students on a daily basis, on a yearly basis, but maybe learn a little bit more in depth about religions and customs. So that's what I would like to improve on, a little more in-depth knowledge.</p> <p>Why you think so? Why do you think that's necessary?</p> <p>Because I want to understand what they're going through. No, I want to understand. How they feel if we have a party and they can eat all of the food that we're serving, I always bring in food for others that can't eat whatever we're going to happen. I wonder how they feel if they have their native mode of dressing. I wonder how they feel when they go out with people. Give them a second glance. You know, I'd like to educate the class and educate myself on their feelings just to make us a more sensitive society.</p> <p>OK, thank you so much. These questions have to do with perceptions.</p>	<p>Demonstrates personal connectedness</p> <p>Develop cultural knowledge about the diverse cultures in the classroom</p> <p>Foster connection between self and students. Show empathy Embrace cultural identity</p>

Interview	Analysis of Data
<p>Do you believe there are any expectations or stereotypes associated with the students you teach? Please explain.</p> <p>I personally never have any stereo-typic view of any of my students and regarding expectations. I feel that everybody is capable of learning. You know, some may take a little bit longer, some may need a little more practice, but everybody has the ability to learn and I feel that I'll do my very best to make that happen.</p> <p>OK, so some stereotypes that have been associated with the students that I teach have been where students, mainly a population of Spanish speaking students, might then try to repeat words in other languages and laugh while they're doing it. And it kind of not kind of. It is offensive to the person they were imitating you know. So that mainly.</p> <p>OK.</p> <p>I think, I think I'm lucky in that I haven't had, at least in my class, too many incidents of stereotypes, I'm sure they have them.</p> <p>Thank you. Thank you.</p> <p>I think they have stereotypes that the police are working, so you can know that they're always very nervous and think the police are always going to do something negative because of the immigration situation.</p> <p>And so sometimes the police are there to help. You know, we're just say, how you doing? Is there anything you know that you'd like to see different in your community? They're just trying to be helpful. But people are always very wary of police officers in the community. So that I have encountered.</p> <p>Okay. Thank you.</p> <p>And do you feel that there are any expectations or stereotypes associated with your own pedagogy that interfere with serving your students?</p> <p>I don't really, you know, I've had I can honestly say I've had kids come in covered with tattoos that look. That are very serious</p>	<p>Everyone can succeed</p> <p>Cultural challenge- denouncing stereotypes in the classroom</p> <p>Cultural challenge</p>

Interview	Analysis of Data
<p>looking, not smiling, not really interacting with other people, but it doesn't change my feeling towards them, I always introduce them. We clap, welcoming them. And so, I don't feel that I personally have any. I don't have any.</p> <p>And that's fine. Thank you so much.</p> <p>So, do you believe that there that your personal and professional competencies impact the quality of instruction provided to your students?</p> <p>I do. I do. I think personally my competency would be the fact that my parents were immigrants. And I know their struggles and professionally, just from working all these years with multicultural students has enlightened me tremendously. And I always try and be sensitive and aware of people and their feelings and, you know, try my best to make them comfortable and feel safe and. You know that they're special and unique. In fact, we have this thing in the class, after, if a lot of new students come. I tell them that we have a secret in this class, and they say, what is it? So, I'll say, you know, these students are the best in the entire school, not just in the entire school. When I walk over to the map in all of the U.S., in Florida, Texas, California. They're the best. In fact, they're the best in all the continents. In fact, they're the best in the universe. And if someone has very limited English, I'll have someone else translate. I'll say, but, you know, we have to keep this a secret because we don't want the other students to be jealous of this class. So, they laugh. So, you know.</p> <p>Thank you. I'm coming down.</p> <p>What are some strategies you use or some things you do to make cultural connections to your students?</p> <p>We have a culture day. We will do a food fair. We'll put maps together, you know, like put a lot of their maps on a great big piece of paper, a show about. Yeah. And also, you know, I like discussing American history and how we</p>	<p>Demonstrates cultural sensitivity</p> <p>Identifies cultural struggles Demonstrate empathy</p> <p>Encourages comfort in the classroom</p> <p>Culturally based instruction</p>

Interview	Analysis of Data
<p>OK.</p> <p>Thank you so much.</p> <p>Thank you for taking the time to speak with me. As I mentioned during the recruitment for this study, I'd like for you to take a bit of time earlier today or later today, when it feels right to you, in the next week or so to journal your thoughts or for this interview. This can include any additional insight that you wish to share, for example, your feelings on sharing this information or anything else. These submit that to me in the next week. I'll follow up with you closer to a week if I haven't heard from you. If you do not mind, and with your permission.</p> <p>May I follow up with you in the next week with anything else that comes to mind?</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>Again, thanks. I'll be back in touch with you when I have the transcripts of our conversation. I will email them to you for your review and to see if there's anything else or more you want to add. Thank you again for your time. This has been helpful to me. You're so adorable. You're kind of. You are such an awesome teacher.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>	

Appendix J

Summary of Findings on Follow-up Questions

Questions	Responses
<p>1. Do you find teaching a culturally diverse student group rewarding?</p>	<p>I find teaching a culturally diverse group of students rewarding because we all learn from one another and this enriches the classroom experience. A culturally diverse group gives me the opportunity to obtain first-hand knowledge about various religions, cultures and customs.</p> <p>I find teaching a culturally diverse group very rewarding. Especially so, when two students from different parts of the world, who speak different languages, become friends.</p> <p>Teaching methods definitely need to be adapted to meet diverse student groups. What works in one group may fail with another. A teacher should not only consider cultural diversity but be aware that students of different ages have different goals and needs.</p>
<p>2. Do you believe that your teaching methods needs to be adapted to meet the needs of culturally diverse student group?</p>	<p>Yes, teaching methods should be adapted and continually be adjusted to meet student needs especially when it is a diverse group because this make learning richer. Some students come to our school with a high level of education from their native countries. Others arrive here with very little formal education.</p> <p>Differentiation of teaching is necessary to target all their needs. Classroom methods need to incorporate more technology as digital literacy is of prime importance in most career choices and in daily living.</p>
<p>3. In what ways do you think the teachers' role need to be redefined to address the needs of students from culturally diverse backgrounds?</p>	<p>Teachers need to be sensitive to the students' lives outside of the classroom and be ready to assist them in navigating American systems and culture. For example, explaining to parents what is expected of them in public schools i.e.: attending parent-teacher conference, contacting teachers, writing absence notes etc. This also includes knowing about community resources that are available to help students.</p> <p>Teachers' roles need to be defined as facilitators and resource connectors. Students' need to take more ownership of their goals and the steps toward attaining them. As the classroom becomes more diverse, it is our job to keep up with cultural changes and how others perceive these new individuals. It's important to have constant dialog with them to clear up any misconceptions.</p>

Questions	Responses
<p>4. As classrooms become more culturally diverse the teacher's job becomes increasingly challenging. Why is this?</p>	<p>It is important to understand the experiences, the cultural mores along with the assets each brings to the classroom. Teachers must continually integrate and reach students of diverse groups and this can be a challenging task in the classroom. As the classroom becomes more diverse, it is our job to keep up with cultural changes and how others perceive these new individuals. It's important to have constant dialog with them to clear up any misconceptions. Our job becomes more difficult as our population becomes more diverse mostly because we have to learn and know more. We become accustomed to working with a certain group and when people from other groups arrive, not only do we have to learn to work with them, but we have to be aware of possible difficulties between the groups. we are working with real people. People are complex and may be difficult to work with because they are complex, not because they come from a certain country or speak a certain language. I use all of this to my advantage in my classroom.</p>
<p>5. In what ways can teachers learn a great deal from students with culturally different backgrounds?</p>	<p>Teachers learn about students' backgrounds, cultural traditions, food music language, practices, beliefs and attitudes, places around the world, etc. in a multicultural classroom. Students love talking about their cultures. They love sharing food, pictures and customs with me as well as their classmates. Working in a culturally diverse classroom is like travelling around the world every day. We get to learn about our students' languages, countries, histories, food, celebrations, sports, cultures and much more including their struggles and goals. My life is so rich because it includes values and ideas from all over the world. If one listens and shares openly, one often learns new things. It is the only way to make a classroom truly learner centered.</p>
<p>6. How can Multicultural awareness training can help you work more effectively with diverse population?</p>	<p>It is important to develop sensitivity to all cultures. It can increase awareness and understanding of various cultural customs. Multicultural awareness training can help me understand behavior that is acceptable and not acceptable in schools in their native countries. It can also help bridge understanding between the students. For example, students in my class do not refer to me by my first or last name. They call me "teacher", which is a sign of respect in their native countries. Multicultural awareness training can help teachers work more</p>

Questions	Responses
	<p>effectively because they can learn to set a tone in the classroom that says "all are welcome, and all can learn". In addition, teachers can learn when areas of conflicts may arise and what techniques to use to improve communication and diffuse conflicts between students.</p>
<p>7. State your views; Regardless of the racial and ethnic makeup of the class, it is important for all students to be aware of multicultural diversity.</p>	<p>Sure, we cannot live under the guise of racism being only black and white. We break down barriers and challenge social norms all the time by learning from one another. I know I have a role as the great facilitator in that.</p> <p>This is a growth mindset which is important to all learners, especially those in a new country, trying to adapt. Teachers and students alike should be aware of multicultural diversity. Absolutely it's important for all students to be aware of multicultural diversity. We live in a diverse world, not only in schools. Therefore, it's common sense to respect everyone's background since we are all special and unique. Regardless of the racial and ethnic makeup of the class, it is important for all students to be aware of multicultural diversity. My view is that it's critical for students to be aware of diversity because we live a very diverse area and it's becoming more so every day. As the students move out of the classroom into the greater world especially into the workplace they will have to interact and work with all of kinds of people. Not to help with this is to do them a disservice.</p>
<p>8. State your views; To be an effective teacher, one needs to be aware of cultural differences present in the classroom.</p>	<p>To be an effective teacher, one needs to be aware of cultural differences present in the classroom. I agree with this statement. For example, people of different cultures may view acceptable classroom behavior differently thereby creating conflict in a class. They may hold stereotypes about gender roles or different religions or any number of potential prejudices that a teacher must understand to be able to create an environment where everyone feels comfortable and can learn.</p> <p>Just as a doctor should seek a full picture of every patient, an effective teacher should do the same thing. Every bit of information, cultural background, educational background, family history, helps the teacher become more effective in planning and delivering the types of interaction and activities that will be the most beneficial. Yes, teachers need to be aware of cultural differences. This is important so that everyone feels respected and valued.</p>

Questions	Responses
<p>9. Identify ways that the school culture (e.g., values, norms, and practices) are different from my student's home culture.</p>	<p>School culture may in some cases be much more structured than in their home countries and in other cases, much more informal. School culture may be similar or different than that of the student's home culture.</p> <p>The culture of an adult school is more relaxed and flexible than the students home culture. Some ways that school practices are different from a student's home culture are dietary restrictions. In school, food might not be kosher for example. In a student's home, all their food would be kosher. Another example is holiday celebrations. Some cultures do not participate in holidays such as Halloween.</p> <p>The feeling that our school culture is most likely more relaxed, flexible and accepting than schools in the students' home countries. It's also more relaxed, flexible and accepting than most American schools, too. At the ALC, we treat everyone who walks through our door as a person with value.</p>
<p>10. Tell how you can develop a community of learners when your class consists of students from diverse backgrounds.</p>	<p>By employing methodology that uses cooperative learning. By encouraging the students to work together, get know each other and learn about each other countries and cultures I develop a community of learners from day 1 with team building activities that consist of circle formation, learning names and greetings, asking questions and listening to the answers. These activities are woven into the current themes of learning throughout the term. I make mistakes and can laugh at myself. This sets a tone for comfort and risk taking in the class. by promoting cultural exchange, understanding listening and learning from each other as students share the same goal of improving their knowledge of the English language. A community of learners can develop with students from diverse backgrounds by celebrating our similarities as well as our differences. We must always keep the lines of communication open. most importantly by modeling acceptance and appreciation of each student regardless of nationality or background.</p>

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<https://doi.org/10.1111/bjep.12135>.

Vita

Name	<i>Angela Trowers</i>
Baccalaureate Degree	<i>Bachelor of Science, University of the West Indies, Kingston, Jamaica, Major: Management Studies and Public Administration</i>
Date Graduated	<i>November, 2001</i>
Other Degrees and Certificates	<i>Master of Science, Saint John's University, Queens, New York, Major: Teaching English to Speakers of Other Language (TESOL)</i>
Date Graduated	<i>May, 2008</i>
	<i>Diploma in Teaching, Shortwood Teachers' College in collaboration with the University of the West Indies, Kingston, Jamaica, Major: Geography, History and Social Studies</i>
Date Graduated	<i>June, 1992</i>