

Practice-Based Coaching to Improve Culturally Responsive Practices in Early Childhood Classrooms

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Culturally Responsive Approach

One framework proposed to address the marginalization and inequalities inherent in U.S. public educational systems is a culturally responsive approach (Gay, 2018)

A culturally responsive approach:

- affirms young children's various cultural and linguistic identities
- holds high expectations for all children
- reinforces pride in children's culture (Cartledge & Kourea, 2008)



Culturally Responsive Practices

Selecting instructional approaches and materials, such as books and play materials that honor children's cultural backgrounds and challenge stereotypes

Incorporating children's prior experiences and cultural knowledge

Creating a bridge between children's home lives and school (Debnam et al., 2015; Wanless & Crawford, 2016)

Improving Early Childhood Teachers' Use of CRP

Need support to utilize culturally responsive practices and reflect on their own cultural identity, learn about other cultures and linguistic identities, examine their own potential biases about cultures and home languages, and be open to critiquing inequitable school structures and policies (Davis et al., 2020; Debnam et al., 2015)

A dearth of data-based research focused on documenting improvements in early childhood teachers' use of culturally responsive practices

Current Study

Experimental analysis of a workshop plus practice-based coaching (PBC) as a professional development tool for enhancing four early childhood educators' use of culturally responsive practices

Research Questions

Multiple baseline design across teachers used to answer:

1. Is there a functional relation between the implementation of a workshop plus PBC and teachers' use of culturally responsive practices in their early childhood classrooms?
2. Which culturally responsive practices improved from baseline to post-intervention?
3. How did teachers and administrators perceive the goals, procedures, and outcomes of the workshop and PBC?

Participants

Early childhood teachers:

- Four White, female, lead early childhood teachers
- Ranged in age from 18 to 54
- Four separate preschool classrooms at the same ECE center

Program administrators:

- Two female preschool administrators
- Both identified as Asian, held Masters degrees, over 10 years' experience in early childhood education

Coach:

- White female, licensed school psychologist, and PhD candidate

Setting

Inclusive, university-affiliated early childhood education center in a Western state

Served students from infancy through five-years-old

Approximately 20% of the 200 enrolled students had disabilities

Dependent Variable

- Culturally Responsive Practices in Early Childhood Checklist (CRP-EC Checklist) that was developed for this project; 10 items scored as “yes” or “no” with scoring criteria
- Example item: “Teacher demonstrates at least one instance of encouraging the use of home language”; scoring criteria: at least one instance of the teacher encouraging the use of a child’s home language, such as the teacher giving the class or an individual child a choice about what language they would like to use (e.g. “what language should we use to label your/our work?”), the teacher using a non-English, home language when responding to children, or the teacher asking students who were multiple language learners if they would like the teacher to label their work in their home language.

Dependent Variable (continued)

- The PBC coach and reliability coders completed the CRP-EC Checklist as a repeated measure approximately one to four times per week per classroom across baseline, intervention, and maintenance sessions
- Took approximately 10 to 15-min to complete through direct observation of one child-directed activity and one teacher-led activity in the teachers' classrooms or playground

Interobserver Agreement

Two reliability coders simultaneously observed and independently recorded teachers' culturally responsive practices on the CRP-EC Checklist in an average of 28% of the observations

The total IOA across participants, conditions, and indicators was 93.6% (range 90-100%)

To account for chance agreement, Cohen's kappa (k) was calculated across items, resulting in a coefficient of 0.88

Additional Descriptive Measures

Two additional measures were utilized to collect descriptive information about teachers' use of and perceptions about culturally responsive practices before and after coaching:

1. The Early Childhood Ecology Scale: Observation Form (ECES; Flores & Riojas-Cortez, 2009)
2. The Culturally Responsive Teaching Self-Efficacy Scale (CRTSE; Siwatu, 2007)

Design: Multiple Baseline Design Across Teachers

Baseline: No instructions about the observation or feedback to teachers were provided

Intervention:

- 1-hour workshop on cultural awareness and culturally responsive practices
- One on one PBC: (a) orientation and partnering, (b) shared goal setting and action planning, (c) focused observations, (d) performance-based feedback, and (e) the celebration of goals met and plan for continued use of strategies

Maintenance: Same as baseline

Movement from baseline to the intervention phase was staggered across teachers and included at least three data points per What Works Clearinghouse single case design standards (Kratochwill et al., 2010)

Phase changes required that a stable or a decreasing trend was observed before the introduction of a new phase (Ferron & Jones, 2006)

Results

All four teachers increased their use of culturally responsive practices following the workshop and PBC, as measured by the CRP-EC Checklist, with functional relations established for three of the four teachers

Amelia:

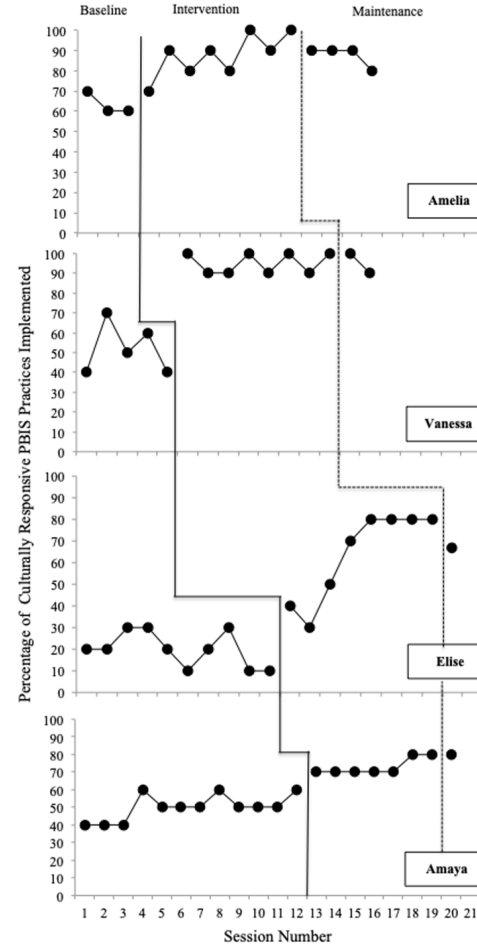
During baseline, Amelia demonstrated moderate levels of culturally responsive practices with a low degree of variability ($M=63.3\%$; range, 60 to 70%) and a slight downward (negative) trend

A change in level ($M=87.5\%$; range, 70 to 100%) and data pattern (trend) was observed between baseline and intervention. The trend changed from slightly negative to moderately positive

Immediacy of effect was observed within the phase change for Amelia, which had minimal overlap (12.5%) between the baseline and intervention phase

Compared to the PBC phase, the maintenance phase demonstrated similar levels of practices and materials ($M=87.5\%$; range, 80 to 90%) and low variability

Figure 1. Percentage of culturally responsive practices and materials implemented during the baseline, intervention, and maintenance phase.



Descriptive Findings

Table 2

Teachers' percentage of implementation of culturally responsive practices on the ECES observation tool during baseline and post-intervention [EXCERPTS]

ECES Observation Items	Baseline	Post-Intervention
Classroom feels like a safe, comfortable place to be.	80%	95%
Classroom provides opportunities for retreat or privacy.	75%	100%
To promote cultural pride, classroom demonstrates evidence of a variety of multicultural materials.	45%	75%
The use of the home language is encouraged.	30%	70%
Children's home language is acknowledged in the classroom displays.	55%	65%
Learning centers contain a wide selection of literacy materials in English and Spanish.	50%	75%

Table 3

Teachers' average percentage of implementation of culturally responsive practices on the CRTSE self report tool during baseline and post-intervention [EXCERPTS]

CRTSE Items	Baseline	Post-Intervention
Identify ways that the school culture (e.g. values, norms, and practices) is different from my students' home culture.	60%	85%
Obtain information about my students' home life.	73%	90%
Establish positive home-school relations.	86%	93%
Greet English Language Learners with a phrase in their native language.	35%	78%
Design a classroom environment using displays that reflects a variety of cultures.	45%	85%

Social Validity

A social validity form was used to collect information from teachers and administrators on the perceived benefits and feasibility of the intervention goals, procedures, and outcomes of the workshop and PBC intervention

Four **teachers' average ratings:** 2.97 on a 3-point scale

- Workshop and PBC involved appropriate goals, procedures, and a reasonable time commitment and was effective for improving their use of culturally responsive practices

Two **administrators' average ratings:** 3.0. on a 3-point scale

- Teachers and students benefited from the coaching and the time commitment was reasonable and feasible for this form of professional development

Implications

A functional relation was documented for three of the four teachers

→ The workshop and PBC approach shows promise in improving culturally responsive practices, but may require individualization or more sessions for some early childhood teachers; better to implement across school year

The practices implemented least frequently before and after intervention were those associated with creating a linguistically responsive classroom, such as encouraging the use of children's home language, using greetings in children's home languages, and integrating children's home languages into classroom displays

→ Increase teachers' preparation for creating linguistically affirming spaces and improve policy and recommended practice guidance

Implications

The addition of pretend food and cooking supplies to the housekeeping areas was challenging for teachers to implement

→ Some culturally responsive practices may take more steps to implement than others

Teachers improved their inclusion of books representing diverse children and families but struggled to include books that challenged stereotypes

→ Some culturally responsive practices may take more courage to implement than others

Future Research

Use of culturally-responsive PBC with diverse coaches, teachers, and settings

Teacher and coach input on challenges, barriers, and effective strategies

How to effectively and accurately measure culturally responsive practices, including teachers' attitudes and implicit biases

Distal effects of supporting early childhood teachers' use of CRP on child outcomes, relationships with families, and suspensions and expulsions