

**Planning for Instruction:  
What Teacher Candidates Know About Culturally Responsive Instruction**

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**Abstract**

Research suggests that a majority of elementary school teachers do not feel confident in their ability to teach English language learners. Moreover, teachers and teacher candidates are often presented as a monolithic group of middle-class, monolingual women with relatively few experiences with people from diverse backgrounds. Accordingly, this study aims to identify the ways in which teacher candidates conceptualize culturally responsive instruction and how these understandings are brought to bear in their instructional modifications for linguistically and culturally diverse learners. Through an analysis of unit and lesson plans designed by pre-service teacher candidates, this study explores the assumptions inherent in specific instructional modifications and how these choices reflect the knowledge teacher candidates demonstrate in their planning. These findings help teacher educators identify the knowledge that teacher candidates bring to their programs, as well as provide teacher educators a non-deficit perspective through which to further support the development of teacher candidates.

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Over the last twenty years, the United States has experienced a significant demographic shift. Much of this shift has been seen in minority populations, most noticeably among Spanish speakers. The Census Bureau (2003) reported that in 1990, almost 32 million people, or approximately 14% of the total population of the U.S., spoke a language other than English at home. Approximately half of those people who reported speaking another language spoke Spanish. In 2000, however, almost 47 million people, or close to 18% of the nation's population, reported speaking a language other than English, with 28 million speaking Spanish. In other words, not only is the Spanish-speaking population overwhelmingly the largest non-English speaking group in the United States, it continues to grow ever larger. Not surprisingly, then, the U.S. has also seen a similar demographic shift among school-aged children during the same time period. In 1990, one in every eight students in U.S. public schools was Hispanic (Pew, 2008), but in 2012, this ratio was a little more than one in every five students (Pew, 2012). Current estimates place this population at around 12 million students, possibly increasing to 28 million by the year 2050. Also by 2050, non-Hispanic school-aged students will increase in number by a mere 4% to 45 million, up from 43 million (Pew, 2008). Upwards of 70% of Hispanic students currently report speaking a language other than English in the home, and these students, many unable to completely understand the language of instruction, are too large a group to ignore.

While in years past many English language learners (ELLs) may have lived and attended schools primarily in urban areas, today, ELLs attend schools in urban, suburban, and rural schools alike. In fact, as of the 2007-08 school year, nearly three quarters of *all* public schools across the country enrolled at least one student who had been identified as limited English proficient (Keigher, 2009). American schools are required to provide academic support services to ELLs such as pull-out ESL classes, sheltered content instruction, or bilingual aides. However,

these students are not required to take advantage of these services; many parents and guardians opt their children out of educational services designed specifically to aid in their academic achievement. Additionally, while many ELLs speak languages other than English at home, many meet a minimum standard of English proficiency and test out of services, also allowing them to enter mainstream, English-speaking classrooms. In the 2011-12 school year, more than 4 million ELL students received formal educational accommodations (US. Department of Education, 2013), while the remaining 8 million ELLs attended school in mainstream classrooms, receiving little to no formal instructional accommodation.

The teacher population of the U.S., however, has not experienced as dramatic a demographic shift. In 1987-88, 71% of teachers in the U.S. were female, and 89% were white, and only 2.8% were Hispanic (Hammer & Gerald, 1990). In 2007-08, 75% of teachers across the country were female, and 83.5% of teachers were white, as opposed to the 6.9% who were of Hispanic descent (Coopersmith, 2009). Of course, the cultural differences that might exist between ELLs and their teachers cannot be underestimated. Sleeter (2008) offers some insight into the perils of these difference, “This gap matters because it means that students of color...are much more likely than White students to be taught by teachers who question their academic ability, are uncomfortable around them, or do not know how to teach them well” (p. 559). Compounding these possible concerns, many teachers are simply not prepared to instruct the ELLs they receive in their classrooms. In fact, only one third of teachers say that they feel very well prepared to teach students from diverse backgrounds (Parsad, Lewis, & Farris, 2001). As such, there is a large population of students entering classrooms with a teacher who feels unprepared to teach them effectively, regardless of her or his actual knowledge, skills, and dispositions.

In light of this situation, teacher education programs are working diligently to prepare would-be teachers to work specifically with students for whom English is not a native language. These programs often focus on increasing teacher candidates' knowledge of their students and their instructional repertoire to not simply 'incorporate' or 'respect' their students' culture in the classroom, but to provide greater access to academic content through the leverage of linguistic and cultural strengths that *all* students possess.

### **INSTRUCTION FOR CULTURALLY DIVERSE STUDENTS**

This study assumes as its theoretical perspective the construct of culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2002, 2010). Within this paradigm, teachers capitalize on and leverage “the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse student as conduits for teaching them more effectively” (Gay, 2002, p. 106). Moll and his colleagues (1992) previously advocated for not simply the respect for a student's cultural being, but “a positive view of households as containing ample cultural and cognitive resources with great *potential* utility for classroom instruction” (p. 134, emphasis in original). Lee (1995) extends this notion through her construct of cultural modeling, wherein she describes a framework for instruction that not only identifies the cultural strengths of students but also tasks teachers to use these strengths in designing instruction for all present in the classroom. Villegas and Lucas (2002) also present a framework defining the culturally responsive teacher. Among the qualities they identify are a desire to learn about students and a repertoire of classroom practices that build upon students' cultural understandings and practices. This framework relies on the notion that teacher must “cross the sociocultural boundaries that separate too many of them from their students” (p. 21). To do cross these boundaries, the authors state that teachers need to gain “the awareness that a person's worldview is not universal but is profoundly influenced by life experiences, as

mediated by a variety of factors, including race, ethnicity, gender, and social class” (Villegas & Lucas, 2007, “Being Socioculturally Conscious,” para. 1). In other words, culturally responsive instruction assumes as its basic tenets the ability to learn about students as cultural beings and to apply this knowledge of students toward literacy instruction and the learning of new academic content.

Much research has been conducted investigating the ways in which teachers employ the knowledge they gain about students in their instruction (e. g., Gonzalez, Andrade, Civil, & Moll, 2001; Jiménez, 2001; Risko & Walker-Dalhouse, 2007; Yau & Jiménez, 2003). Culturally responsive teachers providing instruction along these lines offer students rigorous classroom instruction that builds on their cultural and linguistic strengths, assess students equitably, and present a variety of perspectives on the academic curriculum (Irvine, 2003). For instance, Buchanan and Burts (2007) discussed the links between children’s cultural practices and both the content and method of classroom instruction. In their example, these authors presented ways in which teachers can access academic content through aspects of the popular Pokemon franchise, focusing on English Language Arts as well as Mathematics. Purnell, Ali, Begum, and Carter (2007) integrated art and literacy to connect classroom content “bridge the gap between students’ home culture and the classroom” (p. 419). Grant and Asimeng-Boahene (2006) leveraged African proverbs toward the learning of social studies. These examples highlight the possible ways in which teachers can learn about their students and then apply this knowledge in their classrooms.

The research literature does present numerous recommendations for what content, skills, and instructional practices teachers who work with ELLs ought to know to be effective (see August & Hakuta, 1997; Genessee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, & Christian, 2006).

Knowledgeable teachers, beyond their understanding of elementary academic content, understand how language systems work, how languages are learned, and the ways in which the individual lived-experiences of students affects learning. Skilled teachers who work with ELLs are able to identify and leverage the knowledge skills and strategies their student possess while at the same time helping the students to critique existing and acquire new knowledge, hone existing and develop new skills, and apply existing and add new strategies in academic settings. Effective teachers employ a variety of instructional practices within their classroom. These practices can range from the logistical (e. g., grouping strategies, classroom arrangement, and classroom artifacts) to the instructional (e. g., classroom activities, assessment techniques, and text and material selection) to the interactional (e. g., questioning techniques, classroom language use, and praise and discipline programs).

Generally, however, teachers in the United States are portrayed as a monolithic group that has little to no knowledge of how languages are learned, little to no understanding of how people and communities other than their own function, little to no ability to work with students from diverse backgrounds. Essentialized assumptions of what it is to be white, middle class, and monolingual bleeds into perspectives guiding public discourse as well as academic research. As teacher educators, we must be careful not to view teachers and teacher candidates through the very lenses with which we hope they will not view their students – that teachers and teacher candidates are in some way deficient in their skills, knowledge, or overall ability to teach their students. This is not to say that pre-service teachers enter teacher education programs knowing everything they need to know and able to do everything they need to do to be effective in the classroom. Nor do I mean to imply that teacher educators assume their teacher candidates know and can do nothing. Rather, it is the task of teacher educators to learn what exactly their

candidates already know and can do when they enter teacher education programs and then design instructional activities and field experiences that build upon this very knowledge and ability.

This *personal practical knowledge* (Clandinin, 1986; Clandinin & Connelly, 1986) is the combination of a teacher's beliefs regarding both the value of and the ways in which one obtains an education. Personal practical knowledge can also be seen as a "moral, affective, and aesthetic way of knowing life's educational situation" (p. 59). Golombek (1998) posits that this knowledge "informed [teachers'] practice by serving as a kind of interpretive framework through which they made sense of their classrooms" (p. 459).

Accordingly, this study aims to determine what teacher candidates know about providing culturally responsive instruction and how they apply the specific strengths of their students toward the learning of academic content. Ultimately, these data can inform the ways in which teacher educators can design instruction and educational experiences that do indeed capitalize on the knowledge and skills teacher candidates employ in their instruction of students from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds.

### **METHOD & DATA SOURCES**

This study was guided by the following research question, "In what ways do teacher candidates represent their understandings of culturally relevant instruction in their planning documents?" More specifically, this study investigated, through an analysis of literacy lesson and unit plans, how teacher candidates conceptualize culturally relevant pedagogy and how they modify their instruction to meet the literacy learning needs of their LCD students.

The participants in this study were teacher candidates enrolled in a teacher education program at an access institution located in the southeast United States. Thirty-four candidates were in their first semester, nine candidates in their second semester, and eight candidates in

their third semester of a four-semester-long, professional teacher education program. The data sources for this study consisted of assigned, written units of literacy instruction and lesson plans collected over the course of a single academic semester. Each participant completed a unit of instruction, which included a single unit planner (Figure 1) and five, individual lesson plans (Figure 2). Among other information, the unit planner required the candidates to fully describe the characteristics of the students in their classroom and how the instruction in the unit was culturally responsive in nature. The lesson plan is a revised version of the format developed by Madeline Hunter (1984), containing a specific section wherein the teacher candidates highlighted the modifications they planned for LCD students. The third semester candidates also completed another single lesson plan specifically modified for LCD students. In all, the data set included 51 unit plans and 271 individual lesson plans.

These data were analyzed qualitatively, and in alignment with the research question and theoretical frame above, I coded these data specifically to identify the ways in which the teacher candidates' instructional choices exemplify their understandings of instruction for LCD students. A small set of *a priori* codes guided the initial data analysis. For instance, I expected to see the candidates employ specific grouping strategies as well as provide allowances for students to use their native languages. Thus, the data corresponding to the codes "peer assistance" and "native language use" were immediately identifiable. Other codes, such as "family and community involvement," "non-lesson specific," and, indeed, "inappropriate modification," emerged from the data as collection and analysis progressed.

## RESULTS

This study shows that teacher candidates view culturally responsive pedagogy and the instructional needs of their students in a variety of ways. In particular, the candidates plan for

peer assistance, native language use, and family and community involvement in their lessons specifically to address the needs of the diverse students in their classroom. However, these data also suggest that the teacher candidates maintain some confusion regarding when and how to modify instruction for LCD students by offering non-lesson-specific and, what some may consider inappropriate modifications.

### **Peer Assistance**

The teacher candidates rely heavily on peer assistance in their planning for LCD students (Table 3). The unit and lesson plans contain both homogeneous and heterogeneous groupings in their lessons, in that ELLs are paired or grouped with either their bilingual or monolingual, English-speaking counterparts. Research suggests that school-aged children are able to learn through specific language use and peer interaction (see Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994; Antón & DiCamilla, 1998; DeGuerrero & Villamil, 1994; DeGuerrero & Villamil, 2000; DiCamilla & Antón, 1997; Lantolf & Aljaafreh, 1995). Peer work of in this vein is often theorized by invoking Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development (ZPD). Vygotsky viewed development at two levels: actual development, or what a child can do independently, and potential development, what a child is able to do with assistance.

With modifications of this kind, teacher candidates can mistakenly assume that peer assistance naturally occurs. However, other modifications include the possibility that peers may not be of assistance in any and every circumstance. The candidates specify certain instances when peer assistance may be warranted or effective – in these cases, if a peer can actually translate academic material from one language to another and if there is a specific issue an ELL may experience during the course of a classroom activity. Of course, using words such as *if possible* and *may* are handy words to use in a university assignment; however, these

modifications do still signify a more nuanced approach to peer assistance, implying a more situated purpose for this instructional strategy.

Teacher candidates may also assume that if their ELLs are partnered up, then no further instructional support is needed. For instance, one of the teacher candidates wrote, “The reason I am mixing them with English-speaking students is because many times, students learn best through his or her peers.” A reliance on peer assistance implies that once ELLs are paired, that peer can now function as the teacher in the classroom. Again, these modifications are not necessarily inappropriate. In fact, and as explained above, employing specific grouping strategies is indeed an effective way to support all students and differentiated options in the classroom.

Lastly, candidates assume that existing student knowledge is sufficient to complete the task or fully comprehend the academic content. The candidates imbue both the ELLs and their peers with particular knowledge or skills – the ability to successfully participate in cooperative learning activities and a wealth of ideas that can be accessed at a moment’s notice. To be sure, teacher candidates need to consider what their students can do and know when planning specific instruction. These abilities and this knowledge certainly play a part in a teacher’s decision to choose groups and/or partners as well as the type of activity in which students will participate. Based upon the written modifications, teacher candidates show that they understand that peer assistance is helpful for ELLs, indeed all students. However, for teacher candidates to employ this instructional strategy more effectively, they need to determine whether any one of the above assumptions is correct. In response, candidates need to provide scaffolded assistance pertaining to classroom behavior, including how to interact in small group activities, to monitor and support student work as it unfolds within a lesson or activity, including providing individual assistance

within a group activity, and to formatively assess what students know and are doing throughout a lesson or activity, ensuring that the students are actually able to complete the tasks assigned.

### **Native Language Use**

Students' previous language experiences, skills, and knowledge are paramount when learning new languages and in literacy development. For instance, a student who is a proficient reader in their native language will have access to specific comprehension strategies, vocabulary, and metalinguistic and background knowledge to a text in another language (Buriel & Cardoza, 1998; Jimenez, Garcia, & Pearson, 1996; Jimenez, 2000). Of course, students do not always know how to transfer their skills and knowledge to a new context, and some may not know that doing so is appropriate. Despite these considerations, teachers can help students learn how to leverage these skills in the classroom.

Despite certain public perceptions that hoist ELLs learning the English language above all other content areas and the unfortunate belief that maintaining native language fluency is detrimental to learning other languages, the teacher candidates do indeed see the value in offering their students opportunities to use their native language (Table 4). In their planning, the candidates offer their ELLs opportunities to work with classmates who share their native language. Additionally, the candidates plan instruction specifically to provide the students with chances to read texts and complete writing assignments in languages other than English. Modifications such as "Her persuasive writing will be in her native language, Spanish" suggest that the teacher candidates understand the value of previous language learning experiences and literacy in other languages in learning another language.

With modifications of this kind, teacher candidates need to avoid the untested assumptions that their students can speak and read academically in their native language, that

simply the act of using their native language is sufficient in the classroom, and that assessment of student work submitted in languages other than English is of secondary importance. Teachers need to know their students' language proficiencies and literate practices both in English and any other language the students may know. Also, teachers need to maintain a disciplined and rigorous instructional focus. For instance, while allowing students to write poems in their native language provides students a wider variety of linguistic expression, this choice might not be appropriate within a lesson on English metaphor and simile. I am not advocating that teachers limit their students' use of their native language as a matter of course; rather, teachers need to be strategic in providing specific opportunities for native language use so as to more completely capitalize on the specific strengths of their students.

### **Family and Community Involvement**

Affective benefits of connecting school and home practices abound. Erikson (1987) posits that attempts to account for cultural differences in learning "can reduce miscommunication by teachers and students, foster trust, and prevent the genesis of conflict that moves rapidly the on intercultural misunderstanding to better struggles of negative identity exchange between some students and their teachers (p. 355). In other words, home and school connections can facilitate the creation of safe and comfortable learning environments and schools based upon mutual trust and understanding. Of course, these connections are also academically beneficial. Research has long suggested that not all literate practices taught or expected in schools resemble those in which students participate at home (e. g., Heath, 1983; Moll, Estrada, Díaz, & Lopez, 1980). These differences offer innumerable possibilities in terms of the cultural linguistic strengths that can be leveraged in the classroom. Additionally, by connecting home and school practices,

students are able to employ their full repertoire of skills to access academic content (e. g., Puzio, Keyes, Cole, Jiménez, 2013).

The candidates plan to include the families and communities of their students in their instruction in a variety of ways (Table 5). These modifications include inviting into the classroom family and community members, as well as sending home school-specific information to build and maintain open communication regarding classroom activities. All students bring a wealth of background knowledge to the classroom. As mentioned above, this knowledge can be brought to bear in learning to read. Background knowledge is instrumental in creating greater context and connections through which students can access and make sense of new information. Accessing the knowledge and practices of students' families and communities, teachers can provide this context, make explicit the similarities and differences between in- and out-of-classroom experiences and practices, and foster greater access to academic content.

These modifications all suggest that candidates know that the lived experiences of community members, family or students, holds some value in the classroom. However, beyond affective benefits, these modifications do not specify any instructional implications of the desired involvement. One interesting modification provides for more than simply home or community members, practices, or artifacts to visit the classroom. When a teacher candidate offers the modification, "I can work with the parents of my ELL students to figure out some cooperative things we could both do as a team to make the student successful," he or she envisions involvement as more than a temporal or spatial arrangement, or a one-way street. In other modifications, parents and community members are invited to the classroom to share their experiences with the class, or students, teachers, parents, and community members communicate

to each other. However, in this modification, the candidate opens collaboration between in- and out-of-school contexts all for the benefit of the student.

Inherent in modifications such as these are the assumptions that all out-of-classroom experiences and practices are generically valuable and that just a teacher's knowledge of students' out-of-classroom experiences and practices is sufficient. Choices of this nature suggest that the candidates understand that all students, their families, and communities have a vast repertoire of skills, experiences, and knowledge and are able to express themselves completely in ways that may not be the norm in U.S. classrooms. Exploring the lives of their students in this manner enables candidates to better identify the ways in which their students' cultural and linguistic practices can be leveraged in the classroom.

#### **Non Lesson-specific Instructional Modification**

A number of candidates offer instructional modifications that are not lesson specific (Table 6). That is, the modifications the candidates identify as necessary for their students are the same across all five lesson plans within a single unit of instruction. The instructional practices mentioned in these modifications are wide ranging - accessing institutional resources, providing one-on-one assistance to students, presenting a variety of instructional activities, and including a linguistic focus to lessons. However, the fact that these choices were included in exactly the same language across a sequence of lessons is of particular interest. It is possible that the candidates do not think that the content within any given lesson needs to be considered for modification for ELLs. In other words, the specific content of a lesson does not contain elements that need to be modified in order for ELLs to access that content or to participate fully in the lesson activities. What the candidates may also be demonstrating by stretching a modification across multiple lessons is the understanding that differentiation of this kind can also occur on a

grander scale than a single lesson plan or activity. In other words, modifications that are not lesson specific illustrate a candidate's vision of both when specific differentiation can take place and the scope of such an endeavor.

One such modification, "I would take into account any ELL students that I had in the class that may need extra support from various students in the class or even support staff around the school. I would be sure to address the needs of any students with an IEP and tailor the lesson for their comprehension," shows the candidate's awareness that no matter what the content of a lesson is, more routine modifications are required in the classroom. In this case, any ELL in the classroom may need support from any number of resources within the school – support staff, peers, or the teacher him- or herself. Another modification, "I have provided them with the vocabulary for the activity so that they can have conversations with fellow classmates," also addresses this same understanding – in any lesson presented in the classroom, the candidate needs to understand the specific language required to access content or to participate in the activities presented in the classroom.

### **"Inappropriate" Modifications**

Within the data set, there are four modifications, which, in some cases, may seem wildly inappropriate (Table 7). These data are especially beneficial for teacher educators to attend to because they challenge us again to view what our candidates know, are, and do, not in terms of deficit but of opportunity – an opportunity to build on existing understandings and construct more subtle conceptions of instructional practices and the circumstances under which they can be employed in the classroom. For instance, while "For my ELL's I will be more lenient when I grade their work" implies a teacher candidate's unwillingness to provide academically rigorous instruction to ELLs, this kind of modification does show that candidates consider assessment as a

possible mode of differentiating instruction. Being “more lenient” may simply be an unfortunate word choice, but it certainly leads to more thoughtful understandings of assessment, such as offering ELLs multiple ways to demonstrate their knowledge or skills or maintaining high yet feasible expectations for ELLs’ commensurate with their English or native language proficiencies.

Another modification present in the planning documents references the specific speech patterns candidates might use in the classroom. The modification, “I will have to talk slower so that they can understand me,” is interesting in that it assumes that the “talk” is understandable, just not its delivery. This technique may from time to time be effective in helping ELLs understand the language of instruction, but regardless of the circumstance, this modification suggests that the candidates understand that they need to measure their language use in the classroom. Whether this measurement takes the form of modeling grade appropriate vocabulary or presenting familiar popular culture references, the candidates seem to know that language is something they need to consider in enacting their instruction.

On one of the lesson plans, a teacher candidate wrote, “This is a group lesson and does not require any writing so all students should be able to complete it with no accommodations.” This entry is troublesome. On one hand, it defies certain responsibilities educators have in instructing ELLs. As discussed above, by law, some accommodation needs to be made for these students, as they do not fully comprehend the language of instruction. Of course, views of this nature need to be addressed very specifically. On the other, and just as importantly, modification such as this suggest that candidates perceive ELLs as capable of completing academic work and participating in classroom activities without additional support or provision.

As mentioned above, the data presented here are part of instructional units and lessons, intended to identify specific instructional decisions and actions of the teacher candidate him/herself. It stands to reason, then, that the modification “I will have them receive extra help from other professionals in the school and help them before or after school” might seem inappropriate in that context. However, despite the hands-off nature of this lesson plan entry, it does show that the candidates are aware that there are an array of resources they can access both for themselves and their students.

### **MOVING FORWARD**

This study highlights the specific instructional planning practices of teacher candidates for diverse learners. These data provide teacher educators some direction in providing more targeted support, either in field or course experiences, to expand the knowledge and practice base of teacher candidates. To work more effectively with teacher candidates, regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity, language experiences, or any other cultural or personal aspect, teacher educators need to take into account everything they know, are, and do. Just as we hope teachers will view their students as beings who bring to bear everything about them to the task of learning, so too should we view our teacher candidates. They come to teacher education programs with a variety of experiences, both educational and non. These experiences and the knowledge and skills they have gained over the course of their lives form the prism through which they process the content we present them. The examples presented here provide a window into teacher candidates’ personal practical knowledge, or the collection of theories, values, identities, and experiences teachers employ in the act of teaching. These data show that teacher candidates are aware that pairing ELLs with their peers is potentially beneficial. They also see value in providing their ELLs with opportunities to use their native language. They understand

that involving families and communities in their instruction is helpful for their students. They see that instructional modification can also occur on a routine basis, not just in individual lessons. Accordingly, teacher educators and educational researchers would benefit from viewing these understandings not as an end state of knowledge or practice but as the base from which teacher candidates can construct more intricate understandings of ELL instruction.

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Unit Plan Organizer

Grade Level: \_\_\_\_\_

Curriculum Area(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Unit: \_\_\_\_\_

Unit Elements	
Standards/Outcomes	
“Big Picture” Guiding Questions	
Concept Map	
Student Characteristics	
Learning Environment	
Classroom Culture	
Culturally Responsive and Inclusive Teaching	
Pre-Assessment	
Summative Assessment	
Lesson Sequencing	
Resources	

Figure 1. Unit Plan Organizer

Lesson Plan Organizer

Topic of Lesson: \_\_\_\_\_

Lesson Plan Elements	
Learning Outcomes for Students (Based on Unit Standards & Outcomes Above)	
Prerequisite skills/knowledge	
Individual Learner Characteristics.	
Anticipatory Set	
Procedures/ Methods and Strategies	
Instructional Accommodations/ Modifications	
Lesson-specific logistics	
Closure	
Formative Assessment	
Technology	
Follow-up/ Extensions	

Figure 2. Lesson Plan Organizer

- I would place them near bilingual students so they can help them as well;
- One of the students is Indian so I will place him with another Indian student who I know has the same practices and beliefs at home. The other student is Hispanic and I will place him with our other Latino student;
- I can also pair my ELL students with another student who speaks their language and could translate to them if it is possible in my classroom;
- Cooperative learning is also a great way to allow students to take on roles that they are confident in and will allow them to succeed and help their peers;
- I can pair up my ELL students in with my higher performing students so that the higher performing students can explain to my ELL students what is happening in the story;
- I think that the ELLs will benefit from working in small groups for this assignment. Their peers may be able to assist them when they cannot find something;
- I can place my ESOL students with either a buddy who can translate to them if possible.
- For my ELL's I will have each ELL at a different table with English-speaking students so they can get ideas.
- The reason I am mixing them with English Speaking Students is because many times, students learn best through his or her peers.

*Figure 3.* Modifications focused on peer assistance.

- For my ELL's I will have each ELL in the SAME group and they can write their own poem in any language they prefer;
- I will also be allowing the students, in some lessons, to write in their own language and translate it back to English;
- Her persuasive writing will be in her native language, Spanish;
- Each student in this group will be provided with a Spanish/English dictionary and will complete the model in both languages;
- If the student is knowledgeable of myths from their culture, they would share with the class in their native language and translate to the class for comprehension;
- The students learning English would listen to a variety of Spanish poems or Skippy Jon Jones books;
- I could let them listen to it on tape in their native language. While we are discussing I can place them in a group with another CD player that will tell the book in their native language;
- This student can use the computer to translate words to English if necessary;
- I can send bilingual books home that are in both Spanish and English for my Spanish speaking ELL students to practice reading at home with their family;
- Poetry will be read in Spanish for the two students learning English;
- I will give the ELL students a copy in their native language.

*Figure 4.* Modifications focused on native language use.

- I will encourage parents to come in and talk about some experiences they have gone through;
- This will allow students to represent their own values and write from their own perspective of what they find to be good, a desirable code of conduct, or moral;
- I can work with the parents of my ELL students to figure out some cooperative things we could both do as a team to make the student successful;
- At the end of the unit, students will participate in a Culture Day where they are allowed to bring food, clothes, or any representation of their own culture or a culture they are interested in to share with the rest of the class;
- One of the students is Indian so I will place him with another Indian student who I know has the same practices and beliefs at home;
- Students will have the chance to be able to bring in their knowledge and ways of learning these stories from their home life;
- Allowing students to share text-to-self as well as other familiar connections will be vital to making this unit culturally responsive and inclusive to all students;
- The biggest way that I plan to create a culturally responsive and inclusive environment is by inviting the families of the students to come in and see what the students have been working on. Not only will the families get to listen to the Alphabet speeches the students have prepared, but the work the students have completed throughout the entire unit will be on display for all the families to see. Not only will inviting the families of the students make the students feel more included, but it will also give me the opportunity to see their lives outside of the classroom;

- Any letters that need to go home to parents will be written in Spanish as well as English. This is because many of the ELL students in my class have parent's that speak little no English at home;
- Parents are welcome to visit and volunteer in the classroom at any time; and
- I would ask parents to send in a book that is reflective of their family's culture. These books would be explored throughout the unit, to reinforce the idea of common themes across the genre, and similarities in the stories in different cultures.

*Figure 5. Modifications focused on family and community involvement.*

- I would take into account any ELL students that I had in the class that may need extra support from various students in the class or even support staff around the school. I would be sure to address the needs of any students with an IEP and tailor the lesson for their comprehension;
- ELL and lower level students will get additional assistance with the lesson as needed;
- Reading the books aloud, modeling the projects beforehand, and discussing what we had learned from the books, while also doing a Venn diagram as a class. This helps to ensure that no student feels lost on their own;
- I will provide specific language support to my student who struggles verbally. This student struggles with being vocal so I will assist her by prompting her and explaining the instructions one-on-one; and
- I will provide my one-on-one help with my ELLs students. They can present their understanding through drawing in this lesson.
- I have provided them with the vocabulary for the activity so that they can have conversations with fellow classmates.

*Figure 6.* Non-lesson specific modifications.

- For my ELL's I will be more lenient when I grade their work;
- I will have to talk slower so that they can understand me;
- This is a group lesson and does not require any writing so all students should be able to complete it with no accommodations;
- I will have them receive extra help from other professionals in the school and help them before or after school.

*Figure 7. Inappropriate modifications.*