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Background

The purpose of research study was to conduct a program evaluation of English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers who have participated in Charlotte Teachers Institute's (CTI) professional development seminars. In these seminars, teachers participated in a seven-month seminar focused on a topic of interest and relevance for their K-12 classrooms. Each teacher creates original curricula that they teach within six months of completing the seminar.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

<p>RQ1: How did CTI seminars contribute to the growth of ESL teachers' confidence to teach ESL students?</p>	<p>RQ2: How do CTI seminars support ESL teachers writing new curricula for their classrooms?</p>	<p>RQ3: How did implementing CTI-created curricula impact student's engagement?</p>
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In 2017, a record 66.6 million U.S. residents (native-born, legal immigrants, and illegal immigrants) ages five and older spoke a language other than English at home (Zeigler & Camarota, 2018). Given the greater number of ESL students, classroom teachers have started to seek professional development opportunities to better prepare themselves for the linguistic and cultural diversity they encounter in their day-to-day teaching (Ye, Prater, & Steed, 2011). Educators and researchers have found one of the best ways to improve the teaching and learning process is by providing teachers with quality professional development experiences (Barohny & Heining-Boynton, 2007.) Professional development programs are realistic options for meeting the needs of English language learners (ELLs) because they can provide more classroom teachers with requisite knowledge and skills (Kararbenick & Clemens Noda, 2004).

Methods

Teacher	Subject	Grade level	Years Teaching	Bilingual
Addy	English as a Second Language (ESL)	High School: 9 th -12 th	25 years	No
Alison	English as a Second Language (ESL)	High School: 9 th	20 years	Yes
Jen	English as a Second Language (ESL)	Middle School: 6 th -8 th	6 years	Yes
Jessica	English as a Second Language (ESL)	Middle School: 6 th -8 th	8 years	Yes

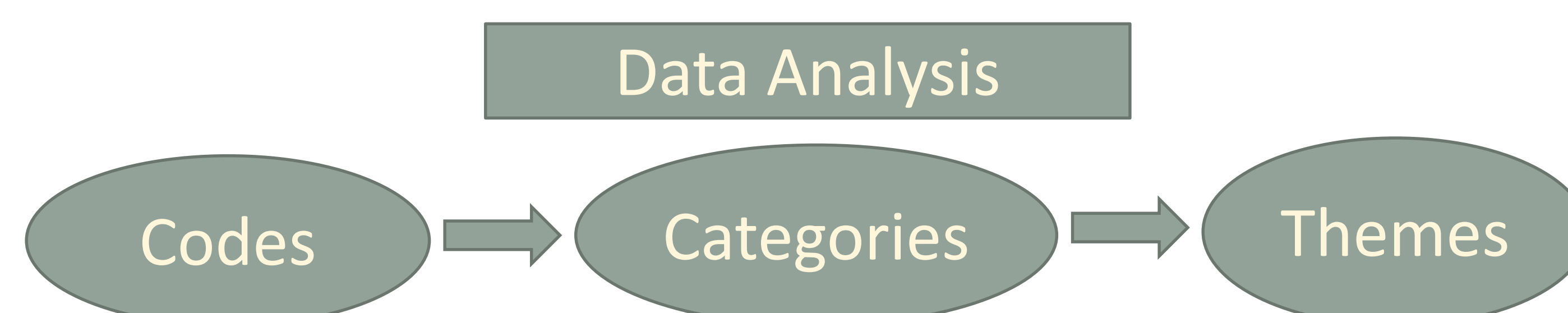
A multi-case study design was used to address the research questions and grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014) was used for data analysis. Four ESL teachers were selected based on the following criteria: completed CTI seminar within 5 years; implemented curricula in ESL classroom; and be an ESL teachers in K-12.

Primary data: Recorded and transcribed semi-structured interviews

Secondary data: Reviewed written curriculum units & curriculum unit usage surveys for content and background data prior to interviews

Member checks: feedback & credibility

Data triangulation: three sources of information



Results

A total of 20 themes emerged among the four participating ESL teachers (cases). From the 20 themes, 3 common themes were derived. One of the 20 themes is presented below for each teacher case.

Addy: EXPANDING STUDENT LEARNING THROUGH INTERACTIVE TECHNOLOGY

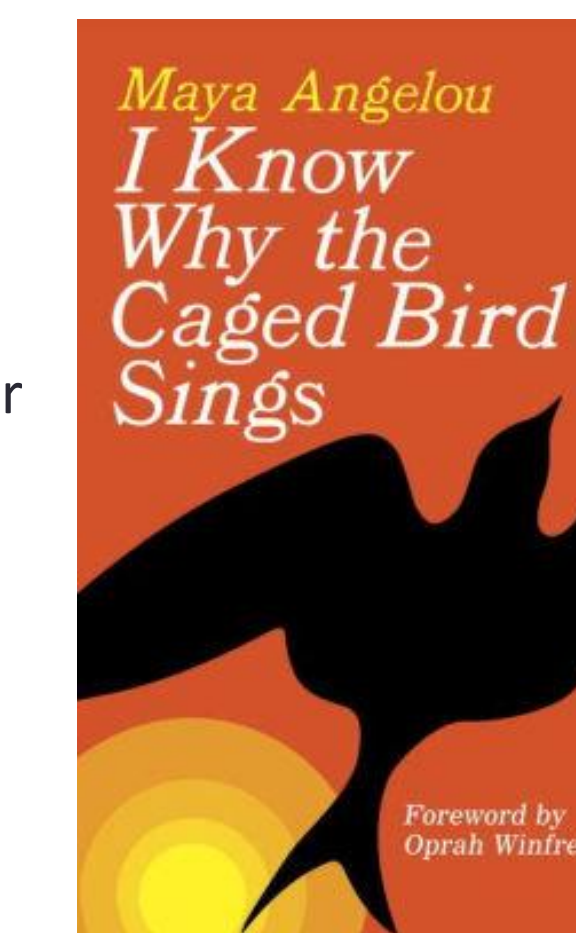
"My students made a poster, where the students did some writing and they wrote about what they brought from their country. We made short videos were they talked about it and we made RQ codes and put those on the poster, so you can hear each of the students talk about what they brought and that was really exciting fun for them."



Project by high school students presenting what they brought from their countries

Alison: INTERACTION OF PERSONAL IMMIGRANT STORIES AMONG TEACHERS AND STUDENTS TO EXPAND LEARNING

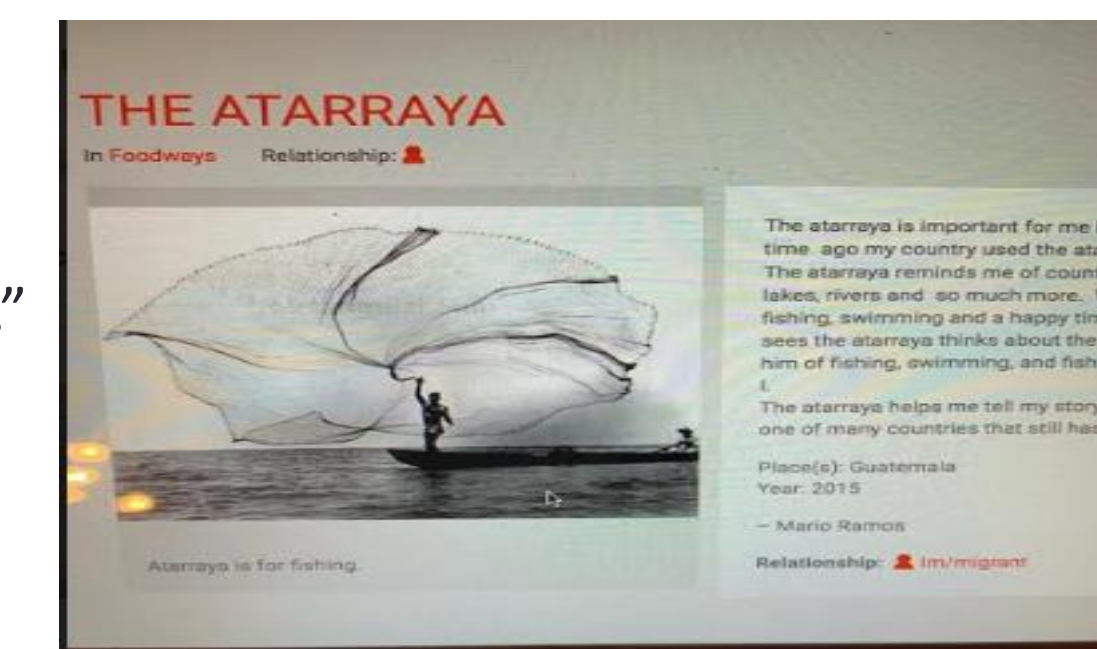
"The students will learn how to write a memoir and at the same time, as the main topic is about limitations the students will be writing a memoir where they will learn to use their limitations as an immigrant students and this is a multicultural curriculum that will also help like close the multicultural gap and between teachers and students."



Example text Alison is used with high school students to discuss "limitations"

Jen: INCREASING STUDENTS SELF-CONFIDENCE THROUGH CONCEPT OF IDENTITY

"Student being able to learn their background knowledge by interviewing their parents...identifying one object that demonstrates their identity and who they are, so I think historically trying to figure out how they could piece it all together, so they could show who they ultimately are at the end and how their parent's history and their own (differ), the country and their home country, and where they live and where they live now and how this all evolves. This doesn't end right now, later they can look back at the object and be like, (this is) not my object anymore, this (other) object says who I am now."



Middle school student project of self identity

Jessica: THE ROLE OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT TO FACILITATE STUDENT LEARNING

"First my goal as a teacher is to teach (and make sure students) enjoy what they do...they learn at the same time they have fun and enjoy... try to make activities more hands on, I try to engage parents, I involve the parents in my activities, so they tell us their real stories and get them engage."



Middle School students decorated classroom doors representing different countries

Conclusion

The common, emergent themes (T) in this study were:

T1: Collaboration through interaction with teachers and resources

T2: Interactive activities and topics that students can relate to their culture and identity

T3: Student impact through improved student performance, activity in afterschool programs, and increased confidence to learn

These themes address the research questions by identifying the ways in which CTI seminars contribute to the growth of ESL teachers' confidence, support ESL teachers in writing new curricula, and the ways ESL students are engaged in the classroom.

Limitations and Future Research

There were three primary limitations to this study. First, limited amount of time for collecting data. Future research could allow more time for each phase of research, including data collection and analysis. Second, all but one teacher was bilingual, so a more diverse group with greater numbers of non-bilingual teachers would provide more perspectives of ESL teachers in professional development. Third, analysis of curriculum unit and curriculum unit usage survey were only used as background knowledge to inform interview questions and analysis. Future studies could focus on fuller analysis teachers' curriculum and survey data.

Recommendations

Based on the data and analysis from this multi-case study design with ESL teachers, three recommendations have been shared with stakeholders of the Charlotte Teachers Institute:

- Based on T1 related to collaboration among teachers, CTI should continue to support activities and resources that give teachers opportunities to share ideas, lesson plans, and classroom resources, as well as find new ways to collaborate.
- T2 focuses on the importance of culture and identity in curriculum. CTI should continue to support curriculum development throughout all levels of grades and subjects that includes culture and identity as essential elements of learning.
- T3 relates to student impact. CTI should continue to contribute to a positive learning environment where (1) teachers feel comfortable to learn as adult learners, (2) teachers create new effective ways to teach their students, and (3) students are engaged as a result of innovative curriculum written by teachers.

References

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