CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING: AN INVESTIGATION OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICES FOR KOREAN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

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CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING: AN INVESTIGATION OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICES FOR KOREAN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

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

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by

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ABSTRACT

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING: AN INVESTIGATION OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICES FOR KOREAN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Kisong Kim

With the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015, policymakers continued to emphasize both excellence and equity for students with high learning standards for their pathways to college (Darrow, 2016). Despite increased attention, national statistics showed that the student achievement gap between ELLs and non-ELLs had not been closed since 1998. To better understand the current status of such student’s academic achievement gap and provide support to ELLs from different cultures, the study incorporated the work of Gay (2010, 2013, 2018) and Ladson-Billings (1992, 1995b, 2009, 2014) and examined factors influencing student learning. Utilizing a phenomenological methodology, this study was designed to acquire a better understanding of the culturally responsive attitudes and practices of teachers and their influences on the student-teacher relationship, classroom culture, and Korean ELLs’ learning experiences. Through the purposive sampling procedure, the researcher recruited all Korean ELL students in the participating school, and all possible teacher populations related to Korean ELLs’ learning. The data were collected through a series of student and teacher interviews, observations, and student focus group sessions. The study aimed to explain the significance of teachers’ culturally responsive teaching to the student-teacher relationship, classroom culture, and students’ perceptions of their language learning experiences. This study is significant to the field since Korean
ELLs have historically been overlooked due to the high achievement of non-ELL Asian students.
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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The demographic composition of U.S. schools has been changing rapidly, with a growing population of students who are English Language Learners (ELLs) – who will account for 40% of the U.S. student population by 2030 (Kena et al., 2016). The percentage of ELLs in U.S. public schools were higher in 2016 at 9.6% (4.9 million) compared to in 2010 at 8.1% (3.8 million) of the entire U.S. student population (McFarland et al., 2019, p. 56). While ELL students reside throughout the United States, there are ten states with heavier ELL student population. New York is one of the states with a high Asian ELL student population (Aud et al., 2011). As the number of school-aged ELLs have experienced significant growth throughout the United States, the number of the school-aged ELLs in New York increased as well. A Division of English Language Learners and Student Support Year 2016-17 Demographic Report of NYCDOE showed that over a quarter of all ELLs were in high school (Gangemi, 2016-17). According to this report, the largest concentration of ELLs was assigned to the ninth grade followed by the second grade, which is presumed to be a potential entry point for the recently arrived ELLs.

To accommodate for the growing population of ELLs in the U.S. education system, New York State Education Department (NYSED.gov, CR-SE Framework, 2019) initiated following reform efforts to inform and to ensure the provision of education opportunity to all ELL students. In 1974, the decision of Lau v. Nichols established the right of ELLs to have “a meaningful opportunity to participate in the public educational program.” Also, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), bipartisan legislation, was signed in December 2015 to prioritize both excellence and equity for the students by supporting educators
The CR Part 154 Comprehensive ELL Education Plan (CEEP) was submitted by all Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) to support and meet the educational needs of ELLs. The CEEP includes multiple sections to address the needs of the ELLs and the strategic plan for providing grade-appropriate, linguistically and academically rigorous instruction that will allow ELLs to meet the Next Generation Learning Standards: every teacher is required to be prepared to teach academic language and challenging content to all students, including ELLs. In January 2018, NYSED commenced to develop the Culturally Responsive-Sustaining (CR-S) framework with experts in P-12 education and higher education.

The schools in the United States are under increased pressure to help all students succeed, but despite the effort, the dropout rate for ELLs is alarmingly high and their graduation rate is disturbingly low (DeCapua & Marshall, 2015; NYSED.gov MLL/ELL Data Report, 2019). One of the causes is the steady academic gap between ELLs and non-ELLs. In 2015, the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) released a long-term trend results of the National Assessment of Educational Program (NAEP) indicating an average score gap of ELLs and non-ELLs on a reading performance test (scale ranges from 0 to 500) – 37 points in fourth grade and 45 points in eighth grade (Kena et al., 2016). The average gap persisted throughout the students’ primary and secondary education, and the gap was notably widened for 12th graders, resulting in 53 points (Kena et al., 2016).

Some researchers explained characteristics and reasons for the persistent achievement gaps (DeCapua & Marshall, 2015; Howard, 2001). One of the researchers pointed out that the most ELLs falling in the academic gap were from culturally and linguistically diverse families (Howard, 2001; 2017: NY STATE – Report Card, 2017).
Specifically, many ELLs coming from culturally and linguistically diverse families regularly speak their first language and practice their culture at home (Howard, 2001). Therefore, the ELLs are more likely to experience unfamiliar cultures, different languages, and societal prejudices against them at school based on race or linguistic ability (DeCapua & Marshall, 2015). These circumstances highlighted the difficulties in bridging the gap between ELLs and non-ELLs in academic achievement (DeCapua & Marshall, 2015).

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) report in 2007 presented data on the percentage of students who spoke another language at home (USDOE, NCES, 2007). In the year of the report, about 64% of all Asian students spoke a language other than English at home. There was higher concentration of Asian students in Grades 9-12 (68%) compared to in kindergarten-Grade 9 (63%). Among all racial or ethnic subgroups, the percentage of Korean students who spoke a language other than English at home was the highest (75%).

Even with the increased attention on underrepresented student populations, Asian ELLs, including Korean ELLs, have been overlooked due to a widely-held notion that Asian students are high achievers – some refer to them as an exemplary minority. Even though the 2007 NAEP reading and mathematics assessment showed that a higher percentage of Asian fourth graders and eighth graders scored at or above Proficient when compared with Black and Hispanic students, the assessment results excluded newly arrived ELLs (Sugarman & Courtney, 2018). Also, according to the NAEP reading achievement assessment, the percentage of Asian students who performed at or below Basic was greater in 12th grade (64%) than eighth grade (59%). Therefore, due to the lack of attention to this
population's needs, the gap between ELLs and non-ELLs in the current education system remains.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to acquire a better understanding of the culturally responsive attitudes and practices of teachers while providing perspectives on their influences on student-teacher relationship, classroom culture, and the perceived learning experiences of newly arrived adolescent Korean ELLs. By conducting this study, the researcher identifies, examines, and makes comparisons of the attitudes and practices of different teachers who have at least one Korean ELL in their classrooms. The researcher further investigates the effects of teachers’ attitudes and practices on the student-teacher relationship, classroom culture, and students’ perceptions of their language learning experiences, with a special focus on Korean ELLs.

To effectively teach diverse learners, Gay (2002) recommended using students’ cultural characteristics and experiences to assist them academically. The educators must provide culturally responsive, appropriate, and quality instruction for students to have an adequate opportunity to learn (Gay, 2018; Klingner & Edwards, 2006). Gay (2018) also emphasized the importance of understanding communicative styles and literacy practices of their students and incorporate them into the instruction. Another researcher, Ladson-Billings (2009), emphasized the importance of teachers empowering students “intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically” by considering students’ cultures as they communicate in teaching. Incorporating culturally responsive teaching as the theoretical framework, and using phenomenological methodology (Moustakas, 1994; Van Manen, 2014), this study determines which attitudes and practices of teachers are aligned
with culturally responsive teaching. It also examines how they influence the relationship, classroom culture, and perceived language learning experiences.

The data are derived from teacher interviews, individual student interviews, focus group student interviews, and classroom observations. This study focuses on both students’ and teachers’ unique experiences as a whole, and their descriptions of the particular phenomenon. During teacher interviews, they explained their beliefs and perceptions regarding ELLs, their unique practices to teach them, and their interactions with ELLs. During student interviews, they explained their language learning experience, their perceptions about the instructors, and their interaction with the teachers. The focus group interviews provided diverse viewpoints of students. The observations confirmed actual student-teacher interactions and a hint of students’ learning experience. The results of the study support the importance of understanding teachers’ attitudes and practices for ELLs, and their influences on student-teacher relationship, classroom culture, and students’ perceptions of their language learning experiences.

**Theoretical Framework**

This study’s theoretical framework is based on culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2010, 2013, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 1992, 1995b, 2009, 2014; Paris, 2012). The theoretical framework is used to investigate the effective practices and effects of its practices on the student-teacher relationship, classroom culture, and students’ learning experiences. The theoretical framework (Figure 1) incorporates elements from culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2010) and culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 2009). As a conceptual framework, culturally responsive teaching and culturally relevant pedagogy were used to investigate the student-teacher relationship, the classroom culture, and
students’ perceived learning experiences. With the lens of culturally responsive teaching framework, culturally responsive teachers express the following characteristics in their attitudes and practices.

Gay (2010) defined culturally responsive teaching as “using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them.” This approach is beneficial for Korean ELLs since they are ethnically and linguistically diverse students and have unique experiences and cultures that need to be taken into consideration. Since culturally responsive teachers realize the importance not only of achieving academic success but also of maintaining cultural identity and heritage (Gay, 2010), students’ language learning experiences (hereafter also referred to learning experiences) would improve significantly through their culturally responsive teaching.

Another researcher, Ladson-Billings (2009) defined culturally relevant pedagogy as “a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes.” Ladson-Billings (1992) emphasized the importance of cultural competence of teachers and defined cultural relevance in similar terms to those used in previous studies: culturally appropriate, culturally congruent, culturally responsive, and culturally compatible. In contrast to the pedagogy of poverty, Ladson-Billings (1992, 2009) provided examples of teachers who enacted the culturally relevant pedagogy by integrating the culture in the curriculum.
In implementing culturally responsive teaching, Gay (2013) believed that there are four essential actions required by teachers. Teachers need to replace the deficit views of focusing on the students’ inability to follow the lessons, hindering successful outcomes, with asset perspectives that value what students already have. Teachers need to understand the possible confrontations or resistances to culturally responsive teaching in order to implement the method with confidence. Then, the teachers need to understand the significance of acquiring cultural awareness and its influence on students’ lives. Lastly, teachers must be intellectually prepared and make a pedagogical connection with the content.
Significance of the Study

The demographic composition of U.S. schools has been changing rapidly with the growing population of ELLs in the recent years. The NCES projected ELLs to be 40% of the U.S. student population by 2030 (Kena et al., 2016). Due to the population growth, policymakers attempted to protect and support ELLs by improving language learning since the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Under Title I, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 provided supplemental compensatory education to school districts with students who are disadvantaged by their home lives, economic environments, the quality of education, social class backgrounds, and specific educational needs (LoPresti, 1971).

The ESEA had been revised by the implementation of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, which mandated that schools respond to the federal requirement and place high expectations on all learners, including ELLs. Furthermore, ESSA was signed by President Barack Obama in December 2015 to prioritize both excellence and equity for the students by supporting educators (Darrow, 2016). For the first time in law, it required every student, including ELLs, to be taught with high learning standards that will prepare them for college and a career; empowered state and local decision-makers; preserved annual assessment and reduced the burden of unnecessary testing; provided better access to high-quality preschool; and established new resources.

Among all ELLs, Korean student populations are often ignored or viewed as the model minority since the data show that Asian students are doing as well as White students or better than Black or Hispanic students. Therefore, there have not been enough studies to support Asian students who are experiencing difficulties linguistically and academically. Even though the 2007 NAEP reading and mathematics assessment showed that a higher
percentage of Asian students scored at or above Proficient, many ELLs were excluded from the testing. The highest percentage of the student population who spoke English with difficulty is the Asian population in Grade 9-12. Among all racial or ethnic subgroups, the percentage of Korean students who spoke a language other than English at home was the highest (75%). Korean ELLs experience a more severe challenge to meet the higher standards when the support and re-evaluation of their academic needs are insufficient.

The literature has shown numerous barriers that the ELLs experience at school to be academically successful. When ELLs enter schools with limited English skills, they experience a lack of support in academic work, influenced by a lack of expectations. These inadvertent circumstances lead ELLs to experience a lack of opportunities for rigorous academic learning (DeCapua & Marshall, 2015; Kanno & Kangas, 2014; Lee, 2012; Milner, 2007). Another barrier the ELLs experience is a lack of belongingness to schools, and one example is the difficulties they experience in developing relationships with teachers. While ELLs spend most of their days in mainstream classrooms, the research has shown that many mainstream teachers are not confident in and ill-equipped for teaching ELLs (Faez, 2012; Polat, 2010). To provide adequate support for ELLs, developing general and cultural competency of the teachers is the major challenge (Good, Masewicz, & Vogel, 2010; Howard, 2010; Jiménez et al., 2015; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Milner, 2010; Polat, 2010).

While culturally responsive teaching does not resolve all barriers for ELLs, it provides a possible solution. Gay (2010) suggested the teachers’ caring attitudes positively influenced teaching quality and students’ engagement. The caring teachers provided differentiated lessons to support and cater to the ELLs’ unique needs (Nguyen & Cortes, 2013), were responsive to students’ academic and personal lives, and were determined to
be available for the students (Slaughter & Carlson, 1996). When teachers care for students, the students tend to put more effort into schoolwork and feel encouraged to be more connected to teachers and establish a sense of belonging at school (Slaughter & Carlson, 1996). Other researchers have emphasized the importance of building a strong student-teacher relationship to promote students’ belongingness in schools (DeCapua & Marshall, 2015). The study by Hollins and Spencer (as cited in Howard, 2001) proved the influence of positive relationship between teachers and students on students’ academic achievement.

In sum, the rapid growth of the ELL student population and the escalation of federal accountability requirements have directed educators’ attention to the unique needs of ELL students. However, even with the increased attention to ELLs, there has been a disparity in academic achievement, which shows the barriers ELLs experience in schools. Consequently, this study explores an important, yet under-studied issue.

**Research Questions**

1. How do teachers view ELLs in general, and how do their views influence the designing of their instruction?

2. How do teachers’ attitudes influence student-teacher relationship and classroom culture?

3. How, if at all, do teachers perform culturally responsive practices?

**Definition of Terms**

*Accommodation.* Adapting language (spoken or written) to make it more understandable to second language learners.

*Caring.* Caring interpersonal relationships are characterized by patience, persistence, facilitation, validation, and empowerment for the participants (Gay, 2018).

*English as a New Language (ENL).* Formerly known as English as a second language
research-based program comprised of a stand-alone model and integrated
ENL (Gangemi, 2016-17).

*English as a Second Language (ESL).* See English as a new language (ENL) (Gangemi 2016-17).

*English Language Learner (ELL).* Student whose home language is not English and has scored below a cut score on the New York State Identification Test for ELLs. These students continue to be ELLs until they reach proficiency on the NYSESLAT or a combination of NYSESLAT scores and ELA/ELA Regents scores (Gangemi, 2016-17).

*Home Language.* Language student speaks at home, with family.

*L1.* First language (also native language).

*L2.* Second Language.

*Language Acquisition.* The process of acquiring a first or second language. Some linguists distinguish between acquisition and learning of a second language, using the former to describe the informal development of a person’s second language and the latter to describe the process of formal study of a second language. Other linguists maintain that there is no clear distinction between formal learning and informal acquisition. The process of acquiring a second language is different from the process of acquiring the first (Baker & Sienkewicz, 2000).

*Language Attrition.* The loss of a language within a person or language group, gradually over time (Baker & Sienkewicz, 2000).

*Language Minority (LM).* A person or language community that is not from the dominant
language group. In the United States, a language-minority child may be bilingual, limited-English proficient, or English monolingual (Lessow-Hurley, 1991).

**Language Proficiency.** To be proficient in a second language means to effectively communicate or understand thoughts or ideas through the language’s grammatical system and its vocabulary, using its sounds or written symbols. Language proficiency is composed of oral (listening and speaking) and written (reading and writing) components, as well as academic and non-academic language (Hargett, 1998).

**Language Skills.** Language skills are usually said to comprise: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Each of these can be divided into sub-skills. Language skills refer to highly specific, observable, clearly definable components such as writing (Baker & Sienkewicz, 2001).

**Linguistically and Culturally Diverse (LCD).** Students from homes and communities where English is not the primary language of communication (Garcia, 1991).

**Limited English proficient (LEP).** Used to refer to students in the United States who are not native speakers of English and who have yet to reach ‘desired’ levels of competence in understanding, speaking, reading, or writing English. Such students are deemed to have insufficient English to cope in English-only classrooms (Baker & Sienkewicz, 2001).

**Scaffolding Approach.** Building on a child’s existing repertoire of knowledge and understanding (Baker & Sienkewicz, 2001).

**Second Language.** This term is used in different, overlapping ways, and can mean (a) the
second language learned chronologically, (b) the weaker language, (c) a language than is not the ‘mother tongue,’ and (d) the less used language. The term is sometimes used to cover third and further languages. The term can also be used to describe a language widely spoken in the country of the learners (Baker & Sienkewicz, 2001).

**Sink or Swim.** Too often, bilingual children are labeled with learning difficulties, while the causes of problems may be less in the child and more in the school or educational system. A subtractive, assimilative system typically creates negative attitudes and low motivation. In the ‘sink or swim’ approach, ‘sinking’ reflects an unsympathetic system and insensitive teaching, rather than individual learning problems… It denies the child’s home language skills, even denies the child’s identity and self-respect. Instead of using existing skills, the ‘sink or swim’ approach attempts to replace them (Baker & Sienkewicz, 2001).

**Uncaring.** Uncaring interpersonal relationships are distinguished by impatience, intolerance, dictations, and control (Gay, 2018).
CHAPTER 2

Review of Related Research

The paradox of foreign language education still exists since educators have been encouraging native English-speaking students to learn other languages while advising ELLs to abandon their first language when learning English as a second language (Alim & Paris, 2017; Reagan, 2002). Ironically, educational practices and policies validate the educational norm, which values acquiring multiple language skills but does not acknowledge the languages non-English speakers use. These misconceived perspectives have developed through the embedded deficit-based thinking that many educators acquired from their experiences in early stages of career or interactions with ELLs, and Gay (2010) warned of the difficulties of changing these misconceptions about learning a foreign language once they are formed. These deficit-based perspectives direct educators to believe that ELLs lack educational ability when they have limited English language skills. Such negative perspectives are accompanied by low expectations about the ELLs’ intellectual abilities and academic potential, which lead to “deleterious effects on student achievement” (Gay, 2010, p. 48). Furthermore, some teachers are afraid of teaching students with limited English language skills due to their lack of confidence and competence in teaching ELLs (Faez, 2012; Gay, 2010; Polat, 2010).

Many researchers have provided explanations about the deficit-based thinking where race and ethnicity are the factors in education (Howard, 2010; Johnson & Zentella, 2017; Milner, 2007; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002; Yosso, 2005), and most of the ELLs are included in this population since they are ethnically and linguistically diverse. Deficit-based thinking is established on the belief that poor academic performance is rooted in the
cognitive and motivational deficits of the students. Unfortunately, many teachers view their diverse students with a deficit-based lens. Due to their negative perspectives, teachers often value a quick transition of ELLs’ home language to the major language. Baker (2011) argued that the attempt to force fast conversion does more harm than good since the “sink or swim” approach is incorporated. The author stated, “it denies the child’s skills in the home language, denies the cognitive and academic competence already available through that home language, and often denies the identity and self-respect of the child” (Baker, 2011, p. 201).

Furthermore, Critical Race Theory shifted the eyes of educators and researchers away from deficit-based thinking and focused them toward valuing cultural knowledge, skills, and abilities possessed by socially marginalized groups (Yosso, 2005). One of the prominent scholars in Critical Race Theory, Yosso (2005), claimed that the students possess various forms of capital cultivated through cultural wealth, which was often unrecognized and unacknowledged by the teachers: (a) aspirational capital is the ability to hope for the future despite the “structured inequality” and existing barriers; (b) linguistic capital is the intellectual and social skills acquired through communication in different languages; (c) familial capital is the cultural knowledge cultivated through families; (d) social capital is the community resources; (e) navigational capital is the ability to maneuver through social settings; and (f) resistant capital is the ability nurtured through challenging the status quo and inequality (Yosso, 2005). These various forms of capital have their bases on the knowledge students bring to their classrooms from their culturally and linguistically diverse homes and communities.
The culturally responsive teaching theory emphasized the importance of recognizing the students’ situation and accepting the students for who they are in order to have a positive impact on students’ learning experiences (Ladson-Billings, 1992). Ladson-Billings (1992) incorporated the ethnographic interview method of Spradley (1979) to discuss the interviewee’s background, teaching philosophy, curriculum ideas, classroom management, and their perceptions of parents and community involvement. In this study, she discussed two teachers who did not “shy away from issues of race and culture” (Ladson-Billings, 1992, p. 316). In these teachers’ classes, the students were appreciated and celebrated as individuals and as members of their culture. She further claimed that the teachers’ culturally responsive attitude was the key factor resulting in the students’ positive experience in the classroom. Even though two teachers performed different pedagogical approaches, culturally responsive teaching allowed students to become literate and perform well at their grade level.

For teachers to acquire a better understanding of students’ experiences and current situations, Carter (2005) emphasized the importance of “simply listen[ing] carefully to students as they describe their school experiences” (p. 163). He further explained that students’ perceived experiences would allow teachers, administrators, and policymakers to learn “how to mend the cracks in our elementary and secondary school systems” (p. 163). To further understand and support the marginalized population, the following closely related topics are addressed in this literature review: theoretical framework; culturally responsive teaching and student-teacher relationship; culturally responsive teaching and classroom culture; culturally responsive teaching and student engagement; culturally
responsive teaching and language learning experiences; culturally responsive teaching and academic achievement; barriers to success.

Theoretical Framework

This study’s theoretical framework is based on culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2010, 2013, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 1992, 1995b, 2009, 2014; Paris, 2012). The theoretical framework is used to investigate effective practices and their influences on the student-teacher relationship, classroom culture, and students’ language learning experiences (hereafter also referred to learning experiences). The theoretical framework incorporates elements from culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2010) and culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 2009).

The culturally responsive teaching theory (Gay, 2010) is an appropriate choice for this study because it suggests that teachers use the “cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles” of the targeted population to shape learning experiences that are more relevant, applicable, and practical for them (p. 31). Gay (2010) also defined culturally responsive teaching in different terms: validating, comprehensive, multidimensional, empowering, and transformative. First, it is validating since it recognizes the cultural heritage, teaching students to understand and respect their own cultures, building connections between home and school, and integrating multicultural information. It is appropriate for this study since it suggests that teachers recognize the cultural heritage of the recently arrived Korean ELLs and possibly incorporate multicultural information for all students to understand and respect the differences by introducing cultures of ELLs and non-ELLs.
Second, culturally responsive teaching theory is comprehensive since it uses cultural resources to develop “intellectual, social, emotional, and political learning” for the students, and “teach the whole child” (Gay, 2010, p. 32). It is appropriate for this study since it recommends that teachers remember that they need to teach the whole child when they view the Korean ELLs. Therefore, they would search for students’ prior knowledge instead of expecting them to demonstrate all prerequisite skills. These attitudes allow the teachers to avoid viewing the students as having less ability to be academically successful when the students are linguistically diverse. It would be also beneficial since the recently arrived ELLs need support not only in academic work but also in social, emotional, and political learning.

Third, culturally responsive teaching theory is multidimensional since it incorporates “curriculum content, learning context, classroom climate, student-teacher relationships, instructional techniques, classroom management, and performance assessments” (Gay, 2010, p. 33). It is appropriate for this study since it suggests that teachers understand the importance of developing positive student-teacher relationships and classroom culture to promote the students’ learning. To perform multidimensional culturally responsive teaching, the teachers are required to obtain extensive “cultural knowledge, experiences, contributions, and perspectives” of students (Gay, 2018 p. 39). For the recently arrived Korean ELLs, the relationship with the teachers and the comfortable classroom cultures would be crucial to navigate through the various levels of the school system.

Fourth, culturally responsive teaching theory is empowering since it promotes “academic competence, personal confidence, courage, and the will to act” to allow the
student to be a successful learner and a better human being (Gay, 2010, p. 34). It is appropriate for this study since the teachers are expected to believe that all students can succeed and are committed to support that belief. When the teachers believe that the students can succeed and acknowledge students’ ability, hard work, and accomplishments, the students’ learning experiences would be enhanced. Gay (2018) explained that culturally responsive teachers recognize the needs and possible barriers the students could experience on the way to academic success. Teachers should provide support for the students to persevere through the barriers and achieve academic success.

Lastly, culturally responsive teaching theory is transformative since it recognizes the existing strengths and accomplishments of the students and then enhances them further in the instructional process. It is appropriate for this study since it recommends that teachers recognize the existing strength of the recently arrived Korean ELLs in their classrooms. Culturally responsive teachers recognize and respect students’ culture and experiences and incorporate them in teaching and learning. Culturally responsive teaching theory ultimately allows students to be proud of their “ethnic identities and cultural backgrounds” and not be ashamed of their differences (Gay, 2010, p. 36; Gay, 2018).

Another researcher, Ladson-Billings (2009), defined culturally relevant pedagogy as “a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes.” The author outlined culturally relevant pedagogy with three principles (Ladson-Billings, 1995b). First, students must experience academic success and demonstrate academic competence, and teachers should demand, reinforce, and produce academic excellence in their students. Second, students must develop and maintain cultural competence, and teachers should utilize
students’ culture as a vehicle for learning. Lastly, students must develop a critical consciousness by challenging current situation and social order, and the teachers should “engage the world and others critically” (Ladson-Billings, 1995b). Culturally relevant pedagogy is also an appropriate choice for this study since it allows teachers to care for students, to help students organize their thinking and develop their problem-solving strategies by posing questions and suggesting solutions, to have rigorous expectations, to believe in students’ ability by treating students as they are competent, and to provide instructional scaffolding.

Another researcher, Paris (2012), introduced a new term, culturally sustaining pedagogy, to further explain this teaching method. Culturally sustaining pedagogy seeks to perpetuate and foster linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of the democratic project of schooling (Paris, 2012). It requires that educators support young people in sustaining the cultural and linguistic competence of their communities while simultaneously offering access to dominant cultural competence. It has its explicit goal of supporting multilingualism and multiculturalism in practice and perspective for students and teachers. Ladson-Billings (2014) agreed that the original version needed a transition to the remix: culturally sustaining pedagogy. She further emphasized the fluidity of the culture, and that culturally relevant pedagogy is the “ability to link principles of learning with a deep understanding of (and appreciation for) culture.”

The theoretical framework incorporated elements from culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2010) and culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 2009) to investigate student-teacher relationships, classroom culture, and students’ perceived learning experiences. The characteristics of culturally responsive teachers (CRT) and
culturally obstinate teachers (COT) have their foundations in the theoretical framework, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1.

*Characteristics of Culturally Responsive Teacher and Culturally Obstinate Teacher.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRT1</th>
<th>Caring.</th>
<th>COT1</th>
<th>Uncaring.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CRT2</td>
<td>Recognize and respect students’ culture.</td>
<td>COT2</td>
<td>Not recognizing or respecting students’ culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRT3</td>
<td>Teach the whole student, not just content knowledge.</td>
<td>COT3</td>
<td>Teach students just content knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRT4</td>
<td>Acknowledge students’ ability, hard work, and accomplishments.</td>
<td>COT4</td>
<td>Not acknowledging students’ ability, hard work, or accomplishments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRT5</td>
<td>Believe all students can succeed.</td>
<td>COT5</td>
<td>Believe failure is inevitable for some.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRT6</td>
<td>Passionate about content.</td>
<td>COT6</td>
<td>Detached, neutral about content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRT7</td>
<td>Incorporate culturally responsive teaching materials and students’ prior knowledge.</td>
<td>COT7</td>
<td>Maintain the existing curriculum and do not wish to make changes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRT8</td>
<td>Teaching is “pulling knowledge out” – like “mining.”</td>
<td>COT8</td>
<td>Teaching is “putting knowledge into” – like “banking.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRT9</td>
<td>Encourage collaborative learning.</td>
<td>COT9</td>
<td>Encourage individual and competitive learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRT10</td>
<td>Knowledge is continuously recreated, recycled, and shared by teachers and students. It is not static or unchanging.</td>
<td>COT10</td>
<td>Knowledge is static and is passed in one direction, from teacher to student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRT11</td>
<td>Help students to develop necessary skills.</td>
<td>COT11</td>
<td>Expect students to demonstrate prerequisite skills.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Parts of CRT 5,6,8,10 and COT 5,6,8,10 are exact quote from Billings-Ladson, G. (2009). The dream-keepers. pp 38, 89.

Culturally responsive teachers care for their students. Both their attitudes and their actions must reflect the principle of caring (Gay, 2018). The author explained that caring is described as “patience, persistence, facilitation, validation, and empowerment for participation” (p. 60). The most significant attribute of caring is the “more action-driven
than emotionally centered” method when teaching. Gay (2018) further explained that the four characteristics of caring are as follows. First, caring is the teachers’ belief which influences designing their classroom instructions to be attentive to person and performance. Second, caring is action-provoking, which requires teachers to understand their own and students’ perspectives and experiences to avoid indifference. Caring includes building relationships through respecting, encouraging, empowering, and listening to the students. Third, caring teachers encourage effort and achievement while holding students accountable for high standards. Lastly, caring is a multidimensional responsive process, which requires teachers to understand the influence of culture and incorporate them to guide the students.

The culturally responsive teachers had attitudes of recognizing the cultural heritage and respecting students’ culture (validating, Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2009); teaching the whole child, not just content knowledge (comprehensive, Gay, 2010); and recognizing students’ existing strengths, ability, and accomplishments (transformative, Gay, 2010). Culturally responsive teachers also believe all students can succeed and are passionate about content (Ladson-Billings, 2009).

The culturally responsive teachers practice integrating multicultural information, teaching students to recognize and respect each other’s culture, and helping students to develop and maintain cultural competence (validating, Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2009); using cultural resources and students’ prior knowledge to develop intellectual, social, emotional, and political learning to teach students (comprehensive, Gay, 2010); encouraging collaborative learning (Gay, 2010); continuously recreating, recycling, and sharing the knowledge by teachers and students (Ladson-Billings, 2009); and supporting
students’ academic competence and personal confidence to allow students to be successful learners by demanding and reinforcing (empowering, Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2009).

In contrast to the characteristics of culturally responsive teachers, there are culturally obstinate teachers, whose characteristics will be further discussed in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5. As shown in Table 1, culturally obstinate teachers are, first, uncaring. They do not recognize or respect the students’ culture. They often express the importance of fairness in treating students. These teachers believe that their role is to teach content knowledge rather than teaching the whole child. They only look at the students’ current learning progress and do not acknowledge students’ ability, hard work, or accomplishments. They believe that failure is inevitable for some, and the ELLs are often included in this population. Culturally obstinate teachers are detached about content and maintain the existing curriculum without any modification. They believe that teaching is “putting knowledge into” the students, and knowledge is passed in one direction, from teacher to student (Ladson-Billings, 2009). These teachers value individual learning time and expect students to demonstrate prerequisite skills.

In summary, the theoretical framework incorporates student-teacher relationships, classroom culture, classroom management, and performance assessment to capture the whole story of the elements that shape students’ learning experiences (multidimensional, Gay, 2010). The classroom culture helps students to develop a critical consciousness by assisting students to challenge current situations and social order (Ladson-Billings, 2009). Therefore, this theoretical framework would allow a full examination of Korean ELLs as they strive to build relationships with teachers, adjust in the classroom, and learn a new language in an unfamiliar setting.
Culturally Responsive Teaching and Student-Teacher Relationship

Many researchers have found the existence of positive student-teacher relationships when teachers have performed culturally responsive teaching in the classrooms (Bishop, Berryman, Cavanah, & Teddy, 2009; DeCapua & Marshall, 2015; Gay, 2010; Howard, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Savage et al., 2011). DeCapua and Marshall (2015) examined a learning model designed for ELLs with limited formal education and studied how the learning model supported culturally responsive teaching. Through the study, the authors found three significant barriers ELLs experience in school: uncertainty of future success, emphasized individual participation, and standardized testing. However, the authors also found that even though ELLs experienced these challenges under the learning model, strong teacher-student relationships alleviated the students’ uncertainty and anxiousness about academic burdens and pressure for success. Thus, they emphasized the importance of developing positive and strong teacher-student relationships in effectively practicing culturally responsive teaching.

Ladson-Billings (2006) emphasized that teachers’ attitudes toward the students and their confidence in the students’ abilities are important as teachers strive to build a positive relationship with their students. The author explained some aspects of culturally relevant pedagogy and provided practical examples to support teachers’ implementation of such pedagogy in class. One of the elements of culturally relevant pedagogy is for teachers to believe that all students can succeed. These teachers, therefore, maintain high expectations of their students’ potential. Culturally relevant teachers also believe that teaching is equivalent to “pulling knowledge out – like mining” and, motivated by genuine interest,
regularly interact with their students to learn about them. These teachers would build a “sense of solidarity” with the students while maintaining high academic expectations.

Researchers have found that when teachers cared for students, the students identified their teachers as supportive, encouraging, and demanding (Gay, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 2006). The students also described that the teachers believed in their abilities. Gay (2018) defined that caring relationships require the characteristics of “patience, persistence, facilitation, validation, and empowerment” (p. 60). She asserted that caring teachers are passionate about learning students’ interests and strengths and apply that knowledge to facilitate students’ success. The author claimed that the attributes of caring in teaching are more “action-driven” than feeling-driven.

The teachers’ culturally responsive attitudes of caring must be demonstrated in action accompanied by a genuine interest in students’ backgrounds and perspectives. Gay (2018) asserted that teachers must demand the responsibility and accountability of the diverse students to encourage advanced performance. She gave examples of some teachers who would have low expectations of students out of a concern that they may hurt students’ feelings when the students underperform. However, when teachers tolerate “academic apathy, disengagement, and failure,” Gay (2018) defines them as uncaring. Noddings’ work (as cited in Gay, 2018, p. 65) suggested that the teachers need to “thoroughly understand their own and their students’ perspectives and experiences” to demand accountability and to avoid such indifference.

One of the critical findings of Howard (2001) indicated that the African American elementary students favored and preferred teachers who displayed caring attitudes toward them. In the study, the teachers encouraged students by providing warm pats on their back
and verbally communicating high expectations of them. As the teachers displayed warm attitudes and communicated high expectations, they also practiced firm and strict standards. Examining the impact of culturally responsive pedagogy on African American students through interviews and observations, the author concluded that strong student-teacher relationships were established when the teachers cared for the students.

Acquiring a strong student-teacher relationship through culturally responsive teaching has various positive influences on students’ academic achievement and ultimate learning experiences. The study of Hollins and Spencer (as cited in Howard, 2001) found three critical themes by interviewing African-American elementary and secondary students: (a) the positive relationship influenced students’ academic achievement; (b) teachers’ awareness of students’ personal lives allowed students to try harder; and (c) students appreciated when they had opportunities to actualize their ideas in assignments. The authors emphasized the importance of positive relationships between teachers and students since bonds formed through positive relationships were shown to have a significant influence on students’ attitudes, engagement levels, and academic achievement.

Bishop et al. (2009) further supported the significance of student-teacher relationship in student engagement and learning experience through the following case study in New Zealand. The authors discussed existing challenges and social, economic, and political inequalities for Maori students and, more specifically, examined their educational experiences. The data were collected and analyzed to incorporate the “voices” of students. They found that some teachers had a deficit-based belief – low expectations and a lack of confidence in Maori students’ abilities. The deficit-based belief of some teachers led to detrimental relationships and interactions with students. Other teachers were
found to have high expectations and cared for students as “culturally-located individuals.” These teachers formed positive and empowering relationships with Maori students, which led to the improvement of student engagement and learning experience. The authors explained that positive relationships were developed when teachers cared for students and practiced culturally responsive teaching.

Some researchers have further argued that the positive student-teacher relationship is beneficial for ELLs but ultimately beneficial for all students if practiced well (Savage et al., 2011). Savage et al. (2011) evaluated the impact of culturally responsive practices in the secondary classroom using a mixed methods approach by observing 400 classrooms and interviewing 214 students. With professional development implementation, the teachers learned about diverse students, their culture, and basic vocabulary. These teachers applied their learning from professional development and implemented culturally responsive teaching in their classrooms. The ELLs recognized and appreciated the teachers’ efforts and showed excitement to share their culture. The students’ interviews revealed positive changes in the relationships with the teachers who performed the culturally responsive teaching.

Building a positive student-teacher relationship is significant in culturally responsive teaching and helpful for students’ learning. Gay (2018) stated that the relationship could be developed when “teachers acknowledge their presence, honor their intellect, respect them as human beings, and make them feel like they are important” (p. 66). The teachers’ attitudes and the relationships developed through their encouraging words and actions empowered students and supported their learning. The students’ academic achievement was evidentially enhanced when the students received social
empowerment through caring, assistance, support, and “a sense of community” (Gay, 2010). As culturally responsive teaching influenced student-teacher relationships and students’ learning, it also influenced classroom culture.

**Culturally Responsive Teaching and Classroom Culture**

Many researchers found that school and classroom culture changed when teachers performed culturally responsive teaching in the classrooms (Bui & Fagan, 2013; Furner, Yahya, & Duffy, 2005; Giroir et al., 2015; Howard, 2001; Irizarry, & Antrop-González, 2008; Jiménez et al., 2015; Ladson-Billings, 2006). Researchers attributed the ELLs’ academic challenges in a school system to the predominant cultural values which do not consider the minority cultural values (Ladson-Billings, 2006; Savage et al., 2011). The researchers claimed that the mainstream culture, language, structure, and system would affirm some students and undermine others. Therefore, it is essential for teachers to respect minority cultures and to help ELLs navigate between home and school settings (González et al., 2005; Ladson-Billings, 2006). When teachers are culturally responsive, they understand the role of culture and language (Gay, 2002; Giroir et al., 2015). For example, teachers would make culturally relevant connections to content subjects by building on students’ prior knowledge, experiences, interests, and home language.

Teachers’ culturally responsive teaching would lead to positive classroom culture and student-teacher relationships. Culturally responsive teachers make efforts to structure their classroom cultures, being cognizant of students’ home and community cultures (Howard, 2001; Irizarry & Antrop-Gonzalez, 2008; Slaughter & Carlson, 1996). Slaughter and Carlson (1996) studied third-grade students’ perceptions of school culture. The authors surveyed 1,000 African American and 260 Latino children. The study revealed that the
positive student-teacher relationship is the most critical aspect of school and classroom culture for the students. Howard (2001) also found the effectiveness of structuring “community-type” culture in the classroom to promote positive relationships among teachers and students.

When teachers held students to the high expectation, honored students’ community resources, and humbled themselves to become learners, positive classroom culture was established (Irizarry & Antrop-Gonzalez, 2008). Academically successful Puerto Rican students and exemplary teachers from three urban centers in Illinois, Wisconsin, and Massachusetts participated in Irizarry and Antrop-Gonzalez’s (2008) study. The authors conducted an ethnographic case study using in-depth interviews and classroom observations to inform efforts to improve educational opportunities and outcomes for the students. In the study, the teachers would actively immerse themselves in their students’ communities and structure the classroom culture accordingly. The teachers’ efforts resulted in positive classroom culture and positive relationships with the students.

To create a classroom culture incorporating students’ home and community cultures, Jimenez et al. (2015) claimed the importance of encouraging students’ native language, facilitating a transfer of native language skills, and allowing students to make connections to their previous knowledge. The authors examined theoretical knowledge, teaching practice, and recommendations by professional development researchers. They found that many white teachers tend to have lower expectations on students of color and that intensive learning of culturally responsive teaching allowed those teachers to become aware of their predisposition toward students of color and to reform their preconceived negative attitudes toward them. To better understand and serve the ELLs, the authors
suggested teachers take formal classes to learn how to teach the target population, try to learn their language, and have interactions with native speakers of foreign languages. Another study (Pray, 2013) experimented with a group of preservice teachers teaching Spanish-speaking ELLs. These teachers believed that ELLs must use English only and learn English quickly. To prove otherwise, the author brought these teachers to Mexico and exposed them to the Spanish-speaking culture, community, and experiences for their betterment of learning the culture and language. After the language learning and cultural experiences, the teachers’ viewpoint was changed to appreciate the value of the students’ native language skills and their culture.

To evaluate the impact of culturally responsive teaching on student classroom experiences, Savage et al. (2011) evaluated the impact of culturally responsive practices in the secondary classroom using a mixed methods approach. The authors described the qualities of culturally responsive teachers. The teachers got to know the students, attended to student input in learning, respected students’ abilities, and valued students’ identity. The caring teachers took responsibility for providing a culturally informed learning environment in which their students could thrive. The result showed changes in the student-teacher relationship, which ultimately improved the school and classroom culture.

**Culturally Responsive Teaching and Student Engagement**

Many researchers found evidence of enhanced student engagement when teachers performed culturally responsive teaching in the classrooms (DeCapua & Marshall, 2015; Fredricks, 2012; Giroir et al., 2015; Howard, 2001). DeCapua and Marshall (2015) presented the indications of increased student engagement when teachers designed culturally responsive lessons. In the study, the target group was newly arrived adolescent
language learners, and some of them had limited or interrupted formal schooling. Despite the uncontrollable social, economic, and physical factors outside the classroom, the instruction that incorporated the principles of culturally responsive teaching promoted classroom engagement and achievement. The authors suggested providing ELLs with opportunities to acquire knowledge and the materials to practice so that the students could be engaged in the new academic tasks and reduce the cultural dissonance.

To discover the students’ perceived opinions regarding culturally responsive materials, Fredricks (2012) initiated Critical Literature Circles grounded on critical literacy and culturally relevant pedagogy. The researcher conducted a one-year qualitative study with thirty-three adult learners to examine the benefits and challenges of the program and its influence on students’ reading attitudes and habits. The finding suggested that culturally relevant pedagogy had positive impacts on students’ reading attitudes and habits. Some students described the culturally relevant texts as emotionally challenging, but they further explained that the texts were relatable and engaged them, making them want to learn more. Some other students expressed appreciation for the culturally and personally relevant texts since they had more relevant and valuable learning experiences. The author was concerned about the lack of representation of students’ diverse cultures in texts and suggested the adoption of appropriately designed lessons that reflect the diversity of cultures.

When teachers performed culturally responsive teaching in the classroom, Giroir et al. (2015) identified students’ enhanced attentiveness and interest, which led the students to be more engaged in the specific content subjects. The authors described the effectiveness of incorporating a daily read-aloud routine with culturally responsive pedagogy on ELLs’ academic learning in elementary grades. The authors collected data through observations,
focus group interviews, artifacts from professional development, and field notes. The authors claimed that the teachers recognized and fulfilled ELLs’ needs when the teachers were culturally aware and understood the role of the students’ language and culture in academic learning. Those teachers would pursue a culturally responsive connection to the content and build the lessons on students’ prior knowledge, experiences, and interests.

Howard (2001) supported the findings of increased student engagement when teachers applied culturally responsive teaching strategies. The researcher assessed African American elementary students’ understanding and perceptions of their relationships with culturally responsive teachers. In addition to the strong student-teacher relationship influenced by culturally responsive teaching, the author also identified that the students found satisfaction in their learning environment. Students preferred teachers’ caring attitude, community or family-like classroom culture, and a fun and entertaining process of learning. The author recognized the increased student engagement in the students’ preferred learning environment.

Some teachers incorporate students’ learning and communication styles into teaching strategies to engage students, and in these strategies Toppel (2015) found evidence of cultural responsiveness. During professional development, the author and the teachers of her school began by selecting “focal students” who were struggling in school. Then they made efforts to learn about the students and how and when the students would engage in lessons, and created culturally responsive lessons differentiated for the students of diverse cultures. Also, the teachers included music, rhythm, movement, culturally appropriate texts, and students’ voices in the curriculum, following the recommendations of Gay (2010) to encourage student engagement. The author also additionally found that culturally
responsive teaching strategies, when incorporated into the curriculum, were effective in enhancing student engagement.

When the teachers did not perform culturally responsive practices, Savage et al. (2011) claimed that there was a lack of association between the students’ culture and the school culture, which ultimately discouraged engagement in classes. As discussed earlier, Savage et al. (2011) evaluated the impact of culturally responsive practices in the secondary classroom using a mixed methods approach. The authors observed 400 classes across different subjects and interviewed 214 Maori students. When the teachers implemented culturally responsive teaching, the authors found the formation of strong student-teacher relationships, high participation, and noticeable learning improvements.

Culturally Responsive Teaching and Students’ Language Learning Experience

Many researchers found evidence of students’ positive language learning experiences when teachers performed culturally responsive teaching in the classroom (Bui & Fagan, 2013; Fredricks, 2012; Howard, 2001; Nguyen et al., 2013; Savage et al., 2011; Slaughter & Carlson, 1996; Toppel, 2015). Nguyen et al. (2013) indicated the importance of designing meaningful learning experiences for ELLs because the 2012 NCES report had shown ongoing academic achievement gaps between ELLs and non-ELLs since 2003. The authors emphasized that traditional teaching, which is heavily lecture-based, would be insufficient to meet the needs of linguistically and culturally diverse students. The authors further presented grounds for the need to establish positive learning environments for ELLs, which were aimed at alleviating academic anxiety, facilitating in-depth learning, and encouraging student participation.
Positive learning experiences are significant since the ELLs directly connect the learning experiences with how they view themselves. Many researchers found that students described their learning experiences and perceptions of themselves as positive when teachers performed culturally responsive teaching in the classrooms (Bui & Fagan, 2013; Savage et al., 2011). In many cases, students of culturally responsive teachers developed better attitudes about themselves and considered themselves more capable students. When students developed positive perspectives about themselves, they were able to appreciate the learning experiences better.

When teachers care for and are available for ELLs, their students experience comfort, deeper relationships with teachers, and positive learning experiences (Slaughter & Carlson, 1996). The authors collected data through a 24-item questionnaire adapted from the School Climate Questionnaire initially targeted for middle-school students. The authors administered the questionnaire individually rather than in groups since the participating students were in the third grade. In this study, the African American and Latino children expressed the differences that were made in their learning experience when the teachers put extra effort into caring for them in the students’ academic and personal lives. When teachers cared for their students, learning experiences were improved since the caring teachers simultaneously expressed high expectations and encouraged students to learn (Howard, 2001).

Some researchers found the connection between teachers’ culturally responsive teaching and students’ learning experiences. Fredricks (2012) initiated critical literature circles based on critical literacy and culturally relevant pedagogy. A total of 33 adult learners gathered in groups of six to seven. The program was offered for an academic year.
The data were collected from individual interviews, a focus group interview, participant reflections, and a researcher journal. The author claimed that the students would have an opportunity for enjoyable language learning experiences through the program. The result showed positive student reports regarding their learning and reading experiences.

To determine the influence of culturally responsive teaching on students’ conceptual understanding and learning experiences, Bui and Fagan (2013) used a quasi-experimental pretest-posttest design with 49 fifth-grade students from culturally and linguistically diverse groups. The authors examined the effects of an integrated reading comprehension strategy to seek the influence of culturally responsive teaching on students’ reading comprehension. The result revealed the improvement of students’ language learning experiences when there was an integration of research-based practice with culturally responsive teaching. The authors suggested that their findings supported the improvement of students’ learning experiences, which was promoted by the association of a school’s learning environment with students’ personal experiences.

In sum, when teachers perform culturally responsive teaching, they explore various methods to appropriately support linguistically and culturally diverse students. The researchers have emphasized the importance of making learning fun and meaningful for the students so that the students would have positive learning experiences. Culturally responsive teaching has been found to allow students to alleviate academic anxiety and to be engaged in learning that naturally leads to students’ association of their learning experiences with positive emotions. Culturally responsive teachers have been found to care for the students and make themselves available for the students. As a result, ELLs have had positive learning experiences, which has led to improved academic achievement.


Culturally Responsive Teaching and Students’ Academic Achievement

One of the criteria for culturally responsive teaching is that the students must experience academic success (Ladson-Billings, 1995a). Many researchers found students demonstrated improved academic achievement when teachers performed culturally responsive teaching in the classrooms (Ladson-Billings, 2009; Orosco & O’Connor, 2013; Peerey, 2011; Powell et al., 2016). The outcomes of learning were often measured by students’ academic language acquisition, literacy skills, and testing improvements. Ladson-Billings (1994) argued that the students’ achievement should be measured by their long-term academic performance and not just by the year-end test results. Some researchers found that the students had significantly higher achievement scores when teachers successfully implemented culturally responsive instruction (Powell et al., 2016).

Malloy (2009) examined the instructional strategies of teachers who supported African American middle school students in math class. The author further discovered that many accommodations were required when the teachers implemented culturally responsive pedagogies. The teachers had to acknowledge student preferences in learning, develop activities to promote student interactions in learning, value student discourse and verbal knowledge, create a learning community for students, and provide moral support for the students. The finding suggested that the teachers’ instructional practices improved student learning in mathematics.

To evaluate the impact of culturally responsive practices in the secondary classroom using a mixed-methods approach, Savage et al. (2011) conducted observations of 400 different subject classes and interviewed 214 Maori students to record the relationship between teachers’ caring, expectations, interactions, and pedagogic strategies
and whether they influence student learning outcomes. The interviewee students indicated teachers’ practices of care, high expectations, numerous interactions, and tailored educational instruction positively influencing their lives and academic results.

The case study of Cammarota and Romero (2009) examined secondary students in Tucson, Arizona. The intellectually challenging program implemented with culturally responsive pedagogy revealed the firm foundation of student-teacher relationships and discovered a direct connection between student participation in the program and students’ academic achievement (as cited in Savage et al., 2011). Affirming this finding, another researcher also found the improvement of students’ academic achievement by adopting culturally responsive attitudes and embracing greater awareness and comprehensive understanding of race and culture (Howard, 2010).

Orosco and O’connor (2013) examined culturally responsive instruction for Latino language learners with learning disabilities. The results indicated that the students’ reading development was enhanced with the application of teachers’ culturally responsive instruction. The authors suggested the importance of integrating culturally responsive instruction for ELL students’ cultural and linguistic needs to promote student learning. Peercy (2011) studied how teachers should prepare ELLs for the mainstream classroom, which demands an understanding of academic language and literacy skills in English. The study examined two secondary ESL teachers, and the findings revealed that teachers provided support in students’ first language and used a culturally responsive teaching method.

Powell et al. (2016) examined elementary teachers’ use of culturally responsive instruction and its impact in reducing achievement gaps. The authors used a Culturally
Responsive Instruction Observation Protocol (CRIOP) as a framework for the professional development and evaluation tool. The results indicated that the teachers achieved a significantly higher rate of implementation of culturally responsive instruction when they were provided with frequent mentoring and coaching. Also, students accomplished significantly higher reading and mathematics scores when teachers practiced culturally responsive instructions.

**Barriers to Success**

A coherent theme regarding barriers to success appeared in the following literature. ELLs encountered numerous barriers to success in schools (Baum & Flores, 2011; Honigsfeld & Giouroukakis, 2011; Kanno & Kangas, 2014; Lee, 2012). When ELLs attend primary and secondary education with a limited understanding of the English language, they tend to experience a lack of support regarding academic work. Even though one of the mandated requirements is an emphasis on college and workplace readiness, the lack of support for ELLs led them to experience a lack of opportunities for rigorous academic learning and limited learning of the attenuated curriculum (DeCapua & Marshall, 2015; Kanno & Kangas, 2014; Lee, 2012; Milner, 2007). Many ELLs also experience a lack of opportunities to access postsecondary education (Baum & Flores, 2011).

Another barrier to ELLs’ success is a lack of belongingness in school. Indeed, one-quarter of those who dropped out of school reported they did not feel they “belonged” to the school community (U.S. Department of Education, 1993, as cited in Juvonen, 2006). One problem is the difficulty of developing positive relationships with teachers. Many studies have suggested that content area teachers feel unprepared to lead mainstream classes with ELLs, where they spend most of their time (Faez, 2012; Polat, 2010). Also,
there are challenges in developing general and cultural competency of the teachers to provide appropriate support in both language and content area for ELLs (Good et al., 2010; Howard, 2010; Jiménez et al., 2015; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Milner, 2010; Polat, 2010).

While culturally responsive pedagogy does not remedy them all, it begins to address the barriers ELLs experience. A student’s sense of belongingness in school can be a powerful determinant of how well she or he does in school. DeCapua and Marshall (2015) emphasized the importance of interconnectedness to promote students’ belongingness in school and suggested building a strong student-teacher relationship as the key. They further highlighted the significance of students feeling connected to teachers, knowing teachers personally, and being a part of the classroom community.

The study of Hollins and Spencer (as cited in Howard, 2001) proved the influence of the positive relationship between teachers and students on students’ academic achievement. When teachers were responsive to students’ academic and personal lives, students put more effort into schoolwork. Gay (2010) also suggested that teachers’ caring attitudes have a significant impact on the quality of teaching and students’ engagement. Those teachers transform traditional lecture-based learning and provide differentiated lessons to support the ELLs’ unique needs (Nguyen & Cortes, 2013). When the teachers cared for the students and put in extra effort to be available for the students’ school and personal matters, students felt more connected to the teachers and felt that they belonged in the school (Slaughter & Carlson, 1996).

In sum, the review of literature pertains to the themes of the relationships of culturally responsive teaching, student-teacher relationship, classroom culture, student engagement, language learning experiences, and academic achievement. It is evident that
there is a need for teachers’ culturally responsive teaching to enhance the student-teacher relationship, classroom culture, and student learning. Also, a clearer understanding of the barriers ELLs experience to success must be developed so that educators can effectively support students.
CHAPTER 3

Methods and Procedures

This section presents the methods and procedures utilized in the research study. The purpose of this study is to acquire a better understanding of the culturally responsive attitudes and practices of teachers and their influence on the student-teacher relationship, classroom culture, and the Korean ELLs’ perceptions of their learning experiences. By conducting this study, the researcher identified, examined, and made comparisons of the attitudes and practices of different teachers who have at least one Korean ELL in their classrooms, and the effects of these attitudes and practices on the student-teacher relationship, classroom culture, and students’ perceptions of their language learning experiences. In this section, the research questions are reviewed, followed by a description of the research design, a discussion of the procedures used, and the data analysis.

Specific Research Questions

To guide the direction of this study and to answer the exploratory questions, the research questions were designed as follows:

1. How do teachers view ELLs in general, and how do their views influence the designing of their instruction?
2. How do teachers’ attitudes influence student-teacher relationship and classroom culture?
3. How, if at all, do teachers perform culturally responsive practices?

Research Design

To answer the research questions, the researcher used a phenomenological methodology with the samples of 11 Korean ELLs, an ESL teacher, and 19 teachers who have at least one Korean ELL in their classrooms. The phenomenological research is
established on the philosophical viewpoint of Husserl (Moustakas, 1994; Van Manen, 2014), which Moustakas (1994) and Van Manen (2014) later developed further based on Husserl’s phenomenological philosophy. Husserl’s phenomenology (as cited in Moustakas, 1994, p. 45) emphasized “subjectivity and discovery of the essences of experience” without interpreting or explaining. Then, Moustakas (1994) highlighted the importance of intuition and deliberation on the experiences, concepts, judgments, and understandings to arrive at essences. Husserl’s phenomenology (as cited in Moustakas, 1994, p. 45) provides “a systematic and disciplined methodology for the derivation of knowledge,” and he further emphasized the importance of the evidence of immediate experiences.

The method is particularly important for this study since the purpose of phenomenological research is an investigation of the meaning of people’s lived experience – experiences of teachers instructing and interacting with ELLs and the Korean ELLs’ learning experiences in different circumstances. It is essential to understand the perspectives of both students and teachers to capture both sides of the story and examine the whole situation. The phenomenological method involves examining “a small number of subjects through extensive and prolonged engagement to develop patterns and relationship of meaning” (Moustakas, 1994). By acquiring various participants’ viewpoints through interviews and continuous observations, the study can address the patterns and the meanings of teachers’ different pedagogic approaches and behaviors – when and how they practice culturally responsive teaching, how the student-teacher relationship is formed and transforms – as well as the related impact on ELLs, as in when and why students are engaged or disengaged in the lessons and how students evaluate their learning experiences.
Phenomenology is essential in the study since it has a foundation in questions that give a direction to meaning. Moustakas (1994, p. 58) stated, “phenomenology is concerned with wholeness, while examining entities from many sides, angles, and perspectives until a unified vision of the essences of a phenomenon or experience is achieved.” In themes that sustain the interest of the participants’ experiences, this approach seems to be fundamental in investigating the experiences of the recently arrived Korean ELLs and the teachers to capture wholeness. With qualitative data, the study demonstrates new insights and describes the depth of the experiences of both students and teachers.

Sample and Participants

The data were obtained from a sample group of Korean ELLs and teachers who are employed by a school that voluntarily chose to participate. The teachers and students are from a private Catholic high school located in Queens, New York. Using Census data, Gamino (2019) calculated a diversity index for every county in the United States, and concluded that Queens County, New York is the most diverse (76.4) county. This means that there was a 76.4% chance that two people chosen at random had a different background. In The New York Nobody Knows: Walking 6,000 Miles in the City, Helmreich (2013) emphasized the importance of recognizing immigration as a significant concept to understand today’s New York. He explained that more than 3 million newcomers have arrived since the mid-1960s, which transformed the city with new ways of ideas, perspectives, behaviors, and traditions. He further explained that Queens has the greatest concentration of immigrants, and its diversity “is truly amazing” (p. 25). The school is appropriate for this study since they accept international students who decided to study abroad in their adolescent years. The school has about 2,500 students in total. The
The demographic of students is 49.5% White, 18.8% Hispanic, 16% African American, and 15.2% Asian.

Table 2.

*Teacher Participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Type</th>
<th>Total Number of Participants</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Interview</th>
<th>Observation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ESL Teacher</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Diana Paterson</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Andrea Marino</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Chris Thomson</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Gray Miller</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Joanna Anderson</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kailey Harris</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Katherine Taylor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kelvin Powell</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kyla Gordon</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lucy Robinson</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Martin Reed</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Michelle Roberts</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Meggie Russell</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Naomi Harman</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nathan Price</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nina Rizzo</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Paul McCarthy</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Peter Morgan</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rebecca Bennett</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sophie Moretti</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Data collection times and methods can vary as a study proceeds since qualitative studies are emergent research design (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The follow-up interviews were conducted when necessary according to the participants’ preferences: face-to-face, dialogue over the phone, or written responses via email.

Through the purposive sampling procedure, all Korean ELLs in the participating school, and all possible teacher populations related to Korean ELLs learning were recruited.

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1 To protect the participants’ privacy, information was collected anonymously and stored confidentially. Respecting the privacy of participants is central to ethical research. The participants’ names were immediately converted into the numeric code and the real name was not used in any notes. Pseudonyms were used in any written materials generated as a result of the data collected.
The ESL teacher who is currently teaching some of the Korean ELLs and 19 mainstream classroom teachers who have at least one Korean ELL in their classroom were chosen for the sample of teachers (Table 2). All science, math, English, and history teachers who had at least one participating Korean ELL were contacted for voluntary participation. Due to the teachers’ preferences, 18 out of 20 teachers were interviewed, but all 20 teachers participated in observations. The minimum number of observations requested was three times per the number of ELLs in their classrooms. There were incidents of students’ unexpected absences when the observation was set and started. In this case, the observation proceeded, and makeup observations were later scheduled. The descriptions of each teacher are in Appendix B.

Through the purposive sampling procedure, all Korean ELLs in the participating school were recruited. A total of eleven Korean ELLs agreed to participate in this study (Table 3). The descriptions of each student are in Appendix C. The sample size was determined through the method of data saturation, which is considered as “a criterion for discontinuing data collection” (Saunders et al., 2018, para 1). Saunders et al. (2018) further described that data saturation originally had its basis in grounded theory of Glaser and Strauss (1967), but now “commands acceptance across a range of approaches to qualitative research” including phenomenological research methods (as cited in Saunders et al., 2018, para 1). Data saturation is reached when the researcher experiences redundancy in the data during the data collection process.
Table 3.

*Student Participants*²

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Type</th>
<th>Total Number</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Individual Interview</th>
<th>Group Code</th>
<th>Group Interview</th>
<th>Observation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual Interview</td>
<td></td>
<td>Eunbyul Lee</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Interview</td>
<td></td>
<td>Heesoo Kang</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Heeyoon Jung (Iris)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hyeyoung Jang</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hyunsuk Son</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Insoo Park (Louis)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Jungin Yang (Chloe)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sanghyun Wang (Richard)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yesol Kwon</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yoojin Lee</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yunjin Yim (Joy)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Data collection times and methods can vary as a study proceeds since qualitative studies are emergent research design (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The English name is included only for the students who used English names in school.

**Instruments**

As described in the research design, the researcher collected the data from interviews with a total of 18 teachers, observations in a total of 20 teachers’ classrooms, interviews with 11 Korean ELL students, and four student focus group sessions. The research methods and procedures consist of phenomenological methodology.

² To protect the participants’ privacy, information was collected anonymously and stored confidentially. Respecting the privacy of participants is central to ethical research. The participants’ names were immediately converted into the numeric code and the real name was not used in any notes. Pseudonyms were used in any written materials generated as a result of the data collected.
The teacher interviews were scheduled within the teachers’ free time before, during, and after school hours. As shown in Table 2, the interviews were conducted once or twice, depending on time and dynamics. The observations were scheduled during the regular class hours when the teachers had at least one of the participating Korean ELLs in their classroom. The observation noted learning events, student-teacher interactions, peer conversations, student participation, and classroom cultures. The observations were conducted for at least three class hours in each classroom, and the researcher took field notes at five-minute intervals. The field notes were later used to fill out contact summary sheets in the early steps of data analysis. To ensure and improve credibility and trustworthiness, the observations were scheduled for at least three times per student when the teachers had more than one Korean ELL in the classroom. In case of unexpected absences of ELLs, a make-up observation was scheduled.

The student interviews were scheduled within the students’ free time – during and after school hours. As shown in Table 3, the interviews were conducted two to three times, depending on the time and dynamics of the interviews. The focus groups were formed based on students’ mutually available free school period, and the interviews were conducted two to four times. The observations were scheduled depending on participating teachers, and the researcher observed both students and teachers during the class hour. When students were absent from class, the researcher only observed the teacher.

The interview questions were developed to align with the research questions with an open-ended structure to allow participants to express their perceptions. The data were triangulated by conducting interviews with teachers, a series of observations, and
interviews with the students, and by referencing field notes, interview scripts, and observation notes.

**Procedures**

The techniques used to obtain data were interviewing, conducting focus group interviews, assessing written responses, and conducting participant observation (Van Manen, 2016). Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) stated that phenomenology has been relevant for clarifying the ways of understanding in qualitative research when focusing the interviews on the experienced meanings of the subjects’ lived lives. Observation is a more indirect method of collecting experiential materials of others (Van Manen, 2016). Through the data collected from the observations, the researcher obtained the additional information and clarified the data collected during the interviews. Bradbury-Jones, Sambrook, and Irvine (2009) suggested that lived experiences can also be preserved within a group context. The focus group provides a plurality of viewpoints by opening up new perspectives and drawing different dynamics of the interviewee. In Table 4, the data collection methods are presented with the designated research question.

The permission was obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at St. John’s University (See Appendix A). After acquiring IRB approval, the researcher contacted the principal to discuss further steps to recruit teachers and students after acquiring the principal’s consent letter (See Appendix D). Since the study uses purposive sampling and requires only Korean ELLs and teachers who teach the participating Korean ELLs, the principal searched the population. Then, all teachers who have at least one Korean ELL were contacted via e-mail, and the researcher explained the purpose of the study and procedures of the study: participate in one semi-structured one-on-one interview
that lasts for 30 to 45 minutes; a possible follow-up interview with the option of face-to-face, phone, email, or text; and observations of the classroom. The teachers were notified that there were no risks to the study, no benefits or compensation for participating, and no disadvantages for not participating. Teachers understood that the participating in this research study was entirely voluntary.

Table 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Data Collection</th>
<th>Data Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. How do teachers view ELLs in general, and how do their views influence the designing of their instruction? | * Semi-structured teacher interviews  
* Follow-up teacher interviews  
* Observations with field notes | * Coding  
* Memoing |
* Follow-up teacher interviews  
* Semi-structured student interviews  
* Semi-structured student focus group interviews  
* Observations | * Coding  
* Memoing |
| 3. How, if at all, do teachers perform culturally responsive practices? | * Semi-structured teacher interviews  
* Follow-up teacher interviews  
* Semi-structured student interviews  
* Semi-structured student focus group interviews  
* Observations | * Coding  
* Memoing |

Some of the Korean ELLs were in the beginning and intermediate enrichment classes (a type of ESL class), and some others were former ELLs who finished the program within two years and still needed some language support. All beginning and intermediate Korean ELLs and former Korean ELLs were contacted, then the researcher gave a short presentation regarding the study with a small group of students or an individual student.
depending on the students’ schedules. The researcher explained the purpose of the study – to acquire a better understanding of the teachers’ attitudes and practices and their influences on students’ language learning experiences. Then the researcher explained the expectation for the participants: participating in a semi-structured one-on-one interview which last for 30 to 45 minutes. The researcher further explained what students would be asked during the interview: (a) students’ ideas about culture and cultural differences, (b) the differences and difficulties students experience in U.S. classrooms, (c) students’ opinion about teacher role and student role and the ideal relationships, (d) students’ opinion about classroom activities and participation, and (e) students’ opinions of their ability to speak or write in English.

Then, the researcher informed the students that they would be attending a focus group discussion with other Korean ELLs. The researcher informed the students that there were no risks to the study and all answers would be kept confidential and would only be examined by the researcher. The students were notified that they would neither get extra credit for participating nor have credit taken away for not participating. Students understood that there would be no compensation for participating in the study. The students understood that the interviews and observations were completely voluntary, and they were for researchers’ better understanding of the topic and to help improve the experiences of Korean ELLs in the future. In addition to the presentation, a flyer in both Korean (front) and English (back) was distributed to students for more explicit communication and contact information (See Appendix E).

All teachers who had at least one Korean ELL in their classroom received a consent packet after a verbal agreement (See Appendix F). All parents or guardians of Korean ELLs
received a consent packet in both English and Korean (See Appendix G). After all parents or guardians returned the consent packet with approval, the researcher reviewed the assent form with the students prior to the interview, asked if the students had any questions, and then asked for assent to participate (See Appendix H).

**Interviews.**

The purpose of interviewing people is to understand themes of the lived experiences from the participants’ perspectives. Johnson and Christensen (2008) further specified that the participants’ thoughts, beliefs, and knowledge would allow the researcher to understand their inner world and grasp their in-depth viewpoints. The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured one-on-one setting with open-ended questionnaires. This kind of interview seeks to obtain descriptions of the interviewee’s lived world and their interpretation of the meaning of the described phenomena (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). Through the interviews using open-ended questions, the participants answered in their own words, which led to the examination and more in-depth insight of their ways of thinking with the rich data (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). Utilizing interviews was an appropriate way to obtain a variety of responses regarding culturally responsive attitudes and practices and their influences. As seen in Table 2 and Table 3, the frequencies for the interview varied as the study proceeded since the qualitative study is an emergent research design (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

**Teacher interviews.**

The researcher conducted audio-recorded, semi-structured one-on-one interviews to investigate the teachers’ understanding of culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2010, 2013, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 1992, 1995b, 2009, 2014) and perspectives of ELLs and their cultures. The recorded interviews were transcribed for further analysis. The researcher
collected teachers’ demographic information including years of experience, education, ethnicity, knowledge of another language, experiences before teaching, experiences of teaching ELLs, background, schools, and cultural experiences. During teacher interviews (See Appendix I), the researcher examined the teachers’ knowledge and beliefs about the effectiveness of culturally responsive teaching practices; teachers’ attitudes toward ELLs and their perception about ELLs; teachers’ opinions of the most effective practices to engage ELLs; teachers’ prior experiences that impacted their beliefs about effective teaching and about ELLs; teachers’ perceptions of having diverse students in their classrooms; the description of curriculum and instructive changes they might make to meet the needs of the culturally and linguistically diverse students; teachers’ opinion on how their instruction influences ELLs’ experiences in learning; and teachers’ descriptions of their relationships with ELLs.

The researcher started the interviews with the teachers who had the most interactions with Korean ELLs. A total of 35 teachers were contacted, and 20 teachers volunteered to participate in this study. All 20 teachers participated in observations, and 18 out of 20 teachers also participated in individual interviews. The teachers selected for the interviews were one ESL teacher and 17 subject teachers who had at least one Korean ELL in their classrooms. Through purposive sampling as the sampling procedure, all possible teachers related to ELLs’ learning were invited to participate. Purposive sampling was selected for this study since the primary characteristic for the participating teachers was having at least one Korean ELL in their classrooms. The total of 18 teachers were selected for interviews, and as stated in sample and participants, the data saturation method was used as the standard in this study to determine the adequate sample size. After the one-on-
one interview, the researcher approached teachers for a follow-up interview according to the participants’ preferences: face-to-face, dialogue over the phone, or written responses via email. After data analysis, ten teachers were contacted for follow-up interviews to test “interpretative accuracy” and “to provide evidence of credibility” through member checks (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, pp. 373-374).

**Student interviews.**

The researcher conducted audio-recorded interviews to investigate the students’ perceptions of how their teachers’ teaching practices engage them, how the teachers support them to understand, and their opinion on their academic learning. The recorded interviews were transcribed for further analysis. The researcher collected the students’ demographic information including years lived in the United States, prior education in their home country, experiences of learning English, learning style, study habits, parents’ education, and immigration experiences. During the student interviews (See Appendix J), the researcher investigated the students’ ideas about culture and cultural differences, their learning style and study habits, differences and difficulties found in the classrooms in the United States, and how their culture might have influenced their learning style. The researcher further identified students’ ideas about teacher role and student role, their opinions about student-teacher relationships, and the current relationship status with their teachers. The researcher also asked students’ level of engagement in the classroom activities, their language learning status, their confidence in learning the language, and their opinions about proceeding to college or career in the future. Each student was interviewed individually and subsequently in a focus group to triangulate students’
interview data. All Korean ELL students with the signed consent and assent forms participated in the study.

Focus group.

To triangulate student interview data and to collect the shared ideas of the student participants, the researcher conducted focus group interviews. Unlike an individual interview that relies on a question-answer format, the focus group interviews allowed participants to interact and produce discussed and shared perspectives. Using the focus group was appropriate for this study since the focus group interviews yield new and agreed-upon perceptions of participants from the discussion. This interaction inspired the researcher to acquire new ideas and direction for further study (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). Also, the focus group allowed the researcher to obtain rich data over a relatively short period.

The focus group was formed with the Korean ELLs whom the researcher interviewed individually. The researcher provided open-ended follow-up questions to acquire clarification and confirmation of student interviews by recollecting the Korean ELLs’ perspectives amongst other Korean ELLs (See Appendix K). This process was important for the study since it allowed the researcher to obtain various data and the plurality of students’ viewpoint which supported data triangulation.

Observations.

Observation is a more indirect method of collecting experiential materials and is an essential tool in qualitative data collection (Van Manen, 2016). Since it was impossible to record everything, the researcher focused on the research questions while conducting observations and writing memos.
The researcher used a contact summary sheet to record the central concepts, themes, issues, and questions that arose during the observations (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The contact summary was used to focus and to summarize questions about the particular field observation. Miles and Huberman (1994) further clarified that a contact summary sheet would allow the researcher to capture “thoughtful impressions and reflections” (p. 52). This method was appropriate for the study since there were at least 20 different classes (20 teachers), and the researcher planned to conduct the observations multiple times per teacher. The contact summary sheet pulls “the data in the soft computer – the field-workers’ mind – and makes them available for further reflection” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 52). As Miles and Huberman recommended, the form was filled out as soon as written up field notes were reviewed.

The observations occurred during the regular class hours when the teachers had at least one of the Korean ELL students. The researcher observed each teacher at least three times during the semester during which the study was conducted, and the researcher took field notes at five-minute intervals. The primary purpose of the observations was to triangulate the interview data and build a sufficient dataset to develop themes and validate the findings. During the observations, the researcher examined the way teachers interact with their students; evidence of culturally responsive teaching practices in planning and preparation; student arrangement during classroom activities; resources and documents used to support culturally and linguistically diverse students; student engagement during discussions, group work, and individual assignments; peer conversations; and classroom culture.
Data Analysis

The qualitative data were collected through teacher interviews, student interviews, focus group interviews, and observations. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, coded by Moustakas’ (1994) method of analysis, and analyzed by cross-case comparison (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Following the processes was essential since the analysis was “recovering structure of meanings that [were] embodied and dramatized in human experiences represented in a text” (Van Manen, 2016, p. 319). The author suggested viewing the text as a whole story, as separate paragraphs, and at the level of the sentence or single word. In the holistic reading approach, an overall theme was discovered. In the selective reading approach, each paragraph was examined, and a significant sentence or phrase was identified to capture the phenomenon. Then, all the sentences were evaluated to find how they revealed the described phenomenon.

The data were coded following Moustakas’ (1994) method of analysis of phenomenological data modified from van Kaam’s (1959, 1966) method: listing and preliminary grouping; reduction and elimination; clustering and thematizing; and final identification for validation (as cited in Moustakas, 1994). First, listing and preliminary grouping, also known as horizontalization, were used, creating a list of every expression relevant to the experience with an attitude of treating all sentences with equal value. Second, reduction and elimination were used to determine the invariant constituents. The data went through the reduction process by testing each sentence with the following criteria: the necessity of the data for understanding the experience and the possibility of abstracting or labeling the data. The repetitive, vague, and excluded data were eliminated. Then, the repetitive and vague expressions were eliminated, and the remaining expressions were the
invariant constituents. Third, clustering and thematizing, a process of clustering the invariant constituents into themes, was conducted. The clustered and labeled constituents became the core theme of the experience. Fourth, the final identification for validation was conducted. This was the process of checking the invariant constituents and themes against the complete record of transcriptions with two criteria: whether they were expressed explicitly, and whether they were compatible. The unqualified constituents were deleted.

The finalized codes of teacher interviews are listed in Appendix L, and the code tree for teacher interviews is in Figure 2. The final codes of student interviews are listed in Appendix M and the code tree for student interviews is in Figure 3.

After the coding processes, the data were analyzed using the cross-case comparison to examine multiple cases to deepen understanding and explanation (Miles & Huberman, 1994). As Miles and Huberman (1994) emphasized, the cross-case comparison was essential for this study since it allowed the researcher to see processes and outcomes across many cases and develop a more powerful explanation about the phenomenon. There could be negative cases found in the study, but Miles and Huberman emphasized, the cases would ultimately strengthen the theory. The interviews were coded separately based on each participant and compared within and across the groups, and the themes were generated to highlight the key findings and analyzed through themed coding and narrative description.
Figure 2. Code Tree of Teacher Interviews
Figure 3: Code Tree of Student Interviews
Each teacher interview was compared with other teacher interviews, and also with the student interviews. To assure the trustworthiness (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Lincoln & Guba, 1985), triangulation of multiple resources was achieved through recording, memoing, pre- and post-discussions, and clarifications. In Glaser’s work (as cited in Miles & Huberman, 1994), memoing is defined as “theorizing write-up of ideas about codes and their relationships as they strike the analyst while coding” (p.72). The researcher conducted enough interviews and observations to meet data saturation, performed a constant comparison, and provided a thick description (Geertz, 1973) of the data and findings. The data like field notes, interviews, and observations were traceable back to original sources like raw data, data reduction, data reconstruction, and process notes. Then, the researcher conducted member checks to obtain credibility by testing data, findings, and conclusions with “members of those stakeholding groups from whom the data were originally collected” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 314). To conduct member checks, the researcher contacted the teachers for follow-up interviews upon completion of data analysis. The researcher also conducted member checks with students during focus group interviews, which started after all individual interviews were completed and analyzed.

**Trustworthiness**

Traditionally, quantitative scholars have used internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The authors first presented definitions for validity and reliability in quantitative terms. The internal validity is defined as the extent to which variations of a dependent variable can be attributed to the variation of an independent variable. The external validity is defined as “the approximate validity” which suggest that “the presumed causal relationship can be generalized to and across alternate
measures of the cause and effect” in different time and setting (p. 291). Reliability is defined as the extent to which the repetition of the application of the same instruments would yield similar measurements and is usually tested by replication. Objectivity is defined as the extent of the intersubjective agreement – whether multiple observers can agree on a phenomenon (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

For this study, the researcher adapted trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), since it is more appropriate for the qualitative study. Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed four new terms to replace the traditional formulations: “credibility” for internal validity, “transferability” for external validity, “dependability” for reliability, and “confirmability” for objectivity.

To establish credibility, Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested prolonged engagement, triangulation, and member checks to measure accuracy and truth of findings. The prolonged involvement with the participants through persistent observation would facilitate an in-depth understanding of the participants and the phenomenon. The data were triangulated by conducting a series of interviews before, during, and after the observations; interviews with the students; and referencing field notes, interviews, and observations.

Upon the completion of interviews and observations, the researcher contacted the participants for member checks to review the findings and conclusions to determine the accuracy of the experiences and the phenomena. A total of 12 teachers were contacted for the member checks, and five teachers agreed to follow-up interviews. A one-page summary was provided, and the researcher asked their opinions regarding the results. Some teachers were shocked by the results, but the others agreed with the results. One teacher said, “the summary is accurate regarding teacher views and feelings on working with ELLs.” The
teachers described the first group of teachers as ideal and the true educators. One teacher said, “They are the ones who haven’t been tainted by the profession, who still have their heart in the right place, and those who have the time, energy and wherewithal to find ways to effectively work with ELLs.” About the second group, a teacher said,

the second group I feel are mostly folks who used to be in group one, but time, lack of resources, roadblocks from administration and the system, have gotten them to a point where it becomes harder and harder to do your job. So, they begin to put in less, and begin to feel they are being left isolated and alone, being asked to do things they were never prepared for and don’t have the proper support for.

About the third group, a teacher said,

the third group tends to be, in my opinion, the professional Malcontents and people who got into the profession of teaching for all the wrong reasons. It is a very cynical viewpoint but the world of education, especially being a classroom teacher, can break you down to a point where you end up in that category. But it is a toxic energy in that category and extremely dangerous to the future of education, especially for ELL.

To ensure transferability, Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested thick description to provide an entire story and a holistic picture to determine the generalizability of findings to other situations. The establishment of transferability required “both sending and receiving contexts” to have the availability of “similar information” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 217). The authors emphasized the importance of specifying everything in the description to ensure the readers’ understanding of the findings.
Traditionally, reliability depends on the repeatability of the study, but phenomenological studies of the same phenomenon can be very different in the results, conditional on the participants and researchers who rate, measure, or evaluate the phenomenon (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To establish dependability and confirmability, Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested audit trails. Providing explanations of how the data are collected and how they are analyzed allows readers to track the process of the study. To assure confirmability, Lincoln and Guba recommended the audit trail, which requires a residue of records. In audit trail, categories are introduced as follows: raw data; data reduction and analysis products (write-ups, memo, summaries); data reconstruction and synthesis products (themes and interpretation); process notes (methodological and trustworthiness notes); materials relating to intentions and dispositions (reflexive notes and predictions); and instrument development information (preliminary schedules and observation formats).

Also, Van Manen (2016) distinguished two types of phenomenological generalizations: existential and singular generalization. First, existential generalization orients to eidetic or essential understanding – to what is universal or essential about a phenomenon in an existential sense. Second, singular generalization orients to what is singular or unique.
Chapter 4

Results

This study identified and examined teachers’ culturally responsive attitudes and practices through the lens of recently arrived adolescent Korean ELLs as well as from teachers’ perspectives, and then analyzed how culturally responsive practices influenced student-teacher relationships, classroom culture, and students’ perceived learning experiences. The qualitative data were gathered through individual student interviews, student focus group interviews, teacher interviews, and observations. Student interviews were conducted during students’ free time during and after school hours. The researcher met with each student individually on two to four different occasions at school for approximately 40 minutes each. After all individual interviews were completed, the researcher met with the students as a group on two to three different occasions at school for approximately 40 minutes each. There was a total of four groups of two to three students, and the interviews were scheduled based on students’ availability. Teacher interviews were conducted during teachers’ free time before, during, and after school hours. The researcher met with each teacher individually on one to two different occasions at school for approximately 30 to 60 minutes each. This chapter explores the following themes that emerged from teacher interviews and classroom observations based on the research questions:

1. How do teachers view ELLs in general, and how do their views influence the designing of their instruction?

2. How do teachers’ attitudes influence student-teacher relationships and classroom culture?
3. How, if at all, do teachers perform culturally responsive practices?

1. How Do Teachers View ELLs in General, and How Do Their Views Influence the Designing of Their Instructions?

This question was answered through an analysis of teacher interviews and observations. It was designed to reveal how teachers viewed themselves and ELLs and how respective views influenced their instructional design. In her book *The Dreamkeepers* Ladson-Billings (2009) pointed out the consequences of color-blindness and further explained that many teachers were uncomfortable acknowledging students’ differences when it came to racial orientation. Color-blindness masks a dysconscious racism, an “uncritical habit of mind that justifies inequity and exploitation by accepting the existing order of things as given” (p. 35). She described that teachers would not consciously punish students based on students’ race, but they were conscious of the circumstances in which some were privileged, and others disadvantaged. When teachers could not challenge the status quo and lopsided privileges, the dysconscious attitude became habitual. This concept is applicable to the ELLs’ circumstances and learning environment in classes where the teachers are deprived of or lacking in any education to teach the ELL population. During the interviews, teachers were first asked how many ELLs they had in their class and how many Korean ELLs they had. Then, they were asked how they viewed those Korean ELLs as a group or as individuals and how they designed instruction for the population. Many teachers agreed that Korean ELLs tended to be quiet in class, but they viewed the population’s tendency differently – some positively and others negatively. Three groups of teachers, having different views on the Korean ELLs, designed their instruction differently
and were categorized as follows: empathetic and exemplary teachers; sympathetic and emerging teachers; apathetic and resistant teachers.

**Empathetic and Exemplary Teachers**

The first group of teachers is described as empathetic and exemplary teachers. They were empathetic toward students’ circumstances while believing in students’ potential. These exemplary teachers viewed the ELLs with full potential regardless of their English language skills, held high standards, and provided adequate support.

When the empathetic and exemplary teachers were asked to describe the Korean ELLs in their classes, they expressed that they recognized the positive behavioral aspects and described them with the following words: respectful, academic, motivated, hardworking, and wanting to do well. Nine out of 18 teachers viewed the students as being patient, wanting to learn, and motivated to work hard. Diana, an ESL teacher, explained that many ELLs are “pretty talkative” in her class. She immediately followed up by saying, “probably different from other classes.” She claimed that all ELLs in her class were hardworking in many aspects – she asserted that every teacher would be able to see this quality of ELLs if they looked closely. Even though there were some cases where the recently arrived ELLs failed some classes, she believed that they were trying hard to pass the class and would be able to get through the challenges with appropriate support since they had potential. She further explained that it was crucial to communicate with the students and hold high standards.

The empathetic and exemplary teachers emphasized the importance of maintaining high expectations and high standards to hold the ELLs accountable for learning. While understanding the difficulties the ELLs experience, the teachers had a firm belief in
students’ abilities and efforts. The teachers believed that all students could succeed, and as a result, they held the students accountable for learning. Gray said, “students need to be responsible. They need to be accountable.” Gray further explained that teachers should possess two things to hold the students accountable. He said, “in order for kids to learn, the teachers have to have the content knowledge. They have to know their subject, and they have to connect with the students.” Secondly, the teachers should always check for the students’ understanding. He said,

if I see them in the hall outside the classroom, casually, I will ask them casually, “do you understand me?” because they don’t want to be singled out. They don’t want to have attention in the class, so it would be embarrassing for me to call on them. When I see them outside like in the hall, or I would see them privately, and I ask them, “do you understand? Is everything okay?”

Some students confirmed the importance of the teachers’ attitudes. Yesol Kwon explained her experiences with two teachers who had completely different approaches when teaching ELLs. She said:

I had two English teachers. In the first year, the teacher gave me a passing grade for everything. I think it was because I couldn’t speak English well. I liked it at that time, but it wasn’t helpful at all when I think about it now. The teacher should’ve told me to fix the assignments and make it better. Then I probably became better. I didn’t try hard, and I was thinking to myself, “it’s okay because she knows that I’m not good at English.” However, the English teacher I have now is totally different. I have to try so hard. The teacher will not give me passing grades if I don’t put my best effort. Even when I think I tried my best, she made me fix it over and over
again and visit the writing center too. She would never let me slide. At first, I thought it was harsh, but I definitely learned a lot more. I think she [the teacher] wanted to teach me because I am here to learn, not like another teacher who just passed me and moved on.

While holding high standards and believing in students, the teachers were empathetic toward the students’ circumstances. When the teachers were asked to reflect on the experiences or processes of learning a second language, most of them expressed feeling empathetic toward the entire process of learning and recognized its difficulty. Diana claimed that she was thankful for having experiences which allowed a better understanding of ELLs’ situation since it was helpful to support the ELLs. She said, “I think it is extremely difficult. I understand that it’s difficult for these students to be sitting in class every day, not really fully understand what’s going on.” She also claimed that the ELLs were very patient. She smiled as she recalled a moment when the ELLs were impatient, complaining about how slow the Wi-Fi was and how long it took to open a page just like other ordinary teenagers. However, she contended that the students were patient with everything else. She stated, “I couldn’t imagine sitting in a classroom for forty minutes and not having a clue what’s going on. That must be so difficult.” Even though the students were going through the frustrations of learning a new language, she expressed her belief in their potential to meet the high standards.

Interestingly, some teachers described the ELLs with two distinctive terms: happy but frustrated. When the teachers described Korean ELLs as being happy, they remembered positive interactions and happy energy. Even though the students appeared to be happy, Nathan, an English teacher, shared his concern from his observations that the students must
be frustrated. He observed ELLs sitting by themselves in the library, in the cafeteria, at times when non-ELLs were usually with other students. He said, “it was evidentially a struggle for the ELLs.” The students were frustrated due to various reasons, and sometimes the frustration even caused a personality change. He stated,

imagine moving to a new country where the primary language is not English. Not only they need to buy something to eat but also need to study in school. Moving to a new country is a dramatic experience for anyone.

Martin, a history teacher, stated, “sometimes that’s got to be difficult because you feel like you are alone. Trying to navigate the process when you don’t have anybody to lean on can be very difficult.” It was evident that some ELLs were struggling because they were not interacting with anyone around them and isolated themselves from the crowd. Moreover, this was the point where the teachers noticed the students’ possible needs and felt empathetic toward their situations.

A cultural shock sometimes caused the students’ frustration, and it influenced their external personality. The teachers witnessed them struggling due to the different environments they are in. The teachers understood that it could be easier for the ELLs to be ignored because they were mostly quiet, good, and easy to push over. Nathan, an English teacher, stated, “My God, they’re in a new country, a new building, a new home. They miss home. It affects your body language.” Sometimes, the teachers recognized the students’ personality changes in the language learning process. After the discussion about students’ cultural change and English learning experiences, Martin, a history teacher, raised a question about the generally perceived characteristics of Asian students. He put himself in the position of one of the ELLs in his classroom. He imagined going into an environment
where the culture and the language are the opposite of what he was comfortable with. He said, “I think it could absolutely cause some people to go inside a little bit more.” He described himself as extrovert and very loud, and he said he would talk to anyone. When he imagined himself in the situation of one of his ELLs, in an environment where he knows he is the one who is culturally and linguistically different, he would become quieter. He pointed out that the ELLs’ focus might have shifted from comfortable lives to trying to understand the language and conversations. He thought some students might build a wall and shrink back but hoped they would do so temporarily and not be prevented from learning.

To achieve a smooth transition for the students, Martin emphasized the importance of the teachers’ attitudes toward them and providing appropriate support when needed.

During the interviews, many teachers described the students as being quiet, but the empathetic and exemplary teachers did not describe the characteristic negatively. Four teachers realized that Korean ELLs were comfortable approaching them individually and privately before and after the class. By quickly understanding the ELLs’ preferred approach and creating a comfortable classroom culture, the teachers recognized that the students could reach their potential despite the English language barrier. When Chris, a math teacher, noticed an ELL in his class, he first spent some time observing the student. When Chris realized that the Korean ELLs generally did not want to verbalize any question in front of the whole class, he tried to walk around the room more often to look at their work and approached them individually. He would use a one-on-one approach, which he believed to be the most effective for the ELLs’ learning. During in-class observations, he repetitively walked around the room to check on the ELLs’ work and engaged them in learning. He knew that the students were more comfortable speaking to him privately and believed that
the quietness was not associated with ability. Once the ELLs were more comfortable with
the teacher, they would raise their hand and call him over during the class if they needed
to ask a question.

After spending much time with Korean ELLs, four teachers recognized the
importance of creating a safe and comfortable classroom culture for the students to become
less quiet and feel comfortable asking any question. In homeroom and science class, Peter
carefully observed Yoojin, who was very quiet at the beginning of the year and became
more open-minded later on. He noticed that Yoojin was very quiet but gradually built a
network of friends with whom she could talk and have fun. When the school year started,
many ELLs tended to stay quiet and did not interact with anyone. The primary reason for
that could be their limited English language skills, and it became problematic when they
isolated themselves. Peter understood that the circumstances must be tough for the ELLs.
He realized that once they found another student having a similar culture or experience,
they would start a conversation with that student. The ELLs needed to feel comfortable in
a class to start having conversations and to be open. In Peter’s science class, Yoojin also
behaved the same way and isolated herself in the beginning. He arranged her seat to be
close to that of another girl from an Eastern Asian country, and Yoojin started to interact
with the student and work with her. Peter explained that they are both academically bright,
and he believed that Yoojin revealed her true self and characteristics as she became more
comfortable with the situation and the classroom.

To create a safe and comfortable classroom culture, seven teachers recognized the
importance of understanding students’ cultures to promote students’ learning in the
classroom. The teachers proposed the importance of considering students’ culture when
they realized ELLs had various issues and connected with the students on the right level. The reason was to make the students feel comfortable, since they were in a completely different environment where the customs, languages, and cultures were unfamiliar to them. The teachers noted that some ELLs identified themselves as an outsider in class. Therefore, learning about the students’ culture allowed the teachers to understand, accept, and address their issues with appropriate support. Besides, the teachers could develop their respect for different cultures by learning more about the specific values that students had. A math teacher, Katherine stated, “learning and knowing more about a student’s culture could help you connect with them on another level.” By understanding students’ culture, background, and origin, the teachers believed that they could help the students both academically and socially.

Sophie, a history teacher, emphasized the importance of incorporating ELLs’ culture when designing her lesson since it would help the students to feel at home. She wanted the ELLs to feel that they were part of the class and not outsiders. She said,

I’ve been told in the past that my students feel comfortable in my classroom. And I try to make them feel comfortable. Because again, you know, once they are in the classroom, it’s a safe spot. They are here to learn, and you want to make sure that they feel safe, so I do.

By learning and incorporating the students’ culture into her lessons, she became more aware of students’ culture and cultivated the ability to address students’ issues.

In sum, the empathetic and exemplary teachers believed in the ELLs’ potential and recognized the students’ ability, efforts, and positive behavioral aspects. The teachers were empathetic toward the ELLs’ entire process of learning and recognized the difficulties the
students experienced despite the ELLs’ motivation and hard work. The teachers emphasized the importance of having positive attitudes and provided appropriate support for the students. The teachers paid careful attention to find students’ preferred way of learning and created a safe and comfortable classroom culture to promote learning. The teachers recognized the importance of understanding students’ cultures and incorporated them into designing their instruction.

**Sympathetic and Emerging Teachers**

The second group of teachers is described as sympathetic and emerging teachers. They were sympathetic toward students’ circumstances, but sympathetic feelings for students did not translate into action. These emerging teachers recognized the difficulties students experienced, and they were willing to speak to the ELLs friendly if the students initiated the approach. The teachers often had lower expectations and standards for the ELLs and did not recognize the need for any instructional change.

When the sympathetic and emerging teachers were asked to describe the Korean ELLs in their classes, they described the students’ behavioral aspects. They labeled them in the following terms: quiet, shy, reserved, and not outward. The teachers viewed those characteristics as negative aspects and often complained that those aspects were the cause of the students’ low performance in class. Five teachers explained that the ELLs would not ask questions most of the time, and lower grades were inevitable due to those negative characteristics. The ELLs would not raise their hands even if there was a misunderstanding or lack of understanding. However, when the ELLs had questions, the teachers expected the students to resolve the issues by talking to other ELLs first. Gray, a science teacher, has Heeyoon and Hyeyoung (Iris) in two separate classes, and he explained that the
students talked together a lot since they had shared experiences. When there was a misunderstanding, Gray claimed that the students preferred to resolve the issue between themselves.

When the teachers were asked to think about the reasons for the ELLs’ quietness, they came up with two reasons: a lack of English language skills and the fear of embarrassment. Five teachers recognized that the ELLs’ language skills were directly correlated with the students’ quietness, which influenced their participation and performance in the classroom. When the ELLs were not as fluent or comfortable with how they pronounced words, they became quieter and more cautious. The teachers assumed that the students might be embarrassed when they appeared to be confused or misunderstood in public, which could discourage them from participating in the classroom. The teachers sometimes noticed difficulties the ELLs experienced due to their poor academic performance, but the teachers considered the challenges ELLs experience as an expected result.

Some teachers understand that the culture in Korean schools advises the students to be quiet during class. Paul, a science teacher, claimed that he would not be surprised or upset about Korean students being quiet in his class because quietness is how the Korean ELLs have been trained to behave in classes. He also believed that the withdrawn behavior was predictable for the ELLs since they were not in a familiar environment. Before the Korean ELLs came to the United States, they were in a classroom full of other Korean students. Now, they are in a new environment and surrounded by the massive sea of people who look different from them and use different languages that they do not have a grasp of yet. Presumably, due to limited English language skills, ELLs tend to be quiet and mostly
only interacted with each other. Paul explained that it was a prevailing norm that they did not interact with the rest of the class. In his class, one student neither interacted with anyone nor asked him a question. Even though the student would not talk to the group members during the lesson, the teacher considered it as a predictable behavior by the ELLs.

The teachers were sympathetic to the students’ circumstances where the ELLs might feel frustrated due to the new environment and language limitations. The teachers would talk to the ELLs friendly if the students initiated the interaction, but they explained that they did not feel the need for any instructional change since they would treat all students equally. Paul talked about the importance of creating a safe atmosphere where ELLs can tell him what is going on academically and personally. He appreciated when the students came to him to talk since the students were mostly quiet, and not many ELLs would come and talk to him. He wanted the students to feel like they could come and ask him when they were having trouble with something. He wanted students to know that he would try to help them, not yell at them, but he would not initiate the approach.

In another class, when Michelle, a history teacher, first had an ELL in her classroom, she recalled that the student’s behavior was unusual. Before she jumped to a conclusion, she decided to get to know the student better, since not all students come from the same place. Michelle realized that the student learned different topics in a different type of classroom in another country. Later, she realized that it was what the student was accustomed to, and the student was not disrespectful or misbehaving. She understood that the students must experience awkward moments and would struggle academically and emotionally. Even though the ELLs’ difficulties were foreseen, the teachers considered it
as an unavoidable result of the transition, and they thought that time would be the best resource.

Even when the teachers were sympathetic to the ELLs and recognized the difficulties they were experiencing, they did not expect students to thrive in the classroom due to the English language barriers. Five teachers explained that the students were more likely to underperform academically since they were going through so many barriers like language, culture, and being apart from family and surroundings. When the subject required basic knowledge to understand, the ELLs had more difficulty mastering the topic. The teachers also recognized that the students must have difficulties learning subject matters when they needed to learn the language first. Lucy, an English teacher, showed sympathy that some ELLs were putting in a great deal of effort, but the result was insufficient to meet the high standard due to their language execution. Even though she would give the students credit for trying, they would never get high grades, which could be disheartening for the students. She explained that the students could do well in music, math, science, and all other subjects, but their language was the number one barrier. She claimed that it was difficult to grade ELLs’ essays since “they are not starting on the same level playing field as someone else, but in fairness, I have to take points off” when there are errors. She explained that the grade was not a mark of the ELLs’ intelligence but rather a mark of inexperience in the English language. Due to the language barrier, she expected that ELLs would perform relatively poorly in class and believed that there was nothing she could do because she needed to be fair to all students.

In sum, the sympathetic and emerging teachers viewed ELLs as quiet, shy, reserved, and withdrawn, which were often considered as negative qualities. The teachers believed
that those negative characteristics influenced students’ performance and participation in the classroom. The teachers explained that the ELLs were quiet because of their limited English language skills and related embarrassment. The teachers were sympathetic to the ELLs’ frustration but believed that it was an inevitable result of their transition, which through the passage of time would be improved. The teachers believed that the failure of some students was unfortunately inevitable, and no support was required of them to improve ELLs’ situation because the teacher’s role did not extend beyond treating all students equally.

**Apathetic and Resistant Teachers**

The last group of teachers was described as apathetic and resistant teachers because they were uncaring for the ELLs’ academic success. The teachers often believed that ELLs lacked potential to be successful, and they should not have come to the United States since they were not ready for the curriculum. The teachers explained that the students were inherently quiet because of their personality, which prevented them from being successful. In addition to the teacher interviews and observations, some of student interviews were included in analysis since some of the last group of teachers did not want to disclose that they did not practice culturally responsive teaching.

Some teachers had difficulties recognizing ELLs in their classrooms because of their quietness, and they considered the students’ quietness and limited English language skills as weaknesses. The teachers explained that the students’ quietness disrupted a chance for the teachers to get to know the students better. The student interviewees reiterated a sentiment that this group of teachers was unwilling to initiate conversations with them and stated they were afraid to speak up in the classes of these teachers. Naomi, a science teacher,
recalled her experience of noticing an ELL in her class. She explained that she would not always know who they were since they seemed shy. She added that shyness was the most significant thing she could think of about the ELLs. She further claimed that it was challenging to get to know them when she had many students in her class. She explained that ELLs did not speak much, did not ask questions, did not answer questions, and did their work individually.

In the middle of a semester, Naomi finally realized that one student in her class was an ELL when the student came up and asked a question. Naomi said, “you realize why they’re so quiet in class. It’s because they just, they are not confident enough about their language skills, or their ability to communicate in English.” She had a firm conviction that the ELLs would not be able to do well in her class due to their lack of English language skills. During an observation of Naomi’s class, she had a student presentation regarding an experiment they planned and performed. The students introduced the concept of the experiment, procedures, results, and discussion. The group was formed by two American students and two Asian students. One of the Asian students struggled to pronounce many words even though he was reading word by word from the presentation slide. Also, he had difficulties understanding a question asked by the teacher – he repeated many times, “umm... pardon?” When he could not answer the question, the teacher said, “oh well,” and shook her head.

One teacher had an ELL in her class who recently came to the United States and was struggling in the class. She tried to meet with the student and tried to communicate, “but the language skills were lacking severely.” She claimed that she at least tried to converse with the student, but the student was failing and could not understand anything.
As she recalled the experience, she described it as a heartbreaking memory since “the student was dropped off from Korea with no knowledge of the language, culture, and so on.” Even though she felt bad for the student, she strongly argued that the student should not have come since their academic failure was expected.

One student attributed his reason for being quiet in the classroom to his relationship with the teacher. Louis stated during his second interview, “there’s just certain teachers that just didn’t like me. I’m not sure why.” In response to the follow-up question, he reflected on his behaviors and assumed why the teacher might not like him. He called himself a class clown who loves to make the teachers and friends laugh, “but certain teachers don’t like me,” he said. He described that there was always a “good side” and a “bad side.” Some teachers might dislike him, but some other teachers would love him. He also described his change of behavior in a class when he realized the teacher disliked him. If he found that a teacher did not like him, he would not be talkative in the class. He said during his second interview,

I’m not going to talk a lot in that class. Just going to sit there and do my job, do what I’m supposed to do, and not get too involved like I would with the teachers that I like or the teachers that like me.

Teachers assumed that the students were quiet in classroom because of the students’ personality and English language skills, but students said otherwise. When students felt disliked by teachers, it had a negative influence on students’ willingness to participate and their language learning experience.

The teachers expressed their concerns for the ELLs’ academic achievement and often said the students should not have come to the U.S. schools due to their limited English
language skills. The teachers believed that the language, school, and curriculum were beyond the ELLs’ ability, and only ELLs would suffer in the process. The teachers quickly added that it would be better for the ELLs to study in their home country to avoid a culture shock by being far from home, living mostly with strangers, being lonely, and feeling “very inadequate.” The teachers were concerned that all circumstances in school and everyday life might be overwhelming for the students. The teachers believed that the students lacked the ability to perform at an average level in the classroom due to the ELLs’ lack of English language skills.

Sometimes, the difficulties ELLs were experiencing were overlooked since expectations of them were compromised. Katherine, a math teacher, explained that most of her ELLs were doing well in her class. She claimed that she knew the reason for the Korean ELLs’ strength in math and explained that most of them already learned the materials in Korea due to an advanced school curriculum in math. For those reasons, she thought that language did not seem to be a barrier. However, when it came to word problems, the students struggled to understand, and she said the language was what prevented the students from answering the questions. Even when the students knew the concept and got all other purely mathematical questions right, the students struggled to answer the word problems. The teacher explained that the students were already doing better than expected and that students just needed some time. She believed that the process was about immersing students in the content, and no other support could accelerate the process.

In a class discussion, Kelvin, an English teacher, expected students to actively interact with each other but he could not notice any of that from the ELLs. He shared his
concern about the ELLs’ development of discussion-based skills that would be necessary for their future success. He believed that the general population of students was expected to pick up such skills before high school. He added that his ELLs did not volunteer to answer questions or share their ideas, and they would need more time to perform at the level of the general population. He could not think of other ways to help the students learn English any faster because he believed acquiring a new language required time, effort, and self-practice. He concluded that ELLs needed to work, try, and practice on their own.

In sum, the apathetic and resistant teachers experienced difficulties recognizing ELLs in the classroom. They explained that the reason was the students’ quietness and further claimed that the quietness and limited English language skills were their weaknesses. They tended to push the responsibility of educating ELLs on others and ignored and avoided the issue when students were having difficulties communicating. They believed that their failure was predictable and that students should not have come to the United States since they were not ready and had weaknesses in certain characteristics and in the English language. Teachers tended to have low expectations for the students’ academic success and believed that nothing could support the learning process since it should be the students’ responsibility to overcome their challenges.
2. How Do Teachers’ Attitudes Influence Student-Teacher Relationship and Classroom Culture?

Most teachers assessed their own attitudes toward Korean ELLs as overly positive. However, there was sometimes a disconnect between how teachers portrayed themselves and how they treated ELLs in their classrooms. The other data, such as student interviews and observations, proved this point. What would be a reason to build a good relationship? A lot of the teachers believed that the student-teacher relationship would have both positive and negative impacts on students’ learning experiences. If the ELLs’ first experience is with a teacher who is not understanding, not willing to try, and not open to the students’ opinion, the students might put up a wall to anybody they encounter in education. By building a good relationship with students and creating a classroom culture where the students could talk about what is on their minds, the teachers would encourage students to get excited about learning.

Martin, a history teacher, emphasized the importance of the openness and fluidity of education. Even though there are certain protocols and parts of the educational system that the students need to learn, there are also informal aspects to education; learning involves more than just the textbook. He also explained that the teachers needed to recognize the fact that the teacher would be an authority figure, having influence over students’ grades. The teachers could be firm and hold high expectations, but they must let students know that they are on the students’ side. He said that teachers must show they believe that building a good relationship helps students want to pursue learning, as opposed to just going to school. In the following section, three types of teachers’ attitudes and ensuing influence on student-teacher relationship and classroom culture are discussed:
exemplary teachers with positive attitudes, emerging teachers with passive attitudes, and indifferent teachers with negative attitudes.

**Exemplary Teachers with Positive Attitudes**

The first group of teachers are exemplary teachers with positive attitudes. The teachers’ positive attitudes are presented as putting in extra efforts to support students while caring for them personally and academically. The teachers incorporate various methods to demonstrate their positive attitudes, which results in positive relationships and a positive classroom culture. One teacher said, “especially here, we have the guidance. They [teachers] really work hard with these students to make sure they are prepared. Many teachers are always willing to go the extra mile and help them prepare as well.” Students developed close and respectful relationships with the teachers through the interactions in and out of the classroom, which allowed them to experience positive classroom culture. Student interviewees evaluated these teachers as challenging but caring. They acknowledged that the respectful and caring attitudes of these teachers facilitated positive learning experiences for them in classes.

When the teachers have positive attitudes toward ELLs, the teachers are actively trying to get to know the students better to support them effectively. Four teachers recognized the importance of understanding students to build a positive relationship and provided appropriate and the best support. Martin described one of his methods to get to know his students at the beginning of the school year. He passed out information cards and asked the students to write down their names, personal interests, where they are from, family, personal goals, and academic goals. He explained that while it was helpful to know all of his students, the information cards were particularly instructive to understand the
ELLS. He used the information on the cards to start conversations with the ELLs and made sure they knew that he cared for them personally as well as for their academic success. By remembering the students’ goals and reminding them, Martin left a sustainable impression on students of his care and support. Martin also tried to build a positive relationship with the students during classroom discussions. He explained that the relationship became stronger when a healthy concern or a disagreement was expressed courteously to students. He said, “It should become a dialogue and a conversation.” He asserted that knowledge should be shared by both students and teachers rather than being passed down from teachers to students, and he believed that this view was a critical factor in building positive relationships with his students.

When teachers have positive attitudes toward ELLs, the teachers understand the difficulties students experience in an unfamiliar culture at school. Martin explained that it was not difficult to find the ELLs with English language barriers in his class. During his class, he would ask a question about content or curriculum, and the ELLs tended to be hesitant before answering. Then he would approach them, or sometimes they would approach him after class, and he found out that the students were learning the English language and just came to the United States from another country. Although the school was big, his purpose was to provide the students with personal attention. He stated, “you’re gonna get a guy like me standing at the door who wants to have that conversation with you.” He explained that he would try to make time for the ELLs before and after class, and that he tried to use those moments for eye contact. When he saw the ELLs in the hallway, he would always go out of his way to talk to them to let them know that he was interested in each student as a person. He stated, “if you can understand you have a human being in front
of you and not just a student, it goes a long way.” He emphasized the importance of building a personal relationship with the ELLs and initiating the approach to demonstrate the teacher’s care for them.

When teachers have positive attitudes, they frequently check with students and try to meet with them individually, which often leads to a close relationship. The teachers emphasized the importance of letting students know that they cared and they wanted to understand the students. Once the students felt that the teachers could understand them, they opened about themselves and shared their lives with the teachers. When a positive student-teacher relationship was established, some students opened up, and a couple of them even cried when they shared their experiences. Meggie recalled an experience she had with one Korean ELL a couple of years ago. When the student first came to her classroom with limited English skills, Meggie offered extra help, checked with her, and let her know that she could always come to visit. One day, the student asked if she could eat lunch in the classroom with the teacher because she did not want to eat in the cafeteria. The student was struggling to navigate through the change of culture, different priorities, and peer interactions with non-ELLs. The student explained that the priority in her Korean culture was centered on academic achievement, and being academically successful had the most significant value. The student told Meggie that she used to understand the process to get to college, how to set priorities, how to behave in a particular situation, and especially the language to communicate. When she came to the United States, she felt lost and could not figure out how to be successful anymore.

Student interviewees corroborated that the teachers’ positive attitudes made them feel understood and feel comfortable. When the teachers possessed caring attitudes,
students expressed their willingness to be around the teachers, which allowed them to talk to the teachers more easily. Yesol explained that she usually got frustrated when she needed to speak English because she felt rushed, and everything was confusing. Yesol said during her first interview, “if I’m in a rush, I can’t think of anything, and I’m not even aware when I make a mistake. So, if the teachers carefully listen to me and care for me, I will make fewer mistakes.” When the teacher listened to her with a caring attitude, she felt comfortable, which led her to calm down and make fewer mistakes. Because she could hear herself better, she was able to organize her thoughts and articulated better when she spoke.

Teachers with positive attitudes are patient, and they are willing to spend extra time and effort to support students. An English teacher, Nathan, approached the ELLs in and outside class to learn about them. He believed that the teachers should be patient with the ELLs because “it’s kind of like a kid learning how to eat his peas off of a fork… They’re just stumbling and struggling. I encourage them as much as I can.” When he returned the students’ written assignments, he tried to take some time to discuss the progress for a few minutes. He told them their strengths and weaknesses and suggested ways to get better. He believed in the importance of individual approach, especially when the school was enormous. He further explained that it meant that he was taking time aside from the class, but he considered his own time with the ELLs a necessary part of instruction. His approach and communication also allowed him to see the students’ individual abilities and efforts. Nathan was impressed with the efforts ELLs put into the assignments and the tests. The students would have everything ready by due dates. Nathan always talked to students individually when he handed out the test results. When he returned the tests, he talked to
the ELLs, and they would tell him how much time they put in to study the materials. Nathan stated, “it wasn’t that they were getting any information from the internet, and even with the book I did, the novel I did, it wasn’t on the internet. There were no notes for it. So, they did it, and boy, I was just very impressed.” He was stunned by the details the ELLs put in those exams, including actual quotes they memorized from the book.

Student interviewees described the teachers’ positive attitudes as supportive and understanding. The students described the teachers as supportive and understanding when the teachers tried to listen to the students. Heeyoon had some teachers who would speak slowly for her, but she said not all teachers would do that. She explained that those teachers cared about clear pronunciation help her and other ELLs as well. She further explained that those teachers would listen to her carefully when she asked a question. Even when the teachers did not understand what she was trying to say, they would ask again friendly to understand her. She explained during Interview 1 that the teachers’ attitude helped her express her opinion. The students described the teachers as supportive and understanding when the teachers tried to understand their situations. When the teachers tried to understand students’ situations, students sensed that they were not left alone. Eunbyul stated during Interview 1, “it feels like I’ve been taken care of, and I feel much better and more comfortable. Rather than feeling alone, it feels like I’m doing it with my teachers, so it’ll be much better.” She understood that the students would get the grades based on the outcome or the product. However, she explained that she could have more courage to try because the teacher cared for her and explained until she understood.

When the teachers have positive attitudes toward ELLs, they try to create a comfortable and positive classroom environment for the ELLs. Three teachers believed
that they should make students feel welcomed, comfortable, and excited about learning. These teachers understood that the ELLs would have more difficulties due to the change of culture, language, and curriculum. Therefore, building a positive relationship was instrumental to pulling down the barriers between teachers and students and leading to frequent communications to make things more productive. The teachers tried to develop a warm relationship with students so that the students could feel comfortable talking about their experiences in and outside school. They emphasized the importance of creating a comfortable environment for the ELLs such that the students could ask any question without feeling embarrassed or afraid that they might be judged. Kyla understood the difficulties the ELLs would go through before they would ask any questions. She stated, 

I don’t want them to feel like they can’t ask for help, and I know that they might feel embarrassed for asking for help. I don’t want them to feel that, so I try to always be friendly and upbeat and positive around them just to make them feel a little bit more comfortable.

The teachers with positive attitudes understood the critical aspects of creating a safe classroom culture. Those teachers tended to be more cognizant of students’ feelings and situations.

Teachers with positive attitudes believe that they need to be facilitators to create a positive and comfortable classroom culture. Four teachers believed that they needed to be facilitators to create a safe classroom culture for the students to take the initiative in learning. Martin stated, “teacher’s role is to facilitate learning, not dictate it.” He believed that educators should expose students to creative problem-solving opportunities by teaching them to discuss the facts and the pros and cons about various topics and issues.
Then, students should be allowed to make informed and reasoned decisions about topics, issues, and viewpoints. Katherine and Michelle also believed the importance of allowing students to think about what they were learning. Katherine stated, “I feel like my job is more of a facilitator, and they kind of learn from themselves, learn from each other, and then we bring it back together.” Kyla also practiced and primarily focused on student-centered activities in her class. She let students take more initiative in their work by stepping back and observing students’ source of information and direction of work.

Another way to create a positive and comfortable classroom culture is recognizing the ELLs’ ability, which leads them to feel more comfortable speaking in class. From the observations and interviews, it was evident that Gray, a science teacher, recognized the ability of a Korean ELL in his class. When Heeyoon did well on a quiz and a test, the teacher congratulated her in front of the class. Other students in the class recognized that Heeyoon did well on the test and were surprised since she never spoke up in class. It was evident that other students were asking Heeyoon for her opinion and respected her capability during a group discussion. Because Heeyoon was acknowledged in class, she felt more comfortable communicating with other students and volunteering to answer questions. Gray also continuously checked for students’ understanding and made sure that his ELLs understood the lesson. Both Hyeyoung (Iris) and Heeyoon agreed that the teacher was genuinely interested in their understanding of course materials. The teacher’s behavior made them more comfortable in asking questions. Heeyoon added that she still had difficulties communicating and participating in English. However, she studied hard for all assignments and tests because she did not want to let the teacher down.
ELLs appreciated when they recognized the teachers’ efforts to build a personal relationship and create a positive classroom culture for them. The students liked the teachers who gave more attention and cared for them. Hyeyoung (Iris) stated during Interview 1, “it means they look at us and see us more often. It means he’s watching me with more care. It feels like he cares for little detail things.” Yesol also had a teacher who paid attention to her when she needed help the most. When she first came to this school, she had a math teacher who was an elderly man. She could not speak English at all when she first came, and she recalled that moment as, “I couldn’t speak, I couldn’t understand.” When she walked into this class, her seat was assigned all the way back on the right side because they were assigned by students’ last names. She explained that she was hidden behind so many students. When the class ended, she just walked outside following all other students. The teacher suddenly stopped her and told her, “do not hesitate to ask if you have any questions.” She was surprised, and she said during Interview 2,

Thankfully understood that sentence. I said, “thank you.” The teacher thought that I wouldn’t know many things about the customs, culture, and might have many questions. I was very thankful that he understood why I couldn’t speak up in the class.

Since ELLs are not accustomed to many things that they run into at school, they always appreciate the teachers’ efforts to reach out to them.

The teachers emphasized the importance of building a comfortable and safe classroom culture to promote positive student-teacher relationships and students’ engagement. Martin, a social studies teacher, believed that building a connection with the student was the key to creating a safe and comfortable classroom culture. Martin noted that
the ELLs were willing to share their opinion about various topics and to be engaged once the classroom culture was safe and comfortable for them. He respected the ELLs’ culture and acknowledged the students’ ability and prior knowledge during classroom discussions. When he discussed a history of a different country, he asked the ELLs to bring up any different perspectives they might have regarding his account of the history. The student would come to him and say, “I think we need to talk about this because I see it differently. I think the information may be incorrect.” He encouraged the students to let him know if he had any misleading information about the country. Whenever a student had different thoughts, he encouraged the student to research the topic and discuss it the next day. He emphasized that it became a collaborative working environment where the students could be involved in the classroom discussion comfortably. He told the students, “you brought up some things that I didn’t know, and I want to thank you for that because I can include this in what I teach to my other classes now.” He added,

I think it’s a great thing. I think sometimes as educators we don’t want to admit that we don’t know everything and that we do make mistakes, but I’ve used those moments as positive moments in the classroom to let students know that I don’t know everything. I’m gonna learn from you, and we can all make this lesson even better by having these kinds of moments.

The teacher’s positive attitudes and efforts to create a comfortable classroom culture allowed students to be more engaged in the lesson.

In sum, the teachers having positive attitudes believe in the ELLs’ full potential, take action to build warm relationships with the students, and promote a safe classroom culture. The teachers actively try to get to know the students to provide appropriate support.
They understand the difficulties the ELLs experience in an unfamiliar culture at school and try to create a comfortable classroom culture. They frequently check with the students and try to meet with them individually, which often leads to a close relationship. They are patient and are willing to spend extra time and effort to support the students. When teachers try to create a comfortable and positive classroom culture for the ELLs, they become facilitators to prompt students to take initiative in learning. They recognize the ELLs’ abilities and prior knowledge, which leads them to feel more comfortable and confident to speak in class.

**Emerging Teachers with Passive Attitudes**

The second group of teachers were emerging teachers with passive attitudes. These teachers were friendly toward the ELLs and recognized their need for more support, but they did not take action to follow through with supporting them. The teachers would not put extra effort into supporting and challenging the ELLs. Many teachers in this group emphasized that they treated all students equally regardless of the students’ backgrounds and that they were not obligated to differentiate the ELLs from other students. Some teachers of this group would even give excuses for the ELLs by giving them a passing grade when the work they produced was not good enough. Some student interviewees described the teachers as friendly, but often they were not intellectually challenged in these teachers’ classes. The students would not try their best to learn in the classroom, and they said, “I don’t think they [teachers] care.” During a student group interview, Hyunsuk talked about his math teacher, Mr. Thompson, who would let him do whatever he wanted to do. He explained that the teacher would not say anything, even when he was using his cellphone. Hyunsuk said, “I guess you [the researcher – he called me teacher] know very
well. I just don’t pay attention to the class and do my own thing. It seems like the teacher allows it.” The teacher seemed to be satisfied with the student’s current progress in the class considering his English-speaking level and would not challenge him academically since he was good enough.

Some teachers agreed that the ELLs had some possibility of performing well but they believed it would take a long time and any type of support was not going to shorten the required time. One social studies teacher, Kyla, experienced her students struggling with writing assignments. Her concern for the ELLs was that their progress in learning English might not be good enough to get through college. She was worried that the ELLs would have to write a lot more, and her students were having difficulties learning how to write in English. When she read the ELL’s written assignments, she claimed that they are still getting the point across even with the grammatical errors. She believed that the most significant challenge the ELLs face is learning English. She recalled the writing of one of the ELLs in her class, and she stated, “I have sometimes noticed their writing is a little, it’s hard like you can tell that they’re learning how to write in English… but they’re still getting the point across.” She believed that the challenge of the ELLs was the English language and not the ability to understand certain subject matter. She added that the students eventually performed well as they spent more time in class.

Some teachers acknowledged that the ELLs were trying, but they believed that it was the students’ responsibility, not their job, to learn the English language. When students first came to a class, many of them could not understand certain words and what was written on the board. Three teachers explained that they would feel sorry for the students because of their limited English language skills. Then, the teachers would recommend
other resources so that students could reach out to ESL teachers, counselors, and writing centers. An English teacher said, “I would assume that’s Diana’s [an ESL teacher’s] job, honestly, because she is the language teacher for the students.” She explained that most of the students already learned grammatical structures in middle school, and it would be challenging to address grammatical issues as an English teacher. When she had an ELL in her classroom, her method was to send the student to Diana. She would tell the student, “go over this with your ESL teacher.” Sometimes, the teachers would recommend that the ELLs visit the writing center to get support. However, the teachers were skeptical of how much support the students could get from other resources. Because students’ English language skills were limited, the teachers believed that the students would not get much better even with the other support.

Some teachers recognized challenges ELLs might experience at school, but they seemed to be unmoved by the students’ circumstances. Teachers were asked to review the Korean ELLs’ current status in their English language learning process. Then, they were asked to share their perceptions of the students’ potential to proceed to higher education. Three teachers mentioned that the biggest challenge for the ELLs to proceed to college was taking the college entrance exam. The verbal section and writing section of the SAT could be challenging since those sections could be arduous even for people who are proficient in English. The teachers were more concerned about the writing section, since the ELLs’ writing assignments had “too many errors and problems.” Even though they predicted that the ELLs would face these challenges, the teachers explained that the students could get support from the school if needed.
Some teachers possessed passive attitudes, and they would give excuses for the ELLs even when the students did not meet required standards. During a second group interview, Yesol talked about her teacher, who gave her favors in class. In her class, all students needed to memorize and recite a poem to receive a classwork credit. While Yesol was writing the poem’s English pronunciation in Korean to memorize the poem, the teacher walked by her desk. The teacher asked if she was visualizing the poem in Korean, and Yesol replied, yes. Then the teacher told her she would get the classwork credit. Yesol said the teacher gave her the credit when she only memorized a half of it. Yesol explained that the favor continued on quizzes and tests. Even when her answer was somewhat wrong, the teacher would give her credit if there was any room for ambiguity. Also, the teacher would help her to answer the question if she had no clue during the test. During a test, one question was about a video clip she needed to watch as homework but did not. When she turned in the test, the teacher asked her why she did not answer the question. Then the teacher gave her the storyline of the video clip and told her to write the pros and cons of the issue. Yesol recalled that experience and described the class as easy and the teacher as friendly.

When teachers have passive attitudes, some students quickly notice that the teachers feel sorry for them and would use this to navigate their school lives. During a second group interview, Joy and Hyunsuk explained that it was important for them to develop a good relationship with teachers and give good impressions of themselves early in the school year. They emphasized the importance of making their teachers think of them as good students trying their best and working hard. Then, their lives would be so much easier since the teachers tended to pity them and their circumstances. Hyunsuk shared his thought that the teachers must be tired of teaching the same subject over and over for many
years. For the first month, he would show his passion for doing well and would ask the teachers how to do well in the subject. Joy quickly added that she would ask those types of questions after all other students exited the room to avoid peer pressure. Hyunsuk explained that the teachers’ suggestions would be predictable when he asked how to do well in class, he said,

it’s always the same. But the teachers will think of me positively in all situations. Then, my life will become much more relaxed. The teachers will give me better participation grades, essay grades, and all other grades, which involve the teachers’ perceptions.

The students explained that the teachers would give them many chances to make up for assignments on which they underperformed. However, they emphasized the importance of building relationships with the teachers outside the classroom.

When a teacher gave excuses to the ELLs by giving them a passing grade even though the work product was not good enough, the students enjoyed it at first but eventually became unsatisfied. During a third group interview, Heeyoon talked about her English teacher, who let her slide through the grading system since she could not speak English well. When she wrote an essay, the teacher would give a passing grade even though she did not write well. She knew she did not write the paper well, and she explained that she wrote many parts of the paper in broken English at that time. She said she liked it at that time and became careless about the quality of her work since the teacher would give her a passing grade no matter what. She described the teacher’s lenient grading practice for the ELLs as uncaring since it did not ultimately benefit them in the long run.
In sum, the emerging teachers with passive attitudes were friendly toward the ELLs and recognized the need for support, but they did not follow through in their actions. The teachers refused to put extra effort into supporting and challenging the ELLs because they did not feel obligated to do so. The teachers agreed that the students had some potential, but instructional support would not be necessary. They believed that the students could do well in the future but that it would require some time. They acknowledged that the ELLs were trying, but in circumstances of ELLs’ failure, they considered it to be the students’ responsibility. The teachers recognized some challenges the students might experience at school, but they seemed to be unmoved by their circumstances; as one teacher said, “there’s nothing I can do.”

**Indifferent Teachers with Negative Attitudes**

The last group of teachers were indifferent teachers with negative attitudes. These teachers would put all the responsibilities associated with learning experiences on the ELLs. They stated that they were just teaching the curriculum and giving information. They believed that success and achievements in learning were entirely up to the individual students. Some student interviewees described how much they hated these teachers and that they kept themselves quiet in the classroom. Based on student interviews, the teachers’ definition of good might not be good enough for the students. The teachers valued a traditional teaching and learning method. One teacher said, “I think it has merit. The teacher will have lectures, and the teacher will tell the students this is how you should be looking at this, this is how you should think about this.” They believed that the role of a teacher was to give students knowledge and the education materials they need to learn.
Even though the world was changing, and generations had passed, students learned in a traditional lecture form and some teachers in the school still worked this way.

Sometimes, there was a gap between teachers’ level of support and students’ needs. A teacher (Kailey) believed that providing visual support and hands-on activities would be sufficient in ELLs’ learning. She believed that science is a universal language, and hands-on activities would allow the students to quickly visualize what they are learning. When the researcher talked to a student interviewee, the student expressed the difficulty of understanding the procedure of entire hands-on activities. The student needed detailed instruction, scaffolding, or a procedure to follow the activities. She felt like she was hung out to dry for the entirety of the activities. She wished the teacher had given written instructions so that she could look them up.

The influence of the negative attitude was evident during the observation. The lesson started by observing an animal cell slide and filling out a worksheet. Joy (Yujin) was struggling from the start, and she did not understand how to get the microscope to focus. She had a difficult time, but the teacher never stopped at Joy’s table. After 10 minutes of struggling, Joy turned to the researcher for help. When the researcher gave her some comments and support, the teacher came to the table. Joy asked basic questions of the teacher. When the teacher left, Joy expressed her feelings to the researcher. She said she was afraid of getting it wrong since the teacher would judge her. Later, she searched for examples of the table and found a chart with the approximate counts of the cells in a different phase. Most of the students were not aware of the purpose or the expectations of the experiment. The lack of direction and explanation confused the students since the teacher did not explain the steps and expectations thoroughly. Meanwhile, Joy kept
searching for the answers online while the teacher was chatting with other students about wearing glasses and having eye surgery. Joy tried to get the teacher’s attention multiple times, but the teacher did not look in Joy’s direction.

Some teachers believe that the students’ role is to not give up and try to make better themselves every day, including attending school, doing homework, and submitting assignments on time. During the interviews, the teachers made it clear that they believed it was not their job to reach out to the students once they felt like the students were not putting in effort. Kailey explained that she gave an additional three weeks to Joy to complete a summer assignment since she began school a little bit later than the other students. Kailey claimed that Joy did not try to communicate and ask for assistance, then she never submitted the work. The teacher stated,

there needs to be an open line of communication, but a failure to submit assignments and a failure to attend class, any student for that matter would run into issues, but especially if you’re trying to become acclimated to the school. If you’re an ELL, you should be aware of those things.

In fact, the student in this instance had transferred to the school after the fall semester started, and she was not aware she had to complete a summer assignment.

Some students met teachers who had negative attitudes toward them. The students identified the teachers’ uncaring attitudes when they experienced the following: dislike, ignorance, and lack of understanding the students’ situation or student herself/himself. When students experienced feeling disliked, it influenced students’ emotions, causing stress and exhaustion. Moreover, it led to a negative relationship with the teacher. Yunjin (Joy) shared her experience with her science teacher. When she asked a question in class,
she explained that there was a brief moment where she could feel disliked by the teacher. During her first interview, she stated,

Let’s say a student’s name is Jessica. The teacher will say, ‘yes, Jessica!’ (right away). But when I asked a question, (she gave a pause, then) ‘yes, Joy.’ When there is a pause, she sighs. When she pauses... I also feel like she doesn’t like me. Maybe because I don’t do well on my homework, she seems like she’s trying not to show it, but I can tell.

Joy further explained how such a negative relationship was built. She claimed that the teacher ignored her problems and did not try to understand her situations or even herself. Joy had difficulties understanding the lesson and tried to drop the class three times, but she was not able to drop the class. It was the first semester after she transferred from another school, and she asked the teacher at the beginning of the year because the class was too difficult for her. The teacher told her to do her best since she would do just fine. Then she asked the teacher again two weeks after, and the teacher told her to try harder. Then she asked the teacher again, and it was now too late. She continued to get through each lesson and tried to learn, but she struggled every day. She explained the reason she struggled in the class, stating during Interview 1, “honestly, it’s her fault, too.” She wished her teacher to recognize her issue when it was raised multiple times, to truly empathize with her, and to suggest practical solutions for her.

“There’s nothing I can do. It’s just a curriculum.” A science teacher, Naomi, believed that there was nothing she could do to support the ELLs other than writing out the equation to show how it should work. She added, “unless they have a question, I don’t answer it.” She described her class as a self-directed lab with a material list. In the class,
the students need to design a lab, design an experiment, take equipment, and analyze the data. Naomi repeatedly explained that her subject was “full of curriculum,” and it would be impossible to get to know much of the students’ culture. She explained that she would not get to know them at all due to students’ shyness and their lack of English skills. She said, “I’m always at the desk available for questions, but a lot of the students [the ELLs] like to get questions answered by their peers than asking a teacher.”

Even though Naomi explained that she was just teaching the curriculum, some students from her class took her to be an uncaring teacher. When teachers possessed uncaring attitudes, it was often associated with the teachers’ unsupportive teaching practice. Also, the students described the teachers as practicing “bad teaching.” The students emphasized the importance the teachers’ attitudes of understanding and caring for them. Chloe stated during Interview 1, “some teachers just don’t understand us that much… some teachers lose their responsibility in teaching. They just, they do not teach and just upload questions in google classroom and let us do it. Then check the answer. That’s it. That’s just a routine.” Chloe felt like her science teacher did not care about the students or teaching the class. She complained that the teacher would sit at her desk from the beginning of the class till the end. She also explained that the teacher would not teach any concepts but make them solve questions and check the answers.

Students described the teachers with negative attitudes as annoyed and uncaring teachers. During a first group interview, Heeyoon Jung and Yesol Kwon shared the differences between their math teachers and their attitudes. Yesol described the math teacher by how much the teacher disliked the students. The teacher was grumpy and always complained that the students were like a wall – not participating much in class. Yesol
explained that she would not participate in the class since she gave up on the teacher’s uncaring attitudes. She clarified that she asked many questions at the beginning of the year because the teacher taught the class so poorly, she claimed.

However, the teacher’s attitude stopped her from trying and reaching out to the teacher. The teacher would give the answer when Yesol asked a question and the teacher seemed to be annoyed whenever Yesol initiated the approach. Heeyoon and Yesol both believed that the teacher’s teaching method also was problematic. They claimed that the teacher tried to go over all the chapters quickly and gave individual study hours to review the chapters. Even though a majority of the students did not yet understand important concepts of a chapter, the teacher would move on to the next chapter. Particularly for the ELLs, the teacher’s uncaring attitudes and fast-paced lessons entrapped the students in a continuing and repetitive cycle of failure to understand a lesson, independent study time, lack of clarification, and encountering the next lesson. Heeyoon and Yesol also described the teacher as temperamental because the teacher’s mood swung up and down. Due to the teacher’s unpredictable temperament, Yesol explained that she was always afraid to participate and never laughed in the class.

Some students expressed that they sometimes felt disregarded or even bullied by some teachers. During the first group interview, Hyunsuk explained that he could notice that a teacher had a negative attitude and disliked his presence in the teacher’s class. He never fell asleep during the class, but he had 20 points deducted from his attendance grade when other students who actually slept during the class only had five points deducted. Then he started to question why 20 points were deducted, and thereafter multiple incidents transpired that made him feel bullied. Hyunsuk explained to the researcher that he was
having difficulties in pronouncing words with \( r \) and \( l \) right next to each other. During the teacher’s class, he wanted to participate and give an answer to a question even though his pronunciation would not be perfect in answering the question. When he gave an answer, which involved the pronunciation of “world,” the teacher sighed and insisted that he repeat it 10 times in front of the class. Joy jumped in during the group interview and asked how the other students reacted. Hyunsuk explained that some students were also upset, and one student said, “that’s brutal.” Later in the class, Hyunsuk dropped a pen and the teacher walked toward his desk and kicked the pen to the back of the class. After Hyunsuk’s story, Joy was also upset with the way the teacher treated Hyunsuk, and she was sure that the teacher bullied him on purpose. She added that ELLs are sensitive to that issue, and it would be rude to do that to even non-ELLs. Later they added that they did not want to study for the classes of bullying teachers since they lost interest in the subject associated with such teachers.

In sum, the indifferent teachers with negative attitudes would put all the responsibilities associated with learning experiences on the ELLs. They valued the traditional teaching and learning method and believed that their role was to deliver knowledge and to follow the curriculum. They explained that success and achievement in learning were entirely up to each individual student. Teachers made it clear that it would not be their job to reach out to students. Interviews and observations showed that teachers believed there was enough help for ELLs while the student interviewees said that there was not enough support and help for them. When teachers had negative attitudes, the students often experienced the following: dislike, ignorance, and lack of understanding. Then, the
students described the teachers as annoyed and uncaring. Some students even expressed the feeling of being disregarded or bullied by the teachers.

3. How, If at All, Do Teachers Perform Culturally Responsive Practices?

Many teachers agreed that culturally responsive teaching could help ELLs, but not all teachers would practice culturally responsive teaching. Culturally responsive teachers are, first of all, caring. They believe all students can succeed and see teaching as pulling knowledge out of the students. They encourage a community of learners and encourage students to learn collaboratively. They also believe that knowledge is continuously recreated, recycled, and shared by teachers and students. They are passionate about content and help students to develop the necessary skills.

On the other hand, culturally obstinate teachers are uncaring for students. They believe that failure for some students is inevitable and see teaching as putting knowledge into the students. They value competitive achievement and encourage students to learn individually. They believe that knowledge is static and is passed on in one direction. They are detached and neutral about content and expect students to demonstrate prerequisite skills.

Culturally Responsive Teachers

The first group of teachers believed in culturally responsive teaching and adapted and practiced such pedagogy in their classrooms. The following characteristics can be found in culturally responsive teachers.

First, culturally responsive teachers were caring. The caring teachers were passionate about student learning and understanding students’ needs by actively observing
them. Four teachers valued their interactions with the ELLs and identified the students’ possible needs based on the teachers’ prior experiences with other ELLs. When the teachers had the ELLs in their classroom, they observed the students and recognized certain circumstances in which the ELLs would need support. The teachers believed in providing “a little nudge” for the ELLs even when the students did not recognize the need for help. The teachers believed that teachers should be a little more vocal and active in supporting the students. They also believed in the importance of taking the initiative to support the ELLs rather than assuming the students were okay when they were quiet.

Peter, a science teacher, had one ELL who just came to the United States with limited English skills. When the ELL needed to go to the office for the administrative process, Peter knew that the student would need some help. He asked a former ELL to accompany the student to the office, believing that “it only takes a few seconds, but just little tiny things that can make a difference.” Katherine, a math teacher, also emphasized the importance of anticipating students’ needs to provide appropriate support. She believed that she could support the ELLs by being a positive role model and showing her care for them. One of her Korean ELLs transferred in the middle of the fall semester, in November, and she knew that the student would need support in settling down. She tried to develop a positive relationship and a definite affinity with him, hoping the student would settle more quickly.

Culturally responsive teachers recognize and respect cultural values the students bring to the classroom. Four teachers valued learning students’ culture and brought more of students’ language and culture into the lesson that could foster students’ learning. The teachers explained that they could also figure out what the students were struggling with
when they were learning the students’ culture. At the beginning of the year, Sophie, a history teacher, tried to get to know the ELLs and incorporate her learning into the lessons. Additionally, she asked the students how she could help them, what resources could be provided, and checked for the appropriate pace of lessons for them. She sometimes provided some of the notes in students’ language and tried to make the content more accessible. She clarified that her purpose in lesson modification was to support students’ learning and make students’ lives better in school. Some students appreciated when teachers recognized their language, allowed more time when needed, and checked in with them during and after class. Yoojin had a teacher who initiated the approach to ask her if she had any needs, any difficulty in understanding course materials, and what could be provided to meet her academic needs. She appreciated the teacher’s understanding since she knew from her experience that not all teachers would be like that.

Culturally responsive teachers believed that their role is to teach the whole child, not just content knowledge. Meggie, a math teacher, had one Korean ELL in her class who had extremely limited English skills. She paid careful attention, offered extra help, checked in with her, and let her know that she could always come to visit. One day, the student asked if she could eat lunch in the classroom with the teacher because she did not want to eat in the cafeteria. The student was struggling to navigate through the shift of culture, different priorities, and student interactions. Since Meggie believed in teaching the whole child, she was committed to developing social and emotional learning for the students using cultural resources and students’ prior knowledge.

Also, Diana, an ESL teacher, was dedicated to teaching the whole child, not just the English language. Diana always put extra effort into supporting the ELLs. She
repeatedly explained to the ELLs that they should ask her for help, especially if they were failing or doing poorly in other classes. She did not stop at telling the ELLs to seek help, but she considered the students’ success as her responsibility. She knew all ELLs’ daily schedule and set appointments with all ELLs individually during their free time. She often told the students, “you can always come to me, and we could work on reading whatever it is together, writing whatever we have to write together.” To appropriately support the ELLs, Diana often requested study materials from all other subject teachers for the students. She explained that building a positive and trusting relationship was necessary since the students started to come to her with their personal matters, knowing that she would be on their side.

Culturally responsive teachers believe all students can succeed and acknowledge students’ ability, hard work, and accomplishments. Nine teachers explained that the students had potential and the ability to succeed despite the language barriers. The teachers explained that there are challenges the ELLs could face due to language barriers, but the students had the ability to overcome with appropriate support. The teachers described the ELLs as being serious, strong, hard-working, committed, and dedicated. Nathan, an English teacher, had some ELLs who had mechanical issues with writing as well as many grammatical or spelling errors. He often described them as admirable in the way that they took on the challenge of learning how to live in and acclimate themselves to a different world. Nathan decided to provide support to fix grammatical problems while teaching them and grading them based on their understanding of the topic until the students mastered the writing techniques. He explained that some of those students sometimes ended up doing a little bit better than non-ELLs since they were putting in more work. Hyeyoung (Iris) explained during Interview 1 that she had a teacher who gave affirmation of her work and
believed that she could do better. She felt that the teacher believed in her ability to complete the assignment, which made her try harder to meet the teacher’s expectations. Also, the teacher frequently stopped at her desk to ask if she was following along with the lesson and if she had any questions.

Culturally responsive teachers are passionate about content. Twelve teachers were passionate about the content and would do anything to make sure the students understood the content. The passionate teachers would put in extra effort and time to support the ELLs. The teachers believed that they needed to prepare the students academically and for daily life as adults, and many teachers are willing to put extra effort into helping. Martin stated, “we’ve put some good building blocks in place, and you have to continue this into college, but we’ve set you up for success. As opposed to just setting ourselves up for a tuition check, which we’d never want.” The teachers considered extra effort to be trying to have a conversation, greeting with a smile, calling ELLs by their native name, checking on them, encouraging them, being aware of their backgrounds and culture, and incorporating their culture to enhance their learning. They believed that trying various methods is essential since they would not be able to know what to do by just having the ELLs sit in front of them.

Also, the teachers understood that the students might not be interested in their subjects, but they believed that they could share the excitement with them to inspire them. The students described the teachers’ positive practices as being passionate, and explained that these teachers also had genuine interest in students. Heeyoon had a very passionate teacher. She explained that the teacher’s attitude must have a strong connection with the classroom culture the teacher created. Heeyoon explained that sometimes she needed more
time or extra help in understanding a topic. When the lesson moved at a fast pace, the teacher approached her in person and explained until she understood. The teacher would use different words and more straightforward concepts to explain when she had trouble understanding. During the second interview expressed that, she appreciated the passionate teacher who asked her to have a conversation after class when she seemed to have a problem.

Culturally responsive teachers would select culturally responsive teaching materials and incorporate students’ prior knowledge in developing their lessons. Although many teachers agreed with the positive effects of using culturally responsive materials, only two teachers incorporated them to design the lessons. Diana, an ESL teacher, explained that she always tried to teach her own materials while following the school curriculum for reading. When she was in college, she learned to keep materials current and relatable, to encourage students in reading, listening, speaking, and writing. Before she became the ESL teacher in this school, two English teachers taught the ESL classes. She claimed that they knew nothing about teaching ESL classes. When she started, she found out that the students were reading *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*. She complained about the choice of the book and decided to choose her own reading materials. She said, “We read things that they can relate to more.” After she took over the class, instead of repeating the existing curriculum, she decided to select a new reading material that the ELLs could relate to. Last year, she chose *The House on Mango Street*, which was about an immigrant family. The narrator was a Latina living in Chicago, and the book was about her life as an immigrant child.
Then, she chose the book *A Step from Heaven* for the current year’s reading. It was about a Korean family who left Korea to come to America. The book is composed of little stories, unlike other books with long formal chapters, she said, and added, “I try and do a lot of relevant things.” She explained that the stories are interesting, and students were having fun reading them. The reason she spent much time searching for relevant materials was that it eventually would handle all aspects of learning. She shared the topic the teachers discussed in the meeting with a whole English department, “how do we get these students to want to read the material?” She explained that it was tough to get the students to want to read in general. It is even more challenging to make ELLs want to read in a language that they are not comfortable with:

So how do we get them to want to read? You can’t teach someone to love reading. So, you have to find something that they’re going to want to read or want to do. So, I think it helps to use something that they can relate to.

Once the students read the story, she would be able to get them to talk and write about the story. By selecting appropriate and culturally responsive reading materials, she witnessed that the ELLs were engaged in the story by actively talking and writing about it. She had students from eastern Asian countries, and they were more involved in the story discussion since it was about Korean children moving to America:

So, in each of the stories, it goes through these characters becoming acclimated into American culture… Once you get to a certain point in the story, they’re like, “Oh my goodness, that’s happened to me, too.” Just being in school and wearing one thing, and everyone else is wearing something different, and you feel like you don’t fit in.
Culturally responsive teachers believed that ELLs would learn a lot from each other and encouraged working collaboratively. Four teachers paired up ELLs for classroom activities since they value working together with peers and helping each other. Diana, an ESL teacher, stated, “I try to be smart with the way I pair them up.” She learned to put more advanced students with the less advanced ones and included someone who spoke the same native language as the one having limited English – just in case they would not understand what was going on. She understood that the ELLs could not be as comfortable in other classes due to limited English skills and pressure to fit in. In her class, she emphasized that the students were all in the same boat. She said, 

they have similar circumstances, like learning language and being apart from their family. I tell the students that they need to help each other and get through the situation together whether their English development level is at the same level or not.

She described her class as a “judgment-free zone.” Paul and Katherine also witnessed that the ELLs learned better when they had peers who could cooperate in learning topic, language, and culture. When ELLs first enter a classroom, in many cases, they do not understand what is going on around them. The teachers recognized that the students could be lost and tried to support them in between the topics. The teachers believed in the importance of giving time to work with other peers to make sure they understand the lesson.

Culturally responsive teachers believe that knowledge is continuously recreated, recycled, and shared by teachers and students. Three teachers incorporated role reversal in their teaching format. The teachers sometimes have students present different topics about their culture in a research project. This would allow other teachers to be aware of the ELLs
and become culturally more sensitive. Martin respected ELLs’ culture and acknowledged their ability, which eventually led to peers’ respect toward the ELLs. Martin teaches social studies, and there were certain times where they talked about a part of the world that a student was from. He said, “recognizing it [ELLs’ culture] and bringing them into the conversation as much as possible is the big part. It would open the gates and connect the ELLs to the material, which automatically connects them to other students in the class.” He explained that the ELLs’ demeanors were attached to their culture and background.

Also, Martin found that when a student could bring personal experience to the table, others in the class would listen because it was not just the teacher talking about what was in a textbook. He valued the knowledge and experience the ELLs possess due to their life experiences, and other students respected their perspective as well. Then, Martin would allow students to speak with the ELL, who was giving the information, and they could educate the teacher as well. One day, he covered a topic, and it pertained to Korea. He turned to one of Korean ELLs and said, “if I say something that’s incorrect, or you know more about than me, let me know. If you’re not comfortable doing it in class, talk to me after class, then I’ll talk about it the next day. You can teach me as much as I can teach you.” When he approached the students that way, he experienced that the relationship changed more positively. He realized that the learning could be achieved better through collaboration, not through traditional formal teaching – teachers teach, and students sit and listen. He believed that the classroom culture became more comfortable as the students understood that he was open to talking with them.

Lastly, culturally responsive teachers search to find and provide resources for the ELLs when they recognize the need to help develop necessary skills. Six teachers believed
that having conversations with ELLs could be the best way to reveal what the students need. The teachers tried to develop a good relationship with ELLs, where they could talk to the students about personal lives and find out what the students were struggling with. Then, they recommended finding resources like a guidance counselor, dean’s office, or the ESL teacher to collaborate and to support them to make the students’ lives better in school. Chris, a science teacher, had an ELL last year, and he could tell that the language barrier was hurting this student’s grades. He tried to talk with the student and reached out to Diana, an ESL teacher, for some advice and guidance. Of Diana’s relationship with ELL students, he said, “I feel like because they have a better relationship, they’re more comfortable sometimes than discussing with me. So that option is there too.” Diana understood that the ELLs would have difficulties understanding the questions on tests due to the way they are worded: “It’s not that they don’t know the material, it’s that they don’t know what the question is asking them.” She first told the students to actively seek help with rephrasing when they are in those other classes. She also reached out to the teachers in advance to receive review materials to go over with her ELLs.

In sum, culturally responsive teachers cared for the ELLs, and they were passionate about student learning and understanding students’ needs. The teachers recognized and respected the cultural values that students brought to the classroom and were committed to teaching the whole child. The teachers believed all ELLs could academically succeed and acknowledged the students’ ability, hard work, and accomplishments. The teachers were passionate about content, selected culturally responsive teaching materials, and incorporated students’ prior knowledge. The teachers emphasized the importance of collaborative work since they believed that knowledge was meant to be continuously
recreated, recycled, and shared by both teachers and students. Lastly, the teachers were committed to providing support for the ELLs to help them develop necessary skills to navigate through the school system.

**Culturally Obstinate Teachers**

Culturally obstinate teachers can be divided into two groups. The first group of teachers would agree with culturally responsive teaching but admit that they had limitations. Some teachers were unsure about how to incorporate cultural responsiveness in their teaching. Other teachers recognized possibly positive outcomes from culturally responsive teaching but were not motivated to adopt such pedagogy. The second group of teachers did not care for culturally responsive teaching and did not believe in any positive effects of the method. One teacher said, “You know, your data will be skewed.” Because two groups shared the common thread of being culturally obstinate, the two groups were combined in this study.

Culturally obstinate teachers were not caring. When the teachers were uncaring and unsupportive, students felt less close to the teachers and often experienced developing negative relationships. Yesol recalled her math teacher again. The teachers’ uncaring attitudes made her believe that the teacher would not want to get to know her or help her when she needed. Yesol stated, “Well. I had that experience in one class. As I told you before, my math teacher is that kind of teacher, who just don’t care. She will not care even if we don’t do our homework.” She explained that the teacher would not care even when she asked a question or did not understand something. She also stated during Interview 2, “It’s not because I can’t do it. I couldn’t do homework a few times because I didn’t understand, but the teacher just didn’t say anything about it.”
Also, when the teachers were uncaring and unsupportive, students often described the classroom as strict and sometimes experienced negative classroom culture, such as bullying and racism in the classroom. When the teacher seemed to be distant, the teachers were often stricter when they did not have to be. Chloe experienced a negative classroom culture due to a teacher’s attitudes. In Chloe’s math class, the teacher always joked about one female student who could not speak English well. Whenever the girl made a verbal mistake, the teacher would repeat after her and students laughed. Even though the teacher said it was a joke, Chloe felt like the girl’s feelings were hurt. She stated during Interview 1,

if that happens to me, I wouldn’t be happy. If I get something wrong, you could just tell me. You don’t have to tell it to the entire class. So embarrassing. I think you could get hurt… in my opinion, it’s wrong.

She further explained that the student just needed some support to understand the topic. Because of the teacher’s attitudes, she claimed that all other students followed the teacher’s behavior.

Culturally obstinate teachers did not recognize or respect students’ culture and taught students just content knowledge. As also mentioned in question 1, part 2 (Sympathetic and Emerging Teachers), and in question 2, part 2 (Emerging Teachers with Passive Attitudes), culturally obstinate teachers believed that instructional modification was not necessary since they believed in treating all students equally. Three teachers explained that their role as a teacher was to give students the knowledge and the materials. When teachers did not recognize students’ culture and only taught content knowledge, students described the teachers as uncaring. During a group interview, Heesoo Kang,
Jungin (Chloe) Yang, and Yoojin Lee described teachers’ behaviors as uncaring and ignoring. Jungin (Chloe) described one of the teachers this way:

Can I be honest? She never teaches. She just gives us textbook, really thick textbook. She just copies the same thing into her PowerPoint and read through it. And then, just gives out worksheet. Then, she gives out the answer sheet. We just see which question we got wrong ourselves since she never go through questions. Then, she gave us the test next day.

Culturally obstinate teachers believed that failure was inevitable for some students. As also mentioned in question 1 and part 3 (Apathetic and Resistant Teachers), when a teacher had a negative attitude toward ELLs, it had a negative influence on the classroom culture. In Naomi’s science class, she had a student presentation regarding an experiment they planned and performed. The students introduced the concept of the experiment, procedures, results, and discussion. The group was formed with two American students and two Asian students. One of the Asian students seemed to have language barriers since he was reading word by word from the presentation slide. Also, he was not able to answer a question the teacher asked. When he could not answer the question, the teacher sighed and shook her head.

Culturally obstinate teachers were detached about content. During two class sessions, Naomi gave an announcement at the beginning of the class and told students to work on a worksheet packet. During the entire lesson, the teacher did not get up to check on students but remained seated. Later in an interview, Chloe explained that the teacher did not understand or even try to understand the students. The teacher ignored the responsibility to teach and told the students to do the work. The teacher would not get up
from her chair once to check the students’ work. When the teachers possessed uncaring attitudes, students’ emotions changed negatively, and they experienced dissatisfaction, stress, exhaustion, and worry. When Chloe felt that her science teacher was not caring about the students, she was scared. She said she would do all the work because she was scared of the teacher. She said during Interview 1, “It just becomes a mission to complete. Then my grades dropped even if I wanted to do better because I just don’t feel well and safe.” Because the teacher was too strict and intimidating, the subject became difficult and students were always worried in the classroom.

Culturally obstinate teachers viewed teaching as putting knowledge into the students and believed that knowledge was static and passed down to students. As also mentioned in question 2, part 3 (Indifferent Teacher with Negative Attitudes), three teachers had negative attitudes toward ELLs in general, and they had their reasons. First, some teachers had difficulties recognizing ELLs in their classes. Second, there was a gap in teachers’ practice and students’ needs. Third, some teachers believed that there was nothing they could do since everything was about the curriculum. Last, some teachers recognize the ELLs’ academic needs, but they believe that it was not their job. The teachers believed their role was to provide the knowledge and the materials that the students needed to be successful in the course. Kelvin said, “I think it has merit. The teacher will have lectures, and the teacher will tell the students this is how you should be looking at this, this is how you should think about this.” He justified his reasons for providing traditional lectures, stating that other teachers also used the method and that he was also educated in this format.
The culturally obstinate teachers encouraged students to learn individually, in isolation. Yesol shared her experience of having a teacher who did not try to understand her situations and her problem. Her math teacher told the class, “if you have any question, you can come early in the morning and ask. If you don’t come, it’s on you.” She went to see the teacher a couple of times, but the teacher would not explain anything else. “I was solving a question and couldn’t figure it out,” Yesol explained. “So, I went to extra help in the morning and asked. She said, ‘ah, this is how we solve it.’ And just told me the answer.” From her understanding, there should be some things that she needed to use or incorporate in solving specific problems. She understood the basic concepts, but she was having difficulty in applying those concepts in different types of questions. As she described during Interview 2:

But this teacher will just tell me the steps of the problem and tell me the answer.

But if there’s another problem, similar but different, I won’t be able to remember the whole thing since I couldn’t understand the problem in the first place.

When Yesol took the ESL class, she had a different teacher. She described the teacher to be very different. She added that the teacher always spoke “so fast,” even though there were many ELLs who were beginners. The teacher tried to cover multiple topics and moved on to the next topic, even when students did not understand it at all. At that time, she thought to herself, “I wish she speaks a little slowly.”

Culturally obstinate teachers who encouraged individual learning were also neutral about the content. When the teachers possessed uncaring attitudes, students’ perceptions of their learning experience changed negatively and were characterized by boredom, stress, and worries due to fast-paced lessons. Students believed that good teachers would try to
find out whether students understood the lesson correctly and would explain until they understood. Yesol shared her experience with her math teacher. She said during Interview 3,

"if a teacher doesn’t do what they are supposed to do and give out a quiz or test to make her job easy, it’s wrong. I have a teacher like that, and I thought ‘she shouldn’t do that.’ It’s actually my math teacher I have now."

Her math teacher would schedule a quiz in advance and then rush to finish related content by that time. Since the teacher needed to finish in time, she would only cover the basic concepts and quickly move on. Yesol explained during Interview 3 that “she’s not trying to make us understand. Most of the students will just do whatever else, daydream, use a cellphone, or fall asleep.” Even when students asked questions, the teacher would repeat the math concept that students already knew and would not explain further.

Culturally obstinate teachers expected students to demonstrate prerequisite skills. One teacher said, “but it’s not my job.” Some teachers recognized the need to teach students the English language as well as the subject, but they did not think it was their job. Lucy, an English teacher, said, “I would assume that’s Diana’s job, honestly, because she is the language teacher for the ELLs.” She claimed that she would refer to the ESL teacher for the ELLs’ language problems. She explained that the students lacked prerequisite skills to attend her class and it would not be her responsibility to teach the students to achieve those skills. She explained that it might not be possible for the ELLs to perform well in her class even if she supported the students. She noticed that the ELLs seemed to do well in subjects where the material was symbolic, like music or math, where they could use universal letters and symbols. But when it came to subjects like social studies or English with a lot of
reading, she noticed the ELLs did poorly because they were required to understand language. She stated, “the common denominator is language. Any subject that needs a strong language base, that’s where they do poorly.” When the teachers noticed that the students did not possess prerequisite skills for their subject, they quickly judged that the student was behind and would be behind the rest of the year.

Heeyoon Jung expressed dissatisfaction with her history teacher’s teaching style, which required her to demonstrate prerequisite skills. It was the students’ responsibility to take class notes in class based on the lecture, and Heeyoon had difficulties writing down what the teacher was saying during the class. During the lecture, the teacher assumed that all students would have basic knowledge about the U.S. government, geography, and culture. Heeyoon was agitated that she was expected to have all vocabulary and knowledge, including knowledge of idiomatic expressions, that American students generally possessed in her regular classes. The teacher assumed that all students already had necessary prior knowledge and skipped explaining it. Yesol added that she also had difficulties understanding some basic vocabulary which was commonly understood by non-ELLs. Both Heeyoon and Yesol agreed that they were ready in various ways but needed some support in learning the English language. When Yesol wrote an essay, the English teacher gave it back to her after reading the first sentence. She recalled the teacher asking her if the sentence made sense to her. When she said yes, the teacher sighed and told her to go to the writing center and fix everything.

In sum, culturally obstinate teachers were not caring toward the students. They were often unsupportive and strict, which made the students feel distant and sometimes scared. The teachers believed that failure was inevitable for some students, and the ELLs were
often included in the failed group of students. The teachers described teaching as putting knowledge into the students and believed that knowledge should only be passed down to students by the teachers, as in a traditional classroom. They tended to be detached and neutral about content and expected students to demonstrate prerequisite skills – English language skills for ELLs – since they believed that teaching English was not their responsibility. The teachers valued individual work time and required students to be quiet all the time.

**Summary of Findings**

The findings of this study indicated that teachers’ attitudes and practices could have impacts on designing their instruction, student-teacher relationships, classroom cultures, and students’ learning experiences. Figure 4 showed the groups of the teachers found in each research question and their relationships to each other.

The first group of teachers were empathetic and exemplary teachers with positive attitudes who were further described as culturally responsive teachers. The teachers believed in the ELLs’ potential and recognized their ability, efforts, and positive behavioral aspects. The teachers were empathetic toward the ELLs’ entire learning process and recognized the difficulties the students experienced during the process. The teachers emphasized the importance of acquiring positive attitudes about the ELLs and they were passionate about providing appropriate support. The teachers examined the ELLs’ preferred ways of learning by frequently checking with the students. The teachers tried to meet ELLs individually, which often led to a close relationship. They were patient and were willing to spend extra time and efforts to support the students. The teachers understood the importance of recognizing students’ cultures and incorporated them into
designing their instructions. They tried to create a comfortable classroom culture by becoming a facilitator to prompt students to take initiative in learning. They recognized the ELLs’ abilities and prior knowledge, which led them to feel more comfortable and confident speaking in class.

Figure 4. Summary of Findings

The second group of teachers were sympathetic and emerging teachers with passive attitudes who were further described as culturally obstinate teachers. The teachers viewed ELLs as quiet, shy, reserved, and withdrawn, which they considered to be negative qualities in learning. The teachers believed that the negative characteristics impacted students’ performance unfavorably in the classroom. The teachers were sympathetic toward ELLs but believed the failure of some students was unfortunately inevitable. The teachers were friendly toward the ELLs and recognized the need for support, but they did not follow
through in their actions. The teachers explained that no support was required of them to improve ELLs’ situation because the teacher’s role did not extend beyond treating all students equally. They believed that the students could do well in the future but that it would require some time. The teachers recognized some challenges the students might experience at school, but they seemed to be unmoved by their circumstances; as one teacher said, “there’s nothing I can do.” They acknowledged that the ELLs were trying, but they considered any instances of ELLs’ failure to be the ELLs’ responsibility.

The third group of teachers were apathetic and resistant teachers with negative attitudes who were also described as culturally obstinate teachers. The teachers often found it difficult to recognize ELLs in the classroom. They believed that students’ quietness and limited English language skills were weaknesses, and they avoided facing issues when students were communicating in limited English. The teachers explained that the failure of ELLs was predictable and stated that students should not have come to the United States since they were not ready for the curriculum. The teachers had low expectations for ELLs’ academic success and pushed all learning responsibilities on the students. They valued the traditional teaching and learning method and believed that their role was to provide knowledge and to follow the curriculum. Student interviews and observations showed that what these teachers believed to be enough was in fact insufficient for ELLs. When teachers had negative attitudes, the students often experienced the following: dislike, ignorance, and lack of understanding. Then, the students described the teachers as annoyed and uncaring. Some students even expressed the feeling of being disregarded or bullied by the teachers.
CHAPTER 5

Discussion

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to acquire a better understanding of the culturally responsive attitudes and practices of teachers and their influences on the student-teacher relationship, classroom culture, and the perceptions of the learning experiences of the newly arrived adolescent Korean ELLs. The following are implications of findings and recommendations for future practice and research by answering three research questions:

1. How do teachers view ELLs in general, and how do their views influence the designing of their instruction?

2. How do teachers’ attitudes influence the student-teacher relationship and classroom culture?

3. How, if at all, do teachers perform culturally responsive practices?

This chapter includes a discussion of prominent findings and their connection to the theoretical framework of culturally responsive teaching. The chapter also includes the findings and their relationship to prior research and existing literature. The chapter concludes with the limitations of the study and recommendations for future practice and research.

Implications of Findings

This study used a theoretical framework of culturally responsive teaching to investigate the effects of its practices on the student-teacher relationship, classroom culture, and students’ perceived learning experiences. The culturally responsive teachers would recognize and respect students’ cultures, teaching students holistically, not just content
knowledge, but recognizing students’ existing strengths and accomplishments (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2009). The overall results of this research indicate that empathetic teachers with positive attitudes of ELLs had a positive impact on designing instruction to differentiate for ELLs, student-teacher relationships, and classroom culture, which improved students’ learning experiences. The teachers believed in the positive influence of culturally responsive teaching, incorporated culturally responsive teaching materials and a role reversal method to allow students to lead the learning, and emphasized the importance of teamwork.

The research questions were created based on the existing research indicating that the significant challenges ELLs experienced were due to teachers’ perceptions and expectations of the ELLs (DeCapua & Marshall, 2015; Kanno & Kangas, 2014; Lee, 2012; Milner, 2007). The researchers have explained that the teachers’ perceptions and expectations influenced the student-teacher relationship and students’ English language learning experiences. A strong student-teacher relationship has been found to be a key factor influencing the students’ sense of belongingness and their academic performance (DeCapua & Marshall, 2015).

The teachers with positive relationships tended to care for the students, and they put extra effort to be available for the students, which allowed students to feel more connected to the teachers and belonged to the school (Slaughter & Carlson, 1996). Even though the culturally responsive teaching theory would not solve all existing problems, the existing research corroborates the positive impact that culturally responsive teaching brings to both students and teachers (Gay, 2010). Therefore, studying the effect of culturally
responsive teaching and students’ learning experiences further explored the importance of providing support to newly arrived ELLs.

The culturally responsive teaching theory incorporates “the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles” of the students to make learning “more relevant to and effective for them” (Gay, 2010). Culturally responsive teachers were caring toward the students, and it was a description of both attitude and practice, which required action (Gay, 2010). Culturally responsive teachers recognized the cultural heritage and respected students’ cultures (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2009). Then, they recognized students’ existing strengths, abilities, and accomplishments while understanding that teaching was educating students as a whole (Gay, 2010). Culturally responsive teachers also believed all students could succeed, and they were passionate about the content (Ladson-Billings, 2009).

Then, the culturally responsive teachers integrated multicultural knowledge, teaching students to recognize and respect each other’s culture, and supported students to develop and maintain cultural competence (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2009). The teachers used cultural resources and students’ prior knowledge to develop intellectual, social, emotional, and political learning to teach the students (Gay, 2010). The teachers encouraged collaborative learning and believed that knowledge was recreated, recycled, and shared among teachers and students (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2009). The teachers believed in providing appropriate support to allow students to be successful learners by demanding and reinforcing (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2009).

The theoretical framework of this study used the theory of culturally responsive teaching to view how teachers designed and modified their instruction for ELLs, built a
positive relationship with the ELLs, and created an adequate classroom culture where ELLs could feel at home and comfortable. The following is a discussion and interpretation of the findings of this research through the lens of the culturally responsive teaching theoretical framework.

**Question 1. How do teachers view ELLs in general, and how do their views influence the designing of their instruction?** The result of this study concluded that three groups of teachers viewed the ELLs differently, which influenced their ways of designing and differentiating the instruction: empathetic and exemplary teachers, sympathetic and emerging teachers, and apathetic and resistant teachers.

The result of this study demonstrate that the empathetic and exemplary teachers were culturally responsive teachers who believed in the ELLs’ potential, recognized the students’ ability, and held high standards, which had a positive impact on their attitudes and instructional design. While recognizing ELLs’ challenging circumstances, the empathetic teachers held high standards for ELLs and trusted in their potential and ability. The teachers viewed the ELLs as having full potential regardless of the students’ English language skills, and they provided appropriate support for the ELLs to meet high standards. The teachers considered the students’ preferred way of learning and created a safe and comfortable classroom culture, which required incorporating students’ cultures in designing their instruction.

Sympathetic and emerging teachers also recognized that the ELLs were having difficulties in the classroom, and they felt sorry for them. However, these teachers often had lower expectations for the ELLs’ academic performance, which led to them having lower standards. They believed that modification in their instruction was not necessary, but
they would speak to the students friendly if the students initiated the approach. The teachers described the ELLs as quiet, shy, and inward, which they characterized as negative qualities. They often believed in treating all students equally and that some ELLs’ failure was unfortunately inevitable due to the time it would take for ELLs to acquire requisite English language skills.

The apathetic and resistant teachers viewed the ELLs as students lacking ability and potential, and they were often uncaring regarding the ELLs’ academic success. The teachers described the ELLs’ characteristics as intrinsically quiet and further explained that quietness and limited English language skills were the weaknesses of ELLs. They believed that the students should not have come to the United States since failure was expected due to the students’ unreadiness in language and curriculum. The teachers had low expectations for the students’ academic success and believed that nothing could expedite the learning process.

The interpretations of these findings indicate that when teachers possessed culturally responsive (empathetic) attitudes, the ELLs benefited from the appropriate support of such teachers. The empathetic teachers created a safe and comfortable classroom culture for the ELLs by understanding their culture to promote learning. The implications of these findings would be providing information and education regarding ELLs and their culture to sympathetic and apathetic teachers so that the ELLs could ultimately benefit from it. The teachers could also benefit from learning students’ cultures and methods to support the students since the teachers struggled to teach the population due to their lack of knowledge specific to the population. The next findings of this question indicated that the culturally responsive and empathetic teachers held high standards in academics and in
general. To provide adequate support and promote ELLs’ English language learning experiences, the teachers performed the following practices: acknowledge students’ efforts and hard work, encourage students in academic struggles and frustrations, observe students’ preferred approach and initiate the interaction, and believe in students’ ability.

**Question 2. How Do Teachers’ Attitudes Influence Student-teacher Relationship and Classroom Culture?** The results of this study indicate that there were three types of teachers and corresponding attitudes, which had different influences on student-teacher relationship and classroom culture: exemplary teachers with positive attitudes, emerging teachers with passive attitudes, and indifferent teachers with negative attitudes.

The results of this question indicate that, while various circumstances could influence the student-teacher relationship and classroom culture, the teachers’ attitudes had the most substantial influence on students’ learning experiences. The exemplary teachers with positive attitudes put in extra effort to support and care for the ELLs compared to the other groups of teachers who had passive attitudes and negative attitudes. Interestingly, most of the teachers in the other two groups (emerging and indifferent) also identified themselves as positive and caring teachers, but students’ individual and group interviews and observations proved the disconnect between the teachers’ perspectives of themselves and students’ perspectives of the teachers. As described in Chapter 3, caring is action-driven, and the teachers’ positive attitudes must translate into actions to adequately support the ELLs.

The exemplary teachers who had positive attitudes believed in the ELLs’ full potential, took action to build warm relationships with the students, and promoted positive
classroom culture. The teachers tried to get to know the students and had a genuine interest in learning culture, customs, and language. They incorporated the students’ prior knowledge to provide appropriate support and created a comfortable classroom culture. While holding high expectations, they frequently checked with the students to support them, which led to a positive relationship with the students. The teachers often became facilitators to allow students to take the initiative in learning and made them feel more comfortable speaking in class by creating a comfortable classroom culture.

The emerging teachers with passive attitudes were often friendly and recognized the students’ needs but refused to provide extra support. Some teachers in this group emphasized the importance of treating all students equally and denied students’ possible difficulties. The teachers believed that the students might do well in the future, but only with the passage of time. Some other teachers in this group gave excuses for the ELLs by giving higher grades in assignments to pass them – out of sympathy and/or out of indifference. The teachers recognized the students’ needs for more support but would not put in extra effort, and they avoided challenging ELLs academically.

Lastly, the indifferent teachers with negative attitudes shifted all responsibilities for learning to the ELLs. The teachers in this group favored the traditional teaching method, and they believed that it had merit since it had lasted since they were young. They believed that their job was to provide information and knowledge, and learning was the students’ responsibility. Student interviews and observation showed the impact of the indifferent teachers’ negative attitudes toward the students: dislike, ignorance, and lack of understanding. The students described the teachers as annoyed and uncaring.
The interpretations of these findings indicate that the teachers’ positive attitudes influenced the student-teacher relationship and classroom culture positively. The results of this study suggest that the teachers should acquire an understanding of the benefits associated with the teachers’ positive attitudes and care toward students. When the students had positive and caring teachers, students reported positive feelings followed by closer relationships with the teachers and felt not left out or alone, supported, and understood. When the students had the emerging teachers with passive attitudes, they reported easy instruction and felt nice but eventually became unhappy with low expectations of them by the teachers and the passing grades given out of sympathy. When the students had the indifferent teachers who had negative attitudes, they reported the following: negative feelings of fright, anxiety, and embarrassment; being stressed out and exhausted; negative relationships with the teachers; and feeling disregarded or bullied by the teachers. Therefore, the teachers should be informed of the influence of their attitudes on the student-teacher relationship and classroom culture to help ELLs relieve stress, develop positive attitudes and relationships with teachers, and understand curriculum and language.

Question 3. How, If at All, Do Teachers Perform Culturally Responsive Practices? The results of this study indicate that, while many teachers agreed that culturally responsive teaching could support ELLs’ learning, not all teachers were culturally responsive; some were culturally obstinate. The culturally responsive teacher (a) is caring; (b) recognizes and respects students’ culture; (c) teaches the whole child, not just content knowledge; (d) acknowledges students’ ability and hard work; (e) believes all students can succeed; (f) is passionate about content; (g) incorporates culturally responsive teaching materials and students’ prior knowledge; (h) sees teaching as “pulling knowledge
out”; (i) encourages collaborative learning; (j) believes knowledge is continuously recreated, recycled, and shared by teachers and students; and (k) helps students to develop necessary skills.

The interpretations of these findings indicate that culturally responsive teachers and culturally obstinate teachers had different perceptions of ELLs’ ability and different approaches in how to teach the population. When culturally responsive teachers cared for ELLs, they actively observed the students since they valued understanding students’ needs. They did not stop at emotional sympathy, but they held high standards with empathetic and warm attitudes for the students’ circumstances. When culturally responsive teachers recognized and respected ELLs’ culture, they valued learning students’ culture and brought students’ language and culture into the lesson to enhance the learning. When culturally responsive teachers believed in teaching the whole child, they were committed to developing social and emotional learning for ELLs using cultural resources and students’ prior knowledge. When culturally responsive teachers believed that all students could succeed and acknowledged the ELLs’ abilities, the teachers recognized students’ potential to succeed regardless of the language barriers. When the teachers believed in students’ potential, ability, and hard work, the students became more confident and more willing to attend and participate. When teachers were passionate about content, they put in extra effort and time to support the ELLs to prepare them for the future.

When the teachers incorporated culturally responsive materials, the teachers considered the ELLs’ prior knowledge in developing the lessons. Because the reading and other materials were relatable to students’ previous experiences, students became more excited about learning and engaged during the lesson. When teachers understood teaching
as “pulling knowledge out” from the students, the teachers recognized the ELLs’ capability and respected students’ cultural values, which added to the classroom culture and helped students initiate the conversation with the teachers more comfortably. When teachers emphasized the importance of collaborative learning, they observed students individually and paired them or grouped them to maximize learning in a judgment-free zone. When teachers believed that knowledge is continuously recreated, recycled, and shared, the students were more recognized for their potential and ability and held accountable for learning in positive ways. When culturally responsive teachers helped students to develop necessary skills, they searched to find and provide appropriate resources and did not expect the students to possess all prerequisite skills.

On the other hand, the culturally obstinate teacher (a) is uncaring, (b) does not recognize or respect students’ culture, (c) teaches students just content knowledge, (d) does not acknowledge students’ ability, (e) believes failure is inevitable for some, (f) is detached and neutral about content, (g) maintains the existing curriculum and does not wish to make changes, (h) sees teaching as “putting knowledge into,” (i) encourages individual and competitive learning, (j) believes knowledge is static and is passed in one direction – from teacher to student, and (k) expects students to demonstrate prerequisite skills.

Culturally obstinate teachers included two groups of teachers. The first group agreed with culturally responsive teaching but did not practice due to uncertainty, incompetence, time constraints, and resources. The second group disagreed with culturally responsive teaching and was skeptical of its implementation. When the teachers were uncaring, they were not supportive and too strict, which resulted in students’ negative emotions, distant relationships, and an uncomfortable classroom culture. The students
often described the classroom as strict and sometimes experienced negative classroom cultures, such as bullying and racism.

Culturally obstinate teachers did not recognize or respect students’ culture and taught students just content knowledge. Even though the teachers’ motivation was to treat all students equally and provide the knowledge, the ELLs described the teachers as uncaring and ignoring.

Culturally obstinate teachers believed that failure was inevitable for some students, and the ELLs were often included in the category of those who faced inevitable failure. As culturally obstinate teachers were detached about content, they did not check for students’ understanding and just taught the content. The students often described the teachers as uncaring, and they were always anxious about learning in the classroom. Because culturally obstinate teachers viewed teaching as putting knowledge into the students, they believed that the teaching should be in a one-way direction – only from teacher to student. When culturally obstinate teachers encouraged individual learning, the teachers tended to be detached and neutral about the content and would just provide answers. Lastly, culturally obstinate teachers expected students to demonstrate prerequisite skills, since they believed that their responsibility was to give knowledge followed by the curriculum.

**Relationship to Prior Research**

This study was built upon the existing research about culturally responsive teaching, student-teacher relationship, classroom culture, and their influence on ELLs’ language learning experiences.

The growing population of ELLs has been changing the demographics of U.S. schools, and they will account for 40 percent of the total student population by 2030 (Kena,
Due to demographic changes, schools have been under high pressure to make all students succeed, including ELLs, but the dropout rate has been alarmingly high for the ELLs (DeCapua & Marshall, 2015). Even with the increased attention, Asian ELLs, including Korean ELLs, have been neglected due to their perceived image as the exemplary minority.

The evidence-based research indicated that ELLs struggled due to lack of support, lack of expectation, lack of belongingness, and ill-equipped teachers (Baum & Flores, 2011; Good, Masewicz & Vogel, 2010; Honigsfeld & Giouroukakis, 2011; Howard, 2010; Jiménez et al., 2015; Kanno & Kangas, 2014; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Lee, 2012; Milner, 2010; Polat, 2010). While culturally responsive pedagogy did not remedy them all, it began to address the barriers to ELLs’ positive experience. When teachers performed culturally responsive teaching, many researchers found evidence of positive student-teacher relationships (Bishop et al., 2009; DeCapua & Marshall, 2015; Howard, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Savage et al., 2011). Other researchers found the evidence of changed school and classroom culture when teachers performed culturally responsive teaching in the classrooms (Bui & Fagan, 2013; Furner, Yahya, & Duffy, 2005; Giroir et al., 2015; Howard, 2001; Irizarry, & Antrop-González, 2008; Jiménez et al., 2015; Ladson-Billings, 2006).

When teachers exercised culturally responsive teaching, student engagement level was enhanced (DeCapua & Marshall, 2015; Fredricks, 2012; Giroir et al., 2015; Howard, 2001), and students shared their positive language learning experiences (Bui & Fagan, 2013; Fredricks, 2012; Howard, 2001; Nguyen et al., 2013; Savage et al., 2011; Slaughter
Ultimately, culturally responsive teaching would support the students’ academic success (Ladson-Billings, 1995a). This study was built around the concept of the positive influences of culturally responsive teaching, which could lead to enhanced student engagement and language learning experiences. The results of this study support the existing research that teachers’ culturally responsive teaching could lead to satisfaction in students’ language learning experience. The data indicate that teachers’ culturally responsive attitudes proved to play a significant role in students’ learning experiences at school.

While existing literature and the findings of this study support the significant influence of teachers’ culturally responsive teaching on student-teacher relationships, classroom culture, and students’ learning experiences, not all teachers understood or agreed with the approach, and some rather believed in traditional teaching. Some researchers have emphasized the importance of designing meaningful learning experiences for students, since many of them have struggled with the heavily lecture-based traditional teaching (Nguyen et al., 2013). Nguyen and Cortes (2013) introduced teachers who transformed traditional lecture-based learning and provided differentiated lessons to support ELLs’ unique needs, which ultimately had positive influences on student learning. The results of this study found some teachers who agreed with the existing literature, but some others, later indicated as culturally obstinate teachers, still valued traditional teaching and learning methods. The culturally obstinate teachers believed that the teachers’ role is primarily providing knowledge, and the traditional teaching method worked since they were students.

The existing evidence-based research demonstrated positive influences and outcomes for ELLs when teachers acquired culturally responsive teaching methods (Gay,
2010, 2013, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 1992; 1995b, 2009, 2014). Especially educating new teachers on how to incorporate and demonstrate culturally responsive teaching is an emerging topic in education (NYSED.gov, CR-SE Framework, 2019). This study was designed to further investigate the influence of teachers’ culturally responsive teaching on the student-teacher relationship, classroom culture, students’ English learning experiences, and ultimately students’ learning.

Due to the lack of study regarding the influence of culturally responsive teaching on Korean adolescent ELLs, this study extends the existing research on culturally responsive teaching and its influence. The results of this study indicate that culturally responsive teaching is crucial to Korean ELLs’ language learning experiences, student-teacher relationships, and classroom culture, which also lead to students’ satisfaction and belongingness.

Limitations of the Study

This study examined the teachers’ culturally responsive teaching and its influences on the student-teacher relationship, classroom culture, and the perception of students’ English language learning experiences. Through the purposive sampling procedure, all Korean ELLs in the participating school were contacted, and a total of eleven students agreed to participate in this study. Then all teachers who have at least one of the participating Korean ELLs in their classrooms were recruited since they could influence the ELLs’ learning. This study was based on the interviews and observations, and some limitations related to the study were apparent within this research: culturally responsive teaching being a difficult concept to define; the researcher’s positionality; the difficulties of generalization; and sampling issues.
First, it was challenging to define culturally responsive teaching as a concept, and the number of teachers who performed culturally responsive teaching was limited. The teachers who had at least one Korean ELL in their classes were interviewed and observed. However, not all teachers could perform culturally responsive teaching even though they agreed with the positive influences of this method. As a possible solution, Ladson-Billings (2014) emphasized the fluidity of the culture and the culturally relevant pedagogy. By situating the study in the context of Korean ELLs and following the theoretical framework, the researcher could define the concept and avoid the biases.

Second, the researcher’s positionality, interest in the topic, and similar experienced memories could cohere with the research inquiries (Milner, 2007). In a phenomenological investigation, the researcher has a personal interest in whatever she seeks to know; the researcher is intimately connected with the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). In this study, the researcher’s self-perceptions toward culture and language learning could influence the way of interpretation of the participants’ responses. The researcher, like the participating ELLs, was a Korean ELL who came to the United States during her high school years and has had academic experience in the United States. It seemed to be a strength of the study since the researcher’s perspectives would allow making connections between culture and the data. Although the researcher’s experience could influence the interpretations, being a cultural insider of both the Korean and the U.S. education systems would allow the researcher to understand both institutional culture and how the Korean ELLs would navigate through the changing learning environments. For example, the processing of field notes could be the limitation of the study. As Miles and Huberman (1994) stated, the field notes were the data generated through the observations and were affected by what the
researcher “treat[ed] as writable and readable.” Also, the descriptive data could fall into the researcher’s interpretations of the circumstances.

Third, the results of this study could not be generalized to other geographic areas since the results were derived from the unique experiences of Korean ELLs studying in a large urban private school. Also, this study only considered Korean ELLs who came to the United States in their later academic years and the teachers who had at least one Korean ELL in their classrooms. Due to the specific location and the population, the transferability of the findings is limited.

Lastly, this study had sampling issues in collecting data, and it was challenging to find teachers who were in the culturally obstinate category from teacher interviews. The concept of culturally responsive teaching was becoming a popular idea, and most teachers spoke about the concept positively. However, there was a disconnect between theory and practice. Even when teachers agreed with the benefits of culturally responsive teaching, not all teachers practiced it in their classrooms. Therefore, the researcher focused on students and the student interviews during the observation, which influenced the field notes.

**Recommendations for Future Practice**

This study was developed based upon the existing research on culturally responsive teaching and extended to its influence on the student-teacher relationship, classroom culture, and Korean adolescent ELLs’ English language learning experiences. The students may have less support, and the teachers may have less information or education to appropriately support the population due to the perceived image of Korean ELLs being a model minority. The results of this study indicate the importance of teachers’ culturally responsive teaching in developing positive and productive student-teacher relationships,
creating a positive and safe classroom culture, and enhancing students’ learning experiences. When the teachers recognize the ELLs’ ability and care for the students with high standards, the students experience a closer relationship with the teachers and have better learning experiences.

By understanding the results of this study, the schools can develop professional development programs and provide available recourses of reference for teachers to perform culturally responsive teaching with adequate support. Through this study, the researcher found many sympathetic teachers who felt sorry about the ELLs’ circumstances but who were unsure of what to do. Teachers’ awareness and competencies in culturally responsive teaching could be improved by training teachers through professional development programs. Then, the teachers would be better prepared to practice culturally responsive teaching for the ELLs. Besides, the resources of reference would allow teachers to be confident in finding resources and support when they have ELLs in their classrooms. Therefore, the schools and school districts could provide more excellent support for the new and existing teachers to be equipped to teach ELLs in their classrooms.

Furthermore, the role of educated and committed school leaders is critical in preparing teachers to be supported and become culturally responsive. Many researchers have emphasized the importance of the principals’ support in implementing culturally responsive teaching in school to avoid facing the risk of “being disjointed or short-lived” (Khalifa et al., 2016). The school leaders should reform the school curriculum and school culture to be more culturally responsive. Khalifa et al. (2016) stated, “culturally responsive school leaders are responsible for promoting a school climate inclusive of minoritized students… within most school contexts” (p. 3). Therefore, a well-developed leadership
preparatory program should help the school leaders to acquire a critical self-awareness. The program should address “race, culture, language, national identity, and other areas of difference,” which would have an impact on creating a positive learning environment for all students, including ELLs.

The findings can help guide teacher training courses and programs that can build culturally responsive teaching into the curriculum and train the teachers to be culturally responsive. The findings of this study revealed that the teachers were feeling incompetent in interacting with and teaching ELLs due to the lack of education in the teacher preparing programs. Even when the teachers received education to teach ELLs, they explained that it was minimal. Then, the teachers explained that they always had the burden of not knowing how to teach the ELLs in their classrooms. They hoped that time would fix the problems the ELLs faced. Therefore, it is evident that teacher training programs could provide significant support for the new teachers to be prepared for teaching ELLs.

However, there is a disconnect between theory and practice. Many teachers agree with the theory, but a better connection to the practice is needed. There were teachers who agreed with the benefits of culturally responsive teaching, but many teachers were skeptical of the use of this method. Professional development is necessary, but the program should include useful and practical information. Therefore, the program should be meaningful for the teachers to change their negative or skeptical perspectives. The school leaders “must play a leading role in maintain cultural responsiveness in their schools” (Khalifa et al., 2016, p. 10). They must create culturally responsive professional development opportunities and provide practical tools to support the unsure or skeptical teachers by examining cultural gaps in the existing system, using school data. School leaders should
arrange a team to search for new ways for the teachers to practice culturally responsive teaching, and they should demonstrate how to implement the methods.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

This study demonstrates the positive influences of teachers’ culturally responsive teaching on the student-teacher relationship, classroom culture, and, ultimately, students’ learning experiences. Therefore, future research on culturally responsive teaching should investigate its influence on school cultures and student outcomes. While this research was focused on the relationship and perceptions of teachers and students, future research can investigate how culturally responsive teaching can be built into teacher education courses and professional development courses.

As stated in the limitations of the study, defining culturally responsive teaching as a concept is challenging, and defining culture adds more complexity. There are issues to be resolved, such as how we know what to look for and how we know when to do what. Foster (as cited in Milner, 2007) stressed the existing discrepancy between dominant and oppressive perspectives: “White people, their beliefs, experiences… are often viewed as ‘the norm’ by which others are compared, measured, assessed, and evaluated.” By carefully defining culture, future research can examine and validate the voices of marginalized and underrepresented groups.

This study examined teachers’ attitudes and practices of culturally responsive teaching and the influences of these attitudes and practices on student-teacher relationships, classroom culture, and students’ English language learning experiences. More research should be conducted to determine methods to promote teachers’ competencies in performing culturally responsive teaching. For example, some teachers recognize the
benefits of culturally responsive teaching and the need for understanding students’ culture and providing appropriate support. However, many teachers expressed difficulties in understanding and practicing culturally responsive teaching. Future research should investigate the implementation methods to build teachers’ culturally responsive attitude and to ultimately support the students’ relationships, culture, and learning.

The data in this study indicated the influence of teachers’ culturally responsive teaching on the student-teacher relationship and classroom culture in relation to the Korean adolescent ELLs’ learning. Different groups of teachers and students in diverse demographics, ages, and locations could generate different results. Future research can examine how different demographics of teachers and students influence the results.

Lastly, future research should examine how location and diversity, or the lack thereof, impact teacher proficiency and attitudes toward culturally responsive teaching. As stated earlier, this study was conducted in the most diverse county in the United States (Gamino, 2019), and yet, some teachers still demonstrated skepticism toward culturally responsive teaching. Future research should investigate how locations and demographics impact teachers’ views of culturally responsive teaching.

Conclusion

This study was designed with a phenomenological method and motivated by my experiences as an ELL who came to the United States during adolescence. While many teachers and students were supportive of me, many struggles with negative and uncaring teachers became part of my adolescent memories. Many of the struggles I experienced were related the lack of support, resources, teacher’s patience, expectation, opportunity, and belongingness. Even though I cannot ignore that those are my experiences and positionality,
I still see the negative practices today in ELLs’ school experiences, 15 years after my similar experiences (Milner, 2007). As uncaring and culturally obstinate teachers have failed to make noticeable progress for more than a decade, I wanted to study how culturally responsive teachers and culturally obstinate teachers influence student-teacher relationships, classroom culture, and students’ learning experiences.

When ELLs arrive at secondary education with limited English, they are not adequately supported or challenged to succeed academically, which often leads to a lack of post-secondary opportunities (Baum & Flores, 2011; DeCapua & Marshall, 2015; Kanno & Kangas, 2014; Lee, 2012; Milner, 2007). Additionally, ELLs experience difficulties in developing positive relationships with teachers and lack a sense of belongingness in school. One-quarter of those who had dropped out of school reported they did not feel they “belonged” at school (USDOE, 1993, as cited by Juvonen, 2006). Even though ELLs spend most of their school hours with mainstream class teachers, the teachers feel unprepared and unready for the ELLs (Faez, 2012; Polat, 2010). While culturally responsive teaching does not remedy them all, it begins to address the struggles the ELLs experience.

Through the purposive sampling procedure, all Korean ELLs in the participating school and all possible teacher populations related to Korean ELLs’ learning were recruited. All students and teachers were interviewed and observed various times in a classroom setting to satisfy data saturation and data triangulation. The findings of this study revealed three types of teachers who behaved distinguishably based on their different belief systems: empathetic and exemplary, sympathetic and emerging, apathetic and resistant. First, the empathetic and exemplary teachers believed in ELLs’ potential, acknowledged their hard
work, and held high standards. Second, the sympathetic and emerging teachers recognized students’ needs and difficulties and often felt sorry about their circumstances but held low standards. Lastly, apathetic and resistant teachers were uncaring teachers who believed students lacked potential to succeed.

The three groups of teachers had significantly different influences on student-teacher relationships and classroom culture. The first group of teachers had positive attitudes and were determined to put in extra effort to support and care for the ELLs. They spent extra time and were patient in getting to know the ELLs as well as in supporting them effectively. They also created a comfortable and positive classroom culture for ELLs, where they became facilitators and recognized the students’ ability amongst their peers. The second group of teachers had friendly yet indifferent attitudes and recognized the students’ needs but did not put extra effort into supporting or challenging them. Even when the teachers realized that students were struggling, they did not consider helping the students to be their responsibility. The last group of teachers had negative attitudes and put all the responsibilities associated with learning on the ELLs. They believed that their job was to teach the curriculum and give information.

Many teachers agreed that culturally responsive teaching could help ELLs, but not all teachers performed it in their classroom. Connecting the findings to the theoretical framework, the empathetic and exemplary teachers with positive attitudes were culturally responsive teachers. The teachers cared for the ELLs, recognized their potential, acknowledged their ability, respected their culture and prior knowledge, helped students to develop necessary skills, and were passionate about content. The sympathetic and emerging teachers and apathetic and resistant teachers were culturally obstinate teachers.
They were often uncaring for the students, valued traditional lecturing in conjunction with competitive and individual learning, expected students to demonstrate all prerequisite skills, and were detached about content.
APPENDIX A

Internal Review Board

MEMO

Institutional Review Board
Federal Wide Assurance: FWA00009066

Date: November 28, 2018

To: Kisong Kim

CC: Dr. Randall Clemens
    Dr. Rene Parmar
    Dr. Mary Beth Schaefer

Protocol # 1018-106
Protocol Title: Culturally Responsive Teaching: An Investigation of Effective Practices for Korean English Language Learners

Please be advised that conditions have been met and your human subjects’ protocol has been approved by the IRB. You may begin your study.

IRB approval of research projects is valid for one year only from the original date of approval. This study expires on November 27, 2019. Approval of the continuation of the research is possible on a yearly basis. A new proposal must be submitted upon request for renewal.

You will not be permitted to collect data more than twelve months from the date of approval without an extension granted by the IRB. Mark your calendar today for October 28, 2019. You should submit your request for continuation on that date and no later.

It is imperative that you keep this memo and the email on file where it can easily be accessed. You will need to provide copies of this document when involved in further correspondence with the IRB.

Best wishes for successful pursuit of this research.
IRB #: 10-18-106 initial
Title: Culturally Responsive Teaching: An Investigation of Effective Practices for Korean English Language Learners
Creation Date: 10-4-2018
End Date: 11-11-2020
Status: Approved
Principal Investigator: Kisong Kim
Review Board: St John's University Institutional Review Board
Sponsor:

Study History

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Key Study Contacts

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Diana Paterson
Diana is a young White woman, who’s teaching ELLs in her English enrichment classes. It’s her second-year teaching in this school. Interestingly, she worked in the general office of the school while she completed her master’s program. Before this school, she worked as a part-time teacher’s aide at nearby high school, closely working with the special education department. Before she started her master’s program, she worked for a travel agency for about a year. She explained that while she was there, she learned about different cultures by meeting different people who came in. She said it was interesting that people who booked the trips needed “someone who spoke Spanish, or someone who spoke Italian, or someone who spoke different language.” And she explained that no one at the travel agency could speak another language. One day, she sat with someone and tried to have a conversation and tried to assess what they needed, where they wanted to go, and she could tell that they were getting frustrated. She said, “Seeing other people in my office get frustrated, it made me realize: imagine how much more frustrating it is for them than it is for us. This is their everyday, going to any store and trying to communicate with someone.” She said, she always wanted to go back to school for teaching, but she didn’t know for what. And this was the moment that she decided what she was going for. She studied linguistics in her undergraduate and decided to study TESOL program for her master’s degree.

Chris Thompson
Chris is a young White man who’s teaching math classes. He has worked at the school for two years. He has experiences teaching in another nearby school for three years. He explained that he had a lot of experience with Spanish-speaking students in his previous school. He had “varying levels” of ELLs. He had a range of students who had just come over from various different countries with no English-speaking skills to students who could speak and understand English pretty well but still need linguistic supports. Since he’s been working in this school, he said the ELL population has been predominately Korean and Chinese students in his class. He has four ELLs among his five classes, and he claimed them to be “kind of noticeable,” saying, “I can tell.” His first impression is from students’ last names. “the first day of school, I’m running down my list of names I can sort of tell who’s an English Language Learner or not at that point. With the names… When I’m calling them and waiting for them to respond, I can usually tell.” His bachelor’s degree was in mathematics, and his master’s degree was in adolescent education. He described himself to be White and doesn’t have experience learning another language. Chris defined the teacher’s role as someone who has to modify certain things that are given for ELLs to “make it more conducive for them, make it a little more fair.”

Gray Miller
Greg is an old White man who’s teaching science classes – physics and astronomy. He’s been in this school for nine and a half years. Previously he had experiences teaching math in a diverse middle school after getting master’s in math education for secondary education
for four years. He explained that he had one or two Korean or Chinese ELLs per class during his time teaching science at this school. He thinks that most of the ELLs would understand him. “I speak loud and I write in large letters.” He thinks that the teacher has the content knowledge and the teacher delivers the content knowledge to the students with examples and scaffolding. He emphasized the importance of possessing content knowledge, but he also highlighted the importance of students’ work. He described his lessons to be a lot of problem solving, and it’s an active thing, not passive. “You can’t just watch me.” He’s very passionate in teaching and getting to know the students when the ELLs tend to be quiet and shy. The students in his class described him to be caring. Students refer to him as Dr. Miller.

Joanna Anderson
Joanna is a young White woman who teaches math. She described her ethnicity as White Caucasian. She’s been teaching in the school for nine years. She said it was her first job out of college and she has stayed there. She has her bachelor’s degree in math with a concentration in education. Then she studied math for her master’s degree. She said she’s teaching AP Calculus and she has a lot of ELLs in her classes. She seemed to be reserved throughout the interview.

Kailey Harris
Kailey is a middle-aged White woman, who teaches science. She described her ethnicity to be an American with Italian and Canadian influence since her father is French-Canadian, and her mother is Italian. She’s been in this school for 14 years and she has been the chair of the science department for the past five years. She previously worked as a dance teacher and a medical assistant at a university. She has her bachelor’s degree in biology and master’s degree in adolescent education. She claimed that she’s familiar with ELLs since she always has ELLs in her classes. She has approximately two to three ELLs per year. She mentioned that some students struggle in her class because of language, even though most of them get more comfortable speaking in class as the year goes by. “I definitely see some varying degrees of language amongst the students.” “When you’re young, your mind just absorbs everything, so it’s a lot easier to learn language for a younger age.” She believes that the teacher’s role is to guide, to prepare, and to encourage. She also emphasized the importance of overseeing the students and the process of learning. “I think it’s also our responsibility to notice that if something is not right, to send that information to the appropriate person.”

Katherine Taylor
Katherine is a middle-aged White woman who teaches math. She’s been in the school for three years and has been teaching Algebra I, II, and Algebra II Honors classes. Before she worked in this school, she taught in a middle school for a year, then an inner-city public school for another year. After she worked in the middle school, she realized that she wanted to teach a higher level of math. Then she moved to the public school in the inner-city, and she described the school to be her worst nightmare. She said there were a lot of fights,
violence, and disrespect. She has her bachelor’s degree in mathematics, and she minored in education. Then she got her master’s degree in math and education. She has approximately 10 ELLs in her classes every year. “We get a lot of Korean exchange, we get a lot of Chinese exchange students.” She described that her role as a teacher is to be a facilitator. “They kind of learn from themselves, learn from each other, and then we bring it back together.” She explained that her job is to “put weight off of the students from the heavy workload” the students have. “I like my students to think… I don’t want to just get up there and lecture… I like to ask them questions to make them think.”

**Kelvin Powell**
Kelvin is a young White man who teaches English. This is his first year at the school. He previously worked in a middle school for four years, and his reason for moving was his desire to work with the older population. He has bachelor’s and master’s degree in English. Then he took some classes to earn education certification. He has about five ELLs in his classes per year. He believes his role as a teacher is to lecture. “When I was in school, I think some teachers in here and even me, still work this way. I think it has merit. The teacher will have lectures and the teachers will tell the students this is how you should be looking at this, this is how you should think about this.”

**Kyla Gordon**
Kyla is a young White woman who teaches social studies. She’s been in this school for two years. Previously she worked in nearby high school for five years, and the reason she chose to move was because of a low enrollment in school in the upcoming year. She has her bachelor’s degree in social studies education. Then she got her master’s in education. She has approximately two to six ELLs in her classes. She emphasized the importance of having fluidity when creating a lesson depending on students’ needs. Some days she would do student-centered activities and let students to take more initiative in their work. Sometimes she would try to step back and let the students do the work and see what they get from working individually. Then she said, there are times that it needs to be more teacher-centered and she gives them notes.

**Lucy Robinson**
Lucy is a middle-aged woman who teaches English. She described her ethnicity as Caucasian, European White. Her father is Polish and her mother is Scandinavian Irish. She has experiences learning French and German. She’s been in this school for 18 years. She previously worked in a public school in Europe for five years. She explained that the major difference in American education and European education is about students’ autonomy in choosing the path. There are a lot of vocational classes for kids that are not academic but “the American system doesn’t allow that.” She has master’s degree in English literature, and language and management studies. She further took classes in secondary education in English. Lucy has interactions with ELLs in her classes and in the writing center. In the writing center, she sees lots of ELLs and helps them with their essays. The teacher tried to learn what Asian students are having the most difficulties in writing. “The majority things for ELLs are misusing verb tenses because a lot of Asian languages don’t make difference in time with verb tenses.” She also tries to understand the special circumstances ELLs are in after moving to the United States to study English. “Some also come over, they live with
guardians who don’t… it’s a sliding scale of how much the guardians pay attention to the kids. She believes that it’s not enough if the only English the students are speaking or hearing is when they come to school. “They have to be immersed if they are gonna get any way better in any period of time.”

**Martin Reed**

Martin is a middle-aged man, who teaches history – global history and U.S. history. He’s been teaching at the school for 14 years. He previously worked in a public middle school for one semester as per-diem substitute after student teaching at the current school. After the per-diem job, he got an offer from the school and came back. He is satisfied with his decision and enjoys the environment because he believes he has a teacher identity. “I feel like here they allow me that freedom to be the teacher.”

Martin has a bachelor’s degree in adolescent education concentrated in social studies. He believes that the adolescent years are formidable years and impressionable. He sees teaching as an opportunity to be a positive force in other people’s lives by getting them in the classroom at that age, and exposing them to topics that they may not have previously had an interest in. “If I can present it in a way where it’s not just interesting, but applicable to their lives, I feel I’m doing something good for the world.”

He has approximately 10 ELLs in his classes per year. He explained that he does not have any formal training to teach ELLs, but he’s been “learning on the fly, just learning from them as much as possible.” He tries to have conversations before and after classes to determine if they are getting the support that they need. He claimed that ELLs are recognizable conversationally. He sees the language barrier in class when he asks questions about content or curriculum. He explains that the ELLs’ response tends to be a little hesitant. Some ELLs will approach him after class, and express that their challenges learning the language after coming to the United States.

He also believes that learning students’ language has positive influence on building relationships with the students.

“I figured I was a good opportunity to build relationships with people. If that’s their native language, and they’re comfortable speaking it, if I can extend the olive branch by speaking to them even a little bit, and show them that I’m trying in their language, I felt like it builds a good relationship.”

**Michelle Roberts**

Michelle is a young White woman, who teaches history – global study, sociology, and U.S. history. She’s been at this school for five years. She had master’s degree in education. Interestingly she graduated from this high school and she came back to teach at this school because she loved the community and the environment. She explained the school is diverse and very accepting. She previously worked in business and needed to change her career since she didn’t enjoy the working environment, and she felt like she wasn’t making a large impact.

Michelle has about four to five ELLs in her classes per year. She does check-ins with the students, and she found that she needs to check freshmen more than senior students. She has experiences learning Spanish and Italian, and she said she’s never mastered any language she tried to learn.
Meggie Russell
Meggie is middle-aged woman, who teaches math. She’s been in this school for 15 years, and she said she’s been a teacher the whole time. Before she started working in this school, she was in finance and she decided to switch her career after 9/11. She said working in finance in Manhattan became difficult emotionally. Then she remembered that she always wanted to become a teacher one day. She has her bachelor’s degree in math and she got her master’s in education administration. She has about two to five ELLs per class every year. She described her role as a teacher as to teach, encourage, and push the students. “I like to think that I try to get the students to be better than they think they can be.” She understands that not every student is going to be a math person, and her goal for them is to try so they can do and understand better than they did yesterday. Her goal for them is to learn to try and fix their mistakes. “At some point in your life, you are going to have something that is hard. At some point in your life, you are going to make a mistake and try to fix it. These are all math things that you do in class.” She believes that there will be a time, a job, or an assignment that students won’t enjoy in their lives. She believes that what she’s teaching is more than the math; she is teaching them to be resilient.

Naomi Hartman
Naomi is a middle-aged white woman who’s teaching science. She described her ethnicity to be Caucasian, Irish, English, and German. She further said, “A mix, I’m a mutt.” She’s been in this school for 14 years. She said she was a full-time science teacher up until three years ago, and now she only teaches one class and runs the iPad program in the school. She explained that the position opened up and she was always interested in technology. She thinks that it’s a good route since “that’s the way the world is going.” She studied for her master’s in chemical engineering and secondary education concentrated in chemistry. She is currently teaching AP Physics, and she said she always had “a fair share of ELLs” in her class. But later, she asked who should be called ELLs when she was asked how many ELLs she has per year. She first described some ELLs in her classroom who are fluent in English. “I feel that the more clear their English is spoken, the more apt they are to participate in groups and answer questions and ask questions. And I think it’s pretty direct correlated to how open they are in the class.” She further explained that the ELLs who are not as fluent or not as comfortable with how they pronounce things, the students tend to be more cautious which lead them to be quieter and not participating in discussions or group works. She described the teacher’s role as to try to use their education and knowledge to help the students get through learning by simplifying and explaining, “if needed,” she said. When she first met me, she was skeptical about what’s going on and what would be studied. She said, “you know, your data will be skewed because we don’t have diverse ELL population in this school. We only have Asians.”

Nathan Price
Nathan is an old White man, who has taught English for 37 years. He said he liked the school from the first interview and liked the department chairperson who eventually turned out to be one of his best friends. He has two bachelor’s degrees, which are in English and biology. Then he got his master’s degree in English. He had a love for learning, and he wanted to become a pediatrician. He started volunteering in
various hospitals and had a moment that changed his career. “I had these moments that are kind of like epiphanies where it’s kind of like your soul or something telling you who you are and what to do.” That was teaching.

He has three to four ELLs in his classes per year. He described ELLs he had in classes as “very pleasant, easy to work with, understanding, personable, respectful, but some have, understandably, very, very weak skills.”

He expressed his concern for learning language for ELLs when they came so late in their academic years. When the ELLs’ language skills are limited and compromised due to the students’ background, he feels frustrations for them. “I’m teaching English, and it’s understanding language. Knowing how to read at this level is not just knowing that T-H-E spells ‘the’ and M-A-N spells ‘man.’ It’s understanding how writers use words to make meaning happen.” He expressed a hope for the newly created ESL program in the school.

He had experiences learning many languages: Spanish, Latin, Italian, German, and French. He explained that he’s not fluent in those languages, but he’s studied them. He believes that you have to immerse yourself in the language since it’s like music. Nathan believes his role as a teacher is to inspire, to make learning fun, and to make students aware of why they are getting an education.

**Paul McCarthy**

Paul is a middle-aged man, who teaches science. He described his ethnicity to be White American. “White American. Ethnicity, I guess Swedish. I’m a mix of different things… American.”

He’s been in the school for nine years. He previously worked in two other schools for a year each, and one of the schools closed down due to financial issues. Paul got Ph.D. in physics and worked as a physics researcher. The reason for the career change was because he burned out on the research and wanted to do something different. The reason he’s happy with the decision is because he likes the interactions with the students. He believes that he might inspire some of them to want to do science, and also can share his excitement for physics with them even if they are not inspired to study science.

He has approximately 10 ELLs per year and most of them are Korean and Chinese students. He believes his role as a teacher is to provide an environment where the students can learn the material, and to present them with opportunities to learn. He emphasized the importance of providing a safe environment and different opportunities for students to try different ways to learn.

**Peter Morgan**

Peter is a middle-aged White man who’s teaching chemistry. He described himself as White-Irish. He’s been working in this school for seven years. Previously he taught chemistry, biology, and physics in other schools. He described having a little bit of experience of teaching ELLs. He’s from Northern Ireland and the school he previously taught in was located in United Kingdom. He had experiences teaching a lot of Eastern European kids in his classes. He has approximately seven ELLs in his classes, and they are mostly Asian students. He has a bachelor’s degree in chemistry and went back to college to get a teaching qualification. He’s been teaching science for 15 years so far. He believes that students will be able to learn to speak a language very quickly, but to learn all of it, the nuances of the grammar, it would take a very long time. Because students are forced
into that position, they would learn to speak quickly. Peter thinks that the most important aspect of being a teacher is first “getting the information out there that they need in that lesson” and classroom management.

**Rebecca Bennett**
Rebecca is a middle-aged woman, who teaches math. She has been in this school for 19 years. She got her bachelor’s degree in math, and master’s degree in education. She described her ethnicity to be Italian.
She explained that she only has experience interacting with ELLs in her classes. She has about 10 to 15 ELLs per year, and she expressed difficulty in getting to know them within the given time frame. “It’s hard, they come in the class for 40 minutes, and then the bell rings, they’ve got to leave to get to the next class, so it’s not like they can stop and talk to me.” In addition to that, students’ personalities might be another barrier. “They don’t talk too much.”
She believes her role as a teacher is to give the students the basic knowledge, hoping students to use it to succeed in the future.

**Sophie Moretti**
Sophie is a young White woman who teaches history. She describes her ethnicity as American, with Italian, Irish, and German descent. “But I consider myself American.”
She’s been in this school for two years and she’s been teaching sophomores and juniors global history and American history. She previously worked in a middle school for four years, and in another middle school for two years. The reason she moved to this school was because she wanted to teach in high school.
She has had interactions and teaching experiences with ELLs throughout her teaching years. She described that the ELLs were “Spanish” when she was teaching in the middle school. Now she has more experiences with the ELLs of “Asian descent,” which was a different experience for her. She felt that it was easier to communicate with the Spanish students because she has some knowledge about the language. “I can’t converse with the Korean students unfortunately. I wish I did know some Korean. Maybe I can learn some. So that’s probably the main reason why it’s so different.” She has about five to 10 ELLs in her classes per year.
She got her bachelor’s degree in adolescent education and her master’s degree in world history. As a teacher, she believes that each teacher should develop some plans to assist the students in need.
Appendix C

Student Descriptions

Eunbyul Lee
Eunbyul is a senior, and she came to the United States in the second semester of eighth grade. She has two younger sisters. She’s currently living with a guardian. All interviews were conducted in Korean. She described herself as, “like to have fun, and want to work hard at the same time.” She said she’s not the kind of person who is diligent and consistent every day. She said she needs motivation. The reason she wanted to come to the States was because she loved studying English, “It was like English was my hobby. It was very fun to memorize all pop song lyrics and watch a lot of TV series, and I naturally wanted to study abroad in the States.” She further described herself as a “free-spirit” and said she couldn’t fit in when she was in Korea. She also mentioned that she was going through puberty and wanted to go somewhere else, an English-speaking country.

Heesoo Kang
Heesoo is a senior, and she came to the United States when she was in ninth grade. She’s currently living with her mother and younger brother who is two years younger. All interviews were conducted in Korean. She described herself as a quiet and hard-working person. She explained that the most important thing for her is to find what she likes, and do what she loves to do. She traveled the United States when she was in sixth grade. She said she wanted to stay but she couldn’t at that time. She further said, “because I wanted to come, I was very determined and just tried my best.”

Heeyoon Jung
Heeyoon is a junior and she came to the United States when she was in ninth grade. She has an older brother, who is 5 years older and lives in Korea. She’s currently living with her uncle. She seemed to be very shy at first, but she was very honest. She described herself as, “awkward” when she first meets a person. She recalled why she decided to study abroad. At first, she didn’t think about studying abroad, but she changed her mind after she experienced her brother going through the college prep in Korea. “He spent another year of studying for college entrance exam [in Korea]. My brother was having a hard time with the exam, and my family was having a hard time too. So if I do that too, then… [it would be difficult not only for me, but also for my family.]”

Hyeyoung Jang (Iris)
Hyeyoung (Iris) is a senior and she came to the United States when she was in ninth grade. She has two younger brothers who live in Korea. She’s currently living with her guardian. She wanted to speak in Korean for the interviews. She recalled her experience when she first came. “When I first came, I didn’t know anything. I just thought that it will be better for my life studying here compare to staying in Korea. When my mom asked me when I was in a middle school, I liked my friends and all my families are there, I told her I didn’t want to go [to the United States]. But, when my mom asked me when I was in eighth grade, I changed my mind and started to prepare to come here.”
Hyunsuk Son
Hyunsuk is a sophomore who came to the United States during his second semester of eighth grade (in 2016), and has attended the current school since ninth grade. He has a younger sister who’s 5 years younger than him and she still lives in Korea. He is currently living with his guardian. He was very talkative throughout the interviews and when we interacted in the hallway. Hyunsuk chose to speak in Korean for the interview. “Do I have to answer in English? Or can I answer in Korean? Because if I speak in Korean, I feel like I could explain better.” He described himself as having a good personality and doing “okay” in school. He traveled the United States twice when he was in elementary school and decided that he would eventually come when he grew up. When he was in middle school, he wanted to study abroad, and he explained how it was when he was making that decision. “Ah... [it was] very complicated. I came to the US that summer and I just wanted to stay and didn’t want to go back. So I had lots of arguments with my mom...”

Insoo Park (Louis)
Insoo (Louis) is a senior and he came to the United States when he was 12 years old. He and transferred to the current school when he was in 10th grade. He has a younger sister. He’s currently living with his uncle. He was very Americanized. He had experience of bullying when he first came here and tried very hard to fit into the system. Insoo goes by Louis and all interviews were conducted in English. He said he’s been involved in a lot of sports activities and has made a lot of friends. He referred to himself as “being social.” And he further explained that, “I guess I can say I’m an outgoing person because I just try to make friends with everybody. I guess I’m confident in the way I represent myself; a little lazy at times. [But] I think that’s fine.”

Jungin Yang (Chloe)
Jungin (Chloe) is a senior and she came to the United States when she was in ninth grade. She speaks three languages: Korean, English, and Chinese. She’s currently living with her grandmother. Most of the interviews were conducted in English. She started to speak Korean more in the second interview, and she’s good at switching back and forth depending on the topic.

Sanghyun Wang (Richard)
Sanghyun (Richard) is a sophomore and he came to the United States when he was in 10th grade. He had only been in the United States for five months at the time of our first interview. He’s currently living with a guardian. The interviews were conducted in Korean. He described himself as a more rational person. He recalled his experience of coming to the United States, “In our city, we studied really hard. I could go to a good university if I get high grades. But in the United States, they don’t just look at your grade, but also your talent. I wasn’t that good at studying, my parents thought that it will be disadvantageous if I grew up there. So, they wanted to send me here, and I wanted to come as well.”
Yesol Kwon
Yesol is a senior and she came to the United States when she was in the second semester of ninth grade, and transferred to this school during tenth grade. She has a younger brother who is three years younger and lives in Korea. She’s currently living with a guardian. She was very interested in interviewing and engaged. All interviews were conducted in Korean. She described herself as being funny, being nice, and loving drawing. She said she likes to make people laugh. She said she likes to follow the rules strictly, and because of that, she can be boring sometimes. She said, “I feel like my life is less fun than other friends.” She also said her personality changed after she came to the States from extroverted to introverted.

Yoojin Lee
Yoojin is a sophomore and she came to the United States when she was in fifth grade. She has a younger brother. She’s currently living with a guardian. All interviews were conducted in Korean. She described herself as a shy person who likes to be alone without talking to people. When she gets closer to people, she becomes talkative, and people tell her that she’s loud. She still likes quiet places and doesn’t like when there are too many people. She said she’s very emotional and cries a lot. She also mentioned that she is ‘a little obsessed with grades.

Yunjin Yim (Joy)
Yunjin (Joy) is a junior and she came to the United States when she was in ninth grade (in 2016), and transferred to the current school during tenth grade. She has an older sister who’s 11 years older and live in Korea. She’s currently living with her guardian. In school, she goes by her English name, Joy. She wanted to speak in Korean for the interviews. She recalled why she decided to study abroad, “thinking back, I finished the first semester in high school in Korea, but I felt like my future was too dark. It was a summer vacation, and I started to watch American dramas. People seem to be so free, students don’t seem to be studying all times, and I thought it could be a breakthrough for me. I thought that I could not stay in Korea for three more years [high school]. And I always had a dream [Ro-Mang, she said] that I wanted to live in America. In other countries…”
APPENDIX D

Principal’s Consent Letter

26 September 2018

Attn: St. John’s Institutional Review Board

Dear Sir/Madam:

I have reviewed Kisong Kim’s approved research study materials and understand what the study titled “Culturally Responsive Teaching: An Investigation of Effective Practices for Korean English Language learners (ELLs)” entails. I understand that the purpose of this study is to acquire a better understanding of the culturally responsive attitudes and practices of teachers and its influence on student-teacher relationship, classroom culture, and the Korean ELLs’ learning. Also, I understand that it requires interviews of teachers and students, focus group interviews, and observations and grant her permission to conduct her study at I have the authority to do so.

If I have any further questions about this research study I understand that Kisong can be reached at (716) 548-3114 or via e-mail at kisong.kim10@stjohns.edu. I also understand that if I have any questions regarding this IRB approval or the rights of research participants I can contact Raymond DiGiuseppe, Ph.D., Chair, St. John’s Institutional Review Board, at (718) 990-1440 or via e-mail at diuseppe@stjohns.edu.
APPENDIX E

Recruitment Flyer

Front

St. John’s University

The School of Education

Invitation

Research About Korean Students

한국 유학생 여러분,

제 이름은 김기송이고, 지금 세인트 존스 대학에서 박사과정 중이에요. 저는 여러분들의 미국에서 공부한 경험, 한국과 미국의 문화적 차이에 대한 생각, 다른 학생들과의 관계, 그리고 교사와 학교에 대한 의견에 관심이 있어요.

St. Francis Prep에 유학생으로 입학한 한국 학생들을 제 연구 프로젝트에 초대하고 싶어요. 제 권장한 설문 (프리랜서식)을 듣고 이 연구에 관심이 있다면 저에게 알려 주시거나 (716) 548-3114 번으로 전화 하시거나 혹은 kisong.kim10@stjohns.edu로 이메일을 보내주세요.

여러분 모두가 새로운 환경에서 공부하는 것에 대한 다양한 인식을 배울 수있는 귀중한 기회인 것과 동시에, 저는 이러한 귀중한 경험과 인식이 한국인 유학생들에 대한 이해를 깊게하고 잠재적 요소를 제거하는데 기여할 것이라고 믿습니다.

For more information contact: Kisong Kim @ (716) 548-3114

[Front]
Dear Korean students,

My name is Kisong Kim, a doctoral student at St. John’s University. I am interested in learning more about your experiences of studying in the US, cultural differences you experience, relationships with other students and teachers.

I would like to invite Korean students who are enrolled as international students in St. Francis Prep to participate in my research project. If you are interested in participating in my research after listening to my brief explanation (presentation), you can either let me know, contact me on calling 716-548-3114, or emailing kisong.kim10@stjohns.edu.

Along with valuable opportunities to learn various perceptions about studying in a new environment from all of you, I believe that these valuable experiences and perceptions will contribute to deepening the understanding and remove any potential misinterpretations about Korean students.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: KISONG KIM @ (716) 548-3114
APPENDIX F

Teacher Consent Form

Project Title: An Investigation of Effective Practices for Korean English Language learners (ELLs)

Researcher: Kisong Kim

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Randall F. Clemens

Introduction:
As a high school teacher, you are being asked to take part in a research study being conducted by Kisong Kim for a doctoral dissertation under the supervision of Dr. Randall F. Clemens in the Department of Education at St. John’s University. You are being asked to participate in this study because you have at least 1 Korean English Language Leaners (ELLs) in your classroom.

Please read this for carefully before deciding to participate in this study.

Purpose:
The purpose of the study is to acquire a better understanding of the teachers’ attitudes and practices and their possible influences on engagement, language learning experiences, and academic achievement of Korean ELLs. This study deemed to consider all the teachers who have interactions with at least one Korean ELLs. Furthermore, this study will seek to deepen the understandings about the educational challenges of Korean ELLs as well as offer insights to teachers’ instructions impacting the level of student engagement an achievement of Korean ELLs.

Procedures:
If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in one semi-structured one-on-one interview that will last for 30 to 45 minutes. There can be a possible follow-up interview with your preference (e.g., face-to-face, phone, email, or text). In this interview, I will ask you questions regarding: your opinions about English Language Learners (ELLs), your opinions of the most effective practices to engage ELL students, your prior experiences, your perception of the necessity of lesson modification, your opinion on how teachers generally influence ELLs’ experiences, and your relationship status with ELLs. This interview will be recorded by an audio recorder and I will take notes on what you say on my notebook during and after the interviews.

For three times, the researcher will observe your instructional practices and strategies used and your interactions with students. The teacher will not rate your teaching practices nor share the memos with anyone other than you. This memo is simply being used to note the effective practices and strategies that you use with your students.
Again, the researcher is the only person who will have access to this information. This information will be kept in a password-protected computer file and locked file cabinet. After completion of the study, the collected data obtained during this study will be destroyed.

**Risks:**
There are no risks to this study. All answers will be kept confidential and will only be examined by the researcher.

**Benefits:**
There are no direct benefits to participants. Through your participation, the researcher will learn more about teachers’ attitudes and teaching practices for ELLs and how Korean ELLs are engaged and learn.

**Compensation:**
There is no compensation for participating in the study.

**Confidentiality:**
All data obtained from participants will be kept confidential and only the researcher will have access. This information will be kept in a password-protected computer file and locked file cabinet. After completion of the study, the collected data obtained during this study will be destroyed.

**Participation:**
Participation in this research study is completely voluntary. If you would like to participate, please check the box below that says, “I agree to participate in this study.” Even if you give consent to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent at any time without penalty. Choosing not to give your consent or to withdraw consent will not impact you in any way.

**Contacts and Questions:**
If you have any questions regarding this study, you may contact Kisong Kim, the principal investigator at 716-548-3114 or at kisong.kim10@stjohns.edu. If you have questions that you do not feel comfortable asking the researcher, you may contact Dr. Randall F. Clemens, the advisor at 443-655-7279 or at clemensr@stjohns.edu.
Statement of Consent:
Please check the box if you consent to participate:

☐ I agree to participate in this study.
☐ I do not wish to participate in this study.

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information provided above, have had an opportunity to ask questions, and agree to participate in this research study.

________________________________________
Name of Participant:

________________________________________
Participant Signature:  _____________________  Date:
APPENDIX G

Parent/Guardian Consent Form

Project Title: An Investigation of Effective Practices for Korean English Language Learners (ELLs)

제목: 영어 교육을 받는 한국인 학생에게 가장 효과적인 가르침에 대한 탐구

My name is Kisong Kim and I am conducting a research study for the doctoral program at St. John’s University. I would like to invite your child to take a part in this study. Please read the statement below in full before making a decision.

본 연구자 김기송은 현재 세인트 존스 대학원에서 교육학과에 재학중이며 마지막 박사 논문을 준비하고 있습니다. 귀하의 자녀가 본 연구에 참여 하도록 초청하고 싶습니다. 참여 결정 전 아래의 설명을 충분히 읽으시기 바랍니다.

목적:
The purpose of the study is to acquire a better understanding of the teachers’ attitudes and their possible influences on your child’s language learning experiences.

이 논문의 목적은 아이를 가르치는 선생님들의 태도와 신념이 아이들의 언어학습 경험에 어떤 영향을 미치는지에 관한 연구입니다.

연구과정:
A. Your child will be asked to participate in a semi-structured one-on-one interview that will last for 30 to 45 minutes. In this interview, I will ask your child questions regarding: 1) ideas about culture and cultural differences, 2) the differences and difficulties the child experience in the U.S. classrooms, 3) opinion about teacher role and student role and the ideal relationships, 4) opinion about classroom activities and participation, 5) opinions of the child’s ability to speak or write in English. This interview will be recorded by an audio recorder and I will take notes on what your child says on my notebook during and after the interviews.

귀하의 자녀는 30 분에서 45 분 동안 지속되는 일대일 면담에 참여할 것입니다. 이 인터뷰에서는 다음과 관련된 질문을 할 것입니다. 1) 문화 및 문화적 차이에 관한 자녀의 생각, 2) 미국 교실에서 경험하는 차이점 및 어려움, 3) 교사 역할과 학생 역할에 대한, 그리고 이상적인 관계에 대한 자녀의 견해, 4) 교실 활동 및 참여에 대한 자녀의 의견, 5) 영어로 말하거나 쓰는 능력에 대한 자녀의 의견. 이 인터뷰는 오디오 레코더로 기록되며 본 연구자가 인터뷰 중 및 인터뷰 후 말한 내용에 대해 메모를 작성할 것입니다.
B. Your child will be invited to participate in a focus group interview that will last for approximately 30-45 minutes. In this interview, I will ask questions related to: 1) opinions about the importance of classroom activities, 2) reasons of participation in the classroom activities, 3) opinion about teacher role and student role and the ideal relationships, 4) the classroom culture 5) how the child adjust to the new environment. Conducting a focus group interview followed by a semi-structured one-on-one interview is significant because it might provide your child with opportunities to refine and evolve ideas. This interview will be recorded by an audio recorder and I will take some notes on your child’s comments on my notebook during and after the interviews.

귀하의 자녀는 약 30-45분 동안 지속되는 포커스 그룹 인터뷰에 참여하도록 초대 받게 됩니다. 이 인터뷰에서는 다음과 관련된 질문을 할 것입니다. 1) 교실 활동의 중요성에 대한 의견, 2) 교실활동 참여 이유, 3) 교사 역할과 학생 역할 및 이상적인 관계에 대한 의견, 4) 교실 문화 5) 새로운 환경에 적응하는 방법.

일대일 인터뷰 후 포커스 그룹 인터뷰를 참여하는 것은 중요합니다. 이는 인터뷰를 통해 아이의 아이디어를 좀 더 구체화하고 발전시킬 수 있는 기회를 제공 할 수 있기 때문입니다. 이 인터뷰는 오디오 레코더로 기록되며 본 연구자가 인터뷰 중 및 인터뷰 후 말한 내용에 대해 메모를 작성할 것입니다.

연구에 따른 위험:
There are no risks to this study. All answers will be kept confidential and will only be examined by the researcher.
이 연구에는 아무런 위험이 없습니다. 모든 답변은 기밀로 유지되며 본 연구자만 검토하게 됩니다.

연구에 따른 혜택:
There are no direct benefits to participants. Through your participation, the researcher will learn more about how Korean ELLs are engaged and learn.
참가자들에게 직접적인 혜택은 없습니다. 참여를 통해 본 연구자는 영어를 배우는 한국인 학생의 참여 및 학습 방법에 대해 자세히 알게 될 것입니다.

연구에 따른 보상:
There is no compensation for participating in the study.
연구 참여에 대한 보상은 없습니다.
기밀유지:
All data obtained from participants will be kept confidential and only the researcher will have access. This information will be kept in a password-protected computer file and locked file cabinet. After completion of the study, the collected data obtained during this study will be destroyed.
참가자로부터 얻은 모든 데이터는 기밀로 유지되며 본 연구자에게만 접근권이 있습니다. 이 정보는 암호로 보호된 컴퓨터 파일과 잠긴 파일 캐비닛에 보관됩니다. 연구가 끝나면 본 연구에서 수집된 모든 정보가 소멸됩니다.

참여:
Participation in this research study is completely voluntary. If you would like to participate, please check the box below that says, “I agree to participate in this study.” Even if you give consent to participate, your child is free to withdraw your consent at any time without penalty. Choosing not to give your consent or to withdraw consent will not impact your child in any way.
이 연구 조사에 참여하는 것은 완전히 자발적입니다. 참여를 원하시는 분은 아래에 있는 "참가 동의를 합합니다."라고 말한 상자를 체크하십시오. 참여 동의를 하더라도, 언제든지 귀하의 자녀는 동의를 철회할 수 있습니다. 동의를 하지 않거나 동의를 철회하지 않는다고 해서 귀하의 자녀에게는 어떤 방식으로든 영향을 미치지 않습니다.

연락처 및 질문:
If you have any questions regarding this study, you may contact Kisong Kim, the principal investigator at 716-548-3114 or at kisong.kim10@stjohns.edu. If you have questions that you do not feel comfortable asking the researcher, you may contact Dr. Randall F. Clemens, the advisor at 443-655-7279 or at clemensr@stjohns.edu. 이 연구와 관련하여 질문이 있으시면 본 연구자 김기송에게 716-548-3114 또는 kisong.kim10@stjohns.edu으로 연락하십시오. 연구원에게 질문하는 것이 불편한 질문이 있으면 Randall F. Clemens 박사 (443-655-7279 또는 clemensr@stjohns.edu)에게 문의하십시오.
Statement of Consent:
Please check the box if you consent to participate:
참여하는 것에 동의하는 경우 확인란을 선택하십시오:

☐ I agree to participate in this study.
참가 동의를 합니다

☐ I do not wish to participate in this study.
참가 동의를 하지 않습니다

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information provided above, have had an opportunity to ask questions, and agree to participate in this research study.
아래의 서명은 위에 제공된 정보를 읽었으며 질문을 하고 이 연구 조사에 참여하는 것에 동의했음을 나타냅니다.

_____________________________________________      ______________________
참가자 이름                                             학생 이름

_____________________________________________      ______________________
참가자 서명                                             날짜
APPENDIX H

Student Assent Form

Project Title: An Investigation of Effective Practices for Korean English Language Learners (ELLs)
제목: 영어 교육을 받는 한국인 학생에게 가장 효과적인 가르침에 대한 탐구

Researcher: Kisong Kim

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Randall F. Clemens

Introduction:
My name is Kisong Kim and I am conducting a research study for a doctoral dissertation under the supervision of Dr. Randall F. Clemens in the Department of Education at St. John’s University. You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a Korean student studying in a high school in the United States.
본 연구자 김기송은 현재 세인트 존스 대학원에서 교육학과에 재학중이며 마지막 박사 논문을 준비하고 있습니다. 귀하는 미국 고등학교에서 공부하는 한국 학생이기 때문에 본 연구에 참여하도록 초청하고 싶습니다.

Please read carefully before deciding to participate in this study.
참여 결정 전 아래의 설명을 충분히 읽으시기 바랍니다.

Purpose:
The purpose of the study is to acquire a better understanding of the teachers’ attitudes and practices and their influences on your language learning experiences. This study considers all Korean students in the school. Furthermore, this study will seek to deepen the understandings about the educational challenges you experience.
이 논문의 목적은 선생님들의 태도와 신념이 참가자의 언어학습 경험에 어떤 영향을 미치는지에 관한 연구입니다. 이 연구는 학교 내의 모든 한국인 유학생들을 고려하였으며, 참가자가 경험하는 교육적 장애물과 도전에 대한 이해를 돕기 위함입니다.

Procedures:
A. You are being asked to participate in a semi-structured one-on-one interview that will last for 30 to 45 minutes. In this interview, I will ask you questions regarding: 1) your ideas about culture and cultural differences, 2) the differences and difficulties you experience in the U.S. classrooms, 3) your opinion about teacher role and student role and the ideal relationships, 4) your opinion about classroom activities and participation, 5) your opinions of your ability to speak or write in English. This interview will be recorded by an audio recorder and I will take notes on what you say on my notebook during and after the interviews.
B. You will be invited to participate in a focus group interview that will last for approximately 30-45 minutes. In this interview, I will ask you questions related to: 1) your opinions about the importance of classroom activities, 2) your reasons of participation, 3) your opinion about teacher role and student role and the ideal relationships, 4) the classroom culture 5) how you adjust to the new environment. Conducting a focus group interview followed by a semi-structured one-on-one interview is significant because it might provide you with opportunities to refine and evolve your ideas. This interview will be recorded by an audio recorder and I will take some notes on your comments on my notebook during and after the interviews.

Benefits:
There are no direct benefits to participants. Through your participation, the researcher will learn more about how Korean ELLs are engaged and learn. This interview provides a unique opportunity to gain insights into the perspectives of Korean ELLs on various aspects of language learning and classroom dynamics. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to ask me.

Compensation:
There is no compensation for participating in the study.

Risks:
There are no risks to this study. All answers will be kept confidential and will only be examined by the researcher.

Benefits:
There are no direct benefits to participants. Through your participation, the researcher will learn more about how Korean ELLs are engaged and learn. This interview provides a unique opportunity to gain insights into the perspectives of Korean ELLs on various aspects of language learning and classroom dynamics. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to ask me.

Compensation:
There is no compensation for participating in the study.

Risks:
There are no risks to this study. All answers will be kept confidential and will only be examined by the researcher.

Benefits:
There are no direct benefits to participants. Through your participation, the researcher will learn more about how Korean ELLs are engaged and learn. This interview provides a unique opportunity to gain insights into the perspectives of Korean ELLs on various aspects of language learning and classroom dynamics. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to ask me.
Confidentiality:
All data obtained from participants will be kept confidential and only the researcher will have access. This information will be kept in a password-protected computer file and locked file cabinet. After completion of the study, the collected data obtained during this study will be destroyed.
참가자로부터 얻은 모든 데이터는 기밀로 유지되며 본 연구자에게만 접근권이 있습니다. 이 정보는 암호로 보호된 컴퓨터 파일과 잠긴 파일 캐비닛에 보관됩니다. 연구가 끝나면 본 연구에서 수집된 모든 정보가 소멸됩니다.

Participation:
Participation in this research study is completely voluntary. If you would like to participate, please check the box below that says, “I agree to participate in this study.” Even if you give consent to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent at any time without penalty. Choosing not to give your consent or to withdraw consent will not impact you in any way.
이 연구 조사에 참여하는 것은 완전히 자발적입니다. 참여를 원하시는 분은 아래에 있는 “참가 동의를 합니다.” 라고 말한 상자를 체크하십시오. 참가 동의를 하더라도, 언제든지 동의를 철회 할 수 있습니다. 동의를 하지 않거나 참가를 철회한다고 해서 어떤 방식으로든 영향을 미치지 않습니다.

Contacts and Questions:
If you have any questions regarding this study, you may contact Kisong Kim, the principal investigator at 716-548-3114 or at kisong.kim10@stjohns.edu. If you have questions that you do not feel comfortable asking the researcher, you may contact Dr. Randall F. Clemens, the advisor at 443-655-7279 or at clemensr@stjohns.edu.
이 연구와 관련하여 질문이 있으시면 본 연구자 김기송에게 716-548-3114 또는 kisong.kim10@stjohns.edu 로 연락하십시오. 연구원에게 질문하는 것이 불편한 질문이 있으면 Randall F. Clemens 박사 (443-655-7279 또는 clemensr@stjohns.edu)에게 문의하십시오.

Statement of Consent:
Please check the box if you assent to participate:
참여하는 것에 동의하는 경우 확인란을 선택하십시오.

☐ I agree to participate in this study.
참가 동의를 합니다

☐ I do not wish to participate in this study.
참가 동의를 하지 않습니다
Your signature below indicates that you have read the information provided above, have had an opportunity to ask questions, and agree to participate in this research study.
아래의 서명은 위에 제공된 정보를 읽었으며 질문을 하고 이 연구 조사에 참여하는 것에 동의했음을 나타냅니다.

Name of Participant 참가자 이름:

Participant Signature 참가자 서명: Date 날짜:
Hello, my name is Kisong Kim and I am conducting a research project towards for the dissertation study at St. John’s University. Today, I’d like to ask you a few questions about your experience of teaching and interacting with ELLs to acquire a better understanding of ELLs. Is it ok if I ask you a few questions? Before we start, I want to go over the consent form. If you have any questions, let me know, ok? [go through form]. Do you have any questions?

As part of the research process, I want to inform you of your rights. There are a few major things. First, everything you tell me is confidential and anonymous. I don’t share the data with anyone. And, when I write about the findings for publication, I change all names and identifying info. Last, if at any time, you want to stop the interview or later don’t want me to use the info, just let me know. That being said, do you have any questions?

Here is the informed consent form that includes a description of the study and your rights. Please take your time to read and sign.

Is it ok if I audiotape this interview?

Ok. Let’s start the interview.

Introduction

1. How long have you been at the school? What position?
   * Before this school, did you work at other school?
   * Do you have experiences teaching ELL student(s)?
   * How many ELLs do you have in your class?
   * Additional questions including education, ethnicity, knowledge of another language, and cultural experiences will be asked.

School

2. Could you tell me about the school? What are the strengths and weaknesses?

3. What can the school do better?

4. Why do you think the ELLs chose the school?
**Relationships**

5. How would you describe the students? What about ELL student(s)?
   
   * If necessary, what do you do to help ELLs?

   * What are your effective strategies to engage ELL student(s)?

   * How do you think your relationship with the ELL influenced ELLs’ learning experiences?

   * During your instructional or non-instructional time, approximately how much of the time is spent listening to the ELL student(s)?

   * Do you set goals with your ELL student(s)? If so, what are the processes?

   * How do you approach the ELL student(s) when you see them meeting a barrier in academic work or in social life?

6. How would you describe your relationship with the ELL student(s)?

7. How would you describe the teachers’ role and students’ role?

**Culture**

8. Can you try to explain what we need to do if we want to be culturally responsive?

   Effective?

9. How would you describe students in your classroom? How are they similar and how are they different?

**Learning**

10. How do you think language learners learn English?

11. What are the biggest barriers to getting to college?

   * Do you think they have enough time to prepare for college? If not, what do you

12. What do you think I should know that I did not ask?
APPENDIX J

Student Interview Protocol

Today, I’d like to ask you a few questions about your high school experience and your teachers and school. Is that ok? Before we start, I want to go over the consent form. If you have any questions, let me know, ok? [go through form]. Do you have any questions?

There are two questions: Is it ok if I audiotape this interview? In the fall, I may take video or pictures. I’ll let you know ahead of time. Is that ok?

I’m going to ask some simple questions. You don’t have to answer them if you don’t want but they may help me make sense of all these interviews. Remember, all answers will be confidential. I don’t share them with anyone.

Ok. I’m going to start the interview. I’m going to ask some basic questions to get a sense of who you are. Then, we’ll talk about more specific things. Ok?

Introduction

1. Tell me about yourself.

2. How would you describe your experience coming to the US.
   * Where are you from? Have you learned English in your country?
   * How long have you been in the US?
   * Whose decision was it?
   * Additional questions including their ethnicity, parents’ education, and immigration status will be asked.

Culture

3. Tell me about your family?
   * How would you describe your neighborhood? And how is it different from Korea?

School and Relationships
4. How would you describe your school.
   * How and who made the choice?

5. Tell me about your favorite teacher and favorite subject.
   * Can you easily talk to your teachers? How well do the teachers listen to you?
   * How can teachers help you by listening to you?

6. How would you describe your teacher?
   * How would you describe the teachers’ role and students’ role?
   * Do your teachers help you set up the short-term and long-term goals?
   * There are many aspects in life that’s changing when you first come to a different country. Also, studying at a place where you use different language can be challenging. How do your teachers help you settle and prioritize your workload?
   * When you meet a barrier, do your teachers encourage you to see it as a chance to grow?

**Learning**

7. How do you like classes? Do you like learning in classes in the US?

8. When you learn English, how do you like to learn? Why do you prefer learning that way?
   * Can you explain the major difference in how you learn in your country and the U.S.?
   * How would you describe your behavior in the classroom? Are they same as before in your home country?

9. When do you participate more in class? In that situation, why do you think you participate more?
*Do you participate more in the U.S. or in your home country? If changed, what do you think changed your behavior?

10. What’s your GPA?

* How would you describe your academic and social English level before you came to the US? How’s your progress of learning and using English?

11. Do you want to go to college?

* What are the biggest barriers to getting to college?

* Do you think they have enough time to prepare?

12. What else do you think I should know about you?
APPENDIX K

Focus Group Interview Protocol

Today, I’d like to ask you a few questions about your high school experience and your teachers and school. If you want to add something, feel free to jump in. Before we start, I want to go over the consent form. If you have any questions, let me know, ok? [go through form]. Do you have any questions?

I have one question. Is it ok if I audiotape this discussion?

I’m going to ask some simple questions. You don’t have to answer them if you don’t want but they may help me make sense of all these interviews. Remember, all answers will be confidential. I don’t share them with anyone.

Ok. Let’s start the discussion.

1. In the classroom, what do you normally do? Do teachers tell you what to do?

2. How do you participate in the classroom activities? Do you like participating? Do you think it’s important to participate in the classroom activities?

   * (Potential topics may include: relationship, respect issue, language incompetence, fear of making mistake, and time required before answering)

3. What do you think of teachers’ role and students’ role? Do you think you can have close relationships with the teachers? If so, do you think the relationships are beneficial?

4. How is your classroom culture? What kinds of classroom environment would you prefer?

5. How can you adjust to the new environment and become a successful when it’s different from your culture and educational background?

6. What kinds of supports do you expect from your teachers?

7. What else do you think I should know about you?
# APPENDIX L

## Codes of Teacher Interviews

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## APPENDIX M

### Codes of Teacher Interviews

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References


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dangers seen, unseen, and unforeseen. *Educational researcher, 36*(7), 388-400.


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