

Chapter 16

Magnifying English Language Learners' Success Through Culturally Relevant Teaching and Learning Frameworks: Acknowledging the Multidimensional Implications on Language, Literacy, and Learning

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ABSTRACT

There is a need to amplify the voices of English language learners through authentic language and literacy learning using a multifaceted culturally relevant and responsive teaching and learning framework that encompasses social justice. Specifically, framing the chapter through the lens of the sociocultural theory to better recognize, acknowledge, and understand the influence of culturally relevant learning. Culture plays a crucial role in forming identity and agency, so we must rethink the effect of culturally relevant pedagogy by linking principles of learning to the cultural realities of children, families, and communities on literacy. English language learners require more empowering and engaging pedagogy that actively involves them in learning experiences while developing self-efficacy through varied opportunities for academic and linguistic proficiency development to further support them as global scholars. As such, parallels exist in literacy development across diverse people and cultures, specifically the Mexican American culture and the Native Hawaiian culture.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-8283-0.ch016

INTRODUCTION

Intersectionality of Language, Culture and Literacy Through Culturally Responsive Pedagogical Practices

One cannot expect positive results from an educational or political action program which fails to respect the particular view of the world held by the people. Such a program constitutes cultural invasion, good intentions notwithstanding. - Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1972)

Dramatic increases in the number of English language learners in United States public schools have been well documented, with even greater growth projected in the coming decades. It is often stated that the United States is a land of immigrants, but too often many find themselves as a marginalized and underserved population. Albeit, our nation is rapidly becoming increasingly more culturally and linguistically diverse as an estimated one in five children now live in homes in which a language other than English is spoken. Students who are language minorities have been identified as the fastest growing segment of the school population (Wagner, Francis, & Morris, 2005). It has been estimated that by 2030, up to 40% of the school population may speak English as a second language (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). According to data gathered by the Pew Research Center (2015), there has been a fourfold increase since 1960 when only 9.7 million immigrants lived in the United States, accounting for 5.4% of the total population to a record 43.2 million immigrants living in the United States in 2015, making up 13.4% of the nation's population.

English language learners face unique challenges but also represent a tremendous asset for our country if their full potential can be unearthed and harnessed. English language learners are a tremendously diverse group representing numerous languages, cultures, ethnicities, and nationalities, with Hispanic or Latino students being the majority and Spanish being the most commonly spoken language. The proportion of English language learners in the United States from homes where a non-English language is spoken is projected to nearly double from 21% in 2009 to 40% in 2030; the majority of them come from primarily Spanish-speaking homes 71% (National Center for Education Statistics, 2010; Thomas & Collier, 2002). Texas has a large number of English language learners whose enrollment in the public-school system ranks among the top 10 states in the nation. According to data by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of English Language Acquisition (2018), English language learners speak over 400 different languages, but more than three-quarters of all English language learners speak Spanish. Spanish was reported as the language most commonly spoken by English language learners at home in 45 states and the District of Columbia, and in all but seven of those states, more than 50 percent of the English language learners in the state spoke Spanish at home. Hawaii is a state recognized for its Native Hawaiian Iloko language and Alaska is recognized for its Native Yupik people's Yugtun language.

The evidence continues to support our ever-evolving national demographics. Our nation is rapidly becoming increasingly more culturally and linguistically diverse. This surge in cultural and linguistic diversity is linked to growing educational challenges. There is tremendous need for culturally responsive pedagogical practices in education that reflect cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity of an increasingly diverse and global student population. With the evolution of our society from local to global, more schools are working toward preparing students to be more competitive in this globalized world and there is increased support for implementing culturally relevant pedagogical practices that reflect the principles

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