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TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING IN TEACHERS' FAMILY COLLABORATION WITH ENGLISH LEARNER FAMILIES: THE ROLE OF BELIEFS, CULTURAL COMPETENCE, AND COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

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TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING IN TEACHERS' FAMILY COLLABORATION WITH ENGLISH LEARNER FAMILIES: THE ROLE OF BELIEFS, CULTURAL COMPETENCE, AND COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

DISSERTATION

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
College of Education
at the University of Kentucky

By
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2023

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING IN TEACHERS' FAMILY COLLABORATION WITH ENGLISH LEARNER FAMILIES: THE ROLE OF BELIEFS, CULTURAL COMPETENCE, AND COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

Through a multiple case approach, this qualitative research study examined how teachers' beliefs on family collaboration and cultural competence related to their family collaboration practices within Culturally Responsive Instruction. The learning theories of Communities of Practice (Lave &Wenger, 1991) and Transformative Learning (Mezirow, 1978), and Critical Consciousness (Freire, 1979) were used as the lens to analyze the data. Teacher interviews and classroom observations were used as data sources.

The study found that teachers' perception of cultural competence impacted their classroom practices. Teachers who worked hard to intentionally change their cultural competence awareness into family collaboration actions appeared to be more successful to work with ELs and EL families than teachers who understood cultural competence as only getting to know families. Also, the teachers' disorienting experiences challenged their old ways of thinking and doing which resulted in transformation in their preexisting assumptions about themselves, their students, and families. They thus were able to translate their understanding of cultural competence into changing family collaboration actions. The findings highlighted the importance of community of practice. Teachers who had collaboration across multiple communities of practice made better practical engagement as a team than teachers who participated in only one community of practice. The first group participation resulted in positive transformative learning experiences to grow their family collaboration and fostered a perspective shift. The study also found that teachers who made efforts to overcome the inevitable constraints to family collaboration appeared to be more successful to enhance their family collaboration. Further, the data demonstrated that teachers' beliefs toward cultural diversity, shaped by their own past experiences, contributed to effective family-school collaborations. Teachers who intentionally changed the ways to collaborate with families appeared to be more successful than teachers who understood family collaboration as getting to know families. The first group demonstrated connections between their family collaboration beliefs and actual classroom practices.

KEYWORDS: Teacher Beliefs, Teacher Cultural Competence, Transformative Learning, Community of Practice, Collaboration with English Learner Families

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Date

TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING IN TEACHERS' FAMILY COLLABORATION WITH ENGLISH LEARNER FAMILIES: THE ROLE OF BELIEFS, CULTURAL COMPETENCE, AND COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

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DEDICATION

To Amir and Niki

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The considerable demographic growth in the racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of the U.S. school population requires teachers to be prepared to work with ELs and their families (NCES, 2021). ELs come from different linguistic, cultural, and educational backgrounds, and teachers need to be prepared to use a variety of instructional techniques to meet their unique learning needs. Research shows that ELs' educational achievement is partly due to appropriate course materials and content (Callahan, 2013) so that ELs are able to actively and meaningfully participate in classroom activities. Towards this end, teachers need to be prepared to teach ELs.

However, teachers feel underprepared to meet the needs of a diverse student population who might have "hundreds of languages and cultures" (Barba, Newcombe, Ruiz & Cordero, 2019, p. 31). There are not adequate ESL (English as Second Language) teachers in more than half of the U.S. to serve the EL population, and teachers who teach ELs are more likely to be mainstream teachers who do not have ESL credentials (Gibney & Henry, 2020). López, Scanlan, and Gundrum (2013) found that states that require both ESL certification and training for all teachers have higher academic achievement among ELs. However, only half of states require that ESL teachers earn ESL certification and only 20 states require that mainstream teachers take courses to teach ELs (Gibney & Henry, 2020). According to TESOL (2018), all teachers need to be equipped with essential knowledge about English language proficiency, second language acquisition, and cultural competence. To support ELs' success, Lucas and colleagues (2008) suggest that teacher education programs require all preservice teachers to take at least one course

regarding instruction of ELs. To improve ELs' learning and development, teachers need to get training on how to adapt the materials so that the content could be accessible for all students (Lucas et al., 2008).

Though Kentucky shows a rise in the EL population, the state does not require ESL certification or course requirements during training for all teachers. This is different from some other states' mandates. For example, California requires coursework in developing English language skills (California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2018), while the Illinois State Board of Education requires pre-service teachers to complete a course on methods of teaching ELs.

Based on findings in López et al., (2013), there is a positive correlation between no state requirements on ESL certification or training and lower academic success for ELs. As previously mentioned, NAEP (2018) reported that among 14 states with a significant decrease (more than 5 percentage points) in ELs' proficiency in 4th grade math, Kentucky had the largest decrease of
-16.5% points over the same period of time. In Kentucky and in many other states, it is mainstream teachers who teach a large number of ELs. The majority of teachers do not get training and those teachers who received training to teach ELs do not feel prepared enough to teach ELs (Gibney & Henry, 2020). Across the country there is a huge range in requirements for teachers to become certified and the kinds of preparation they are required to have to teach ELs.

The school-age population in the United States is becoming more racially and ethnically diverse (National Center for Education Statistics, NCES, 2018). The number of English Learners (ELs) in the U.S. increased by 29.2 million people between 1980 and

2015 (Batalova & Zong, 2016). The percentage of ELs increased from 9.2% in 2010 to 10.2% in 2018 (NCES, 2021). In terms of diversity of languages spoken by ELs and their families, Spanish is reported to be the most common home language, used by 75.2%f ELs (3.8 million students) in public schools in 2018 followed by Arabic, used by 2.7% of ELs (135,900 students), and Chinese, used by 2.0% of ELs (102,800 students). In 2018, Hispanic students were the largest racial/ethnic population of ELs enrollment in public schools (77.6% of ELs), followed by Asian students (10.7% of ELs), White ELs (6.7% of ELs), Black ELs (4.4% of ELs). In each of the other racial/ethnic groups (Pacific Islanders, American Indians/Alaska Native students, and students of two or more races), less than 1% of ELs were identified (NCES, 2021).

Reflecting the national change by state, California is reported to have the highest (19.4%) EL share of total student enrollment, West Virginia is reported to have the lowest percentage (0.8%), with Kentucky having 3.2% of ELs in public schools (McFarland et al., 2018). Kentucky, where this research study was conducted, experienced a 400% growth in the ELs in public schools from 2000-2017 (U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition, 2020). Kentucky represents 4.2% of public school enrollment identified as ELs, which equates to roughly 35,000 ELs (Villegas, 2021). Spanish is the most commonly spoken language among ELs in Kentucky with 64.2% of EL families, followed by Arabic (4.8%), Somali (2.9%), Nepali (2.2%), Chinese (2.1%), and 23.7% for other languages (U.S. Department of Education, 2014-2015).

There was an immigration shift in immigration policy in the U.S. since the advent of the Trump presidential administration in 2016. The United States has experienced an

immigration crackdown through changing immigration laws and policies (García, 2019). The administration focused on restricting the number of immigrants through deportations or individuals who planned to enter the country. This change accompanying with the public health crisis amid Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 resulted in immigration population reduction (Chishti & Bolter, 2020). ELs' challenges to achieve academic outcomes also were increased by the COVID-19 pandemic. To reduce the education gaps between ELs and their native born peers there is a need to practice culturally responsive education to create a more meaningful environment for students.

1.1.1 English Learners' Challenges in Schools

The family-school relationship-building relies on the component of language which is the key issue because the language piece makes it different from what it would look like for other culturally diverse students and families who their first language is English. Since the main focus of this study was on teachers who work with ELs and their families, it would be helpful to define who ELs are.

According to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA, 1965), ELs are defined as students aged 3 through 21, have a native language other than English or experienced an environment that contributed to limited English learning opportunities, have a language barrier to meet state academic standards, successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English, and are able to fully participate in society. The U.S. Department of Education defines ELs or people with Limited English Proficiency (LEPs) as individuals who were not born in the U.S. or have a native language other than English, come from an environment where a language other than English is dominant, or are American Indian/Alaska Native and come from an

environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on their level of English language proficiency (Migration Policy Institute, 2020). Not all ELs are immigrants but many ELs fall in the category of immigrants. Migration Policy Institute (MPI) defines foreign-born or immigrants as individuals without U.S. citizenship at birth including naturalized citizens, lawful permanent residents, refugees and asylees, people on temporary visas, and the undocumented people (Batalova, Blizzard & Bolter, 2020).

Since the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) law passed in 2015, the states are required to supports ELs or students who do not identify English as their primary language with greater intensity (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.-b). They are mandated to assess ELs' language proficiency annually as an indicator of their progress. Educational assessment on ELs' academic performance and proficiency is a measure to find out if they have the expected skills and knowledge at grades 4th, 8th, and 12th (NCES, 2018).

ELs and their families reflect a range of proficiency with English. On average, ELs perform below their native English-speaking peers in standardized assessments of reading and math skills. In 2017, only 11.4% of ELs tested at or above proficiency on statewide academic assessments in Kentucky (U. S. Department of Education, n.d.-a). Language barriers can adversely impact ELs' educational achievement at school compared to native English speakers. That is because ELs face the challenges of learning a new language as well as developing their academic proficiency altogether. ELs usually have lower achievement in core academic subjects that could result in higher dropout rates and lower college attendance in the future than their proficient peers at school (Callahan, 2013). There are discrepancies between the academic achievement of ELs and

non-ELs at schools in both lower scores on standardized tests and lower graduation rates (NCES, 2017). The challenges ELs face in comparing academic success between ELs and their non-EL peers are that ELs need to learn English language as well as catch up to their peers in academic content knowledge. ELs are supposed to be proficient enough in core subjects and in developing their language skills before they reach third grade in order to be academically successful in the future (Correll, 2016).

For each grade and subject, ELs were behind the proficient rates compared to their non-EL peers (NAEP, 2017). For instance, ELs have significantly lower scores in 4th grade reading, 37 points below their native-speaking peers and significantly lower scores in 4th grade math, 25 points below their native speaking peers (Park, O'Toole, & Katsiaficas, 2017). NAEP (2017) assessed that only 14% of 4th grade ELs were at or above proficient in math and only 9% of 4th grade ELs were at or above proficient in reading.

In terms of change in ELs' proficiency rates at the state level, almost half of the states had a decrease. Among 14 states with a significant decrease (more than 5 percentage points) in ELs' proficiency in grade 4 math, Kentucky had the largest decrease of -16.5% points over the same period of time (NAEP, 2017). At the same time, the state of Kentucky experienced rapid growth in the EL population. With the barriers to ELs' academic achievement and the ELs' increasing population, there is a need for teachers to know how to help ELs grow both in language and academics.

1.1.2 English Learner Families' Challenges in Schools

Besides ELs' challenges in schools, their families, too, face some problems connecting to their children's school. Given the status of ELs' academic success, the

importance of the role of family and community engagement has been emphasized as an integral part to support ELs' achievement (Epstein, 2010). Students' success is a shared responsibility where schools, families, and communities work together to achieve this mutual goal. Enhancing family and community engagement involves two-way, ongoing, and meaningful communication where schools and families work together as partners to support students' learning and development (Epstein, 2018). As the result of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Title I schools are required to follow a parental involvement policy that explains in what ways schools are engaging families in activities at school. Since then, family and community engagement has gained an important place in the U.S. education system (Green, 2021).

However, there are some barriers to family and community engagement that makes it a challenge for EL families and can limit their effective involvement. There is no doubt that parents have always wanted to be part of their children's education, but research cites that students' success in school is highly related with families' socioeconomic status, education, and their engagement with school. Parents with high academic expectations support and encourage their children's learning. They tend to have more engagement at school such as in parent-teacher conferences, participating in school activities and events, and volunteering which in turn contribute to their children's academic success (Loughlin-Presnal & Bierman, 2017). Families with socioeconomic challenges experience barriers to effective participation with schools (Garcia & Weiss, 2017).

One of the most common barriers for families is the language barrier that results in limited communication with schools. ELs' families may not understand

communication with schools due to their English language proficiency. Another barrier for EL parents is their work schedules. They generally have long working hours, might work non-traditional hours like evening or night, or work more than one job (Raissian & Bullinger, 2017). The stressful work schedules make it hard to be able to participate during normal school hours or be able to volunteer for school activities.

Also, EL families may have limited knowledge about US school settings, culture, beliefs, and practices. The parents' unfamiliarity with school culture and values could be another factor that might prevent families from communicating with schools. Research shows that even educated parents could have difficulty to understand the culture and expectations of U.S. schools. Perry (2009) argued that no matter what their formal education is, Sudanese parents experienced challenges to figure out what the school expected them to do with (e.g., the papers sent home from school). Parents were unfamiliar with the American education system which was different from Sudanese families' education culture and values:

> Formal schooling has its own culture, but it is far more similar to the culture of white, middle class America than it is to the cultures of more marginalized communities. All families therefore need access to knowledge related to values, beliefs, and expectations of schools to navigate the system. (p. 274)

Parents are less likely to engage at school because they encounter a new context that requires new cultural and educational knowledge which is different from their own existing values and experiences.

The fact that EL families' perception of school is different from that of teachers could negatively impact the development of trust between teachers and families (Hornby

& Lafaele, 2011). Rather than working together, teachers and families might work against each other. On one hand, families might build negative feelings toward teachers and assume that teachers do not care about their children (Hornby, 2011). On the other hand, teachers might complain that families are not involved in their children's education. They may develop cultural assumptions that EL families do not see their children's education as a priority (Henderson, Mapp, Johnson & Davies, 2007) or they do not value education (Valencia, 2002). Families and teachers' different perceptions toward schooling brings misunderstanding for both parties.

Scholars encourage teachers to view families as a partner in students' schooling (González et al., 1995; McIntyre et al., 2001) and help parents understand the unfamiliar culture of the American school system (Perry, 2009). The problem is not that the parents do not want to engage in their children's schooling, rather, they might be confused by school expectations and culture. Besides, it is not only EL families who grapple with the complexity of school context. Parents who are native English-speaking, too, see that as a challenge (Rogers, 2003).

1.1.3 What is Family Collaboration?

Family collaboration emerged as an important construct in education and its influence on children's achievement has been increasingly researched. Scholars have used different terms to define family collaboration in education. Fan and Chen (2001), for example, used *parental involvement* and argued that it is not clearly defined across studies. Similarly, Jeynes (2003) referred to parental involvement as a vague term which needs to be more clearly defined. Fan and Chen (2001) as well as Hill and Tyson (2009)

stated that one reason for inconsistency among definitions is that the concept is complex, multifaceted in nature, and includes different aspects.

Parental involvement has been defined as different parental behaviors and practices including parents' desire for their children's achievement at school (e.g., López et al., 2001), communication with their children about school (e.g., Christenson et al., 1992), their interaction with their children about homework (e.g., Clark, 1993), their communication with teachers (e.g., Epstein, 1991), their participation in school activities or meetings (e.g., Mapp, 1999), education-related practices at home (e.g., Keith, Reimers, Fehrmann, Pottebaum, & Aubey, 1986), and developing a supportive environment at home (e.g., Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003).

Over time the term shifted from *parental involvement* to *parental partnerships* and *engagement*. The term parent-school partnership is widely used to imply "shared and equally valued roles in education" (Price-Mitchell, 2009, p. 13). The term partnership suggests a wide variety of collaboration between families and school in meaningful ways that can positively impact children's achievement (Davies & Johnson, 1996). The term parent engagement is increasingly used to emphasize "the importance of parents' active power-sharing role as citizens of the education community rather than people who participate only when invited" (p. 13).

Another shift was in regard to use of the word *parent*. Using *parents* excluded some types of families, because parents are not the only people who are responsible and supportive in children's education development (Perry, 2010). The concept of parent got a multidimensional turn and expanded to include all types of caregivers such as

grandparents or foster parents (Kim et al., 2012) or aunts, cousins, and neighbors (Perry, 2009).

1.1.4 What Does Effective Family Collaboration Look Like?

Providing culturally responsive instruction requires teachers to learn about students' families, cultures, and communities (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). When teachers gain a clear understanding of families' expectations and needs, they can develop effective partnerships with parents and can support students' academic and literacy learning (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). The key factor in productive and effective family and community engagement is the commitment from both home and school parties. Their two-fold communication helps foster positive collaborations (Epstein, 2018), that is, families can be seen as a resource for teachers to increase family engagement and partner in their children's education achievement. True family-school partnerships put emphasis on "the bidirectional relationship between families and schools, and purport to enhance student outcomes" (Kim et al., 2012). While supporting their children at home, families make collaborative relationships with schools, too (Kim et al., 2012; Price-Mitchell, 2009).

The nature of this partnership model contrasts with traditional parent involvement that involves "top-down, one-way models of communication between schools, teachers, and families" (Perry, 2021, p. 30). In a traditional approach, relationships are single-dimensional, that is, families have traditional roles and the communications are solely directed from school on certain expectations. Kim and her colleagues refer to this traditional model as "unidimensional (school or home) or unidirectional (school to home)" (2012, p. 3). For example, families are required to devote their time to come to

school for volunteering activities whenever needed with the sole purpose of supporting teachers, instead of teachers reaching out to families with the purpose of developing a multidimensional learning community (Chavkin, 2005).

1.1.5 Culturally Responsive Teaching and Family Collaboration

In this study I explored how teachers' beliefs on family collaboration and teachers' understanding of Cultural Competence (CC) connected to their family collaboration practices within Culturally Responsive Instruction (CRI). CRI is the theoretical framework in CRIOP (Culturally Responsive Instruction Observation Protocol, Powell et al., 2017) measurement, used to select participants, conduct classroom observations and teacher interviews in this study.

Thus, throughout this study I used CRI when I talked about teacher classroom observations, the practices teachers implement from the CRIOP, and teacher interviews. However, the theoretical framework of the study is based on Gay's (2000) theory of Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT). CRT focuses more on what teachers are practicing in the classroom and their actual practices in a more practical way which aligns with the purpose of my study. I thus stick with CRT and use it throughout.

Below I briefly defined Ladson-Billings' (1995) Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP), Paris' (2012) Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy (CSP), and Gay's (2000) Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT). In chapter two I present a comprehensive review of the research on each of these teaching approaches.

Ladson-Billings' (1995) theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) asserts that using students' culture as an asset can benefit their learning. CRP empowers students to engage with school through applying three criteria: all students must experience

academic success, all students must develop and maintain individual cultural experiences, and all students must develop a critical consciousness through which the social order's status quo can be openly challenged. Through these criteria CRP mainly focuses on student achievement and appreciation of cultural identity. By building on the work of Ladson-Billings' CRP, Paris (2012) developed the concept of Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy (CSP). Paris went beyond the concepts of responsiveness and relevance (previously proposed by Gay and Ladson-Billings) and asserted that it is not enough for teachers to just value and respect the students' culture as an asset in their classroom practices. Rather, teachers must create an inclusive environment to sustain and perpetuate the cultural diversity.

Gay's (2000) theory of Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) is defined as "using cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and more effective for them" (p. 31). Gay suggested that CRT is validating, comprehensive, multidimensional, empowering, transformative, and emancipatory based on co-constructed knowledge and developing a critical consciousness. According to Gay (2010) in the process of becoming a culturally responsive teacher, an examination of one's own culture, beliefs, and pre-existing assumptions is important.

In this study the teachers as learners are the focal point and teachers' beliefs and assumptions matter for what would happen with the students in the classroom. More often teachers overlook the significant role of their own cultural identities reflecting in their teaching approach (Ndura, 2004). Throughout the process of learning to become culturally responsive teachers, the teachers develop an understanding of the importance

of their own culture that comes with cultural assumptions when teaching diverse population (Barnes, 2006). Teachers who are from a different cultural background from their students find that they do not have the same cultural frames of reference as their students and according to Gay (2000) they live in "different existential worlds" (p. 23). As a result of raising in different life situations, teachers might have gained negative cultural assumptions toward these students and their families and develop a deficit perspective rather than an asset perspective.

1.1.6 What is Teachers' Cultural Competence?

This study focused on different but related constructs of teachers' CC and teachers' beliefs in relation to family collaboration. I explored if teachers' own CC and beliefs were related to their actual implementation of family collaboration in the classroom. I examined the relationship between teachers' understanding of their own CC related to their family collaboration classroom practices within the framework of CRI. I analyzed how teacher participants defined CC and how their CC perceptions reflected any stages of Mezirow's (1991) Transformative Learning (TL) which is a central theoretical framework of this study. TL theory used as a theoretical framework to analyze if teachers experienced any stage of TL as a result of challenging their own assumptions toward cultural diversity. TL requires learners' critical reflection that results in changing actions. In this section I briefly explained what CC could mean related to the purpose of this study and why it was important in relation to work with ELs and their families.

Understanding the true meaning of CC is confusing and seems more than just a simple mantra (Pecci, Frawley & Nguyen, 2020). Part of the confusion about CC could be that the phrase itself sounds misleading to explain how teachers could be competent in

someone's culture. It seems hard for the teachers to be competent in each student's culture in the classroom. The meaning of CC has evolved over time as different scholars continued to apply the concept in different ways (Lum, 2011). One of the most common and early definitions of CC in the literature is having cultural awareness (i.e., constant reflection on both one's own and others' culture), cultural knowledge (i.e., possess knowledge about various cultures to interact appropriately), and cultural skill (i.e., ability to communicate appropriately and adequately) in relation to different cultures (Sue et al., 1982). However, it is not enough of having self-awareness and willingness to be constantly alert to the fact that teachers own cultural skills/knowledge are not those of other students. They are different and those differences are important in how teachers interact with students and their families and how to collaboratively work with and across different cultures.

Some researchers perceived CC as evolving form cultural knowledge to cultural awareness. It means that to obtain CC, teachers get to know the beliefs, values, norms, and history of a cultural group. Over time this cultural knowledge results in teachers being more sympathetic, tolerant of others, and open to learn from and grow with other cultures different from theirs (Adams, 1995). Teachers are expected to have cultural knowledge and awareness about cultural diversity plus some sets of dispositions and values. This value and commitment goes beyond only awareness which helps them to be more open to help diverse populations. Even though they might possess the cultural knowledge, awareness, and skills, they might still fail with the dispositioning part of teaching.

Teachers' CC seems to be about being able to recognize students' different cultures, recognize how teachers' own culture contributes to cultural diversity, and not appropriating students' culture for themselves. Rather, CC is finding ways to work with and help students and families who have cultural knowledge different from theirs.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The goal of this study was to explore how teachers' beliefs on family collaboration and teachers' own cultural competence can be related to their implementation of family collaboration. What supported teachers to become more culturally responsive to be able to take up new perspectives to better engage families and what constraints brought limitations for them to enhance family collaboration?

To enhance school-family collaboration, teachers needed to be prepared to develop effective engagement with ELs and EL families. Toward this end, teacher preparation programs have made efforts for PD workshops and training courses focusing on family engagement (Epstein, 2018). Teacher training with the purpose of meaningful family engagement with EL families helped teachers to implement practices that build upon EL families' values, heritage, life experiences, strengths, literacy practices, and Funds of Knowledge (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005).

Although there has been increasing progress in teacher preparation, teachers still felt that what they were learning in teacher preparation did not equip them with the skills and knowledge they really needed in actual classrooms to build effective engagement with EL families (Caspe et al., 2011). In places such as Kentucky, where there are growing numbers of ELs but no requirement about ESL preparation for teachers, culturally and linguistically responsive teacher education and training programs like

Project IDEAL (Instruction Development for ELs Achievement in Literacy) (a pseudonym) program, in which this research study conducted in, seemed to be crucial to enhance EL families' engagement.

The IDEAL project is a National Professional Development program grant based on CRT (Gay, 2000) and Funds of Knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & González, 1992). The program provides PDs, in-school coaching, and advanced leadership courses for K-8 in-service teachers to assist them to learn about and use ELs' Funds of Knowledge in classrooms. The goal is to prepare teachers to support ELs' school achievement and to enhance family collaboration, in which the latter goal is the purpose of this study. Project IDEAL used the CRIOP (Powell et al., 2017) instrument to assess the effectiveness of classroom teaching on six elements including Classroom Relationships, Family Collaboration, Assessment, Instruction, Discourse, and Critical Consciousness (see Appendix A). The focus of this study is on the family collaboration component of CRIOP that includes four indicators: The teacher establishes genuine partnerships (equitable relationships) with parents/caregivers; the teacher reaches out to meet parents in positive, non-traditional ways; the teacher encourages parent/family involvement, and the teacher intentionally learns about families' linguistic/cultural knowledge and expertise to support student learning.

In terms of what is missing in current literature much research has been conducted on student learning and using students' Funds of Knowledge in the classroom, however, there is little research on teachers' learning rather than students'. This study was significant because it filled a gap in research literature about teacher learning to explore why some teachers were able to successfully transform their teaching practices to take

new perspectives of doing and thinking in their classrooms while some teachers were not. This is an area where not much research currently exists. Also, conducting research on how teachers' own beliefs and CC were related to their classroom actions seemed crucial because they could impact teachers' decision-making to reshape curriculum and teaching practices in respect to ELs. It is crucial to focus on the fact that teachers come to the classroom with their own sets of beliefs and how they respond to students' needs who come from different backgrounds. Teachers who do not acknowledge the cultural differences between themselves and their students are being conventional in their practices (Ladson-Billings, 1994). The goal of this research study was to add to the body of research literature in understanding why some teachers were more successful than others in implementation of new teaching practices with respect to ELs and EL families' engagement.

The goal of assessing participant teachers in the IDEAL training program was to understand how teachers' actual CC and beliefs are related to their practices. This was important because teachers' CC might be different from the perceptions that teachers themselves might have about their CC. This was the area where teacher participants of this study might fall into two different groups in terms of bringing change or not in their family collaboration practices since they graduated from the program. Toward this end, I designed my research to be on teachers' beliefs and CC in relation to all the cultural differences and knowledge existing in the classroom. I explored how teachers' thinking and values on family collaboration and their CC understanding shape their family collaboration practices. To achieve this goal, I designed the research questions of my study as follows:

(1) What supports and constraints shape teachers' ability to shift their teaching to better include family collaboration?

(2) How do teachers' beliefs on family collaboration and cultural competence relate to teachers' practices of family collaboration within Culturally Responsive Instruction?

CHAPTER 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The primary focus of this study was on teachers, specifically those working with ELs. The research questions of the study were (1) what supports and constraints shape teachers' ability to shift their teaching to better include family collaboration? and (2) how do teachers' beliefs on family collaboration and cultural competence relate to teachers' practices of family collaboration within Culturally Responsive Instruction? The theoretical framework of this study was guided by Lave and Wenger's Community of Practice theory (1991), Mezirow's Transformative Learning theory (1978), and Freire's Critical Consciousness theory (1970) to help answer the research questions.

2.1.1 Community of Practice Theory

The theory of Community of Practice (CoP) by Lave and Wenger (1991) is one of the central theoretical frameworks of this study. Since I explored the relationship between teachers' learning and the CoP they felt they were part of, the CoP theory explained how the teachers learned to become better culturally responsive teachers in collaborating with ELs and families. It was thus important to problematize what constituted community and what the purpose and function of community for the teachers was. Project IDEAL was considered as the primary CoP that teachers still felt belonged to as they did in the past when they were participants in the program. It included coaches, peer teachers, and alumni teachers.

However, there was the possibility that teachers might also have membership in a school CoP or another CoP. In terms of what CoP teachers felt they belong to support

their learning about family collaboration, it might be that the CoP of school represented one aspect and the Project IDEAL CoP played another aspect of that in learning about how to enhance school-family collaboration. The CoP that teachers had membership in could impact their beliefs and the decisions that they made in classroom practices.

Research in adult education suggested that practices are shaped by communities' beliefs and values (Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992). The notion of thinking together built the foundation of the CoP concept in sociocultural theory. The idea was proposed by sociocultural theorists Lave and Wenger (1991) in their book *Situated Learning*. They were inspired by Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of learning and expanded the social and cultural nature of learning and development. They proposed a broader view of learning and argued that learning occurs in a larger and different social and cultural environment and outside formal academic settings. CoP supports the learning process in which the members of the community think and learn together.

CoP consists of a group of people who share common goals and interests, and together they learn and develop through sharing knowledge, information, and experiences. Understanding of a shared desired goal, negotiation, peer discussion, reflection, and active participation can lead to community members' transformational learning (Lave & Wenger, 2001). The result of this learning process is that the learners' identity and understanding of their participation changes to fit into the needs of the community. Learning is a social phenomenon and occurs in relations among people and constitute through dynamic interactions within the social and cultural world.

Lave and Wenger (1991) defined learning as *Legitimate Peripheral Participation*, that is, learning happens through participation in a CoP which eventually leads to

membership in the community of practitioners. The CoP concept explains social influences and how newcomers' knowledge and practices change, reproduce, and transform so that they eventually become experienced and knowledgeable members of a CoP. Lave and Wenger illustrated apprenticeship among Yucatec Mayan midwifes in Mexico as an example of Legitimate Peripheral Participation that led to membership in a CoP. A Mayan girl, as a result of growing up in a family who the mother or the grandmother was a midwife, became a midwife. The girl had a very small role at the beginning. She would sit quietly watch and listen to her mother. Eventually she could gain the mastery to do the midwifery activity independently. She absorbed the midwifery knowledge and skills gradually as she grew up and could eventually take over her mother' midwifery work. This example illustrated two points here: Learning is being shaped through participation in community of practices. Learning can take place outside formal school settings in a larger social and cultural community. Also, it is important to see the learner as a whole person related to a set of relationships or activities with other people within the real world.

In this study, the concept of Legitimate Peripheral Participation can be applied to the process of teacher learning through the communities of practice they felt part of. Teachers learned through participation, negotiation, reflection, discussion, and sharing resources and ideas with their teammates from school or colleagues from the program over time. Through self-reflection teachers could learn new ways of learning and teaching to enhance family collaboration and go through some steps of the TL process.

According to Lave and Wenger (1991), to understand the learning and development process as the result of active participation in a CoP, it is crucial to see the

learner as a whole person with their past and new experiences and history in their life. This had an implication for this study to consider if teacher participants had a different cultural or linguistic history prior to the research study. This was important because in the learning process, participants' previous background matters when they seek new ways of thinking and learning in a new environment. For example, if any participant teacher is bilingual/bicultural, they might reflect upon and bridge those two cultures or languages. What and how individuals learn depends on their background knowledge, prior experiences, and the contextual contexts in which the learning takes place (Johnson, 2009)

As I explored how the teachers shifted their teaching to enhance family collaboration, the learning theories of CoP and TL explained teachers' TL to take changing actions in family collaboration implementation. CoP sets a context for teachers' TL steps to occur through shared learning within the community.

2.1.2 Transformative Learning Theory

This study was also framed and guided by Mezirow's Transformative Learning theory (1991). As the study focuses on the relationship between teachers' understanding of Cultural Competence (CC) and their family collaboration practices, Transformative Learning (TL) theory was an appropriate theoretical framework to explain how teachers learn. TL theory explained if and how teachers moved through the steps of TL process over time and transformed their family collaboration implementation.

The concept of TL was first introduced by Jack Mezirow in 1978 and has undergone some revisions in later years through which he offered a new perspective about how adults learn. The theory was developed in the field of adult education on the

women who were returning to education or work after long absence. Through a qualitative study, Mezirow explored to "identify factors that characteristically impede or facilitate" (p. 6) these women's progress who returned to their work or resumed their graduate studies after an extended period of time. Mezirow found out that the participants went through a personal transformation and identified 10 stages of learning that these participants could experience.

Mezirow (1978) identified four types of conventional learning for adults including learning how to do something, how something works, how to deal with other people and learn about their expectations, and to form an evolving concept of self as an individual who possesses values, norms, and beliefs. He, however, suggested a missing dimension of learning which is central to adult learning and adult education as "learning about meaning perspectives" (p. 101) and the social situations that influence how adults make sense of their own experiences.

By meaning perspectives he referred to "the structure of cultural assumptions within which new experience is assimilated to – and transformed by – one's past experience" (p. 101). By learning about meaning, he meant how adult learners understand their own past experiences and gain a critical awareness on their preexisting assumptions. Learners' self-reflection on their prior experiences impacts how they see themselves and their relationships with others in the world. This deep awareness could lead to transformation in their understanding. He explains:

> how adult learners make sense or meaning of their experiences, the nature of the structures that influence the way they construe experience, the dynamics involved in modifying meanings, and the way the structures of meaning themselves

> undergo changes when learners find them to be dysfunctional. (Mezirow, 1991, p. xii)

Based on his definition, TL means a kind of learning that change someone's meaning-making or conventional ways that individuals look at themselves and their relationships. TL requires adult learners to build an understanding of new experiences based on their own past experiences.

Mezirow argues that deciding on what learners want to learn, how much they are ready to learn, how receptive they are to collaborate with their community, how determined they are to encounter the related challenges, and consequently take sustainable actions (individually or collaboratively) all depend on learners' meaning perspectives.

Though meaning perspectives are ingrained in a learner's history and culture, they have the potential to change. To achieve a change in one's perspectives, three types of learning need to take place: instrumental, communicative, and emancipatory. All three type of learning are crucial to fully understand how a social environment influences learners' perspectives.

Instrumental learning "involves determining cause-effect relationships and learning through task-oriented problem solving" (p. 73). It is acquisition and building of skills and knowledge (e.g., complete forms). For example, teachers' learning how to plan, implement, and reflect on student learning in a lesson is an example of instrumental learning. For instrumental learning to be transformative, learners need to figure out how they can influence a cause-and-effect relationship to gain a desired outcome. TL is a deeper level of learning that requires a shift in people's worldview.

Communicative learning is to "understand what others mean and to make ourselves understood as we attempt to share ideas" (p. 75). Teachers' learning through shared learning, negotiation of meaning, and communicating with fellow teachers in the training program or colleagues at school is one example of communicative learning. In communicative learning, interactions with other individuals in the community and peer conversations and collaborations facilitate learning that is communicative in nature rather than individual.

Emancipatory learning is the third type of learning that must occur to see a change in one's perspective. Emancipatory learning means that through critical self-reflection and self-awareness on their own history and experiences, learners might be able to challenge their misleading conceptions. Critical reflection "involves a searching view of the unquestioningly accepted presuppositions that sustain our fears, inhibitions, and patterns of interaction, such as our reaction to rejection, and their consequences in our relationships" (p. 87). One example of teachers' emancipatory learning is when teachers learn to how to assess their cultural assumptions toward teaching ELs and their families so that their family collaboration practices can be more inclusive and accessible to all.

However, during the process of learning, learners might experience a disorienting dilemma as Mezirow (1978) offered it as the first stage of TL. Mezirow presented ten phases of the continual process of TL:

1. A disorienting dilemma
2. Self-examination with feelings of guilt or shame
3. A critical assessment of epistemic, sociocultural, or psychic assumptions

4. Recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared and that others have negotiated a similar change
5. Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions
6. Planning of a course of action
7. Acquisition of knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans
8. Provisional trying of new roles
9. Building of competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships
10. A reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's perspective (pp. 168-169).

To make my ideas clear on the connections between three types of learning and the ten phases of TL, I presented a table below. I defined each phase of TL and brought an example related to each stage.

Table 1
The Ten Stages of Transformative Learning

Stage	Definition	Example
1. Disorienting dilemma	A dissonance occurs when learners' own beliefs and values are challenged when a new situation occurs that does not fit in with their existing assumptions.	Teachers participate in Project IDEAL because they realize that their classroom practices are not working for their ELs and families.
2. Self-examination with feelings of guilt or shame	Learners question their past experiences and beliefs. They re-assess them from different perspectives while feeling guilty or ashamed	Teachers might blame themselves for challenges in engaging with their students and families
3. Critical assessment of epistemic, sociocultural, or psychic assumptions	Learners reflect upon new information that has been learned and fit that new knowledge into their worldview/position.	Teachers critically reassess assumptions about ELs and their families. Teachers revisit decision-making about lesson plans and instructional practices.

Table 1 (*continued*)		
4. Recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared and that others have negotiated a similar change	Learners share and discuss similar experiences of transformation with other members of the community	As a result of sharing with fellow teachers in CoP, teachers recognize that they are not alone along the way on this path. Peer support makes the process easier.
5. Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions	Learners seek potential solutions for the issue they faced.	Teachers evaluate their own and their schools' current family engagement practices and brainstorm new options.
6. Planning of a course of action	Learners put their newly formed ideas into action. Learners adopt a new approach to deal with the problem and practice it in the social community of practice.	In consultation with fellow teachers and coaches, teachers plan to implement a new practical strategy that is responsive to students' and families' needs. Teachers might try different strategies.
7. Acquisition of knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans	Learners gain enough knowledge and skills to be able to implement what they already planned in the previous step	To facilitate communicating with ELs and their families, teachers might learn more about families Funds of Knowledge or consult with their coaches regarding practical strategies
8. Provisional trying of new roles	Learners tentatively examine their new actions and roles	Teachers enact their new plans and strategies
9. Building of competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships	When learners gain new knowledge and skills and put the new perspectives into practice, they build up confidence in implementing their new actions and become more confident in their transformation	Teachers gradually gain confidence in their ability to connect with families and incorporate Funds of Knowledge in teaching.
10. Reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's perspective	The final stage occurs when learners are able to apply the new actions and practices unconsciously.	Teachers transfer what they learn into their practice. They implement new changing actions independently.

Stage one, disorienting dilemma, is related to people's experiences. As long as teachers' experiences fit into their existing meaning structures, they usually do not

engage in transformative learning. However, if there is a disconnection between their pre-existing background knowledge and the environment they are in, it causes a disorienting dilemma. When learners' experiences do not fit in with their beliefs, they question their deeply ingrained beliefs and make room for a change in their prior frames of reference. Learners' disorienting dilemmas are critical in change and TL because they challenge learners to form new meaning. An example of a disorienting dilemma might be that teachers in Kentucky have many more ELs in their classrooms but they have not been formally prepared to teach ELs. The disorienting dilemma is important because it may be the beginning stage of teachers' change.

The disorienting dilemma in stage one could result in learners revisiting their assumptions in stage two. Mezirow (1991) defined stage two as self-examination with feelings of guilt or shame. For example, teachers might compare themselves with their fellow colleagues and feel embarrassed that they do not devote enough time and energy for their students' well-being or academic success. Teachers might feel faulty that they could have reached families more to learn about their child's interests or culture to make the classroom activities meaningfully and personally related to their life.

Teachers' feeling of embarrassment might make them go through Mezirow's stage three, critical assessment of epistemic, sociocultural, or psychic assumptions, during which learners revisit and re-assess their past experiences from different perspectives. Stage three seems critical in the process of TL because learners try to broaden their awareness thinking that there is a possibility that their previous experiences and beliefs behind their practices might be faulty and inaccurate. According to Mezirow (1978), learners must develop critical awareness of the fact that though their beliefs are

deeply rooted in their history and culture, they have capacity for meaning perspective transformation. For example, teachers might question their old assumptions and practices when they gain awareness of the social, cultural, and linguistic differences between themselves and their students.

Mezirow defined stage four of TL as recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared and that others have negotiated a similar change. This stage seems to represent learners' ability of rational discourse. It means that learners are able to reasonably communicate their dissatisfaction of the situations they are in with others. They can infer that the transformation they experience is similar to what other members of the community experienced. One general example of stage four could be when through sharing with fellow colleagues, teachers realize that their teammates experience the same problem.

After evaluation of situations in the fourth step, learners might develop some general ideas about their experience and seek for some solutions. At this stage, according to Mezirow (1991), the learners go through stage five of TL. Phase five involves exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions. For example, teachers might evaluate their own and their schools' current family collaboration practices and brainstorm new options for sustainable actions.

Mezirow (1991) defined phase six as planning of a course of action in which learners adopt strategies to tackle a problem. For example, as the result of sharing ideas with fellow teachers or people in the CoP, teachers might plan to implement a new practical strategy to be responsive to their students' and their families' needs. Through integrating in the new situation teachers might have a chance to try different strategies.

After the integration phase, learners might go through stage seven of TL which Mezirow defined as acquisition of knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans. Teachers, for example, might try to learn the native language of their students or learn more about families' Funds of Knowledge to better communicate with them.

In phase eight of TL, provisional trying of new roles, learners try their tentative plans to see if they work out. A general example could be when teachers examine a new strategy in their classroom to see if it works well with their students' needs. When teachers attempt to challenge themselves to implement new strategies, they gradually develop their skills and knowledge. By doing so, they might build confidence and competence in implementing classroom practices. This is stage nine in TL process and is defined as building of competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships (Mezirow, 1991).

The final stage of TL, stage 10, is a reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's perspective. In this step, teachers are able to successfully transform, revise, or add to their lesson plans and teaching practices, and to independently transfer the new approaches they learned into their daily classroom activities.

Mezirow (1991) suggested that the learning process occurs in a linear and a series of ten steps one after another. This means that the first step must occur and be completed for the second step to follow. However, one criticism to TL theory was that TL should have a cyclical nature and be more recursive to illustrate that learning cycles may repeat constantly in which learners might cycle through learning steps more than once (Wright,

2020). Learners may need to drop back to an earlier stage before they can move forward to the next step or at the final stage, they might cycle back to the first stage.

Teachers have their own unique frames of reference or meaning structures that guide their classroom actions. When TL occurs, teachers' worldviews transform so that they can perceive the new thinking from a different perspective to take actions differently.

TL theory was a major tenet of the theoretical framework in this study because it provided an appropriate lens through which I was able to examine if any transformation occurs in teachers' learning to shift their family collaboration implementation. TL explained how teachers' family collaboration practices changed over time after they finished the program.

2.1.3 Critical Consciousness Theory

Several theorists influenced Mezirow's theory of TL and its key concepts, one of which was Paulo Freire's (1970) theory of critical consciousness or *conscientization*. Two major aspects of TL theory were the disorienting dilemma and learners' critical reflection/self-reflection on their pre-existing assumptions, which were both informed by Freire's critical consciousness theory. The concept of critical consciousness was first introduced by the Brazilian theorist Paulo Freire (1970). He argued for consciousness raising and that knowledge needs to be historically constructed. In his work, the Brazilian villagers received critical education which empowered them to believe that their voices matter and they possess agency to bring desirable changes into their lives. The villagers, the working class of society, gained critical awareness that empowered them reflect on

their work situations and enabled them to take action to change the undesired work situations.

Freire (1970) analogized traditional forms of education to the banking model of learning where teachers deposit information to students "The more students work at storing the deposits entrusted to them, the less they develop the critical consciousness which would result from their intervention in the world as transformers of that world" (p. 60). The issue with traditional education was that students do not learn to think for themselves and become more dependent on the teacher for feeding information. Freire emphasized consciousness raising or *conscientization* that brings power to the learners to become independent and change the narrative. He believed that education should be emancipatory to empower students to think critically about their education. Freire defined *conscientization* as "learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions—developing a critical awareness—so that individuals can take action against the oppressive elements of reality" (p. 19).

He argued that education should not stop in the classroom. Rather, it should continue in all aspects of learners' life in which learners can make a link between education and their social contexts. To Freire, for education to be empowering, the teacher needs not only to be democratic but also to form a transformative relationship between themselves and their students, students and their learning, and students and society. According to Freire, critical reflection needs to be translated into appropriate transformative actions so that disadvantaged individuals could gain critical consciousness of their current conditions to eventually be able to take ownership of their situation. Freire suggested that teachers need to have critical consciousness in order to develop

critical consciousness, which means that teachers without critical consciousness could not possibly develop it. Teachers who possess critical consciousness are able to incorporate critically conscious pedagogy in their own instructional practices. It allows teachers to perceive inequity, to reflect upon it, and to desire to act on the social structures that bring limitations in the classroom.

2.1.4 Transformative Learning and Critical Consciousness

Mezirow's TL was informed by Freire's concept of multidimensional critical consciousness and the concept of education as a practice of freedom, which Freire explained as "reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it" (Freire, 1970, p. 36). Mezirow's emancipatory learning is where TL could be connected to Freire's concept of critical consciousness. The emancipatory aspect of learning posits that emancipatory learning occurs when learners are free from limitations that social norms bring to the situation such as institutional or environmental limitations.

Mezirow's TL and conceptualization of critical self-reflection was influenced by Freire's concept of critical consciousness as a "prerequisite for liberating personal development and social action" (Mezirow, 1991, p. 103). Inspired by Freire, Mezirow extended the use of adult education to shift teachers' history and frames of reference (meaning perspective in Mezirow's words) into developing social change.

Critical consciousness development involves a reflective awareness of the differences in power, privilege, and the inequities in social interactions. According to Kumagai and Lypson (2009) critical self-reflection or critical consciousness is not just a single focus on the self. Rather, it is to understand one's own pre-existing assumptions, cultural biases, and values and then shift from self to others and social inequalities.

Within the context of this study, learners' critical consciousness linked to paradigm shift in TL. The interplay between Freire's critical consciousness theory and Mezirow's TL theory was critical to this study because they were both based on the concept of "authentic reflection cannot exist without action" (Freire, 1974, p. 16). Critical consciousness was a key concept to justify the transformation teachers brought into their family collaboration practices because critical consciousness heightens teachers' awareness about students, families, and their circumstances. Teachers' own critical consciousness about the self and world was an important factor in determining how they were able to change their family collaboration practices. In this study teachers developed critical consciousness or self-reflection. It empowered them to go through some TL steps, move away from existing constraints such as social, political, or institutional-level barriers, and take sustainable actions for an effective school-family partnership. They were able to transform their family collaboration practices to meet the needs of all including ELs and their families.

Here, it is important to mention that although the main focus of this study was on teachers' learning as adult learners, Ladson-Billings' (1995) concept of developing critical consciousness in students could still be an important foundation for this study. Her work mainly focused on students' outcome, however, because teachers' consciousness and actions ultimately impacts students' learning, I considered that Ladson-Billings' concept of developing critical consciousness can be indirectly related to this study. Teachers' self-reflection and critical consciousness impacts their classroom practices and supports an equitable educational system for each and every student (Freire, 1974).

By developing their own critical consciousness, culturally relevant teachers can push back against the dominant mainstream classroom norms and values that perpetuated in the education system (Ladson-Billings, 1995) and bring sustainable changes to their family collaboration implementation. As Freire (1970) argued for critical reflection and action to bring a change in the relationship between students and teachers, Ladson-Billings (1994) and Gay (2000) defined critical consciousness as a core tenet to become culturally responsive teachers. They called educators to challenge themselves and to set the ground for their students to be co-constructors of knowledge. In this way, teachers can transform classroom practices to be more culturally responsive for marginalized students who have been historically disenfranchised by the educational system. This means that teachers are required to consistently be analytical about what they are teaching, how they are teaching, and who they are teaching (Ladson-Billings, 2001).

Developing teachers' own critical consciousness bridges to the idea of getting to know families' Funds of Knowledge and that how it relates to students' outcomes. By including cultural differences, teachers empower students to interpret the knowledge shared in the classroom through connecting it to their own real-life experiences and background. Research emphasizes the power of teacher training and education to support teachers to develop their own critical consciousness (Powell et al., 2016) and to work with ELs and their families to effectively implement CRT. Knowledge should be linked to "dialogue that is characterized by participatory open communication focused around critical enquiry which translates into a social praxis" (Freire, 1994, p. 97). Thus, moving through development of critical consciousness to changing actions can be attainable through meaningful curriculum design and teaching strategies.

2.1.5 Transformative Learning and Community of Practice

There are connections between Mezirow (1991)'s communicative learning of TL theory and Lave and Wenger (1991)'s CoP theory. CoP theory asserts that learning occurs in a dynamic interplay between community members to achieve a shared desired outcome. As the result of shared learning and active participation the members learn from each other. Likewise, in communicative learning of TL theory teachers learn within a CoP through peer collaborations, peer conversations, and sharing ideas with other members of the CoP (e.g., fellow teachers at school or in teacher training program). TL is a deeper level of learning that requires teachers' self-reflection, re-examination of assumptions, and a perspective shift to seek new ways of teaching and learning. This was an overlapping area with CoP where community members work together collaboratively to achieve the desired common goal. Through shared collective learning teachers reflect, discuss, and explore new ways for their learning and development. Both TL and CoP theories of learning center around negotiation of new meaning and self-reflection within a community toward TL.

Teachers learned as a result of working collaboratively with members of CoP. This connects with the ideas of shared learning and negotiation of meaning. Shared learning fosters self-reflection and exploration of new ways of thinking and doing which ultimately lead to TL within CoP.

In this study, CoP provided a setting for teachers' TL steps of learning to occur. the two theories worked together to foster teachers' TL and construct new knowledge about how to enhance family collaboration and take individual or collaborative actions.

2.2 Teachers' Cultural Competence

In this study, I examined the relationships between teachers' CC and how it reflects in teachers' family collaboration practices. I asked teachers to define CC and whether or how they practiced CC and explored how their CC understanding looked like in the classroom. Though some teachers might believe in family collaboration, they might not possess CC to actually implement it in their classroom. Speaking of bringing transformation in teachers' classroom practices, CC might be a tool to help shift their teaching. TL theory used as a theoretical framework to analyze if teachers experienced the TL process as a result of challenging their own cultural assumptions and critical reflection that could result in changing actions.

The meaning of cultural competence has evolved over time and scholars applied CC concept in different ways (Lum, 2011). One of the earliest and most common traditional definition of CC was introduced in 1982 by Sue et al., in the field of counseling and psychology. They defined cultural competence as the ability to create conditions for learning and development through learners' reflecting on their own beliefs and understanding different worldviews. This cultural competence model included three components of having awareness, knowledge, and skills about cultural diversity (Sue et al., 1982).

Cultural awareness means to be aware of one's own beliefs and the existence of other beliefs, and to respect other cultures that are different from one's own. It requires reflection on both one's own and others' cultural heritage. For example, educational excellence is a norm in East Asian cultures. By having the cultural awareness about this cultural group's norm, a teacher is able to better appropriately communicate with that

student and their family. Having no cultural awareness could result in cultural bias that prevents people to be willing to gain cultural knowledge (Sue et al., 1982).

In their model, cultural knowledge means one must possess knowledge about various cultures and interact with them appropriately in that setting. Building cultural knowledge is an ongoing process that needs time and efforts. A teacher, for example, who teaches Native American students should have the cultural knowledge about them such as the nuclear family unit in Native American cultures is different from the European American family unit. Native American families have extended families including parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins who live together and share responsibilities (Sue et al., 1982).

Culturally competent people also need to possess cultural skills to be able to adequately, appropriately, and verbally or nonverbally interact and communicate with different cultures. Sue et al., (1982) argued that since communication is a two-way process, one needs to be able to both send and receive messages in the context. Through becoming skilled in verbal and nonverbal communication, one can communicate with different cultures in a wide variety of ways. The wider skills the teachers acquire, the more appropriately they are able to respond to students from different cultures (Sue et al., 1982). According to the authors, the tripartite model of cultural competence is a repetitive cycle of process and strategies of awareness, knowledge, and skills which can help teachers reflect on their diverse classrooms and plan to take actions accordingly.

However, some scholars criticized the traditional model of CC and asserted that teachers' cultural responsiveness must go beyond the traditional concept of CC that conventionally defined as a set of awareness, knowledge, and skills. These concepts are

not static requirements to be checked off the list. Rather, it must involve critical consciousness development of the self, others, and the world (Kumagai & Lypson, 2009).

Some researchers perceived CC evolving from cultural knowledge to cultural awareness. This means that to obtain CC teachers get to know the beliefs, values, and history in a cultural group. Over time this cultural knowledge results in teachers' being more sympathetic and tolerant of others (Adams, 1995). However, accepting and tolerance of cultural diversity is not enough to be a culturally competent teacher. Rather, teachers need to be open to and grow with other cultures different from theirs. Although celebration, acceptance, and inclusion of cultural diversity might be an indicator of cultural awareness, it is not necessarily an indicator of CC (Lenski, Crumpler, Stallworth & Crawford, 2005).

Culturally competent teachers are attentive to build an inclusive classroom where the cultural differences are acknowledged. These teachers build authentic positive relationships with students and families who are culturally different from their own cultural background. They promote and foster cultural differences that reside outside of their cultural knowledge and norms and use them as an asset to enhance teaching and learning (Diller & Moule, 2005). By recognizing their own cultural differences in relation to culturally diverse settings, these teachers try to make it work to collaborate with students and families.

Culturally competent teachers understand that that ELs benefit from a learning environment that has personal connections to their values, daily lived experiences and background (Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, & Davies, 2007). They are aware of cultural differences between the school culture and home culture and are better prepared to

establish relationships with families and to connect their culture to classroom practices (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Teachers' CC is also related to the concept of Funds of Knowledge (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). If teachers know about ELs' families, they are more likely to have the CC needed to connect with ELs and their families.

It is not enough of having awareness to be constantly alert that teachers own cultural knowledge are not those of their students. Teachers are expected to have cultural knowledge and cultural awareness plus some sets of dispositions and values to position themselves as learners. This value and commitment in teachers goes beyond only cultural awareness. That is why even though teachers might possess the cultural awareness/knowledge/skills, they might still fail with dispositioning part of teaching due to their beliefs and lack of CC and critical consciousness.

2.3 Teachers' Beliefs

A major theoretical construct in CC in teaching and learning is teachers' beliefs and perceptions. Since I investigated the connections between teachers' beliefs and their family collaboration practices, in this section I talked about teachers' beliefs.

Belief systems are unconscious inferences which act as a dynamic filter through which people make sense of the world (Kagan, 1992; Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992). Pajares (1992) defined beliefs as "the best indicators of the decisions individuals make throughout their lives" (p. 307). Teachers' beliefs have an enormous impact on what they actually practice in the classroom. Teachers' beliefs are instrumental in their planning, making decisions, and taking actions about their teaching activities (Pajares, 1992). Teachers' beliefs are shaped by different factors such as their prior personal experiences from home, school, and community, and values from the larger context of society

(Nespor, 1987; Richardson, 1996). One premise of CRT is that teachers must hold beliefs that see cultural diversity as a positive component, a valuable resource, and an asset in teaching and learning (Gay, 2010). Teachers with positive beliefs about cultural diversity incorporate the cultural knowledge of diverse populations into instructional practices. However, teachers' negative racial and ethnic beliefs adversely impact the way they treat diverse population (Guttman & Bar-Tal, 1982). For example, Grant & Sleeter (2012) argued that some teachers view white and Asian students, and students from middle or upper class families, as more teachable compared to their Black and Latino peers, and students from working class families.

2.3.1 Developing Teachers' Beliefs

Teachers' beliefs as a defining attribute of teaching are stable and resistant to change (Kagan, 1992; Nespor, 1987). Pajares (1992) suggested that "the process of accommodating new information and developing beliefs is gradual and taking initial steps, accepting and rejecting certain ideas, modifying existing beliefs systems, and finally accepting new ideas" (p. 45).

The learning theories of CoP and TL framed this study to explain teachers' changes in their family collaboration practices. Although beliefs are resistant to change, they have potential to change. If teachers experience a disorienting dilemma (Mezirow, 1991) in the process of their learning, they might be able to re-examine their preexisting old beliefs, ideologies, and past experiences to take new perspectives. This is the stage that might result in change in teachers' beliefs. According to Mezirow (1978) learners must develop critical awareness that even though their beliefs are deeply rooted in their

past experiences and background, they have the capacity for transformation in behaviors and actions.

Also, the idea of CoP had a role to explain transformation in teachers' beliefs because beliefs and practices are the key concepts in CoP theory. Through active participation and negotiation of meaning with members of CoP, teachers take new perspectives and beliefs, and learn new knowledge and skills to take changing actions. Teacher learning is shaped through mutual values, beliefs, and sociocultural practices within the context of CoP (Rogoff, 2003).

Teacher education and training is important for teachers who work with diverse populations because they impact teachers' beliefs toward diversity in classrooms (Durgunoglu & Hughes, 2010). Teachers' beliefs and thinking are one way to approach teacher education and development. Teachers' beliefs are important because teachers do not come to teacher education program with empty minds. They step into the program with their own ingrained beliefs and values. Their salient beliefs and ideologies might have shaped either very early in their personal life, childhood, and home culture or by their school's rules and expectations, and/or later by where teachers were trained and earned their teaching credential.

Transforming the existing beliefs is a slow and complex process (McDiarmid, 1992) because new beliefs may not be consistent with teachers' prior experiences and beliefs. Modifying teachers' beliefs is difficult to achieve in a short period of time (Kagan, 1992; Richardson, 1996). Research suggested some strategies to help teachers change their beliefs. For example, in the context of CoP theory, one possible way to trigger teachers' beliefs could be the use of peer teachers and successful alumni teachers

to share their positive experiences and activities from working with ELs and their families, the challenges to enhance family collaboration, and how they came up to overcome those constraints.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section I review the literature related to teachers' cultural competence and teachers' beliefs as the main concepts to frame this study. Then, I review studies that used cultural-based pedagogical models of teaching including Gay's (2000) Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT), Ladson Billings' (1995) Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP), and Paris' (2012) Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy (CSP). They are student-centered teaching approaches to empower culturally diverse students through acknowledging their cultural and linguistic backgrounds. These frameworks challenged deficit perspectives that only value white and dominant cultures in American schools and emphasized on including each and every culture and language. Here I wanted to make it clear that most of the pedagogic philosophy was important across groups, however, the main focus of this study was on ELs.

2.3.2 Teachers' Cultural Competence

To explore teachers' cultural competence, I reviewed the research studies that addressed teachers' cultural competence as an essential factor in being culturally responsive (Hickling-Hudson & Ahlquist, 2003; Jimenez & Gertsen, 1999; Sheets, 1995). These studies illustrated how teachers practiced enhancing their cultural competence in different ways. To increase their knowledge about diversity, teachers used diverse communities' Funds of Knowledge in curriculum and their instructional practices, adjusted the curriculum to respond to diverse populations, and developed family

collaboration. The teachers also were conscious about empowering culturally diverse students in classrooms through critical reflection and engaging students of color in classroom decisions.

In one study, Hickling-Hudson and Ahlquist (2003) observed four indigenous schools to explore teachers' perceptions about the prescribed curriculum, which was largely designed for the dominant white population, and how teachers were using any alternatives for inclusion of indigenous populations in schools. In their study, teachers themselves brought resources that were specifically related to indigenous communities such as healing herbs. Teachers also invited diverse students and their families to share meaningful family artifacts or objects (e.g., games, seashells) from their home. Teachers showed pictures of important indigenous people, maps displaying indigenous tribal groups, and posters depicting non-English-alphabet poems and proverbs. To appreciate the knowledge of individuals of color, teachers also allowed their students to use their own home language to express themselves and as a tool for their learning. The teachers developed critical consciousness and allowed students to discuss controversial topics or chose texts with critical topics.

In another study, through classroom observations and teacher interviews, Jimenez and Gertsen (1999) analyzed 3rd to 5th grade Latino teachers' teaching strategies to teach literacy to Latino students. The researchers explored the impact of teachers' ability to speak the same language on their teaching of ELs from the same linguistic and ethnic group. Culturally responsive teachers increased their cultural competence through using ELs' home language as a resource to foster students' discourse and interactions in the classroom. The researchers found that students' learning manifested through back-and-

forth classroom discussion or use of humor. Connecting to students' cultural knowledge, teachers fostered Spanish-speaking students' classroom interactions which were similar to their home culture and values. Research cites that different ethnic and cultural groups have their own specific values that impact how these students interact and learn in the classroom (Morrison, Robbins, & Rose, 2008). For example, in this study because the teachers and students were from the same cultural and linguistic background, teachers were more aware of the fact that Latino students' culture highly values teamwork. They also gained awareness that their Spanish-speaking students learned better through more collaboration and interactions rather than individually. The teachers, then, decided to build an environment of learning for Latinos which was less competitive and involved more cooperative teamwork.

In her study, Sheets (1995), as a Spanish high school teacher-researcher, taught Latino students in an AP (Advanced Placement) Spanish classroom. She found out that though her Spanish-speaking students were able to talk in Spanish, they were not adequately able to read and write in Spanish to pass AP Spanish exams. Drawing on students' strengths and knowledge, she designed oral assessments that challenged her Spanish students which resulted in students' success in reading and writing assessments. She empowered her students to make decisions about the content of classroom lessons and instruction, creating the syllabus, and establishing assessment criteria.

Sheets (1995) and Jimenez and Gertsen (1999) both emphasized that teachers must be invested in their students' success. Teachers in both studies bridged students' home language and home culture to increase Spanish-speaking students' classroom interactions and learning. Teachers' beliefs about building the classroom content and

activities on ELs' Funds of Knowledge led to students' academic success. They viewed themselves as personally accountable in students' outcome and set high academic expectations for students to achieve. For example, Sheets (1995) had continual communication with students. She was available for her students before and after school hours and even on the weekends. Likewise, in Jimenez and Gertsen's study, teachers made use of their planning time at school to work with their students. In both studies, teachers either created or brought materials to make learning relevant for students to connect to their life experiences.

In synthesizing the studies that I reviewed, culturally responsive teachers tried to increase their knowledge about families and to develop family collaboration in different ways. They incorporated ELs' and their families' heritage into their classroom and tried to build school-family relationships of trust and respect in different ways. For example, in these three studies teachers invited families and speakers from diverse communities into the classroom to share their experiences or personally attended students' family or community events. In Jimenez and Gertsen (1999), a Latino teacher of Latino students invited parents to teach the classroom how to make piñatas. Likewise, in Hickling-Hudson and Ahlquist (2003), teachers invited grandparents and important people from the community to share their indigenous traditional stories. Sheets (1995) also invited Latino students' families to the Ballet Folkloric as part of a field trip. The teachers in these studies tried to increase their awareness, knowledge, and skills through bridging bodies of knowledge to the classroom curriculum, practices, and activities. Moreover, these studies found that teachers conducted family visits any time they had the opportunity (Jimenez & Gertsen, 1999; Sheets, 1995). Similar to Hickling-Hudson and

Ahlquist (2003), Jimenez and Gertsen (1999) demonstrated that to increase their cultural competence, teachers used their ELs and their families as partners and resources for teaching in classrooms.

One common thread among these studies was how teachers had critical awareness to empower their students in different ways. Jimenez & Gertsen (1999), Hickling-Hudson and Ahlquist (2003), and Sheets (1995) brought examples in which teachers shared power in the classroom with their students. For example, teachers empowered their students by allowing them to call teachers by their first name (Sheets,1995), to make decisions about classroom activities (Jimenez & Gertsen, 1999), and engaging families and communities in classroom decisions (Hickling-Hudson & Ahlquist, 2003). In these research studies, teachers increased their cultural competence through building on ELs and their families' Funds of Knowledge which led to more students' academic success.

Another common thread among the three studies (Hickling-Hudson & Ahlquist, 2003; Jimenez & Gertsen, 1999; Sheets, 1995) illustrated how teachers practiced their cultural competence via acknowledging ELs and their families' home language and building classroom practices upon families' Funds of Knowledge. The teachers allowed their students to use their home languages as a means of expression and a tool for learning. Teachers incorporated familial cultural knowledge into teaching including cultural artifacts, cultural events, families' native languages, and valuing the cultural group's heritage by inviting speakers of color. Going through the process of awareness, critical reflection, and gaining knowledge and skills, teachers were able to take critical action to bridge ELs' familial knowledge, heritage, and experiences to the classroom practices (Gay, 2000). Culturally competent teachers acknowledge other cultures besides

their own and enhance their knowledge about ELs and their families which foster family engagement.

2.3.3 Teachers' Beliefs

In this section, I reviewed and synthesized studies about teachers' beliefs on cultural diversity in classrooms. Similar to this study, the participants of these studies were in-service teachers who taught ELs. The methods used to explore their beliefs were interviews, observations, and surveys. Also because my research had a PD focus, I reviewed studies with a PD focus related to teachers' beliefs.

In a seminal phenomenological study, Penfield (1987) investigated 162 New Jersey in-service teachers' beliefs about diverse students and their families in their classrooms. The reason I picked this study was that because this is one of the early studies about teachers' beliefs. Though Penfield's research is over three decades old, some of the author's findings still hold up. Through a survey method, Penfield found out that teachers had strong assumptions that it was not their job to teach their Limited English Proficiency (LEP) students. Rather, it was the job of English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers because they were the ones who were able to speak LEPs' home language. They attributed LEPs' low school achievement to either their laziness and lack of effort or to the ESL teachers. The teachers' frustration was not only about dealing with their LEP students, but also working with their families, too. They strongly assumed that family collaboration was the ESL teachers' job, not theirs. For example, when one teacher was asked that how they communicate with LEP students' families, they responded "I don't. That is the ESL teacher's job" (p. 34). Penfield's work unpacked the underlying assumptions the teachers had toward the diverse populations in the

classrooms. Their negative beliefs guided their behaviors, actions, and decision making in classroom activities. Teachers' actions negatively impacted LEP students' learning and hindered their families' social and cultural engagement in the classroom. Though the teachers had LEP students in their classrooms, they never learned how to work with them. Penfield's study suggested the need for teacher training to better deal with culturally and linguistically diverse students and families.

About two decades later, in 2005, a study by Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, and Driscoll (2005) illustrated different findings. In contrast to Penfield's (1987) findings, teachers in this research possessed positive attitudes about ELs in their classrooms. Gándara and her colleagues examined in-service teachers' beliefs about ELs by administering a questionnaire regarding beliefs, challenges, and experiences to 5,300 teachers who taught ELs in California. Teachers' biggest challenges were time constraints, lack of resources to teach ELs, and communication with ELs and their families. Though teachers faced these challenges, they did not put the blame on ELs and their families for their low school academic achievement. Rather, they were willing to seek what they could to fix the challenges and to help ELs' school success.

In understanding why some teachers were frustrated in working with diverse populations in one study and some were not in another, there could be some contributing factors. One common thread between these two studies is the extent to which the teachers in these two research studies were exposed to diverse populations. For example, participant teachers in Penfield's study had fewer ELs in their classrooms compared to Gándara and her colleagues' study and, thus, had less exposure to diverse population in the classrooms. Lack of exposure could be the factor that negatively impact teachers'

beliefs about classroom diversity. Gándara et al. (2005) found that the more teachers had ELs and had thus greater exposure, the more they showed positive beliefs about ELs.

Another common thread was the need for teachers' training and teachers' desire to attend PDs. For example, Gándara and her colleagues conducted their research study in California where there is the highest ELs population in American schools. However, their participant teachers were opposed to participating in teacher PDs. They instead wanted to have more time in the classroom for teaching and to have more access to resources to teach ELs. In contrast, teachers in New Jersey were more open to participate in teacher PDs, though, they had smaller EL populations in their classrooms. For example, when they were asked what they would need to work with ELs more effectively, the most frequent responses were the need of having the opportunity for more training and education about how to teach ELs. Since a great deal of research cited that teachers with effective training could make a difference in students' success (Sanders & Rivers, 1996), implications for these studies suggested that although beliefs are resistant to change, they are possible to transform via effective training programs.

2.3.4 Culturally Responsive Teaching

Multiple frameworks for culturally responsive approaches of teaching emerged from the pioneering work of Gay's (2000) theory of Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT). Gay (2000) defined CRT as "using cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and more effective for them" (p. 31). The core principles of CRT were to make cultural accommodations by critically evaluating instructional materials and resources and then adapting the instructional practices to better serve the

needs of cultural diversity in the classroom (Gay, 2010). She posited that to become a culturally responsive teacher, teachers need to examine one's own culture, beliefs, and pre-existing cultural assumptions and to embrace asset-based views toward diverse population to support students' achievement (Gay, 2010).

Christal (2003) framed his study on Gay's (2000) CRT theory of practice and examined how creating a virtual museum of cultural artifacts support CRT practices for Native American students. Virtual museum projects were digital classroom learning projects that used student-centered materials. The projects were the result of collaboration between Native American schools and community local museums where they provided Native cultural content and knowledge. The Native knowledge and values were the key for teachers' CRT in the classroom in which four Native American schools created digital photographic files (e.g., labels and essays) of Native American cultural artifacts in two community museums. Teachers either asked students and their families to share and bring materials from their home communities, or teachers themselves brought materials themselves. In this way teachers empowered their students to reshape the white mainstream curriculum materials through using their families' history and to bridge those bodies of knowledge to the classroom content. Teachers attended to critical consciousness by bringing in discussion topics that tapped into Native Americans' culture and heritage. For example, after students created a virtual museum of Native American artifacts, the community viewed the project as a form of cultural communication. The project was a site to address stereotypical assumptions and misconceptions that non-Native communities commonly hold about the culture of Native American communities.

In a qualitative study, Brown (2003) used Gay's (2000) CRT framework to study how urban teachers, who were trained to teach middle-class students and who came from middle-class families, addressed ethnically and culturally diverse students from low-income families. Brown interviewed 13 urban K-12 teachers from seven cities throughout the U.S. to examine if their instructional practices reflected CRT to support these students' success. In their practices, teachers developed personal relationships with students. They devoted time to individually communicated with students to understand their non-academic issues. Teachers developed a comfortable and friendly environment of learning with mutual respect. For example, they used a lot of body language, did not raise their voice, gave students hugs, took them on picnics, and ran friendly classmate interviews. These teachers believed that developing relationships of caring, trust, and respect provided opportunities for students' school achievement. Teachers also considered students' learning style as a means of building upon their Funds of Knowledge such as allowing for more collaborative teamwork rather than individual work.

However, the teachers in Brown's (2003) study did not encourage school-community relationships to develop cultural competence awareness as much as teachers in Christal's (2003) study did. Moreover, teachers in Christal's study were critically conscious about taking risks to engage students in critical topics as a way to empower students. This was not a norm in traditional schooling and seemed to be a missing component in teachers' CRT practices in Brown's study. Instead, a strength point in teachers' practices in Brown's research was that they explicitly set high expectations for

their students through creating a cooperative learning environment and collaborative teamwork.

2.3.5 Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Besides Geneva Gay, Gloria Ladson-Billings significantly contributed to the field of education to address racially diverse teaching methods with a focus on students' outcome. She opened the door in how to train teachers to better serve culturally and linguistically diverse population in the classroom. Ladson Billings' (1995) Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) brought culture and pedagogy together to provide students of color more opportunities of academic success. CRP is "a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 18). CRP encompasses students' academic achievement, cultural competence, and sociopolitical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 2001). Teachers use a student-centered approach of CRP to empower students socially, emotionally, and politically to connect them to instructional materials (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

In an ethnographic study, Hyland (2005) explored how teachers identified themselves as teachers of students of color. The data sources were teacher interviews, classroom observations, and field notes. The participants were four white elementary school teachers of African-American students in the U.S. Midwest. She found out that the ways teachers identified themselves as teachers of African American students were connected to the ways they practiced CRP. Teachers used students and their families' knowledge as resources for teaching. They built positive relationships with families and respected their heritage and familial knowledge through conducting family visits. For

example, one teacher mentioned that because of time constraints during the school year, she visited the families in the summer vacation before schools started. Teachers took a critical stance in their instructional practices so that their students, too, could develop a critical perspective. For example, they built a learning environment where students could feel comfortable to ask critical questions about the texts they read. Teachers developed their own critical conscious by engaging their students in social justice activities. They themselves critiqued the unjust school system that perpetuated the culture of the white population. Teachers felt committed in their students' learning. They practiced to be good listeners for their students and to appreciate their opinions.

In a 5-year longitudinal case study, Powell (1997) used Ladson-Billings' theory to examined one white, middle-class high school teacher's CRP practices. Powell explored how teacher-student interactions could meet Hispanic students' personal and academic needs. Powell found three themes related to teaching ELs: culturally relevant teachers built cultural competence through building relationships with ELs and their families, they reshaped the prescribed classroom curriculum, and they invited all students to engage in learning. For example, Amy, the participant teacher, practiced cultural competence by incorporating ELs and families' familial cultural knowledge into classroom content to make the mainstream curriculum relevant to students. She conducted frequent family visits from the beginning of school and throughout the school year. She asked her students to write stories about their personal lives and put them in a class booklet. Powell also found examples that Amy affirmed her ELs' language identity. For example, Amy allowed her ELs to write in their native language as a tool to express themselves and to be able to learn better. She acknowledged the students' home language even though she

herself did not know their language "all of the different languages that our students speak should be affirmed and encouraged," Amy stated (p. 477). She got the students' writings translated later.

One common thread in both studies by Christal (2003) and Powell (1997) is that the teachers were culturally competent to increase their knowledge about diverse populations and take actions to implement CRP in the classroom activities. The teachers in both studies explored ELs families' cultural and linguistic background (e.g., use of students' home language) and encouraged school-family relationships (e.g., conducting family visits to learn about Funds of Knowledge and home literacy practices). Both Christal and Powell called the scholars to find ways to help teachers enhance their critical consciousness such as teacher training programs and close partnerships with teachers. These studies raise the question of how to train and educate teachers to critically reflect on their classroom practices to be able to support ELs' academic learning.

2.3.6 Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy

In 2012, Django Paris refined the terms responsiveness and relevance in previous approaches of CRT and CRP. He, instead, offered a more accurate term called Culturally Sustaining as an alternative in the next step of the evolution of culturally-based pedagogies. Paris's (2012) Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy (CSP) "seeks to perpetuate and foster - to sustain - linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of the democratic project of schooling" (p. 95). CSP aimed to *sustain* the multicultural and multilingual components of students of color by making cultural and linguistic pluralism a part of the school rather than sustaining monoculturalism and monolingualism based on white middle class cultural and linguistic norms. The term culturally sustaining looked beyond

responsiveness or relevance of pedagogies to the students' cultural experiences and practices. Rather, CSP helped teachers disrupt traditional assumptions about mainstream white linguistic and cultural ownership and practice. It empowered racially diverse youth to sustain their own cultural and linguistic heritage while allowed them to learn from and access to the dominant white culture. Paris's work looked at how youth of color such as African American students navigated their identities through African American Language and Hip Hop culture and how other youth of color such as Latinos and Pacific Islanders participated in African American linguistic and cultural practices. In turn, African American and Pacific Islander youth shared Latinos' Spanish language to foster their heritage linguistic culture. CSP emphasized that as much as it is important to sustain the culture and language of communities of color, it is also crucial to give them opportunities to learn about white culture and language. CSP asked educators to "reimagine schools as sites where diverse, heterogeneous practices are not only valued but sustained in fundamentally reimagining the purpose of education. CSP demands a critical, emancipatory vision of schools that reframes the object of critique from our children to oppressive systems" (p. 3).

In one study, McCarty and Lee (2014) conducted an ethnographic study on culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy to understand classroom practices for Native American students. Their research drew upon Paris's concept of CSP. They studied two Navajo teachers and examined how their CSP looked like to meet the needs of Native American learners. They implemented CSP to address the challenges of implementing CSP in schools and the limitations that traditional school systems and prescribed curriculum bring to Native communities. Their findings supported community-based

classroom CSP practices that challenged Indigenous tribal sovereignty issues. The teachers extended Native Americans' values and cultures and used them as classroom content to develop practices that would strengthen the indigenous community. For example, one challenge in practicing CSP was the need to address the monolingual/monocultural nature of assessment in schools because it excluded the community-based values of the Navajo language. Speaking Navajo (an Indigenous language of the Southwestern United States) is an important identity of Navajo people. Navajo teachers put efforts to teach students Navajo language. Teachers' CSP practices used students' linguistic identity so that classroom practices could be meaningfully connected to their linguistic heritage. The teachers incorporated Native culture into social studies, science, and math in different ways. For example, the content had monthly themes relevant to students' cultural background such as nature, Native traditional homes, Navajo songs and story-telling, and health remedies. The concept of family and community, too, had an importance place in Native culture as one teacher explained:

> So our first month will be about self-esteem, it is more of your clanship, your kinship, who you are, where you come from… you are of the Dine [Navajo] people, you should be proud of who you are and how you present yourself as a Navajo person. That's all intertwined with [cultural] stories as well. (p. 114)

The teachers prioritized the importance of students' well-being and emotional aspects (e.g., love, empathy) which led to their academic success. CSP practices which were meaningfully connected to students' linguistic and cultural background can impact students' school achievement.

2.3.7 What is Known and What is Problematic?

Teachers' beliefs toward diversity in the classroom and family collaboration shape their CRT practices and ultimately impact students' success (Gay, 2010). Teachers' reflection on their own beliefs and frames of reference is a strong component to disrupt their prior experiences and help them accept new ideas and knowledge which could eventually bring in transformation in family collaboration actions. Culturally responsive teachers devote time to communicate with ELs and families to build relationships of trust and to make sure that all ELs and families feel safe and welcome at school and use the familial knowledge in classroom. Since this study has a PD focus, it is also important to explore how teachers' beliefs are being shaped through professional learning experiences in the IDEAL Project CoP (besides school and ELs/EL families' communities of practice). PDs provide the context for teachers to reflect on their beliefs and how they can better enhance family collaboration.

Teachers' beliefs and cultural competence impact the changes in their classroom practices (Pajares, 1992, Richardson, 1996). Teachers' beliefs and prior experiences often acquired through personal life and previous childhood experiences and might remain functional or dysfunctional for them as adults. They are frames of reference through which teachers see the world which thus allow them (or not) to use a new culturally informed perspective. CC is a developmental process that needs time and reflective work to embody CRT practices and beliefs (Bennett, 1986; 2017). The process of teacher learning is long and complex, however, even small steps toward change in teachers' beliefs around family collaboration, cultural competence, and family collaboration practices matter and could be considered as the good start along the way.

Speaking of what is missing in research, it seems that much is known in the areas of CRT, using students' Funds of Knowledge, and student learning. However, there is little research on teachers' learning rather than students'. There seems to be a gap in the current research literature on teacher learning about why some teachers are able to make a shift in their teaching practices, and successfully take and implement new perspectives in their classrooms while some teachers are not.

This research study, guided by learning theories of TL and CoP, and Critical Consciousness theory, contributed new information to answer some questions in areas of teachers' transformation in family collaboration implementation, how CoP can foster teachers' TL, how teachers' understanding of CC reflected on family collaboration practices, and how teachers' beliefs toward family collaboration impacted their classroom practices.

This study had implications for teacher training program. How teacher educators can design a CoP to help teachers' learning as the result of shared learning, critical reflection, discussion, implementation and ultimately learning within the social learning theory of CoP. The study also suggested how teacher educators could help teachers traverse transformative process to eventually lead to some levels of TL within the learning theory of TL.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I described the objectives of the study, the research design, researcher positionality, and the procedures taken for data collection and data analysis.

3.1 Purpose

The purpose of this study was to understand teachers' learning and transformation in implementation of family collaboration practices. The research questions of the study included (1) what supports and constraints shape teachers' ability to shift their teaching to better include family collaboration? and (2) how do teachers' beliefs on family collaboration and CC relate to teachers' practices of family collaboration within Culturally Responsive Instruction?

To answer the research questions, I took a qualitative multiple case research approach with inductive analytical methods. Qualitative research is an effective process through which researchers are able to understand social and human experiences by collecting and analyzing data from the participants' perspective (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Qualitative research provides an opportunity for an investigation of current phenomena and an intense observation of participants in authentic contexts to explore the perspectives and lived experiences of individuals (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2014). Since qualitative research illustrates the exploration of people's subjective experience (Miles et al., 2014), it allowed me to examine teachers' real experiences who worked directly with English Learners (ELs) and their families in a real-world context of schools. I explored to understand how participant teachers' beliefs

on family collaboration and CC shaped their roles and dispositions in the classroom to inform their family collaboration practices.

In this study, teachers' understanding of CC and family collaboration beliefs was examined through classroom observations and teachers' interviews. The semi-structured interviews provided a dialogue between teachers and researcher so that teachers could share their stories and personal experiences in their own words. Through listening to teachers, qualitative research provided an opportunity for the researcher to empower the participants through which their voices could be heard. Thus, the research questions of this study called for the use of a qualitative research method to depict participant teachers' stories. The goal was to explore teachers' beliefs and CC related to their family collaboration practices, what supported teachers to transform their teaching to enhance implementation of family collaboration, and what impeded teachers to enhance family-school partnerships.

3.2 Research Design

There are a variety of qualitative research genres, among which case study is a well-stablished research tradition (Saldaña, 2011b). Within the framework of the qualitative approach, the methodology that best addressed my research questions was multiple case study. In case studies the researchers try to understand the complexity of a bounded system, its components, and how the system works (Johnson & Christensen, 2019). Since the focus of this study was on participant teachers' real-life classroom experiences in the authentic setting of classroom and its relations to their pedagogy, I used multiple case study. Classrooms represented a unique naturalistic cultural context where teachers shared their lived everyday experiences. Qualitative case study allowed

me to learn about teachers' beliefs on family collaboration and their perceptions of CC in teaching and how they were related to their family collaboration teaching practices.

Miles and his colleagues (2014) suggested that multiple case studies are distinguishable from single case studies because they "add confidence to findings" (p. 48) by giving a better perception of the processes across cases. By focusing on multiple cases, unlike a single case, the accuracy and trustworthiness of the findings will be increased (Miles et al., 2014). Through collecting data from multiple teachers, at multiple sites, and within multiple school districts, I was able to answer the how or the why about the contemporary events over which I had little control (Yin, 2009). Teachers' understanding of their CC and beliefs related to their pedagogy in the social context of classrooms was a complex social phenomenon and by analyzing multiple cases, I was able to better investigate this concept.

A case or unit of analysis is defined as a "focused and bounded phenomenon embedded in its context" (Miles et al., 2014, p. 30). According to Miles et al. (2014) a case, for example, can be defined by a role (e.g., school principal), a small group (e.g., a college-level rock band), an organization (e.g., a nursery school), a community (e.g., a village in Tanzania), an event (e.g., a search committee meeting), a process (e.g., implementation of an education program in a school district), and a culture or subculture (America during the 2012 presidential election cycle). There were different ways to bound or divide up the cases in this study. One way to look at the cases was to see the individual teacher as one case. Even though participant teachers shared commonalities, they were in different contexts (e.g., different grade levels, different schools, and different districts). Another way to bound the cases was based on each cohort of teachers

in the program (e.g., each of cohort one, two, or three could be one case). Because the research questions focused on the transformation in teachers' family collaboration practices, that made an argument for having the two cases of the teachers: One case/category was teachers whose family collaboration scores increased from pre- to post- classroom observations over a year of participation in the project. Another category was teachers whose family collaboration scores did not increase/stayed the same, or went lower from pre- to post- classroom observations over a year of participation in the project. With the two cases/categories, I defined the cases based on the process of implementing family collaboration, rather than by each individual teacher. In this way I was able to investigate what were the affordances that allowed teachers to shift and what are the constraints that impeded them to bring transformations into their family collaboration practices.

Cases might have subcases that are embedded within its specific context. For example, a case study of a school might have specific cases of classrooms or teacher-student relationships within the context of the school (Yin, 2009). One strength of qualitative data is that the data are collected closely to its specific environment. Because teachers' beliefs and CC were different across the two cases of teachers, the cases had embeddedness. Embeddedness means that in the research design I had more than one subcase or unit of analysis (Yin, 2003), that is, within each case, I had subcases or teachers who taught in different schools and different districts. The two cases of teachers, teachers with no change and teachers with positive change in family collaboration component, were like an umbrella, within which I had four teachers (subcases) embedded under teachers whose scores increased (Ashley, Rachel, Kate, Denia) and two teachers

(subcases) embedded under teachers whose scores stayed the same (Stacey and Bryan) in family collaboration component of CRIOP (Culturally Responsive Instruction Observation Protocol) from pre- to post-observation over a year.

3.2.1 Research Site

In this section I first provided a description of Project IDEAL because it was the setting where the participants of this study were selected. I then described the setting and participants of this study.

In September 2017, faculty from a university in Kentucky were awarded funding from the U.S. Department of Education through a National Professional Development program grant named Project IDEAL (Instruction Development for ELs Achievement in Literacy) (A pseudonym). By using Culturally Responsive Teaching (Gay, 2000) and Funds of Knowledge (Moll et al., 1992), the project implemented professional development (PD) workshops for K-8 in-service teachers. The goal was (a) to prepare teachers to improve ELs' language development and academic outcomes, and (b) to support teachers' use of ELs families' Funds of Knowledge through sustained family and community engagement activities to promote student learning.

Project IDEAL consists of four components: (a) a four-day PD workshop held in summer for the incoming cohort of participant teachers, (b) ongoing in-school coaching for each teacher, (c) year-round PD workshops, and (d) advanced leadership courses framed in CRT taught at a southeastern university in Kentucky for approximately five participant teachers per year. Each of these components were implemented annually for each new cohort of teachers who participated in the program: approximately 25 teachers

per year, 125 teachers through the life of the project (2017-2023) across three area counties in central Kentucky.

The order of program activities implementation annually for a single cohort of participants included participants' recruitment in spring (March-April), a four-day PD workshop in summer (July), and advanced leadership courses taught at university and in school coaching by coaches/faculty throughout the academic year (August-May).

The main focus of the PD sessions included review of specific elements of the CRIOP framework, including Classroom Relationships, Family Collaboration, Assessment Practices, Instructional Practices, Discourse, and Critical Consciousness. The implementation of PDs were structured through lectures by university professors/coaches and invited guest speakers, and collaborative work with teacher participants. Teachers were provided with materials and resources to use in the PDs. Teachers were assigned tasks to complete before the PDs, as well as worked collaboratively during the sessions with their teammates and instructional coaches. For example, teachers would bring a lesson to evaluate from a culturally responsive literacy perspective and revise.

In terms of coaching, each teacher participant received an average of 10 coaching sessions during the academic year (almost once a month). The coaches' activities included assisting in lesson planning, setting goals, developing lessons, modeling lessons, providing feedback and resources to support implementation, helping teachers assess progress toward goals, co-teaching lessons and strategies learned in PDs, and planning for next steps.

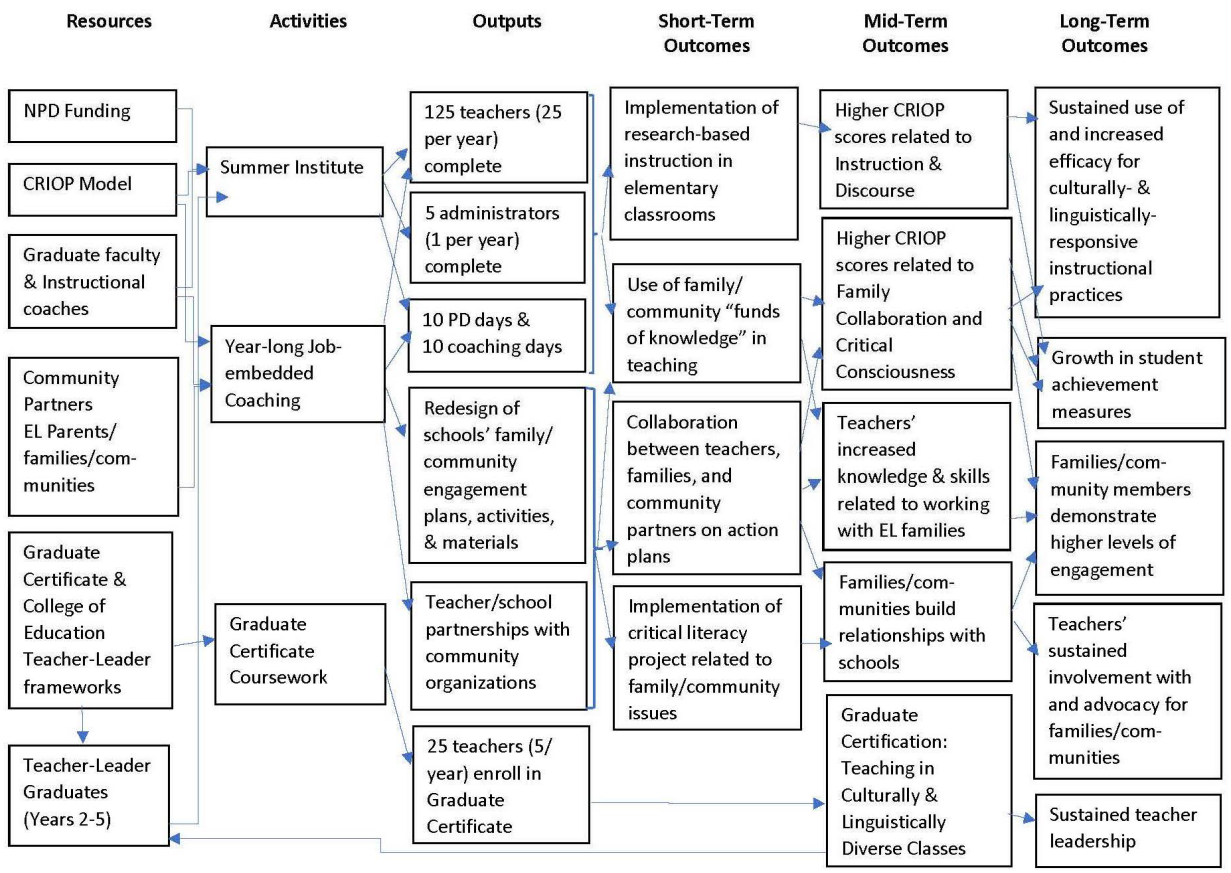
It was important to mention that there were some concepts the teachers were explicitly introduced to in PDs such as Funds of Knowledge, Family Collaboration, and

Critical Consciousness, whereas teachers might have implicitly experienced/learned some concepts such as Cultural Competence. These concepts have been used in the teacher interview of this study.

Below is a visual representation of the program implementation and the connection between planned activities and the desired outcomes.

Figure 1

Model of Program Implementation



The data for the present study were collected from five elementary schools and one middle school. The schools located in three counties near the southeastern university in Kentucky including Falls County, Spokane County, and Creek County (pseudonyms).

Falls County is the largest district and Creek County is the smallest district among the three in the area.

3.2.2 Research Participants Selection

To select the participants of this study, I conducted purposeful sampling out of existing Project IDEAL (Instruction Development for ELs Achievement in Literacy) participant teachers to select six teachers based on their pre and post CRIOP scores for family collaboration. One rationale to choose purposeful sampling strategy was that in multiple case studies, the researchers purposefully select cases to illustrate different perspectives on the process under investigation (Creswell, 2007). In terms of generalizability, although the contexts across my cases were different, the cases were representative for the group because the focus was on the process of implementing family collaboration rather than each single teacher. Another rationale for purposeful sampling was the accessibility to cases (Creswell, 2007). I had the opportunity to access to the rich source of data of Project IDEAL, from which I was able to select my participants.

In the process of data generation in multiple case studies, one challenge that researchers face is that how many cases would bring enough confidence in the analytical generalizations (Miles et al., 2014). The goal in qualitative studies is not the generalization of information, rather it is "to elucidate the particular, the specific" (Creswell, 2007, p. 126). Depending on how complex the within-case sampling will be (Miles et al., 2014), we can decide on the number of cases in the study. In this study, investigating the teacher understanding of their beliefs, CC, and its relations to their culturally responsive practices was a complex concept. To understand the complexity of

how the system works, having too many cases could make it more difficult to manage all the data. Miles et al. (2014) suggested a minimum of five cases for multiple case studies.

Here I first explained from which cohorts of the program (6 cohorts in total), the participants were selected from and then I explained how I selected the participants in two groups. In this research I looked at teachers' continuing growth in family collaboration over time since their graduation from the program. Therefore, I omitted cohort 6 because as of completing this study (June 2023), Project IDEAL was still working with cohort 6 of teachers. I also excluded cohort 5 because at the time of proposing this study (2021), cohort 5 did not have enough time to show this change and thus were out for participant selection.

Initially, I was not planning to target cohort 4 for recruitment because they were a unique group of teachers. They were alumni teachers from the first three cohorts/years of program who voluntarily participated a second time during the Covid-19 pandemic. Cohort 4 of Project IDEAL was originally intended to be the focal research study year for the grant as a treatment group. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, cohort/year 4 appeared to be an uncertain time to conduct in-person research for the project. Some changes were made to the project timeline and activities and cohort 4 of the project served as a group of alumni teacher participants who received virtual PD and coaching.

Therefore, my original reasoning and plan was not to select my participants among cohort 4 because they already completed the program once before and they were not really equivalent to other cohorts of teachers who participated once in the program. Cohort 4 received two years of participation in the training program while other cohorts participated in one year of the project. However, it happened that I needed to eventually

recruit my teacher participants from cohort 4 as well because there was not a big enough pool of participants to select from. Thus the six participants of this study were selected from cohort 1 (2017-2018), cohort 2 (2018-2019), cohort 3 (2019-2020), and cohort 4 (2020-2021) of the Project IDEAL.

Since the focus of this study was on teachers who worked with ELs and families, I set one criterion to select the participants and that was the teachers must have ELs in their classrooms to be able to participate in the study. I thus excluded those teachers who did not have ELs.

To select the participants of this study I used the original data already collected in Project IDEAL (Instruction Development for ELs Achievement in Literacy) based on the CRIOP instrument (see Appendix A). The Culturally Responsive Instruction Observation Protocol (CRIOP) is a 6-category observational inventory utilized to assess an individual classroom teacher's quality of instruction in relation to: Classroom Relationships, Family Collaboration, Assessment Practices, Instructional Practices, Discourse, and Critical Consciousness. The focus of this study was only on the family collaboration component of CRIOP that included four indicators: (a) The teacher establishes genuine partnerships (equitable relationships) with parents/caregivers, (b) The teacher reaches out to meet parents in positive, non-traditional ways, (c) The teacher encourages parent/family involvement, and (d) The teacher intentionally learns about families' linguistic/cultural knowledge and expertise to support student learning. These indicators were markers that raters were looking for within the interviews to arrive at the scores. To make sure the raters/observers/interviewers scored the data precisely, they went through multiple training sessions to look for inter-rater alignment.

The CRIOP instrument had observers provide a count of how often teachers exhibited these culturally responsive traits. Raters must determine whether teachers exhibit these traits consistently (4), often (3), occasionally (2), rarely (1) or never (0). The CRIOP overall/holistic scores range from 4 (consistently), 3 (often), 2 (occasionally), 1 (rarely), and 0 (never) based on the extent of implementation of each Culturally Responsive Instruction (CRI) element present (Powell et al., 2017) (see Appendix A). It has been previously found to have Cronbach's alpha values of .88 and .94 (Malo-Juvera, Powell & Cantrell, 2013). The pre-observations in the project were conducted in August-September before the PDs and school-based coaching. The post-observations were conducted in May after the PDs and the school-based coaching were finished.

To form the two groups of participants of this study, I looked at the existing family collaboration pre- and post-observation scores from teachers' original participation to see where they fell. The criterion to select participants for group A was teachers whose family collaboration score increased by at least two points or more from pre to post classroom observation, and for group B was teachers whose scores remained the same or decreased from pre to post classroom observation.

Therefore, through purposeful sampling out of existing Project IDEAL participant teachers, I selected six teachers. Group A included four teachers (Ashley, Rachel, Kate, Denia) whose family collaboration scores increased from pre- to post- classroom observation. Group B included two teachers (Stacey and Bryan) whose family collaboration scores remained the same from pre- to post- classroom observation.

Another initial criterion was to recruit the teachers who still taught in the same school, district, or position when they had participated in the project. However, after

sending out the recruitment emails to teachers I did not receive many responses back. The majority of teachers stated that they were willing to participate in my research study but were overwhelmed at that time at school. Therefore, after consultation with my dissertation committee, I included teachers who had moved to different districts or student groups to expand the pool of potential participants.

Eventually six teachers agreed to become the research participants of this study including four teachers in group A (Ashley, Rachel, Kate, Denia) and two teachers in group B (Stacey and Bryan).

3.2.3 Research Participants

My research study would not have been possible without its six teacher participants: Ashley, Rachel, Kate, Denia (Group A), and Stacey and Bryan (Group B). Group A was the teachers whose family collaboration scores increased from pre- to post-classroom observation. Group B was the teachers whose family collaboration scores remained the same. In this section, I presented individual portraits of teacher participants and the researcher positionality.

The participants of this study were early participants of Project IDEAL including five female teachers and one male teacher. One teacher was Hispanic and the other five teachers were white. All teacher participants were public elementary school teachers except Ashley, who was a 6th grade math teacher at a public middle school. Rachel and Kate were 3rd grade teachers, Stacey was a 1st grade teacher, and Bryan was a 5th grade teacher. Denia was an ESL teacher in an elementary school. The teachers taught in different districts. To ensure the privacy of participants, the teachers were assigned pseudonyms. I asked the teachers to come up with a pseudonym for themselves. All of

the teachers except Bryan chose their own pseudonyms. I chose the pseudonym for Bryan.

3.2.3.1 Ashley

Ashley was originally a participant from cohort 2 (2018-2019) of Project IDEAL. She also voluntarily participated for the second round in the cohort/year 4 alumni group. She was a 6th grade math teacher at a public middle school. She was born and raised in a white middle class family in Kentucky. She is mainly Western European and her family has spoken English for generations. She shared that there is not much diversity in her family, although she was taught from an early age to accept all people and not treat them differently. As she grew up, she realized there was more prejudice than previously taught in her family. Her grandparents used slang terms for different ethnicities and she did not realize how wrong they were until many years later. Based on this realization, she decided to be an educator and change the narrative for future generations. Since teaching, she strived to educate herself on inclusion so she can be a better role model for her students.

3.2.3.2 Rachel

Rachel was originally a participant from cohort 1 (2017-2018) of Project IDEAL. She also voluntarily participated for the second round in the cohort/year 4 alumni group. She was a 3rd grade teacher at a public elementary school. Rachel grew up low income in the smallest county in Kentucky which is comprised almost totally of white, English speaking, Christian, and working class people. She shared that there was no diversity in her town and she knew people of color and different cultures only through stereotypes. It was not until college that she learned about the world outside of her small town. “Up to

that point I had only been around people exactly like me and had never developed my own thoughts about much of anything; I did not know what I did not know," Rachel shared. She learned about and interacted with people from other cultures and backgrounds, and "unlearned many biases I had unknowingly had my whole life," she added. She earned both her bachelor's degree and an EL endorsement in Kentucky and has been teaching elementary school for ten years. Throughout her career she has taught students from a variety of cultures, students with special needs, and varied socioeconomic levels. Rachel stated that she advocates for special populations and is passionate about culturally responsive teaching and inclusivity. "Throughout my career in teaching I have had unique opportunities in working with diverse families. I have learned tolerance and acceptance while building relationships with them and navigating different belief systems, family values, and languages," Rachel shared.

3.2.3.3 Kate

Kate was originally a participant from cohort 3 (2019-2020) of Project IDEAL. She also voluntarily participated for the second round in the cohort/year 4 alumni group. She was a 3rd grade teacher at a public elementary school. She was born and raised in Kentucky in a white, middle class, and English speaking family. She attended private schools from K-12th grade. She has been around education her entire life since her mother was and her sisters are teachers. She shared that her private school educational experience has been very different from her current experience as a teacher in a public school. "However, working in public schools has opened my eyes to the struggles that students from low income families face on a daily basis," Kate shared. It has also allowed her to come in contact with students of different ethnic backgrounds that she has

not previously had the opportunity to work with. She studied Spanish from middle school through high school and has a limited working proficiency in Spanish. She obtained a bachelor of arts degree in History and completed a master's degree in Sport Administration and teaching and began her teaching career in 2018.

3.2.3.4 Denia

Denia was originally a participant from cohort 2 (2018-2019) of the Project IDEAL. When she was a Project IDEAL participant, she was a classroom teacher in a public elementary school. At the time of this study, her professional position had changed to an ESL teacher in a public elementary school. Denia was born and raised in Honduras in a Latina, middle class, and Spanish speaking family. She migrated to the United States to pursue higher education. She completed her bachelor's degree in Elementary Education and master's in Teacher Leadership and currently is in the process of earning her rank one ESL endorsement. Her tenure in the education field spans eleven years commencing as a 4th-grade instructor of math and science with instruction rendered in Spanish as part of the school's Spanish Immersion Program. She taught Spanish language arts to students ranging from kindergarten to sixth grade, before returning to the 4th-grade level, instructing in a self-contained classroom for five years. She shared that her current instructional focus is teaching ESL (English as a Second Language) which she is passionate about, owing in part to her personal experience as an English language learner. She believes this affords her a unique perspective on the challenges English learners face and she strives to facilitate their development as future leaders, acting as inspirational model for their careers.

3.2.3.5 Stacey

Stacey was originally a participant from cohort 2 (2018-2019) of Project IDEAL. She also voluntarily participated for the second round in the cohort/year 4 alumni group. She was a 1st grade teacher at a public elementary school. Stacey grew up in a small town in Kentucky in a white English speaking family. She completed her undergraduate degree in education and master's degree in reading and writing instruction. Following that, she received her rank one in administration in Kentucky. Stacey has taught for 20 years in different elementary schools in Kentucky. She is currently completing training to become a literacy processing specialist. Her hope is to become a reading intervention teacher in the near future.

3.2.3.6 Bryan

Bryan was originally a participant from cohort 2 (2018-2019) of the Project IDEAL. He was a 5th grade teacher at a public elementary school. He was born in Florida and grew up in Pennsylvania in a white and non-diverse middle class area. In K-12, his peers and teachers were mostly white because it was and still is a very white area. Interactions with students of another background did not happen to him until college. After two years of studying psychology in a university in Kentucky and working in after school programs, a friend recommended him going into education. He graduated in Elementary Education and since decided to stay in Kentucky and teach. A few years into his career, he earned a Masters of Arts with a focus on Instructional Technology. After graduating, he worked as a para-educator and it took him two years to get his first classroom position. In 2012, he joined the school where he is currently teaching. Since his first year of teaching there, he has held the position of School Technology Coordinator and Webmaster. Even though he has no Spanish language background he

loves working with Spanish speaking students who are the dominant population of his school. From a social and cultural perspective, he shared that there have been a few events within the past five years that have had an effect on him. There have been two students from Central America that have been detained at the border, and a few years ago he attended the funeral of his ex-student. Bryan mentioned that these events further illustrated the struggles the students face and the trauma they have been through and how teachers need to be supportive and aware as educators.

3.2.4 Researcher Positionality

Qualitative research is field-focused and begins with a socially situated observer. The researcher-as-observer is an instrument who engages in the situation, and collects and interprets data to makes sense of it (Eisner, 2017). It is important that qualitative researchers be clear about their personal experiences because they impact the process of data collection and analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). I could not separate who I am as the researcher of this study from what I was researching. It was inevitable that my cultural (Middle eastern) and linguistic background (Persian/Farsi), and my previous personal and professional experiences (e.g., a former ESL teacher, a former English instructor, an EL) impact, either positively or negatively, the process of data collection or data analysis.

In 2017, I first arrived into the United States as an international graduate student to study in the Ph.D. program in Education Sciences. Prior to that, I was an ESL teacher in elementary schools and private language schools, and an English instructor at university level in the Middle East and Europe. Four months after my arrival to the United States, I was hired as part of the research staff in Project IDEAL in the department

of Curriculum and Instruction. In my role as a Research Assistant, I was supposed to work directly with teacher participants of the project to conduct teacher interviews and teacher classroom observations. Being a newcomer to the United States and IDEAL research project added more difficulty to the reality of my identity as an EL since I had to work with participant teachers who were culturally and linguistically different from me. Being brand new in the world of the American education system, I stepped into an American school for the first time ever for classroom observations and follow-up interviews. It was a stressful experience to see how the teachers might perceive me and how I would perceive them with the preexisting cultural and linguistic diversity.

The participants of current study were the earlier participant teachers of Project IDEAL who I had worked with through the training program. I had not interviewed nor observed their classrooms in the project, however, we had interactions and conversations through the PDs. Out of six teacher participants of this study, five were white and one was Hispanic. Though mutual understanding and communication in a linguistically and culturally different environment was initially a challenge for me in the process of data collection for the project, it brought benefits for this study. I would say my previous positive relationships with the teachers through the project impacted my study in positive ways. There were not any language or cultural barriers. We were able to communicate smoothly with friendly chats in between. They were understanding of my tight schedule for classroom observations and that I had to travel from Washington to Kentucky for a short period of time to meet them. They were welcoming and tried to share as much as their time allowed. They offered their contact numbers to reach out to them with any

follow up questions that might come up later. During the interviews, if there were areas that I needed more clarifications, they tried to paraphrase them or bring an example.

Also, one of my participants was an ESL teacher with Hispanic background. When she was a Project IDEAL participant, she was a classroom teacher and her professional role recently changed to an ESL teacher. We thus had the same experience of being ELs and ESL teachers. When she learned that I have been an ESL teacher too, she asked me to share with her how it looked like to be an ESL teacher in different ESL contexts and to talk more of my ESL and EL experiences. In return, she shared more than what I expected. She even brought up some personal stories about what she went through when she had to move to the United States as a brand new international student with a culturally and linguistically diverse background. She shared that how dealing with the challenges of an EL and all those personal experiences and hardships she went through, contributed to her broadened perceptions and shaped her view to work with ELs and EL families in a better collaborative way. Our similar personal and professional experiences gave me a better insight and perspective into her experience and work. It built a deeper mutual relationship of trust that made her confident to share her personal stories with me and even to offer me a ride.

As I previously mentioned I knew the six participants of my study through the project. However, there was one teacher that while I met her in the project we did not exchange any conversations or activity together. When I sent her the recruitment email she never responded. I had to send her the email several times in case she had not received the original email. I waited for an extended period of time before I asked my dissertation chair to contact her with a follow-up email. As a result, when she came back

to me she did not give a definite response whether she was willing to participate in my research project. She stated that she already had many things going on in her classroom and she might be more open later in the year. When she eventually considered to be part of my study, I had mixed feelings. On one hand, I was glad she agreed to be my participant. On the other hand, because of all difficulties I went through to get her in, honestly, I had this assumption that she might not want to share much information. However, I tried to be mindful to not to be judgmental and do not allow my existing assumptions, as a result of poor communication, impact my research. In contrary of my assumptions, she shared a large amount of information which was beyond what I expected. She responded carefully and coherently to my questions. Her responses were thorough and attended to details and examples.

Throughout my research I tried to be mindful of mutual understanding, trust, and openness with my participants and took any opportunity to learn from them. I valued their sense of collaboration, trust, openness, and flexibility to participate in my research.

3.3 Data Sources and Collection Procedure

According to Creswell (2007), the data collection in case studies should be extensive. Yin (2003) recommended researchers to collect a variety of sources of data including interviews, direct participant observations, artifacts, and documents to ensure collecting enough information. For the data collection of my study, I conducted teacher classroom observations and teacher interviews to follow up on what happened with both groups of teachers since they completed the program to map the teachers' growth over time: With the teachers whose CRIOP family collaboration scores increased from pre- to post-observations (Group A) to examine whether they continued to educate themselves to

work better with ELs and their families, and with the teachers whose CRIOP family collaboration scores remained the same from pre- to post-observations (Group B) to examine whether they brought any changes to their family collaboration practices.

3.3.1 Teacher Classroom Observations

After the completion of teacher recruitment process, I scheduled with the six teacher participants to observe their classrooms. Before finalizing the schedule, I asked teachers that if I could observe their classroom when they were working on family collaboration lessons and activities and they did accordingly. I observed each teacher in person in their classroom once for two hours and a half in November-December 2023. During classroom observations I took field notes to record examples of family collaboration related activities. The researchers used field notes during classroom observations to provide detailed thick description of the contexts to elicit events and quotes, and to study the complexity of the phenomenon in its naturalistic setting (Geertz, 1973).

3.3.2 Teacher Interviews

The six teacher observations were followed by six semi-structured teacher interviews, one interview per teacher. To design teacher interview questions for this study, I modified and used two questions from the CRIOP family collaboration interview and added my questions. Posing open ended questions using wh-question words (e.g., why, what, or how) helped elicit more detailed narratives from respondents and encourage them to open up conversations.

The family collaboration teacher interview questions included areas of focus on: (1) How teachers think of family collaboration and how they implement it (e.g., How do

you define family collaboration? Can you give me some examples of how you collaborate with families?), (2) How teachers think of Funds of Knowledge and how they use it in the classroom (e.g., How do you define Funds of Knowledge? How do you learn about families? Can you give me some examples of how you've used the knowledge you've acquired from parents/caregivers to enhance student learning and/or classroom instruction in the classroom?), (3) How teachers think of CC and perceptions of themselves as being culturally competent (e.g., How do you define teachers' CC? How do you see the importance of teachers' CC awareness in interaction with ELs and families? How do you practice CC?), (4) Questions to give teachers opportunities to be able to reflect on changes over time, negative or positive, on their life and profession (e.g., What do you think about the changes over time since you finished the program? What has changed in your life, teaching, classroom?), (5) explore perspectives from the teacher whose role changed from content teacher to language teacher (e.g., how the changed professional conditions have impacted your work with ELs and EL families?), and wrap up with a general open invitation question (e.g., Is there anything I haven not asked that you want to talk about how you work with ELs and their families?) (see Appendix B).

Since geographically I was far away from participants, to decrease the costs of travel and time, we agreed to conduct the interview via Zoom video call. Therefore, the teacher classroom observations were in person while the teacher interviews were via Zoom. The six interviews went well without any technological issues or internet disconnection. The teachers met either from their home or from their classroom after school ended. Each interview was automatically recorded, transcribed, and saved on

Zoom for later analysis. For safety reasons, I also recorded the interviews with a personal recorder to ensure I would not lose any data. Since Zoom's auto transcriptions were not accurate, I re-listened and revised the transcriptions. Each interview took about an hour.

I set conventions for the transcriptions to make the analysis easier. For example, I used the letter I for interviewer and letter P for participant to easily track who is who in the interviews. I bolded the letters to indicate the person speaking. Each person's turn was indicated by starting a new line. I used brackets and italic font to indicate gestures and non-verbal language or communication (e.g., sighs, laughs, rolling eyes, silences) that seemed meaningful based on the context. Riessman (2008) emphasized the "interviewer's emotional attentiveness and engagement and the degree of reciprocity in the conversation" (p. 42).

3.4 Data Analysis Procedure

Relevant to the purpose of this study, I used the family collaboration component of the CRIOP instrument (Powell et al., 2017), as the framework of this study. I qualitatively analyzed data from the teachers' semi-structured interviews and descriptive field notes from the classroom observations. Data analysis included analysis of emerging themes through open/initial coding and additional pattern coding that focused specifically on teachers' beliefs on family collaboration, teachers' understanding and practice of CC, teachers' challenges and supports in school-family collaboration, and teachers' evaluation of their TL process over time.

3.4.1 Coding

Codes represent the symbolic meaning of the information/data and come in different sizes of chunks from one single word to a long paragraph. They act as prompts to trigger researchers' mind to deeply reflect on the meanings of data. Codes allow researchers (a) to dig deeper into data and make sense of it, (b) to conveniently categorize similar chunks to get pulled out of data for further analysis based on the research question(s) or the related theme, and (c) to find themes related to research questions. Each code needs to have a clear operational or working definition so they can be used consistently over time in the process of coding and analysis (Miles et al., 2014).

A code is defined as

> a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data. In qualitative data analysis, a code is a researcher-generated construct that symbolizes and thus attributes interpreted meaning to each individual datum for later purposes of pattern detection, categorization, theory building, and other analytic processes. Just as a title represents and captures a book, film, or poem's primary content and essence, so does a code represent and capture a datum's primary content and essence. (Saldaña, 2013, pp. 3-4)

Coding process is to determine the codes to downsize and condense the piled-up data. It is the process of labeling and organizing data to identify themes and the relationship between them based on research questions. Coding helps researchers manage the overloading data that could be overwhelming in the process of data generation.

According to Saldaña (2013) coding has two stages. First Cycle coding, in which codes first assigned to similar data chunks to detect the recurring patterns. The First Cycle Coding or initial coding (also known as open coding) is the very first step of coding, where researchers read through transcripts and create codes using first cycle coding methods. Then in Second Cycle coding, codes from the first cycle are grouped together to condense into smaller categories of codes called Pattern Codes (Miles et al., 2014).

After I completed the interview transcriptions and organization of classroom observation field notes, I started First Cycle Coding or open coding (Miles et al., 2014) which is the very first step of coding and includes some methods to create codes. To begin with, I used the holistic coding method which is a preparatory method of coding before moving on to a thorough and detailed coding. I read each teacher interview transcript at a time and assigned one single code to a big chunk of data (instead of line-by-line coding) that represented a broad concept (e.g., teachers' beliefs on family collaboration and implementation, using ELs' Funds of Knowledge in the classroom, teachers' understanding of CC and practice, teachers' evaluation of their growth over time, teachers' family collaboration perspectives whose professional position changed). This way allowed me to look broadly at the main areas of focus in coding to help me better what I was looking for to answer the research questions. After coding chunks, I re-read the data for the second round and narrowed down the codes. I assigned key words or phrases from data units (e.g., awareness of white privilege, more exposure with families, connect instructions to ELs' Funds of Knowledge) to a main concept in research

questions or topics teachers talked about (e.g., teachers' practice of CC) for each individual teacher.

Since coding is an ongoing recursive process, I kept reading the transcripts, reviewing the field notes, and taking notes. I revised and summarized the codes to get rid of the codes that were redundant or unrelated to the main concepts. I re-read the data for another round and looked at the overall list of codes and tried to see how often I used one particular code. It helped me combine those same kinds of codes that teachers talked about but seemed irrelevant. As an example, because my focus was not on teachers' instructional strategies, I combined all codes related to Accountable Talk, Picture Word Induction, or Sentence Stems into one code of Instructional Strategies. It helped me see the areas that talked about the same idea and get rid of redundancy to reduce the pile of codes. I organized the codes for each individual teacher and took some guiding notes (e.g., if I were only looking at this one teacher, how would I answer my research questions?) which helped me organize my thinking for each teacher to find each teacher's patterns individually. First Cycle Coding helped me to categorize a wide range of data and have a clearer understanding of how data related to the main concepts.

Then in Second Cycle coding (Miles et al., 2014), codes from the first cycle grouped together to condense into smaller categories of codes called theme, category, or pattern codes. "Pattern codes are explanatory or inferential codes, ones that identify an emergent theme, configuration, or explanation. They pull together a lot of material from First Cycle coding into more meaningful and parsimonious units of analysis" (p. 90). The purpose of pattern coding is to condense large amount of data to smaller number of units of analysis to find patterns or themes among data and to set ground for cross-case

analysis by rising common themes. Second cycle coding is a practice where researchers ask themselves "I have a mountain of information here. Which bits go together?" (p. 251).

I pulled out summarized codes created from the first cycle to categorize the codes around broad concepts (e.g., teachers' beliefs on family collaboration, teachers' challenges and supports in school-family collaboration, solutions to overcome barriers, teachers' understanding of CC, transformation process in teachers' family collaboration practices over time). To explain how pattern codes were generated, for example, teachers described their experiences with how to work with ELs and EL families in independent but interrelated ways. I identified the different ways each teacher approached EL families. Their responses created one pattern that grouped into one theme or category. There were common threads among teachers in how they included families (e.g., implementing family connected activities) that pulled out into one theme. The common thread set the background for cross-case analysis.

After I traced the patterns for each individual teacher, I then looked at them in the group. I looked at the trends across the two groups. For example, I used process coding to understand teachers' actions and interactions regarding working with families. There were some words that came up over and over across some teachers such as *doing*, *making efforts, being intentional and curious*, and *working*. These concepts could be an indication of teachers' actions to practice family collaboration. In cross-case analysis, I compared and synthesized the similarities and differences across the cases (Yin, 2003) to come up with major themes (e.g., identify connections between teachers' stated beliefs about family collaboration and their actual practices in the classroom). Second cycle

coding helped me come up with major themes and gain a detailed understanding about the research problem. Also, through pattern/theme coding, I analyzed observation field notes to identify any data that supported the code categories in the interview transcripts.

I also found that discourse or dialogic analysis could be helpful for data analysis because it goes beyond theme analysis and provide opportunity to interpret participants' oral language. Discourse analysis questions "how talk among speakers is interactively (dialogically) produced and performed as narrative" (Riessman, 2008, p. 151). Dialogic analysis looks for practices of language use. The types of pronouns teachers used in their stories had different meanings which could be an indicative of their beliefs. For example, some teachers in group A referred to ELs and EL families as *our/us/we* that could carry the meaning that teachers saw ELs and their families as part of one community (e.g., we encourage our families to come in and see what our kids are doing in in the classroom). The teachers might use first- and third-person pronouns such as *I* or *they* to convey "privileging the individual over family and community" (Riessman, 2008, p. 12). Discourse analysis helped me gain insights about teachers' beliefs and dispositions beyond what they said.

3.4.2 Trustworthiness and Validation of Findings

To establish the credibility of the study and to reduce the risk of any biases and positions that might impact the research, qualitative researchers maintain rigorous approaches for data collection and data analysis (Creswell, 2007; Miles et al., 2014). Rigor in this sense means collecting rich data, in-depth data analysis, participant checking, and triangulation across data sources. To ensure trustworthiness of my findings, I adopted different strategies, one of which was triangulation across multiple

sources of data. In triangulating sources of data, I adopted difefrent sources of data in different contexts including teacher interviews, classroom observation, and descriptive field notes to increase the validation of findings (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1988). Triangulation provides opportunities to explore for multiple realities (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

Another strategy to reduce the risk of biases is participant checks (Miles et al., 2014). Participant checking means getting feedback from participants and having our findings evaluated by participants. The teachers who I talked to and watched could be the source of corroboration to judge the accuracy of my findings. The teacher participants of my study were not able to review and comment on the transcripts since they were swamped with school. However, whenever I needed to check my understanding with them on what they shared or said, they were quickly responsive to provide their reflections and comments. In this way I was able to make sure that I correctly understood and interpreted their responses.

3.4.3 Research Ethics

In qualitative research studies, privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity are ethical concerns that should be taken into consideration. Though these terms have been used interchangeably, their meanings vary (Miles et al., 2014). Privacy refers to controlling the access of others and to maintain boundaries against receiving private, unwanted information to the researcher. Confidentiality refers to researcher's agreement with research participants through participants' informed consent about how their private information will be used or disseminated. One form of confidentiality is anonymity in which the researcher keeps the participant's identity confidential (Sieber, 1992). To

protect the confidentiality of participants, I asked them whether they preferred to use pseudonyms or their real names throughout research. They preferred pseudonyms, thus, all six teachers were assigned pseudonyms. I gave them the option to come up with a pseudonym for themselves. All of the teachers came back to me with their own pseudonyms except Bryan. I then chose a pseudonym for Bryan.

To protect the confidentiality of my data, I transferred and saved data including the observation field notes, interview recordings, interview transcripts into my work laptop from the IDEAL project which was password protected. In terms of consent forms, IRB regulations were strict and comprehensive. Participants read and signed the Informed Consent letter. Teachers' participation in my study was fully voluntary and they were fully aware of what my research study involved. I was mindful of being open and honest with the participants about my research, to build up relationships of trust with them, and to appreciate their valuable time and input in the whole process of research (Miles et al., 2014).

CHAPTER 4. FINDINGS

In this chapter, I discussed the findings pertaining to the following research questions, respectively:

1. What supports and constraints shape teachers' ability to shift their teaching to better include family collaboration?
2. How do teachers' beliefs on family collaboration and cultural competence relate to teachers' practices of family collaboration within Culturally Responsive Instruction?

4.1 Findings of Research Question One: Teachers' Supports to Enhance Family Collaboration

Since each research question had two parts, I presented the findings related to each part separately to be able to clearly answer the question. The first part of research question one was what supports shaped teachers' ability to shift their teaching to better include family collaboration? The second part of research question one was what constraints shaped teachers' ability to shift their teaching to better include family collaboration*?* In this section I talk about the findings related to the first part.

One purpose of the study was to find what supports shaped the teachers' ability to shift their teaching to better enhance their family collaboration. The study found that there were two communities of practice that supported teachers to enhance their family collaboration: Project IDEAL CoP and the school CoP. All teachers were part of both communities of practice except Bryan who was only part of his school CoP. The findings highlighted the importance of community of practice and indicated how teachers' collaboration across multiple communities of practice resulted in their positive

transformative learning experiences and fostered a perspective shift. The study found that teachers who belonged to multiple communities of practice made better practical engagement as a team and thus better supported their learning to how to grow their family collaboration than teachers who participated in one community of practice. Teacher participation established positive relationships and impacted their learning and growth in family collaboration.

4.1.1 Project IDEAL Community of Practice

In this section, teachers shared their experiences about what factors supported them to be able to transform their teaching practices to engage EL families after their participation in the program ended. Teachers were initially part of the Project IDEAL CoP when they had participated in the PDs and coaching sessions. The goal of the program was to create a supportive CoP where teachers could develop partnerships with peer teachers, alumni teachers, and coaches. Teacher participants learned how to connect with families and how to design curriculum and instruction in line with the CRIOP elements including family collaboration. The IDEAL CoP tried to guide teachers in the decisions they made about the curriculum design and classroom practices regarding family collaboration.

The study found that all teachers except Bryan still felt that they were part of the IDEAL CoP. The evidence that show the teachers had still membership in the IDEAL CoP included: active participation on the IDEAL Facebook page, volunteer participation in the program events even years after it ended, peer collaboration with their school teammates who were once the participant in the program, and volunteer participation in a special alumni cohort during the Covid-19 pandemic. I explained the evidence below.

4.1.1.1 Active Participation on Project IDEAL Facebook Page

It seemed that Ashley and Denia remained part of the Project IDEAL CoP through its Facebook page. After the program ended, they continued to share how they implemented their own project-related classroom practices and continued to exchange their new ideas and resources with other members of the group.

For example, Denia, as a bilingual ESL teacher, shared bilingual story time videos on the Facebook page where she and her two children read a Spanish-English story for the ELs of her classroom. Denia read the book in Spanish and her children read the book in English. Not only did Denia empower her bilingual children to be part of an inspirational activity, but also she tried to encourage other teachers in the group to cherish their ELs and families' native language and to make use of their Funds of Knowledge in their practices.

Ashley, too, was still highly active on the Facebook page. She either responded to the questions other teachers posted seeking suggestions or resources, or she shared the activities she implemented in her classroom. For example, when one teacher posted on the Facebook page seeking ideas about how others learn about EL families' values and culture, Ashley shared her ideas:

> Sending in family recipes, having student and parents make a family quilt, asking families to write about their favorite or most important holiday. I'll add more as I think of them… Oh! And the camera project or brown bag project.

Ashley's thorough response could be an indication of her accountability and connectedness with their teachers in the group in one way and caring for families in another way by bringing in her ideas. In another example, Ashley collaborated with her

school team teacher, who was previously a participant in the program, to plan a family-related activity through teaching games. She posted her project on the Facebook page and shared:

> We hope this helps all students understand game play regardless of language. Our goal is that students will in turn teach their families and gain quality time as a family unit. If anyone has any questions, feel free to ask one of us. If anyone has any suggestions, please share.

The quote demonstrated that not only did Ashley share her own new idea with other group teachers, but also was open to welcome ideas from other members of the team. She and her teammate were promoting family literacy and language learning in a fun way through playing games.

Stacey shared her implementation of family-connected projects on the IDEAL Facebook page as well. She designed family journals where her students were able to personalize their journals and to take them home to share with their parents every week. Parents participation was in different ways. Some parents wrote a note and their children added their own sentences to the journal while some other parents helped their children write their own sentences. Through sending the journals back and forth to homes, Stacey was able to learn about families' home culture. "I hope this is successful! They [students] were excited to go home and show their parents," Stacey shared. She tried to create a way to connect with her students' families. The fact that she shared her students' work on the IDEAL Facebook page could mean that she still saw herself as part of the IDEAL CoP.

4.1.1.2 Volunteer Participation in Project IDEAL Events

Another evidence demonstrating that teachers felt that they were part of the Project IDEAL CoP was that some teachers voluntarily attended a conference sponsored by Project IDEAL, even years after their graduation from the program. The project invited the teacher participants from all cohorts to attend a national conference in Nashville, Tennessee, in November 2022 put on by the National Center for Families Learning (NCFL). The conference focused on learning about family engagement, family literacy, and resources. The project grant funded the teachers who were interested in attending the conference.

Kate, Ashley, and Stacey acknowledged the NCFL conference as a source that provided great opportunities to learn about ELs and to collaborate with their families. For example, Ashley shared that she picked one great idea from the conference about connecting with EL families. The conference shared the most-commonly-used-Spanish phrases that teachers could simply print and use it with ELs and EL families. Ashley was successfully able to put the idea into practice, partnering with her school's front office, to welcome a newcomer EL and their family at her school. Ashely shared:

> It just happened today actually! The bond that we made for our front office staff and that was we got them most-commonly-used-Spanish phrases and today the front office was actually able to use that with our EL student that came in today from Honduras and none of the family spoke English. It came really handy because our translator wasn't available. Instead of just sitting there isolated, they were able to start some of the paperwork. It worked really, really well. It's one of those things that you never know you need it until you need it. That resource really helped my student start his day off. Just seeing that there's something

written in your native language and connected to your background knowledge is comforting for our EL families.

Ashley was proud to see that the idea worked well and that her EL student and family felt welcome on their first day of school as newcomers with knowing no English. Ashley's perception was that Project IDEAL seemed to support her to develop her cultural and linguistic awareness to team up with the school to make connections with the EL family. She worked toward finding a way to overcome the language barrier between the school and the families to empower the ELs and their family.

Kate also stated that the conference was beneficial for her, especially because she attended with Jane who was her teammate from school. Jane had participated in the program the year before Kate. Kate and Jane continued to work with each other since the program and participated in the conference as a team. They were able to pick up some ideas about how to enhance their engagement with EL families and together planned to implement those ideas at their school.

4.1.1.3 Peer Collaboration with Project IDEAL Teachers

Kate's teamwork experience with Jane reflected upon how she teamed up with Jane from her school to not only change the current family engagement routine, but also setting plans for their future family projects. Similarly, Rachel shared that she collaborated with her teammate from school who was currently the program participant "Our music teacher is doing the project right now. Actually, she decided a few years ago to learn Spanish, and she's made great connections with my families and so we collaborate together with my families as well." Kate and Rachel continued to work actively with their teammates from the school and the project. Their ongoing peer

collaborations indicated that they seemed to still be part of Project IDEAL CoP as they were in the past.

4.1.1.4 Volunteer Participation as Project IDEAL Alumni Teachers

Additional evidence suggested that teachers voluntarily participated for a second time in the project as alumni teacher participants in year four of the project (2020-2021). As I earlier explained, cohort 4 of Project IDEAL was originally intended to be the focal research study year for the grant as a treatment group. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, cohort 4 appeared to be an uncertain time to conduct in-person research for the study and changes were made to the project timeline and activities. Therefore, they served as alumni teacher group and participated in virtual PDs and coaching. The alumni teacher focus allowed teachers from past years to build on prior learning and centered on how the teachers might better support ELs and their families during remote and virtual learning.

Demographic analysis demonstrated that Rachel, Ashley, and Kate in group A and Stacey in group B, who were already the project participants in previous years, voluntarily participated for the second round in the year four alumni group. They participated in the project twice, compared to most teachers who only participated once. This could mean that they still saw themselves as part of the community because they sought more opportunities to be part of the project than others.

While this evidence illustrated that Ashley, Rachel, Kate, Denia, and Stacey seemed to feel the membership in Project IDEAL CoP, Bryan did not appear to see himself as part of the project community anymore. For example, Bryan did not mention any examples to indicate that he continued to work with his teammates from the same cohort or another cohort in the project. Despite the fact that a large number of teachers

from his school had gone through the project, he did not participate on the Project IDEAL Facebook page. He did not engage in any events or activities that the project provided. During our interview, he was not able to remember what he learned from the program around enhancing family engagement. When I asked him to explain in what ways he was able to grow in family collaboration with the supports from the project, he was not able to bring any examples. “To be honest I don't remember much about it [Project IDEAL] from my cohort. Don't hate me! Sorry! My big takeaways were just general about family involvement and ELs,” Bryan stated.

When I conceptualized this study, I assumed that Project IDEAL would be the primary CoP for some teachers but maybe not for all of them. Because I did not want to assume which of the different communities of practice might be working for teachers, I tried to focus outside Project IDEAL CoP and to see if some other communities could be influential in teachers’ learning and growth as well. I explained other communities of practice below.

4.1.2 School Community of Practice

The study found that the Project IDEAL CoP was not the only influencing community for teachers. Schools also supported teachers as communities of practice to enhance family collaboration. The evidence suggested that Ashley and Rachel in group A, and Stacey and Bryan in group B were influenced by their school CoP supports and viewed themselves as part of their school family.

Ashley reported that beside Project IDEAL, her school, too, was a supportive resource to help her enhance family collaboration. Ashley acknowledged that her school tried its best to engage EL families. “We are a very partnership-type school to where we

really are not just an open door, but we really want those parents to be seen in the school as well," Ashley explained. She shared that her school also encouraged cultural diversity by bringing in diverse mentors and community partners so that the ELs could see successful people who they can identify with better "Our school really tries to get to develop diverse group of volunteers so the students can see people that look like them, which is really important." She pointed out the white female dominance of school staff and teachers and brought the awareness that it was important to invite community partners who students could relate to. Ashley's statement could mean that she saw herself as part of her school CoP, and her school community supported her to grow in family collaboration.

Rachel, too, felt that she had membership in two communities of practice: The IDEAL CoP and the school CoP. "This year most of my Spanish speaking families are non-English speaking so I've had a lot of support from school translators. We have a translator who is amazing and we collaborate with each other to work with families," Rachel shared. The quote demonstrated that besides the IDEAL CoP, she also saw the school as the influencing CoP to learn from and work with families.

Like Ashley and Rachel, Stacey saw herself as part of her school CoP as well as the IDEAL CoP. Stacey acknowledged her school and its team as a supportive resource to help her enhance family collaborations. She stated that she got a lot of support from ESL teachers, the interpreters, and the translation services easily available at school. Stacey shared:

> This year in particular, I have a high number of culturally diverse students in my classroom. Most of my EL students are Hispanic and I have three students whose

> families speak Swahili. I work with our EL teacher to learn more about their culture and family. I recently had a phone conference with their mom with an interpreter to discuss class progress. I have been communicating with those families by using Talking Points which has been our main form of communication and has given me insight into how I may be of more help for them.

Although Bryan did not seem to be part of the Project IDEAL CoP any longer, he did describe active engagement with his school CoP. When I asked him what supports he had to better include family collaboration, Bryan reported his school community, including the bilingual school administration and staff, the ESL teachers and interpreters, translation apps, and school PDs as his supports. Bryan stated that it was a great opportunity that his school staff are bilingual and always available in the building to help him working with ELs and their families. Bryan shared:

> Our ESL teachers, front office staff, and bookkeeper can speak Spanish and a lot of them are Hispanic which helps with on the spot translation and interpreting. We always have an interpreter per room and an ESL teacher per grade level just because of that need. That's great here at our school. They [school] also put PDs throughout the year stressing different EL strategies, especially co-teaching. It is a big benefit with our ELs. For example, I got to go to one PD a few years back in LA which was all about ELs and different strategies that we could do in the classroom. I was able to share some of that with our staff and our ESL teachers to use.

Bryan saw the ESL teachers, interpreters, translation apps, and Spanish-speaking staff as highly beneficial and as the main source of support to communicate with EL families. He

emphasized the importance of translation apps such as Talking Points or the Language Line. “That quick language translation app. All you do is just type, click, and see translation. Bam! And vice versa for me, too. It’s pretty cool because it eliminates the need of other services or anything,” Bryan shared. For Bryan, school seemed to be the influencing community in how he was able to collaborate with families.

In thinking about what factors supported teachers’ abilities to grow in family collaboration, it could very well be that the school CoP was one of the key elements for these teachers.

4.2 Findings of Research Question One: Teachers’ Constraints to Enhance Family Collaboration

In the previous section, I presented the findings illustrating the teachers’ supports to enhance family collaboration. The second part of research question one was what constraints hindered teachers' ability to transform their teaching to include family collaboration? In this section I talked about teachers’ challenges to enhance family collaborations and the differences between two groups to address those challenges.

The study found that teachers’ challenges to enhance family collaboration included families’ hesitation to share about their life situation, families’ past experiences, families’ work schedule, and schools’ inadequacy of human resources to help communicate with families. Rachel identified communication with newcomer ELs and their families as a constraint because of their past school past experiences. Bryan and Kate identified the families’ work schedule as a barrier to bring them into the schools. Ashley identified communication with families and the inadequacy of human resources in the building as challenges to help communicate with families. For Stacey, finding a

communication tool to help with family communication was an obstacle. Denia shared that some families were not willing to share about their life situation and families. Also, teachers addressed the challenges in two different ways: Group B only identified the barriers they had in family collaboration and did not mention if they were able to find any ways to tackle the problems. Group A both identified the challenges and saw the challenges under their control to find a solution to fix them to better collaborate with families. They described their efforts to overcome those constraints The study found that teachers who made efforts to overcome those inevitable constraints appeared to be more successful to enhance family collaboration. Below I presented what the teachers shared.

Rachel identified communication with newcomer EL families as a constraint to enhance family collaboration because of ELs' and their families' past experiences. She shared:

> Besides English proficiency, the past experiences make it hard for EL families to reach out, especially our newcomers. You never know who the kids have had to interact with and for adults what their past experiences have been in school. Any life experience they've had, especially moving here because not everyone is so welcoming here. If you've had negative experiences in the past with anyone, it's hard to want to be around new people.

To overcome this communication barrier, Rachel intentionally practiced reaching out to newcomers at any chance she got to build relationships and sense of trust. She continued:

> I try to reach out to them to make sure that they have what they need. Any chance that I get like brothers, sisters, cousins, counselor, or ESL teacher. Whoever comes, I always make sure to introduce myself to let them know that they're

> welcome here. Taking that extra step to reach out to them and building that bond with them so that they can trust me with their kids.

The quote demonstrates that Rachel made efforts to find a solution to the inevitable constraints in family collaborations. She faced the language barrier and tried to fix it in a different way. Denia identified the challenge to family collaboration as:

> The problem is that some of our families open up and tell us a lot about themselves, however, some families won't. So it's really hard to make them share if they don't want to share about their life and family situation. They feel frustrated, if that make sense.

Bryan shared:

> I would say that families feel frustrated partially with the language barrier. We do have our classroom teachers who are not fluent in Spanish, you know. We know some words here and there. But back to work with the families, I think what's challenging is [families'] work schedules. That's what I think is. I would even argue that might even be a slightly greater hindrance, you know.

Ashley explained the constraint to family collaboration as "the challenges for working with EL families are human resources mainly like having the adequate resources like ESL teachers and translators in the building to communicate with families but technology helps." The quote suggested that Ashley's main constraint in working with EL families was communication challenges. She stated that it was difficult not to have an interpreter or translator in the building when it was needed. However, the school had access to interpreters through a Language Line translation service.

One theme I found across the two groups was that when teachers shared their experiences and reflected on the constraints to enhance family collaboration, they addressed them in two different ways. For example, Bryan in group B only identified the constraints he faced in working with EL families, while Kate in group A not only identified the constraints but also described a potential solution for the challenges. As an example, Kate and Bryan shared the same constraint they faced in working with EL families and that was families' work schedules. The way that Bryan addressed this barrier was different from Kate. Bryan only identified the communication constraint as "what's challenging is [families] work schedules. I would even argue that might even be a slightly greater hindrance." When I asked him if he was able to find a way to overcome the constraints, Bryan did not suggest any ways that he might be able to overcome this limitation. Kate, though, shared the same constraint plus she found a solution for the challenge she faced. She shared:

> With my Swahili speaking families, it's very hard to get them on the phone because they mostly get cleaning jobs night shifts with odd hours. So just trying to work around their schedule to call or meet just because they're on such a different schedule from school…We [she and her teammate teacher] have done a better job about changing times, so that our parents can come like some things we do right after school but also other things we do late like 6 o'clock so that more parents can come.

The quote suggested that Kate was able to work with her teammate and put efforts to work around the families' schedule to fit them in and to engage them in school activities.

Reflecting upon the constraints the groups experienced to enhance family collaboration, it could be possible that part of the reason that Kate was successful to enhance family collaboration was that she was able to identify a solution to fix the challenge. Perhaps Kate saw the challenge as under her control and that she was able to overcome the inevitable constraint. For Bryan, it seemed that he was just stuck when he faced barriers. He seemed to blame external factors when he faced challenges to engage families.

4.3 Findings of Research Question Two: Relationship between Teachers' Beliefs and Classroom Practices

In this section I presented the findings to answer research question two: How do teachers' beliefs on family collaboration and cultural competence relate to teachers' practices of family collaboration within Culturally Responsive Instruction? Like research question one, research question two had also two parts. In this section I explained what I found related to the first part of research question two which was related to the relationship between teachers' beliefs on family collaboration and their family collaboration practices.

The study found that teachers' beliefs toward working with EL families can impact family collaboration practices. The findings illustrated that teachers approached families in different ways which was an indicative of teachers' beliefs toward family collaboration. The ways teachers approached families reflected their beliefs regarding family collaboration which, in turn, impacted their family collaboration practices. Bryan's belief of family collaboration was getting to know families. Ashley, Rachel, Kate, Denia, and Stacey's beliefs toward family collaboration was building relationships, deliberate work to bring families into the classroom, and incorporate families' Funds of

Knowledge into their instruction. The study found that Ashley, Rachel, Kate, Denia, and Stacey who worked hard to intentionally change the ways to collaborate with and to reach out families appeared to be more successful than Bryan who understood family collaboration as only getting to know families. The first group also showed connections between their family collaboration beliefs and family collaboration practices in these areas: incorporating families Fund of Knowledge into classroom practices, using the acquire knowledge from families to enhance teaching and student learning, and designing the activities contextualized in families' Funds of Knowledge.

4.3.1 Connections between Teachers' Beliefs and Classroom Practices

The findings illustrated that teachers' beliefs toward working with EL families can impact family collaboration practices. There were degrees of alignment between what teachers defined as their belief and how those beliefs reflected in their actual family collaboration practices. Rachel, Kate, and Ashley showed belief-practice alignments in some areas included incorporating families Fund of Knowledge into classroom practices, using the acquire knowledge from families to enhance teaching and student learning, and designing the activities contextualized in families' Funds of Knowledge. In Table 2, I pulled out examples from the data on how teachers defined family collaboration, families' Funds of Knowledge, and teachers' CC and then how it looked in their classroom.

Table 2

Alignments between Teachers' Beliefs and Classroom Practices

	Teacher's Definition of Funds of Knowledge	Examples	Teacher's Definition of Family Collaboration	Examples
Ashley	I feel like funds of knowledge, which is a term that I didn't know before the project, it's just the cultural knowledge that people have from those unique traditions, the work, history and their daily lives. I feel like these are usually learned from family members, and just those cultural traditions. So it's unique to the person like no one's funds of knowledge and culture is going to be the same. I really think it's just that knowledge that you learn from being in your family and being around people that look like you	we do a "3-word share", which is, they have to come up with 3 words to tell me about their weekend and family activities. Of course everybody does different things and we get to see the differences in our classroom based on their [families] unique routines.	creating partnership that works here inside the school and outside the school and to make sure that students and families feel supported for high level of success	Those candies are his family cultural tradition. Since I learned about that, I keep them here. If he meets all his expectations, then he'll get one. I use them to curb his undesirable behaviors to keep him on task. After speaking with his family, now I give him a choice of putting noise cancelling headphones on, that drowns that out so that he's able to focus better in the classroom
Rachel	packets of knowledge that families are super knowledgeable about and are experts in. I see families as specialists they're really good at	I had a parent who works for the electric company. He came in to the science lesson and taught my kids about simple circuits, so bringing in his profession and teaching the kids all about his knowledge	I think it's working with, together with our parents being on a team. everyone brings something to the table, or has the same kind of goals in mind, and it's to better our students' lives. I think it's really important to collaborate with our families as a	[In family interview] the kids interviewed a family member, got to research their culture and made a presentation to share it with the classroom.

Table 2 (*Continued*)				
			team, that's the first thing I think of is just working together.	
Kate	Basically the background knowledge that a child has based on their culture and where they're drawing their information from is how I've always understood funds of knowledge	My EL kids love when the words are not all in English. That's something meaningfully related to them and it's a great connection to their culture when they read in their native language.	It's collaborating with parents on a team. Everyone brings something to the table to achieve same goals in mind to help enhance students' education	I had a parent came and read a book in Spanish and then I read it in English. She brought Mexican candy and a couple of other things for my kids. That was cool. Family Quilt project

4.3.1.1 Incorporating Families' Funds of Knowledge into Practices

One area where Rachel and Kate demonstrated beliefs-actions connections was when they tried to incorporate families' Funds of Knowledge into their instruction. Rachel shared that she incorporated EL families' Funds of Knowledge into classroom by bringing the families to teach a lesson on what they are knowledgeable about. "I had a parent who works for the electric company. He came in to the science lesson and taught my kids about simple circuits, so bringing in his profession and teaching the kids all about his knowledge," she explained. Rachel viewed EL families as knowledgeable experts who can have partnerships in their children's success.

There were connections to Rachel's belief on families' Funds of Knowledge, family collaboration, and her teaching practices. She defined Funds of Knowledge as "packets of knowledge that families are super knowledgeable about and are experts in. I see families as specialists they're really good at." The quote demonstrated alignment between Rachel's beliefs about working with EL families and her teaching. Rachel viewed parents as partners in their own children's education. Rachel used the parents' knowledge and abilities and saw them as experts (González et al., 1995) and teamed up with EL families to reach the same goal of students' success.

Moreover, Rachel practiced bringing in cultural diversity awareness into the classroom by using ELs' linguistic Funds of Knowledge. She made reading bilingual books a consistent routine of her classroom practice. She made efforts to make the classroom library more responsive to bilingual/bicultural students "I enriched my library with bilingual texts that are diverse in cultures, skin tones, dynamics, family builds,

struggles, and experiences. My white kids have never experienced or heard of them. They have characters that are very different than them." Her recognition of and respect for families' cultural and linguistic Funds of Knowledge seemed crucial in her success to enhance working with them and could suggest another indication of the connections between her stated beliefs about Funds of Knowledge and her classroom practices.

Likewise, Kate brought families to the classroom to teach a lesson on what they are expert in "I had a parent came and read a book in Spanish and then I read it in English. She brought Mexican candy and a couple of other things for my kids. That was cool," Kate shared. Using EL families' expertise in the classroom was a reflection of what she believed about family collaboration "It's collaborating with parents on a team. Everyone brings something to the table to achieve same goals in mind to help enhance students' education," Kate explained. She also acknowledged families' linguistic Funds of Knowledge in the classroom. Her Spanish-speaking ELs teamed up with Kate as classroom partners to read bilingual books to their classmates. She made efforts to use ELs' native language through reading culturally and linguistically diverse books as a routine in the classroom. Kate shared:

> I did a whole unit on Cinderella and Little Red Riding Hood in different cultures so that all the kids could have some ownership of the story. My EL kids love when the words are not all in English. That's something meaningfully related to them and it's a great connection to their culture when they read in their native language. They are being able to be our teacher and read in Spanish. I try to learn and read in Spanish. They correct my butchered [Spanish] language. I try to find the things that our EL families are knowledgeable about so that they can teach us

the same way that we teach them, and other kids understand that their classmates are able to teach them things, too.

The quote demonstrated that Kate recognized her ELs as a powerful resource who can bring benefits for and have ownership in the classroom. Kate showed alignment between her beliefs about students' Funds of Knowledge and her practices in working with them "basically the background knowledge that a child has based on their culture and where they're drawing their information from is how I've always understood funds of knowledge," Kate explained. Kate sought to learn students' first language and practiced cultural and linguistic awareness by bringing families' expertise into the classroom.

4.3.1.2 Using Acquired Knowledge from Families to Enhance Teaching

Another area of belief-practice alignment was when teachers talked about how they were able to use the knowledge they acquired from EL families to enhance their teaching and student learning. Ashley, for example, shared that she learned from one family about a special family tradition candy they had, which was their son's favorite treat as well. Since then, Ashley used the candy as a positive reinforcement for him if he met classroom expectations "candies are his family cultural tradition. Since I learned about that, I keep them here. If he meets all his expectations, then he'll get one. I use them to curb his undesirable behaviors to keep him on task," Ashley explained. In another example, Ashely learned from one family that the student did not work well with music on. Since then, she gave the student the option of using the headphones in the classroom when the music is on so that he could better focus. Ashley shared:

> It may not work best for me personally, but that's what works best for that family. After speaking with his family, now I give him a choice of putting noise cancelling headphones on that drowns that out, so that he's able to focus better in the classroom.

Ashley's classroom practices aligned with her beliefs about family collaboration which was "creating partnership that works here inside the school and outside the school and to make sure that students and families feel supported for high level of success."

4.3.1.3 Designing Classroom Activities Contextualized in Families' Funds of Knowledge

Another area of belief-practice alignment was when Rachel, Kate, and Stacey designed classroom activities based on families' Funds of Knowledge. To be able to design the curriculum and instruction based on families' Funds of Knowledge, teachers implemented some CRI-based family-connected activities. The activities were designed to be centered around inquiring about ELs' interests, goals, native language, and families' literacy skills and experiences (González et al., 2005). In this way, ELs were able to actively and meaningfully participate in classroom activities relevant to their home culture and values.

Rachel designed and implemented Family Interviews and Me Bag family projects. Kate designed and created a Family Quilt project. Stacey designed and implemented Family Journals. Connecting the curriculum and instruction to students' life experiences resulted in authentic conversations amongst students and their families (McIntyre et al., 2001).

In the Me Bag activity, Rachel asked her students to bring in a bag with items that represented their families "They brought things and photos that represent them and their family and their interests. We did it in English and Spanish." Rachel used family artifacts to learn about students and their families' Funds of Knowledge. In another activity, Rachel asked the students to have a conversation with their families to learn about their familial culture. "The kids interviewed a family member, got to research their culture and made a presentation to share it with the classroom," Rachel shared. When asked to define family collaboration, Rachel stated:

> It's working together with our parents being on a team. Everyone brings something to the table or has the same kind of goals in mind and it's to better our students' lives. I think it's really important to collaborate with our families as a team. That's the first thing I think of.

The quote suggested that what Rachel believed actually reflected in her classroom activities such as the Me Bag and Family Interview family activities.

Like Rachel, Kate shared that she designed a family quilt project "I sent home a square of paper and the family came up with their holiday tradition. About 80 kids participated. They are very proud of it." Kate shared. The quote demonstrated that many families got involved and their children were happy to get the project done by partnering with their families. Through making the family quilt, Kate was able to learn more about her ELs' and their families' home culture and Funds of Knowledge. Kate hung up the family quilt in the school hallway so that other people could have the opportunity to read it and learn about different cultures' traditions. The evidence suggested that Kate's beliefs about family collaboration "working alongside the parent or caregiver to help

enhance students' education, and not necessarily just their own student, but the other students," reflected her teaching practices. There was an alignment between Kate's teaching and what she stated as her belief.

Moreover, Stacey designed and created a family project called Family Journals. She sent the journals home regularly. Families and the students had the opportunity to collaborate together to write in the family journals in English and Spanish and Stacey was able to add her notes in the journals. She shared:

> Knowing that one of my students who tends to struggle with peer relationships, focus, and staying on task has had a traumatic experience in her life helps me to approach her in a way that is different from her peers. Knowing that she comes to school and has awareness of certain previous family problems helps me when we are discussing families in class. This also helps me to be more sensitive to her needs.

Through the family journal activity, Stacey created a way to connect with families and to learn about them and to use the information she acquired from the families to build relationships. When I asked her in what ways she used the knowledge she acquired from parents to enhance student learning, she responded:

> With two of my newest students who are refugees from Africa, I have worked with our EL teacher to learn more about their culture and family. Our EL teacher and I have worked together to collaborate with their mom like we recently had a phone conference with mom with an interpreter to discuss her child's class progress.

Stacey made efforts to work with the ESL teacher to collaborate with families. Another way that Stacey collaborated with families was through sending home the pictures of students who worked hard or reached a goal. She shared:

> I make it a point to highlight students who have been successful in my classroom by notifying their parents their child has met or exceeded classroom expectations. I have a student who has severe behavior concerns. Even though classroom behaviors have increased in frequency and severity, I make it a point to celebrate any victories this student demonstrates.

Though Stacey understood the importance of working with families, it seemed that her family collaborations was through traditional ways of communication at schools such as using text-messaging apps or parent conferences. Also, the quote made it sound like one-way communication from Stacey to the families, rather than two-way communication. She made efforts to better include EL families and made some progress, however, her family collaboration seemed not to be as advanced as teachers in group A.

Bryan's family collaborations were through traditional means of communication at school such as celebration of events, parent conferences, or family nights. He defined family collaboration as "working relationship between schools and home" but it seemed that he found it difficult to build this working relationships with families. He continued:

> Sadly, we've had a lot going on. We haven't been able to increase the frequency of communications with families. Our goal was to do quarterly bringing the families in. Obviously that didn't happen yet. On a basic level, it [family collaboration] can look like the communication between the teacher and home in terms of newsletters, but also bringing funds of knowledge into school as well.

It seemed that the families had the chance to come into the school but it was through traditional events and activities at school level. It was not what Bryan himself intentionally worked toward building the relationships. This was different from how other teachers' practices looked like. Although Bryan defined family collaboration as bringing families' Funds of Knowledge into the classroom, when I asked him to give some examples of how he did it, he did not offer any examples in how he did it.

Therefore, the different ways teachers talked about families reflected their beliefs and understanding of family collaboration which eventually impacted their practices.

4.4 Findings of Research Question Two: Relationships between Teachers' Cultural Competence and Practices

In this section I presented the findings to answer the second part of research question two which was related to the relationship between teachers' Cultural Competence (CC) on family collaboration and their family collaboration practices. Since there was no pre-data about teachers' understanding of CC when they first participated in Project IDEAL, I was not looking into any changes over time. Rather, to find connections between teachers' CC and their family collaboration practices, I looked for any patterns in how teachers defined CC in the interviews and if their understanding of CC reflected on their family collaboration practices.

The study found that teachers' perception of CC impacted their classroom practices. The findings illustrated that teachers' understanding of CC was in two ways: cultural diversity awareness and perspective shift to put the awareness into family collaboration changing actions (e.g., building relationships with families and bringing their familial Funds of Knowledge into the classroom). Bryan understood CC as cultural

awareness of ELs and EL families' background and gaining information about them. Ashley, Rachel, Kate, Denia, and Stacey understood CC as diversity awareness plus gaining the perspective shift that this awareness needed to be translated into work and actions in the classroom. Ashley, Rachel, Kate, Denia, and Stacey who worked hard to intentionally change their CC awareness into family collaboration actions appeared to be more successful to work with work with ELs and EL families than Bryan who understood CC as only getting to know families.

In this section, I presented teachers' definitions of CC which reflected their classroom practices. Stacey defined CC as:

> When a teacher is able to take into account differences from other cultures and use that to enhance student learning. I work with our EL teacher to help students and their families. My cultural competence is important for the well-being and progress of my students. If I don't know about their cultures, I cannot fully understand how to help their parents to help their children.

The quote could mean that Stacy defined CC as both awareness and action. Stacey recognized the importance of cultural diversity awareness for the students' success and also used the knowledge to enhance learning and connect with parents. The quote also suggested that she was examining his own assumptions about cultural diversity and EL families and also used CC knowledge to improve students learning and family communication.

Bryan understood CC as cultural awareness of ELs and EL families' background, gaining information about them, and showing empathy toward them "It's just knowing what he's been through and showing extra care when I'm speaking to him." Bryan stated.

He defined CC as understanding and empathy toward ELs but maybe not necessarily as an action other than showing extra care toward ELs.

Kate defined CC as cultural diversity awareness “an awareness of the other cultures that are in your classroom and in your schools”, changing awareness into changing actions “to take that awareness into account when we're doing things and teaching in the classroom.”, and a perspective shift “be open to learning and growing with other people's cultures.” Kate saw CC as reflecting her CC awareness onto classroom practices.

Ashley perceived that CC is a hard concept to understand and practice, meaning that it was hard to unconsciously be aware of cultural differences but at the same time try to intentionally practice it in the classroom. Ashley shared her thoughts as:

> When I think of cultural competence, I think about the basis of not only seeing the whole child but also learning about the child and family’s culture. In education, we're taught to see the whole child but to me that is not the last step of teachers’ cultural competence. I think it's hard because, on one hand, you try to do it intentionally in the classroom but on the other hand, you want to do it naturally and unconsciously. The end goal is that unconscious competence where it's ingrained in you just like it would be in your planning or activities to where you don't necessarily have to be deliberate to that specific culture or that specific family. But that you're doing it in a way to where it makes all cultures feel recognized or benefit from that specific instruction. It's easy to identify a cultural aspect, but much harder to naturally or even unconsciously be aware of the cultural differences. It takes practice. It's something that I’m actively practicing

> on now. Not necessarily deliberately saying "okay, I need to do this for this child," but in my daily instruction, phrasing it to where it's open to all of those cultures. It's working smarter than harder. Just changing my mindset to where "Okay! this is going to work for my student from Honduras, but it's not going to work for my student from Mexico." So instead of having two completely separate things, "what's something I can do that works for both of them?" I feel like that's really cultural competence is: you get to a point where you don't have to think about including all cultures in your instruction. It's just something that comes naturally. I think it's a lot to attain. It's just that automatic thing but like I'm not doing it because I have that one student that can't get these terms down, but because it's going to benefit for all [emphasis] of the cultures in my classroom.

Ashley defined teachers' CC as both awareness and action. She understood CC as while incorporating students' different cultures into teaching routine is attainable, it needs consistent practice and extra efforts. She believed that through practicing, her CC would gradually get to the point that it would happen organically.

Ashley reflected upon the importance of pushing outside of comfort zones by showing flexibility to learn new cultures and growing with them. She shared:

> Teachers have to open it up and not being discriminatory about things we don't know and push those boundaries in that comfort zone on themselves into learning things because we don't learn them in teaching. It's not just indicative of teachers either, it's indicative of people here in America. It's popular that if we Americans don't understand it, then we don't want to deal with it and as teachers in this

> profession, we don't get to make that choice. I don't think anybody should have the ability to make that choice but to be the best that we can be.

Ashley admitted that navigating multiple cultures might seem tough, but teachers must keep the doors of learning new thoughts and cultures open. She also stated that even if it might be impossible to understand the culture of each single family, teachers can at least be flexible to learn that each family is unique even from the same culture. She believed that culturally competent teachers had to not only acknowledge the diversity but also work hard to learn about cultures and grow with them. Ashley continued:

> Being able to understand that not everyone has the same environment that we do and to take that into account when we're doing things. I mean just because two children speak Spanish doesn't mean that they have the same culture. One may be from Honduras. One is from Mexico. They have different practices.

Ashley's understanding of CC was also reflected through her awareness of the white population's dominance at her school and the white privilege teachers owned which was hugely different from ELs and their families. Ashley shared:

> Unfortunately, diverse teachers and staff presence in our school is really lacking. I mean it's like 96 and we have three non-white teachers. The importance of being cognizant of teachers' cultural competence is huge, especially for White teachers that have the privilege of whiteness. Our life is different the way that ELs were born and raised which is usually different from the other kids, too. It is critically important in the way that the teachers are interacting and the type of the content that they're including in their instruction. You won't survive here, if you're not

> aware of cultural competence and understand the support ELs and their families need. If someone isn't displaying that, I feel like why are we teaching?

In this quote, Ashley stated that awareness needed to be translated into action. Ashley was able to develop recognition of her white privilege and how her background might impact her evaluation of other cultures and teaching practices. She had an understanding of and acknowledged the importance of respecting cultural differences, and understanding the context in which teachers are interacting with different cultures. Ashley felt guilty that white female teachers like her dominate teacher population whereas the students' population at school is mostly non-white.

Denia defined CC as:

> That's one of the things that I struggle with because in order for you to do understand that you have to understand the background culture of all the students to incorporate in your lesson planning. So that's really difficult! Here at school they are all Hispanic and so there is a large group of one culture, so it's easier to do it in one way. You can do it. Whereas if you had a classroom with four different cultures, that would be much harder because you need to make an extra effort to learn about all these as a teacher. If you have African Americans and you're talking about slavery you need to make sure that you're doing your research, and you're doing it in a respectful and educational way or the females-males rules are very different in each culture and you need to learn about them all. I mean we learn the hard way, right? We learn when we just have to learn. Because we haven't had experience of differences in cultures we have to make an

> extra effort and time to learn about that. It's hard to be open to get educated about different upbringings.

Denia defined CC as both cultural diversity awareness and actions. She explained that CC is hard because if there are multiple cultures in a classroom it would be much more difficult to get to know all cultures. Denia came to the realization that it takes extra time and efforts understanding multiple cultures. She also used the word *doing* a lot that could mean that she saw CC as an action. She connected CC to teaching content and stated that CC was the knowledge that teachers incorporate in their lesson planning.

Denia continued that it was very important that she and other teachers push themselves out of their comfort zone. She shared:

> As teachers we really need to make an effort to understand where these kids are coming from in order to see them through the lens of their perspective, not just what we assume. We cannot assume that we all have the same lives. We teachers only see our [EL] families through the lens of a deficit like we have always been conditioning to seeing them like "you're acting up! Get back on track! Don't be disrespectful. They don't speak English or their families don't, they are illegal or they're poor." We, us, including me, mostly concentrate on those deficits instead of assets. We see all those differences as a deficit because we are not open to learn new things like the things that are different from us. Because a lot of people here in the U.S. don't leave their city ever their whole life, so they don't know what's happening around them in the world. So they are not seeing those people as an enrichment like thinking this is going to benefit my intellectual to learn about all those different things in the world. It's sad!

Denia's statement suggested that she talked about CC as a perspective shift in which she examined her own assumption. She reflected upon deficit assumptions toward EL families as a common practice among teachers and how that needed to change. She saw this problem as an issue in education which was important to change to work with families. Both Ashley and Denia demonstrated the desire for continued growth through being flexible and making efforts to learn about new cultures and ideas rather than getting stuck in the desire for comfort. Rachel defined CC as:

> You do have to do those deliberate things to find where you feel comfortable in approaching cultures in the classroom and it's required to work towards that cultural competence. It all comes down to asking questions and listening to families, brief or broad that conversation may be, just sticking with it. Communicating with the families is how you achieve cultural competence. Getting to know those cultural values through conversations, accepting and being tolerant of other people. Not only be tolerant, but also be curious about how we can help to make them comfortable and how can I make sure that I'm not offending them.

Rachel defined CC as both cultural diversity awareness and doing actions. She highlighted the importance of not only getting to know families but also make a shift to how to approach families. She claimed that instead of just appreciation of cultural diversity it is crucial to take actions and reconsider of how teachers need to include families at school.

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary of Findings

This study focused on understanding how teachers' beliefs on family collaboration and Cultural Competence (CC) were related to their classroom practices and what supports and constraints teachers had in collaborating with families. The six teacher participants of the study included four teachers in group A (Ashley, Rachel, Kate, Denia) and two teachers in group B (Stacey and Bryan). Group A included teachers whose family collaboration observation scores increased from pre to post over a year of participation in the project IDEAL and group B included teachers whose family collaboration observation scores stayed the same. Below is the summary of findings related to the research questions: (1) what supports and constraints shape teachers' ability to shift their teaching to better include family collaboration? and (2) how do teachers' beliefs on family collaboration and CC relate to teachers' practices of family collaboration within Culturally Responsive Instruction? The findings of the study were in four areas. I summarized them below based on the research questions, respectively.

The study found that there were two communities of practice that supported teachers to enhance their family collaboration: Project IDEAL CoP and the school CoP. All teachers were part of both communities of practice except Bryan who was only part of his school CoP. The findings highlighted the importance of community of practice and indicated how teachers' collaboration across multiple communities of practice resulted in their positive transformative learning experiences and fostered a perspective shift. The study found that teachers who belonged to multiple communities of practice made better practical engagement as a team and thus better supported their learning to how to grow

their family collaboration than teachers who participated in one community of practice. Teacher participation established positive relationships and impacted their learning and growth in family collaboration.

The study found that teachers' challenges to enhance family collaboration included families' hesitation to share about their life situation, families' past experiences, families' work schedule, and school' inadequacy of human resources to help communicate with families. Also, teachers addressed the challenges in two different ways: Group B only identified the barriers they had in family collaboration and did not mention if they were able to find any ways to tackle the problems. Group A both identified the challenges and saw the challenges under their control to find a solution to fix them to better collaborate with families. They described their efforts to overcome those constraints The study found that teachers who made efforts to overcome those inevitable constraints appeared to be more successful to enhance family collaboration. Below I presented what the teachers shared.

The study found that teachers' beliefs toward working with EL families can impact family collaboration practices. The findings illustrated that teachers approached families in different ways which was an indicative of teachers' beliefs toward family collaboration. The ways teachers approached families reflected their beliefs regarding family collaboration which, in turn, impacted their family collaboration practices. Bryan's belief of family collaboration was getting to know families. Ashley, Rachel, Kate, Denia, and Stacey's beliefs toward family collaboration was building relationships, deliberate work to bring families into the classroom, and incorporate families' Funds of Knowledge into their instruction. The study found that Ashley, Rachel, Kate, Denia, and

Stacey who worked hard to intentionally change the ways to collaborate with and to reach out families appeared to be more successful than Bryan who understood family collaboration as only getting to know families. The first group also showed connections between their family collaboration beliefs and family collaboration practices in these areas: incorporating families Fund of Knowledge into classroom practices, using the acquired knowledge from families to enhance teaching and student learning, and designing the activities contextualized in families' Funds of Knowledge.

The study found that teachers' perception of CC impacted their classroom practices. The findings illustrated that teachers' understanding of CC was in two ways: cultural diversity awareness and gaining perspective shift to put the awareness into family collaboration changing actions (e.g., building relationships with families and bringing their familial Funds of Knowledge into the classroom). Bryan understood CC as cultural awareness of ELs and EL families' background and gaining information about them. Ashley, Rachel, Kate, Denia, and Stacey understood CC as diversity awareness plus gaining the perspective shift that this awareness needed to be translated into work and actions in the classroom. Ashley, Rachel, Kate, Denia, and Stacey who worked hard to intentionally change their CC awareness into family collaboration actions appeared to be more successful to work with work with ELs and EL families than Bryan who understood CC as only getting to know families.

According to Epstein (2011), family-school collaborations are nonhierarchical relationships in which educators including teachers and administrators interact with families to improve student achievement. Family-school partnerships must be culturally responsive (Mapp & Bergman, 2019). To enhance family collaboration within the

framework of CRI at schools, teachers need to be prepared to teach culturally and linguistically diverse students and to engage with EL families. Teacher preparation programs make efforts to develop PD workshops and training courses focusing on family engagement (Epstein, 2018) to help teachers implement practices that build upon EL families' Funds of Knowledge and life experiences (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). Although there has been increasing research on teacher preparation, teachers still feel that teacher preparation might not equip them with the skills and knowledge they need to work with EL families (Caspe, Lopez, Chu & Weiss, 2011).

There is much research on student learning, using students' Funds of Knowledge in the classroom, and family collaboration, however, there is little research on teachers' learning process. This study was important because it filled a gap in research literature about teacher learning to answer the question of why some teachers were able to successfully shift their teaching practices to implement new ideas and take new perspectives in their classrooms while some teachers were not. This is an area where not much research currently exists. Research on teachers' beliefs and CC is important because it impacts their decisions about classroom practices. This study was framed by Mezirow's Transformative Learning theory (1991), Lave and Wenger's Community of Practice theory (1991), and Freire's Critical Consciousness theory (1970).

TL is one's perspective/belief transformation. It is a paradigm shift in which individuals critically examine their prior interpretations and frames of reference to form new meaning or *meaning structure* in Mezirow's words (e.g., perspective shift in how to approach families). A meaning structure is people's predispositions and people are resistant to anything that does not fit their meaning structures. Mezirow's TL states that

adults' disorienting experiences, whether positive or challenging, might lead them to challenge and eventually change their prior existing assumptions. The 10 steps of TL theory are teachable ways of thinking that can explain how teachers make meaning of their experiences. This study suggested that some teachers experienced different levels of TL as a result of challenging their cultural assumptions toward ELs and their families and critical reflections on their practices. The teachers who experienced the higher stages of TL showed more success in being able to include families in the classroom.

The theory of CoP (Lave & Wenger, 1991) provided a framework to understand teachers' learning to enhance in family collaboration in different communities of practice. Members of a CoP come together to solve their problems and improve their problem-solving skills over time (Lave, 1993). Learning is not a solely individual process but a process of social participation and interaction between the learner and their social cultural environment. The strong relationships amongst the participants of a community brings a sense of belonging (Wenger, 2000) which results in why the members of a CoP come together to make practical contributions as a team (Wenger 2010).

Connecting to Freire's theory, the study found that some teachers' critical consciousness awareness of their own beliefs about ELs and families helped them push back against the classroom norms to include EL families and shift their family collaboration practices. Developing critical consciousness is essential to become culturally competent and culturally responsive teachers (Gay & Kirkland, 2003). Teachers' CC aligned with teachers' own critical consciousness because teachers' cultural diversity awareness helped them learn knowledge and skills (e.g., Kate tried to learn Spanish) or critically reflect on their cultural bias (e.g. Rachel examined her

preexisting cultural assumptions) to enhance family collaboration. Lack of cultural awareness could result in cultural bias that prevents one to be willing to attempt to gain cultural knowledge (Sue et al., 1982).

5.2 Discussion of Findings

The two research questions in this qualitative study explored the supports and challenges of six elementary and middle school teachers to enhance their family collaboration practices, and the connections between teachers' beliefs on family collaboration and understanding of CC and their classroom practices. The data were collected through semi-structured interviews and the classroom observations. I organized my findings into two sections to address each research question.

5.2.1 Research Question One

The first research question focused on teachers' supports and constraints to work with ELs and EL families. I categorized the findings of the first research question into two parts: communities of practice to support teachers to enhance implementation of family collaboration and teachers' identified challenges to enhance family collaboration.

5.2.1.1 Communities of Practice to Support Teachers

The study found that Ashley, Rachel, Kate, Denia, and Stacey who belonged to multiple CoP made better practical engagement as a team and thus better supported their learning to grow their family collaboration than Bryan who participated in one CoP. Connecting back to Lave and Wenger's Community of Practice theory (1991) as a central theory to frame this study, the findings highlighted the importance of role of CoP to

support teachers' learning to enhance their family collaboration. Previous research has suggested that practices are shaped by communities' beliefs and values (Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992) and teachers who have successfully engaged in communities of practice have a better understanding of the relationship of theory to practice (Sim, 2006). It was likely that Project IDEAL and the individual schools were factors in which teachers had influenced from for family collaboration transformation.

As learning is being constructed through social interactions, it matters where the learning is situated. The learners are informed by their environment which, in turn, they contribute to their environment, causing the process of learning to evolve (Wenger, 1998). In this study, the theory of CoP (Lave & Wenger, 1991) provided a supportive context to understand teachers' learning and growth in family collaboration in different communities of practice they are members of. The concept of CoP is based on sociocultural theories of learning. According to Wenger (1998), a CoP is a group of people who engage in the same work and share a common goal. Members of a CoP learn in order to pursue their purpose through sharing experiences and knowledge and engagement with each other.

The study found that all teacher participants still appeared to feel membership in the IDEAL CoP except Bryan. Bryan's learning as a result of partnership and collaboration existed within one CoP of the school, while for Stacey, Denia, Kate, Ashley, and Rachel, learning occurred across two communities of practice. After his graduation from the IDEAL CoP, Bryan lost connections with the program and its members including the teammates he was working with from the same cohort. He did not share on the project Facebook page or did not participate in any related events in the

program. Bryan's investment in the IDEAL CoP gradually decreased and he was not learning in the IDEAL CoP membership. Rather, his learning was the result of partnership in his school CoP. He continued to work in practice with school individuals and started to gain the benefits of membership within his school CoP. As he stated his biggest change over time was high collaboration with his school staff specifically front desk, translators, interpreters, and ESL teachers. He received support from school staff to be able to meet ELs and EL families' needs. Collaboration with his school CoP seemed to be an influential factor for Bryan' learning. However, it might be more challenging for Bryan when he was navigating learning in isolation, individually, and being part of one CoP, rather than sharing and reflecting across multiple communities.

For Rachel, Ashley, Kate, Denia, and Stacey, their collective partnership in two communities of practice appeared to better support their learning and growth in family collaboration. For example, initially Rachel thought about EL families' lack of engagement at school form a deficit perspective and negatively attributed it to cultural assumptions. Over the years due to impact from membership in two communities of practice and shared learning, she reflected on her previous cultural assumptions and shifted her mindset toward ELs and their families. Her understanding of ELs and their families evolved through membership in multiple CoP over the years.

This was connected to the prior literature. Communities of practice exist in overlapping networks, and individuals within these networks learn not only within but also across communities of practice in constellations that are interconnected (Wenger, 1998). Rachel, Ashley, Kate, Denia, and Stacey shared information and experiences as a team across two communities of practice. This collective participation supported teacher

learning and development (Desimone et al., 2002). Their collaboration across multiple communities of practice impacted their learning and growth in family collaboration because they established a better practical engagement as a team and shared learning. Their partnership fostered a perspective shift in how to work with families which resulted in positive TL experiences for them.

To think about which communities of practice teachers were part of, I did not look at the two groups as group A vs. group B category or as an either/or categorization. Instead, I thought about them as being placed on a continuum. For example, Stacey attributed her progress in family collaboration to both the Project IDEAL and school communities, rather than just being in group B.

The motivation to work together is based on benefits of what the CoP brings for its members for their learning and development from each other. These teachers stated that they meet regularly with their teammate from school to plan and implement activities together. Development of social interactions and negotiation was important for them to be effective and produce shared desired outcome. According to Wenger (1998) CoP occurs around the influence of the dynamic interplay and mutual engagement between community members for shared desired outcomes which enable the members to learn from each other over time (i.e., teachers within a school or a training program over an academic year).

5.2.1.2 Teachers' Identified Challenges

The study found that teachers' challenges to enhance family collaboration included families' hesitation to share about their life situation, families' past experiences,

families' work schedule, and schools' inadequacy of human resources to help communicate with families.

Denia stated that some families were not open to share about their life situation which made it hard for teachers to stablish relationships with them "That was very touching to hear their [ELs'] heartbreaking stories but it was really important for teacher awareness... the biggest problem is that their families do not open up and tell us about themselves." Denia believed that teachers must make efforts to understand what these kids go through and see them through their lenses and find ways of how they can be of help for these students. It was eye-opening for Denia and her colleagues to listen to these students' stories. Denia possessed critical self-reflection and demonstrated emerging critical consciousness about the constraints ELs and their families encounter. The students and families try to deal with the impacts of trauma they go through. To have effective school-family partnership it is important for teachers to show empathy and connectedness when working with students and families who experienced trauma and hardships in their life (Teter, 2021). According to Gerdes, Segal, Jackson and Mullins (2011), empathy can be achieved through understanding individuals' lived experiences which involves self-awareness and flexibility. Through a trauma-informed lens, teachers need to be more attentive to students' social emotional learning to help them overcome what they went through. PDs can provide tools and resources to help teachers to build social emotional skills in students with trauma experiences and to build an empathetic partnership with their families.

For Rachel communication with newcomer ELs and their families was a constraint to enhance family collaboration because of ELs' and EL parents' school past

experiences. “You never know who the kids have had to interact with and for adults what their past experiences have been in school.” Any negative educational past experiences the students and families had could make it hard for them to adapt in the new environment and meeting new people. Rachel shared that the big constraint was related to parents own negative experiences at schools as students. According to Sanders and Epstein (1998), parents who have negative education experiences feel discomfort to be part of school and are unwilling to take roles in education. To overcome this communication barrier, Rachel came into action to practice reaching out to newcomers at any chance she got to build relationships of trust. She tried to meet with any members of families (e.g., siblings, cousins) or any people at school that she knew these students and families worked with (e.g., counselor, ESL teachers). “Taking that extra step to reach out to them and building that bond with them so that they can trust me with their kids.”

One finding of this study was that teachers addressed the challenges in two different ways: Group B only identified the barriers they had in family collaboration and did not mention if they were able to find any ways to tackle the problems. Group A both identified challenges and found a solution to fix them to better collaborate with families. Bryan and Kate both identified the families’ work schedule as a barrier to bring families into the schools. Kate worked hard with her teammate at school to work around families’ schedule to engage them in school activities “We have done a better job about changing times, so that our parents can come like some things we do right after school but also other things we do late like 6 o'clock so that more parents can come,” Kate stated. It is hard for working parents with multiple jobs to be engaged in school activities the way they want to be (Lawson, 2003). It is important for the teachers to keep the lines of

communication open so that parents are able to participate in school events and activities. To enhance family collaboration, the school can provide opportunities to reduce conflicts with parents' work schedules (Baker et al., 2016). The teachers like Kate who made efforts to overcome those inevitable constraints appeared to be more successful to enhance family collaboration than Bryan who only identified his challenges. Kate, together in collaboration with her teammate from school, showed the desire for growth through being open in communication with families rather than getting stuck in desire for comfort. Being pushed out of her comfort zone, helped Kate gain a perspective shift and push to go through steps of TL and grow her family collaboration.

Ashley and Stacey identified communication problems as the major obstacle to build relationships with families. Ashly shared that it was hard not to have an interpreter or translator at school when it was needed. However, the technology could help her with the inadequacy of human resources. She had access to interpreters through the Language Line translation service. Stacey's perceived challenge was to find a communication tool to communicate with EL families "Some families do not understand how Dojo works or they did not sign up for it even after multiple requests." She shared.

Poor communication is a major obstacle that makes families perceive the schools to be less family-friendly (Baker et al., 2016). Research documented the teachers' lack of understanding parental communication styles (Caplan, 2000). Effective communication seems essential for effective family-school collaboration. While Stacey used Dojo as a communication tool, it did not work well for both parties because parents did not know how it worked and did not ask for help. Dojo could turn into a valuable communication tool if the parents could receive the training and gain necessary communication skills how to

use the communication tools. George (2009) suggested that PDs that focus on developing communication skills for both parents and teachers facilitate communication challenges. PDs that put families and teachers as equal participants could develop an understanding and appreciation for the role of each party in their collaboration. Thus, teachers and parents need to enhance their skills and knowledge to support each other. When working with diverse families, it is crucial for teachers to strive for culturally responsive communications (Soutullo et al., 2016) and ensure that they have the necessary skills, tools, and resources for meaningful and sustainable communication with EL families.

This study found that although some teachers were able to come up with a solution for family collaboration constraints, it seemed that teachers still need to gain more knowledge and skills to better engage families and be able to overcome the barriers they face in teacher-family partnerships. The findings aligned with the prior literature. Teachers do not have the necessary skills and knowledge to work with families possibly due to lack of training and support to prepare them to work with families specifically for those teachers who work with EL families. Teachers and parents have not been exposed to positive family collaboration examples (Epstein, 1991; Teter, 2021).

5.2.2 Research Question Two

The first part of research question two focused on how teachers' beliefs related to design and implementation of family-collaboration practices within Culturally Responsive Instruction. I categorized the findings of research question two into two parts: connections between teachers' beliefs on family collaboration and their family collaboration practices, and connections between teachers' understanding of CC and their family collaboration practices.

5.2.2.1 Connections between Teachers' Beliefs and Practices

The second part of research question two focused on how teachers' beliefs about family collaboration related to design and implementation of family-collaboration practices within Culturally Responsive Instruction. In the interviews, teachers defined their beliefs and reported how they practiced family collaboration in the classroom. The study found that teachers approached families in different ways which was an indicative of teachers' beliefs toward family collaboration. The ways teachers approached families reflected their beliefs regarding family collaboration which impacted their family collaboration practices.

Bryan's belief of family collaboration was getting to know families and gaining information about them. His family collaborations were through common traditional means of communication at school such as celebration of events, parent conferences, or family nights. Though he defined family collaboration as "bringing Funds of Knowledge into school," he did not offer any examples of how he implemented it in the classroom. The families had the chance to come into the school, but it was through traditional events at school level. It was not that Bryan himself intentionally worked toward building the relationships.

This was different from how other teachers' family collaboration practices looked like for Stacey, Rachel, Ashley, and Kate, and Denia. Their beliefs toward family collaboration was building relationships, deliberate work to bring families into the classroom, and incorporating families' Funds of Knowledge into their instruction. These teachers also showed connections between their reported beliefs on family collaboration and how they were reflected in classroom in the areas such as incorporating families

Fund of Knowledge into classroom practices (e.g., bringing the families to teach a lesson on what they are expert about, using EL's linguistic Funds of Knowledge through making classroom library more responsive to ELs), using the acquired knowledge from families to enhance teaching and student learning (e.g., using the family tradition candy to encourage the student to meet classroom expectations), and designing the activities contextualized in families' Funds of Knowledge (e.g., implementing CRI-based family-connected activities such as Family Interviews, Me Bag, Family Quilt, and Family Journals).

The study found that Ashley, Rachel, Kate, Denia, and Stacey who worked hard to intentionally change the ways to collaborate with families appeared to be more successful than Bryan who understood family collaboration as getting to know families. These teachers had self-reflection and gained a perspective to approach families in a deeper and more meaningful way than just gaining information from them.

Connecting back to Mezirow's Transformative Learning theory (1991), these teachers experienced the higher stages of TL and appeared to be more confident and successful to include families in the classroom. It seemed that they experienced self-reflection and gaining perspective shift successfully transformed and revised their lesson plans and teaching practices to independently transfer the new approaches they learned into their daily classroom activities. It could be evidence that they were able to complete the later stages of TL. Teachers' beliefs toward diverse groups of learners and their families are shaped by their own past education, life experiences, and preconceived attitudes (Gay, 2010). Teachers' negative assumptions of diversity could be a constraint to achieve a high level of family-school engagement (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011).

5.2.2.2 Connections between Teachers' Cultural Competence and Practices

The study found that teachers' understanding of CC was in two ways: cultural diversity awareness only and gaining perspective shift to put the awareness into family collaboration changing actions. The teachers' understanding and practice of CC reflected stages of Mezirow's (1991) Transformative Learning (TL), which was a central theory to frame the study. TL required teachers' critical reflection which resulted in changing actions in the classroom to include ELs and families.

Through word level analysis, the data demonstrated that some similar words and concepts came up over and over again across some teachers while they talked about working with families in the interviews. Rachel, Denia, and Ashley, for example, chose to use some words and their word choices could be indicative of how these teachers thought about family collaboration. For example, the words *deliberate*, *intentional*, *make efforts*, *being curious*, and *work* felt important regarding family collaboration. (See the examples below). Though these teachers identified CC as a hard concept to understand and practice, they tried to deliberately practice CC through being more intentional to work toward communication and exposure with EL families. They pushed themselves to be consistent with communication and building relationships with families. Below I brought some illustrative examples of these teachers' intentional work to practice CC. Rachel explained:

> You do have to do those deliberate things to find where you feel comfortable in approaching cultures in the classroom and it's required to work towards that cultural competence. It all comes down to asking questions and listening to

> families, brief or broad that conversation may be, just sticking with it. Communicating with the families is how you achieve cultural competence. Getting to know those cultural values through conversations, accepting and being tolerant of other people. Not only be tolerant, but also be curious about how we can help to make them comfortable and how can I make sure that I'm not offending them.

Here it seemed that Rachel made a big statement. She made an important distinction between tolerance and CC. She stated that it is not enough for teachers to just be tolerant, but they also need to be inquisitive, keep learning, and thinking about how they can grow in family collaboration. She emphasized on not just knowing about families and understanding them but the need to change how teachers approach families. It was not only about accepting the families' cultures. Rather, it was all about active work ingrained inside teachers and re-examination of how they need to work with families.

Denia, like Rachel, discussed how teachers need to be intentional to learn about families through more exposure because the pressure about testing, the curriculum, and getting the ELs to the grade level "make us too robotic… we need to be more human," Denia stated. In response to how she practiced CC, she explained that she tried to share her own traditions with her students and invited EL families to share theirs through reading books in their native language. She continued:

> Just more exposure! Invite the families to come over and talk to us about themselves and show us real life pictures, not just what we have in the books. Tell us what it was like to grow up with gangs in Mexico. Bring somebody in the family that can read about their experience coming to this country in their

> language. Let us talk about the stuff we don't do anymore since we came here [the U.S.].

Denia's statement demonstrated evidence of having more exposure with EL families and feeling more comfortable and confidence with family collaboration.

Moreover, Ashley described how she worked hard to learn about families' Funds of Knowledge and try to incorporate them deliberately in classroom practices. She shared that Funds of Knowledge has "taken a new meaning and made me be more deliberate and thoughtful of not only figuring out the students' funds of knowledge but also using them intentionally in my instruction."

These major concepts in these teachers' statements could suggest the way teachers viewed the families. Teachers put efforts into working with families which reflected their beliefs. These highlighted words could also be related to the whole idea of awareness because the teachers were aware of their limitations to grow their engagement with families, and they had plans for how they were going to address family collaboration constraints. In their reflection to plan actions in their relationships with EL families, Rachel, Ashley, and Denia seemed to be at deeper levels of Mezirow's TL. Their broadened awareness of EL families seemed to be at the process of perspective shift between the "I need to know this" phase vs. the "I need to act and change too" phase.

These teachers demonstrated the desire for continued growth through being flexible and making efforts to learn about new cultures and ideas rather than getting stuck in the desire for comfort. Their statements indicated that being pushed out of their comfort zone, also pushed them to go through early steps of TL. They experienced a

disorienting dilemma that brought them feeling of discomfort, self-examination of their feelings, and being pushed to have a different perspective.

Ashley, Rachel, Kate, Denia, and Stacey understood CC as diversity awareness plus gaining the perspective shift that this awareness needed to be translated into work and actions in the classroom. For example, Rachel perceived CC as cultural diversity awareness "being aware of others around you", and put it into actions "you do have to do those deliberate things to find where you feel comfortable in approaching cultures in the classroom and it's required to work towards that CC." She believed that getting to know families' cultural values through conversations and communication could be a way in how teachers can achieve CC. However, accepting, appreciating, and being tolerant of cultural diversity is not enough to be a culturally competent teacher. Rather, she believed that teachers need to be open and curious about in what ways they can be able to make families comfortable to engage at school. She actively worked with families to bring changes in the ways she approached families and kept learning and growing in teacher-family partnership.

Denia perceived CC as cultural awareness "understanding the background culture of all the students to incorporate in your lesson planning", changing actions in the classroom "to make sure that you're doing your research and you're doing it in a respectful and educational way", and a perspective shift "we really need to make an effort to understand where these kids are coming from in order to see them through the lens of their perspective, not just what we assume." She put her own deficit assumptions toward EL families into examination and believed that there needed to be a shift in the common practice in education "we teachers only see our families through the lens of a deficit".

Ashley defined CC as cultural awareness “learning about the child and family’s culture”, and shifting it into teaching "you try to do it intentionally in the classroom, just like it would be in your planning or activities, doing it in a way that all cultures feel recognized or benefit from that specific instruction.”, and perspective change “to open it up and not being discriminatory about things we don’t know and push those boundaries in that comfort zone on themselves into learning things.” She understood CC as being open and flexible to learn new cultures and grow with them.

Ashely believed that it is important that white teachers have awareness of their own CC and white privilege “you won’t survive here, if you're not aware of CC and understand the support ELs and their families need.” McIntosh (1998) described white privilege as a phenomenon that is invisible and unspoken, yet, brings advantages for white population as Delpit (2006) called it culture of power. Teachers’ beliefs can be influenced by white privilege which impedes teachers to set high expectorations for ELs’ academic success (Sleeter, 2001). However, Ashley challenged herself and others to be aware of power and be open to learn and grow with different cultures and use it consciously in the classroom practices. She also examined her own cultural assumptions and felt guilty that white female teachers like her dominated teacher population whereas students’ population at her school mostly included non-white.

Ashley, Rachel, Kate, Denia, and Stacey demonstrated that they were able to reflect their CC awareness onto family collaboration implementation through building relationships of trust with families and bringing their familial Funds of Knowledge into the classroom. Mezirow’s TL requires teachers’ critical reflection which resulted in changing actions and that is the significant component in TL process.

Bryan understood CC as cultural awareness of ELs and EL families' background, gaining information about them, and showing empathy toward them "It's just knowing what he's been through and showing extra care when I'm speaking to him." Bryan stated. He defined CC as understanding and empathy toward ELs but maybe not necessarily as an action other than showing extra care toward ELs. The findings of this study aligned with previous literature suggested that engagement of culturally diverse students ties into the incorporation of CC in the classroom practices (Banks & Banks, 2010). This is important connected to Bryan's situation because teachers who intentionally changed their CC awareness into actions in their classroom were more successful to engage students and their families.

Integrating CC in teaching is a pathway for teachers to understand students and families' home culture and values (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011). According to Reed and Black (2006) to become culturally responsive teachers, the TL process must first happen in which teachers' pre-existing assumptions are challenged because TL requires learners' critical reflection that results in changing actions. Based on Mezirow's TL theory (2000), individuals critically self-reflect on their own assumptions which might lead to a transformation of perspective. This perspective shift eventually affects individuals' perceptions of themselves and their environment and eventually results in a permanent shift in their assumptions. Introduction of new information challenges individuals' old ways of thinking and leads to perception change.

Teachers who think critically about their current situations can decide to take actions for change in their classroom practices. Emancipatory learning is introspective as the learners are self-reflective. The emancipatory process of learning moves learners to

become critically aware of how and why their cultural assumptions constrained the way they see their self, others, and surroundings to create an inclusive environment for all (Mezirow, 1991).

Thus, CC requires knowing how teachers should navigate between or adapt to cultural diversity in their classroom. It is awareness of their students' cultures as well as their own identities and how the culture of the classroom is being shaped within the students' lives and experiences. Each teacher comes to classrooms with their own varying levels of CC and their understanding of their own CC that can affect necessary changes on their classroom practices.

5.2.3 Teachers' Evaluation of their Growth over Time

One major theme emerged out of data was that teachers had an evaluation of their own growth and experiences since participation in the Project IDEAL. Teachers talked about the changes in their family collaboration approach over time since they graduated from Project IDEAL. Their experiences and whether they shifted their teaching could be explained through Mezirow's (1991) TL theory. Teachers' evaluation of their growth over time was not a direct research question. However, since the main focus of the study was on how teachers transformed their family collaboration practices, I asked this question in the interviews and the teachers shared their experiences. Because the findings could be incorporated into the second research questions, teachers' beliefs and CC, I presented them here in this section. In this section I discussed teachers' family collaboration growth and learning and explained them through TL process. The areas where teachers demonstrated growth over time included teachers' self-reflection on their

learning, being open and intentional to enhance family collaboration, and becoming more comfortable in communicating with EL families.

5.2.3.1 Teachers' Self-reflection on their Learning

Teachers' self-reflection was an important part of the TL process and was a major theme of this study. For example, through self-reflections on her classroom practices, Rachel showed evidence of moving through some steps of Mezirow's TL process. "Half of my classroom are ELs and most of their parents were non-English speaking and about half of them were newcomers," she shared. At the beginning, Rachel had a hard time collaborating with families and if there was any event going on at school, she had cultural assumptions toward families. "They are not coming again! This [school's event] is not something they want to come to," she explained. Interacting with EL families while not understanding their culture was a disorienting dilemma (step one of TL) for Rachel. The experiences and feelings contributing to the struggles she had could be seen as the beginning of Rachel's TL. Rachel's disorienting dilemma was a challenge for her and caused feeling of discomfort. Step one is an important theme for the study because it seemed to be the beginning stage of teachers' change which resulted in teachers' revisiting assumptions. Over the years Rachel transformed to re-evaluate her own cultural assumptions toward Els and families which she expressed it with feelings of shame. Rachel felt guilty that in the past she did not try her hardest to fully include the EL families into her classroom because she used to make cultural assumptions about them. Rachel shared:

> Reaching out more to EL families and how I approach them to build relationships and not making assumptions about EL families have been a huge change for me.

> There's a fine line… that word assumptions. When we make assumptions, they're a little stereotypical. In the past, I used to make cultural assumptions about EL families that was far from the truth and I assumed the worst, like if a parent didn't reply to my message or didn't show up, I was like they don't really care. Clearly, they care about their child. Every parent cares about their child. I just didn't realize that I needed to make more connections and being consistent in sending out extra messages to let them know that I want them here.

Rachel felt guilty because she did not understand that her Els and their families might need extra help from her especially that most of her EL families were newcomers to the U.S. In this scenario Rachel completed step two of the TL process when she self-examined with feelings of guilt and shame. She questioned her past beliefs and blamed herself for the stereotypical cultural assumptions she made about engaging EL families.

Rachel completed step three of the TL process when she had a critical assessment of the cultural assumptions about Els and their families (Mezirow, 1991). Rachel continued:

> Whereas now I assume best intentions with my EL parents, and when you assume best intentions, then you take other avenues and reach out a different way or try again and you say "I bet that they were at work when I called, or that sounds to lost the note or maybe I need to get my translator to make a call or talk to their siblings or special education teacher." My white parents would read the paper and say "Ok, I need to go to that." They understand it. So now I have a different view like, how can I support them [EL families] to get here, or how can I make them want to be here, or maybe they just need someone to reach out and give them a

> special like "hey, I would love to have you here." Now I believe that the EL parents feel more comfortable if I place a much bigger emphasis on making sure that they understand what's going on and that they're invited.

Rachel's critical assessment of her assumptions about Els and their families gradually led her to the realization that she was not actually fully engaging the EL families. Being pushed to have a different perspective could be an indication of step three of TL process.

Rachel realized that following one-size-communication would not work for her families. She explored new options for relationships with her Els and her families (step five) and planned to implement a new practical way that would be more responsive to Els and families' needs (step six). Rachel became more confident to take more responsibility and initiation with reaching out to EL families and building genuine relationships. Rachel worked through the acquisition of knowledge and skills in how to better communicate with Els and EL families (step seven). The alterations she brought to her teaching practices allowed her to be successful to engage ELs especially newcomers and also to develop relationships with their families.

Rachel continued to work on her understanding of family collaboration. She revisited her decision-making about how she needed to approach EL families and be mindful about their needs. Not only did she understand and accept that families' culture and perspective were different from hers, but also she continued to work on being aware of her biases. The fact that Rachel tried different ways to connect with families helped her built self-confidence (step nine).

Through the process of identifying, questioning, and rectifying her biases in working with EL families, Rachel was able to integrate effective family collaboration

independently (step 10). She developed a new habit based upon her past experiences and integrated it into her teaching routine (Mezirow, 1991). The evidence indicates that all these tasks and actions facilitated the development and completion of all stages of TL for Rachel.

In another example, Ashley reflected on her own learning related to her communication practice with EL families: “Even down to me I'm a very loud person and I have learned lowering my voice level when I’m talking to certain people of these families. Even these little things are awareness of cultural competence.” To build an effective relationship with her EL families, Ashley developed a new habit by trying to lower her voice while interacting with families.

Engaging in self-reflection made room for teachers to review their past experiences to enable them to assess the discrepancies in their own understanding of the situation they are in. Self-reflection is where, according to Mezirow (1991), emancipatory learning occurs and allows teachers to identify and challenge their biased assumptions, to accept ELs’ cultural differences, and to integrate those differences into their teaching practices. By reflecting on their past experiences and beliefs, teachers’ perspectives about family collaboration shifted. Critical assessment of assumptions seemed to be an important component in teachers’ TL process because without completing this step, these teachers were not able to expand their perspective in regards to engaging EL families.

5.2.3.2 Being Intentional to Enhance Family Collaboration

Another area that teachers had growth over time was that they showed mindfulness to be open and intentional about increasing family engagement. There could be the possibility that their successes to better include family collaboration were related

to their broadened awareness and perspective change of families' cultures. Rachel, as previously explained, showed transformation in her mindset and brought her relationships with families into a deeper level. "I take more initiative with building my relationships with EL families and became more comfortable to reach out to them in new ways and to develop stronger collaborations with them," Rachel explained about her altered perspective.

Ashley shared how, over the years, the concept of Funds of Knowledge became more meaningful and helped her be able to successfully connect her instruction to students' background knowledge. She explained:

> Something that really stuck with me was the funds of knowledge. It's taken a new meaning and made me be more deliberate and thoughtful of not only figuring out the students' funds of knowledge but also using them intentionally in my instruction. That's the biggest thing I have changed, and it was down to using word problems in math like what examples I am using for them to understand it? I'm not going to give them a word problem that has to talk about, for example, cassette tapes or surfing or lakes. They don't understand it! They are not going to learn it without having background knowledge about it. They're just getting the numbers out of it, and it doesn't make them think about what the actual problem is asking. Instead, I use a lot of video game references that they can relate to it.

Ashley became deliberate about connecting students' background knowledge to her classroom practices. She believed that in assessing a skill, if it was presented in a way that students could relate to, they understand enough to be able to get the skill out of it that she would want them to.

5.2.3.3 Becoming Comfortable in Communicating with Families

When I asked teachers what changes they made over time since Project IDEAL ended, they shared that they became more comfortable to reach out to EL families. Rachel shared:

> Just my approach to building relationships is a lot more different, and I take a lot more responsibility and initiation with reaching out to my EL families. My connections got more explicit and consistent and just being intentional about reaching out to them like "David's family did not come to this. Have I talked to them? Should I reach out again? Maybe we can talk to his little brothers or special education teacher, because I know [his mom] talks to them." So I definitely take other avenues besides just a "one-size-fits-all" communication style for my families. I take more initiative with building my relationships with EL families and became more comfortable to reach out to them in new ways and to develop stronger collaborations with them. Now I understand that I am not the boss and my role is to make them feel included and to let them know that I want to collaborate with them. We're all in this together.

Rachel became more confident to take more responsibilities in reaching out to EL families and building genuine relationships.

Not only did they seem content with how much they grew in family collaboration, but they also set high expectations of themselves and had already planned future projects. "We did a lot with families, but I want to do more. I want to pull more of families in here like I want to do like a family tree moving forward," Ashley explained. Likewise, Rachel

not only excitedly reflected on her self-growth -- “I look back even five years ago, and I’m like “huh! You just realize how much you've grown?” -- but she still desired more plans to connect with families. Rachel shared:

> I want to do better about making those connections and finding things out and using them to connect with my families more. I know what all my kids’ parents do, and what their families like to do. Just bringing them into the classroom more.

Over the years after their graduation from Project IDEAL, they continued to transform their views toward family collaboration and the ways they would approach EL families. Their altered perspective and awareness about ELs and their families’ backgrounds and needs was an indication of their TL. Based on Mezirow’s (1991) TL theory, when a perspective change occurs in learners, then the learners are able to reintegrate their new perspective into their life. These teachers reintegrated their learning experiences, which was based on their new perspective and mindset shift, back into their classroom practices (step 10). These teachers developed a better understanding of diverse families and reached out to them in new ways and build meaningful family collaboration. All of these required a shift in their beliefs regarding family collaboration. They heightened an awareness to communicate with EL families which resulted in developing felling of compassion and understanding for them. As a result, they were able to overcome their discomfort in reaching out to EL families and try different ways to connect with them.

5.3 Limitations

As all research faces some limitations, this research study is not an exception. There were some limitations that existed for my study during data collection and data analysis. This research study adopted a multiple case methodological design. The multiple case approach seemed appropriate for my study because it enables the researcher to explore multiple cases (bounded systems) over time through detailed data collection from multiple data resources such as interviews and observations (Creswell, 2007). The qualitative research method was best suited to probe teacher participants' perspectives and mapping their growth over time because this design allowed for the exploration of human elements (Yin, 2009). According to Creswell (2014), a quantitative design was not appropriate for this study because the research study approach was not testing, measuring, or experimenting with theoretic frameworks. Rather, the focus was to gain better understanding of a social problem. The social constructs can be studied most effectively using a qualitative approach methodology and provide a venue for generating perspective-based data (Yin, 2009).

One limitation in this study was that I had to rely on participants to share information. There might be a possibility that they may not have been very talkative or may not have shared everything about their experiences. Some people talk more than others which does not necessarily mean that the people who talk less, did not implement something. It could be just that they did not talk about it for some reason. I just assumed the teacher participants shared their experiences as much as they could during the interviews.

Another limitation of the study was about teacher observations. At the time of data collection my participants were local in Kentucky and I resided in Washington state. To reduce the cost of travel to Kentucky for multiple visits, I asked all teachers to assign one specific week to observe their classrooms when they were going to implement family collaboration-related activities. There could be the possibility that teachers were not actually preparing or doing a lot of family collaboration practices then, and that they may have done more family collaboration at other times. This limitation could impact the data collection of the study specifically with teacher observations. Also, I only had one observation per teacher. More observations could have provided richer data for the study.

Another limitation of the study was about the way I conducted the teacher interviews. Research suggests that traditional in-person interviews have some advantages over the ones conducted through computer or telephone. The reason is that in-person interviews allow for verbal and non-verbal communication and enhances the relationship between the interviewer and the participant (Tracy, 2013). "Mediated interviews are interviews that do not occur face to face, but rather via technological media such as a telephone, computer, or other hand-held device" (p. 163). However, since geographically I was far away from my participants and the schedule for classroom observations was tight to meet in-person for interviews, it was more convenient, time efficient, and less costly to conduct the teacher interviews via technological media. I conducted all six interviews through a communication program called Zoom. Zoom is a communication platform that allows users to connect with video, audio, and chat. Zoom has some drawbacks and benefits. The videos allowed for capturing face-to-face interactions, expressions, and observing nonverbal feedback with teacher participants (Tracy, 2013).

However, it could be a limitation that I was not able to see the participants' whole body interactions. Zoom has a feature that allows using audio-transcription for cloud recordings, so it eliminates the needs for recorders. The video-conferencing programs automatically records audio and visual files of the interviews via the computer's installed webcam (Tracy, 2013). Zoom's automatic recording feature is a benefit but it could also be a drawback as the program does not always transcribe the data accurately and thus more review and care is needed to use transcribed data. Sometimes the internet connection issues might limit the communication as it exists in face-to-face communications, though I did not face this issue during the interviews. I admit that meeting my participants via Zoom program could limit to establish the communication with my participants in the ways explained above. However, that seemed to be my only and best option to conduct interviews.

One additional limitation of the study was the researcher's inability to explore whether the goals and values of two of the participants' communities of practice supported or conflicted with each other. Since it was a limitation of this study I bring it up as a potential research question for future studies. Teachers are part of their own school community and they get shaped by the values of the school CoP where they are teaching. As part of a school CoP, teachers might pick up stereotypical assumptions about diverse populations in classrooms. Then they were exposed to different ideas and values in the IDEAL CoP. The teachers who entered into the Project IDEAL CoP might have had different beliefs from other colleagues in their school about working with ELs and their families. The school values might be different from the values in Project IDEAL. I did not really ask teachers about how teachers at their school viewed things and

did not explore what teachers' school CoP was like. I was not able to compare the two communities of practice and thus was not able to conclude if teachers' school CoP had any impact on their thinking about Project IDEAL.

Another limitation of the study was that I had initially planned to give the Multicultural Teaching Competencies Scale (MTCS; Spanierman et al., 2011) to teachers and ask them to fill out the survey to see how they grew in this area. However, since there was no pre-data about teachers' CC when they first participated in Project IDEAL, the survey could not be considered as a measure of CC growth for teachers. Thus, I focused on the relationship between teachers' CC and their family collaboration practices and left out the CC survey. Another reason to leave out the survey was that my participants were only six teachers and surveys usually makes sense when we have large number of individuals.

5.4 Implications

The findings of this study could have some implications for practice and also future research to continue to add on what I have done in this study.

5.4.1 Implications for Practice

The findings of this qualitative study have implications for teacher educators who make efforts to assist teachers to enhance family collaborations. It also has implications for educators who embrace CC and practice self-reflection on their beliefs to boost meaningful collaborations with ELs and their families. Through self-reflection on personal histories and experiences, educators can become culturally responsive to alleviate biases that might influence their personal beliefs (Taylor, 2010).

One implication for culturally responsive teacher educators could be to add a CC component in PDs to assist teachers with the development of curriculum and instructional practices that embeds CC pedagogy. The teacher educators could consider continuous implementation of CC-related instruction to inspire higher levels of CC awareness and self-reflection in teachers. For example, coaches can engage teachers in interactive activities such as watching videos to see trauma through the eyes of the students and their families to experience what they went through. Also, one teacher shared how the stories of these students were eye-opening for herself and her colleagues. The students' storytelling and listening to their real-life authentic life experiences of could be a powerful tool that the coaches can work on. These activities can follow up with discussion and meaningful debriefing related to how the trauma can be responded or how in general these challenges could impact family-school partnerships. The teacher educators might also want to invite guest speakers from different cultural and linguistic background (e.g., parents/caregivers, educators) to share their personal journey in education or life experiences. The tools and resources facilitated by coaches could be thought-provoking for teachers who might come up with this awareness that they were not moving forward through TL stages. These strategies could make teachers question their past experiences and beliefs and see the situation from different perspectives which consequently might move beyond the earlier stages of TL.

Another implication that is aligned to the previous discussion about focusing on CC is that teacher educators could use a CC survey to measure the teachers' own CC. As already discussed, there was a limitation in my study that I was not able to use the scale to measure teachers' growth on CC. This made me think that it might be helpful for

teachers to use it. This could be as an implication for teacher educators who usually train large group of teachers. They could use CC survey in PDs to measure over time the different constructs including teachers' own CC knowledge and attitude around diversity in their classroom. The survey could be used more than once, before and after the program. This could help teacher educators understand how prepared the teachers are to work with ELs and families. Plus, the MTCS measure include items focused on parents and families that will be helpful for family collaboration-centered PDs. Thus, it could be helpful for PD developers and teacher educators to work on the teacher CC variable using a CC measure.

Since the main focus of the study is on collaboration with ELs and EL families, it would be beneficial for teacher educators to get the parents/caregivers and students on board in developing PDs. Due to time constraints and IRB approval complications, I was not able to include any EL students or EL parents as my participants. However, I think culturally responsive teacher educators who are mindful and sensitive to diverse cultures, might want to consider a wider range of group of people such as students and parents/caregivers in their training. They might want to run surveys or focus group to gather information from families about their needs and get the students and parents/caregivers' perspectives and choices around improving family collaboration.

Another implication is that the findings of this study emphasized on the important role of communities of practice to support teachers to grow in family collaboration implementation. The teacher educators need to develop and sustain a CoP. For example, coaches could facilitate teacher peer collaboration and working with their teammates from school. Facilitating peer collaboration could be beneficial because the teacher and

their school teammate go through the same situation in the same context so they can be of better help for each other as a team. It seems that teachers who had their supportive CoP, whether it was the program or school where they were actively engaged in, were more successful. Thus teacher educators could continue facilitating these same situations happen for the future participants to engage them in the CoP could bring more engagement and success for teachers to enhance family collaboration.

5.4.2 Implications for Future Research

As I already discussed, teachers belonged to different supportive communities of practice. Each community revolves around a particular sense of values and beliefs that could impact teachers' beliefs and classroom practices (Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992). The question of whether the goals, beliefs, and values of one CoP could reinforce or conflict with the other CoP could be a good research question for the future studies. Also, future research could explore if the different communities of practice are acting as a form of co-construction focusing on partnership that, in turn, could help teachers' learning or not.

Although the findings of this study demonstrated that some teachers were able to overcome challenges to enhance their collaboration with EL families, it seemed that teachers still need to learn different ways to find a solution to fix the constraints they face in family collaboration. Additional research could focus on how teacher educators can design an effective CoP that supports teachers' problem-solving skills around barriers to collaborate with families. One suggestion could be for the teacher educators to bring in peer teachers who have successfully overcome challenges to family collaboration to

model their solutions for their colleagues. This implication highlights the importance of the CoP as a support system for teachers.

Through pronoun analysis, I realized that some teachers referred to EL families using our/us/we pronouns while some other teachers used they/their/them pronouns. The first group appeared to see themselves, and their ELs and families as one community (e.g., we encourage our families to come in and see what our kids are doing in in the classroom; it's really important to collaborate with *our* families as a team. We're all in this together; just to be more conscious about the different cultures and how to reach out to *our* families; I look at the makeup of my classroom and be able to find the things that *our* families celebrate). Using our/us/we pronouns reflected their beliefs that it was our community and it was me working with my families. This shift may connect to the teachers' heightened awareness to include families. This we vs. they word analysis could illustrate that the teachers saw themselves as part of a CoP with ELs and families, in partnership with them as opposed to other teachers who used they/their/them pronouns. According to Riessman (2008), this finding could be an indication that teachers saw ELs and families as one community that the teachers themselves were part of. I came up with this analysis, however, did not have evidence to consider it as the findings of the study because I did not interview with parents/families. Thus, I thought that this could be a good area to work on for future research question.

5.5 Conclusion

The EL population growth in the U.S. school population requires teachers to be prepared to work with ELs and their families (NCES, May 2021). There are not adequate

teachers in more than half of the U.S. to serve the EL population. In Kentucky, where this research occurred, the EL population is growing, while many teachers do not get training to teach ELs or even those who received training do not feel prepared enough for teaching ELs (Gibney & Henry, 2020).

Speaking of what is missing in research, it seems that much is known in the areas of CRT, family collaboration, teachers' beliefs, and teachers' cultural competence. However, there seemed to be a gap in the current research literature on teacher learning about why some teachers were able to successfully shifted their teaching practices to implement new ideas and perspectives in their classrooms while some teachers were not. This research study is important as it added to the body of literature in understanding why some teachers were more successful than others to transform their family collaboration implementation to new practices with respect to ELs and EL families' engagement. This study was also important as it provided insights into how teacher educators could support teachers to enhance family collaboration.

The study found that there were two communities of practice that supported teachers to enhance their family collaboration: Project IDEAL CoP and the school CoP. The findings highlighted the importance of community of practice and indicated how teachers' collaboration across multiple communities of practice resulted in their positive transformative learning experiences and fostered a perspective shift. Teachers who belonged to multiple communities of practice made better practical engagement as a team and thus better supported their learning to how to grow their family collaboration than teachers who participated in one community of practice. Teacher participation established positive relationships and impacted their learning and growth in family collaboration.

The study also found that teachers' challenges to enhance family collaboration included families' hesitation to share about their life situation, families' past experiences, families' work schedule, and school' inadequacy of human resources to help communicate with families. Also, teachers addressed the challenges in two different ways: Group B only identified the barriers they had in family collaboration and did not mention if they were able to find any ways to tackle the problems. Group A both identified the challenges and saw the challenges under their control to find a solution to fix them to better collaborate with families. They described their efforts to overcome those constraints Teachers who made efforts to overcome those inevitable constraints appeared to be more successful to enhance family collaboration.

The findings illustrated that teachers' beliefs toward working with EL families can impact family collaboration practices. Teachers approached families in different ways which was an indicative of teachers' beliefs toward family collaboration. The ways teachers approached families reflected their beliefs regarding family collaboration which, in turn, impacted their family collaboration practices. Teachers who worked hard to intentionally change the ways to collaborate with and to reach out families appeared to be more successful than ones who understood family collaboration as only getting to know families. The first group also showed connections between their family collaboration beliefs and family collaboration practices in these areas: incorporating families Fund of Knowledge into classroom practices, using the acquire knowledge from families to enhance teaching and student learning, and designing the activities contextualized in families' Funds of Knowledge.

The findings demonstrated that teachers' perception of CC impacted their classroom practices. The findings illustrated that teachers' understanding of CC was in two ways: cultural diversity awareness and gaining perspective shift to put the awareness into family collaboration changing actions (e.g., building relationships with families and bringing their familial Funds of Knowledge into the classroom). Teachers who worked hard to intentionally change their CC awareness into family collaboration actions appeared to be more successful to work with work with ELs and EL families than Bryan who understood CC as only getting to know families.

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Appendix A

Culturally Responsive Instruction Observation Protocol

Rebecca Powell, Susan Chambers Cantrell, Pamela K. Correll, and Victor Malo-Juvera

Originally Developed by: R. Powell, S. Cantrell, Y. Gallardo Carter, A. Cox,

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Revised 2012 by: R. Powell (Georgetown College), S. Cantrell (University of Kentucky), P. Correll (University of Kentucky),

V. Malo-Juvera (UNC-Wilmington), D. Ross (University of Florida) and R. Bosch (James Madison University)

Revised 2014 and 2017 by: R Powell (Georgetown College), S. Cantrell (University of Kentucky),

P. Correll (Missouri State University), V. Malo-Juvera (UNC-Wilmington)

School (use assigned number):_____ Teacher (assigned number): _____
Observer:_____ Date of Observation: ___ # of Students in Classroom: _____
Academic Subject: _____ Grade Level(s): _____
Start Time of Observation: _____ End Time of Observation:_____ Total Time of Obs: _____

DIRECTIONS

After the classroom observation, review the field notes for evidence of each "element" of Culturally Responsive Instruction. If an example of the following descriptors was observed, place the field notes line number on which that example is found. If a "non-example" of the descriptors was observed, place the line number on which that non-example is found.

Then, make an overall/holistic judgment of the implementation of each component. To what extend and/or effect was the component present?

4 – Consistently
3 – Often
2 – Occasionally
1 – Rarely
0 – Never

Transfer the holistic scores from pp. 2 through 9 to the table below.

CRI Element	Holistic Score
I. CLASS	
II. FAM	
III. ASMT	

CRI Element	Holistic Score
IV. INSTR	
V. DISC	
VI. CRITICAL	

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I. CLASS CLASSROOM RELATIONSHIPS

Holistic score 4 3 2 1 0

Consistently Often Occasionally Rarely Never

CRI Indicator	For example, in a responsive classroom:	For example, in a non-responsive classroom:	Field notes: Time or line(s) of example	Field notes: Time or line(s) of non-example	Field notes: No example (✓)	SCORE for Indicator
1. The teacher demonstrates an ethic of care (e.g., equitable relationships, bonding)	Generally Effective Practices: • Teacher refers to students by name, uses personalized language with students • Teacher conveys interest in students' lives and experiences Practices that are Culturally Responsive: • There is a "family-like" environment in the classroom; there is a sense of belonging; students express care for one another in a variety of ways • Teacher promotes an environment that is safe and anxiety-free for all students, including culturally and linguistically diverse students; students seem comfortable participating in the classroom • Teacher differentiates patterns of interaction and management techniques to be culturally congruent with the students and families s/he serves (e.g., using a more direct interactive style with students who require it)	• Teacher permits and/or promotes negativity in the classroom, e.g., criticisms, negative comments, sarcasm, etc. • Teacher does not address negative comments of one student towards another • Teacher stays behind desk or across table from students; s/he does not get "on their level" • Teacher does not take interest in students' lives and experiences; is primarily concerned with conveying content • Teacher does not seem aware that some students are marginalized and are not participating fully in classroom activities • Some students do not seem comfortable contributing to class discussions and participating in learning activities • Teacher uses the same management techniques and interactive style with all students when it is clear that they do not work for some				

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2. The teacher communicates high expectations for all students	Generally Effective Practices: • There is an emphasis on learning and higher-level thinking; challenging work is the norm • Students do not hesitate to ask questions that further their learning; there is a "culture of learning" in the classroom • Teacher expects every student to participate actively; students are not allowed to be unengaged or off-task • Teacher gives feedback on established high standards and provides students with specific information on how they can meet those standards Practices that are Culturally Responsive: • There are group goals for success as well as individual goals (e.g., goals and charts posted on walls); every student is expected to achieve • Students are invested in their own and others' learning ; they continuously assist one another • Teacher takes steps to assure that emerging bilinguals understand directions and have access to the same content and learning as native speakers	• Teacher has low expectations consistently giving work that is not challenging or frustrating students by giving them tasks that are unreasonably difficult • Teacher does not call on all students consistently • Teacher allows some students to remain unengaged, e.g., never asks them to respond to questions, allows them to sleep, places them in the "corners" of the room and does not bring them into the instructional conversation, etc. • Teacher does not establish high standards; evaluation criteria require lower-level thinking and will not challenge students • Teacher feedback is subjective and is not tied to targeted learning outcomes and standards • Teacher expresses a deficit model, suggesting through words or actions that some students are not as capable as others • Teacher does not explicitly assist emerging bilinguals to assure they understand directions and content				
3. The teacher creates a learning atmosphere that engenders respect	Generally Effective Practices: • Teacher sets a tone for respectful classroom interaction and teaches respectful ways for having	• Teacher shows impatience and intolerance for certain student behaviors • Lack of respectful interaction amongst students may be an issue				

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for one another and toward diverse populations	dialogue and being in community with one another • Teacher implements practices that teach collaboration and respect, e.g., class meetings, modeling and reinforcing effective interaction, etc. • Students interact in respectful ways and know how to work together effectively • Teacher and students work to understand each other's perspectives Practices that are Culturally Responsive: • Positive and affirming messages and images about students' racial and ethnic identities are present throughout the classroom • Teacher affirms students' language and cultural knowledge by integrating it into classroom conversations • Teacher encourages students to share their stories with one another and to have pride in their history and linguistic and cultural identities • Classroom library and other available materials contain multicultural content that reflect the perspectives of and show appreciation for diverse groups • Classroom library (including online resources) includes bilingual texts that incorporate students' native languages	• Teacher establishes a competitive environment whereby students try to out-perform one another • Teacher does not encourage student questions or ridicules students when they ask for clarification • Posters and displays do not show an acknowledgement and affirmation of students' cultural and racial/ethnic/linguistic identities • Classroom library and other available materials promote ethnocentric positions and/or ignore human diversity • Classroom resources do not include any bilingual texts • Teacher never affirms students' native languages and cultures				

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4. Students work together productively	Generally Effective Practices: • Students are continuously viewed as resources for one another and assist one another in learning new concepts • Students are encouraged to have discussions with peers and to work collaboratively	• Students are discouraged from assisting their peers • Students primarily work individually and are not expected to work collaboratively; and/or students have a difficult time collaborating • Teacher dominates the decision-making and does not allow for student voice • The emphasis is on individual achievement • Classroom is arranged for quiet, solitary work, with the teacher being "center stage"				

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II. FAM FAMILY COLLABORATION

Holistic score	4	3	2	1	0
	Consistently	Often	Occasionally	Rarely	Never

NOTE: When scoring this component of the CRIOP, the family collaboration interview should be used in addition to field observations.
Observations alone will not provide adequate information for scoring.

CRI Indicator	For example, in a responsive classroom:	For example, in a non-responsive classroom:	Field notes: Time or line(s) of example	Field notes: Time or line(s) of non-example	Field notes: No example (✓)	SCORE for Indicator
1. The teacher establishes genuine partnerships (equitable relationships) with parents/ caregivers	Generally Effective Practices: • Parents'/caregivers' ideas are solicited on how best to instruct the child; parents are viewed as partners in educating their child • There is evidence of conversations with parents/caregivers where it's clear that they are viewed as partners in educating the student Practices that are Culturally Responsive: • Teacher makes an effort to understand families and respects their cultural knowledge by making a concerted effort to develop relationships in order to learn about their lives, language, histories, and cultural traditions • Teacher makes an effort to communicate with families in their home languages (e.g.,learning key terms in the student's home language,	• Parents'/caregivers are never consulted on how best to instruct their child, and/or their suggestions are not incorporated in instruction • No effort made to establish relationships with caregivers • There is evidence of a "deficit perspective" in which families and caregivers are viewed as inferior and/or as having limited resources that can be leveraged for instruction • All communication with families is in English				

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	translating letters, using translation tools, involving a family liaison, etc.)					
2. The teacher reaches out to meet parents in positive, non-traditional ways	Generally Effective Practices: • Teacher conducts home visit conferences • Teacher makes "good day" phone calls and establishes regular communication with parents Practices that are Culturally Responsive: • Teacher plans parent/family activities at locations within the home community • Teacher meets parents in parking lot or other locations that may be more comfortable for them	• Communication with parents/caregivers is through newsletters or similar group correspondence,, where they are asked to respond passively (e.g., signing the newsletter, versus becoming actively involved in their child's learning) • Teacher conducts phone calls, conferences, personal notes to parents for negative reports only (e.g., discipline)				
3. The teacher encourages parent/family involvement	Generally Effective Practices: • Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in school-related events and activities • Parents/caregivers are invited into the classroom to participate and share experiences Practices that are Culturally Responsive: • Parents from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds are invited to share their unique experiences and knowledge (e.g., sharing their stories, reading books in their native language, teaching songs and rhymes in their native language, etc.)	• Parents/caregivers are never involved in the instructional program • There is no evidence of home/family connections in the classroom				

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4. The teacher intentionally learns about families' linguistic/cultural knowledge and expertise to support student learning	Practices that are Culturally Responsive: • Teacher identifies families' "funds of knowledge" so it can be used to facilitate student learning (e.g., through home visits; social events for families where information is solicited; conversations with parents and students about their language, culture, and history; attending community events; home literacy projects; camera projects etc.)	• Families' "funds of knowledge" are never identified				

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III. ASMT ASSESSMENT PRACTICES

Holistic score	4	3	2	1	0
	Consistently	Often	Occasionally	Rarely	Never

CRI Indicator	For example, in a responsive classroom:	For example, in a non-responsive classroom:	Field notes: Time or line(s) of example	Field notes: Time or line(s) of non-example	Field notes: No example (✓)	SCORE for Indicator
1. Formative assessment practices are used that provide information throughout the lesson on individual student understanding	Generally Effective Practices: • Teacher frequently assesses students' understanding throughout instruction and uses assessment data throughout the lesson to adjust instruction • Students are able to voice their learning throughout the lesson • Informal assessment strategies are used continuously during instruction, while students are actively engaged in learning, and provide information on the learning of every student (e.g. "talking partners," whiteboards, journal responses to check continuously for understanding) • Teacher modifies instruction or reteaches when it's clear that students are not meeting learning targets	• Assessment occurs at the end of the lesson • Assessment is not embedded throughout instruction • Assessment is regarded as a set of evaluation "tools" that are used to determine what students have learned (e.g., exit slips, quizzes, etc. that are administered after instruction has occurred versus examining students' cognitive processing during instruction) • Teacher follows the lesson script even when it's clear that students are not meeting learning targets • The goal is to get through the lesson and cover the content versus assuring student understanding				
2. Students are able to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways	Generally Effective Practices: • Divergent responses and reasoning are encouraged; students are able to share the processes and evidence they used to arrive at responses versus simply providing "the" correct answer	• Most or all tests are written and require reading/writing proficiency in English • Teacher expects students to tell "the" answer • Students have a narrow range of options for demonstrating competence (e.g., multiple choice				

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	Practices that are Culturally Responsive: • Students with limited English proficiency and/or limited literacy can show their conceptual learning through visual or other forms of representation (e.g., drawing, labelling, completing graphic organizers etc. depending upon their level of English language acquisition)	tests, matching, etc.)				
3. Authentic assessments are used frequently to determine students' competence in both language and content.	Generally Effective Practices: • Students' written and oral language proficiency is assessed while they are engaged in purposeful activity • Teacher primarily uses authentic, task-embedded assessments (e.g., anecdotal notes, targeted observation, rubrics/analysis of students' written products, math charts/journals, etc.) Practices that are Culturally Responsive: • Teacher assesses both academic language and content	• Assessments measure discrete, isolated skills and/or use short, disconnected passages • Students' linguistic competence is never assessed, or is evaluated solely through standardized measures • Assessments are "exercises" that students must complete versus meaningful, purposeful work				
4. Students have opportunities for self-assessment	Generally Effective Practices: • Students are encouraged to evaluate their own work based upon a determined set of criteria • Students are involved in setting their own goals for learning • Students are involved in developing the criteria for their finished products (e.g., scoring rubrics)	• Assessment is always teacher-controlled				

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IV. INSTR INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

Holistic score	4	3	2	1	0
	Consistently	Often	Occasionally	Rarely	Never

CRI Indicator	For example, in a responsive classroom:	For example, in a non-responsive classroom:	Field notes: Time or line(s) of example	Field notes: Time or line(s) of non-example	Field notes: No example (✓)	SCORE for Indicator
1. Instruction is contextualized in students' lives, experiences, and individual abilities	Generally Effective Practices: • Learning activities are meaningful to students and promote a high level of student engagement • Materials and real-world examples are used that help students make connections to their lives • Learning experiences build on prior student learning and invite students to make connections Practices that are Culturally Responsive: • Teacher uses instructional methods/activities that provide windows into students' worlds outside of school (e.g., "All About Me" books, student-created alphabet walls, camera projects, etc.) • Teacher views students' life experiences as assets and builds on students' cultural knowledge, linguistic knowledge, and "cultural data sets," making connections during instruction in the various content areas • Materials and examples are used that reflect diverse experiences and views • Families' "funds of knowledge" are integrated in learning experiences	• Learning tasks and texts reflect the values and experiences of dominant ethnic and cultural groups • No attempt is made to link students' realities to what is being studied; learning experiences are disconnected from students' knowledge and experiences • Skills and content are presented in isolation (never in application to authentic contexts) • Teacher follows the script of the adopted curriculum even when it conflicts with her own or the students' lived experiences • Learning experiences are derived almost exclusively from published textbooks and other materials that do not relate to the classroom community or the larger community being served • Families "funds of knowledge" are never incorporated in the curriculum; parents are never invited to share their knowledge				

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	when possible; parents are invited into the classroom to share their knowledge					
2. Students engage in active, hands-on, meaningful learning tasks, including inquiry-based learning	• Learning tasks allow students to practice and apply concepts using hands-on activities and manipulatives • Learning activities promote a high level of student engagement • Exploratory learning is encouraged • Teacher engages students in the inquiry process and learns from students' investigations (e.g., inquiry-based and project-based learning) • Students are encouraged to pose questions and find answers to their questions using a variety of resources • Student-generated questions form the basis for further study and investigation	• Students work passively at their seats on teacher-directed tasks • Passive student learning is the norm (e.g., listening to direct instruction and taking notes, reading the textbook, seatwork, worksheets, etc.) • Exploratory learning is discouraged • Teacher is the authority • Students are not encouraged to challenge or question ideas or to engage in further inquiry • Students are not encouraged to pose their own questions • All knowledge/ideas are generated by those in authority (e.g., textbook writers, teachers)				

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3. The teacher focuses on developing students' academic language	• There is an emphasis on learning academic vocabulary in the particular content area • Students are taught independent strategies for learning new vocabulary • Key academic vocabulary and language structures are identified prior to a study or investigation • Teacher develops language objectives in addition to content objectives, having specific goals in mind for students' linguistic performance • Teacher articulates expectations for language use (e.g "I want you to use these vocabulary words in your discussion; I expect you to reply in a complete sentence" etc.) • Teacher scaffolds students' language development as needed (sentence frames, sentence starters, etc.) • Academic language is taught explicitly (identifying it in written passages, dissecting complex sentences, using mentor texts, creating "learning/language walls," etc.)	• Little attention is paid to learning academic vocabulary in the content area • New words are taught outside of meaningful contexts • Students are not taught independent word learning strategies • Teacher does not articulate expectations for language use • The teacher does not establish language objectives for students; only content objectives are evident • Teacher does not scaffold students' language development • No attention is given to the language used in particular disciplines; academic language is not addressed • Students are evaluated on their use of academic discourse but it is never taught explicitly				
4. The teacher uses instructional techniques that scaffold student learning	• Teacher uses a variety of teaching strategies to assist students in learning content (e.g., demonstrations, visuals, graphic organizers, reducing linguistic density, etc.) • Teacher models, explains and demonstrates skills and concepts and provides appropriate scaffolding • Teacher uses "comprehensible input" (e.g., gestures, familiar words and	• Teacher primarily uses traditional methods for teaching content (e.g., lecture, reading from a textbook) with few scaffolding strategies • Teacher does not always model, explain and demonstrate new skills and concepts prior to asking students to apply them • Teacher does not use visuals, comprehensible input etc. to facilitate understanding				

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	phrases, slower speech, etc.) to facilitate understanding when needed • Teacher builds on students' knowledge of their home languages to teach English (e.g., cognates, letter-sound relationships, syntactic patterns)	• Teacher does not build upon students' home languages to teach terms, skills and concepts in English				
5. Students have choices based upon their experiences, interests and strengths	• Students have multiple opportunities to choose texts, writing topics, and modes of expression based on preferences and personal relevance • Students have some choice in assignments • Students have some choice and ownership in what they are learning	• Teacher selects texts, writing topics, and modes of expression for students • All assignments are teacher-initiated • Students have no choice or ownership in topic of study or questions that will be addressed				

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V. DIS DISCOURSE

Holistic score	4	3	2	1	0
	Consistently	Often	Occasionally	Rarely	Never

CRI Indicator	For example, in a responsive classroom:	For example, in a non-responsive classroom:	Field notes: Time or line(s) of example	Field notes: Time or line(s) of non-example	Field notes: No example (✓)	SCORE for Indicator
1. The teacher promotes active student engagement through discourse practices	• Teacher employs a variety of discourse protocols to promote student participation and engagement (e.g., call and response, talking circles, read-around, musical shares, etc.) • All students have the opportunity to participate in classroom discourse • Teacher uses various strategies throughout the lesson to promote student engagement through talk (e.g., partner share, small group conversation, interactive journals, etc.)	• The main form of classroom discourse is Initiate-Respond-Evaluate (IRE) where the teacher poses a question and individual students respond • The teacher controls classroom discourse by assigning speaking rights to students • Not all students have the opportunity to participate in classroom discussions • Some students are allowed to dominate discussions				

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2. The teacher promotes equitable and culturally sustaining discourse practices	Generally Effective Practices: • Students use collaborative, overlapping conversation and participate actively, supporting the speaker during the creation of story talk or discussion and commenting upon the ideas of others • Teacher uses techniques to support equitable participation, such as wait time, feedback, turn-taking, and scaffolding of ideas Practices that are Culturally Responsive: • Students speak in their home language/dialect when it is situationally appropriate to do so • There is an emphasis on developing proficiency in students' native language as well as in Standard English; bilingualism/ multilingualism is encouraged (e.g., students learn vocabulary in their native languages; students read/write in their native languages; students learn songs and rhymes in other languages, etc.)	• Discourse practices of various cultural groups are not used during instruction • Students are discouraged from using their home language or dialect and communicating in culturally specific ways, even when it is situationally appropriate to do so • Emerging bilingual students are discouraged from using their native language, both inside and outside of school • Students are discouraged from communicating in a language other than English • There is no evidence of attempts to promote bilingualism/multilingualism				

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3. The teacher provides structures that promote academic conversation	Generally Effective Practices: • Students engage in genuine discussions and have extended conversations • Teacher explicitly teaches and evaluates skills required for conducting effective academic conversations Practices that are Culturally Responsive: • Teacher provides prompts that elicit extended conversations and dialogue (e.g. questions on current issues; questions that would elicit differing points of view)	• Students are discouraged from talking together, or conversations are limited to short responses • Teacher rarely asks questions or provides prompts that would elicit extended dialogue • Teacher does not teach skills required for academic conversations				
4. The teacher provides opportunities for students to develop linguistic competence	Generally Effective Practices: • Teacher provides many opportunities for students to use academic language in meaningful contexts • Students are engaged in frequent and authentic uses of language and content (drama, role play, discussion, purposeful writing and communication using ideas/concepts/vocabulary and syntactic structures from the field of study) Practices that are Culturally Responsive: • Students are taught appropriate registers of language use for a variety of social contexts and are given opportunities to practice those registers in authentic ways	• Students' use of language is limited and they do not use language in authentic ways • Students are not taught about the registers of language use; they are expected to use Standard English in all social contexts				

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VI. CRITICAL CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Holistic score	4	3	2	1	0
	Consistently	Often	Occasionally	Rarely	Never

CRI Indicator	For example, in a responsive classroom:	For example, in a non-responsive classroom:	Field notes: Time or line(s) of example	Field notes: Time or line(s) of non-example	Field notes: No example (✓)	SCORE for Indicator
1. The curriculum and planned learning experiences provide opportunities for the inclusion of issues important to the classroom, school and community	Generally Effective Practices: • Students are engaged in experiences that develop awareness and provide opportunities to contribute, inform, persuade and have a voice in the classroom, school and beyond • Community-based issues and projects are included in the planned program and new skills and concepts are linked to real-world problems and events Practices that are Culturally Responsive: • Students explore important contemporary issues (poverty, racism, global warming, human trafficking, animal cruelty, etc.) • Teacher encourages students to investigate real-world issues related to a topic being studied and to become actively involved in solving problems at the local, state, national, and global levels	• The focus of literacy and content instruction is to teach the skills and information required to "pass the test"; learning occurs only as it relates to the standard curriculum • Teacher does not encourage critical thought or questioning of contemporary issues • Teacher does not encourage application to real-world issues; accepts or endorses the status quo by ignoring or dismissing real life problems related to the topic being studied				

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2. The curriculum and planned learning experiences incorporate opportunities to confront negative stereotypes and biases	Practices that are Culturally Responsive: • Teacher facilitates students' understanding of stereotypes and biases • Teacher encourages students to examine biases in popular culture that students encounter in their daily lives (TV shows, advertising, popular songs, etc.) • Teacher makes intentional use of multicultural literature to facilitate conversations about human differences • As appropriate to the grade level being taught, teacher helps students to think about biases in texts (e.g., "Who has the power in this book? Whose perspectives are represented, and whose are missing? Who benefits from the beliefs and practices represented in this text?" etc.) • As appropriate to the grade level being taught, teacher challenges students to deconstruct their own cultural assumptions and biases both in the formal and informal curriculum	• Teacher does not encourage students to examine biases in instructional materials or popular texts; texts are considered to be "neutral" • Teacher never addresses issues related to human differences • Teacher makes prejudicial statements to students (e.g., girls are emotional; immigrants don't belong here; etc.), and/or fails to challenge prejudicial statements of students				
3. The curriculum and planned learning experiences integrate and provide opportunities for the expression of diverse perspectives	Generally Effective Practices: • Students are encouraged to challenge the ideas in a text and to think at high levels Practices that are Culturally Responsive: • Texts include protagonists from diverse backgrounds and present ideas from multiple perspectives	• The conventional, dominant point of view is presented and remains unchallenged • Few texts are available to represent diverse protagonists or multiple perspectives • Biased units of study are presented that show only the conventional point of view (e.g., Columbus discovered America) or that ignore other perspectives (e.g., a weather unit that does not				

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	• Students are encouraged to explore alternative viewpoints • Opportunities are plentiful for students to present diverse perspectives through class discussions and other activities • Students are encouraged to respectfully disagree with one another and to provide evidence to support their views	include a discussion of global warming) • No or very few texts are available with protagonists from diverse cultural, linguistic, and/or socioeconomic backgrounds • No opportunities are provided for students to learn about or to present diverse views				

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Post-Observation Teacher Interview

1. Was the lesson(s) that you taught today typical of your classroom instruction? If not, please describe how the lesson was different. Are there other lesson components that you usually include in your classroom instruction that you didn't include in this lesson?

2. How would you define "culturally responsive instruction"?

3. What are your biggest successes with using culturally responsive instruction with your students?

4. What are your biggest challenges with using culturally responsive instruction with your students?

5. Is there anything else you'd like to add?

Family Collaboration Teacher Interview

(NOTE: This Interview accompanies the CRIOP assessment instrument)

1. Please tell me about the conversations you have had with the parents/caregivers of your students. Where did these meetings occur? What did you learn from those conversations?

2. Can you give me some examples of how you've used the knowledge you've acquired from parents/caregivers to enhance student learning and/or classroom instruction?

3. What methods do you typically use to communicate with parents/caregivers? How often does this communication occur? Please describe all of the methods you use (notes home, phone calls, home visits, social events, parent workshops, etc.)

4. If you have conducted home visits, what is the purpose for the visits? What information do you gather? How do you use that information?

5. Do parents/caregivers participate in classroom activities and events? If yes, describe how they participate.

6. What else can you tell me about how you work with the families and students in your class?

Field Notes Template

Teacher

Name_____Date_____

School

Name_____

Observer_____

Field Note Directions: As you observe the teacher's lesson record field notes in a separate file. Your field notes should be taken in a three-column format. One column should record the time, one should record objective notes, and one should record your interpretations. You should endeavor to record your field notes in five-minute intervals throughout the duration of the lesson. Also make a sketch of the classroom noting any environmental evidence on walls, bulletin boards, etc.

Time	Objective Field Notes	Interpretations

Appendix B

Family Collaboration Teacher Interview Instrument

1. How do you define family collaboration? Can you give me some examples of how you collaborate with families?
2. How do you define Funds of Knowledge in your own words? How do you learn about families? Can you give me some examples of how you've used the knowledge you've acquired from parents/caregivers to enhance student learning and/or classroom instruction in the classroom?
3. How do you define teachers' cultural competence? How do you see the importance of teachers' cultural competence understanding in interaction with ELs and their families? How do you practice to be culturally competent?
4. What do you think about the changes over time since you finished the training program? What has changed in your life, your classroom, teaching, etc.?
5. How the changed professional conditions have impacted your work with ELs and EL families?
6. Is there anything I have not asked that you want to talk about how you work with students and their families?

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Perry, K.H., Shaw, D.M., & Saberimoghaddam, S. (2020). Literacy practices and the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC): A conceptual critique. *International Review of Education: Journal of Lifelong Learning, 66*(1), 9-28. DOI: 10.1007/s11159-019-09819-9.

PRESENTATIONS

Saberimoghaddam, S., Perry, K.H., & Cantrell, S.C. (2021). *The Influence of Teachers' Beliefs and Self-Awareness on Implementing Family & Community Collaboration*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Literacy Research Association, Atlanta, GA.

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Perry, K.H., Shaw, D.M., Saberimoghaddam, S., & Martin-Young, S. (2018). Literacy Practices, Community, and Adult Assessment. In *Reclaiming Literacy Research in Adolescent and Adult Community Contexts*. Symposium conducted at the annual conference of the Literacy Research Association, Indian Wells, CA.

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