Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Instruction in an RtI Framework: Supporting Emergent Bilinguals in the Secondary Classroom

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Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Instruction in an RtI Framework: Supporting Emergent Bilinguals in the Secondary Classroom

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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Urban Education as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

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THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
Abstract

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by

Lisa Auslander

Advisor: Dr. Nicholas Michelli

This dissertation investigates the impact of teacher team collaboration and planning around culturally and linguistically responsive instruction for emergent bilingual students in a secondary school setting supported by a targeted intervention system. To provide a context for the importance of this study, the dissertation begins by: 1) observations of both academic teacher team and guidance collaboration to understand the strategies used to plan instruction and guidance interventions for students drawing on existing research around professional learning communities and guidance structures; and 2) use of an existing observation protocol and frameworks to identify key practices and characteristics of culturally and linguistically responsive instruction and assessment in classrooms in both Tier 1 and Tier 2 settings. Finally, through semi-structured interviews, the study explores 3) the ways that teachers acquire culturally and linguistically responsive strategies through traditional and nontraditional means.

This research is an ethnographic case study with data collection that includes observations of both team meetings and classrooms for a team of grade-level teachers in a small New York City newcomer high school, semi-structured interviews with teachers, administrators and guidance team member, student focus groups, and document analysis of teacher artifacts and student work. Findings suggest that targeted support and planning around language and culture
can be effective in promoting student progress in English language and content knowledge but that foundational literacy can be an area that is overlooked without the right types of assessments or practices to guide progress monitoring. In addition, structured teacher collaboration with guidance can help generate a culturally responsive climate for students that better addresses their needs in and outside the classroom. Overall, this dissertation hopes to fill a gap in teacher education and professional learning in addressing and teaching to the complexity of diverse learners.
Acknowledgments

My ability to continue to work towards the goal of completing the Urban Education doctoral program and my dissertation would not have been possible without the love and support of my husband, Brian. Throughout my time working on this after work, weekends and some holidays, he encouraged me to do my best. I will always love and appreciate him for this unwavering support. In addition, my other family members and friends including my sisters, Valerie and Judi encouraged me throughout the years to work towards this personal and professional goal.

My research and ideas have evolved over the years. I also went through a period of leave to take care of personal and professional priorities. Throughout all of this, my advisor, Professor Nick Michelli, always encouraged me and helped me to believe that I had potential to pursue my ideas and complete the program. I will always be grateful to Nick for his support and invaluable guidance. I also want to thank Professor Alberto Bursztyn for simultaneously challenging my thinking while supporting my ideas throughout the graduate program. He helped me better form ideas and a research plan and has served as a mentor. In addition, I want to deeply thank Professor Terrie Epstein who has served as a brilliant example to me of what it means to create a community for students as she did during both of her classes I attended. Thanks also to Terrie for her great feedback in my research design, which helped me to better implement my research plan and data collection in the field. In addition, throughout the research and dissertation phase, the members of my study group were there to read my work and listen to me process all the data as I attempted to make sense of their meaning. I wish to particularly thank Sharon Hardy and Audra Watson for reading through many drafts as well as Joanna Yip for being a fellow RtI and literary enthusiast with whom I could share ideas.
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Chapter 1:

Introduction

“Every child is a universe.”

--Anonymous HS Principal

After leaving my school in East New York to venture out to try something new, I joined a team of teachers and new principal as a founding member of a new urban high school in another part of Brooklyn. When my principal said this phrase in the context of both individual and group planning meetings, it resonated. Although it wasn’t a new idea, I felt that her ability to bring it into professional learning conversations was so helpful as a way to externalize and make public the question of how to serve students with so many diverse and often very specific needs.

In my own experience as a general education teacher who collaboratively team-taught in an inclusion classroom setting that included both general education students, special education students with a variety of IEP specifications as well as English language learners across the continuum of language acquisition, I grappled with finding ways to teach my students and provide them with all they needed in the classroom. I didn’t learn what I needed to know in my teacher prep classes and after teaching for a while, learned to look to colleagues and some administrators for help. Still, even as I learned more, I often had many more questions than answers.

To situate my own perspective, I was a middle school and high school teacher who entered into an urban classroom as a suburban, middle class White teacher while most of my students were of color, often immigrants and in many cases, ELLs or former ELLs. My students came from very diverse backgrounds, including both the urban and rural environment. As I continued my journey, I was constantly reminded of the need to find ways I could best support
my students and learn from their varied perspectives not only to serve their academic needs, but to facilitate a positive learning environment. Each student has very complex learning needs and, like many teachers, I found that often the pedagogical and assessment tools I had at my disposal to support them were limited both from a theoretical and practical perspective. I needed a more complex perspective and set of tools to support and deepen my understanding so that I could better support them. In addition to my own need to learn and grow in the field, I was also faced with common obstacles of a bureaucratic system that, at times, did not support the needs of the students as learners or of myself as an adult learner in the field. For example, I found that the referral system for special education students and resulting reports for those students offered little to no real information about student needs. Although these systems have improved since my time as a teacher, the Individualized Learning Plans or IEPs that I had at my disposal were often meaningless in gaining real knowledge or understanding about the needs of those students. For “gen ed” students, it was equally challenging for me to figure out their literacy level, especially when working with English Language Learners who often were SIFE or newcomers. As Ofelia Garcia, et. al reminds us (2008) even the term and labels such as “ELL” confuses both who the students are and their journey as she helped reframe identify of this heterogeneous group of learners to “emergent bilinguals.” In her research brief, the authors write:

“It has become obvious to us that a meaningful and equitable education will not only turn these English language learners into English proficient students but, more significantly, into successful bilingual students and adults” (p. 7). I use both terms throughout this paper but hope to call on the spirit of Garcia’s concept to highlight these students as students who hold promise and talents as students who have their own language and heritage to share. English and the
educational process, therefore, should be building on students’ own knowledge, language and beliefs.

In my own journey of teaching and learning, I found that as a teacher myself and later as a coach that educators need more of the language, skills, training or tools to support understanding and acting on this complexity. In the beginning, I also underestimated the need to take on a complex view of culture as a part of the picture I painted of my own students. Learning to recognize myself as historically and culturally situated as well as my students became an important and continuing part of my education that was necessary in order to become effective as a teacher and to help others become effective. Later, even as I learned more about the supports available, I grappled with the same issues as a coach and administrator in thinking about how to help others adopt a culturally relevant and data-informed approach to teaching and learning. Now, through my research, I have continued to probe deeper to uncover practical strategies for teacher professional development that will support educators in grappling with the complexities of teaching diverse learners and to even understand and unpack what “diverse” really means. In order to do this, I needed not only practical experience in the field but a conceptual framework to build upon and help me and my colleagues unpack the needs of diverse learners. In the context of my work, teachers often asked me what was effective, what responsive classrooms looked like for their students. Even more important than sharing resources or modeling specific strategies I found was sharing what other teachers did that supported their students in learning literacy skills and setting up their classroom routines and interactions. Setting up inter-visitations became an important strategy in the way I’d work with teachers. In facilitating sharing a rich slice of the classroom of their peers, I provided them with data that no book or reenactment could provide in the same way.
Overview of the study

In reading much of the research, these rich slices that I longed to experience are often not as prevalent in the kinds of description and context that a case study can provide. In an effort to provide a voice to the experience of teachers in the field attempting to create a culturally and linguistically rich classroom environment, I chose a case study approach. My field work became a quest to provide a slice of teacher practice and student voice that may help other teachers not only consider strategies but to consider what culturally and linguistically responsive practice looked like in action, at least in one setting. These anecdotes and data pictures are not meant to be comprehensive or generalizable to whole populations; they are meant to paint a picture of how one team of teachers collaborated, set up successful classrooms to support, in this case, their emergent bilingual newcomer students and their attempt to address the complexities of their student’s backgrounds. It also shows their struggles and some of the challenges they encountered, and how they reacted as a team.

More importantly, this case study is meant for readers to consider how teaming in both traditional and innovative ways can support student growth and serve as a key structure in the school improvement cycle. In my experience, I have found that educators respond to vignettes of this type of practice to help inform or reflect on their own teaming and, perhaps most of all, to reflect back the voices of teachers and students themselves. Thus, my research is organized in such a way that I include data from interviews with teachers, student focus groups, and also the coach and administrator of the school in order to support the leadership perspective, which more and more is shown to be an imperative part of the way effective part of the way teams can be built and structured.
Why RtI? The Intersection of Instruction, Intervention and Culture

Working at the middle and high school level, I found that often success is measured in credits and demonstration of an understanding of content knowledge. Although this is changing with the implementation of the Common Core, the crisis of how to address and train teachers around the needs of adolescent literacy is also imperative to support older learners in their own journey to improved literacy and, thus, access to greater opportunities. Secondary level students need support in reading instruction, particularly around discipline-specific instruction that extends to all subject areas and becomes increasingly complex as students advance and are required to digest difficult concepts (Shanahan and Shanahan, 2008).

Although U.S. students in grade four score among the best in the world, those in grade eight score much lower. According to the *Time to Act Study* on Advancing Adolescent Literacy, (2010) by grade ten, U.S. students score among the lowest in the world (p. 1). This study showed that the literacy demands have changed in secondary schools through a variety of factors. Texts become longer, word and sentence complexity increases in student texts during the secondary years as “complex relationships among ideas are signaled” and texts begin to vary widely among content areas (p. 13). This means that teaching literacy is more complex in the ways that schools present material to students. Since research has pointed out that the “achievement gap” also masks a larger, cultural opportunity gap for students, particularly those from low income communities of color, studies that can show what aspects of schools support students for their full academic and socio-emotional selves most are important to consider (Quaglia, et. al., 2010). Students also come from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds that are not oriented to the ways that American schools support learning in any great depth.
Moreover, as James Gee points out (2009), literacy is much more than teaching reading to students, although this remains a part of the process. He sparked a movement advocating for a socio-cultural approach to literacy as a way to educate students.

People who take a sociocultural approach to literacy believe that the ‘literacy myth’—the idea that literacy leads inevitably to a long list of “good” things—is a ‘myth’ because literacy in and of itself, abstracted from historical conditions and social practices, has no effects, or, at least, no predictable effects. Rather, what has effects are historically and culturally situated social practices of which reading and writing are only bits, bits that are differently composed and situated in different social practices. For example, school-based writing and reading lead to different effects than reading and writing embedded in various religious practices (Kapitzke 1995; Scribner and Cole 1981). And, further, there are multiple school-based practices and multiple religious practices, each with multiple effects. (p. 44)

In addition to drawing upon convention notions of literacy, I draw upon the sociocultural approach as a component to building the kind of community our students need and also to help teachers consider how to choose their approach to teaching and facilitation in the classroom. For students, literacy not only means in both language and content, building background knowledge for learning but also drawing on family and cultural resources to inform the approaches we use to teach our students. (Moll, 2014) Thus, approaches to teaching and learning literacy that incorporate a sociocultural as well as a linguistic approach are key to addressing student’s needs in the context of schooling. When considering language, this becomes important in considering how to redefine what diversity means among “subgroups” as categorized by education policy:
Under current accountability policy, English learners are placed into a single subgroup, with the implication that they are a homogeneous group with similar needs and rates of growth. Cook and Zhao clearly show that English learners who begin at different proficiency levels attain proficiency at different rates. The variation measured in this study does not take into account that English learners come from a variety of native languages, come from many cultures, or have different educational backgrounds and experiences in their home countries. Given this group’s essential heterogeneity, different timelines to proficiency should be expected. Thus, the four- to seven-year timeline suggested in the literature seems reasonable (H. Gary Cook, Boals, and Lundberg, 2011).

This type of homogenizing has a detrimental effect on students in that teachers may falsely categorize or understand their needs. Schools that can practice a more complex approach to diversity can help their students overcome these kinds of harmful generalizing that may often lead to wrong kind of instructional approach for their needs.

Milner (2010) reminds us that teacher training must address the ways that teacher practice is influenced by mindset and teacher beliefs. As educators we must be mindful that “low expectations and deficit mindsets” affect the way we serve students and must be challenged to think from an asset based perspective when organizing their instruction (p.15). He also addressees the need to challenge a “context neutral mindset” in education (p.37). Schools and teachers must address the specific environments in which we teach and take that into account in the way we design instruction. As a result, educators must consider the cultural and linguistic variation in the community of students and teachers in the school as well as the racial differences among students and how that may affect identity and approaches to instruction. We need more tools to help teachers unpack the complexity of the students in their classrooms, to better relate
with one another as well as design instructional experiences that will more fully support
students’ needs. Milner notes this applies not only to students of color but also White students:
“Students who attend mostly White settings do not live in a vacuum; they will experience
matters of race and diversity in the world they inhabit and inherit and must be able to understand
their own opposition and opportunities, as all as those of others.” (p.40). In order to address the
opportunity gap, we must have ways of understanding and assessing that help teachers find ways
to provide more opportunities to reach all students in their classrooms.

Furthermore, Sleeter (2001) calls for research in teacher education to extend beyond pre-
service education, linking pre-service education with community-based learning and with
ongoing professional development and school reform. The way we approach designing and
implementing instruction must include an understanding of the community issues and how they
relate with our students. Moll (2014) helps provide one way that teachers can better
understanding family assets that can be utilized to improve instruction and include family in the
curriculum as well as provide an understanding of a student’s individual context. He also shows
how incorporating home language is key to supporting development of bilingual learners (p. 44-
81).

One of the key reasons to more fully characterize a culturally and linguistically
responsive approach is due to the historically-situated problem posed when so many students of
color receive false referrals to special education or suffer from increased suspension rates. Black
students, Latinos and ELLs experience the highest rate of suspension rates, according to recent
Civil Rights federal research. (U.S. Department of Education, 2014) and Losen as editor of the
book, Closing the Discipline Gap (2015); “ELs at the elementary level are suspended at lower
rates than most other subgroups but the secondary school data reveal an extraordinary increase in
their risk for suspension” (p. 4-5). This book notes the need for policy and practices to help address the inequities in public education that are associated with exclusionary discipline practices. Although RtI and an instructional and intervention framework has a great deal of potential in supporting student growth in literacy, without a culturally and linguistic lens and practices, it has the potential to do harm. Thus, there is a need for microanalysis of what classrooms settings look like where teachers and students are engaging in this work to understand the challenges at the school level.

From a policy perspective, teachers and administrators alone cannot bear the burden of addressing the complexities of students in their classrooms. These concerns must be addressed and integrated in the way policymakers approach assessment and instruction as well as school accountability. My goal with a case study approach is to 1) illuminate best practices for ways to learn about students with different cultural and linguistic characteristics 2) provide examples of teacher conversations that lead to collaboration to develop cultural and linguistic responsive practices 3) the successes and challenges of implementing RtI at the secondary level with a diverse group of learners, particularly in language. With some of these micro-practices, I want to provide tools which can provide teachers tools and material for their own discussion and collaborative practice as well as a bottom-up approach to considering policy implications for implementing secondary level RtI and the way we describe and approach the learning of students in inclusive classrooms, particularly emergent bilinguals.

**Research Questions**

In order to address questions about practices at the school level and my questions about culturally and linguistically responsive practices of a team of teachers, the purpose of my study has been to explore the ways that one secondary school department uses culturally and
linguistically responsive strategies to support student and organize academic learning using an RtI framework, specifically in classes of which the majority are English Language Learners. Overall, my main purpose is to explore how a team of teachers integrates culturally and linguistically responsive instruction into an RtI framework. My research questions are as follows:

1) How do teachers plan for culturally and linguistically responsive instruction within an RtI framework?

2) In what ways do teachers use culturally and linguistically responsive strategies when enacting Tier 1 and 2 instruction? What are considerations for Tier 3 instruction?

3) How do teachers acquire knowledge of culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy?

4) And finally, what are the implications of the study for teacher education, professional development and policy?

In considering how to research these questions, I realized there was a need for a deeper understanding of cultural and linguistically responsive instruction embedded in a school setting. In determining what can be identified as culturally and linguistically responsive instruction, I utilize two different frameworks to support my inquiry including Lucas and Villegas six traits of linguistic responsive instruction (Lucas and Villegas, 2010) and Powell and Rightmyer’s *Literacy for All Students: An Instructional Framework for Closing the Gap* (2011). These frameworks will also be outlined in my methods and approach to planning and implementing the case study. The tools that accompany *Literacy for All Students* also allows me to examine, to
what extent do those strategies impact student progress both from observations and some student data examples but also according to teacher and student perceptions.

**Defining core elements of RtI**

![RtI Tiers Diagram](image)

*The Tiers*

The key core idea of RtI is that the assessment system is a pyramid made of three tiers that include: appropriate instructional strategies, deliberate quick assessments and parent committee support. This three-tiered system supports student learning and keeps students on track to progress through academic and behavioral interventions. This focus, partnered with the creation of a core committee of teachers to steer the process and sustain the involvement with parents can create a great support system for students as well as monitor progress of students more effectively.

Incorporating professional development that supports teacher learning of instructional strategies preferably in teams and with a coaching approach is a key step in any RtI program. This must be combined with student work analysis, inquiry about student outcomes and teachers working together to explore how students think and their misconceptions. However, the
strategies that also interest me involve those that support strategic assessment choices that minimize overuse of assessments while at the same time providing teachers with the right kind of information periodically to support their choices of interventions and instructional approaches. Margaret Searle categorizes these assessments and the way they influence classroom instruction in three ways: probes, diagnostics and progress monitoring to differentiate ways of assessing (2010, p. 46). Universal screeners can be a first step in assessing student mastery of specific skills in the beginning of the year as a way to guide the process of next steps in planning and instruction and identify at-risk students in a variety of areas. Diagnostic assessments help analyze the root cause of learning issues while progress monitoring tools can be curriculum-based or imbedded assessments that help track progress in the learning process and can be more integrated into instruction.

Searle suggests introducing RtI in the framework of each historical initiative in the school and considering a timeline to support making connections. For example, one school identified Reading First three years ago as a way of identifying one of the first steps they had already inadvertently made towards an RtI model (p. 41). In this way, schools can identify and deepen work that is already happening in the school and more consciously create a system around it that is also in alignment with their mission and philosophy. The RtI Action Network, a program of the National Center for Learning Disabilities, provides multiple tools both for behavior and academic interventions that can be useful for schools and districts (RTI Action Network, 2014).

Tier 2 instruction is targeted towards students whose performance and rate of progress lag behind those of peers in their classroom, or school (National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities, 2005). My experience in terms of how school administrators effectively introduce this kind of assessment plan is to marry it with planning conversations around instructional
outcomes and curriculum that already exists. For example, one Bronx school integrated a Language and Literacy supplemental intervention Tier 2 approach for an hour during each day that supports their primarily ELL student body. One of these tiered homogenous groups is an independent reading up which has a curricular focus linked to their ELA program with more intensive routines and strategies to support areas in which they have been struggling. In other cases, Tier 2 instruction can be conducted during regular classroom time by offering small group instruction guided by the teacher while other students’ work independently on a task (Searle, 2010; Fischer & Frey, 2010). This is up to the skill set and discretion of the teacher and school site but must also be accompanied by teacher development in gradual release of responsibility strategies so that teachers and students have a comfort level with negotiating this kind of instruction, especially in larger classes.

Finally Tier 3 classes are usually one-on-one or small groups consisting of no more than three students with licensed teachers designing interventions that support at risk learners for 9-12 weeks in order to buttress and improve skills in concentrated periods of time before or after school. The goal of this type of instructional regime is to support at-risk learners in a more intense way to ascertain whether a referral, sometimes referred to as Tier 4 (Edwards and Klinger, 2006), is required. At all stages of the planning process there should be action planning and parental involvement to support movement across the tiers.

The last ten years have shown various success with RtI in part because there are distinct ideas and philosophies about how and why to use it (Fuchs and Stecker, 2010) and not always the resources or coordination to support its implementation and, in many cases, support the most struggling of learners. However, in the era of assessment and standards-based reform, RtI provides a compelling strategy for urban schools to support students in increasingly strategic
ways in order to help educators focus in more on learning that is working for specific groups of students.

_RtI²: Instruction and Intervention_

Fisher and Frey (2010) expand on conventional notions of RtI to a model known as RtI². This has come to mean that any whole-school reform approach must address not only academic interventions but also instructional approaches overall. This means for example, that the emphasis on Tier 1 instruction and gradual release of responsibility in the classroom is vital as the first step of the RtI process. This is detailed more in the literature review.

_RtI³: Culturally and Linguistically Responsive RtI._ In my inquiry, I would like to emphasize that it is equally important to evaluate and support students in ways that include a cultural lens and can actually assess the student’s needs not only from a clinical standpoint but from a cultural standpoint as well. I would argue, and follow others who support the notion that reading and RtI interventions must actually be integrated from both an instructional, cultural and socio-emotional perspectives, and on that stems not from a deficit but rather a strength-based perspective (Morales-James, Chemay, et.al., 2012; Klinger & Edwards, 2006).

In this study, I use the phrase “Culturally and Linguistically Responsive RtI” as a way to describe a system that includes intervention, instruction and the connection to student’s background, language and culture as a way to inform instructional decisions. This builds on the notion of disposition and background to explicitly include language as part of the building blocks of how we build a system of instruction and intervention that is responsive to the needs of the whole child. I refer to this concept of incorporating instruction, explicit interventions, culture and language as well as socio-emotional needs as RtI³ in my research. I do not include behavioral oriented systems of RtI such as PBIS in this project.
Organization

My dissertation is organized in the following way. In Chapter one, I provide this introduction to frame my own experience and entry point into this study, how I am situated in relation to the students as well as the school in the study, and an overview of key terms. Chapter two presents the review of the literature on RtI at the secondary level as well as culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy and related work with emergent bilinguals and provides my theoretical and conceptual approach to the work. Chapter three outlines the methods used to design and implement a case study approach at the school level as well as discuss its strengths and limitations. Chapter four provides the first chapter findings around the specific teacher team inquiry approach to culturally and linguistically responsive instruction in the case school. Chapter five provides description and intersection between the instructional work of the teacher team and the work of guidance and the ways that guidance supports teachers in addressing the socio-emotional needs of students to help build the culturally responsive climate of the school. Chapter six findings provide observation data of both Tier 1 and Tier 2 classrooms as well as the referral process to Tier 3 in school of study as well as use of these strategies related to teacher and student perceptions and evidence of impact on their experience and learning. Chapter seven reveals the results of interview data across ten staff members in how they describe their acquisition of culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy. Finally, Chapter eight provides an analysis of the findings and recommendations for policy and teacher education programs in integrating and helping teachers develop culturally and linguistically responsive practices.
Chapter 2: 

Theoretical Framework
Culturally Responsive Pedagogy and Language and Literacy Instruction

The basis of my study is several pedagogical theories that I attempt to bring into conversation with one another. The first examples are cultural responsive pedagogy and educational psychology perspectives specifically around reading and literacy. Although culturally responsive pedagogy supports and unpacks notions of diversity and identity, at times it neglects to address the need for a practical set of tools or interventions that can actually support the individual learner in, for example, getting the learner to the next level in reading. However, in the same way, psychological approaches to differentiation and instructional strategies neglect to take into account the diverse and complex cultural backgrounds of students, thus creating situations where teachers may misinterpret student need and falsely assess their students. My goal is to shine light on this conflict and bring together both disciplines as part of a theoretical framework for my study in the hope that research can serve to support educators in considering how to support practice with culturally relevant dispositions that also can be translated into practices by individual teachers and departments through the whole school transformation approach of RtI. In the book, When Research Matters: How Scholarship Influences Education Policy, James Kim (2008) provided a history of the reading wars and emphasizes the National Reading Panel’s (NRP) finding around the importance of the role of the teacher in any reading program:

More broadly, the empirical findings affirmed the vital role that teachers played in improving children’s reading skill. The NRP concluded that explicit instruction involving phonemic awareness, phonics, oral guided reading, and comprehension strategies was more effective in improving children’s reading skills than student-centered approaches
like sustained silent reading, in which children received little or no guidance from teachers in selecting and reading text. Thus, the NRP concluded that teacher-directed instruction was essential to improving children’s reading, a robust finding that has been documented in over 100 years of education research. (p. 103)

His conclusions, however, also showed the need to involve teachers in research and in considering how effective research is in implementation process in the classroom. This debate, however, reflected the different camps of thinking about literacy, one that was more about context and the role of culture and identity education and one about the importance of developing specific linguistic skills for students that include phonemic awareness, vocabulary, syntax, among others.

I follow in the footsteps of educator researchers who have begun to address this divide. Ana Maria Villegas (2012) provides a more in depth rationale for the need to cross disciplines in bridging the worlds of special education and literacy education and multicultural education. In her article, she teases out the issues that prevent these camps from coming together constructively in teacher education. For example, she maintains that culturally responsive theories of multicultural education, although vital as a first step, fail to include strategies for the individual and to support the “multidimensional” identities of the learner (p.289). In turn, exposing the gaps in psychology, she points out that differentiation is often used in the classroom in such a way that ignores cultural difference and fails to incorporate cultural knowledge into classroom assessment and planning (p.288). Furthermore, to deepen the divide, she notes that conflict deepens for educators who are committed to culturally relevant teaching and remain suspicious of the overrepresentation of Hispanic and African-American children who are referred to the special education system without proper evidence. This continues the cycle of injustice
and inequity against communities of color and perpetuates a false cycle of inquiry about the needs of those students. Villegas proposes the integration of “sociocultural consciousness” into teaching in order to help teachers understand the roots of this issue before approaching pedagogical plans for learners (p.290). In this way, teachers can integrate a reflective stance about themselves as culturally situated as well as develop an understanding around the larger inequities in education that will help inform their decision-making, thus enabling them to make better decisions about their students as they learn to employ new teaching strategies and gather data about their students. This is fundamentally crucial for any approach to Rti in order to actually monitor progress in a way that recognizes each learner as multidimensional. This kind of mindset can be cultivated in teacher communities or departments that employ Rti as an approach to supporting the academic and social growth and progress of their students.

To support my study, I draw from the rich research around culturally responsive teaching to form an approach to Rti that is grounded in the need for educators to reflexively consider their backgrounds in connection to their students and consider it a part of their job to also understand the cultural backgrounds of their own students. As discussed earlier, Milner (2010) has shown us the need to examine our own mindsets as it affects our entire teaching approach and strategies we use. Without this base, our teaching strategies won’t be as effective or targeted nor will our approach to Rti, for example, or any whole-school or departmental approach to shift practice. Gloria Ladson-Billings has been a key thinker in helping educators and researchers understand the need for culturally relevant pedagogy as the best way to bridge the gap between home and school (1995, p. 467). She articulates the need for teacher education schools and professional development initiatives to nurture the ability in teachers to “conduct a social critique of their environment so they are able to discern the needs of their students” (p. 477). Likewise, Ladson-
Billings identified three areas connected to teacher success in working with diverse students: his/her conception of self, his/her approach to social relations and his/her approach to knowledge. In her ethnographic study of eight teachers’ relationships with their students she found that successful teachers believed that all students were capable of academic success, thus the conception of self and their own belief system mattered greatly in influencing how they worked with their students (p. 478). Moreover, these teachers built key relationships and encouraged “student-to-student accountability” and helped develop a “community of learners” in the classroom as opposed to a focus on individual learning support alone (p. 480). Finally, she found that successful teachers in her study must be able to scaffold or build bridges to facilitate learning with a multi-faceted view of assessment. Knowledge cannot be considered only external to the learner rather the teacher must be able to recognize that knowledge comes from the learner as well (p. 481). These three components of a culturally responsive approach to teaching provide a guide to a path for increased success in urban classrooms.

Vygotsky has been a major influence in that he connected multicultural education and special education in a crucial way in that he recognized and inspired so many thinkers in education to recognize a cultural-historical approach to cognitive development, where culture plays a role in the development of higher mental functions (Scrimsher and Tudge, 2003, p. 303). He helped educators recognize the need for social interaction as a requirement for children to learn. Thus, recognition of children as transmitters and mediators of cultural values must be integrated into a theory of their identity and experience as learners. This fundamental understanding is required and a prerequisite for teachers in the way they approach students as learners. In extending this concept to language learning, Larsen-Freeman (2013), in her research, argues that cognitive transfer is inseparable from issues of emotion and learning. She focuses on
the transformational process of learning and makes a connection that social engagement is key to language learning. Indeed, language must be a key component in any approach to cultural competency because, cultural awareness, without essential understandings into the unique challenges of English language learners in our changing society does not prepare a teacher to effectively support them. Finally, I draw on disability studies and DisCrit and the idea that ability is constructed by society and, although students need differentiated support, it is often the case that students are evaluated through a deficit-based lens that affects students of color, immigrants in a higher proportion, whether by special education referrals or disciplinary status (Connor, Ferris, et.al., 2012; Losen, 2014; Noguera, 2004).

Villegas, Lucas and Freedson-Gonzalez (2013) deepen and widen our understanding of culturally relevant teaching around language in their article on “Linguistically Responsive Teacher Education.” Here they articulate the need for six essential understandings every teacher must develop in order to effectively serve English Language Learners. Of the six, one of them echoes Vygotsky in the need for teachers to know that students must engage in social interaction to improve conversational learning of English as well as academic discourse (p. 364).

Furthermore, the authors differentiate between conversational proficiency and academic language proficiency, the latter of which takes many more years to develop, an understanding vital for teachers to have as they scaffold and plan instruction for diverse language learners (p. 362). In the context of RtI, Tier 1 instruction requires teachers to include opportunities for group discussion for ELLs and to provide scaffolds to support their pathway to academic language proficiency (Fisher and Frey, 2010). In addition, students require “explicit attention to linguistic form and function” (p. 363), which, for example, manifests itself in the need to develop language objectives for lessons in addition to academic content objectives. The deeper understanding of
the cultural complexity of ELLs combined with an understanding of the technical competencies needed can help teachers go deeper with their practice and create a more complex approach to lesson planning and instruction as well as a more educated way to ask for support, for example, from a collaborative team teacher, or a type of professional development experience or in the types of resources they request for their classroom.

In Garcia, et.al’s policy study (2008), the researchers call upon three decades of research to make policy recommendations for the future direction of education for English Language Learners. Primary to their argument and evidence is that the use of home language, preferably through bilingual programs in schools, is vital to supporting student development. They argue that home language development also supports students in learning English, a proposal first researched and proposed by Cummins (1979, 1981, 2000). Some of the pedagogical aspects they emphasized include linguistic interdependence or the idea that increased learning of home language is correlated with learning English, as well as the notion that academic language proficiency in a second language is a complex learning process that requires five to seven years to acquire. Garcia, Bartlett, and Kleifgen (2007) built on this idea and proposed the concept of “pluriliteracy practices,” to support emergent bilinguals in their education which incorporates a sociopolitical perspective. They write,

(This idea is) grounded in an understanding that equity for emergent bilinguals must take into account the benefits of having strong native language and literacy skills for attaining academic achievement in another language. Equity must also account for the power and value relations that exist around the various languages, language varieties, and literacy practices in the school setting and in society. It is thus important for schools to value the pluriliteracy practices of emergent bilinguals, those in which they are engaged
at home, and in community efforts and schools in other contexts or countries, in other languages and scripts. An equitable education for emergent bilinguals builds on all these practices and enables them to develop a powerful repertoire of multiple literacies. (p. 28)

The report also cites research from Artiles, Rueda, Salazar, & Higareda (2002) which showed that English language learners are overrepresented in categories of special education, particularly in “specific learning disabilities and language and speech impairment classes, and most especially at the secondary level” (p. 38). This issue is not only a learning issue but also a civil rights issue that must be addressed to appropriately support this authentically heterogeneous population of students.

Moreover, there is an emphasis in this research predicated on the importance of culture. To define culture, I consider several factors in these pedagogical theories. Another of Villegas and Lucas’ essential understandings connects to the importance of the classroom climate in that ELLs require “a safe, welcoming environment with minimal anxiety about performing in a second language” (p. 363). If students learning English are exposed to teasing and harassing by other students there is a greater likelihood to inhibit learning and prevent deeper linguistic and cognitive growth for those students, especially as they may become more fearful and anxious to speak (p. 369). A key requisite to any kind of learning, but particularly language learning is to take risks. Thus, it is possible to identify another key component to establishing a foundation in setting the stage for a culturally responsive, data-driven RtI structure: classroom climate.

Lave and Wenger (1991) reinforce this idea in their argument that learning is situated and that learners learn what they do by participating in communities of practice and by being active learners in those communities. From the field of anthropology, Pollock calls for educators to engage in “deep cultural analysis” by pointing out the need to move beyond superficial notions
of culture when working with groups of students. In short, she argues that students are not part of static cultural groups but also create new learning and cultural identity by working with one another and across groups, which creates new knowledge for those participants (2008, p. 374). Thus, she encourages a more complex cultural analysis simply by recognizing that classrooms are made of varied cultures in schools; for example, there is culture imbedded in classroom climate, the varied cultural backgrounds of the student and teacher and also culture exists in the sense that students interact in specific ways to build on knowledge with one another (p. 373).

Finally, Artiles (2014) builds upon this idea of complex culture by arguing that “students enter interactions with multiple attributes of social identity” and that are situated between both internal and external processes to the school. He argues that educators and researchers must work to strengthen the interface between general education and special education, and that one way to do this is to deconstruct the cultural codes and assumptions that are imbedded in instructional strategies and assessments. He calls upon researchers to map the layers of culture in the classroom to include the different facets of student identity we have described here. In an NCRESST report (2005) researchers took a stance on RTI and considerations for integrating culturally competence into the framework:

RtI models are based on the premise that all instruction should be evidence-based. But evidence derived in what contexts? Central to our approach is the belief that instructional methods do not work or fail as decontextualized generic practices, but work in relation to the socio-cultural contexts in which they are implemented (Artiles, 2002; Gee, 2001). Whereas quasi- and experimental studies can point to which instructional approaches a most effective under certain conditions, they do not provide information that can help us understand essential contextual variables that contribute to the effectiveness of an
approach, or increase our awareness of implementation challenges, or provide
information about the circumstances under which a practice is most likely to be
successful (Shavelson & Towne, 2002). (p.3)

In this report, the researchers challenged the “ecological validity” of assessment and intervention
practices where one size fits all students and calls for culturally and linguistically responsive
environments that take into account teacher classrooms and variation by population (p. 5).

It was my intention in my study to support a reflective analysis of practice imbedded
utilizing a complex lens of classroom culture that takes both culture of the classroom into
account as well as the cultural values and backgrounds of individual students as well as in
conversation with their peers. The classroom protocols and principles I use, as will be discussed
in my methodology, imbed all three of these characteristic as a lens of inquiry. This will be the
guiding theoretical construct for my study in the hopes that, as educators, we can find ways to
engage learners in many facets of their identity and to use that information to support them in the
learning process and, ultimately, to grow as people and as learners. In exploring teacher’s
classrooms and one school’s attempt to implement aspects of RtI, my hope was to uncover the
culturally and linguistically responsive strategies they use in instruction and assessment not as
way to prescriptive solution pathways but to offer examples of ways to flexibly strategize on
differentiation of approach by school, by classroom and by student.

Literature Review: Defining core elements of RtI

The key core idea of RtI is that the assessment system is a pyramid made of three tiers
that include: appropriate instructional strategies, deliberate quick assessments and parent
committee support. This three-tiered system supports student learning and keeps kids on track to
progress through academic and behavioral interventions. This focus, partnered with the creation of a core committee of teachers to steer the process and sustain the involvement with parents can create a great support system for students as well as monitor progress of students more effectively. RtI can also address key components of behavioral interventions. For the purpose of this study, I will focus on the academic side, although it is clear that behavior and academics are inextricably linked.

Incorporating professional development that supports teacher learning of instructional strategies preferably in teams and with a coaching approach is a key step in any RtI program. This must be combined with student work analysis, inquiry about student outcomes and teachers working together to explore how students think and their misconceptions. However, the strategies that also interest me involve those that support strategic assessment choices that minimize overuse of assessments while at the same time providing teachers with the right kind of information periodically to support their choices of interventions and instructional approaches. Margaret Searle categorizes these assessments and the way they influence classroom instruction in three ways: probes, diagnostics and progress monitoring to differentiate ways of assessing (2010, p. 46). Universal screeners can be a first step in assessing student mastery of specific skills in the beginning of the year as a way to guide the process of next steps in planning and instruction and identify at-risk students in a variety of areas. Diagnostic assessments help analyze the root cause of learning issues while progress monitoring tools can be curriculum-based or imbedded assessments that help track progress in the learning process
Keep the Focus on Instruction AND intervention – RTII

There are some elements that are key to effective implementation of RTI which include finding the right protocols and interventions and setting up key structures including common planning time and the right schedules for interventions. In addition, as already mentioned, it presumes educator expertise (Fuchs, Fuchs and Stecker, 2009). Before exploring these structures, I think it is important to emphasize that the structure and design of Tier 1 instruction is the key to success with RtI. It is imperative to maintain a strong focus on Tier 1 instruction so that teachers and teacher teams are constantly learning and thinking about the curriculum and instructional strategies that support learning for a diverse group of students. Equally valuable in setting the tone and strategy for the way RtI rolls out in schools, is the role of leadership in supporting a culture of positive, culturally competent and student-centered assessment practices that are woven into instruction. Some researchers have made a distinction between RtI and RtI² also known as Response to Instruction and Intervention (Fisher and Frey, 2010; WIDA, 2013). Bringing the focus back to instruction is important to ensure that educators do not over rely on Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions (Fisher and Frey, p. 25).

Demystifying and emphasizing the core elements of Tier 1 instruction are one of the ways to counteract this tendency. For example, in their book, Enhancing RtI, Fisher and Frey identify the key elements of Tier 1 which include an adherence to an instructional model with elements of teacher modeling, guided instruction and independent instruction through gradual group work that relies on individual and group accountability (p. 44-50). In addition, the need for increased language accessibility in the Tier 1 classroom has also become more important as English Language Learners have increased in our classrooms. The need for more effective research-
based strategies to teach language skills is necessary to support these students in a variety of settings.

In an empirical study conducted by Fisher and Frey in 2010, they researched their own high school as part of a case study, which revealed several common themes and findings. For example, the data suggested that the lack of assessment information used resulted in an inability to provide meaningful interventions. This is key because the progress monitoring information used strategically from classroom instruction proved to be a key indicator of how students were doing in specific classrooms and overall (p. 111). In addition, besides the lack of use of screeners and progress monitoring schools they also found that, when practices occurred and Tier 1 instruction was organized properly, Tier 2 could be conducted within the classroom in small groups.

These findings reveal the importance of productive group work and a classroom that incorporates gradual release in Tier 1 instruction, economizing and providing support to more students within the classroom, particularly an important theme for urban schools that may have less funds for intervention work. Moreover, research out of the University of Minnesota found that high school students performed significantly better when small-group interventions, such as those associated with Tier 2 small groups, were matched to student needs rather than simply implementing an intervention that addresses multiple areas of literacy targeted by the National Reading Panel (Burns, Scholin, McCarthy, & Karich, 2011). Thus, focusing on the way assessment and instruction are linked, as part of practice is an important theme that emerges in my own study.

More research has been conducted on elementary-grade students and the impact of RtI. For example, O’Connor and colleagues (2005) investigated the effects of Tier 2 and Tier 3
reading interventions on a variety of reading skills. Tier 2 instruction consisted of small-group instruction (10–20 minutes per session) delivered three times per week. Tier 3 interventions consisted of five daily, 30-minute sessions that incorporated group and individualized instruction. They reported that students receiving Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions showed improvement on all reading measures when compared to a historical contrast group from the same school (RTI Action Network, May 22, 2014).

The current research reveals the need to have more research on RtI and its impact on secondary students who experience a significant gap in their reading ability. In addition, districts, schools, and teachers could benefit from understanding which assessments and which types of instruction support the secondary learner in using data to drive the instructional results in their classroom. However, instead of viewing this as one teacher driving results, seeing it from a systems point of view in a department may help a school pilot their efforts as they move towards making RtI school wide in approach.

My initial research interest was directed towards how to support a variety of learners with instructional strategies based in a strategic curriculum and the formative assessment action plan. In addition, the focus was to consider how assessment could be part of the instructional process as opposed to a separate “event” especially as considered in accountability structures. Whether in Tier 1 instruction or the other levels of hierarchy of the pyramid, what becomes equally important, is considering growth for all learners. Effective Tier 1 instruction is important to any RtI program and thus RtI² is a way to recast instruction as part of a larger instructional and intervention program, instead of individual educators working on his or her own craft. Even with a strong focus on instruction, with increasing student diversity and culture in classrooms, particularly urban classrooms, how can RtI also be more attuned to the needs of its diverse
learners and more discerning in its evaluation of students? This point of view contributes to the complexity of defining and creating assessment tools that work for an increasingly diverse group of students, particularly in the area of language.

**Why Secondary Students and English Language Learners?**

*English Language Learners and the need for culturally relevant assessment practices*

The research shows that adolescent learners in the United States are in a crisis. The 2011 NAEP report indicates that almost one-third of U.S. students do not achieve basic levels of reading competency by fourth grade (NAEP, 2011). Also it is a challenging prospect to note that high school students’ reading performance shows no improvement since 1971, with only 38 percent of high school seniors scoring at or above proficient (National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), U.S. Department of Education, 2011, p. 2; NCES 2012, p.457).

The United States has also experienced growth in the number of ELLs in the country. From the 1997 to 2009, the number of English-language learners enrolled in public schools increased from 3.5 million to 5.3 million by 51 percent (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition, 2011). Achievement data suggest that English language learners lag far behind their peers. To exacerbate the literacy issue, nationwide, only 12 percent of students with limited English scored “at or above proficient” in mathematics in the 4th grade on the 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), compared with 42 percent of students not classified as English-language learners. The 2011 Reading results from the NAEP Reading scores showed English language learners (ELLS) as 70% below Basic Reading level.

Although the adolescent literacy crisis is not limited to only English language learners, because ELLs are a growing and prominent group of students who help to make up the population in the United States, it becomes important to locate and identify the quality of their
learning experience and understand its implications more deeply. Too often English language learners are lumped into school populations and perceived as a homogenous group without attention to differences in language, in ability and without an understanding of their ability to read, write and speak in their native language. Further, ELLs get lumped in as students with disabilities or, in contrast, are not referred early enough due to the complexity of assessing their needs. Accentuated by the absence of clear records that translate into the journey to the United States for recent immigrants and the potential of a subset of students to be considered SIFE, or students with formally interrupted education, there are not only cultural and linguistic differences but, as with any student, socio-emotional factors to consider in assessing their literacy and comprehension level. With the recent increase in influx of English Language learners and the complexity of teaching adolescents to read, particularly urban schools and staff become faced with an overwhelming complexity of human need and assessment data that can be hard to interpret.

Moreover, the federal and state efforts to implement state and more rigorous educational standards through the Common Core apply increased accountability through federal mandates including the Race to the Top grants from prior years that push principals and teachers to help students achieve higher results on state tests. The increased presence of ELLs has provided more pressure on states to analyze state assessment procedures to ensure state exams are administered in ways that account for the right accommodations and preparation for the needs of English Language Learners. Initiatives from prior years such as NCLB demonstrate that state accountability measures often fail to provide a clear understanding of what ELLs need and also, by design, often misdiagnose student literacy needs. These tools often do not take heterogeneity into account, which can further confound school attempts to create smart plans for learners that
appropriately address student needs. To compound the complexity of fulfilling student needs, there is also the issue that districts face around decreased resources available to schools to address specific student group needs (Abedi, 2004).

LEP students exhibit differences in level of performance, language proficiency, and family and cultural background characteristics. For example, the results of a study of fourth- and eighth-grade LEP and non-LEP students suggested that parent education is highly related to student performance. It is interesting to note that mean reading scores for some LEP students with higher levels of parent education were higher than mean reading scores for non-LEP students with lower levels of parent education. (p. 5)

Understanding the needs of a heterogeneous ELL population requires teachers, among other stakeholders, to further refine and differentiate instruction in a way that advance and supports in increasing their skills over time. This increased pressure has caused many educators and policymakers to look for more refined ways to use data to inform instruction, albeit in ways that are also more sensitive to the whole child and not just around reading scores. Since research shows that traditional practices and assessments often misinterpret English Language Learners as having a knowledge or intelligence deficit or disability (Oller, 1991), it becomes important not only to refine assessment practices, both formative and summative but also instruction and the way we make instructional decisions day to day as educators.

Furthermore, there is research that shines a light on the many misconceptions that educators and state policymakers alike have around characteristics of the populations of English Language Learners and these should, first and foremost, be debunked in any systemic effort to create a tiered assessment system in order to better develop a framework embodying a holistic understanding of their needs. Klingner, et. al. (2008) present several of the misconceptions that
English Language Learners face in schools in the United States; however, for purposes of this study I will introduce two. One prevalent one is that the current assessments administered for accountability purposes provide accurate information about ELLs reading and literacy abilities. For example, their book highlights a study by MacSwan, Rolstad and Glass (2002) in which the researchers compared results of the analysis of Spanish natural language samples to results on formal native language assessments and found various levels of proficiency on the more formal ones and “little variation on the natural language samples in the rate of error in morphology and syntax in Spanish” (p. 24). This reinforces the understanding that teachers face obstacles in gathering useful data through formalized assessments that potentially take up a lot of class time.

The second misconception raised by Klingner, et. al. is that not all English Language Learners learn English at the same rate or in the same way (p. 28). They point to Cummins research (1984, 2000) to remind us that not only do these reasons include student background factors such as foundation in native language, nature of past schooling experiences, effectiveness of early literacy instruction, and literacy opportunities but also how they and their first language is perceived by the community in which they live. The continual perception of both the way ELLs learn language and content and the assessments or tools used to monitor them must be altered through research based on successful classrooms and teachers who support ELLs every day.

In looking for solutions, Response to Instruction and Intervention has shown positive results in some studies, particularly in elementary school instruction for ELLs (Zehr, 2010) but also secondary instruction for ELLs (Fisher, Frey, 2013). In Fisher and Frey’s study of one secondary charter school with a large ELL population, they found that overall, students, a the school improved on local measures over a two year period.
Although we cannot claim that the implementation of RtI was the sole cause of the improvement, it is noteworthy that student achievement accelerated during the 2 years of the study compared with previous years, and the presence of a developing RtI system did not appear to depress these markers. By the end of the 2 years, Carver outperformed the state identified similar schools by 11%. (p. 109)

They found that their research within the school brought out a variety of themes including the need to focus heavily on successful strategies for Tier 1 instruction, such as productive group work as a foundation before considering the intervention work required. In addition, however, was the need for dedicated funds and structures to the intervention work established for the school. Relevant to my study is the fact that special education referrals declined during this implementation period:

Referrals to special education also decreased over the 2-year investigation. During the baseline year, 17% of the general education population was referred for special education testing, compared to 3% during the final year of the study. By the end of the data collection period, 8.5% of Carver students had an IEP, which compares to the county average of 11.5%. As an English teacher commented during her interview, “I used to refer students to special education when I needed help with them. Now I have that help, and I am part of that help.” (p. 108)

Beyond tiering instruction, I found that there is a need for understanding the role of assessment that can be effective for English Language learners and a way to organize the data more comprehensively before beginning instruction and along the way so as to interpret most accurately what is happening for each student. In addition, teachers and schools seeking practical strategies for teaching reading to ELLs and can benefit from understanding more clearly how
teachers in a school setting comprehensively support their students in making progress. Other findings point to the need to examine student test scores in light of both instructional strategies students experience to as well as student background factors such as language, ethnicity, and gender that may be associated with performance (Abedi, Leon, & Mirocha, 2000; Saxe, Gearhart, & Seltzer, 1999).

In summary, teachers need more complex and multidimensional, yet less time-consuming ways to assess and support English Language learners. Key instructionally flexible assessments and screeners can be a first step in painting a nuanced picture of each of their students to inform teacher practice. With the most current NAEP and reading scores, we see that secondary learners and, particularly, English language learners require a variety of instructional supports which address a variety of ways that students access language and content. Linking the practices of assessment and instruction in very mutually informative ways can help school communities develop more nuanced understanding of their students.

Cultural Competency in RtI

Klingner and Edwards wrote “the foundation of the first tier should be culturally responsive, quality instruction with ongoing progress monitoring within the general education classroom” (2006, p. 113). They advocate for a holistic approach that includes language instructional methods used in the general education classroom. This may include incorporating language objectives into the curriculum and considering research-based methods that support all levels of English Language Learners. WIDA, the World Class Instructional Design and Assessment Consortium, identifies seven factors to consider in methods for teaching and assessing ELLs in an RTI model: Learning Environment Factors; Academic Achievement and
Instructional Factors; Oral Language and Literacy Factors; Personal and Family Factors; Physical and Psychological Factors; Previous Schooling Factors; Cross-Cultural Factors. Several of these can also be considered for other cross-cultural contexts for non-ELLs.

WIDA has also developed a Culturally and Linguistically Responsive RtI\(^2\) Planning Form that integrate these factors in order to better train all staff in thinking in a similar way about the learning and assessment of their students. There are guiding questions and notes sections to support teacher teams and RtI planning teams in the ways they plan for students and organize intervention strategies (WIDA, 2013). The WIDA approach models a way that action planning for assessment and instruction in schools must be imbedded in professional learning communities in a way that also engages with ways to with create a culture that will be welcoming to all students and an environment where teachers can deepen their understanding of diverse learners’ needs. Klingner and Edwards provide us with a framework of factors that support this learning, one of which is incorporation of techniques that have previously been ignored or marginalized. They write, “Incorporation requires researchers to study community practices that have not been valued previously by schools and incorporate them with the curriculum” (p. 109). They argue that cultural competence is key to instruction and also organization of assessment programs as it provides a deeper and more holistic lens into what students need.

It is a large undertaking for schools to consider all the factors that support all students learning well. However, making a few educated choices about the tools and protocols teacher teams will use, incorporating a strong focus on Tier 1 instruction and integrating and encouraging knowledge and understanding of the cultural backgrounds of its student population are all a step in the right direction. It is also the reason it is vital that schools have the power to
make their own choices about the types of instructional model and assessments they use within a district framework.

Overall, the assessment of English Language Learners has been challenging in K-12 schools because there has been a knowledge gap in distinguishing between literacy problems around language acquisition and reading disabilities, particularly for ELLs. Assessments have not been comprehensive enough to address the needs of such a diverse group. Minnema, Thurlow, Anderson, and Stone’s (2005) review of the literature highlights issues with diagnosing literacy needs for all English language learners. They identify three sources of academic problems that hinder the assessment of ELLs. These include “deficiencies in the daily learning environment; lack of access to differentiated instruction that addresses ELLs; and difficulties resulting from a disability that must be addressed through special education services” (p. 7).

The study highlights that many students lack access to high-quality, differentiated instruction and enough opportunities to learn. High quality assessments that can help screen students early that not only address their unique learning needs around language but also provide insight into their background can shed light on what resources schools and families may need to provide support. The study has a variety of educational policy recommendation, which include using RTI based programs to support English Language Learners (p. 16) and also differentiation of instruction and intervention based on the need identified with assessments (p. 19). Here I also argue for a more comprehensive understanding of the cultural background of the student in order to more deeply understand the complexity of the student’s background and more accurately understand the ways the child will learn in moving forward with a plan for instruction.

Here I have explored a few key definitions and core principles of RtI but also the importance of it as a part of a system that is partnered with an imbedded cultural responsiveness
and a strong instructional community of practice and inquiry. In my own experience as an urban educator and working with several schools with a common culture, mission and a group of caring teachers, it has been clear that even strong school communities struggle to find ways to support the vast needs of students’ social and academic needs particularly when a large percentage of students struggle with accessing text or are below grade level in reading for a variety of reasons. I hope my study will add to the research by identifying ways that one urban school is able to more effectively evaluate instructional practices as a result of using culturally and linguistically competent assessment strategies in working with their student population.
Chapter 3

Methodology

Choosing the Site

This study was completed over one academic semester within one urban secondary school made up of 100% English Language Learners who have four years or less of English as their second language. The school was identified through prior experience and inquiry as a school that attempted to address differentiation and culturally and linguistic responsive elements during a pilot phase through observations and informal interviews. The school had made efforts to integrate elements of Tier 1 and Tier 2 RtI practice with their ELLs, as well as screening factors indicated. Thus, after some observation and conversation with teachers, I enlisted the support of the principal and a team of teachers within one grade-level team who agreed to allow me to observe their team practice, their students and classrooms. My focus with this department has been on instructional and assessment practices as well as relational management practices that contribute to student learning.

Following suggestions in the research by Yin (2008), I created a set of selection criteria and a process for deciding on the research site for a case study (See Appendix A). I screened the schools for a variety of factors including the existence of some type of intervention program in addition to a heavy emphasis on quality Tier 1 instruction (Fisher and Frey, 2010); strong teaming structures that would allow for an inquiry approach; secondary learners that included English language learners and/or special education students in an inclusion environment; some evidence of a culturally and linguistically responsive practices defined by based my guiding frameworks (Powell, 2010); and, finally, a willing team. In the fall, I reached out to six different schools (Appendix A) and tracked my communication and visits to each particular school. When
I found out that my current research site had instituted a CBAS class, or Content-Based Academic Support as it was named by the school, I realized there was something interesting to investigate related to both Tier 1 and Tier 2 types of instruction. The teachers and coach designed the block of time in order to address student literacy needs during Tier 1 instruction. This section met three times per week and the groupings were based on prior native language assessments administered at the beginning of the year to determine student need. The school team had decided to place all students in CBAS and differentiate according to need, since the school is made up of all newcomer ELLs and required intense language interventions on a continuum of need. In the fall, I came to the school to observe classrooms as part of a weeklong pilot study to assess if this was the right school for the type of questions I was researching.

In my prior experience as a coach in the school for the network I had also learned about the school’s potential for supporting students in language acquisition but also in their teachers’ cultural sensitivity to addressing the needs of their students. The principal is a former social worker and also has hired a staff of two social workers and a guidance counselor, all of whom have interns from the local college. As this combination of factors is rare for any schools in the urban environment, after the week of observations, I reached the conclusion that this would be a great case from which to learn more about the potential of RtI for English Language Learners and also its challenges in implementation. Even if they were not fully implementing RtI based on all the defining factors, they had begun an implementation of an intervention system based on a linguistically responsive screener and assessment strategies.

In addition to adding this new intervention system, the school was transitioning to be a portfolio school, one of approximately thirty schools that have been accepted to the New York State Performance Standards Consortium and have been granted a waiver from most Regents
exams. This original group dates back to 1995 when State Commissioner Thomas Sobel established the group (Foote, 2005). After speaking with the principal, I recognized that this would mean there would be many challenges in implementing an intervention system while also dealing with the complications of integrating a portfolio mentoring system and refining their already existing portfolio assessments, that until then, had taken a back seat to the Regents exams as a result of accountability metrics. The push to help emergent bilinguals, particularly with a high percentage of SIFE students, in developing English language proficiency and content knowledge, and thus gain access to college is a major challenge for any school that serves this population as the research will show (Garcia, et al., 2008).

Initially, I met with the principal who referred me to the coach, Laura, who spoke with me about the study. I let her know that I was looking to observe a teacher team who engaged in inquiry and who were interested in examining student progress as part of their professional learning, who were coherent as a team and potentially exhibited some of the characteristics of linguistically and culturally responsive teaching that the research recommended but, also possibly new practices that students perceive to be helpful in their learning. After meeting with Laura to explain the goals of my research, she recommended that I meet with a team with whom she worked more directly on an inquiry project that examined whether specific Hochman writing strategies were supporting student complex writing and thinking in the interdisciplinary classes.

I met with the team of five teachers with the coach and presented a one-page explanation of my research questions and goals. Although the term “RtI” was not so familiar to all of the teachers, the intentions of a program to support literacy across a continuum was very familiar, and they agreed to allow me to visit their weekly meetings and their classrooms, with some teachers more willing to provide me access than others on a weekly basis. I attended every
weekly meeting during the semester as well as a team guidance meeting that is usually very confidential so took some time to decide with the team if it was appropriate for them to have me there.

**Orientation to the school site**

There are approximately ten or more languages represented at the small International school with approximately 421 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The student body includes 95% English language learners, 5% former English Language Learners and 8% special education students. Boys account for 57% of the students enrolled and girls account for 43%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-14 school year was 85%. The student demographics consist of 20% Asian, 29% Black (these consist of Haitian and African students), 38% Hispanic and 13% who identify as White (these consist of European students, according to the website). In terms of staff, there are approximately 25 staff members including as described above the guidance staff, a literacy coach, an AP and the principal, a business manager and teachers include two special education teachers, content area teachers, some of whom are TESOL-certified. Teacher turnover rate for the school site was only 13% in 2010-2011, extremely low for an urban school.

In terms of climate and safety, on the 2013-14 Learning Environment Survey, 86% of students of students feel that their school offers enough variety of programs, classes, and activities to keep them interested in school; 98% of parents are satisfied with the education that their child has received; 82% of students feel safe in the hallways, bathrooms, locker rooms, and cafeteria; and 93% of the of teachers would recommend this school to parents. As a result of these statistics, it seemed safe to infer that this site would be appropriate to not only look at the
instructional model but also ways that teachers and administrators worked to build the school climate or to integrate cultural responsive traits into the school ecology and instructional model.

Generally, the accountability report that came out this year in 2014-15 includes high marks for the school. Indicators on the school improvement rubric showed that in the area of the instructional core which includes curriculum, pedagogy and assessment, the school scored well developed in all indicators; in professional collaboration including teacher team work, also a well developed; and in school culture, proficient. I will drill down into this indicator-level data in the case study in order to provide additional data points that may help provide additional understanding of the school’s strengths and weaknesses from an alternative source.

When you walk in the building and up to the site on the fourth floor, you see a lot of smiles in the hallway. The vision of the school is to “ensure all recent immigrant students have access to a quality high school education that prepares them for college, career and full participation in democratic society…..” It also appears to be a place where students are happy. Students are chatting with each other, often with others in their home language. One student described the atmosphere in the school and between schools in the building as “friendly, a home away from home.” (Field note, 6/15) When you walk into classrooms, there are mostly tables grouped in the classrooms and students working on projects collaboratively. You may see Janine, the social worker, a stocky woman with long, curly hair, talking in Spanish with one or more of the students, checking to make sure they are in class. You may also see Monroe, walking the halls with a clipboard, checking attendance, or checking with students about how they’re doing in the morning. Teaches are at their doorways or in classrooms preparing to work. What is not apparent, according to interviews from the social worker and one of the interns, is the challenges many of these youth face (Interview, May 2015). Many of the youth are undocumented, and of
that group, many have crossed the border either on their own or lost family members in the process. Mary, a social work intern, describes what she sees in many of the students who come to her:

A lot of depression, a lot of anxiety, there's some internalizing symptoms, some externalizing symptoms like acting out, becoming very, very angry, and triggered, and feeling very scared and ready to fight or flight kind of response. Or feeling super overwhelmed emotionally intense crying or intense anger coming out. I think often students have issues sleeping, related to a lot of flashbacks that happen, flashbacks to traumatic past things. It could happen in class. It can happen and then they can't sleep. That's a very hard one to deal with, because their affect is so heightened. Then sometimes issues come up between students that are pretty intense, relational issues, because of something they had at home.

(This means there are) kids not staying awake in class, kids leaving class because they're upset with a classmate, or they're having a flashback or having a meltdown….There's a very high percentage of kids who have had suicidality or just like other pretty big risks going on to their safety.

In the chapter on “The Role of Guidance and Teacher Teams”, I explore the strategies that the guidance/social work team uses to support students behind the scenes in their office and how they collaborate with the teachers in this process. Another component of school ecology that may not be apparent is the “professional collaboration” component of the work. Teachers are often working together or preparing for a meeting they will have on either curriculum share, guidance collaboration or team time, where teachers meet for a variety of purposes in support of student learning and socio-emotional health of their students. These I will describe more in depth in the findings section on “Teacher Collaboration.”
During the fall planning phase I decided on the case study approach in four phases for this project. My first step was to screen the schools in the fall. The screening process consisted of my preliminary research and a screening visit to the school with some informal observations. I met with the teacher team and the principal to review the project abstract and gauge their interest. The screening process was a two-way process as the school and team has to decide that this is a good investment of their time and will need to have established trust in me to be there in the school on a weekly basis and behave in a non-invasive, respectful manner. I also spent this time planning and writing the case study protocol and going through the IRB application process. In addition, I spent a week piloting the study in observing classrooms and CBAS in order to assess whether this school was the right research site.

Initially, when I identified a school site, I analyzed the social dimensions and dynamics of my selected site by “casing the joint” as Dyson and Genishi describe in On the Case:
Approaches to Language and Literacy Research (p. 19, 2005). This helped me to familiarize myself with the school climate, get to know the cultural and academic issues in the school and the concerns of teachers. In this phase of the project, I reviewed schedules for the department, both formal and informal, to get a sense of how teachers and students interact with one another, in and outside of classrooms. Overall, the goal of this phase of work was useful in that I was able to “attune themselves to the rhythms of daily activity” (p. 29).

In this phase, I designed an initial semi-structured interview protocol with teachers in the team and the principal in order to better understand their teaching philosophy, their view of cultural pedagogy and assessment for the English Language Learners, what they perceive to be best practices in their classroom and explore how they learn and acquire professional development in both formal and informal ways within and outside of the school (See Appendix B). I chose to do semi-structured interviewing since I will only one or two formal sessions with the teachers and will occur after some observations in their classrooms. (Bernard, 1988). I also began to explore the strategies they have used that they might define as culturally responsive, particularly ones that they have recently implemented or are in the process of designing. In addition to the teachers included on the grade level teacher team, I will also set up interviews with the key administrator(s) of the school and the assigned guidance counselor or social worker that works with that team.

During this time, I dove deeper into review of state, city and local data about the school overall and learn more about the history and cultural context of the school as a whole through interviews and informal discussions as well as data analysis. I inquired as to how teachers and administrators collect baseline data about their ELLs to inform instruction. I cross checked these type of baseline data to the type outlined in the WIDA Culturally and Linguistically Responsive
RtI² Planning Form (WIDA, 2013) as a way to inform some key types of data in the school that support understanding of ELLs based on research. (Damico, et. al., 2007) In the findings section and in my analysis, I used publicly available data to contextualize the landscape of the school including historical data from the NYS report card, the NYC progress report, the NYC quality review and the NYC learning environment school survey, which provides information about school climate and safety.

In phase two of the case study research, the semester began formally, and I conducted classroom observations in order to get a feel for how teachers facilitate learning with their ELLs and get a sense of teacher and student interaction as well as assessment practices in Tier 1 and Tier 2 instruction. In this phase, I used “thick description” in order to help develop strong full portraits of each classroom and the department or grade level team as a whole (Geertz, 1973). In order to more effectively build the portraits, I gathered descriptive data to better inform how teachers create learning environments and enact instruction they have planned. I also observed ways the classroom was organized to support tiered instruction and how grouping influences instruction. During this phase, I reviewed some of the assessments and student work as a way to familiarize myself with the students at the school. In addition to classroom observations, I observed and interviewed the teacher team to more deeply understand how teachers collaborate to plan for culturally responsive assessment in the school and look for trends in the types of strategies and interventions for which teachers plan. As the semester progressed, I reviewed student work samples from the teacher team and move into reviewing student work from instruction and assessments identified as “culturally responsive” to explore how students respond as a way to explore which culturally responsive pedagogy and assessments support instruction
and assessment in the classroom. I visited the team meeting regularly each week to observe, and in a few cases, participate in team meetings.

I continued to triangulate data through interviews, classroom observations and review of student work and instructional documents provided by teachers. I conducted two focus groups, one from a group of seniors and one a group of freshman and juniors that included the “target students” of the team’s inquiry so that I could ask targeted questions about their assignments and record their perceptions about their work in both the regular classroom and separate intervention setting(s), where applicable as well as their general perception of teacher practice and their school environment. I hope with these multiple perspectives to be able to provide a more complex portrait of the impact of a culturally responsive RtI environment for a group of students from the perspective of the educator, the student, and the external observer as well as from student work analysis.

During phase three in May and June, or the latter part of the semester, I conducted a second interview with two of the teachers to dig deeper into their experiences with culturally responsive teachers and also inquire as to the way they have learned or acquired their understanding and skills of some of these practices. This allowed me to clarify some of their practices and ask follow up reflective questions to better understand their work. For the entire data collection process, I used NVivo, a web research application, to document my case study data and annotate. I kept my notes in Evernote as part of my case study database, suggested by Yin (2009) as an important way to deepen reliability in case studies, so that the study can be replicated for other cases and also reviewed by an external auditor. I used the NVivo software to sort through the data towards the end of the data collection process, identify codes that may provide insight into larger trends in the data, and code the data. In the final phase, post-data
collection, during the summer I completed coding the data and began analysis of will of academic and relational strategies and interventions were effective according to a variety of data and why, according to the varied participants. The write up and revision process followed.

**Instruments**

Since this is a qualitative study, I included several ethnographic and qualitative techniques detailed here. Participants were asked to participate in focused semi-structured interviews in order to discuss the school’s philosophies and practices with regard to culturally responsive pedagogy and assessment, to understand what they think of targeted assessment practices such as RtI and how they acquire related assessment and pedagogical skills. I also asked questions in related to their professional development and experience and how they acquired key culturally relevant and linguistic practices. I asked the coach to share professional development goals for teachers and data they use to guide their support and progress monitoring of English Language Learners. I also interviewed the school social worker and one intern on the team to understand how guidance works with teachers to partner around socio-emotional and academic issues. I interviewed two sets of students in a focus group during phase three of the project to better understand student perceptions of specific strategies used in the classroom and their perceptions of what supports them as learners. (Appendix B, C)

I observed teachers two to three times each in order to record teacher interactions with both students and teachers. Using field notes, I describe participants’ interactions with students during and, in some cases, outside formal instruction where possible. All of the observations are recorded, stored and coded in Nvivo. The data collected from these observations show the types of assessment and instructional strategies that teachers use to understand and get to know their students, in both formal and informal ways, and, where possible, student reactions to these
strategies. During the observations, I used the CRIOP (Culturally Responsive Instruction Observation Protocol), as a resource and guideline for the key indicators and less as an evaluative tool. The protocol is stems from culturally responsive teaching theories; the researcher and her team created a protocol as part of a literacy instructional framework (Powell, 2010) based on seven tenets of culturally responsive teaching: Assessment Practices, Classroom Caring and Teacher Dispositions, (Classroom Culture) Curriculum and Planned Experiences, Discourse and Instructional Conversation (Peer-to Peer interaction), Family Involvement and Collaboration, Pedagogical Practices and Sociopolitical Consciousness/Multiple Perspectives. These categories, as described earlier in the theoretical framework, help tease out key culturally responsive instructional and assessment strategies, but also helps to provide a well rounded understanding of culture in the classroom, from the climate that the teachers and students co-construct, to the incorporation and recognition of identity of individual students and families to the peer-to-peer interactions among students in the classroom. This tool has helped meme address the many layers of culture within both the Tier 1 and Tier 2 environments. The CRIOP has been field tested in multiple counties and recently evaluated as part of a professional development plan for teachers. (Cantrell, Correll, and Malo-Juvera, 2012-13).

In addition to the CRIOP, I created a mini-protocol consisting of fewer categories informed by the CRIOP and other research to assist in the observation of Tier 2 intervention periods to help assess how the time is useful in its purpose of providing targeted learning support (Powell, et. al, 2013; Gersten, et. al., 2007; Vaughn, et. al., 2006; Sun, et. al., 2010). I included select indicators from the CRIOP to inform the analysis in order to support triangulation of data among observations, student work and interviews/focus group. (Appendix D) In addition, to the various parts of the CRIOP that I included ensuring Tier 2 interventions created a culturally
responsive environment that will enable students to learn, the RTI model requires ongoing progress monitoring tools to determine if a student is making adequate progress. And data from screening and progress monitoring assessments should be used to make decisions about the instructional support English learners need to learn to read (Gersten, et al., 2007). These resources and guidelines, through the IES Practice Guide helped inform the rubric used to observe Tier 2 classrooms. In addition to using these tools, I kept an interviewer’s log throughout the study (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) and have utilized it to record memos throughout the collection process. The information in this log helped me to construct future questions and to highlight areas and/or topics that require additional information or clarification.

As discussed earlier, much of my case study is designed as part of this protocol to ensure validity and reliability in the qualitative case data. I accomplished in several ways. Initially, as I collected the data, I maintained an electronic case study database to help organize the data and ensure anonymization of records. This has helped sustain the reliability in such that another researcher could come to similar results if she/he were to examine it (Yin, 2010). In addition, I have all interviews digitally recorded which created stronger reliability during transcription (Creswell, 2007; Yin, 2010). As I conducted my analysis I used numerous data points to corroborate different points of view. For example, the rationale for interviewing teachers, the guidance counselor as well as one to two administrators and two student focus groups was to include multiple data points that will allow for multiple points of view around similar questions. Student work analysis also provided another data point that was important to understanding student thinking from one point in the semester to another. I designed The PI Interview guide as a way to support this process and the triangulation of data in the analysis (Appendix C).
Third, I included another reviewer to externally audit my work on a monthly basis against the case study database to ensure that there is interrogation of the data. Towards the end of the study, I engaged in member checking among two to three of the teacher team and the coach who will be reviewing the initial write up to ensure it represents the school environment in terms of data collection (Creswell, 2007). Finally, the interviewer log that I outlined in my instruments will be a way for me to ensure that I am checking and reflecting on my own bias in the process as I engage in observations and fieldwork so that I am more aware of the perspective and biases I bring to the research process (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

**My role as researcher**

I was at the site approximately one to two days per week for the semester in addition to other days for scheduled interview sessions and focus groups. My role in the team inquiry meetings also known as “curriculum and student work share” was as observer. Mostly, I listened and took detailed notes of what was being discussed in the meeting and in each teacher’s classroom. However, once in a while, during team meetings I would ask questions or express an opinion. In some classrooms, I helped out the students and they gradually got to know me and expect me to be around. At these times, I shifted into the perspective of participant observer. Robert Stake (1995) in his book *The Art of Case Study Research*, emphasizes the role of the researcher and the importance of roles and how they may shift throughout the process and affect the methodology in a variety of ways. Here, I identify other ways my role took on a variety of different forms throughout the project.

*Case study researcher as teacher*

Stake notes that the case researcher plays a role of teacher in the way he or she conveys learning for the reader and in how he or she designs the case study for the potential audience (p.
In my role as researcher, I did consider that I wanted the work to serve as content meant for others, particularly practitioners, in order to use as starting point to discuss their own teaching and collaborative practices. Where I think this is most salient is in the vignettes about teacher team collaboration and planning in Chapter 4 and in the classroom vignettes in Chapter 5. Particularly here, I hoped to shed light on the actual practices of teachers but also allow room for discussion where teachers may ask questions of their own practice and consider either alternatives to or enhancement of their own practice. Alternatively, such content may serve merely as a starting point for reflection on their work. In addition, in considering the readability of the case study, I enlisted an additional reader who was not a educator nor an academic to read for clarity and his ability to follow the stories. As a result of feedback from this reader, I changed parts of Chapter four and six to include excerpts from the actual documents that I used in analysis of teacher work so that it became easier to follow what the students and teacher were actually doing in the classroom

**Case study researcher as advocate**

Clearly, I am not without motive and a particular viewpoint as a researcher. Stake writes:

> Phenomena need accurate description, but even observational interpretation of those phenomena will be shaped by the mood, the experience, the intention of the researcher…Research is not helped by making it appear value free. (p. 95)

This assertion reinforces the need for the writer to make clear his or her stance and it’s possible effect on the research.

In this case, I worked from my situated role as an educator who experienced the inequities faced by my students and many others in getting their academic needs met in the context of US schooling. In addition, I have experienced the challenges both I and others have
faced in ensuring their students get the kinds of educational experiences and services they need while, at the same time, as at teacher, confronting obstacles in obtaining the right professional learning and development while implementing curriculum and instruction bounded by state and federal policies.

Through this research, I advocated for the needs of emergent bilinguals who have been falsely homogenized as a group and, as a result, their needs falsely represented without the resources required to meet their very diverse needs. There are many assumptions made about these groups of students not only as they come to this country as newcomers, but long thereafter. In this way, my research has a particular stance, even as I use critical tools to help me clearly assess and describe the situations at the site of study.

*Case study researcher as evaluator and interpreter*

Although I had no interest in evaluating teachers in this study and attempted to make this clear from the outset, in Chapter six I present myself as an evaluator of the instruction across classrooms as a way to shed light on the strengths and gaps over a period of time to consider what next steps may be for this group as they attempt to meet the needs of the learners in their classrooms. This was the most challenging role for me, because I was concerned about any data being used to evaluate teachers and, in addition, was aware of the limitations of observational data over a bounded period of time. In some ways, being aware of the practices and planning in the team meeting helped me as a researcher to understand and identify scaffolding and planning for the students and, thus, be a better observer. In other ways, these participant observer experiences may have biased me in my observations of teachers. I did my best to follow the protocol, but it is worth mentioning as both a strength and limitation of my role and the study.
Finally, as most case researchers, I served in the role of interpreter to consider what we can learn from this group of teachers in students in their experience of the site of study in both teacher practice and student experiences of the climate and instruction in their classrooms and the school. I attempt to use broader academic and policy studies as a way to contextualize these experiences and then provide a slice of interaction for further reflection and consideration of the ways planning and implementation of curriculum and instruction actually unfolds in a school and team setting.

**Limitations of the study**

This study is limited in that it is a single-case study of a specific team of teachers as the unit of analysis. As a qualitative study, the results will not nor should be expected to be generalizable in that teacher outcomes will not ensure similar results for other teachers with their students. However, the goal of the study is to shed light on culturally responsive practices in the classroom during Tier 1 and Tier 2 instruction that may provide insights for other teachers on how to carry out instructional and formative assessments practices and curricular planning that may better support English Language Learners in their classrooms. Therefore, this research is meant to serve as a descriptive case study that will lend itself as a field reference for other educators.

One limitation of my own researcher stance in this study was my inability to speak students in their native languages. Although I am a second language learner, I am not bilingual in any of the students’ languages of origin, except perhaps Spanish, of which I have a limited understanding. Unfortunately, at times, this made it more complex to have access to student thinking and get to know them in great depth as well as have an insider or advanced understanding of their thinking and linguistic needs. One of the strategies I employed was having
fellow students or teachers translate for students wherever possible. During interviews and focus
groups there was only one student who spoke no English. Since I was in the classroom in a
limited capacity, I wanted to ensure they got what they needed in terms of support and often
didn’t push questions. Although I still learned about the students, access to their full range of
thinking about the strategies and the school was limited and made it challenging to have more in-
depth spontaneous conversations, depending on the student. Despite these factors, I was able to
capture a large amount of data from a variety of student and teacher sources, in the hopes that a
variety of data points would build a more complex portrait that reflected teacher and student
voice as well as teacher and student sentiment.
Chapter 4

The Role of Academic Inquiry and Teacher Teams in Culturally and Linguistically Responsive RtI

“The trajectory for me as a teacher has just been more and more planning with the teachers and not doing my own thing. I feel like the more I do that, the better my teaching is. I get a chance to reflect on what I’m doing pretty much constantly because if you’re talking about what you are going to teach and making your plan, you have to discuss, ‘how did this go in this class?’ Those kinds of conversations are super useful for me.” —9th and 10th grade English Teacher

“That idea of practice isn’t what’s changed, but my ability to do those things. That’s all through learning from my peers.” —11th grade Science Teacher

“We help each other.” — 9th grade student

The key finding of my research that has resounded across teacher interviews, student focus groups was the value placed on staff and student collaboration. The nuts and bolts of collaboration contributed to teachers helping create a culturally responsive community that is reflected in the literacy framework outlined by Powell, et al. (2015). This is particularly salient in the category of classroom relationships, which indicates a variety of indicators including a “learning atmosphere that engenders respect for one another and toward diverse populations.” (CRIOP, 2010) Since much of the work in the school happened in teams, collective decision-making was a common occurrence, intentional and structured during the course of the day. Collaboration and team meetings contributed not only to the culture of the school as a whole but also was a major indicator in how teachers described their growth of their own professional learning, which I will describe in Chapter 7 in more depth. In addition, the series of meetings I attended helped me explore answers to the question, how do teachers plan for culturally and linguistically responsive instruction?

The theoretical framing of this team collaboration model revolves around a few key researchers, particularly those that focus on the burgeoning work about professional learning
communities. First and foremost, Lave and Wenger with their situation learning theory helps frame this imbedded team learning as central to their participation in the group and the community.

Learning viewed as situated activity has as its central defining characteristic a process that learners inevitably participate in communities of practitioners and that the mastery of knowledge and skill requires newcomers to move toward full participation in the sociocultural practices of a community. (p. 29)

In the case of the site of study, teachers worked together and inducted new teachers to create a professional learning community that is driven by a desire to improve practice but, more importantly, to improve student learning. This drove their inquiry process. The role of the principal was to create and program the time for teachers and to facilitate the creation of a schedule that allowed for this type of collaboration in a setting with many compliance requirements. In addition, the role of the facilitator of team learning was also crucial and will be discussed in further detail. With the learning community itself, sample key characteristics are outlined by Bransford, Brown and Cocking (1999) including the need for communities that are knowledge centered, learner centered, assessment centered, and community centered (p. 131). Many of the characteristics they identify in this three-pronged approach reflect the shifts in goals and educational organizations to reflect learning theory in which teachers and practitioners drive the learning (p. 132). For example learner-centered environments refer to those “that pay careful attention to the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and beliefs that learners bring to the educational setting” (p. 133). Culturally responsive practices are key to the way learning and teaching practices are designed, and language is key to the way we design learner-centered instruction.
The second type of characteristic, knowledge-centered design, involves intersecting knowledge and the importance of content understanding and theory as an intersecting principle.

Knowledge-centered environments also focus on the kinds of information and activities that help students develop an understanding of disciplines (e.g., Prawat et al., 1992). This focus requires a critical examination of existing curricula. (p. 136)

The next characteristic, assessment-centered environments, is one where practitioners facilitate student feedback resulting from an analysis of student work and data that is both formative and summative and that helps drive curriculum conversations and learning goals (p.140). Finally, community-centered environments connect to home, community centers, and other places that can help create a network for the student and connect to who they are as learners (p. 147).

Teachers and teacher teams as units can be extremely vital in helping create and foster these key characteristics in a learning community.

McLaughlin and Talbert (2006) provide different models of design to frame the work of professional learning communities. In the case of the school site I researched, this particular team approach is known as “learner-focused inquiry” which is focused on teachers in an interdisciplinary group looking at student work using established protocols to drive the learning (p. 45). This process “builds upon teachers’ shared professional commitments to serving their students and connects with their interest in particular students in their classroom…” (p. 49). This type of group is usually facilitated by a lead teacher, administrator or driver of the work who, according to Wenger, McDermott and Synder (2003), serves in a “community’ coordinator” role whose main function is to manage to support building the practice of the group’s learning (p. 40).

In the process of this team’s inquiry, curriculum design and review was also central to the work of teachers and provided a lens into the more culturally and linguistically responsive
practices. In this aspect of the work as well as discipline team curriculum planning, teachers addressed the need to provide explicit attention to linguistic form and function in language instruction as named in the principles described by Lucas and Villegas (2010). This work was also motivated and initiated in a responsive approach to student need, according to the findings of the group in a prior year’s inquiry. It is reflected in their curriculum design, which primarily was developed in discipline teams:

Our school is wonderful about teachers collaborating, in terms of all the materials. So, I mean, for my regular discipline classes of global history, I work with Myrah and Stacey. And Jeff and Laura are in those meetings a lot, too. And also, now, Myrah’s student teacher, Casey. They’re all lovely. So, we plan everything together. We have a strategy that we try to work through. And you know, the way that it's done in each class might, change differently because of our personalities and the way we do it. But there is very much a focus, and strategy that we all have, and we've come to together. So, knowing that we're operating from that base also helps me in terms of my direction that I'm trying to go, because I can bounce ideas off of them, and they can say, ‘Well, this worked in my class, but you know, maybe for my students, it might have to be something a little bit different. That helps me with the decisions that I have to make about global history class (Jaime, Social Studies Teacher, Interview February 2015).

In addition to these characteristics provided, the team grounded their practice in student outcomes. This made it easier to identify struggles and pedagogical strategies for addressing these more quickly than without such an approach. In their need to find ways to support their students in writing, the team has chosen the Hochman writing program¹ to implement as it has

¹ Created by Dr. Judith Hochman
shown promising results in planning interdisciplinary writing instruction for English language learners in order to provide a focus on form and structure in language, as well as integration with content area knowledge.

In order to provide context on the process of teaming at the school, here are a few of the findings from the 2014-15 Quality Review Report for this specific school site that surfaced after my own research began. This includes evidence that provides a descriptive overall picture of how teacher teams operate at this site:

- Teacher teams are focused on vertical alignment, student work and their own practices to answer the question, “What do my students need to know, be able to do, and be able to explain in order to produce graduation-ready work in my content by the 12th grade?” The ongoing work of teams that addresses this question is grounded in the graduation portfolio rubrics that exist for every core content area.

- Interdisciplinary teams meet two to three times per week to look at student work, conduct curriculum shares and identify interventions and common teaching strategies to increase student progress. One such team was observed supporting a teacher who presented the focusing question, “How do I get students to ask higher order questions?” The team followed a modified protocol which gave the presenting teacher time to contextualize her efforts to date, the team time to review documents provided, as well as an opportunity to reflect on the pedagogical challenge and offer suggestions. One such suggestion was to develop a task where students’ questions were grounded in the written work of their peers and specifically geared toward the theme of the written piece; for example: dealing with power.
• Teachers noted that they consistently share practices and protocols for English language development including identifying the best supportive partners for strategic group assignments, when and how to leverage native language support and focusing on the same skill across content areas.

• Teachers agreed that the collective efforts of teacher teams has had a direct impact on their approaches to student collaboration with a focus on ways to get students to talk with each other about their learning while acquiring English as a second language.

The reviewer concluded that the school was well developed in this area: “All teachers are engaged in inquiry based professional collaborations where they systematically analyze their own practices as well as student work and data impact. The instructional capacity and coherence of teachers has increased along with student achievement for targeted students.” In addition, according to the 2013-14 Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP), the school organized teacher teams into so that “weekly professional development meetings will be conducted with all staff… and will include the following activities: analysis of student work in order to improve instruction/design interventions; analysis of student assessments (project-based learning); social-emotional progress of a teaching team’s shared students; formation and refinement of discipline specific benchmarks at each grade level Peer critiques of teacher-generated curricula” (p. 19).

These data points help frame the story of the teacher team I observed and the nature of their interactions. My first impression of the interdisciplinary team two is that they were a coherent group. They laughed together, seemed to know when to get serious about the work, were open to trusting one another and sharing to feedback (Impressions, Fieldwork February 5, 2015). The regular agenda at this particular weekly meeting included review of what the team
would cover, a “special needs” check-in to discuss any issues with students who have Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs), and in some cases, other students who had issues that needed immediate attention. Then either the team conducted a curriculum share by one teacher or student work analysis based on the use of one of the strategies. We made the agreement at the first meeting that I would leave the special needs section of the meeting so that they could talk more freely about the students without concern than any confidential information was being shared. Even though I had already obtained IRB for the process and outlined procedures, the teachers wanted to be cautious, and I respected this. This established a protocol for our interaction that worked to build a routine for my interaction with them as a team. It also provided them a time when they could talk without a researcher present on a weekly basis about their students.

Meeting the Teachers

During this time, there were six educators who regularly attended these team meetings. Annie was the science teacher on the team. She had worked at the school for eight years. Originally interested in academic research as a student at a New York State university, she decided to turn her interest to teaching when she realized that her college students as an adjunct didn’t always develop a love for science. As a result, she came to a realization that she may have more impact at the school level than at the university level by helping students develop this love early on as well as an awareness of the environment. Jeff is the special education teacher. He worked at the school for a year before as a long-term substitute, had a good experience but, when the school didn’t have a special education position opening that year, he left to work at another high school. He returned the following year when a position opened up. Jeff showed up as best
he could to each meeting but worked across three teams so was busy and had less common planning time than the other teachers. Jocelyn, a seasoned English teacher, taught for four years at this school and for four years at another school with a more diverse population of both native English speakers and emergent bilinguals. She brought a lot of experience around English language to the table and also worked with the coach and the English team to consider how to integrate Hochman strategies, part of a systematic writing program with strategies for explicit writing instruction into the school wide English curriculum in a more consistent, systematic way.

Laura, the coach, had worked at the school for eight years, both as a teacher, a guidance counselor focused on college and career and, at this time, as an instructional coach. She pushed the meetings forward in a firm but respectful way. Jaime has worked at the school for many years, first for eight years as a social worker and then for the last three years as a Social Studies teacher. He brought a lot of interesting sociopolitical questions into his curriculum with his students and, as a native Spanish speaker, often participated in translation for students for other staff when needed. Finally, Gina was a long-term substitute, who is teaching while the regular math teacher was on maternity leave for the semester. She was from the Philippines and has worked at several large mainstream schools where she recently had been excessed. She struggled with classroom management but had a love for math. She enjoyed the team but struggled as a newcomer to the school in developing relationships with her students. I only visited her class once since issues came up and visitors seemed more of a disruption to her on the days when things weren’t working. One of the team members was supporting her in adapting to the school.

**Last year’s inquiry: Student-friendly Rubrics for Portfolio Assessment**

It helped me to learn that the focus of last year’s inquiry was how to support student involved assessment by creating more student-friendly rubrics particularly necessary for emergent
bilinguals in their first or second year in the school. Jaime explains how the need for this team focus came up for them as a team in their inquiry process:

Additional work that we've done, that I think was really helpful… has been about the assessment process for the students, and helping the students to understand how they're being assessed, and evaluated based on their actual work. …With the Common Core, or within the network…there are so many rubrics. You have to be so explicit about walking them through what those different things mean.

Or they get the report card, and they have these different criteria areas that are there – English Language Development, Attendance and Punctuality—that's straightforward enough. But then, you know, Collaboration, or you know, the – Habits of Mind is another one, too. That was, like, the most vague, weird, nebulous concept to them. ‘What does that mean, ‘habits of mind’…?’ We broke it down for them.

I think helping the students to understand that when we say, ‘English Language Development’, that means, we are looking at how your sentences, how you're writing, your vocabulary usage has improved from, say, November through February. They have a much better sense of what that means, now. They have a much better sense of the specific skills that we are looking for, in terms of the work that they can produce…

(Jaime, SS Teacher, Interview February 2015).

The team had had relative success with this process based on student testimonies and results from student end-of-year portfolios, although they noticed that students still struggled to feel comfortable to share with others through group presentations. One person noted on the team, “We teachers are nice, reasonable people. What can we do to help them with anxiety?” The
team discussed that, over course of the semester, the students prepare small group presentations and present them to their advisory to practice in a low stakes way. One of the additional foci of the team was continuing to support student-involved assessment. This work became part of the team’s goals. Laura said, “We give them space to try and generate questions with their peers but don’t teach them over time to do that...similar to the scaffolding for the presentation from mechanics of writing a question to different types of questions. Maybe the portfolio committee can develop different materials to support us in this.” The planning for the grade thus covered not only the inquiry piece but also their own mentoring and support structure for students in preparing for the new school wide system of portfolio that was enhanced as it was now the primary mode of assessment for students, in addition to the ELA and math Regents exam.

**Planning for language learning across the disciplines**

When I started observing the team, the coach established as the first step of the semester to set goals around the inquiry process related to the Hochman strategies that would guide the team’s examination of student work with representative students from a different stages on the English acquisition continuum including, Sandar, a student with interrupted formal education also know as SIFE. Sandar was new to print but, after being in the school, almost a year and despite multiple interventions was still struggling to access basic literacy skills. Fernando, a more advanced student who had more native language literacy in Spanish and has demonstrated great gains since the 9th grade. Nada, a student who demonstrated growth but had middle-range grades and excels in science. Also, there was Dolores, a student who is shy and needs support in language and is just emerging from the silent stage but is not SIFE and excelled with peer support. Two of the four students spoke Spanish, one spoke Urdu and one a West African language. The opportunity to get to know these students more in depth helped the teachers assess
different approaches to learning and to assess the impact of the strategies on different types of students. Although this was not generalizable to all students and was not the only way teachers in which examined student work, it provided a more targeted view of how the strategy impacts students at particular levels of student learning and allowed teachers an opportunity to consider how to design differentiated approaches to the Hochman work.

As the team moved into talk about the semester’s deeper inquiry and continuation of working on explicit language they decided to focus on in their curriculum shares. After reviewing some of the research, the team agreed this integration of explicit attention to writing to be a key interdisciplinary strategy of the team. They agreed that ELA can start and they relay the instruction and other subject areas can follow. Below are a few key areas they agreed to focus on based on their review of student work last semester.

**Table 1: Instructional strategies for explicit language instruction in spring semester**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Vocabulary</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Using word banks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incorporating words from annotations and text into sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word list specific to one sentence stem –</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Deepen work on conjunctions</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More practice with but and so, less with because</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model and examples with content sentences for how the conjunction is used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do a matching activity where student matches conjunction with the sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Match the subject with the predicate using the appropriate conjunction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Verb use</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide students with sentences with verbs. Have them ewrite the sentence with different verb tense.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss, what is a verb?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annotation of the verb in content sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sort content vocabulary – nouns versus verbs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Student Work Share: Jaime

As mentioned earlier, throughout the year, the teachers would track the work of their students individually, but as a team, they tracked the work of key students who represented different types of students in terms of their learning style across the continuum from struggling reader to more advanced reader. They would plan their curriculum around these students as a strategy for expanding differentiation in their classrooms and then evaluate student work throughout the year to assess how students were progressing. Annie described the process:

When we look at student work on Thursday meetings, we have this spreadsheet that Laura made that tracks some of the Hochman sentence structures, and once at the beginning of the year, maybe in November…we looked at student work, and we rated it. We're like, does this student not do this thing?’ rating a complete sentence using ‘but, because I said so’, or ‘does a sentence need a noun and a verb or (does this student) use punctuation correctly?’ These are the different indicators, and then we graded our four target students and those indicators, based on an assignment. So, what we noticed is, at the beginning of the year, there were a couple of students who were pretty good at it. They either mastered it, or almost mastered it. And then, there were a couple of students who are beginner, and students who had not (mastered it).

I can't remember what the grade is, but it's basically… approaching the standard. And then, just recently, maybe a couple of weeks ago, a few weeks ago, we did it again, with the same students, and we compared it.

We were like ‘wow, this student before wasn't using punctuation correctly, and now they are.’ So, it's a really small sample, but it's more objective to me than just saying ‘oh, it
seems like they're using the words more.’ We're actually looking at student work, and rating it (Interview, March 2015).

The writing analytic tracker is something the team used to help them see how and if students evolve in the writing strategies they have targeted (Appendix F). They used the tracker to help them assess how their “profile” students are doing, in other words, the key group of students that represent levels of differentiation for their classrooms. This is also a practice used by other interdisciplinary teams. Although the teachers agreed, the diverse profiles of their classrooms varied greatly, this proved to be a helpful tool to assess key student progress and plan more effectively for differentiation. The team started the meeting this week looking at student work resulting from a curriculum share with Jaime, who starts the conversation in the group with the first student, a West African student, who speaks four oral language dialects but struggles with accessing print. The task assigned to the students was to explain the environmental consequences of oil spills in the Niger Delta. The teacher provided differentiated assessments. Sandar received one that displayed images of the mangroves, one before and one after the spill.

Here the team analyzed his work. See Figure 2 below.

Jaime: We are helping him make incremental jumps, (At first) I thought it might have been too much since the assessments are a little different. The other three (questions) are open ended, for his it’s a little more visual support in terms of specific things to respond to based on those ideas.

Laura: He knows the content.

Jaime: He DOES know the content; he can talk about it; it’s encouraging; we talked about it for four months

Laura: One thing you could do is go back and use a highlighter to highlight vocabulary
Jaime: If they could answer those main questions, then the sub-questions would help them….The jeopardy game was a way to prepare.

Janine: (looking at the work) “And the people was trying to help her…doing the medi-…..he’s using the wrong word…he doesn’t know how to say…using medicine….creating medicine.

Laura: It’s an ELL usage issue.

Jaime: I know what it is (he’s trying to say). They have to make medicine.

Laura: Let’s do a round of observations; one thing all students know how to use because very well, less so with but and so,
Figure 2: Sandar’s writing on the Niger Delta

This form of the assessment included open-ended written essay questions for the students to answer. The teachers reviewed the work and a few minutes later discussed it.

Laura: Fernando has two examples
Jaime: Nada had 1-2-3 … (She used) four “sos”."

Gina: Diana used one “but”…

Janine: (finishes her sentence) There are no other subordinating conjunctions…like for Randy...he didn’t use them except for ‘also.’

Laura With Sandar he knows to put a noun, which means he is developing a sense of language….

Jaime: I see running.

Laura: Stems are really helping him

Jaime: Nada, in looking at previous scores, she showed consistency in her scores and a little improvement with some areas…..observations that she continues to get better with her writing…. (I want to help her use) verb tense to be more specific, using more precise vocabulary in her writing.

Annie: She used the word accountable ...did you teach her that?

Jaime smiles and says, ‘Yes!’

Laura: This, Nada and also Dolores, trying to write more complex sentences because it is more open ended…it can become a run on…they are getting without any prompting, trying to build more complex sentences.

Janine: Yeah Fernando too, writing a few run-ons, but he is not year clear how to make a compound sentence….

Laura: Some of the other strategies are about...

Jaime: (finishes her sentence) Linkage.

Laura: Some of them are about building clauses, if you guys think kids are ready for that, then we can design stems related to those.
Angela: We used “since,” (at one point)

Janine: I’m for sticking with “because, but, so” (as my conjunctions)

Laura: Do you guys want to try it?

Annie and team: Yes

Laura: Then I would first pick the ones needed in your content area, but then they will need more modeling and scaffolding to know what conjunctions and functions are.

Janine: I found that “while” is hard, …we may want to hold off on ones that have multiple meanings

Annie: “Since” means a time thing too, but they got it because it was clear it was same as “because,”

In this team meeting, the team reviewed the different pieces of student work to evaluate how students are able to grapple with using English language conjunctions in social studies writing. As a result of their analysis, they realized that at least three of the students were ready to try out complex sentences and may have been receptive to the use of different conjunctions to make meaning of their work. The coach encouraged the group to consider introducing discipline specific conjunctions.

In addressing the effectiveness of some of these strategies, I interviewed the student focus group with 9th and 10th graders; each student discussed here was very capable of using conjunctions and explaining why they used them. This group included the four target students included in the strategic inquiry. For example, I showed Nada, Sandar and Fernando the caterpillar worksheet from science. Here is a sample from their activity (Figure 3 and Figure 4) as well as an excerpt from the transcript where I spoke to them about their understanding of the work.
Figure 3: Excerpt from Science Food Chain activity – Using Reasoning

Using “because”

Researcher: What is this trying to teach us?

Sandar: The caterpillar population decreased so that the reason is why….because…this is the reason why….

Fernando: The flower population increased because that caterpillar decreased we can plant more flowers or something so there are more flowers...

The bird population decreased because (pause) The caterpillar population decreased then the birds population when the caterpillar decreased then the bird has nothing to eat.

Sandar: You gotta explain the reason for the decrease in population.

Nada: Sometimes we know something but we don’t know why - it helps us use “because” so we know why
Figure 4: Excerpt from the Food Chain Activity - Using Because/But/So

On the differences between “because, but and so”

Nada: When you say the negative thing you can use but...like I like to read books but the words are difficult.

Sandar: If you want to say ‘but’...tomorrow I want to go to school but my teacher won’t come to school….

Researcher: What’s the difference between but and so….

Nada: What is so...if you have a reason and another positive thing to continue...so ...like an example...’I like to go school so I will get enough fun with others.’

Nada best describes the differences between the conjunctions but all students are able to address the use of “because and but,” and talk about examples from the curriculum in a detailed way. The conversation with the students demonstrated a lot of exposure to the use of these The conjunctions as a way to extend and make meaning. Although they each had variance in complexity of understanding, all of the students were able to speak to the question and work through the exercise. For the full worksheet, please see Appendix G.
The conversation on the team continued with student work outside of the target students:

Jaime: Outside of our observation group I have a few comments (about kids’ progress) I’m really proud of Jerry, he didn’t have longest answers…he is able to write full complete sentences and write really well…last year at this time, he wasn’t writing at all,

Laura: (After looking at this student work) “Also his content writing is on point…”

Jaime: Also Edgar, I’m proud to see how he performed on this…Fatima in 10th grade….about a year ago it would have been next to nothing….here she answered everything and gave evidence.

Annie: That is a confidence booster. It was harder for her…

Jaime: I picked up her assessment, she was mortified that I looked at it in front of her…Another student, with visuals …showed she put something down and understood and working with Fatima together has been really good for both of them.

These examples showed that the team used the student work in a variety of ways: 1) to evaluate student progress and see student struggles, their successes and their misconceptions; 2) to celebrate student progress; 3) to support one another in planning next steps in the curriculum writing and/or lesson adaptation. Also a vital part of their collaboration was using the Hochman strategies to integrate more explicit language into their heterogeneous grouping model with newcomer English language learners The team’s approach to integrating this type of instruction was a way to address the need of students across their class in a systematic way and then analyze how these specific strategies were working for students.

Curriculum Share - Janine on Romeo on Juliet

Janine wanted to elicit feedback on her curricular handout that helped students engage with Romeo and Juliet, Scenes 1 and 2. She had done a lot to scaffold the content and language and to
make it interesting for the students since it was complex text. Today, she shared a packet that outlined stems for the students to work on conjunctions. (For the full packet, see Unit 4, Romeo and Juliet Worksheet, Appendix G) In addition to practicing using vocabulary from the unit, she had them practice making longer sentences with “before, after or whenever,” which is an extension of the prior work on because, but and so to see how students do with these. This is an outcome of the conversation and reading they engaged in as a team on “Basic Writing Strategies” the week before. They looked at page 2 to have students complete sentences based on their reading of the story. The team read over the document and the various stems that Janine has created to help students walk through the story.

**Figure 5: Excerpted Romeo and Juliet Prompts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Whenever Romeo is feeling sad,........</th>
<th>After Benevilio asks Romeo why he is sad. ....</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Before Benvolio starts laughing. ....</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here is how the team conversation ensued:

Laura: I think the stems will help them read. What do we anticipate students getting stuck with these stems?

Annie: Something I struggle with is knowing what the subject after this; so for example, whenever Romeo is feeling sad, then what….how do you know what the options are? Maybe it’s more straightforward when you read the text.

Laura: (You can) prompt them to know what noun to use after the comma. It could be some other noun. Sometimes it doesn’t matter, but here it seems like it you have something in mind.
Sometimes there is variation -but it is very text dependent. If they didn’t get what’s happening in the text they won’t be precise…

Janine: They’re supposed to work in a group so that should help them talk it out and write down the answer

Laura: (to the rest of the group) Does this help you think about it your subject area?

Annie: We’re talking about three major chemical reactions in science…this happens first, then this after….three days about different reaction, and the fourth day is a comparison of all three, so on that day we can do before and after sentences.

Laura: Can you bring that packet to the next meeting?

Annie: Sure.

Laura: Then we can hear how this more complex usage worked in your class, Janine.

Janine had used conjunctions a lot in throughout her prior novel, Novio Boy, as well as Romeo and Juliet, so she wanted to challenge the students with more complex conjunctions and transition words. She figured that working in a group would support the students who really don’t have enough language skills to understand the full meaning, but had made steps to explicitly instruct students on the meaning of these words and had modeled how to use them.

This exchange shows the type of analysis that happened during the meeting, and anticipation of misconceptions that the teachers engaged in with a follow up conversation about strategies of how to mediate and what might need to be changed. It turns out the one conjunction students struggled with was “whenever” and, Janine realized she would have to rethink how to introduce to students with text.

One misconception that Klinger, Hoover and Baca (2008) clarify is that emergent bilinguals “acquire English in the same way they acquire their first language, through exposure
and interactions with others. Exposure to English and interactions with others are important, but they are not enough to provide the support student’s need to be able to fully participate in classroom learning and achieve to their potential; explicit instruction at an appropriate level helps” (p. 19). Here, Janine and her peers attempted to use the Hochman strategies as a way to explicitly teach writing and sentence structures. The students’ testimonies and improvement signify progress in using these strategies in the Tier 1 classroom setting. I also examine later the ways the strategies and language structures are reinforced in CBAS.

**Inquiry Results: Student Success Analysis**

In this final meeting before the team presents its findings from their inquiry project, the team utilized the Success Analysis Protocol to analyze parts of the work that represent success. The coach presents the protocol to the team to consider the aspects of the Hochman strategy work that have proven effective with many of their students. The guiding questions include:

- What made it a success?
- What made this different from what kids were able to do in the past?
- What are trends and patterns across the board for what is contributing to the success
- What can the team learn about conditions for success?

Three teachers, Janine, Annie and Gina, brought student work to this meeting.

*English work and Nada*

The question posed by the curricular activity was, “Are the things that happened in our lives determined by free will and destiny?” Janine described the activity: The kids answered questions about the reading and engaged in a discussion and took notes. She passed out the work. What’s been working for Nada that is leading her to write and follow the protocols? Below is an excerpt from the team’s conversation about Nada’s work.
Janine: What worked for Nada are things that are clear — she responds to a place to write notes; things clearly defined to expand on her thinking; in the seminar you see that happening. About question 1, it’s hard to answer that question without looking at something from the beginning of the year.

Jaime says he will bring her work from the beginning of the year to share.

Janine added: She is motivated to do well - that’s a strength of hers - I’ve seen her grow and being express herself in idea development; I’m asking her to make sure she has her examples — she is able to put in her real world examples.

Jeff: This free will concept — she seems to really understanding it. She made a decision and backed it up. The whole way through everything is destiny.

Jaime: (She uses) the structure of picking a position and incorporating what everyone said kept it solid.

Annie: Something that stood out to me is that she made a personal connection - I don’t always see people do that and to me that showed she had deeper understanding…she uses ‘because’ without being prompted.

Jaime: She follows through w/structures and scaffolds in place…she works well that way…writing strategies that are imbedded have helped her writing to continue to improve…if we can continue to do that next year, it will continue to improve next year.

Nada’s work, now a tenth grader, showed her to grow in leaps and bounds since ninth grade.

She exhibited a sort of tenacity in the student focus group as well as she quickly delved into providing explanations of the science sentences. Nada has shown improvement in language acquisition not only through the support of Hochman strategies but has also shown increased
independence in reading and in general more confidence in the way she worked across
classrooms in the past year.

Science work and Sandar

Below is an excerpt from a team conversation about Sandar’s work. As a reminder,
Sandar is a student who is undergoing the referral process for special education, and it has been
an ongoing process for the team to determine whether he needs services. Sandar is in the tenth
grade year after undergoing a year with the team already. His case reveals the complexity of
understanding students who are SIFE, who come to this country with gaps in education, and
nuances of understanding who the learner is, what knowledge and assets he brings to the table
and where the gaps are in foundational literacy as opposed to a processing issue, for example.

Annie introduced the student work: I am not convinced that he can write a complete
sentence and he isn’t using vocabulary well but here I asked him to make a prediction, He used
because on his own and used science vocabulary to explain his reason… this showed most
success for him.

Laura: I think about the way Sandar was able to do that….

Jaime: It was due to continuous repetition throughout the year. This has helped make an
automatic response for Sandar where he knows the answer has to include a justification because
we are expecting that kind of response. The word bank is helping him to connect to the box.

Gina: He is a visual learner. If he sees something then he can start working from that; he
can also write sentences. His connections he can draw. (Pointing to the work)
Annie: The picture was part of the lab….he had to do that before -like Jaime said repetition - we had done in class once he was able to apply that learning to his answer on the test/free write.

The team came to the agreement that the use of visuals and repetition has helped him grow in his ability to write sentences and comprehend text. The team also started with his assets to identify how he learned best instead of from a deficit perspective. Sandar was still struggling and the group agreed he needed the consistent small group interventions to help him with the more complex work. This student had been referred and was meeting with Jeff, the special educator in CBAS, three times per week and was in the process of undergoing evaluation. One of the challenges in getting him evaluated, according to Jeff, was access to a bilingual psychologist who speaks his language. This is one of the ongoing challenges in supporting English language learners in the school system that can often delay services, according to practitioners in the field.

*English writing and Fernando*

Here the team looked at a different English assignment from the last one. Although the team began by speaking about Fernando’s response to a prompt, they end up talking about his writing in general.

Annie: He combined these two things — he said it….he put them together because he related them. We didn’t teach sentence combination….but he picked it up.

Jeff: He is pretty impressive. He is able to follow up with sentences on his own so fully. He is at a point now and is able to do that and take minimal instructions and run with it because he has more confidence in his writing. He can do some risk taking.
Janine: (digressing from student work) He has strong grasp of language, but he doesn’t crack a book. He is not a reader or consuming books; Where does that come from? What is he doing in school? He is not in any programs or anything. I see Nada growing and outside of class I see her getting extra help. Fernando doesn’t do those things and he has grown a lot. (Back to the work) I notice in the word bank he is underlining words so he is using it or at least monitoring words.

Jeff: What do we know about his native language skills or his middle school? He came over pretty directly. His Spanish writing is good….he doesn’t need all the grammatical instruction that the others do.

Jaime: He speaks really well in Spanish. This has probably helped translate I had him in SSR last year (Silent Sustained Reading) and we read the book…Diary of a Part-Time Indian. He loved that book and the character is so funny. He enjoyed it and asked to read it all the time…

Laura: It is the Matthew effect - same for literacy skills; he is the kind of kid where heterogeneity really works.

Here the team acknowledged the fact that despite Fernando’s tendency to avoid assignments and reading in general on his own for the most part, he was often more successful at classroom reading assignments and resulting work than many students in their classroom. Extensive research has found that students who are learning to read in a second language are able to transfer many skills and knowledge from their first language to facilitate their acquisition of reading skills in the second language. There is strong evidence from studies showing that students with strong reading skills in the home language also have strong reading skills in their second language (August & Shanahan, 2006; Riches & Geneseer, 2006).
The team, with knowledge of some of this research, realized it is a possible explanation for Fernando’s success without much additional effort on his part. Some of this knowledge comes out of a native language assessment the team administered in the beginning of the year, and some of this knowledge about Fernando comes from their work with him in class, particularly Jaime who is a Spanish speaker and can assess Fernando’s abilities in Spanish. Later, this contributed to the conversation with individual teachers about the use of home language in the classroom and allowing or encouraging students to go back and forth between languages to encourage making connections between their home language and English. In the classrooms I observed this most often happened in the following forms, also cited by Freeman and Freeman as effective ways to translanguaging (2015), including to

…have students work in pairs with students who speak their home languages so that they can discuss concepts and support one another to clarify reading or writing assignments in English; and use students, aides, or parents or go to http://translate.google.com to translate into languages you do not speak.

One of the questions that came up for the team was, to what extent is home language used as a resource in the classrooms? How can this be improved? Laura has pointed out that the Matthew effect, or the phenomenon where students who are poor readers stay poor at reading creating a widening gap between readers who are successful and those who are not. This has shown in schooling to be an important source of achievement variance (Stanovich, 1986). Of course, this issue is what teachers in urban schools face when attempting to provide the opportunities as well as the resources and knowledge to help students be more successful readers. This is especially salient for newcomer emergent bilinguals who come in with a lot of pressure to learn English in a short time and with a schooling system that does not always know how to approach their needs.
In describing schools that have high concentrations of English language learners, De Cohen et al. (2005) summarized:

High-LEP schools are more likely to be located in urban areas and therefore have many characteristics associated with urban schools: larger enrollments; larger class sizes; greater racial and ethnic diversity; higher incidences of student poverty, student health problems, tardiness, absenteeism, and lack of preparation; greater difficulty filling teaching vacancies; greater reliance on unqualified teachers; and lower levels of parent involvement. (p. 19)

Facing some of these obstacles in this type of environment, the teachers at this site were attempting to provide students with more of the strategies they need to be successful. In the last part of the year, the team was focused on a plan to share results about the writing program they implemented across the team.

**Plans for Sharing Results**

Finally, the last part of the conversation involved the following question: What can we do as a team can we do together as next year for interdisciplinary planning for creating conditions for success? How can we share our results? Two ideas that came up in the discussion were utilizing tenth grader knowledge to support incoming ninth graders in bridge classes and creating a scope and sequence for teachers. Each of the teachers planned to bring in strategic excerpts of student work and curricular samples from their year of inquiry to share with staff at their end-of-year meeting. This again reinforced the concept of learner-centered community that also incorporates knowledge through content strategies and research. Sharing and integrating knowledge into the community became part of the growth process. The retreat also served a role in furthering the professional learning of the teachers. Team two had piloted a specific set of
strategies to increase linguistically responsive instruction through writing; the rest of the team benefitted from this process and could ask questions. See below in Figure 6 for Parallel Revision Strategies from the Hochman training excerpt.

One artifact of this sharing can be seen below in Figure 7 with an excerpt of Janine’s presentation on parallel revision, a strategy which guides teacher in modeling and demonstrating the revision process for students. The student work reflects explicit teaching strategies of revision using the Hochman Method to help the students draft their work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARALLEL REVISION STRATEGIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Improve a given (correct but boring) paragraph to model and demonstrate the idea of revision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ongoing reinforcement of sentence building strategies so that students can use them for revision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Opportunities and structures for revision teach students how to independent build sentences. Their sentence building skills will not be internalized otherwise.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Revision Activity A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Improving and revise the following sentences. Use any of the following strategies.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>improve</strong> T.S. and C.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>combine</strong> 2 sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>vary</strong> sentence starters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>add C.S.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>add descriptive words</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>expand sentences</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>give examples</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>sequence</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>add a transition</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>vary and use more precise vocabulary</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>use an appositive</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>provide examples</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6: Parallel Revision Strategies
STUDENT WORK BEFORE PARALLEL REVISION

EXAMPLE OF STUDENT WORK WITH PARALLEL REVISION COMMENTS
Discussion and Analysis

In this series of team meetings, inquiry helped drive the learner-centered community. In considering answers to the research question, how did teachers plan for culturally and/or linguistically responsive instruction, my observations indicate that the team structure helped the teachers utilize knowledge and training, in this case from Hochman, to support the inquiry and student learning to determine it’s effectiveness in their classrooms. As discussed earlier, the process required facilitation by a “community coordinator,” a person who had the skills to ask the right questions, redirect the conversation at times and keep the team, who are involved in heavily complex work with their students everyday, on track to stay with the group question and inquiry process. Laura was able to do this using both evidence from within the classrooms and also professional learning resources from outside of the classes. Also important was the use of information about the student: his or her home language, experiences and struggles. This often
helped informed the conversation and allowed team members to share knowledge about the students as well as provided entry points to supporting them.

Team conversations also helped provide insight into what productive conversations and discourse among teacher teams may look like and the specific ways this helped them raise questions that returned them back to their practice. The teachers, throughout this process, raised questions about the student work and interrogated their own curricular documents and planning process. The impact of this process was primarily related to real time changes to upcoming lessons and design of later units. These conversations allowed the educators to more effectively differentiate their instruction for the broad range of skills and types of knowledge that their students bring to the table including great variance in level of skill in their home language. Those more knowledgeable about literacy instruction, like the coach and the ELA teacher were able to provide support to others in the group around how to structure and integrate literacy into the content areas. This was particularly true with the science and math teachers. In the classroom, we begin to see how these curricular effects impact student learning and instruction.

In conclusion, the team discussions shed light on the kinds of conversations teachers have to plan linguistically responsive lessons using student data at specific times to drive the conversation. Lyster (2007), drawing primarily on research from Canadian French immersion classrooms, points out the need for a ‘counterbalanced’ approach around language immersion. When teachers do not directly attend to language, language learners may not receive sufficient and extended language development necessary to achieve high levels of proficiency.

Much incidental attention to language is too brief and likely too perfunctory to convey sufficient information about certain grammatical subsystems and this, in those cases, can
be considered neither systematic nor apt to make the most of content-based instruction as
a means for teaching language. (p. 27)

We see that this teacher team did attend to language throughout their planning and discussion in
great detail. It was clear how language was a part of every lesson and unit and that the
understanding of each student’s language ability was often part of the team conversation. The
purpose of sharing these kinds of discussions was to provide insight into how linguistically
responsive curriculum and instruction can be planned through an inquiry model. In addition, it is
important to see how professional learning takes place as a result of the facilitation and
additional resources from the coach as a way to move the learning forward around specific
students and language instruction in the Tier 1 classroom, and in some cases, the Tier 2
intervention classroom. In the next chapter, I focus on how collaboration with guidance
provided an impact on culturally responsive instruction and school climate both inside and
outside of the classroom.
Chapter 5

The Role of Guidance in Culturally and Linguistically Responsive RtI

“One thing that I learned, this school it's more like a family. You got support on every step.”
Senior student from focus group

“They make you feel better,” 10th grade student, focus group June 2015

In considering how teams plan for culturally responsive instruction, the practices of the guidance team emerged as an important theme from the data. In considering culturally and linguistically responsive practice, addressing the social and emotional needs of students is a key factor. It is imbedded in the CRIOP, in the focus area on a caring classroom environment and in linguistically responsive indicators from Villegas and Lucas which explain that the culture of the classroom and the school is of resounding importance in creating a community where emergent bilinguals can feel safe to try out language and literacy strategies:

A safe, welcoming classroom environment with minimal anxiety about performing in a second language is essential for ELLs to learn. Learning is enhanced for most students when they are in a safe environment, rather than a threatening one. However, because ELLs have been found to feel stigmatized, anxious, unwelcome, and ignored in U.S. classrooms (see Olsen, 1997; Valdds, 2001), teachers of ELLs need to be vigilant about creating such environments. Attention to this aspect of the instructional context is warranted given the growing anti-immigrant sentiment in the United States in recent years. (p. 5)

The difficult transition situations that immigrant students bring with them to schools is overwhelmingly salient in school environments in addition to the types of social and psychological issues that all adolescents already bring to school. First and foremost, my research
data showed that the students overwhelmingly feel supported by guidance\(^2\), with everything from socio-emotional support to filling out the FASFA.\(^2\) They expressed, both individually and in groups, that the social worker and guidance counselors on staff are a source of support when they need them. Moreover, the data from this project show that the resoundingly systematic support for serving student socio-emotional needs present in the school is powerful not only in supporting students with coping skills but also instructionally. At the school site, these practices take many forms. One example is in individual counseling and support around college and career. One student recognized that this kind of support doesn’t happen everywhere:

One example is my counselor, Ms Li. She is actually helping us for all the college things, for FAFSA, for plan for college. How to do all that. I have a cousin. He go to the other school. It's April already and no one helps them to do their college application, their FAFSA. Usually, I have to go over there and I help my cousin for that. When I asked them, "Your teachers did not help?" He said, "They don't care" (Field notes, May).

One of the key factors in establishing this support school-wide has been with the current principal who herself is a former bilingual teacher and social worker. She explains how she, as an AP with the former principal had organized the school to incorporate a guidance team as a pillar of the school, often to deal with difficulties of immigration:

The way that we run our school is with the understanding that our students, most of them, have been separated from their parents in one way because of their immigration story,

\(^2\) For the sake of this study, I use the term “guidance” to mean the types of work that both guidance counselors or social workers do with students, understanding that this may mean both socio-emotional support and conflict resolution to college and career counseling.

\(^2\) FAFSA is the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (*US Department of Education*)
and they suffer losses. Losses of that relationship with their mom, grandma, or losing those people that they are attached to when they come here. They lose their parents. They've suffered trauma, death, all the things you see in the newspaper. People are struggling in the world. They go through these things. That's why we're here for them. Then, also being the child of immigrants, and the alienation - that's with my parents. To a certain degree, being first generation and getting some of that feeling…You realize that school has to do a lot of things that an American family would do, but they don't know the system. They don't know how to navigate (Interview, June 2015).

She addressed the trauma and the need to have some kind of experts in the building to help address those situations that ultimately come up for many of the students and often impact teachers. In these situations, the effects of student trauma often affect adults as well as students:

Even if you're going to be a teacher, a guidance counselor, or whatever, as teacher, as an advisor, there needs to be enough support, expertise, something in the building, so that people can process that very, very scary typical stuff. (We decided) to have a social worker on staff who is understanding that kids go through tough stuff...You need people who can handle this stuff. If we're going to have a strictly guidance program, then we really need to support people.

She also discussed how advisory is another component of support that mimics family structure:

That's why that part of support is super important in bridging the cultural gap and scaffolding that, for the kids and the parents, and so into our advisory program. In our classroom, we can't take things for granted. If you're coming from all over the planet, there's very little that you can take for granted. It's funny, a very simple thing.
In addition to structures like individual counseling and teacher advisory, the guidance team and their interns also offer support groups. These include a variety of themes, but one, for example, is specifically targeted to students whose parents or family members have died. One of the social work interns who led this group reflected on her experience and notes that cultural difference can sometimes have an impact or get in the way of listening to one another.

… They're in very different places and a lot of them have lost a parent. I think that's important that we're like a team and I'm keeping tabs on who could use more support. Because there's only so much that they can get support for in a group where other students are saying ‘Oh, I'm already accepting this loss in a totally different, way’ and other people are saying that they're not sleeping because it's so fresh in their mind…I try to check in with the students afterwards if it seems like it's really tough for them in the group. Or make it clear there is support for them. (Interview, May 2015)

Students in the focus group commented that both individual counseling and groups were helpful to them as a place to get support. Thus, the guidance team in addition to support structures like advisory function in the school as a way to 1) supplement family support that the student may or may not currently receive and 2) provide relief from social and psychological stressors that may get in the way of their learning, growth and development. In addition to this kind of support, the social worker described her work with students who served as peer mediators. She would often choose students who struggled themselves with conflict and ask them to help her resolve other conflicts. Since the team is attempting to build a restorative justice program, this has been one of the building blocks to helping her think through the process. In one case, a student translated for another who was dealing with an anger management issues. Afterward, the student told the social worker that she had begun to think about the implications for her own situation: “She (the
student) said to me, ‘You know, miss, with me helping you do that, I just figured out how to do it myself with what you just said.’ A light bulb went off for me, and I realized I had to do this more often.” As a result, the social worker often involved students in one role or another of the conflict mediation process to help them consider anger management issues, for example, of their own.

 Guidance and Differentiation for Students

Another story illustrated how the collaboration with guidance supported teachers in considering the role of classroom interventions. Through my research and interviews with teachers it became clear that guidance strategies played a role in differentiation for students. Annie, again spoke to the support of guidance in helping a student cope in one of her classes:

I know that you probably know Viktor (pseudonym). We'll use him as an example. He has been seeing one of the interns, and I feel like he's changed a lot, since the beginning of the year, since when he started seeing her. He's always been crazy, off the wall, and energetic. He's like the class clown, which is...I think it's nice to have that character in the class, as long as it can be managed. [laughter]

To me, it brings a sense of togetherness for the class as a community. This is the guy who makes us laugh, and he's friendly with everyone.

I think it's important to have a student like that, as long as he's getting his work done, and it's not completely distracting. I think he's going through a lot. Last year we had a student pass away, and he had graduated already, but he was close with Viktor. They had been friends, they made this music video together, like a song. They wrote a song, and they rapped it together. It was pretty intense. So, he was profoundly affected by this student's death, his friend's death. He went into this funk, and he was just disruptive everyday in my class. It was like I couldn't figure out how to help him stay focused, and
not think about his friend. I tried everything. I tried being really nice to him; I tried being really mean to him - in the professional way of being nice and mean. But nothing was working, because he was traumatized from this experience.

At this point, I was at the end of my rope, I didn't know what to do, but guidance had been working with him this whole time, and it was a really slow process, it took months. They're still working through it, but I feel like they helped him cope with that, and also come up with strategies for when he feels really angry, or like he needs to go out without permission. That's the kind of stuff he would do, he would just leave without permission multiple times in the class. They helped him come up with strategies... like "when I feel the need to leave" or "when I get really angry at the teacher" instead of exploding, I'm going to do X, Y, or Z.

Those XYZ things were never communicated to me as a teacher, but the fact that they were working with him to come up with strategies to help him with anger management, that was communicated to me. So, I knew that they were working on it together, even though I didn't know the details.

There are times when I can see him getting angry and frustrated, and before he would just storm out, or create a big scene and yell, but now he doesn't.

He's figured out some way to check himself, and continue in the class. And even more recently, he's been really on point. He's not disruptive, at all. He's doing all of his work. He's like a model student. He participates. He's still. Contributes to the class community.

It could be for many reasons, but I feel like a lot of it has to be attributed to our guidance team. They get him involved in these other programs that are supposed to help for XYZ
...I don't know what goes on in there, who's in it, but they connect our students to services that they need, in addition to helping them.

Self-regulation for students is a theme that emerged in the narratives of teachers and students who described their experiences with the type of support and interaction that resulted from the guidance team. Since Annie checked in with the guidance counselor, the guidance team helped troubleshoot on how to manage Viktor’s behavior and to support him in self-regulation and also, when to send him to her for further guidance. In this situation, it is clear the need for the student to have coping and self-regulation skills. The guidance counselor in this school was able to provide Viktor with a strategy that supported him in his ability to stay in the classroom and continue to participate and, in time, he has been able to use it effectively. There are studies which show the increasing importance of learning self-regulation of adolescents on their achievement. One such study explained the impact:

Metacognitive self-regulation persists as an important predictor of school achievement at all developmental levels, and the motivational self-regulation has significant impact on performance in the first (14-15) and second age group. (Karin, et. Al, 2010, abstract, p.1)

This kind of targeted approach to student behavior and socio-emotional health and connecting it to the instructional work is a theme that comes up in other places as well. The instructional coach described how this kind of intersection impacted the work of teachers with students:

The fact that we're attending to their socio-emotional needs, recognizing that kids can't do their academic work well if they have a lot of psychological burden that they're contending with. It really puts a blockage on their ability to learn. Having that understanding makes it possible for us to see, ...., ‘This kid has this issue.’ Sometimes, they explain why. A lot of times, they’re like, ‘Oh, that kid is going through
a lot. Let's think about what we're asking, what we're demanding of the kid when they're in class and make sure that it's reasonable, and make sure that they can still be successful even with all of this stuff happening with their life. I think, in general, that's how we see how the guidance work and the instructional work interfaces... Sometimes, the guidance people are able to explain some behavioral patterns also that then inform the differentiation (Interview, April 2015).

Another example of the use of guidance strategies was exhibited in the way the social worker and guidance counselors worked together to monitor student behavior in classrooms and even in the hallway. At times, the guidance team was able to explain behavioral patterns that then inform the differentiation in the classroom. For Ahmin, a student in the 9th grade, he was unable to sit in the classroom for more than a few minutes at a time. It became more and more obvious as he spent time in the hallway, that there were bigger issues in the hallway as the team realized that he wasn’t the age listed on his official record. The coach described the situation:

I don't know if you've met that kid, Ahmin. (pseudonym) He's one of those kids that he runs away from you when you say, "Hi." He's getting evaluated, right now. He's 11. He's not 14 or 15… He came to our school when he was 10. He should have went to elementary school instead of a high school….A lot of times he would run around in the hallway and this would contribute to presenting patterns of behavior. That provides data to teachers...(and the counselors). Sometimes, it's about adjusting the instruction, but, sometimes, it also helps them understand why students process information in particular ways because of the way that they're interacting, their social interaction impacting the way that they're processing information that they need for academic work. For example, he wouldn’t talk he would make noises (Interview, March 2015).
Students and teachers describe the culture of the school as one that allows for them to get to know one another beyond traditional teacher and student relationships. Teachers borrow heavily from one another in learning about their students in collaborative meetings and guidance teams support the teachers in non-traditional ways to support with students like Ahmin. They often patrol the hallways between classes to get a sense of what the students were doing and how they were interacting with other students as well as look for patterns of student behavior. The social worker also described the importance of her role in following up with teachers and to encourage informal conversations to learn more about what’s happening during the school day: “They know my door is always open, if they have any issues with a student, they know they can come here and talk about it to come up with solutions, to deal with the situation.” This kind of informal support is also bolstered by the formal weekly guidance meeting with teacher teams on a weekly basis described in the next section.

**Guidance working with teacher teams**

An integral part of the school ecology is the collaboration between teacher teams and the guidance team. Each guidance counselor or social worker is assigned to one of the teams. A practice in this school is that the social worker is assigned to the ninth/tenth grade teams and the guidance counselors, who emphasize college and career to a larger degree work with the eleventh/twelfth grade teams. As one science teacher in the school describes it,

Ninth/tenth grade is a lot more big picture in terms of how are kids feeling. Are they feeling like this is a place where they can learn? Are their needs being met? Do the kids have what they need at home? There's a lot more of a focus on the individual students' situation and what they, maybe, are dealing with at home and how that can impact the classroom (Interview, April 2015).
Thus, the role of the social worker is more focused on the students well being and adaptation to their circumstance and to the school. Resoundingly, in all of the interviews with both teachers, administrators and students, the role of guidance working with the teacher teams is named a structure and practice that is essential to the school. Annie, a core subject area teacher on the team speaks about the importance of guidance and their collaboration with the teacher teams as well as their individual support for students:

I can't stress enough the importance of our guidance team in our school. I don't know how other schools get by without the number of people we have dedicated to guidance. Because I've heard horror stories like, you have to share a social worker with some other school, and they're only there twice a week…We've changed the structure of this year, so that we have one social worker who is working with our team, and she's working with another team as well, but she can focus on those two teams. She doesn't have to worry about the whole school (Interview, February 2015).

In fact, research shows that the ratio of guidance counselors to students has a correlation with achievement (Lapan, et. al, 2012). Jaime, the Social Studies teacher who was formerly on the guidance team affirmed this in describing his own continued partnership with guidance after he crossed over into a teaching role:

Caren is the person assigned to our team, in terms of being a social worker. And I mean coming from the guidance team before, I've worked with Caren….this is my eighth year working with her, you know? So, she was here when I came into the school, as a para-coordinator…and we worked very closely together for five years. Caren is so valuable to this school, I can't even express it.
Teacher teams meet with their assigned guidance member once per week to discuss specific students and action plan on how to support them. In addition to regular meetings, the guidance member and the teachers on that team also continue to discuss and follow up on issues that come up through email, in the hallways, and through Skedula, the school’s record keeping and data system. There are weekly guidance meetings where the guidance members discuss and strategize the issues that come up with their teams to get support. In this way, they have their own community to help them troubleshoot the more difficult issues. The purpose of the meeting I observed was for the teachers and guidance worker to 1) strategize about how to work with specific students and 2) how to collaborate with the family of one struggling student who has been having serious attendance issues in the current year. In this case, they brought in a parent as an intervention and collaboration to help bolster support for that student and provide a community approach to problem solving for that child’s needs.

**Vignette: 9th-10th Grade Guidance Meeting for Interdisciplinary Teacher Team**

Jaime is writing on the board to help guide the meeting. He is dressed in purple jeans and a tie and plaid shirt and is smiling. All the team’s teachers have slowly trickled into the room to join the meeting. Jaime, Annie and Janine are in conversation trying to figure out which students should be the focus of today’s discussion. They also are talking about the NYSESLAT testing days and how to organize students.

“Should we move students around so that classes are more even? Annie asked. The teachers discussed but decided not to, since it may just be more disruptive than having the larger class. They are waiting for a student and his parent to come into the room for a meeting. A few minutes into the meeting, Caren came in after getting the student’s mother and him to escort them into the room. She is wearing heels and a long sleeved blue shirt and pants.
Juan walked in with his mother and the mood changed as all the teachers are seated around three tables in a long rectangle as each one goes around to talk about their impressions. Juan is well dressed as far as any other teenager would be concerned. He is wearing a gold chain with square interlocking gold and silver squares, a white watch, black T-shirt. He has a stocky frame and wears stretchy, white cotton pants with black print. He has a nervous expression as his mom walks with him into the room. She is a little taller than him and wearing all black, pants and loose fitting shirt.

They sat down at the long table as the meeting begins. Jaime facilitates, since he is the Spanish speaker on the team. Jaime first begins with introductions around the table and then translates in Spanish for Juan’s mom. He explains that the purpose of the meeting is to talk about Juan’s absences and some of his issues and help come to a solution today. Janine starts the meeting in English: "When Juan comes to class he can be very helpful, but one of the things we’re experiencing is that we can’t help Juan because he doesn’t come to class." Jaime translated for the mother. Then Annie speaks about science class.

“I’ve taught Juan since last year - what I’ve seen is a big change.” She turned to Juan to face him. "I remember, you were doing a project (last year) and you memorized everything but I didn’t know you had trouble with writing. I noticed that you worked hard to do that presentation to make sure it was good. This year I don’t see that same effort from you. In fact, I only saw you three times in the last month.” (Jaime translates)

Gina spoke next. “I am Juan’s math teacher and advisor. He is pleasant and does work sometimes. But often he is absent or when he is here, he is late and goes to bathroom everyday - leaves class a lot."

Caren said, “Juan, do you want to respond to what the teachers are saying?”
Mom speaks and Jaime translates:

“She did speak to someone at the school last year—she is only back for 15 days since coming back from DR. She said that she said that one of the main reasons he didn’t come -he feels bad about his lack of education compared to other students - he is 17 years old-his dad is working and she is there to be there for the other kids. She has had many conversations with him. She understands he is embarrassed but he should know the school won’t discriminate against him - he should try.”

Janine jumped in, “There are 9th graders in our school who are 17…it’s not that unusual…those struggles w/reading and writing -those things are not going to go away -Jeff is ready for you to help solve those issues but you need to come class…”

Caren adds, “We understand why you are upset. Janine than said, “We think not coming to school doesn’t solve that problem.”

Jaime translates: “Mom said she talked to him about this and said the same thing about coming to school. She is ready and committed to helping with other situations with the house….so he has no excuse for not coming to school Now that she’s here, the whole family is brought together again….she is helping Dad take care of three kids….”

After this, Caren and Juan enter into a dialogue:

Every teacher says when you come to class and you did great work….you get so excited when you do good work…you come to me and say” hey I got a 4”!

Juan, Sometimes I have trouble coming in the morning and then I don’t come.

Caren turns to Jaime, “Tell his mom how he feels.”

Jaime says “Mom appreciates that and understands difficulty in morning and will help him come on time.
Caren: What is preventing you from coming to school?

Juan: Sometimes I don’t feel like it.

Caren: Are you tired?

Juan: Sometimes I don’t feel like coming all day

Caren: Their schools close at noon (in the DR) — so you’re not used to it — we have to figure out how to push you a little bit….. We need to figure out how to push Juan to get up and get to school, get you through the whole day….it feels good when you’re in school doing the work, go back to the behavior checklist, you participated and you were very proud of it? You come to my office when you come to school. Is that cool? (Juan nods) That will be a start.

After further dialogue with the teachers:

Caren: I just want to say something about you feeling uncomfortable, embarrassed. When you come to school you’re learning how to do that stuff. The more you come to school the more you’re going to develop those skills, the more chance you’re going to be successful. By staying home and doing it, it’s not going build you, your confidence, etc. It’s not helping you. You’re going to gain your confidence. and embarrassed will not be a word in your vocabulary…but you know things now..(she laughs) (Juan laughs).

Teachers thank the mom for coming.

Caren Thank you for continuing to help him and us.

Caren escorts the mom and Juan out. Upon her return she describes what happened:

“Juan has to bring his mom home, she says. (She sighs) That’s part of the problem. Will he come back? I hope so. Even if it’s 2 p.m. I told him, come back to school just to get a class in.”

Discussion and Analysis
This interaction was only one part of the meeting but it displayed the kinds of partnerships required in helping students get support and encouragement as well as accountability for their actions. In addition, these interactions, above all, display evidence of the kinds of culturally responsive relationships that have built the climate of the school that students described in focus groups. Caren had obviously been meeting regularly with Juan as have his teachers to try to help him change his behaviors and help enhance his literacy skills. For example, Jeff met with him to teach him more explicitly on language since Juan was struggling, but he resisted at first. He started to miss school more and more. We learn that beyond his reading struggles, his mother has been in the Dominican Republic since he first came here, and his dad has been raising he and his siblings alone. Despite the interventions both instructionally and with the social worker, we see that often the challenges loom large. The community coming together, parent, student, teachers, guidance counselor with translation helps at least facilitate a discussion on how to help the student and how he can strategize and find solutions for himself.
Figure 8: Relationship between culturally and linguistically responsive RtI and team collaboration

The figure above is designed to show the relationship between guidance and teacher instructional intervention and how these relationships can help support one another to work with students more comprehensively. Often the guidance team members are the first ones to learn more about the student’s home life. This knowledge is often used to problem solve issues that arise or also to support the use of home language and family knowledge in the classroom. Later in the meeting, after Juan left, the teachers also engaged with a range of other issues with which students were grappling, Jaime had to put in a call to Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) because there as a second domestic violence incident with a student who had been struck with a broomstick a few times. She was having bad headaches and complained to both Jaime and the guidance counselor but hadn’t wanted to go to the hospital initially. Finally, she went for treatment. The team discussed how to help her while she was still in school living with the grandmother. They discussed the complexities of living with her mother who was also subject to grandma’s violence but often “treated the men well.” Another student, Lyon, was in great distress because his father wanted him to move to Queens and attend a school there since they were moving. Jaime went to the father as an advocate, only to convey what the school meant to Lyon. It turned out the father and son hadn’t spoken about his feelings. Coming from a traditional family structure and with traditional views of masculinity also exhibited often in American culture, Jaime served as a broker to help the student convey his emotions. In the end, the counselor also intervened and the student was able to stay in school. These are the kinds of team collaborative interventions and “data exchanges” that helped both teams operate more effectively in supporting students and designing strategies to intervene both academically and socio-emotionally in the world
Despite the strengths of this approach and the efforts of all stakeholders, two months later, I found out from Jeff that Juan has dropped out. In spite of all the mechanisms in place to support him, these intervention strategies may not always succeed. Danny’s father who is in construction has found him a job, and Juan decides to drop out at 17 and follow in his father’s footsteps. His low literacy may have been too big an obstacle or he may found it more gratifying to work with his father. It’s hard to know all the complex reasons that prompt a student to drop out. This anecdote is important in demonstrating the need for these kind of interventions and community conversations, but also points out the pitfall in considering any of these strategies, either instructional or social-emotional to be a panacea for all student problems. It is a reminder that the complexity of the cultural landscape in schools and that teacher must be aware of the external forces that shape their students’ identities and lives. Not only did the school lose a student, but the family removed itself from the network of support of the school and it’s resources.

As I approached this research project, I was very focused on the academic instruction and intervention strategies. I knew about behaviorally focused RtI and systems, for example, PBIS; however, I wasn’t intending to focus on that kind of support to students. The data, however, overwhelmingly pointed to this notion of social-emotional structures and interventions in the school that supported them in the larger scope of accomplishing academic goals as well as helping them develop more fully as individuals. These data stories reveal that, at times, in spite of strong interventions and action planning by the school team, there were not always foolproof solutions. In my opinion, these data provide a strong argument for a responsive set of interventions that can be changed and adapted according to the needs of the student and his/her external familial and social conditions as well as the challenges internal to the school that is also
aligned to research on funds for knowledge and the usefulness of incorporating family
knowledge into classrooms (Moll, 2014). In the third findings chapter, observations reveal some
of the impact of both academic interdisciplinary team planning and teacher team collaboration
with guidance to plan student interventions.
Chapter 6

Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Pedagogy and Assessment in Action

Introduction

These initial findings help answer the research question at my site, in what ways, if any, do teachers use culturally and linguistically responsive strategies when enacting Tier 1 and 2 instruction? I wanted to understand and describe the ways in which instruction unfolded to help identify the instructional moves and planning that facilitated learning for students. Also using my instruments and observation protocols, I was able to consider the trends across classrooms for this team of teachers as they attempted to integrate an RtI approach in targeting their instruction in the heterogeneous classrooms. I would like to also state here that these observational data are not meant to evaluate the teachers. I have great respect for each of them and was not present enough to evaluate them individually. The goal of observing them utilizing the two rubrics, one for Tier 1 and one for Tier 2 settings, was to provide a framework for gathering evidence of trends in their classroom and across classrooms around linguistically and/or culturally responsive instruction.

According to Lucas and Villegas, linguistically responsive pedagogy is characterized by six key traits that include both pedagogical strategies that integrate language and content instruction and also address cultural conditions in the classroom. As discussed earlier in the paper, this is one guiding framework that has helped me identify practices through observations and interviews in context of classroom practice. Here I address four of the six essential understandings they outlined related to instructional strategies.
Figure 9: Essential Understandings of Second Language Learning for Linguistically Responsive Teachers (Lucas, et al., 2010)

- Conversational language proficiency is fundamentally different from academic language proficiency (Cummins, 1981, 2000), and it can take many more years for an ELL to become fluent in the latter than in the former (Cummins, 2008).

- Second language learners must have access to comprehensible input that is just beyond their current level of competence (Krashen, 1982, 2003), and they must have opportunities to produce output for meaningful purposes (Swain, 1995).

- Social interaction in which ELLs actively participate fosters the development of conversational and academic English (Gass, 1997; Vygotsky, 1978; Wong-Fillmore & Snow, 2005).

- ELLs with strong native language skills are more likely to achieve parity with native-English-speaking peers than are those with weak native-language skills (Cummins, 2000; Thomas & Collier, 2002).

- Explicit attention to linguistic form and functions is essential to second language learning. (Gass, 1997; Schleppegrell,)

- A safe, welcoming classroom environment with minimal anxiety about performing in a second language is essential for ELLs to learn. Learning is enhanced for most students when they are in a safe environment, rather than a threatening one. However, because ELLs have been found to feel stigmatized, anxious, unwelcome, and ignored in U.S. classrooms (see Olsen, 1997; Valdds, 2001), teachers of ELLs need to be vigilant about creating such environments. Attention to this aspect of the instructional context is warranted given the growing anti-immigrant sentiment in the United States in recent years.  

The classrooms I observed were heterogeneously organized classrooms where students worked mostly collaboratively in table groups. Although the philosophy of the school promotes heterogeneity to promote student collaboration and use of home language, in recent years, there had been a need to target instruction more carefully to both student language needs well as content knowledge and staff has struggled to find ways to do this with ELLs, considering the lack of tools to diagnose and group students, particularly newcomers, the difficulty in

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differentiating the needs of their students based on home language. They have utilized a variety of tools including the mandated home language interview, the SIFE LENS, an assessment created by faculty at the CUNY Research Institute for the Study of Language in Urban Society (RISLUS). According to their webpage, the LENS (Literacy Evaluation for Newcomer SIFE) is a “multilingual literacy diagnostic that educators can use to evaluate the home language literacy skills of recently-arrived Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE). It is available in Spanish, Haitian Creole, Chinese, Arabic, Bangla, and Urdu. Teachers also administered various English literacy activities to gauge how students are progressing through the curriculum.

Throughout my observations of the team and from evidence in my interviews, this has been a controversial topic at times since there are differing views on how to help students with foundational literacy and the need for explicit language teaching for students who have low literacy skills in their home language.

In an attempt to resolve these disagreements, academic intervention period known as Content-Based Academic Support or CBAS was established to start the process of integrating RtI for ELLs, however basic in its structure, which is one characteristic that established it as my research site. Although there are not all the structures and formal assessments in place to really support an RtI structure, the reality of implementing RtI in a urban environment is challenging based on a variety of structural as well as cultural factors as discussed in the literature (Ahram, et al, 2011). I observed CBAS to understand how teachers may structure Tier 2 interventions outside the classroom to target instruction both in terms of content and programming. I describe the tools I used in the research to support my understanding of what happened in the classrooms.
Tier 1 Classroom Observation Findings

To support my research, I used the research-based Culturally Responsive Individual Observation Protocol or CRIOP, created by Powell, et.al, to help me in the Tier 1 observations to see which characteristics may or may not exist in the classrooms. Eight indicators or “pillars” that support theoretical principles of culturally responsive pedagogy characterize the rubric. These included assessment, instructional practices, discourse, teacher dispositions and classroom caring, physical climate, sociopolitical consciousness and family collaboration. In my classroom observations, I utilized four main categories to support my research questions. Moreover, the CRIOP is focused on language and literacy, although it does not always provide very detailed sub indicators about language. Thus, at times, I refer back to Figure 1 to highlight specific linguistic principles that may have been observed in the classroom. This table presents the data across classrooms in aggregate form with the sub indicators identified and discussed throughout the next section.

Table 2: Tier 1 Heterogeneous Classroom
Aggregate classroom data using selected indicators from CRIOP (0-4 Scale)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CR</th>
<th>Assessment Practices</th>
<th>Pedagogy and Instructional Practices</th>
<th>Classroom Caring and Teacher Dispositions</th>
<th>Classroom Climate/Physical Environment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CR=Classrooms A-D organized by teacher (anonymized)

Overall, I observed each Tier 1 classroom four times. Across classrooms, at the times of observations, there were culturally and linguistically responsive practices evident in all
classrooms. Using the CRIOP as a guide, I used four of the key indicators provided to assess traits during the observations: Assessment Practices, Classroom and Physical Environment, Pedagogy and Classroom Care. I chose these because, for English language learners, according to principle 6 in Figure 9, the welcoming environment is key to promoting learning. Thus, both the physical and socio-emotional factors may weigh heavily on their success and wanted to observe if the teachers were able to provide this type of environment and, if so, what is looked like in the classroom. In addition, I chose pedagogy and instructional practice to determine what, if any, teacher moves were made to support students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Finally, assessment practices are crucial to determining how to move students forward in a dynamic way and how to move students forward in an RtI environment, particular as a bridge to the Tier 2 intervention period. Thus, I chose this as an additional indicator of focus.

Classroom Climate and the Physical Environment

Table 3: Classroom Climate and Physical Environment Subindicators

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>The physical materials and furnishings invite students to use literacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>The physical materials and furnishings promote shared ownership of the environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>The physical materials establish an environment that demonstrates an appreciation for diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>The furnishings allow students to be seated with a partner or group and collaborate or assist each other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I started with this indicator, as in all the classrooms observed there was strong evidence of all or at least half of the indicators in every observation. Physical furnishings in every classroom invite students to use literacy. For example, In the ELA classroom, there was a library with leveled books that were organized in ways that students can find by theme. There were two

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4 For examples and the rest of the rubric, see Appendix __
computers in every classroom where students were often engaged in research and laptop carts that teachers checked out during research periods. In English, during a lesson where the teacher and students were creating a play about the book *Novio Boy*, the teacher provided materials so that students could create props and backdrops.

![Photo 1: Group Reading Strategies](image)

**Photo 1: Group Reading Strategies**

There was evidence of visuals in social studies class that supported group reading procedures as shown in Photo 1 above to help students navigate English text in groups. (Subindicator 1) All the Tier 1 classrooms had tables where students are heterogeneously grouped and set up for collaboration. These were dynamic in most classes as groupings changed based on different lessons or in some cases, units. (Subindicator 4)
In terms of shared ownership of the environment (Subindicator 2), rules were co-authored by students and teachers in all of the classes with two of the four teachers posting them. In science class the following “Class Resolutions” were written on chart paper on the wall:

- We resolve to keep the room clean, including binders
- We resolve to respect student and teacher opinion
- We resolve to help each other
- We resolve to work together like a real team
- We resolve to be nice and respect each other.

In Photo 2 below entitled “Rights and Responsibilities,” these show the examples from the teacher in the social studies classroom. In all classrooms there were examples of physical materials that demonstrated appreciation for diversity (Sub indicator 3) but also linguistic diversity and literacy, which although not in this particular rubric were of extreme importance in assessing classrooms for emergent bilinguals. Some examples of this are included below in Photos 3-5.

In addition to all the annotation examples provided, there were also guided writing exercises posted in science to help with academic and domain-specific vocabulary as seen in Photo 3 below. In social studies there was evidence of using transition words in writing complex sentences that was described during team meetings. In Photos 4 and 5, we see the examples provided in using the transition words, “while,” “although,” “even though,” and “whereas.” In addition, the teacher referred to a poster of additional transition words in a lesson.
Photo 2: Rights and Responsibilities in the Classroom

Photo 3: Guided Writing in Science
Writing Complex Sentences

Photo 4: Transition Word Poster – Writing Complex Sentences

1. While 50% of whites expressed anti-white sentiments, almost double that percentage (59%) expressed negative attitudes towards blacks.

2. 30% of whites expressed anti-white sentiments, whereas 59% of whites expressed anti-black sentiments.

3. Although 59% of whites expressed anti-black sentiments, only 30% of whites expressed similar opinions about their own race.

4. Even though over half of all whites (59%) expressed anti-black sentiments, only 30% of whites held anti-white opinions.

Photo 5: Transition Words Examples
Photo 6: English Literary Analysis Visual

This chart in Photo 6 above documents work from a initial class literary analysis in which students were identifying and describing characters and the setting as an entry point into the story.
Photo 7: Excerpt from the Declaration of Independence, in Spanish

In addition to the physical environment supporting literacy practices and development for youth, there was evidence of appreciation of diversity in culture and language in one particular classroom, social studies. In Photo 7, we see an excerpt from the Declaration of Independence published in Spanish to show linguistic diversity around common principles.
**Photo 8: Scientists of Color**

In science there was evidence of showcasing and exposing diversity to youth around multicultural backgrounds of scientists to promote student awareness. In Photo 8 the teacher has posted scientists of color around her classroom door and detailed their background and area of study.

**Classroom Caring and Teacher Dispositions**

**Table 4: Classroom Care Subindicators**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The teacher demonstrates an <strong>ethic of care</strong> (e.g., equitable relationships, bonding)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The teacher communicates <strong>high expectations</strong> for all students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The teacher creates a learning atmosphere in which students and teachers <strong>feel respect</strong> and <strong>connect to</strong> one another</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The teacher <strong>actively confronts</strong> instances of <strong>discrimination</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Subindicator 1 of this portion of the CRIOP describes the demonstration of an ethic of care. This was also observed in all classrooms as teachers differentiated management techniques according to different needs in the classroom. The fact that each teacher is facilitator for much of the class allows for the ability to rotate and talk to students about their work. For subindicator 2, there was evidence of teacher respect and connection among teachers and students. For example, in English the students worked for several periods on their presentation and collaboratively supported one another by reading work aloud and, in some cases, students sought out advice from others or helped one another create their specific prop. The special education teacher also moved around the classroom and, in one case, helps keep students focused and supports them with writing prompts with which they were struggling. In science, the students worked in groups to write their lab and conduct peer reviews to get additional feedback. In social studies the teacher created an opportunity for students to create propaganda posters and then provided feedback to groups as he rotated. In terms of confronting discrimination, the English teacher described having to clearly outline and navigate a challenging discussion about Islam with students from varying Muslim backgrounds who had different points of view. In one class, students described the ways teachers challenged students to discuss gender, which in at least two cases pushed them to reflect on their own beliefs. The guidance team supported the teachers in this area by supporting them to understand and differentiate in their class based on conversations with individual students (see Chapter 2 section on *The Role of Guidance in Intervention*). Many students, teachers and administrators in interviews described positive caring and teacher dispositions across classrooms.
Photo 9: Evidence of Care in the Socials Studies Classroom

Although most evident as a way to positively construct the physical environment, this sign in Photo 9 also reflected the atmosphere created by the teacher in the classroom where students and teachers feel respect and connect to one another, also reflected in Sub indicator 5.
Photo 10: Challenging Gender Stereotypes

In Photo 10, this group collage is the produce of an intense discussion held in advisory, according to students and teachers. In this art activity, students challenged gender stereotypes and what it meaning of what a man or woman “cannot or should not do.”

Pedagogy and Instructional Practices

Table 5: Instructional Practices and Pedagogy Sub indicators

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The teacher <strong>learns with students</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The teacher <strong>allows students to collaborate</strong> with other students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The teacher uses <strong>active, hands-on learning</strong> that promotes student engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The teacher <strong>balances instruction</strong> using both explicit skill instruction and reading/writing for meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The teacher <strong>balances instruction</strong> using both explicit skill instruction and reading/writing for meaning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Collaboration and active learning: shared literacy experiences with annotation

Annotation was a key school wide strategy that was used in many of the team’s classrooms I observed. Students also commented on the use of annotation as something that helped them in their reading. The annotations reflect a type of routine reading process that is used throughout the grade team and in many parts of the school. In a lower school focus group, Junior 9/10 interviews, Fernando, the 10th grader in the focus group named this as one of the strategies that has helped him the most. Annotation was a strategy used throughout the year in the content areas to support English language learners in reading content materials. Photo 11 provides an example used in the science unit on human impact on the environment. The guiding question from the unit was “Can humans exist without polluting their environment?” Students were asked to use an annotation protocol to dissect this question.

Photo 11: Annotation of Science Unit Essential Question
A modified use of this annotation style, shown here from the following visual in the Social Studies classroom, which show an excerpt of a reading on posters that the students annotated to make meaning of the content on oil pirates in Nigeria, from their unit of study. The visual in Photo 12 (below) is excerpted from a reading that is intended to help students identify some of the key environmental factors affecting the life of local people in the Niger Delta. I provide a more detailed look at the way annotation gets transferred into the Tier 2 classroom in the section, CBAS and Tier 2 Intervention Classes.

Photo 12: Annotation of Quotations from Nigerian Delta Oil Piracy Stakeholders

Questioning and Writing Complex Sentences

In science class, the science teacher provided a poster project where students must work collaboratively to answer the question, “Where does electricity come from?” The teachers taught vocabulary explicitly first with pictures to help support their students’ comprehension. The teacher shared vocabulary in a table to show three common verbs for their assignment: convert,
transform and conserve. Students translated them into their native language and wrote the meaning for themselves to begin the process. (See Figure 10 below) (Subindicator 2 and 3)

Energy Unit Vocabulary Log

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vocabulary Word</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Translation (if needed)</th>
<th>Example, Sentence or Picture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Figure 10: Representation of Science Vocabulary Worksheet

In another class later in the semester, the students were tasked with writing their own lab reports for the first time. Many students had no prior knowledge of what it entailed to write a lab report. The teacher introduced it to them in a lesson about communication, where she elicited student knowledge about communication resources. She later explained, “Scientists write to communicate with other scientists in journals with the results from their labs.” She conducted a matching activity to help orient students to the different parts of the lab report to help them become comfortable with these sections. (Subindicator 4)

In social studies, as students played Jeopardy, they discussed complex questions that required them to generate textual evidence to support a point of view. These included discussions with guiding sentence starters to questions such as, Is it okay to break the law for a good reason? Why or why not? Give an example from the Nigerian oil conflict. One student responded to this after the discussion with the group, “It is not okay to break the law for any reason…in the Nigerian Delta they broke the law…they are stealing oil and polluting the water. They don’t even
have the fresh water. Because of that people are debating and going hungry.” After that, a debate ensued in the class with members from another team.

Other questions included: Why are many people in some oil producing countries rich while in others they are poor? Who should be responsible for cleaning up the environment in the Niger Delta? Is the oil industry good or bad for the people of the Niger Delta? Provide evidence to support your answer. For questions to help build background knowledge, one example included “Name two factors that affect gasoline prices.” Students made choices about the type of question they wanted to discuss and wrote out answers in collaborative groups. They had class binders to help them draw from prior exercises and texts. (Subindicator 5)

In later essays around these prompts, students used the “because, but and so” conjunctions the team had planned across the curriculum. In English class, the students studied Romeo and Juliet and the teacher provided explicit language instruction on pronouns: subject, object and possessive. The teacher eventually provided material on the use of more advanced conjunctions that included some of the ones they discussed in team meeting with which to experiment now that students had exposure. This supported them in their essay writing. (Subindicator 4). The team discussed this activity and it’s relationship to Hochman in a team meeting discussed in Chapter 1.
Photo 13: Student Poem

This photo is a poem written by a student, posted in the social studies class. This assignment was actually from advisory class where students wrote poetry in English about their experiences, some of which may be published in their end-of-year portfolio. This reflected sub indicator 5 of
Pedagogy and Instructional Practice in which the teachers provide students choices in content and assessment methods based on their experiences, values, needs and strengths

*Assessment Practices: A Culture of Feedback*

**Table 6: Assessment Practices Subindicators**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The teacher <strong>gives clear direct feedback</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The teacher includes <strong>multiple ways to represent knowledge</strong> and skills (all of the language arts, visual arts, music, drama, math)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The teacher encourages <strong>student self-assessment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The teacher uses <strong>multifaceted</strong> (more than one type of measure), <strong>classroom-based</strong> assessments, <strong>tied to particular projects</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The teacher uses <strong>assessment data</strong> that <strong>captures individual</strong> student <strong>learning/thinking</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The teachers provided direct feedback through rubrics, rotating in the classroom to speak with specific students and checklists provided in some mini-lessons. For example, in the science classroom, there were guides for each lab that provided students with a scaffold that provided teacher guidance around the assignment. (Subindicator 1) There were assignment specific rubrics for larger assignments but also the portfolio rubric, known as the Lower School Oral Presentation Rubric in addition to content rubrics that were often referred to for larger assignments. Students were able to demonstrate multiple ways of representing knowledge across classrooms. For example, in English class the students created props for a play, an assignment differentiated to include increased writing, drawing or artwork/sculpture based on a story depending on the student’s interest and knowledge as a way to scaffold knowledge and interest in the story the class was reading.

In social studies, in the game and discussion described earlier regarding oil piracy, students self-assessed their abilities using the rubrics provided for assignments and then worked collaboratively in groups to assess their work. In a second social studies class, I observed a student presenting his oral presentation for the final semester portfolio and was provided...
feedback by peers and his teacher publicly about the project based on the rubric as a way to support and help him prepare for his presentation for his advisor. This provided opportunities to show content knowledge but also practice English and show growth in language acquisition. (Subindicator 3) All teachers use multifaceted assessments, including classroom-based assessments, projects, reading and writing assignments utilizing trade books as well as textbooks as resources, oral responses in English as well as formal Regents exams where required, for example, in English and Math. (Subindicator 4)

The area where evidence was lacking across classrooms was in regards to Subindicator 5 where teachers are expected to use increased student data to capture individual student learning. Although teachers used projects for each student to inform instruction at times, there was no evidence that fine-grained assessment data was used to capture individual student understanding clearly except for the five sample students in the team meetings. This is also discussed in the CBAS section.

**CBAS and Tier 2 Intervention Classes**

Understanding that the staff had created an aspirational targeted Tier 2 grouping, I created a rubric to help guide the observations of the CBAS classes that include two key foci from the CRIOP including the use of formative assessment, consistent teacher feedback and explicit instruction combined with reading and writing instruction for meaning and the traits of a classroom culture of caring. In addition, I utilized research around intervention work to identify some of the characteristics of explicit intervention work to guide my process. Gersten, et. al provides a research-based IES practice guide entitled, “Effective Literacy and English Language Instruction for ELs in the Elementary Grades” (2007). I found that many of these components can also support secondary learners. This informed my rubric in that it included progress
monitoring and systematic data driven instruction as part of the planning stage, intensive small group instruction but also in the five core reading elements with explicit, direct instruction and high quality vocabulary instruction.

Sun, et. al (2010) expanded on this study to provide characteristics of Tier 2 instruction that include progress monitoring around goals and the use of interactive teachings that allows for “multiple opportunities to respond, with corrective feedback” (p. 3). I broke out consistent teacher feedback as a subindicator from formative assessment for the Tier 2 classroom since that is the area where consistent feedback is sorely needed. The rubric reflects the additional components for Tier 2 instruction as well as a couple of the same ones for Tier 1. Since these classes are taught separately in this setting and not integrated into Tier 1, it was important to include a couple of the same traits as required by Tier 1 instruction, namely Classroom Care and the formative assessment feedback component. In the rubric, I define traits and their characteristics in three categories: Firmly established, moderately established and not yet established. This rubric helped me answer the following additional questions:

• What are the best practices of the Tier 2 classrooms? Which ones are culturally responsive?

• What is being carried from T1 that carries over into T2? Which indicators seem to be utilized in a more focused way in T2?

I observed CBAS classrooms approximately two to three times per teacher over the course of the semester. The tools helped me to see where the gaps may be around this type of intervention practice.
Table 7: Tier 2 CBAS Indicators - Evidence Across Classrooms\(^5\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CR</th>
<th>Progress Monitoring</th>
<th>Systematic data driven Instruction</th>
<th>Formative Assessment Practice*</th>
<th>Consistent Teacher Feedback</th>
<th>Explicit instruction – content Directions*</th>
<th>Explicit instruction - Foundational Literacy skills</th>
<th>Classroom Care*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Not Evident</td>
<td>NYE</td>
<td>WE</td>
<td>WE</td>
<td>WE</td>
<td>NYE</td>
<td>WE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Not Evident</td>
<td>NYE</td>
<td>WE</td>
<td>ME</td>
<td>WE</td>
<td>NYE</td>
<td>WE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Not Evident</td>
<td>ME</td>
<td>WE</td>
<td>ME</td>
<td>WE</td>
<td>ME</td>
<td>WE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Evident</td>
<td>ME</td>
<td>WE</td>
<td>WE</td>
<td>WE</td>
<td>NYE</td>
<td>WE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Trends Across Tier 2 Classrooms

According to Table 6 data, it is clear that across Tier 2 intervention classrooms, there was evidence of consistent teacher feedback that was either moderately or well established. Teachers often took time in small groups to rotate and provide direct verbal feedback to students to support improvement in language acquisition, to acknowledge good practice with helpful details, as well as to provide feedback on misconceptions around content. There were well-established formative assessment practices that were also identified in the Tier 1 classrooms, including checking for understanding practices and exit tickets. There was evidence in every observation of explicit instruction on either instructions for how to complete an assignment or general language structures or reading comprehension routines. Finally, there was consistent evidence of well-established routines around subindicators of classroom culture of caring that were also apparent in Tier 1 Classrooms. Where there were gaps in Tier 2 instruction were in evidence of systematic data-driven instruction and progress monitoring. There was no evidence in routines either

\(^5\) NYE=Not yet established; ME=Moderately established; WE=Well established
individually in a classroom or across the team in understanding how groups of students were performing. Only the individual profile students in inquiry team meetings showed evidence of this kind of more targeted process. In addition, there was a lack of focus on foundational literacy skills for the subset of students who needed it.

Each teacher took a slightly different approach to organizing CBAS. Generally, the content in social studies CBAS was preserved as a focus while honing in on sentence structures and emphasis on skills such as sequencing, which the teachers had described as being an area where students needed support. English and Science teachers focused on narratives through film and Socratic seminar practices to build oral language and discussion skills. The math teacher worked on numeracy practices to support students in basic skill building but often the focus shifted to project support. The special education teacher’s CBAS focused on supporting students in accessing the Tier 1 curriculum, with mostly a focus on the English curriculum although at times branching out into the content areas with individual students. In the following two vignettes, I describe the observations and evidence for linguistically or culturally responsive characteristics of the instruction and where there may be gaps. Also, I include teacher comments about their own practice and what they said they were hoping to improve or move towards where appropriate.

**Content Based Academic Support (CBAS):  Vignettes in Tier 2 Intervention Classrooms**

In my first example, Jeff’s CBAS class, he focused on special education ELL students who have been formally referred or were in the process of referral and often needed extra support in their daily assignments. Although students often need support with foundational literacy, Jeff said in interviews that he is stretched thin and has found that he doesn’t have the capacity to integrate this type of instruction into his CBAS class as of yet. He was initially working with
students from different classes using a variety of linguistically responsive strategies. The one highlighted here is annotation but we also see that home language and translanguaging has a natural place in this context as well as the way he grouped students in this small class.

Jeff’s CBAS: Annotation in Action

“Fair is not always equal.”

--Jeff, special education teacher

There is a lot of research that has accumulated to address and differentiate the needs of special education and English Language Learners. Unfortunately, at the heart of this matter is the need to complicate and interrogate the concept of diversity is to ensure that students aren’t stereotyped, misdiagnosed with the wrong learning needs, with the resulting assignment of lower standards to specific students due to misconceptions about their abilities. This often the case with emergent bilinguals new to the country who are undergoing a new and profound change in environment that includes not only perhaps new content and type of schooling and environment but learning new language. Thus, literature has been written on the need to more deeply understand where emergent bilinguals do need support and that adequate time and observations are part of the equation in determining their status. Again, many researchers (Klinger, ___; Sun, et. al. 2010) remind us that Tier 3 instruction is only introduced once it is established that the student’s learning difficulties are not related to limited English proficiency but a learning disability. (p.3)

In the case of my site, the referral process is based on many steps, including what we show later as an RtI assessment document to determine anecdotal and assessment data that can help the teachers set up a referral with confidence. Jeff is a 9th and 10th grade special education teacher who worked with teachers on two different teams. At the time of the interview, this was
his third full year in the classroom and his second as a special education teacher. He was at the school two years ago as a regular substitute teacher but there was no permanent vacancy. When he finished school and his special education license, there wasn't an open special education position at this school, so he was hired at a different school in the same borough to teach in an ICT inclusion class with 12th grade seniors. At the end of last year, he found out that this site was planning to expand the special education program and was excited to come back. He loves the school, but this year is struggling with the schedule:

I teach...eight ICT classes (on one team). And on another team, I teach six ICT classes. And then I also teach two CBAS sections, which are two classes each. So, four CBAS classes total. Yeah. It's a lot. It's too much, in my opinion. I feel like I'm being stretched thin– I feel like I'm doing a lot of things okay, as opposed to a few things really good, if that makes sense (Interview, April 2015).

Despite all this, Jeff is very committed to the students and does his best to find ways to support them. He doesn’t place any type of blame on administration or other teachers as he has mentioned they are actively trying to find ways to solve this problem. He also talked about what he learned at this school and how it compared to his last setting. He has a keen awareness of the ways that ELLs are often falsely referred due to a lack of understanding of the need to integrate language instruction into the classroom. In the interview, he spoke about his last school site:

Out of all my seniors, I think I had like four or five ELLs. Just seeing how they're treated, in an environment like that, as opposed to an environment here was really eye-opening. And it's very easy to see how those kids can slip through the cracks in other settings….it was helpful for me, because I think I took a lot of my experience here working with ELLs, and I brought it to working with those kids in that setting, and I think they
appreciated that. But I also know that they weren't being treated like that in some of their other classes, and it was unfortunate.

This year he was able to co-plan and co-teach with his English colleague, Janine, based on a newly created schedule. As a result, he used some of his intervention time to work with students on foundational literacy skills but also sometimes the assignments from class that they struggled with, in order to support them or provide further scaffolds to help them accomplish the work. At times, working in groups or pairs, he helped the students. He talked about his approach to thinking about how to differentiate for the students in his small primary support group, known as CBAS.

I think it's something that we do well at this school—is this whole idea of fair is not always equal. Where...differentiation is going to look different, for different students doesn't mean it's unfair. And I think it's something that, just by the nature of our school, and our students, and everybody – the culture that we've created here, it's something we do really well. So, this idea of being able to meet students where they're at, I think is important. It's also very hard to do.

On one of the days I observed, it was a cold day, yet Jeff’s small room was hot. He was waiting on all five of his students to come in from the hallway and turns on the AC since the room gets oppressively hot. The students walked in and one student, Rey, a short and spry 9th grader, says “Thanks Jeff!” They like the cool air, especially in such a tight space. There are two parallel tables, one against each wall, with room for four students. I was at Jeff’s desk and one student went to Jeff’s computer where she usually works. Jocelyn is a Spanish speaker and is focused on her science assignment. She looks comfortable working alone. When I ask, she said she is working on a lab report.
The students fell right into place and start working on their assignment, which was called the TOW, or Topic of the Week - an article the students receive for homework in English class, a class that Jeff co-taught with Janine, the English general education teacher. While Jocelyn was working independently on the science assignment on the computer, the other students were working on the TOW assignment, which revolved around an article on a measles outbreak. Two students, Reynaldo and Juan, were working in partnership with one another since they are both Spanish speakers. They worked independently with some occasional structured support from Jeff, while, most of the time, Jeff worked more intensively with one student, John, who speaks an African dialect. John was a SIFE student who is struggling to learn language but shows evidence of prospering in this setting, according to Jeff and to observations over the period of the semester. While the other students get out their work, Jeff asked John, “Do you have your activity?” as he fumbled for his packet. On the wall was Jeff’s annotation chart, which students sometimes referred to when they do the TOW assignment. It was also on the assignment itself as in Figure 11 (below).

The students referred to this while they’re working and work collaboratively to annotate the text.

I think the annotation strategies that we use help. I think forcing the kids to kind of slow down, and go back and re-read things. And we use a pretty simple strategy in English class, and that's what they were doing today. They circle words they don't know. They put stars next to things that they think are important. And then they're supposed to write in the margins, like, connections to themselves, or connections – that it reminds them of something. So, I think that helps a lot.
Jeff read aloud the first article entitled, *Staying Safe from Measles means No School for Some.*

It’s about a measles outbreak in Santa Ana, CA. “Are there any words you don’t know in this first paragraph? Read through and circle them and then let’s talk about them.”

![Image of T.O.W. #20 Assignment and Annotation Guide]

**Figure 11: Introduction to TOW Assignment and Annotation Guide**
Figure 12: Introduction to Article

Two of the students looked them up in Google Translate. John seemed very comfortable talking, even though he needed support from Jeff on many of the questions for his writing. He gave an example. "Disease is when people get sick from something. …"

Another student said, “Symptoms? Measles is spread by coughing.”

“Can you use ‘disease’ in a sentence? “Jeff prompted.

John said, “I know my father had a disease when he was young…” When Jeff is finished talking with John, he turns to the others as well to finish the annotation work on the first paragraph, “Can you make a connection to anything we just read? Does that remind you of anything in your life?”

Juan said, “I have had shots before.”

John added, “It hurts mister!” The group laughs.
Jeff replied, “Ok why don’t you write that?...Rey, you can write that you’ve gotten that before.
And John if you can’t write it now, you can circle it…”
As a few minutes passed, he said, “You need five (words) by the end...contagious might be a good one....”

Vocabulary Directions: Choose 5 new words. Find their definition and write a sentence using each word.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New Word</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Translation</th>
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Figure 13: Topic of the Week Vocabulary Exercise

Jeff went over the directions with them. “Okay, you’re going to finish using the text codes below as you read the article to understand the text more deeply. Do a round on your own with the next paragraph or two.” The students took some time annotating at different paces.
Jeff said, “Vaccine keeps it from spreading...Do you know that word ‘Kindergartners?’”
Rey: “What is that? People in the kindergarten.” Juan turned to him and said in Spanish. “It’s a school…for young kids.” Rey understands, “Ah okay!”

Jeff wrote, “Can you connect that to anyone in your own life?”
John said, “It reminds me of Ebola. Measles is more contagious than Ebola? Can that be true?”
Teacher...Well, not really,” he jokes, “maybe if I wiped my hand on John’s mouth….
They all laugh. “No, it’s not as contagious,” he said. “Keep reading.”
Rey translated for his partner and they exchange. Jeff said, to Juan and Rey “You guys write down an example of when you’re sick or Reynaldo you can write about Ebola.”

They annotated the next paragraph on vaccines entitled “Vaccine keeps it from spreading.” The next exercise after vocabulary required students to write an original sentence using the word. Jeff said, “Some parents aren’t getting the shots because they are afraid. Are you going to do definitions or translations?”
Figure 15: TOW Comprehension Section

Comprehension

1. Draw a picture showing how measles spreads from one person to another. Then write a sentence explaining your picture.

2. Draw a picture that shows why some parents are not vaccinating their children. Then write a sentence explaining your picture.

Reynaldo said to his friend, “Do you know do you say spitting? How do you spell it?” Juan translated. Translanguaging is a regular part of the annotation process where students often move into home language, especially in these case where they have a partner with the same home language. John used native language Google Translate to find meaning on an iPad. Juan helped Rey, and Janine joined the activity back from the computer.

Jeff said, “How can you use measles in a sentence?” John wrote, “Measles is a disease that can be dangerous…” “What did you learn about measles?” prompted Jeff. John thinks and said, “Measles can be contagious...”
“That’s a good one…why don’t you write that...” Reynaldo spoke up, “Measles are contagious and people can die from that…” Jeff asked Juan and Rey, “Why are people not vaccinating their children? What are they afraid of?”

Reynaldo answered in Spanish:” Que leen algo negative....”

Juan added, “They are afraid of the symptoms…..or that they are going to get sick.”

In the last section, the students drew a picture about how measles spreads from one person to another. Jeff asked John, “What are you going to draw?” When John is unsure, Jeff provides a few suggestions. John, Rey and Janine made it to the final assignment, but not all finished it. It was a more advanced writing prompt in Figure 8 below:

**Figure 16: TOW Writing Prompt**

3. **Opinion Writing:** Some people have been saying we should pass always that everyone must be required to get vaccinations, whether they want it or not. Explain your opinion in one sentence using the word ‘because.’

The students used annotation to help them. The last activity linked back to scaffolds for writing that has been the interdisciplinary work of the teacher team when planning lessons.

**Discussion and Analysis**

Jeff provided a comfortable culture for students in the way he arranged the room and the way he interacted with students. He provided visuals throughout the room to support students in their work as well as the grouping that would help them work optimally. He demonstrated he has solid relationships with his students by referring to them by name and clearly drawing upon their experiences. He was interested in their lives and experiences and leveraged these to help them make connections from the text. He took a different approach with John than Rey and Juan to cater to their learning styles and linguistic needs. In this way, as Powell details in the CRIOP sub-category Classroom Relationships he demonstrated the ethic of care in his ability to help his
student self-regulate as well as differentiate the strategies he used with different students whether
in grouping, in the type of questions or the additional tools and materials he used. Also, Jeff
helped support students in demonstrating direct instruction balanced with reading and writing for understanding, also under the category of Instructional Practice in the Powell, et al framework.

Jeff mostly structured the time around subject areas on which students need to focus. Since he co-taught ELA, this was often the subject of choice to best support students in English language acquisition. A key routine the teachers used was the Topic of the Week article and assignment where the students annotated for meaning. Finally, according to Table 1 provided, Krashen (1982, 2003) showed that second language learners must have access to comprehensible input that is just beyond their current level of competence and they must have opportunities to produce output for meaningful purposes (Swain, 1995). All the activities in this CBAS class have been designed with language and content objectives to support this framework where the content is chunked in ways that will help them access it more effectively, but is still challenging for the students. They were able to get support from peers, technology tools, annotation guides or with Jeff’s support in reading aloud and/or questioning. Often, Jeff conducted a “think aloud” and encouraged students to do this as well to process the text with a teammate. Although it was outside the scope of this research project to measure growth around any one of the particular strategies used, the students in Jeff’s class demonstrated growth in their English class as a result of this additional support, according to the other teachers and classroom reports.

Jeff used a lot of strategies, including questioning, to teach vocabulary meaning. We also see, as in many other classrooms at the school that computers, dictionaries and Google translate are used often as a support as they navigate readings and new material. He helped students connect ideas to their own experience so they could deepen comprehension. He partnered with
other students who shared the same native language in order to take full advantage of utilizing home language as a resource as students learn English but also to deepen their thinking. Thus, translanguaging was encouraged where students were able to utilize both languages to support making meaning in the classroom.

Jeff also tried to create community by having students work together when possible and then he rotated and worked more intensively with one student before moving to another. In a prior CBAS class, one of his students, Gideon started to escalate into emotional crisis mode. He was upset about a personal issue that had been escalated in the hallway, and Jeff helped him self regulate by providing him with a book he liked to distract him and help him focus. As the student sat down on the floor, he began to become quiet and read to himself. Later in the period, he was able to start working on the assignment. During the next CBAS, Gideon was better and was able to actually do a lot of work after an initial pleading to go into the snow. He typed up his whole lab report, for example, in class and was able to demonstrate renewed academic focus.

Unlike the TOW article, some of the readings in English and Social Studies class are more complex. The Common Core has required grade level reading, and Jeff expressed concern that the students can’t access them independently in class. He often needed to modify the language of the reading because every other word or two the students struggle with and some can’t do it all independently or even, sometimes, in partnership with another students. John, his SIFE student, had intermediate literacy skills in his home language, according to initial first year diagnostics, but struggled in learning the new words in English and needed extra support in writing. In the context of the teacher team observed, Jeff was an outlier in terms of his limited access to meet with teachers on his team regularly. As a result, he said he was often unable to provide the right scaffolds for them. The assigned students in CBAS class were able to receive
support on an ongoing basis, so in this case, he said he was better able to accommodate them as learners, some of whom, but not all whom, have IEPs.

In terms of the Tier 2 rubric, for Jeff, systematic data-driven instruction was dependent on what happens with the larger team. For all students, the initial native language assessment was administered in the beginning of the year to help understand student language schooling and family background as well as the New York State-mandated New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners (NYSITELL) designed to help categorize English language learners into subgroups. Students are moved in and out of CBAS as based on student work in Tier 1 classes and specific improvements observed by the teacher. Progress monitoring was informal and thus more subject to error in teacher perception. There were no agreed upon assessments to support their next steps in specific foundational literacy areas. Formative assessment data captured broad thinking of individuals, and there was reading and writing connected to articles created for students in the Tier 1 class (TOW).

In Jeff’s class there was clear guidance and feedback given to individual students, in some cases corrective, done in a respectful way and as a way to push learning in English and provide students with a deeper understanding of the errors (Gersten, 2007). There was some direct instruction on vocabulary throughout the lesson; however, Jeff also drew upon student experiences to pave the way for comprehension. Jeff provided modeling in a few areas but less explicit instruction. There was some explicit vocabulary instruction related to the assignment. There was a firmly established culture of care in that the teacher demonstrates an ethic of care, communicates high expectations for all students, there is atmosphere of respect and learning, there was active confrontation of discrimination if needed. By his own admission, as well as according to the rubric, the area of growth for Jeff in his CBAS is in explicit instruction in
foundational literacy and progress monitoring. At times, Jeff worked with a literacy teacher when CBAS wasn’t enough, so this was a helpful resource for the team. Jeff worked with two other teams and their CBAS students and used a variety of methods to support students, which he described in an interview. For example, he used tools with students who need oral language support such as Dragon Dictation and specific computer applications. He differentiated and tailored instruction to the student’s IEP; for example, for one student he acted as a scribe.

Jeff described the limitations of what he can offer for some students. About one student in particular who is struggling, he said, “If I just had time to go back to really basic stuff, like the alphabet (it would be great)….There’s just not enough time to go back however many years back he would need to go.” There are structural and programmatic obstacles that interfere with Jeff’s ability to create a more in depth Tier 2 setting. However, he is serving a lot of students and the implication, as often the case in urban settings, is related to personnel and financial resources in serving students.

Annie’s Content Based Academic Support (CBAS): Scaffolding Socratic seminar for language learners

“It's important to to talk about what you're learning for yourself and to benefit other students. I think it's even more important for our students to practice using vocabulary in explaining something to other students.”

-Annie, science teacher

I spent several class periods in Annie’s CBAS class. Annie was the science teacher and has articulated that literacy and teaching language had been a challenge for her. In interviews and in meetings, she often spoke in a reflective way about the benefits of collaborating with the team and how it shaped her thinking and practice with students. In her CBAS, Annie decided to work on language and discussion skills with a mix of students who were either at an intermediate or a basic level on the New York State English Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT). Although a couple of students could not yet speak English, they had the chance to plan in the
home language with their peers where possible and observe the ways the Socratic seminar could support discussion skills. This was a strategic decision by the team as Annie partnered in planning with Janine, the English teacher, who also used Socratic circle with her students as a way to model thinking and discussion and provide opportunities for practice. Annie talked about her beliefs on teaching in an eloquent way: “I think that's a core belief that I have is that students should be able to ask good questions, and they should ask questions all the time and not just accept everything that is given to them.” This statement is reflected in the way that Annie supported her students in expressing their opinions and asking questions of one another in Socratic seminar.

In terms of linguistically responsive principles Annie addressed in her CBAS classroom, I found evidence for the following principle from Table 1: “Social interaction in which ELLs actively participate fosters the development of conversational and academic English.” (Gass, 1997; Vygotsky, 1978; Wong-Fillmore & Snow, 2005). In Annie’s Tier 1 classrooms, there was a preponderance of evidence on CRIOP around pedagogy and instructional practices which highlighted teacher learning with students; allowing for collaborating with other students; using hands-on learning to promote student engagement, particularly in labs. There was evidence of balancing instruction of both explicit skill instruction and reading and writing for meaning, which became particularly necessary with science vocabulary and texts. Some of this carried over into CBAS, although the focus was more on literacy practice that did not include a content focus on science.

The CBAS consisted of a small class of 10 students. In observing the last of a series of Annie’s CBAS class, the group watched *Pursuit of Happyness*, a 2006 film featuring Will Smith that revolves around the plot of a homeless man and his son, his pursuit of a job and a way to
escape poverty and somehow enter the middle class. Many of the teachers on this team used film as a way to spur discussion, teach vocabulary and generate interest and engagement with their students and allow them opportunities to practice English in groups.

During this session, I walked in late when the kids were engaged and entranced by the film in its last scene. Here Will Smith’s character, a homeless man who is supporting a young child on his own, gets a coveted full time job he has struggled to earn through an internship and selection process. The scene brought the students immediately into discussion. All students, even those who speak little English, were interested in informally communicating about the film. The students were first prompted to work with a partner to talk about the film with some guiding questions. The goal of the activity was for students to be invited into the Socratic circle with one group on the inside participating actively in the conversation, the other on the outside listening in. Annie provided the following prompts for each discussion question in the assignment in Figure 17 below.

NAME _______________________________ CLASS____________________

Directions: Answer each of the questions by yourself. Then share your answers with a partner. After you share your answers with a partner, we will have a Socratic Circle discussion about the questions.

1. The theme of a story is the general idea or insight expressed by the author. Theme is a universal and meaningful that emerges from the characters’ actions and from the outcomes of the conflicts described in the story. Theme is thought of as the lesson of the story. Usually, the theme can be expressed in one sentence.

   a. What is the primary or central theme of this story?

   b. Do you agree or disagree with it? Why?

| I think….. | My partner thinks…. |
2. Has this movie changed your view of the homeless?

I think….. My partner thinks…..

Figure 17: “The Pursuit of Happyness” Handout – Scaffold for Socratic Circle

Annie placed the more experienced English speakers in the circle on the outside to speak and the other students on the inside to respond to questions. She reminded them that they must call on each other to talk. She let them know that for this first round she will ask the questions since they are just starting out. “What is the primary or central theme? Do you agree or disagree?”

One student responded “If you want something never give up.” The other students responded. Jean, a Spanish-speaking student from Puerto Rico agreed. Jean chose the next person. Antoine, a West African student said, “I agree with what he said, but if you try hard you can do anything….but if you keep asking people won’t believe it.” Andell spoke next: “Chris wanted to try very hard he had a young kid and the didn’t want him to be homeless or parentless…”
Andell chose Angelo. Angelo said, “If you want something in life you have to work hard to accomplish it.”

He, in turn, chose a girl, Mahana.

Mahana said, “I think he if you are homeless don’t (sic) be lazy keep working and keep working harder ‘til you get there and that Chris he didn’t to be homeless…he kept trying to work harder…..”

Angela prompted them to switch sides. Now it was the inside circle’s turn.

This time, the student Fatima asked a question: “Has this movie changed your view of the homeless?

Jean responded, “Yes, It did change because Chris was homeless and he tried his best not to be homeless. “Do you agree,” said, turning towards another student.

“Yes,” this student said, “I agree with you, because Chris he don’t want to be homeless because he had a kid so young…he don’t want to be……

Fatima finished his sentence, “…he worked hard not to be homeless.”

With the last prompt, Jean responded, “Before I thought homeless were lazy, now not anymore.”

Mahana said, “I thought the homeless was poor and lazy…Now I think even the homeless can choose what they want and what they want to do…”

**Discussion and Analysis**

This type of Socratic seminar provided a safe space for students to practice oral language discussion skill development with practice in pairs and small groups in response to complex questions. It was transformative in the ways the majority of students opened up and participated. I met two boys here, one of whom became a student that participated in my focus group and turned out to be one of the inquiry groups from the teacher team. This student, Sandar
was dark skinned tall and thin young man of West African descent. He told me he spoke multiple oral languages but that he has only surface knowledge of English so far. It was clear from the conversation and interaction with him as well as data from the inquiry group that he struggled to access print. He thought more about the sequence of the story than about the feelings or themes and had a hard time expressing anything other than sequential thoughts. The other boy, Pete, was light skinned, Spanish speaking, with curly hair and thin. In our small group, I observed that he had a much easier time expressing his thoughts in English. For example, he was able to say that if the homeless (or anyone) worked hard they can achieve and do things. He was able to understand what I shared in English as well and write it down with some spelling and tense errors. Although Sandar couldn’t fully participate in the writing, he had strong opinions and participated in the informal discussion. He was still learning how to identify words, form English sentences and work with print language, whereas Pete had more experience with print English and had his home language as a resource, particularly in translanguaging with other students.

Annie’s arrangement of the lesson allowed scaffolding for success. For example, the partner work was a great scaffold to the socratic circle where students tried it out for the first time. The inner circle included the more experienced kids on the first go around which helped because they felt more comfortable talking. The dialogue above showed that some were willing to talk more easily because they could access discussion language prompts that had been established in the Tier 1 classroom. “I agree with so so and so, I feel…..” CBAS provided another opportunity for practice. Annie took the lead in teaching them explicitly about the circle. I wondered at the time how she measured improvement. One student, an Arabic student, Michele, couldn’t speak at all. I wondered, had he shown any improvement in English since he’s
been here? Had the teachers found ways to assess or access his home language literacy levels or knowledge? We missed the opportunity to address students like Michele in our interview.

Overall, based on the Tier 2 CBAS rubric, I observed the class to be moderately developed in terms of consistent teacher feedback. The teacher provided this in very direct, respectful ways in her go-around to students. She modeled how to discuss with other students in the warm up exercise and explicitly taught the process, which is another example of direct instruction. Although there could have been more opportunities, students responded. The CBAS academic vocabulary was included and related mostly to content from ELA Tier 1 instruction. As in Jeff’s CBAS, explicit instruction of distinct language forms was not present. For learners in the silent stage, there were few opportunities for them to engage in practice. Although it provided an opportunity for them to view others try out English in safe ways, it didn’t help him/her practice the foundational skills they needed to build their linguistic schema. It turns out two of those students are SIFE and the student I worked with Sandar is waiting on an IEP review.

**Tier 3 Considerations**

Upon asking how the teachers coordinated this review and assessed students for special education, Jeff said he coordinated the process for each student who may show need for additional supports. He used the form in Figure 18 to elicit from teachers how students were performing both academically and behaviorally to help foster conversations with parents and teachers. According to teacher interviews and observations considerations for Tier 3 for emergent bilinguals include many factors. These include whether there is availability of a bilingual psychologist for the student in need; teacher education around misconceptions around language acquisition versus cognitive ability; the strength of the teacher team and referral
process both from a guidance and instructional standpoint; availability of student data from prior schools and/or living environments. This would be an area of possible further research to explore.

**RTI Snapshot**

*School Year 2014-2015*

**STUDENT’S INFORMATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student’s First Name</th>
<th>Student’s Last Name (initial only)*</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Team</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Native Language(s)</th>
<th>Advisor</th>
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**ACADEMIC OVERVIEW**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLASS</th>
<th>ACADEMIC STRENGTHS</th>
<th>ACADEMIC CHALLENGES</th>
<th>INSTRUCTIONAL MODIFICATIONS/INTERVENTIONS ATTEMPTED (including duration)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Science</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elective (Please specify)</td>
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**BEHAVIORAL OVERVIEW**

| BEHAVIORAL STRENGTHS | |
|----------------------||
| BEHAVIORAL CHALLENGES | |
There was ample evidence of cultural and linguistically responsive strategies in the Tier 1 and Tier 2 intervention classrooms, advisory and in informal spaces throughout the school. Among the strongest practices I observed were those related to creating a climate that is social emotionally supportive and sensitive to student’s needs and the diversity in the classroom including establishing mutual respect and trust. Physical climate also mirrored a lot of strengths in creating visuals to anchor students in a culture of care and also in literacy practices to support learning and language development. In a close third place in term of evidence collected were the instructional and pedagogical practices that were very strong in supporting English language learners across a spectrum of language acquisition skills. These practices included annotation, scaffolding reading and writing through supports, for examples, sentence frames, explicit language instruction in sentence writing across disciplines through Hochman writing methods and collaborative project work often related to authentic experiences. In assessment, the classrooms offered diverse opportunities for self-reflection and formative assessment to gauge how students are performing across the team. The whole school rubrics in content areas and for
oral presentations provided opportunities for students to improve in critical thinking skills pertinent to their subject areas as well as presenting and speaking in English. The curriculum designed by teachers also provided support in developing academic conceptual knowledge in addition to language skills.

There are still gaps in targeting foundational literacy for SIFE and other students who need additional support early on as newcomers to the school. Targeted progress monitoring to move students into more data-informed grouping doesn’t yet exist and is not yet accepted by everyone in the school as a necessary process. For example, although the Socratic seminar CBAS class provided an excellent opportunity for the students to practice and deepen discussion skills, there was a mismatch in providing the foundational literacy skills to the group of students who really needed this kind of support, even temporarily. There wasn’t evidence of targeted grouping that would provide these opportunities in CBAS. Jeff’s class also provided wonderful support for students in accessing their assignments. He, too, struggled to find time to teach basic skills to the students who needed them.

I found this to be evident in every CBAS class that I observed. Although every class consistently provided engagement and support, foundational literacy development was a factor that was missing as indicated in Table 2. According to Jeff, this type of learning sometimes happens in one-on-one instruction or occasionally in his CBAS; however, this is not the norm for a variety of reasons, according to interviews with staff as well as observations. The literacy teacher discussed, in an interview, that there is potential for this type of work in her classroom but at times, her services were utilized in a haphazard manner.

There exist one or more of the following factors among teams, according to observations and interviews for this team and across teams in the school: 1) a lack of skill or knowledge of
how to teach foundational literacy; 2) a belief that this is not required for the majority of students and may be harmful to them or take away from the rigor of the curriculum; 3) a lack of assessment tools to help differentiate and group in more targeted way and, at times, more homogeneously in the Tier 2 classroom; and 4) scheduling and programming issues that may prevent time for this type of instruction. Also, 5) there existed disagreement among team members on the need to progress monitor in the process in a more meaningful and targeted way.

According to the literacy coach the Tier 2 classroom they have created should be a separate space that's just focused on language systematically, over time, for all four years of the student’s time in high school. She pointed out that this shouldn’t supplant the instruction that is happening in Tier 1 classrooms but should supplement it over time in more systematic data-informed ways:

That imaginary space for providing additional intervention doesn't exist in the way that we want it to, currently. We have the literacy class. Now we have the CBAS academic support class. Then now with portfolio, we have mentoring. Those interventions are happening. There are those spaces that are strategically carved out in the day for it. Whether it is functioning the way that we imagine it could function, we're not there. There's this idea that, in addition to the core content area classes, in order to really provide really individualized support to students, the core content area classes are low and are not sufficient for that. But, absent any other space to do explicit language instruction systematically right now, that (current CBAS) is what we have.

When assessing from a systems perspective, many of the basic organizational principles of RtI exist; however, the progress monitoring and appropriate assessments that need to be in place to ensure that students can be moved more strategically in their English language growth is yet to come. This also reflected the challenges that the teachers describe in creating a space for
newcomer ELLs who are learning English. In some cases, as with this school site, there are a variety of home languages. Understanding and unpacking diversity requires complex kinds of pedagogical activities and assessments to better understand the linguistic skills students come with and those they still need to hone. Although the teachers were working on increasing a variety of content and language skills in Tier 2, there was no clear path to help students like Sandar who need to work on foundational literacy, despite the additional support measures provided. In the same way, there are not measures to help students like Fernando to push him into more advanced literacy work, for example. The process, although informative, does not support teachers optimally in the Tier 3 process as it is currently laid out, according to the special education teacher (See Figure 2). Although Jeff has a form to facilitate the referral process, it is an unclear roadmap and does not always ensure that the distinctions between learning disability and language acquisition issues are made.

Despite these areas of improvement suggested by the research, there is an overwhelming amount of evidence of the skill and sensitivity that many teachers have in language acquisition and cultural responsiveness and some mechanisms to provide support to teachers who are still novices in these areas. Despite overwhelming structural obstacles, the special education teachers worked with content area teachers to move along a referral process when deemed necessary and support the students who have been referred to him in respectful and dignified ways. Despite imperfect assessments, the teachers teamed together to plan for increased instructional coherence to support and scaffold writing for their students. Teachers worked also to determine who might need support in foundational literacy to get extra help from an overbooked literacy teacher. The coach supported multiple teacher teams throughout the inquiry process and achieved success with the team I observed in facilitating learning and analysis of student work to inform
instructional planning. In many ways, the quality of the curriculum planning for language and content differentiation provided exceptional examples of support for a variety of English language learners along the continuum while taking into account, with the support of the guidance team, the diverse learning and socioemotional needs of students.

In schools where teachers do not have this kind of knowledge and skill or the opportunities to collaborate, the implications for referral errors are high and the depth of understanding the linguistic and cultural needs of students will be potentially low. One of the implications for policy and school improvement that emerged from this study is the importance of team planning, both vertically and horizontally for culturally and linguistic strategies and also in cooperation with the guidance counselor or social worker to deepen understanding of the socio-emotional needs of students in addition to their family context to ensure that knowledge from the home and from families is integrated into planning classroom instruction but, perhaps more importantly, in relating to the child. An additional implication from this study is understanding and providing avenues for teachers to acquire culturally and linguistically responsive awareness, knowledge and strategies. The final chapter explores how the teachers in this school site acquired this kind of knowledge and skills to interrogate our current understandings and assumptions about how teachers learn.
Chapter 7

Teacher Acquisition of Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Practices

Introduction

Upon interviewing teachers at this school site, it became clear that there were a few key routes by which teachers had acquired culturally and linguistically responsive strategies. All of the teachers interviewed were also observed and had implemented culturally and/or linguistically responsive strategies in one form or another, as defined using the multiple tools described. The guidance team spoke about the importance of culturally and linguistically responsive strategies in working with individual and groups. The team’s use of some strategies was corroborated by student interviews and focus groups as well as one observation of a guidance/teacher professional collaboration meeting. In determining key themes about acquisition of these strategies, I reviewed and coded ten interviews for themes with staff, which included six teachers from the school, four of who belonged to the teacher team I observed with two exceptions, the literacy teacher and 11th grade science teacher. In addition, I coded interview data from the social work intern, one social worker, the literacy coach and principal to explore this question.

One finding from this research was that all teachers interviewed and observed had received Masters degrees, as required by New York State; however, none of them with the exception of the literacy coach, who had received a TESOL license, reported that they had been trained in these strategies in their pre-service classes with any depth. In fact, this was mentioned in all teacher interviews and often prefaced their explanation of their need to acquire training and guidance in alternative ways. Three out of the six staff interviewed, however, said that they attended strong Master’s programs where they learned other useful information. This is helpful
to keep in mind that the programs weren’t necessarily poor quality but didn’t focus on how to support English language learners and their specific needs.

**Team Collaboration as Learning**

The first and most salient key theme around their educational acquisition and professional learning was that, for teachers, the learning that took place in their collaboration with other teachers within their discipline and grade level teams; for the guidance intern, first and foremost, collaboration with the guidance team and second, collaboration with teachers; and for the principal in collaborating with staff across the school. The social studies, science and English teachers spoke at great length about the curriculum planning process for their discipline and the ways it impacted their own learning and teaching. They each described the process as a collaborative design, where for each unit created, teachers planned in big picture ways to establish the unit and essential questions, then backwards plan, and then divide up tasks along the way. Each discipline team member planned different lessons that, wherever possible, showcased their individual strengths that could be applied across the team. The English teacher described it this way: “A lesson doesn’t exist that I plan myself ever. It’s all part of a process that I do with other people on the team…that makes a huge difference.” The special education teacher corroborated this practice and affirmed its usefulness insofar as he was able to participate in planning with one discipline team when possible, and more frequently in co-teaching situations.

The English teacher also described an impact she has noted on instruction. For example, she described that all members of the team, as a result of co-planning, were required to implement other team members’ teaching strategies which often helped push individual practice.
“There are some things that other people have done in practice and then you have to do them instead of…filing away in the filing cabinet of a million good ideas. You try new things, which is good.” In her case, she tried theater and drama strategies, which, originally were not in her “comfort zone.” When she saw how they helped students learn, she continued to use and hone them as is corroborated by teacher observation data in her classroom in Chapter 6. Another way she described the impact of co-planning on instruction was that routines emerged for the planning for students. They came to establish, for example, literary analysis on Mondays and often seminar discussions around an essential question another day of the week. Thursdays were writing. “That became much easier to plan because we had a structure, “she said. In this way, the lessons were also backward mapped to the instructional outcomes and the final product, in this case an essay on the novel taught. Teachers then tailored the lessons to their own students as needed.

The teachers described learning during co-planning to happen in a variety of ways including getting feedback on a lesson, hearing how others had implemented a specific strategy before and the outcomes for students, making decisions about how to organize their class. In science, the 9/10th teacher described her experience joining the school as a new teacher:

When I came here I was in shock. I don’t really know how else to say it. I was teaching 11th and 12th graders though so they had already gotten some language in the lower school. I didn’t have any training in teaching ELLS. Everything I new came from my co-teacher at that time and basically the interdisciplinary team.”

During that time, the more veteran teachers on the team created curriculum while she implemented it in her classroom. These teachers, who were more experienced with the population, worked with her to understand and implement instructional strategies. In this case,
the team took on a mentoring role. Some teachers also described the troubleshooting process where they may have needed to differentiate their lessons further or move into their own individual strategy with the class. The English teacher said, “Every once in a while, people will say, you know what? This isn’t working for me. I am going to do this other thing. My kids need X. And that was okay too.”

Other teachers also described grade-level or interdisciplinary team meetings as a professional learning experience. The 9th and 10th grade science teacher emphasized team structure: “There are 70 kids in this school that are ours and I think every team takes real ownership of the students on their team as a family.” Coming together around the students provided motivation and engagement. The practice that was mentioned by all the teachers in this regard was the process of looking at student work. The English teacher described the process of reviewing papers after allowing two weeks to pass; with her team: “I could see all of the depth of their understanding when I may have missed it…in the moment….”

The coach described the impact of teaming on students, from her perspective:

Obviously from a school administrator perspective, the teams have varying degrees of good teaming and team dynamics. In some cases, there are teams that can become dysfunctional. When that happens the impact of the teacher team on the instructional work is very clearly diminished, but when the teams work well together then the instructional impact on kids is high.

She also described the role of interdisciplinary team work to be intentionally designed as a form of professional development in which she played a role: “Thinking about how to structure that space and making that a meaningful place for teachers to collaborate together making it into a professional learning space was what I thought was my biggest job for last year.” Often PD is
envisioned as an outsider coming into the school to create learning experiences; for her as in many professional learning communities, it was creating and engineering a space where teachers can learn together. Similarly, the guidance team, in addition to meeting with teachers, also met on their own on a weekly basis. Team two’s social worker talked about the guidance meetings as a venue for problem solving, to talk about alerts to students having difficulty and as a way to collaborate to help the student. One of their interns described those meetings: “There’s a lot of sharing practices that happens in the guidance staff. The meetings help us learn from senior staff and know our limits as interns.”

One teacher described the role of more traditional professional development in their team collaboration. For example, when the team made the decision to pilot the Hochman writing strategies, they each rotated in attending professional development workshops with the coach to learn about the theory and implementation. They shared their learning in the group and, once a month, the coach would share an article about Hochman that detailed strategies or introduced a new concept and the team would discuss it. For example, the coach brought in Diane August’s 14-step lesson plan to use in a school wide workshop and with the teams as a way to support teachers in developing lesson for ELLs and used it strategically to see where the gaps were in planning as opposed to starting from scratch. The coach noted that teachers were doing many of the components of August’s planning, already; however, they were missing “the kinds of questioning that gets kids to play very close attention to text.” Therefore, she focused on that piece with them, thus strategically leveraging traditional PD practices as a way to craft the professional learning of the team.

Finally, a key component of both the weekly interdisciplinary meetings was the practice of conducting “curriculum share” which at this school, denoted the practice of sharing a lesson
and having the team analyze it for structure or for a particular set of strategies. An 11th grade science teacher described the effect of the protocol and process: “One of the things that’s really nice about it is once you internalize it, it’s just constantly happening.” As a result of this practice, he said it helped build a relationship with his fellow 12th grade science teacher so that they also would seek out feedback about lessons using the protocol informally.

One of the ways that this practice became such a strong component of school culture is that the administration programmed interdisciplinary teams to meet three times per week, a challenging feat for many schools. However, as a result, the interdisciplinary teams were able to meet once a week around instruction, one around logistics and scheduling and once with one member of the guidance team, who as described in earlier chapters was their point person for the entire year and worked exclusively with their team of students. The principal described the necessity of this collaborative work:

We have to be working together and communicating with one another to take care of that whole person. That kind of model needs to happen in a school, because we’re dealing with the whole child…That’s the vision and philosophy.

As described in earlier chapters, the guidance team provided a lot of intervention strategies both within and outside the classroom for individual teacher teams. The ongoing support from one guidance counselor or social worker assigned to each team provided continuity for both one set of students and one team of teachers. The social studies teacher described their guidance counselor, “Her insights about the way students are feeling and what they are going through are always playing in the back of my mind, depending on the situations that are happening in class.” The type of learning in these meetings happened through problem solving around the types of interventions that would support students with socio-emotional and, in some cases, resulting
instructional problems. Another teacher described it: To have all those people involved to tackle an issue from different angles is (so helpful). I don’t know what without it or how I would solve problems. “Finally, the science teacher added her perception: “Guidance is just another piece of that family so to me it’s really important that we have these guidance meetings.”

There were several important criteria that surfaced from these interviews and team meeting observations. One criterion for these professional learning meetings, according to interviewees and based on observations is the organization of the meetings for the purpose of learning. The role of coach as facilitator supported team two in moving to another level of learning since she helped plan agendas and provided the support around the inquiry process. She also supported the professional development process through sharing both research and providing opportunities to build knowledge and skills in workshops external and internal to the school. A tool that helped all of these meetings be more effective was the use of technology to communicate. For curriculum planning, Dropbox was used by most teams to plan and warehouse their curriculum. For the instructional interdisciplinary meeting Skedula, a data and scheduling program, was used to review data sources and also make notes for the guidance counselor on anecdotes. Google docs were used to take minutes and set agendas as well as share folders that included other professional development documents. These tools provided teachers with ways to more effectively use their time together and to communicate when they weren’t together in person.

According to team members and the coach, another important criterion for meetings and professional collaboration as learning is trust. The coach explained,
If I don’t trust you I’m not going to sit down and have a conversation with you about my lesson plan. … I have seen the very detrimental effects on instruction... because where there are possibilities for teachers to work together they are not doing it.

The special education teacher described his co-teaching relationship with the social studies teacher: “We have a previous history of working together, and I think that’s what’s helped us out in terms of our comfort level and rapport.” The guidance intern also described the meetings with her team and her supervisor and described that both trust and knowledge played a role. She said her learning this year involved communication and building trust with youth as well. Her team is helping her with this:

I do most of my work in Spanish, and I’m really trying to give space for young people to define their narrative of coming here. I think it’s really critical that they feel respected. I’ve learned a lot about critical family relationships are during immigration and after it, and how much trauma there is that could have happened years ago in a kids’ life but resurfacing when they’re going through all of these huge changes. We read about immigration trauma the first week (here at school).

This interview excerpt shows how the role of learning transcends the group of staff and extends to learning from families and students themselves. In this case, the team also supplemented this experience with research. Like the instructional team used additional resources described in Chapter 4 such as Hochman writing strategies and Diane August’s curriculum mapping tools for ELLs, the guidance team also focused on specific learning resources to augment their work. The intern noted that, based on her experiences with the students, she wanted to learn more about culturally competent models for working with families of immigrants and students, so she took time to read that individually: “I think I’ve learned a lot about cross cultural relationship with
students, recognizing how important the family system is for their mental health and how to support immigrant families.” In many ways, the role of research also led back to learning from families and students themselves both in the classroom and in counseling. An upper-school teacher said he would talk with his students and ask questions like, “What’s difficult? What’s keeping you from engaging in this task? What’s going on and how can I support you? What would work better for you?”

The other criteria that emerged from interviews was the need to set goals for meeting and clear agendas. The coach described the instructional meetings as focused in a way to “strategically meet goals.” She also said about the importance of teaming with goals, “They have something they’re tackling consistently over time. This year, it’s the writing they’re tackling together.” The role of goal setting was also clear from observations from team meetings. Every time the team had an agenda and clear goals they moved forward smoothly with the meeting and richer discussions. However, two out of the ten times observed, the team didn’t set goals or maintain an agenda, and the conversation didn’t move into any kind of learning. In both of these cases, there was no facilitator, neither coach nor teacher. All of these criteria are important to consider and the possibilities of exploring other criteria emerged for me as a further area of study to explore. I have summarized these criteria in Table 7 below.

Table 8: Important Criteria for Teaming: Role of Facilitator

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria for team learning</th>
<th>Tools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Year long learning goals and agendas | • Action plans and protocols  
• Team scope and sequence |
| Trust | • Discussion and norm setting;  
• Ongoing reference back to norms;  
• Protocols and facilitative leadership in working through disagreement and conflict |
Strong communication in and out of meetings

- Clear team roles and responsibilities,
- Protocols,
- Technology as a resource

Advancement of knowledge and skills

- Inquiry practice with student work;
- Collaborative lesson planning;
- Strategic PD resources and individual development

In addition, the coach’s professional learning scope and sequence provided an important tool for professional learning that included student learning goals and inquiry team goals. (See Document 1 below)

**Table 9: Team Curriculum Meeting Scope and Sequence**

**Focus:** Fall 2014 writing strategies, implementation and inquiry

**Fall 2014 student learning goals**

- Be introduced to and begin to master sentence strategies listed below
- Write sentences independently using sentence building skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall 2014</th>
<th>Spring 2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is a sentence?</td>
<td>Subordinating conjunctions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nouns and verbs</td>
<td>Appositives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinating conjunctions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence expansions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sentence Strategies:**

- What is a sentence?
- Sentence types & Questions
- But, because, & so

**Inquiry Goals:**

- Map out inquiry work
- One round of curriculum share using sentence strategies
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Sentence Strategies:</th>
<th>Inquiry Goals:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Get baseline student work for students</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Sentence Strategies:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Nouns &amp; Verbs</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• But, because, and so</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Sentence expansion</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Parallel revision</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Inquiry Goals:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Inquiry cycle:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Design and prototype instruction</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(modeling, examples, tasks/exercises)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>o Student work – what are they</td>
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<td></td>
<td>struggling with?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Student work – how are they moving?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>o Iteration</td>
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<tr>
<td>November</td>
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<td>• But, because, and so</td>
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<td>• Sentence expansion</td>
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<td>• Inquiry cycle:</td>
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Job-imbedded Coaching

A second key theme that emerged from the data was the importance of an in-school coach to support the process of learning and implementing responsive strategies. This assertion, of course, is contingent on the types of practices enacted by the coach and the type of relationship building maintained between the coach and the teachers as well as the receptivity of the teachers to the coach. Teachers offered descriptions of the types of coaching that supported their own practice. The teachers described the characteristics of the coach that were helpful is that she was “highly experienced,” “knowledgeable in these areas and strategies.” The social studies teacher received individual coaching, which supported him in practices in the classroom and was augmented by conversations about specific lessons and planning. “This feedback …has been tremendously impactful and very helpful. It’s given me confidence.” A science teacher describe the coaching as highly supportive due to factors like consistency, frequency of her presence as well as the fact that she is imbedded in the school and knows their specific students. “Just to have her there to say, I want to help you do something specific in your classroom that ‘s going to help your students in a systematic way is going to be persistent.” The coach described some of her strategies with individual and team coaching: “I mostly try to work with (where the teachers) are. They have a pretty good idea where they want to go, what the content is that they want to cover.” She helped teachers pinpoint focus areas for their practice that needs honing in order to better support students; in team two’s case this process surfaced topics such as questioning and scaffolding texts for students. In addition, other key role she played is in facilitating and building the team meetings as described earlier. Planning for and facilitating these meetings involved finding specific protocols to use to support teachers in planning, communicating, and, in some cases, working through conflict and setting goals. Another strategy
she used to inform the teams’ goals was to send out a survey to teachers to gauge their perceptions of need and how well they were supported at the present. Finally, she leveraged research and professional development resources, which played a key role in advancing teacher learning, according to interviews with her and the teachers, as she worked to differentiate support for teams and for some individual teachers as needed. Overall, the role of the instructional coach was an important part of how this school facilitated and supported a learning community. Although there were team leaders who often led the groups in some departments, the coach provided a more expert support in that she helped build capacity of teachers to 1) enhance knowledge and skills and 2) serve as supportive mentors and facilitators where appropriate.

Prior work and life experience

A final theme that emerged from the data about professional learning of responsive strategies was leveraging prior work and life experience to learn and implement new strategies as well as plan for them in the classroom. Every teacher mentioned life experiences that affected their experiences and understanding in working with English language learners and that helped shape his or her understanding even as they learned new strategies. For example, one teacher was a social worker in the foster care system before entering into teaching. This allowed him enormous strategies for understanding the socio-emotional issues often experienced by underserved teenagers and, in some cases, for immigrant youth who are new to the country. “I’ve just always had a lot of empathy from trying to work with, and help young people out.” In his case, leveraging knowledge and understanding of the types of struggles students experience and having skills to support them through that process was an entry point into creating a culturally responsive classroom environment. This skill set enabled him to build stronger relationships with students but also to build a strong climate in the classroom where students
interact with one another. This also echoed back to the experience of the principal, a former social worker, social work manager and Guidance Assistant Principal, who helped the school take on a focus that integrated guidance into the work of teachers and the school in a more holistic way as a result of her experience working with newcomer immigrants in a health and hospital setting. The social worker described how in her prior school, there had been less of an emphasis on collaboration yet her experiences dealing with difficult emotional behaviors there helped her work at this site as well as her collaboration with the teachers.

Other types of experiences teachers described that they were able to leverage included travel and the ability to speak other languages besides English. Having experienced what it is like to learn a second language and other cultural values and belief systems helped some of the teachers in relating to the struggles of their students and better supporting them in language learning in their own classroom. The science teachers had experience as a college environmental activist and science researcher, respectively, which helped inform their understanding about what youth know or may be interested in learning about science at the college level. Finally, the social studies teacher described his own experience in an immigrant family and witnessing his mother who had to learn English. He described how this impacted him:

I always found her story so remarkable. That she picked it (English) up and she at first was translating her homework from French, back to Portuguese to understand better and then trying to turn that around to make it English. And I just imagine that mental cycle for the kids who sometimes have to translanguage…and that’s not even getting into the cultural factors and dynamics they have to go through. So it’s really rewarding when you see students able to make progress and improve on those particular kinds of skills.
His experience as the son of immigrants may have brought him to this work, but also informed his learning and experiences of processing different strategies. He described his connection to the students through Spanish, which also provided him with the impetus to create a social outlet for students by founding a Latino club, where students joined to plan social events including a big lunch party hosted by the club during the semester I was there. At this time, the club organized other students to bring in dishes from their home country. One of the students served as a DJ and the teachers took pictures. They celebrated the birthdays of two of the teachers, and one student made a speech about how helpful a teacher had been to her cohort of students. The culture of collaboration extended beyond the classroom and much of the teacher’s prior experience working with youth in a social work setting is what helped bring about this type of possibility for community.

**Discussion and Analysis**

The data revealed that professional learning occurs not only in external professional development events or as Darling-Hammond, et al. (2009) describes, “episodic events” but in professional collaboration. This key report describes how many experimental studies have shown that team learning is valuable to increasing student learning and should reflect multiple principles including learning that is connected to student learning practice. (p. 9) She describes the teacher learning process as a team:

> Teachers meet on a regular schedule in learning teams organized by grade-level or content-area assignments and share responsibility for their students’ success. Learning teams follow a cycle of continuous improvement that begins with examining student data to determine the areas of greatest student need, pinpointing areas where additional educator learning is necessary, identifying and creating learning experiences to address
these adult needs, developing powerful lessons and assessments, applying new strategies in the classroom, refining new learning into more powerful lessons and assessments, reflecting on the impact on student learning, and repeating the cycle with new goals. (p.3)

We see that this kind of structure is imbedded in this school site and, for this team, has helped improve practices around integrating language and has begun to impact student outcomes, according to classroom report data in Skedula.

In the national report’s findings, professional learning should also align with school improvement priorities and goals (p.10). In this team, the work aligned with school goals around improving linguistically responsive instruction to support their newcomer ELLS in better developing critical thinking and writing skills through the Hochman strategies. The team I studied was piloting the use of the practices and shared this out with the other teams. Other teams did try this during the year as well as they heard about some of the results and this year, in 2015-16, the teams are utilizing this set of strategies across the school and incorporating some of the practices from the team.

An additional key principle relevant to my study is the recommendation that professional development should build strong working relationships with teachers (p.11). The emphasis on building trust, on using strategies to build a shared practice, co-planning curriculum and sharing and tracking work results together in this team reflects strategies for helping other teams grow and develop despite the tendency for teachers to work individually and in more isolation. In Darling Hammond, et al’s report, teacher collaboration as part of action research is on decline in the United States, with the exception of California, a state reported an outlier with over 70% of teachers reporting to collaborate together on instruction in structured ways.
The SASS data also show a drop in the proportion of teachers engaged in individual or collaborative research, from 47 percent in 2000 to about 40 percent in 2004. More, however, were involved in mentoring and coaching (46 percent) or peer observations (63 percent). (p. 23)

Another important reason to highlight the types of learning that occur in teacher teams is to show the impact on practice and how it can actually support teacher growth in specific areas, particularly in culturally and linguistically responsive practices. For the team highlighted in this study, linguistic practices became the common focus to support students in their writing. All the teachers except the coach discuss their lack of resources and skills in learning strategies to support English Language Learners. Through mentoring and the collaborative structures highlighted at their school, these teachers became more expert in these practices, as evidenced in observations, teacher surveys and student perceptions as well as descriptions of their own knowledge and understanding of language forms. This is worth taking note when designing professional learning communities (PLCs) and the form of instructional focus the group adopts.

Another entirely different area of growth of teacher support highlighted in the 2009 study is in the area of coaching. Here results were promising with some limitations:

Several comparison-group studies have found that teachers who receive coaching are more likely to enact the desired teaching practices and apply them more appropriately than are teachers receiving more traditional professional development. However, a study conducted in the Netherlands found that while teachers who had been coached felt more confident in their teaching, they were not rated as more effective than teachers who had not been coached. Another small-scale study found that teachers who had received coaching on particular strategies did not necessarily know when it was appropriate to
select one instructional strategy over another. These studies suggest that coaching may need to be embedded in broader efforts to build professional knowledge if it is to be most useful. (p.12)

The evidence from my study shows that, according to teacher perceptions and also evidence from classroom observations, impact on teacher practice was most heavily influenced by strategic coaching of the team the team as well as the relationship building built through individual sessions and follow up. It is important to note the types of deliberate instructional planning enacted by the coach to achieve these results, and it cannot be assumed that coaching alone can have the same impact on a team of teachers without this level of strategy.

Finally, it is worth a reminder here that the third factor with most impact on teacher professional learning in my study was their prior knowledge and work experience. This kind of knowledge can be an initial starting ground when training teachers in new skills and understandings or when creating and orienting team members to a new PLC to expose one another to the knowledge of the group. That being said, this kind of experiential knowledge should be considered a starting point not an end point in the PLC and the way it is related to professional learning. In a review of the literature on PLCs published in 2007, Vescio, e al. cited a study that points to the potential pitfalls of PLCs:

In a research study that analyzed teachers’ representations of classroom practices, Little (2003) cautioned against the limited nature of teacher-led collaborative groups. After analyzing the language of teachers in a high school math and English department, she warned that teaching communities could be limited by their own “horizons of observation” (p. 917). She defined this term as, “the extent to which elements of a work environment are available as a learning context” (p. 917). She then used transcripts of
meetings to analyze the discourse of teachers engaged in a learning community to improve instructional practices. Her main point was that teachers construct visions of teaching and learning based on a picture that is structured by their very positions as teachers. This can create paradigms of thinking that privilege certain voices and epistemologies based on preconceived notions of right, wrong, good, or bad in schooling. In the end, this horizon of observation can serve to limit the solutions teachers develop to improve their own practices or improve student learning. (p. 89)

It is because of this potential shortsightedness of teacher teams that the leveraging of external ideas and professional development strategies played such an important role as did the role of facilitator to push thinking in the group as well as a scope and sequence for the year mapped to teacher goals and student learning goals, as in Table 2.

The 2007 review of literature called on the need for several types of studies, including an in-depth look at PLCs to see how these practices look in specific teams over a sustained period (Vescio, et.al, 2007, p. 91). My hope is that this study provides an in-depth look at how language and literacy practices can be influenced by inquiry conversations around student work and, thus push teacher practice. In addition, these conversations can impact student knowledge and skills through a shift in teacher practice, in this case, in writing in English class and in the content areas. Overall, these findings reflected an affirmation of 2005 National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (NCTAF) recommendations in their study around what supports teachers in their description of PLCs in developing practice:

Participation in a strong professional learning community helps build strong teaching practices that lead to greater effectiveness by all teachers in a school. Working together, PK-12 educators and their higher education partners can use teacher preparation,
induction, and continual professional development to establish a new culture: a collaborative community of practice. Today’s modern technologies can support effective strategies for establishing and extending the reach of such communities. (p.21)

The data from this group of educators shows that the structure of this particular school’s professional learning communities has led to some concrete successes in teachers supporting one another in their practice and supporting students in their language development.
Chapter 8:
Summary and Recommendations

Summary of research study design and components

Garcia, et. al.’s (2008) study shows that in order to serve emergent bilinguals we must understand that linguistic interdependence of home language and development of academic language is imperative to supporting students in classrooms. In addition, they emphasize the importance of social literacy practices in creating a culture that welcomes and integrates these students into the learning environment:

Equity must also account for the power and value relations that exist around the various languages, language varieties and literacy practices in the school setting and in society. It is thus important for schools to value the pluriliteracy practices of emergent bilinguals, those in which they are engaged at home or in community efforts and schools, in other contexts or countries in other languages and scripts. An equitable education for emergent bilinguals builds on all these practices and enables them to develop a powerful repertoire of multiple literacies.

The premise of my study was that teachers need more description of the everyday instruction created for emergent bilinguals to support development of academic language proficiency and the use of home language in English instruction. Although the program at my case study site did not offer a bilingual program, there was evidence of practices that were linguistically responsive and designed to support holistic development of the learner that preserved cultural identity and language as an integral part of the learning plan. In addition, building relationships with students and families as part of this learning plan is imperative and goes hand in hand with the tenets of culturally responsive pedagogy (Villegas and Lucas, 2010; Milner, 2010). These types of
characteristics were also evident in the school culture as well as most individual classrooms.

In order to more deeply explore what this type of instruction looks like and how it is planned for the classroom, I chose to design an exploratory case study using qualitative analysis including semi-structured interviews and ethnographic observations to better create a picture of how a team of teachers integrate culturally and linguistically responsive instruction into an RtI framework. Specifically, the questions I wanted to explore included the following:

1. Is there evidence of culturally and linguistically responsive teaching at the site of study and, if so, what does it look like in the classroom in both Tier 1 and Tier 2 settings within an RtI framework? What are considerations for Tier 3?

2. How do educators plan for culturally and linguistically responsive instruction?

3. How do educators currently acquire knowledge and skills around culturally and linguistically responsive educational strategies?

4. By interpreting the data from this study, what are the implications for teacher education and policy?

My research design was based on a case study protocol (Yin, 2010) that began with a site selection process including pre-observations at the school and screening of school data as well as short interviews with one or two educators in the school about the study. After identifying several potential sites, I met with the principal and one specific teacher team who, after hearing a brief presentation, agreed to the study and included me in their weekly team meetings. After obtaining IRB approval, I attended weekly instructional meetings and two guidance meetings over the course of the semester, over approximately a six-month period. This school was made up of 100% newcomer emergent bilinguals.
During the process, I interviewed ten staff members in the school including the principal, the literacy coach, a team of teachers I observed and two additional teachers from outside the team, social worker and a social work intern. I held two student focus groups one from the ninth/tenth grade bridge group. These students were chosen since they served as key students in the teacher collaborative inquiry process. They were willing to contribute their point of view about the strategies and to respond to specific questions about instructional strategies used in the classroom. I also interviewed one group of seniors about their general perspective on staff and school in terms of the culture and types of pedagogy utilized by the team.

The system I used for organizing data included maintenance of an electronic data log of field notes with analytic memos that I wrote after meetings and observations. The framework I used in conducting classroom and meeting observations and analyzing interview data included Powell, et. al’s Culturally Responsive Instruction Observation Protocol (2010), which served as an analytical tool to help break down areas of knowledge and skill that teachers use to facilitate creating a culturally and linguistically responsive classroom. This included such general categories as physical climate that contributes to language learning and literacy; positive social classroom climate where the teacher promoted respect for all students and multiple identities; curriculum planning that incorporates knowledge of the learner and diverse perspectives; assessment strategies that support the learner in self-assessment and, for example, clear and direct feedback; among other criteria including, in this framework, a sociopolitical consciousness, instructional discourse, and a collaborative-based pedagogy. I supplemented this framework with Lucas and Villegas’ six principles of linguistically responsive instruction (2010), which provided a more specific lens for aspects of instruction and climate that teachers may create to support students in language acquisition and development. In addition to these
frameworks, I also created a rubric of my own for the Tier 2 classroom that included both some of the key tenets of the CRIOP, as well as indicators from research specifically supporting RtI and targeted instruction and intervention strategies for English language learners (Gersten, 2007; Sun 2010; Vaughn, et. al. 2006). These multiple frameworks helped me conduct a deductive analysis to help identify and categorize the data into the specific themes and criteria that may characterize culturally and linguistically responsive instruction and planning. Throughout the study, I coded all data in the program NVivo, according to pre-determined categories in order to identify evidence of these strategies in each of the classrooms and in meetings. After the first round, I conducted a second review to review for key patterns or trends that may have emerged from the data. I based my analysis on both of these rounds of data, thus relying on both inductive and deductive methods of data analysis.

Finally, I approached the research with an interdisciplinary theoretical framework to better enable me to identify intersections among different theories of learning that had implications for serving these learners and unpacking diversity for a group that has been homogenized in often damaging ways. First, an area of research from which I drew was culturally responsive pedagogy and social literacy which includes the importance of identity and culture as construction of identity and informing literacy instruction for students (Gee, 2008; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Milner 2010) In addition, I drew upon reading comprehension theory that supports and highlights the ways student acquire, including the acquisition of content-based an linguistic schema and foundational literacy skills (Mckenna and Stahl, 2010; Ehri, 1987; Chall, 1979). I also drew on disability studies and DisCrit and the idea that ability is constructed by society and, although students need differentiated support, it is often the case that students are evaluated through a deficit-based lens that affects students of color and immigrants in a higher proportion,
whether by special education referrals or disciplinary status (Connor, Ferris, et al., 2012; Losen, 2014; Noguera, 2004). Finally, considering the role of school improvement and administrators in building schools as collaborative and responsive institutions, I utilized empirical studies of RtI as a school wide assessment framework and resource that includes multiple aspects of literacy into consideration and consider multiple aspects of identity, reframing culture to take on deeper more complex meaning in the classroom (Artiles, 2002; Pollock, 2008).

**Key findings**

From the data several findings emerged. First, it was clear that there were examples of culturally and linguistically responsive instruction in all of the classrooms in multiple ways, although not in every way in every classroom. The role of teacher teams in collaborative planning at the discipline level and interdisciplinary level impacted teacher practice and had the potential to impact student achievement. In this study, planning can be directly traced to teacher practice moves. Linguistically responsive instruction was implemented across the team in all content areas as a result of collaborative planning, in this case, using a common set of strategies taken from the Hochman writing program in which teachers were held accountable for use in their classrooms. The use of home language was encouraged in all classrooms in conjunction with frequent opportunities to practice English.

Other specific criteria contributed to the strength of the teacher team space in impacting teacher practice, including the leveraging of professional learning knowledge and skill-building outside the school walls, strong facilitation that leveraged the strengths of the participants and was based on goals for both teacher practice and student outcomes. The role of facilitator during structured team time played a major role in shifting teacher practice. This role also involved and had impact on the team as a result of the integration of professional development and learning.
related to linguistically responsive instruction in the team meetings and in accompanying workshops and opportunities for inter visitation.

Culturally responsive practices conducted in the classroom were, at times, impacted by the teacher team collaboration with assigned social worker/guidance team member in the school. Best practices that contributed to this impact included the assignment of one guidance/social worker to one team throughout the year to also serve and collaborate around that specific group of students. Guidance staff members helped identify issues and strengths of students’ families to share with teacher teams to help increase awareness of individual families and what they contributed to the community as well as what areas of support they may need. The guidance team and the school leader’s role to creating this type of team contributed to culturally responsive practices that helped set a tone in the school as a whole. Educators and staff in the study perceived their own knowledge and skills in these areas to be influenced by teacher team collaboration, coach support and prior work or life experience. One interesting example of this proved to be with the principal as a former Guidance AP and social worker, who brought to the school a wealth of information about trauma, student socio emotional needs and methods for organizing adult collaboration around those needs.

**Policy Implications**

1. *Increased in-depth training in language and literacy skills as well as action research in pre-service and in-service professional development programs.*

Lily Wong Filmore has argued that all teachers need to know how to be teachers of language (2000). Similarly, a 2015 report by the Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee showed that culturally and linguistically responsive instruction should be part of teacher education in ways that expand the instructional strategies for students to be
more culturally responsive in addition to other strategies that impact, for example, hiring practices (EOGOAC Annual Report, 2015). Not only would this type of more extensive technical and cultural literacy instruction support a teacher cohort in their level of knowledge and skill in approaching instruction and assessment of a diverse group of students, it also would create a teacher cohort that is capable of building relationships with those students and integrating information and knowledge from families that can support students. Although there is no causal relationship between increased knowledge and skills and fewer referral rates in this study, results suggested that this kind of learning about specific cultural and literacy practices would help provide teachers with knowledge that would help decrease generalizations about ability or dis/ability, whether this is about language development or ability to assess progress for students in content.

The voices of teachers from the study confirmed this assertion and need for more extensive and strategic training. First, the role of technical training emerged as important. Teachers who were interviewed overwhelming described the need for more expanded technical training to serve English Language Learners that would include strategies from TESOL, literacy and reading instruction including foundational literacy. In addition, teachers overwhelmingly cited teacher collaboration as a major source of learning, and observations of meetings and review of student work confirmed that the role of action research and inquiry played a major role in furthering the learning with the support of a skilled facilitator. One implication of this study is that training and experience in the inquiry process as part of teacher training can be an asset. When teacher candidates or teachers on the job conduct action research, it can be used to target student learning. Learning, participating and practicing this process early in in pre-teacher
training could have great benefits for implementing more fluidly at a later time on the job when the stakes are higher.

2. *Formalized training in culturally responsive training from experienced teachers and school counselors including strategies for building classroom and school culture.*

Other kinds of learning that may be beneficial to teacher pre-service learning is an orientation to culturally responsive strategies and literature, which has become more prevalent in recent years, particularly with the NCATE requirement in the standard around diversity. This, however, should be coupled with strategies in action by a skilled teacher in the strategies either by observation in a video or in person through inter-visitation practices to see how they are implemented and how the teachers build relationships with students but also among his or her students in a classroom. In addition, coaching and professional conversations around how to build these specific kinds of relational skills can be important over time. Related to this, the results of the study reinforced for me the importance of drawing more formally on the experiences of teachers and their own lived experiences as a starting point, much in the same way we want them to do with their students. For example, it may be helpful in professional development to explore teacher backgrounds and experience when we initiate learning around new concepts around language and literacy practices. Finally, bringing together guidance practices that may be helpful to teachers can be integrated into the teacher curriculum. This may include restorative justice practices, literature on self-regulation, or strategies that can be useful in the classroom or in relationship-building practices with individual students’ community and family.
3. Use of culturally and linguistically responsive diagnostics, ongoing assessments and instructional strategies in a collaborative setting in an RTI framework.

Similar to pre-service training, there should be ongoing exposure to identifying, implementing and assessing the use of foundational literacy skills and their effects on student learning. In the study, annotation proved to have benefits to students’ ability to make meaning and build reading comprehension. The use of home language used throughout lessons whether in writing or discussion provided students access to English texts. While implementing strategies and structuring intervention work both within and outside the classroom, teachers should be receive training on how to use diagnostic and progress monitoring assessment strategies that are linguistically and culturally responsive (NCRESST 2005, WIDA 2013). In addition, training and exposure to a school wide RtI model and the relationships between Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3 – key training for administrators to support teachers in making complex decision about their students, how they create strong instructional models in their Tier 1 classroom, but also how to provide more intentional support in intervention strategies and in the referral process in ways that consider the whole child.

4. Planned and strategic implementation of collaborative teacher team structures that include the social worker or guidance counselor as a resource and team member.

An increased ongoing emphasis on the use of structured collaboration both academically in vertical and horizontal planning for teacher teams is important to establishing shared strategies in the classroom and the practice of creating collaborative assessments that can build coherence both across the team for a student in his/her subjects but also across grades. Teacher partnership with guidance and social work teams can be develop around support in differentiation and access to home knowledge from families. Finally, literature and examples of strategies for partnering
with school guidance teams or individual guidance counselors should be highlighted. This can also be coupled with professional study on how trauma can affect learning in the classroom and what to look for in the effects of trauma in students.

**Validity, Reliability and Limitations of the Study**

As discussed earlier, much of my case study was designed as part of this protocol to ensure validity and reliability in the qualitative case data. This was primarily accomplished in several ways. Initially, as I collected the data, I maintained an electronic case study database to help organize the data and ensure anonymization of records. This increased the reliability in such that another researcher could come to similar results if she/he were to examine it (Yin, 2010). In addition, I recorded all interviews digitally to ensure stronger reliability during transcription (Creswell, 2007; Yin, 2010).

Furthermore, as I conducted my analysis I used numerous data points to corroborate different points of view. For example, the rationale for interviewing teachers, the guidance counselor as well as one to two administrators and a student focus group is to include multiple data points that will allow for multiple points of view around similar questions. Student work analysis also provided another data point that was important to understanding student progress from one point in the semester to another. The PI Interview guide supported this process and the triangulation of data in the analysis. (Appendix C) Third, I included a reviewer to externally audit my work on a monthly basis against the case study database to ensure that there is integration of the data. I engaged in member checking with two members of the teacher team and the coach who reviewed some of the chapters to ensure it represented the school environment in terms of data collection (Creswell, 2007). Finally, the interviewer log that I outlined in my instruments was a way for me to ensure that I am checking and reflecting on my own bias in the process as I engage in
observations and fieldwork so that I am more aware of the perspective and biases I brought to the research process (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

This study is limited in that it is a single-case study of a specific team of teachers as the unit of analysis. Therefore, the results will not be generalizable in that teacher outcomes will not ensure similar results for other teachers with their students. In addition, a case study of more than one school may have produced different accounts of how instruction was planned, strategies were used or what was successful. My own limitations in access to the specific home language of the students at this school prevented me from gathering deeper knowledge and testimonies from some of the students themselves. This kind of knowledge could have produced additional accounts of student perceptions of how teaching practices affected their learning.

Suggestions for future research

Garcia, et. al (2008) describe the ways that policymaking needs to change to support emergent bilinguals. They write,

…Educators need to be supported by policy and resources that bolster their expertise and advance their teaching. They need to observe students closely and document their work with and through language, as well as their learning, instead of focusing only on performance in invalid assessments. They need to continue to teach individual children, instead of seeing teaching as a master plan of scores. They need to work with the good aspects of governmental policy, at the federal, state and local level, as we advocate for changes in those parts of the policy that make no sense for emergent bilinguals. For changes to be effective, the different levels of policy must work in tandem, with educators and language minority communities. Only then, will we begin to address closing the gap between levels of abstract policies and local realities through which most
disadvantaged children, such as emergent bilinguals, fall through. (p.47)

The goal of the study was to shed light on culturally and linguistically responsive practices in the classroom during Tier 1 and Tier 2 instruction that may provide insights for other teachers on how to carry out instructional and formative assessments practices and curricular planning that may better support English Language Learners in their classrooms. Therefore, this research is meant to serve as a descriptive case study that will lend itself as a field reference for other educators, but also support bottom-up policymaking that comes from learning and conducting research based on the lived experiences of teachers and students in classrooms. Other kinds of research that may be valuable to explore based on the results of this study include:

- In depth interviews with students to have more integrated perspectives on their experiences in and out of school and how these impacted their learning. The voices of emergent bilinguals and their experiences in school can be a valuable resource for educators and policymakers.

- A multi-site case study with schools of differing sizes and populations of emergent bilinguals. Looking across a group of schools to better understand specific practices and how they impact student learning can be helpful to educators and teacher training and preparation programs. Observing and documenting practices and impact of school wide intervention practices can help administrators rethink school wide organization practices to include culturally and linguistically RtI that include tools for diagnostics, instruction, and ongoing assessment.

- A quasi-experimental, longitudinal study to show the impact of specific culturally and linguistic strategies on student achievement over time with a group of students. Although case studies are valuable over the short-term, longitudinal studies following specific
subpopulations of emergent bilinguals will provide richer and more valuable insights as to how specific relationships and teaching strategies impact student learning and development over time.

Together, such findings would help inform teacher preparation programs, in-service professional development programs, assessment vendors as well as policymakers about culturally and linguistically responsive instructional strategies and assessments that support not only individual emergent bilingual students, but also progress monitoring and instructional practices that may support such students in a school wide setting.
Appendices
### Appendix A: School Screening Tool

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Demographics</th>
<th>Language(s)</th>
<th>Universal screener</th>
<th>Tiers established</th>
<th>PR/Quality Review</th>
<th>Observable culturally relevant pedagogy prospect</th>
<th>Contact/ stage in process</th>
<th>Likely candidate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Brooklyn School #1</strong></td>
<td>100% newcomer ELLs</td>
<td>Varied (List: West African languages, Spanish, Russian)</td>
<td>Coach implemented native language screener</td>
<td>Yes/separate Tier 2 but not clear how to manage the time (Content Based Academic Teams)/less accepted but coach wants to model after MSQI</td>
<td>B/Proficient</td>
<td>Yes, particularly in language and assessment practices; in some classrooms socio-political consciousness</td>
<td>Contact with principal; presented to coach and two teams; yes the team is willing although two teachers are not sure about interviews due to time factor</td>
<td>Yes, pending meeting with the teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bronx School #1</strong></td>
<td>100% newcomer ELLs</td>
<td>Varied (List: Spanish, West African languages)</td>
<td>Yes, in some departments</td>
<td>Yes/Language and Literacy training part of the culture but not sure how effective</td>
<td>C/ (No recent QR/had a state review)</td>
<td>Yes, particularly in language (strong math and social studies)</td>
<td>Email w/response from principal chose a team</td>
<td>Yes, pending meeting with the teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>Demographics</td>
<td>Language(s)</td>
<td>Universal screener</td>
<td>Tiers established</td>
<td>PR/Quality Review</td>
<td>Observable culturally relevant pedagogy prospects</td>
<td>Contact/Stage in process</td>
<td>Likely candidate</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Manhattan School #1</strong></td>
<td>Transfer school; large sped pop</td>
<td>English/ some ELLs and former ELLs</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Yes/partially in collaboration with guidance</td>
<td>A/Proficient</td>
<td>Instructional practices in general were developing during the QR whereas guidance practices were very strong</td>
<td>No contact made</td>
<td>The principal may be on board but unclear if this is the right fit at this point in time due to demographics (good for a follow up case study)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bronx School #2</strong></td>
<td>100% newcomer Spanish-speaking ELLs</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Yes, particularly in language and literacy focus</td>
<td>A/Well Developed</td>
<td>Yes, has potential, particularly in language</td>
<td>Sent letter w/no response; not clear on interest; need to follow up with phone call</td>
<td>Unlikely, no response from principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bronx School #3 (chart)</strong></td>
<td>69% ELLs, 17 of whom are Spanish</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>Not yet</td>
<td>1st year school</td>
<td>Yes, present evidence indicates</td>
<td>Initial meeting with principal</td>
<td>Somewhat likely. Still need</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>Demographics</td>
<td>Language(s)</td>
<td>Universal screener</td>
<td>Tiers established</td>
<td>PR/Quality Review</td>
<td>Observable Culturally relevant pedagogy prospects</td>
<td>Contact/ stage in process</td>
<td>Likely candidate</td>
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<td>Bronx School #4</td>
<td>100% newcome r ELLs</td>
<td>Many, majority Spanish speakers</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>Yes/Language and Literacy training part of the culture but not sure how effective</td>
<td>Developing/NA school</td>
<td>Not observabl e from initial observati ons</td>
<td>Sent letter/email and called with no response</td>
<td>Unlikely, the principal is not intereste d and the school has taken a downwa rd turn right now</td>
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<td>Former ELLs</td>
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<td>more in family practices</td>
<td>; need to request school proposal 11/19</td>
<td>more data and may be too new a school</td>
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Appendix B: Interview Protocol (For Educators and Students)

Questions by topic and role

Lisa Auslander

Teachers

Introductory

▪ Why did you become a teacher?
▪ How long have you been a teacher?
▪ How long have you been a teacher in this setting?

If teaching more than 2 years:
▪ What is the most significant way you would say your practice has changed the most over the years?
▪ How do you think this change happened?
▪ How have your beliefs about literacy and working with ELLs changed over the time that you have been in this role?

Administrators/Coach (may be able to exclude these)

▪ What is your teaching or prior work history and background? What made you decide to transition into administrative/coaching role?
▪ What are some of your greatest rewards in the job? Your greatest challenges?

Guidance Counselor

▪ What is your education history in teaching/guidance or social work?
▪ What made you decide to work in this setting and in this role?
▪ How has your practice changed the most since you have started working in this role?

Beliefs and teaching philosophy/intervention work

Teachers

▪ What is your belief about teaching students that you feel leads your work most?
▪ How do you support students in your intervention work?
▪ What are your beliefs about intervention work?
▪ What are the strengths and challenges about doing intervention works for ELLs?
How have your beliefs about literacy and working with ELLs changed over the time that you have been in this role?

Administrators/Coach

- How do you feel the school is organized to support the interventions that students?
- What is your belief about teaching students that you feel leads your work most?
- Are there any ways you wish it could be different and, if so, why?
- What is your plan for the year to support teachers in differentiation and intervention?
- How do you feel teachers react or respond to this PD plan?
- How have your beliefs about literacy and working with ELLs changed over the time that you have been in this role?

Guidance Counselor

- What is your belief about students that you feel leads your work most?
- How do you support students in your intervention work?
- Where did you learn about intervention or differentiation?
- What are your beliefs about intervention work?
- What are the strengths and challenges about doing intervention works for ELLs?
- How have your beliefs about literacy and working with ELLs changed over the time that you have been in this role?

Instructional strategies and impact on student progress

Teachers

- What are some key strategies you use to support progress for student literacy?
- Which strategies most impact student progress in your experience? (Corroborate with student work and focus group) Please give even 1-2 concrete examples.
- What are the various ways you group your students and what motivates you to do so?
- What types of data and information do you use to support your planning for your students?
- Can you provide an example and share about how you used this? What are some of the obstacles that you see around doing this work?
- How do you work with together with the special ed teacher (or how does the special ed teacher work with the other teachers?) What works well and what should be improved around this collaboration?
- How do you collaborate with guidance?
• What would be your ideal next steps with your team in improving targeted intervention work?
• How do you work with parents to support intervention work?

**Administrator/Coach**

• What instructional strategies have you observed in classrooms that show evidence of success?
• Which ones could be interpreted as culturally responsive or connected to family and/or cultural/linguistic background?
• How do teachers support struggling students with interventions either in the regular classroom or in their (Tier 2) intervention period?
• What are the strengths and challenges about doing intervention works for ELLs?

**Guidance Counselor**

• How do you work with teachers to support interventions?
• What have you seen in classrooms that show evidence of success?
• What in your own practice has shown evidence of success?
• What are the strengths and challenges about doing intervention works for ELLs?
• How do you work with parents to support intervention work?

**Culturally responsive teaching and assessment**

**Teachers**

• Have you heard the phrase Culturally Responsive Teaching?
• What does it mean to you?
• What might be strategies you use in the classroom and out of the classroom that can be characterized as “culturally responsive?”
• What are the strengths and challenges of implementing culturally responsive instruction?
• Which strategies do you think have the most impact?

**Administrator/Coach**

• What do you think are the strategies used that most impact student progress in teachers' classrooms and how do you know that?
• How does inquiry work happen at the school? What are key types of data that teachers use to support and plan instruction?
In what ways do you consider what teachers do culturally responsive?

**Guidance Counselor**
- Have you heard the phrase Culturally Responsive Teaching or interventions? What does it mean to you?
- What might be strategies you use in your counseling and generally in your work that can be characterized as “culturally responsive?”
- What are the strengths and challenges of implementing culturally responsive instruction?
- Which strategies do you think have the most impact?

**Professional Development and Acquisition of Skills**

**Teachers**
- Describe how you receive training or coaching or PD? How do you get support?
- How do you plan with your team that supports your learning? How does planning support your instruction?
- How does your team use the inquiry process?
- How does use team work with families to support students?
- With guidance?
- Do you support students in any way outside of a school context? If so, how?
- How do you get support around the different aspects of teaching and learning for your students?(Both formally and informally)
- Have you received training in culturally responsive pedagogy? If so, how?

**Administrators/Coach**
- Describe the way teachers train internally or externally? How do teachers get support?
- How do teachers plan together?
- How do other types of support outside of instruction help students succeed?
- How do teachers collaborate with guidance?
- Are there larger policy obstacles to improving intervention work? To utilizing culturally relevant pedagogy? If so, what are they?
- Where do you think teachers learn about culturally relevant pedagogy? Guidance counselors?

**Guidance Counselor**
- Describe how you receive training or coaching or PD? How do you get support?
- How do you plan with your team that supports your learning? How does planning support your counseling work?
- How does your team(s) use the inquiry process?
- How does use team(s) work with families to support students?
- Do you support students in any way outside of a school context? If so, how?
- How do you get support around the different aspects of teaching and learning for your students?
  - Both formally and informally.
- Have you received training in culturally responsive pedagogy? If so, how?

**Student Focus Group Questions**

- Describe your experience as a student in the school in your academic classes? In advisory and other types of classes?
- What are ways you communicate with teachers? How do you work with your teachers?
- How do you get support from family members at home or from teachers/peers in school?
  - What are ways you get help in school when you need it?
- What are examples of assignments in your regular classes you have found helped you?
- How do you get support in learning the English language in your classes? Give some specific examples.
  - How do teachers communicate with your family in order for you to get support? What is your role in this process?
  - What is an example of a project you did well on? Why do you think you succeeded? What were the challenges and how did you overcome them?
Appendix C: PI Interview Protocol Guide  
Lisa Auslander

The purpose of this document is to help ensure internal validity of the research project. The questions are designed to corroborate the evidence from different stakeholders in the school and identify the areas where there is a discrepancy between viewpoints.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Administrator/Coach</th>
<th>Counselor</th>
<th>Students Focus Group</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introductory Questions</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Why did you become a teacher?</td>
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<td>• How long have you been a teacher?</td>
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<td>• How long have you been a teacher in this setting?</td>
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<td>If teaching more than 2 years:</td>
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<td>• What is the most significant way you would say your practice has changed the most over the years?</td>
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<td>• How do you think this change happened?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• How have your beliefs about</td>
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<td><strong>Optional</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• What is your teaching or prior work history and background? What made you decide to transition into administrative/coaching role?</td>
<td>What is your education history in teaching/guidance or social work?</td>
<td>What is your name and where are you from?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• What are some of your greatest rewards in the job? Your greatest challenges?</td>
<td>What made you decide to work in this setting and in this role?</td>
<td>What do you enjoy most about your school community? Do you have any hobbies?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• How has your practice changed the most since you have started working in this role?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Describe your experience as a student in the school in your academic classes. In advisory and other types of classes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>Administrator/Coach</td>
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<td>literacy and working with ELLs changed over the time that you have been in this role?</td>
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</table>

**Beliefs and teaching philosophy/intervention work**

- What is your belief about teaching students that you feel leads your work most?
- How do you feel the school is organized to support the interventions that students here need?
- Are there any ways you wish it could be different and, if so, why?
- What is your plan for the year to support teachers in differentiation and intervention?
- How do you feel teachers react or respond to this PD plan?
- How do your beliefs about reading changed over the time that you have been in this role?
- What is your belief about how to support students that you feel leads your work most?
- How do you support students in your intervention work?
- Where did you learn about intervention or differentiation?
- What are your beliefs about intervention work?
- What are the strengths and challenges about doing intervention works for ELLs?
- How have your beliefs about literacy and working with ELLs changed over the time that you have been in this role?
- How do teachers and counselors communicate with your family in order for you to get support? What is your role in this process?
<table>
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<th>Teachers</th>
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<th>Counselor</th>
<th>Students Focus Group</th>
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<td>literacy and working with ELLs changed over the time that you have been in this role?</td>
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<td>role?</td>
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</table>

**What strategies do teachers plan and use when enacting Tier 1 and 2 instruction?**

**Which ones impact student progress?**

### Focus on Instruction

- What are some key strategies you use to support progress for student literacy?
- Which strategies most impact student progress in your experience? (Corroborate with student work and focus group)
- What are examples of assignments in your regular classes you have found helped you?

- What instructional strategies have you observed in classrooms that show evidence of success?
  - How do teachers support struggling students with interventions either in the regular classroom or in their (Tier 2) intervention period?
  - What are the strengths and challenges about doing intervention works for ELLs?

- What have you seen in classrooms that show evidence of success?
  - Which ones could be interpreted as culturally responsive or connected to family and/or cultural/linguistic background?
  - How do teachers support struggling students with interventions either in the regular classroom or in their (Tier 2) intervention period?
  - What in your own counseling practice has shown evidence of success?
    - What are the strengths and challenges about doing intervention?

- What are ways you communicate with teachers? How do you work with your teachers?
- How do you get support from family members at home or from teachers/peers in school?
- What are ways you get help in school when you need it?

Please give even 1-2 concrete examples.
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<th>Teachers</th>
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<th>Students Focus Group</th>
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</table>
| the various ways you group your students and what motivates you to do so?  
  - What types of data and information do you use to support your planning for your students?  
  - Can you provide an example and share about how you used this? What are some of the obstacles that you see around doing this work? | works for ELLs? | • How do you get support in learning the English language in your classes? Give some specific examples.  
• |

**Focus on Collaboration**

- How do you work with the special ed teacher (or how does the special ed teacher work with  
- How do you support parent outreach around intervention work?  
  - How does the school guidance team collaborate with teachers? Are there structures or systems in place, and if so, can you describe them?  
- How do you work with teachers to support interventions, either behavioral or academic?  
  - How do you work with parents to support intervention work?  
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| the other teachers?) What works well and what should be improved around this collaboration?  
  - How do you collaborate with guidance?  
  - What would be your ideal next steps with your team in improving targeted intervention work?  
  - How do you work with parents to support intervention work? | | | |

**To what extent do culturally sensitive pedagogy and assessments support instruction and formative assessment in the classroom?**

- Have you heard the phrase Culturally Responsive Teaching?  
  - What does it mean to you?  
  - What do you think are the strategies used that most impact student progress in teachers' classrooms and how do you know that?  
- Have you heard the phrase Culturally Responsive Teaching or interventions?  
  - What is an example of a project you did well on? Why do you think you succeeded? What were the challenges and
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| (share with them informally some of the categories of the CRIOP protocol in order to inform the questions)  
- What might be strategies you use in the classroom and out of the classroom that can be characterized as “culturally responsive?”  
- What are the strengths and challenges of implementing culturally responsive instruction?  
- Which strategies do you think have the most impact? (corroborate with observations) |  
- What might be strategies you use in the classroom and out of the classroom that can be characterized as “culturally responsive?”  
- How does inquiry work happen at the school? What are key types of data that teachers use to support and plan instruction? (Consider using WIDA tool to inform this questionnaire)  
- In what ways do you consider what teachers do culturally responsive? (Use the categories from CRIOP protocol as prompts) |  
- mean to you?  
(share with them informally some of the categories of the CRIOP protocol in order to inform the questions)  
- What might be strategies you use in your counseling and generally in your work that can be characterized as “culturally responsive?”  
- What are the strengths and challenges of implementing culturally responsive instruction?  
- Which strategies do you think have the most impact? (corroborate with observations) |  
- how did you overcome them?  
- Do you every have opportunities to use your native language in class? Provide an example or two. If so, how did that help or not in your studies?  
- What are examples of way you work with other students in class? |
**How do teachers acquire culturally and/or linguistically responsive pedagogy? How do they improve intervention work?**

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<tr>
<td><strong>How do teachers acquire culturally and/or linguistically responsive pedagogy? How do they improve intervention work?</strong></td>
<td><strong>How do you plan with your team that supports your learning? How does planning support your instruction?</strong></td>
<td><strong>How does your team(s) use the inquiry process?</strong></td>
<td><strong>Do teachers support one another school at this school? If so, how?</strong></td>
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| ▪ Describe how you receive training or coaching or PD? How do you get support?  
▪ How do you plan with your team that supports your learning? How does planning support your instruction?  
▪ How does your team use the inquiry process?  
▪ How does use team work with families to support students?  
▪ With guidance?  
▪ Do you support students in any way outside of a school? | ▪ Describe the way teachers train internally or externally? How do teachers get support?  
▪ How do teachers plan together?  
▪ How do other types of support outside of instruction help students succeed?  
▪ How do teachers collaborate with guidance?  
▪ Are there larger policy obstacles to improving intervention work? To utilizing culturally relevant pedagogy? If so, what are they?  
▪ Can culturally relevant pedagogy enhance intervention work? Is it necessary? Explain your thoughts.  
▪ Where do you think teachers learn about culturally relevant pedagogy? Guidance counselors? | ▪ Describe how you receive training or coaching or PD? How do you get support?  
▪ How do you plan with your team that supports your learning? How does planning support your counseling work?  
▪ How does your team(s) use the inquiry process?  
▪ How does use team(s) work with families to support students?  
▪ Do you support students in any way outside of a school context? If so, how?  
▪ How do you get support around the different aspects of teaching and learning for |
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<td>▪ Both formally and informally.</td>
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<tr>
<td>learning for your students?(Both formally and informally)</td>
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<td>▪ Have you received training in culturally responsive pedagogy? If so, how?</td>
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Appendix D: Tier 2 Holistic Intervention Rubric with Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Characteristics
Lisa Auslander

Research sub-questions
1. What are the best practices of T2? Which ones are culturally or linguistically responsive?
2. Does this type of instruction improve student progress? If so, what is the evidence?
3. What are the key differences between T1 and T2? When and where is it occurring?
4. What is being carried from T1 that carries over into T2? Which indicators seem to be utilized in a more focused way in T2?

Goal: Observe two teachers out of five in both Tier 1 and Tier 2 (intervention) period to collect data around these sub-questions
The rubric pulls out key indicators that will be of most interest according to RtI research; however, the observations may indicate further evidence of interest.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic of Tier 2 Instruction and Intervention</th>
<th>Firmly established</th>
<th>Moderately established</th>
<th>Not yet established</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Progress monitoring (over time)</td>
<td>-Student's activities related to goals are adjusted based on progress</td>
<td>-Student's activities are usually related to goals and adjusted based on progress.</td>
<td>-Student's activities are not usually related to goals and adjusted based on progress.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systematic, data-driven instruction</td>
<td>-Teachers work with students based on prior understanding assessment of student's need -There is ample written and verbal evidence of a future plan for instruction based on data points -Data used includes</td>
<td>-Teachers work with students based on prior understanding assessment of student's need -There is some evidence (either written or verbal) of a plan for instruction based on skills and concepts needed</td>
<td>-Teachers may or may not work based on understanding of student need -There is little evidence of either written or verbal plan for instruction based on skills and concepts needed by student</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristic of Tier 2 Instruction and Intervention</td>
<td>Firmly established</td>
<td>Moderately established</td>
<td>Not yet established</td>
<td>Evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>diverse portfolio of formal test data, classroom data and data about the student's cultural and linguistic background and socio-emotional needs</td>
<td>by student -There is some diversity in data about the student used in the instructional small group (at least two sources)</td>
<td>-There is little data about the student used in the instructional small group (one source or no information)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-The teacher uses multifaceted (more than one type of measure), classroom-based assessments, tied to particular projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Authentic assessments are used frequently (e.g., authentic group discussions/conversations, presentations, reading/writing for real audiences, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Assessments typically involve reading and writing connected text (e.g., running records, journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teacher uses assessment data that captures broad thinking of individuals or groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Student may introduce some authentic assessment but it is in formation and not well developed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teacher uses very little or no assessment data that captures individual learning/thinking: this is not yet a habit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Students work only on worksheets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Students have a narrow range of options for demonstrating competence (e.g., multiple choice tests, matching, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teacher uses standardized testing or constant quizzing; no</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Formative Assessment Instruction Alignment to CRIOP: (1.4, 1.5)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic of Tier 2 Instruction and Intervention</th>
<th>Firmly established responses, etc.)</th>
<th>Moderately established assessment alternatives</th>
<th>Not yet established</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Firmly established</td>
<td>-Formal and informal assessments are used to provide a holistic view of students’ strengths and needs (1.4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-The teacher uses assessment data that captures individual student learning/thinking (1.5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modestly established</td>
<td>-Teacher provides some evidence of feedback for some or all students where appropriate, during class with correction</td>
<td>-Teacher doesn't always provide feedback to some or all students, where appropriate.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistent teacher feedback</td>
<td>-Correction is respectful of student and provides student with a deeper understanding of the errors</td>
<td>-Correction is respectful of student</td>
<td>-Correction may not be respectful of student and/or provide them with a deeper understanding of their errors. Alternatively, there is no correction and students have</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alignment to CRIOP: 1.1</td>
<td>-The teacher gives clear direct feedback (For all students) with supportive correction in small group environment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Correction is respectful of student and provides student with a deeper understanding of the errors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristic of Tier 2 Instruction and Intervention</td>
<td>Firmly established</td>
<td>Moderately established</td>
<td>Not yet established</td>
<td>Evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Explicit Instruction Alignment to CRIOP: Partial 7.4 | -Teacher is modeling for the students on the skill or concept presented  
-Teacher makes the thinking process public such as with think aloud  
-The teacher balances instruction using both explicit skill instruction and reading/writing for meaning | -There are some examples of modeling  
-There may be some examples of thinking process, but not consistently | There is very little evidence of explicit instruction and modeling  
-There is little evidence of the thinking process used | |
| Use of academic vocabulary Alignment to CRIOP: | -Teacher emphasizes development of conversational, discipline specific as well as academic vocabulary. | -Teacher sometimes emphasizes development of either conversational, discipline-specific or academic vocabulary. | -Teacher rarely emphasizes use of vocabulary | |
| Classroom care Alignment to CRIOP: 2.1-2.4 | -The teacher demonstrates an ethic of care (e.g., equitable relationships, bonding).  
-The teacher | -The teacher demonstrates an ethic of care (e.g., equitable relationships, bonding).  
-The teacher | These characteristics are not clearly all yet part of the classroom | |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic of Tier 2 Instruction and Intervention</th>
<th>Firmly established</th>
<th>Moderately established</th>
<th>Not yet established</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>communicates high expectations for all students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The teacher creates a learning atmosphere in which students and teachers feel respect and connect to one another</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- The teacher actively confronts instances of discrimination</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Alignment to CRIOP language in **bold**

Additional Evidence from Observations:

**References:**


Sun, Jennifer W. Sun, Ma, Nam, Jeanie E. Nam, Ma, and Vanderwood, Michael V. “English Language Learners (ELL) and Response to Intervention (RTI).” (2010) *Helping Students in Home and School III*, S7H4–3. University of California at Riverside: NASP
Appendix E: Looking at Student Work - Collaborative Analysis Protocol

This protocol will be used as both a guide for the researcher in analyzing student work and in discussing the student work with teachers.

Setting Context (5 minutes)

Step 1: Recall the reasoning behind giving this assessment. What was the big idea?
What were the learning targets? What misconceptions were you trying to get at?
How did you present the assessment to your class?

Discussing the Work (15-20 minutes)

Step 2: Using the language from the learning target(s), what does the [strong, medium, weak] work show that students are able to do? Remember there are not explanations for the performance at this point, simply what students are able to do in relation to the learning targets.

Step 3: Using the language from the learning target(s), what is missing in the [strong, medium, weak] work?
What is it in the learning targets that students struggled with?

Step 4: Is there a pattern to what students did well, within a level or across different performance levels?
Are there any patterns to what students struggled with, within a level or across levels?

Discussing Instruction (10-15 minutes)

Step 5: What did you learn from looking at the work of these representative students that could support all of your students? What about specific groups of students?
What might this mean to your instruction as you move forward?

Discussing the Assessment (10 minutes)

Step 6: How well did your assessment allow students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in relation to the learning targets? How will did the assessment provide students with an opportunity to demonstrate a range of thinking, from more basic to more complex?

How might this help you design your next assessment?

- Compare prepared with representative samples of strong, medium, and weak student work (in relation to the identified learning targets).
- Focus on issues of teaching and learning related to the student work presented.

- Seek to understand before being understood

- Support ideas, not members

- Build on others’ ideas

- Engage in open and honest communication

- Withhold judgment

- Criticize ideas, not members

Teacher Grade/Content Area Date

What does the work show that students are able to do in relation to the learning target(s)?

Learning Target Successes & Challenges Which Student Groups?

Based on these work samples and the learning targets, our students know and are able to...

Based on these work samples and the learning targets, our students need additional practice

Based on these work samples and the learning targets, our students need additional instruction

Discussing the Assessment: What did we learn about the assessment itself from analyzing the work of these students?

How well did our assessment allow students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in relation to the learning targets?

How well did our assessment provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate a range of thinking, from more concrete knowledge and skills to more complex understanding and application?

What could we do to strengthen this assessment and/or the next tasks we provide for students?

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Appendix F: School Artifact - Data Tracker for Sentence Work (Hochman)
Note: This tracker is an aspirational tool for this team to use in their tracking of student progress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentence Skills</th>
<th>Student 1</th>
<th>Student 2</th>
<th>Student 3</th>
<th>Student 4</th>
<th>Student 5</th>
<th>Student 6</th>
<th>Student 7</th>
<th>Student 8</th>
<th>Student 9</th>
<th>Student 10</th>
<th>Total N's per skill</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Is there evidence of mastery of sentence boundaries (all complete sentences, no fragments)?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Is there evidence of the ability to vary sentence types (for ex, use of a question or command)?</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Is there evidence of mastery of use of the coordinating conjunctions but, because and so?</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Is there evidence of mastery of the appositive (use of at least one appositive)?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Is there evidence of mastery of varied sentence starters (any sentences that begin with a subordinating conjunction, such as since or although)?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Are sentences elaborated with rich detail answering questions such as who, when, how and why - beyond the bare minimum required for a simple sentence?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Is there varied, precise vocabulary?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Is there evidence of mastery of mechanics (capitalization, punctuation, etc)?</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total N's per student:
Appendix G: Team Documents

LOWER SCHOOL ENGLISH CLASSES TRY PARALLEL REVISION WITH LITERARY ANALYSIS OF ROMEO AND JULIET...

- Students wrote first drafts.
- We identified 7 issues.
- Students practiced correcting these issues on texts we created.
- Students corrected the same issues on their own papers.

EXAMPLE OF PARALLEL REVISION STEP 1

3. **ADD SENTENCE STARTER:**
   Example: Definition of influence When what you do affects the people around you.
   Revised: ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________

REFLECTION ON PARALLEL REVISION

- Don’t try this at the end of the year for the first time with 7 writing strategies.
- Start at the beginning of the year with one writing strategy.
- Consistently incorporate the practice of parallel revision into your curriculum by adding more writing strategies one at a time after you teach them.

H.1 PowerPoint presentation on parallel revision prepared by ELA teacher to share with staff
H.2 FOOD CHAIN Exercise
1. SIMPLE FOOD CHAIN

Flower → Caterpillar → Bird

Part A. Energy Flow

Please write 3 sentences describing how energy flows in the food chain.

1. First, the flower gets energy from the ________________________________

2. Next, the caterpillar ________________________________

3. Finally, ________________________________

Part B. Because / But / So

Please write 3 sentences about the organisms in the food chain. In each sentence, use one word from the word bank, and because, but, or so.

1. The flower is a producer because ________________________________

2. The caterpillar eats ________________________________, so it is ________________________________

3. The bird ________________________________

Part C. Human Impact

If farmers sprayed pesticides (chemical that kills worms and insects) on the flowers, what is the effect on the population of each species? Write the effect in the table below. Use words like increase, decrease, or remains the same.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flower</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caterpillar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bird</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organism</td>
<td>Effect on population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caterpillar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flower</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bird</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Use **SO** to write about food webs and population changes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CAUSE</th>
<th>SO</th>
<th>EFFECT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Humans sprayed pesticides on the flowers</td>
<td>so</td>
<td>the caterpillar population decreased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The caterpillar population decreased</td>
<td>so</td>
<td>the flower population increased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The caterpillar population decreased</td>
<td>so</td>
<td>the bird population decreased</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**EX:**
1. Humans sprayed pesticides on the flowers, **so** the caterpillar population decreased.
2. ________________________________________________________________________
3. ________________________________________________________________________

Use **BECAUSE** to write about food webs and population changes.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EFFECT</th>
<th>BECAUSE</th>
<th>CAUSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The caterpillar population decreased</td>
<td>because</td>
<td>the humans sprayed pesticides on the flowers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The flower population increased</td>
<td>because</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The bird population decreased</td>
<td>because</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EX:
1. The caterpillar population decreased because the humans sprayed pesticides on the flowers.

2. _____________________________________________________________
3. _____________________________________________________________

2. MARINE CHAIN

Part A. Energy Flow

Please write 4 sentences describing how energy flows in the food chain.

1. First, ____________________________

2. Next, ____________________________

3. Then, ____________________________

4. Finally, ____________________________

Part B. Because / But / So

Please write 4 sentences about the organisms in the food chain. In each sentence, use one word from the word bank, and because, but, or so.
Part C. Human Impact

On April 20, 2010, BP’s Deepwater Horizon Oil Rig exploded off the Gulf of Mexico, resulting in the biggest oil spill in American history. Dolphins became sick and fish eggs were killed. The oil was toxic for plants, too. What is the effect on the population of each species? Write the effect in the table below. Use words like increase, decrease, or remains the same.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organism</th>
<th>Effect on population</th>
<th>Reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Algae</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Fish</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large Fish</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dolphin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Use SO to write about food webs and population changes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CAUSE</th>
<th>SO</th>
<th>EFFECT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. BP spilled oil in the Gulf of Mexico</td>
<td>so</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>so</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Use **BECAUSE** to write about food webs and population changes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EFFECT</th>
<th>BECAUSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>because</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>because</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**EX:**
1. BP spilled oil in the Gulf of Mexico, **so** ____________________________

________________________________________________________________________

2. ______________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

3. ______________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

4. ______________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
EX:
1. The algae population decreased **because** the oil spilled by BP is toxic for plants like algae.

2. __________________________________________________________________________

3. __________________________________________________________________________

4. __________________________________________________________________________

3. **HUMAN CHAIN**

   Phytoplankton → Mussel → Small Fish → Tuna (Big fish) → Human

**Part A. Energy Flow**
Please write 5 sentences describing how energy flows in the food chain. Use words like **first, second, next, then, after, finally, ultimately**.

1. First, ____________________________

2. ____________________________

3. ____________________________

4. ____________________________

5. ____________________________
Part B. Because / But / So
Please write 5 sentences about the organisms in the food chain. In each sentence, use one word from the word bank, and because, but, or so.

1. __________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
2. __________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
3. __________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
4. __________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
5. __________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

Part C. Human Impact

Sushi is becoming extremely popular all over the world. However, due to the popularity of sushi, humans are catching tuna (a big fish) faster than ever. Humans overfish without waiting for big fish to reproduce and make more young. What is the effect on the population of each species? Write the effect in the table below. Use words like increase, decrease, or remains the same.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organism</th>
<th>Effect on population</th>
<th>Reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phytoplankton</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Use **SO** to write about food webs and population changes.

1. ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

2. ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

3. ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

4. ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

5. ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
Use **BECAUSE** to write about food webs and population changes.

1. ____________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

2. ____________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

3. ____________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

4. ____________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

5. ____________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

4. FULL CHAIN

Plant → Grasshopper → Lizard → Eagle → Mushrooms

**Part A. Energy Flow**

Please write 5 sentences describing how energy flows in the food chain. Use words like **first, second, next, then, after, finally, ultimately**.

1. ____________________________________________________________________________

2. ____________________________________________________________________________

3. ____________________________________________________________________________

4. ____________________________________________________________________________

5. ____________________________________________________________________________
Part B. Because / But / So

Please write 5 sentences about the organisms in the food chain. In each sentence, use one word from the word bank, and **because**, **but**, or **so**.

1. ________________________________________________________________

2. ________________________________________________________________

3. ________________________________________________________________

4. ________________________________________________________________

5. ________________________________________________________________

Part C. Human Impact

Humans are always trying to build bigger houses. They clear land to build more houses. What is the effect on the population of each species? Write the effect in the table below. Use words like **increase**, **decrease**, or **remains the same**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organism</th>
<th>Effect on population</th>
<th>Reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grasshoppers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lizard</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eagle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mushrooms</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Use **SO** or **BECAUSE** to write about food webs and population changes.

1. ____________________________________________________________________________  
______________________________________________________________________________  
______________________________________________________________________________

2. ____________________________________________________________________________  
______________________________________________________________________________  
______________________________________________________________________________

3. ____________________________________________________________________________  
______________________________________________________________________________  
______________________________________________________________________________

4. ____________________________________________________________________________
5. __________

FINAL THOUGHT QUESTIONS

1. Expand the sentence:

   **Food chains show relationships.**

   What kind? ..........................................................

   How? ..........................................................

   Expanded sentence:


2. Complete the sentences using *because, but, and so*:

   a. Humans are considered the biggest predators because

   b. Humans are considered the biggest predators but =

   c. Humans are considered the biggest predators so

3. Complete the sentences using *because, but, and so*:

   a. Producers are important in a food chain because

   b. Consumers are important in a food chain because

   c. Decomposers are important in a food chain because
4. Consumers, decomposers, and producers are all important parts of food chains and food webs. Which type of organism do you think is the most important? Complete the sentences using *because*, *but*, and *so*:

   a. ________________ are the most important type of organism in a food chain because ________________________________________________________________

   b. ________________ are the most important type of organism in a food chain but ________________________________________________________________

   c. ________________ are the most important type of organism in a food chain so ________________________________________________________________

5. Small actions cause big changes. How does a food chain show that? You may provide an example to help you explain your answer.
H3: Romeo and Juliet Scaffolding Worksheet using vocabulary and conjunction practice

Name ___________________ Date ___________________ Class ___

Unit 4: Romeo and Juliet
Day ____ : Romeo and Juliet Act 1 Scene 1 and 2 (pages 13- 26)

1. Do now: Put the following events in order from our reading:

____ Benvolio tried to break up the fight.

____ Sampson bit his thumb at the Montague’s servants.

____ Prince Escalus said if there is anymore fighting, the fighters will die.

____ Tybalt attacked Benvolio.

2. Vocabulary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word:</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Sentence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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2. Making longer sentences with *Before, After and Whenever*

1. **Before** Benvolio tried to break up the fight, ____________________________.

2. **After** Tybalt attacked Benvolio, ____________________________.

3. **Whenever** Capulets and Montagues meet, ____________________________.

3. **Group Work:** Read aloud the pages 13- 26 in your group. Divide up the roles below:
Scene 1:
Lord Montague: ____________________________
Benvolio: ____________________________
Romeo: ____________________________

Scene 2:
Lord Capulet: ____________________________
Paris: ____________________________
Peter: ____________________________
Romeo: ____________________________
Benvolio: ____________________________

As you read complete the sentence below for each section. Be prepared to share your answers.

1. Page 13

Whenever Romeo is feeling sad, ____________________________

2. Page 14-15

After Benvolio asks Romeo why he is sad, ____________________________

3. Page 16-17

Before Benvolio starts laughing, ____________________________

4. Page 18-19

After Romeo says that his love has left him, ____________________________

Scene 2:

5. Page 20-21

Before Lord Capulet invites Paris to his “traditional feast”, ____________________________
6. Page 22-23

**After** Lord Capulet gives Peter the party invitations, ____________________________

7. Page 24-25

**After** Romeo asks Peter where the party is, _________________________________

8. Page 26

**Before** Romeo says he will go to the Capulet party with Benvolio, ______________

**Homework:**

**Character Summary: Romeo**

Complete the Character Summary for Romeo

What is one important thing Romeo says?  

How does Romeo feel in this chapter? Why?

Name of character: **Romeo Montague**

What is one important thing Romeo thinks or does?

What are some of Romeo's traits?
References


Sun, Jennifer W. Sun, Ma, Nam, Jeanie E. Nam, Ma, and Vanderwood, Michael V. (2010) English Language Learners (ELL) and Response to Intervention (RTI). Helping Students in Home and School III, S7H4–3. University of California at Riverside: NASP


