

Public Abstract

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Graduation Term:SS 2011

Department:Special Education

Degree:PhD

**Title:AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF
CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING PRACTICES
FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE ELLS**

The numbers of English language learners in US classrooms has increased substantially over the past three decades; these students struggle with getting their academic needs met and often perform poorly on large-scale assessments. They are often inappropriately referred to special education and have a high drop-out rate. Districts are mandated by NCLB to provide these students with appropriate high quality instruction for their language learning needs, as well as their academic achievement. Educators have to be equipped to ensure these goals are being met. Researchers suggest that one way in which teachers can support ELLs's learning is by being culturally responsive. This study examined what teacher characteristics contribute to the regular utilization of culturally responsive practices within classrooms. The study was conducted in three school districts in a mid-western state and teachers who chose to participate took an anonymous on-line survey. Findings from the study indicated that the single most important predictor of teachers's perceived importance and reported use of culturally responsive practices in the classroom was teacher attitudes towards ELLs with professional development proving to be a somewhat weaker predictor for reported use of culturally responsive practices. Future research would need to further explore teacher variables that affect the education of ELLs. It is also imperative that the expanding knowledge base is shared with practitioners such that all stakeholders can purposefully work towards improving teacher effectiveness and student achievement for all linguistically and culturally diverse learners.