

THE NEW JERSEY CULTURAL COMPETENCY AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS INSTITUTE AND MENTORING PROGRAM

# TEACHERS AS GLOBAL TRANSFORMERS

*Engaging Students through Culturally Responsive Actions*

A SUMMATIVE REPORT OF THREE COHORTS OF TEACHERS



THOMAS EDISON  
STATE UNIVERSITY

THE JOHN S. WATSON INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY

Center for the Positive  
Development of Urban Children

**PRINCIPAL AUTHORS:**

Ana I. Berdecia, MEd;  
Caitlin Kosec, MPP;  
Kamili O. Leath, MS; and  
Ashley Reid, MA, MDIV

Funded partly by:



Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation



Princeton Area Community Foundation



PNC Charitable Foundation



TD Charitable Foundation



The John S. Watson Institute  
for Public Policy of  
Thomas Edison State University



Trenton Public Schools



Wells Fargo Regional Foundation



# Contents



ABOUT THOMAS EDISON STATE UNIVERSITY	2
INTRODUCTION	3
OVERVIEW OF LEARNING INSTITUTES IMPACT	7
MEASURING INCREASED KNOWLEDGE FROM DAY 1 TO DAY 3	8
WHO ARE OUR GLOBAL TRANSFORMERS?	11
PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS	12
MENTORING THROUGH THE ART OF COACHING	14
2017-2018 SUMMER COHORT DATA STORIES	18
2017-2018 SUMMER COHORT PHOTO GALLERY	22
SUCCESS STORY #1 – SILVIA RAINES, FIRST GRADE BILINGUAL TEACHER	24
SUCCESS STORY #2 – ERICA BROOKS, SECOND GRADE GENERAL ED.	28
2017-2018 MLK COHORT PHOTO GALLERY	36
SUCCESS STORY #3: LUZ CASTILLO, FIRST GRADE BILINGUAL TEACHER	38
2018-2019 FALL COHORT DATA STORIES	42
2018-2019 FALL COHORT PHOTO GALLERY	46
SUCCESS STORY #4 – DAISY SANCHEZ, FOURTH GRADE BILINGUAL TEACHER	48
TAKING A CLOSER LOOK AT THE FALL COHORT TRENTON SUBSET	52
THE CARTERET PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS	56
THE CARTERET COHORTS	57
SUCCESS STORY #5 – RITU CHAUHAN, ESL TEACHER	62
SUCCESS STORY #6: KIMBERLY BARKER-GERRITSE, ESL TEACHER	66
CONCLUSION	70
REFERENCES	72
PROGRAM ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	73
WRITERS’ BIOGRAPHIES	74

# About Thomas Edison State University

Established in 1972, Thomas Edison State University provides distinctive undergraduate and graduate education for self-directed adults through flexible, high-quality, collegiate learning and assessment opportunities. One of New Jersey's senior public institutions of higher education, the University offers associate, bachelor's, master's and doctoral degree programs and certificates in more than 100 areas of study. For more than 45 years, the University has pioneered the use of the latest technologies to develop and deliver academic programs that work around the unique needs of adult learners and has served as a national leader in the assessment of adult learning. *The New York Times* called the institution "the college that paved the way for flexibility." The University is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, (267-284-5000).

## The John S. Watson School of Public Service

at Thomas Edison State University prepares professionals for leadership roles in a wide variety of public service-related settings. The Watson School is preparing the next generation of public policy and community service leaders in the following areas: Urban, Rural and Regional Policy Studies; Nonprofit Management; Environmental Policy/Environmental Justice; Information and Technology Management; Health Policy and Public Health Management; Early Childhood Education Leadership and Management; Public Administration; and Public Finance/Budget and Fiscal Management. The concentration areas of the School have been a direct result of The John S. Watson Institute for Public Policy work across the state with leaders in various sectors.

## The John S. Watson Institute for Public Policy

is a center of innovation and applied policy within the Watson School offering a new paradigm, applying the resources of higher education to public policy decisions in a practical and hands-on manner and in response to the expressed needs of decision makers, providing practical research, technical assistance and other expertise. The Watson Institute is considered a "think and do tank," versus a traditional "think tank."

It strives to develop long-term strategic partnerships that will effectuate the greatest level of change through its four thematic policy-based centers: the Center for Civic Engagement and Leadership Development; the Center for the Urban Environment; the Center for Health Policy; and the Center for the Positive Development of Urban Children.

## The Center for the Positive Development of Urban Children (CPDUC)

strives to bridge the voices of teachers, practitioners and families with policy initiatives that impact the positive development of New Jersey's children. The work of the CPDUC encompasses a holistic approach that utilizes best practices, policy analysis and research to improve the health, well-being and educational outcomes for children and adults working with families.

### CPDUC goals are:

- + To review and advise on early childhood policy and initiatives that impact the positive development of urban children.
- + To utilize evidence-based practices and evaluations to influence best practices in the field of early childhood development, early learning and child health. Such practices focus on children's socio-emotional development, teacher preparation and support systems for diverse children and families.
- + To identify and promote economic messages to engage nontraditional champions for children within municipal government and the business sector.
- + To provide professional development opportunities that focus on parent engagement, socioemotional development, supervision and mentoring of teachers, and working with diverse children and families.
- + To provide advisement to early childhood practitioners that guides them to career and academic options for becoming highly qualified and certified.

# Introduction

**According to the National Clearinghouse for English Acquisition (2011), one out of every 10 public school students in the United States is an English language learner (nearly 5 million).**

New Jersey mirrors the national statistics trend, as the number of English language learners in schools continues to increase. The United States Census Bureau's 2017 population estimates, show a total of 1,028,372 limited English-speaking individuals resided in the state of New Jersey, which ranks sixth in the nation for its share of the limited English proficiency population. This figure has impacted New Jersey public schools with 6.5 percent of the total student body (1,408,108) identified as English learners or 216,632 students (Source: NJ Performance Reports 2019). Educating students, whose first language is not English, in all subjects and skills to be successful in school and in life is one of the biggest challenges' educators face today. Research conducted by the U.S. Department of Education and other policy institutes report the benefits to the students when teachers employ a variety of cultural and linguistic strategies to engage students. "Students who are exposed

to diversity have improved cognitive skills, and critical-thinking and problem-solving skills. Regular interaction with a variety of racial and ethnic groups helps students debunk stereotypes and reduce unconscious bias inside and outside of the classroom" (2018).

Additional interesting statistics according to the National Center for Education Statistics conducted by the U.S. Department of Education is that the percentage of students of color is growing exponentially faster than the number of teachers of color and that racially and ethnically diverse teachers with strong academic skills improve outcomes for all students.

Teachers with bilingual, multilingual, and cultural competencies have superpowers that allow them to respond culturally and linguistically to diverse students and their families in an authentic and intentional way. Teachers who engage the students using their cultures and languages are global transformers (superheroes) who do not wear capes or fly around the classroom, but they are able to do something that is just as extraordinary. They value what their students bring to the classroom in terms of their cultural

*"Simply put, as a teacher, you have great power to affect a great number of people, and, as Spiderman says, **"With great power, comes great responsibilities."** That's right, as a teacher, based purely on the number of people you interact with each day — and your potential to ripple joy into the lives of those connected to the students you teach — you are a superhero. Numbers and logic don't lie."*

CHRIS WONDRA, FOUNDER OF WE TEACH WE LEARN.  
[WWW.WETEACHWELEARN.ORG](http://WWW.WETEACHWELEARN.ORG)

knowledge and wealth (culture, language, traditions, rituals, perspectives of two worlds, and even three worlds, etc.). These teachers transform their classrooms into global communities using the students' cultural backgrounds across content areas; as well as, the unwritten curriculum that supports students' social-emotional development, cultural identity and self-esteem while enhancing their potential for academic success.

**The New Jersey Cultural Competency and English Language Learners Institute and Mentoring Program** was designed to address the rare opportunity educators receive to engage in extensive course work and professional development thus preparing them to work with the increasing proportion of culturally and linguistically diverse students in their classrooms. The program provides professional development (21 hours) coupled with mentoring and coaching (25 hours) to educators in the Pre-K to 12 grade system serving low-income students who qualify for the free and reduced lunch subsidy and speak another language other than English at home. The



program goals are to raise awareness of teachers to become culturally and linguistically conscious and responsive. Through our intervention, we are interested in how the learning and the coaching



cycles change the way teachers think about culture and language and how the adoption of best practices transforms their teaching practices and interactions with diverse students. The program has a 13-year evidence-based approach that goes far beyond a simple overview on diversity; it provides a guided discovery of their own cultural identities, biases and misconceptions; allowing them to help their students articulate and hold sacred their cultural identities.

In New Jersey, there is no other program of its kind that couples professional development focused on culture and language followed by intensive mentoring that supports how teachers create and sustain positive interactions with diverse students and their families. Mentorship is at the heart of the program model and its results. Careful investing and training of mentors provide cultural coaching to challenge teachers in their thinking and pedagogy. During the mentorship for the three cohorts from 2017-2019, the mentors provided **3,135 mentoring/coaching touch points** via text, email, mail, face-to-face meetings, and on-site mentoring visits.

The program has implemented a model that collects quantitative and qualitative data, which demonstrates that although teachers entered the program unaware of where to start, upon completing the program they are able to develop effective strategies for working with English Language Learners (ELL) and culturally diverse populations of students. We have seen teachers dramatically improve their ability to become more culturally and linguistically conscious through experiencing a shared body of knowledge and applying that knowledge in their classrooms. The program has developed its own data collection

system that is highly dependent on mentor reports which include supportive visit narratives and two assessment tools (the Culture and Language Assessment 5-Point Scale developed by Ana I. Berdecia and the Stage of Change 5-Point Scale developed by the Children's Institute in Rochester, N.Y.). The Culture and Language Assessment measures strategy adoption across

three domains: classroom design; teachers' dispositions; and instructional practices. The Stage of Change Scale measures teachers' readiness for change and the mind shifts in the teachers' thinking about culture and language. These evaluation tools measure the efficacy of the program model and the changes that teachers are making in their thinking and practices.

## The key components of the program are:

- + **A pre-assessment visit** using the Culture and Language Assessment 5-Point Scale collects baseline data that is used to compare three additional post-Institute assessment visits.
- + **A two- or three-day Learning Institute** that assists teachers to examine their bias, learn about ELL students and what strategies are most effective in supporting their development. The Institute utilizes lectures, simulations, and literacy practicums to help teachers develop a fresh approach to diversity and engaging English language learners.
- + Each classroom receives **a Cultural Toolbox valued at \$500** with multicultural materials and resources to redesign their learning environment and instruction.
- + **Four Mentoring/Coaching Supportive visits** alternate between assessment visits to help teachers plan on the adoption of the 26 program strategies that support the transformation of the classroom learning environment and instructional practices.
- + **Three Post-Institute Assessment visits** using the Culture and Language Assessment 5-Point Scale and the Stage of Change 5-Point Scale at the four-month, six-month and nine-month markers measure what strategies have been adopted and what has changed in the teachers' thinking in terms of culture and language. Mentors provide teachers with informal and formal debriefings after each visit to encourage further adoption of the program strategies; as well as. affirm the strategies adopted.
- + **Quarterly Teleconferences** establish learning communities with each cohort where teachers are learning from each other and from content experts.

In the academic years of 2017-2018 and 2018-2019, we had the distinct opportunity to work with three cohorts of teachers from three municipalities in New Jersey: Hamilton, Carteret, and Trenton. According to the 2017-2018 New Jersey School Performance Summary Report, several schools in Trenton had 36.1 percent ELL (MLK Elementary) and 58.1 percent ELL (Trenton Central High School-West Campus) and in Carteret 27.4 percent of ELL (Nathan Hale Elementary) and 19.1 percent (Private Nicholas Minue Elementary School). These schools participated in the New Jersey Cultural Competency and English Language Learners Institute and Mentoring Program.

We worked with eight teachers in Trenton and Hamilton (**Summer Cohort**), 12 teachers in Trenton and Carteret (**Fall Cohort**) and 15 teachers at one school, Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School, in Trenton (**MLK Cohort**). Both the summer and fall cohorts received 21 hours of professional development coupled with 9 months of mentoring. The MLK cohort received a condensed version of the program that consisted of 16 hours of professional development and seven consecutive weeks of mentoring. The data findings in this report highlights the shifts in teachers' thinking and practices that demonstrate cultural and linguistic competencies across the three cohorts. In addition, a comparison of teachers at MLK who participated in the 9-month program and those who participated in the 7-week program showed



that the 9-month program yield better results. Moreover, the data revealed that the thinking and disposition of teachers who wanted to become more culturally and linguistically responsive and who made the commitment to change, scored higher on both programs' evaluation measures.

In conclusion, our 13-year evidenced-based model perfected the art of cultural conversations, which affords teachers the opportunities to examine their thinking and teaching practices when working with diverse students who are culturally and linguistically rich. The program heightened the assets, resources, and strengths that diverse students bring to the learning table, so they are valued and validated. We have seen the transformation process in all three cohorts of teachers who participated in the professional development series coupled with mentoring and coaching. The program challenged teachers who work with diverse learners to sustain a culturally responsive pedagogy that ignites their passion for teaching once again while connecting with their diverse students in real and substantial ways.



# Overview of Learning Institute's Impact



Each cohort began with professional development to provide instruction around cultural competency and how to incorporate cultural pedagogy into the classroom. During the professional development institute, participants had to fill out pre- and post-assessments that measured knowledge of the core program concepts. To measure comprehension of these concepts we utilized a rubric allowing responses to fit into four categories: basic, competent, proficient, and advanced.

Analysis of the pre-and-post assessments concluded that participants improved their comprehension of the Institute's core concepts over the course of the Learning Institute (21 hours of professional development). According to the pretests, participants from all three cohorts mostly identified their knowledge of the concepts as basic. However, in responding to the post-assessment, participants reflected more confidence in not only their understanding of the concepts, but their ability to create and implement cultural pedagogy into their classrooms. Post-assessment ratings landed more in the proficient and advanced categories, versus basic and competent. This upward trend in the data would also later be reflected in the mentor visits and Stage of Change Scale assessments.

During the Learning Institutes, teachers learn about the importance of culture, home languages, and English acquisition for academic success; as well as, strategies for supporting diverse students and English language learners. This experiential learning occurred through lectures, interactive simulations and a cultural literacy moment practicum that allowed participants to demonstrate how culture and language fits across all content areas and grade levels using standards.

## The Learning Institute Curriculum included:

- + **Program overview** and expectations
- + **Exploration of cultural biases** through simulations such as The Privilege Walk and the AWAKA (cultural immersion experience)
- + **The Value of Mentoring and Coaching:** What can I expect?
- + **First and Second Language Acquisition**
- + **Cultural Consciousness Discussion** using participants' Cultural Masks and Cultural Artifacts from their heritages
- + **Cultural Literacy Moments** (infusing culture and language into literacy development using props, gestures, visuals, music/movement, and rich vocabulary in both English and home languages) **doubles the message and increases comprehension**
- + **Understanding the world of English Language Learners and the Immigrant Experience**
- + **Using culture and language across content areas to enhance instruction and build community of acceptance**
- + **Examining the affective filter** and its link to socioemotional development when learning is compromised by stress
- + **Modeling solid and predictable routines**, providing transitional activities, brain breaks, and the use of small groups to support ELL in their overall development and academic success.

# Measuring Increased Knowledge from Day 1 to Day 3

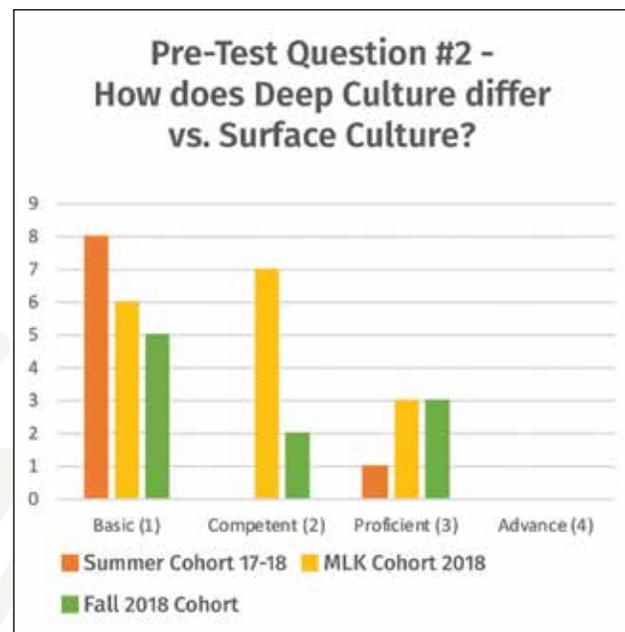
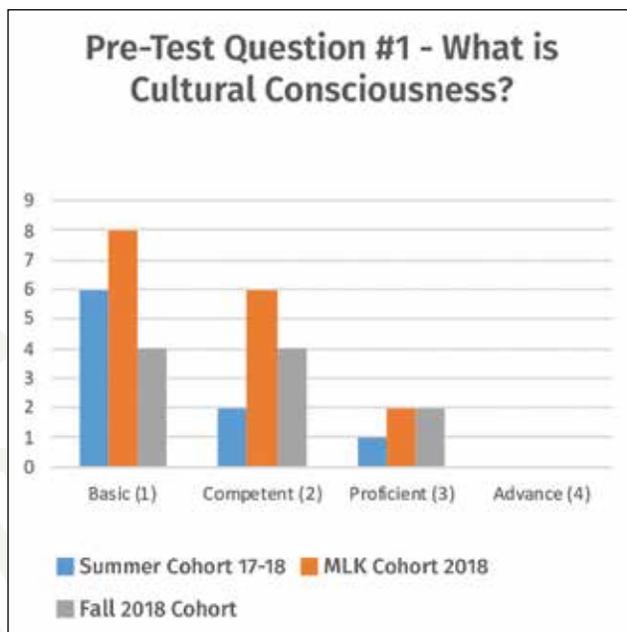


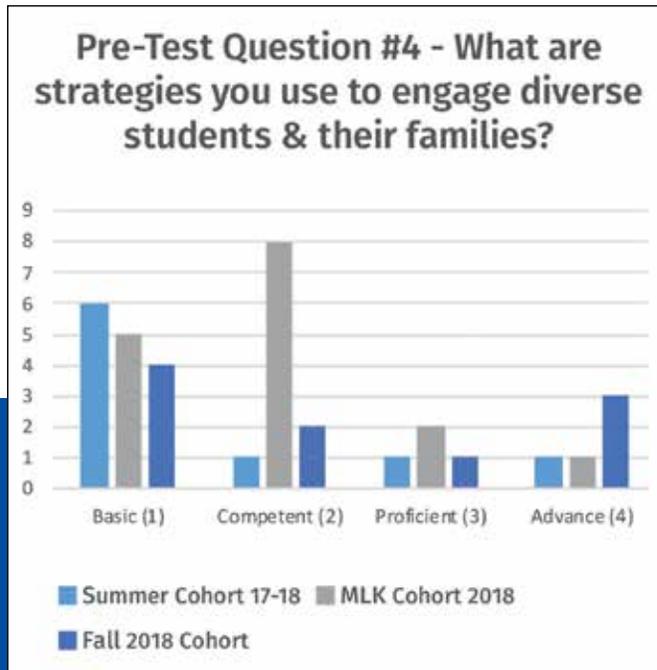
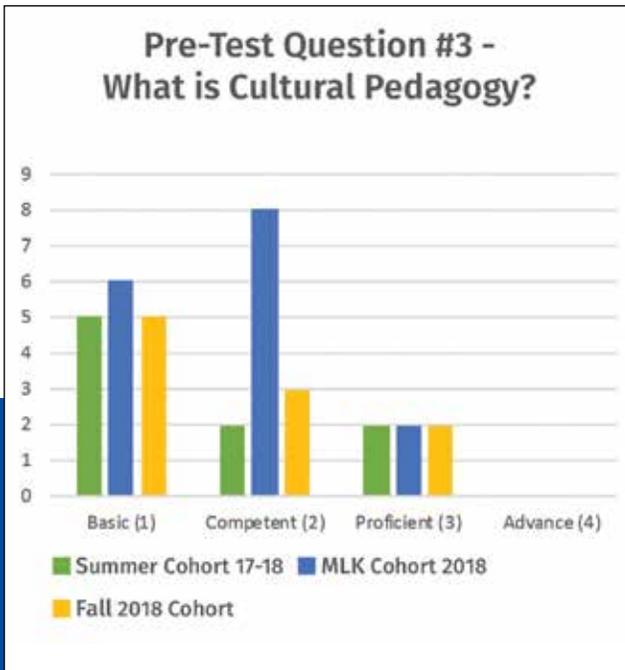
Pre-and-post-tests were used to measure the **increased knowledge of the educators from the first day to the last day of the Learning Institute using these four key prompts:**

- + What is cultural consciousness?
- + How does deep culture differ from surface culture?
- + What is culturally responsive pedagogy?
- + What are the strategies you are currently using to engage diverse students and families?

To measure comprehension of these concepts we utilized a rubric allowing responses to fit into four categories: basic, competent, proficient and advanced. Analyzation of these assessments concluded that participants improved their

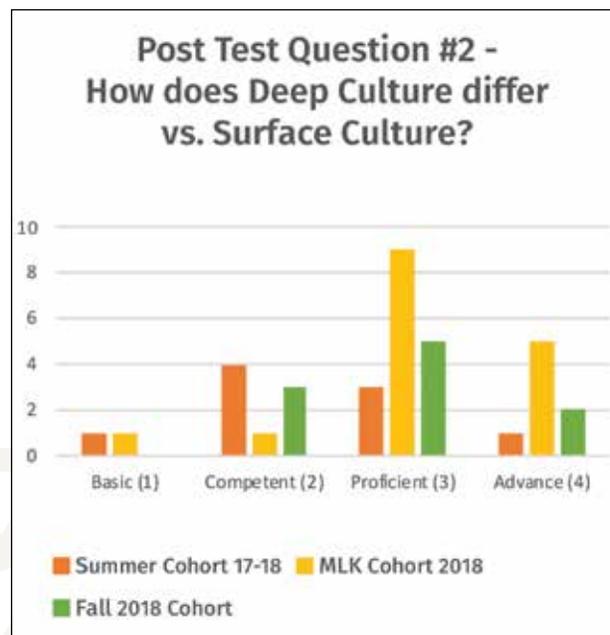
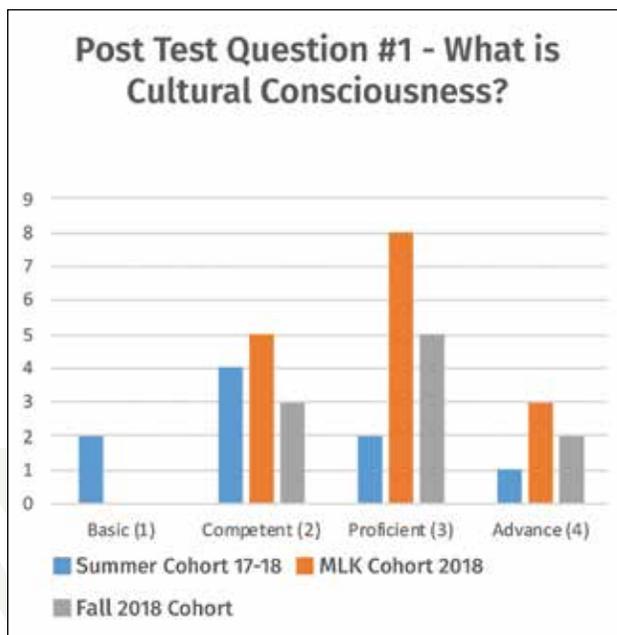
comprehension of the Institute's core concepts over the course of the professional development. According to the pre-tests, participants from all three cohorts mostly identified their knowledge of the concepts as basic. See the following charts.

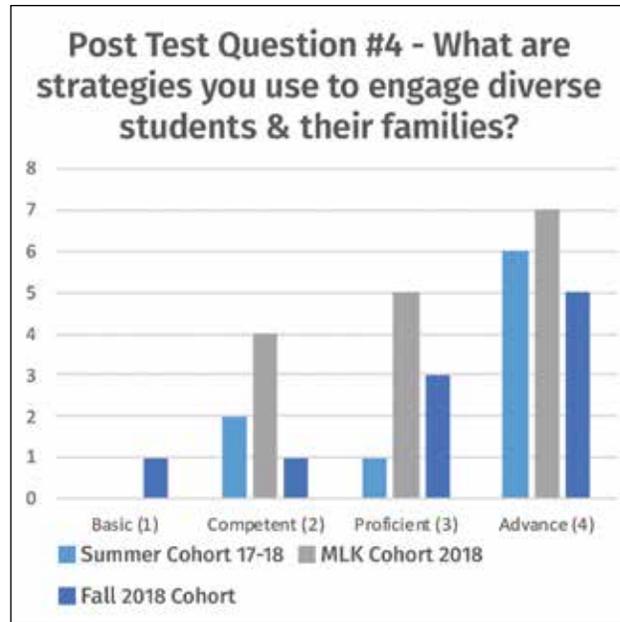
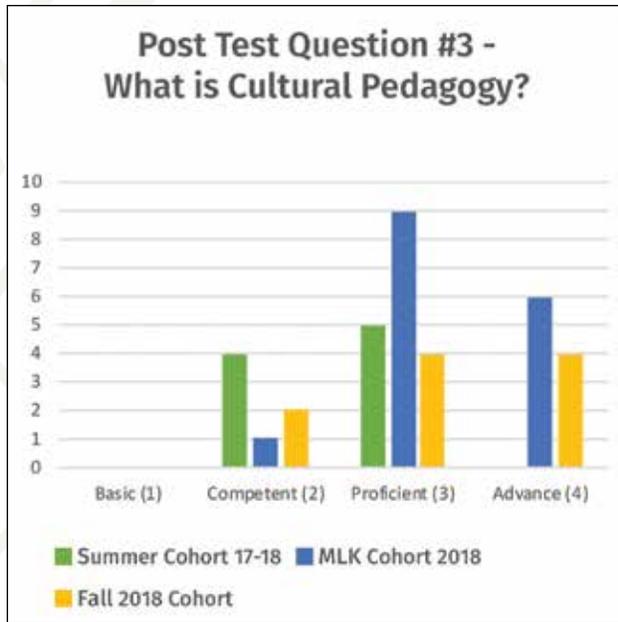




However, in responding to the post assessment, participants reflected more confidence in not only their understanding of the concepts, but their ability to create and implement cultural pedagogy

into their classrooms. Post assessment ratings landed more in the proficient and advanced categories versus basic and competent. See the following charts.





## Overall Reflections of the Learning Institute from Our Participants:

- > *"I really enjoyed the literacy moments. I appreciated the conversations that invoked deep thoughts."*
- > *"It was bit challenging, but it was a great experience to dig into my own life to see the 'me' that others don't always see."*
- > *"I realized that I failed as a teacher to really embrace cultural differences and am now determined to make a difference in my assigned centers – all while collaborating with teachers and center directors."*
- > *"I firmly believe that I can be a global transformer. This workshop has given me immense confidence that I can be that agent of change in my school."*
- > *"I enjoyed having the opportunity to explore the social-emotional aspect of our interaction with students. Too often the conversations surrounding students are focused on testing, academic rigor and other topics that do not consider the developmental stages of learners."*
- > *"I knew my students' cultures were important, but I didn't know how to address them. I got some great ideas. Because my culture was denied, I didn't know how to address it in my classroom."*
- > *"The simulation of the two societies was a different experience for me. It was a great way to experience, express and act upon different beliefs and situations that I haven't experienced before."*
- > *"Using more hands-on activities, props and visuals that enrich student's vocabulary is something I am going to adopt."*
- > *This was the best professional workshop because of all the hands-on approaches and practices."*
- > *"When I make a visual aid for my class or select a video to use as a part of my instruction, I make sure it is culturally relevant and that it deepens students' interest and engagement."*

# Who are Our **Global Transformers?**

**Class of 2017-2018 (Summer Cohort)**



## **2017-2018 MLK Cohort-7 Week Intervention**

Theme: Transforming Your Thinking and Teaching to Connect with Diverse Students (Day 1 and Day 2)



## **Class of 2018-2019 (Fall Cohort, Learning Institute)**

Theme: The League of Extraordinary Teachers Empowering Diverse Students Toward Excellence



# Participant Demographics



<b>TEACHER AGE RANGE</b>	Summer Cohort 2017-18	MLK Cohort 2017-18	Fall Cohort 2018-19
18-24	0	0	1
25-30	1	2	2
31-40	4	3	1
41-50	2	5	5
50+ Years Old	1	5	3
<b>ETHNICITY</b>	Summer Cohort 2017-18	MLK Cohort 2017-18	Fall Cohort 2018-19
African-American	1	3	1
African-American/ Puerto Rican	1	0	0
Bolivian	1	0	0
European (German, English, Irish, Swedish, Danish, French, Welsh, Italian, Dutch, Scottish)	1	5	2
Indian (India)	2	0	1
Pakistani	1	0	0
Puerto Rican	1	1	2
Cuban/German	0	0	1
Dominican (Dominican Republic)	0	2	1
Mexican	0	0	1
Polish	0	0	1
Russian	0	0	1
African (Ivory Coast)	0	1	0
Ecuadorian	0	1	0
German, Irish, Hungarian, French, Nigerian	0	1	0
Hungarian, Irish, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rican	0	1	0
American (USA)	0	0	1



<b>CREDENTIALS/EDUCATIONAL LEVEL</b>	Summer Cohort 2017-18	MLK Cohort 2017-18	Fall Cohort 2018-19
Bachelor's Degree/Certification K – 6th	1	7	2
Bachelor's Degree	1	0	2
Certification K - 8th	0	1	0
P-3 Certification	4	2	0
Special Education Certification	1	0	1
Master's Degree	6	4	9
PhD	0	1	0
ESL Endorsement	1	3	1
Bilingual Endorsement	1	2	3
Other Certifications	0	0	3
Other Endorsements (languages)	0	1	0
<b>YEARS IN CURRENT POSITION</b>	Summer Cohort 2017-18	MLK Cohort 2017-18	Fall Cohort 2018-19
1 Year or Less Experience	0	0	2
2-5 Years' Experience	6	6	5
6-10 Years' Experience	0	2	1
11-15 Years' Experience	1	3	2
16-20 Years' Experience	1	2	0
21+ Years' Experience	0	2	3
<b>TEACHING EXPERIENCE</b>	Summer Cohort 2017-18	MLK Cohort 2017-18	Fall Cohort 2018-19
1 Year Experience	0	0	0
2-5 Years' Experience	3	4	3
6-10 Years' Experience	2	5	4
11-15 Years' Experience	1	2	2
16-20 Years' Experience	1	2	1
21+ Years' Experience	0	2	3
Unknown	1	0	0

# Mentoring through the Art of Coaching



## 2017-2018 Mentors Team

Mentorship is at the heart of the program model and its results. Careful investing and training of the mentors provide an extraordinary team of cultural coaches that come alongside teachers to challenge their thinking and teaching practices. Our program mentors have made a commitment to continue to study the art of coaching through mentors' retreats, additional professional development, peer learning and reflective practices. Coaches are encouraged to remain curious and use reflective questions to unlock what is already inside of each teacher. According to John C. Maxwell, "Questions

unlock and open doors that otherwise remain closed...it is the most effective means of connecting with people; it cultivates humility; builds better ideas; gives different perspectives; and challenges mind-set."

The program mentors are all seasoned educators and facilitators of learning with more than 20 to 30 years of experience in various educational fields. They are experts in the art of conversation and pulling out the brilliance of each teacher assigned to them through the art of mentoring and coaching. During on-site mentoring visits, mentors

witnessed how the classroom environment and instructional practices were transformed from general learning environment into intentional global learning spaces that values culture and language, and the funds of knowledge that diverse students bring to the classroom. The goals of the coaches are to raise awareness, provide resources to consider and supports for implementation of best practices to address diversity as well as the linguistic repertoire of English Language Learners.

In addition to providing two to five hours of face-to-face mentoring to each teacher, mentors interact with teachers via calls, texts, email, mailings and other face-to-face meetings, which we call touch points. We believe that the multiple interactions help teachers to take a deeper dive into their beliefs and practices in order to become culturally and linguistically responsive for their

students. During the mentorship for the three cohorts in the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 program years, the mentors provided **3,135 mentoring touch points**. These touch points unfold organically and are initiated by the mentor or the teacher. Some teachers take full advantage of this opportunity to have a thinking partner as a sounding board for their decision-making process while other teachers tap into this resource only around the pre- and post-mentoring visits. Our numbers will vary from cohort to cohort, but we know by the detailed mentors reports that teachers are changing their thinking and trying strategies they have never attempted before to engage their diverse ELLs. Teachers have become more curious about their students' cultures and languages, and how they can use their rich heritages as a springboard for curricula.



**2018-2019 Mentors Team**

# The New Jersey Cultural Competency and English Language Learners Institute and Mentoring Program



## Mentoring Touch Points = 3,135



FACE TO FACE



TEXTS



MAILINGS

2017-18

### SUMMER COHORT

(8 classrooms)

32

738

8

2017-18

### MLK COHORT

(15 classrooms)

62

358

72

2018-19

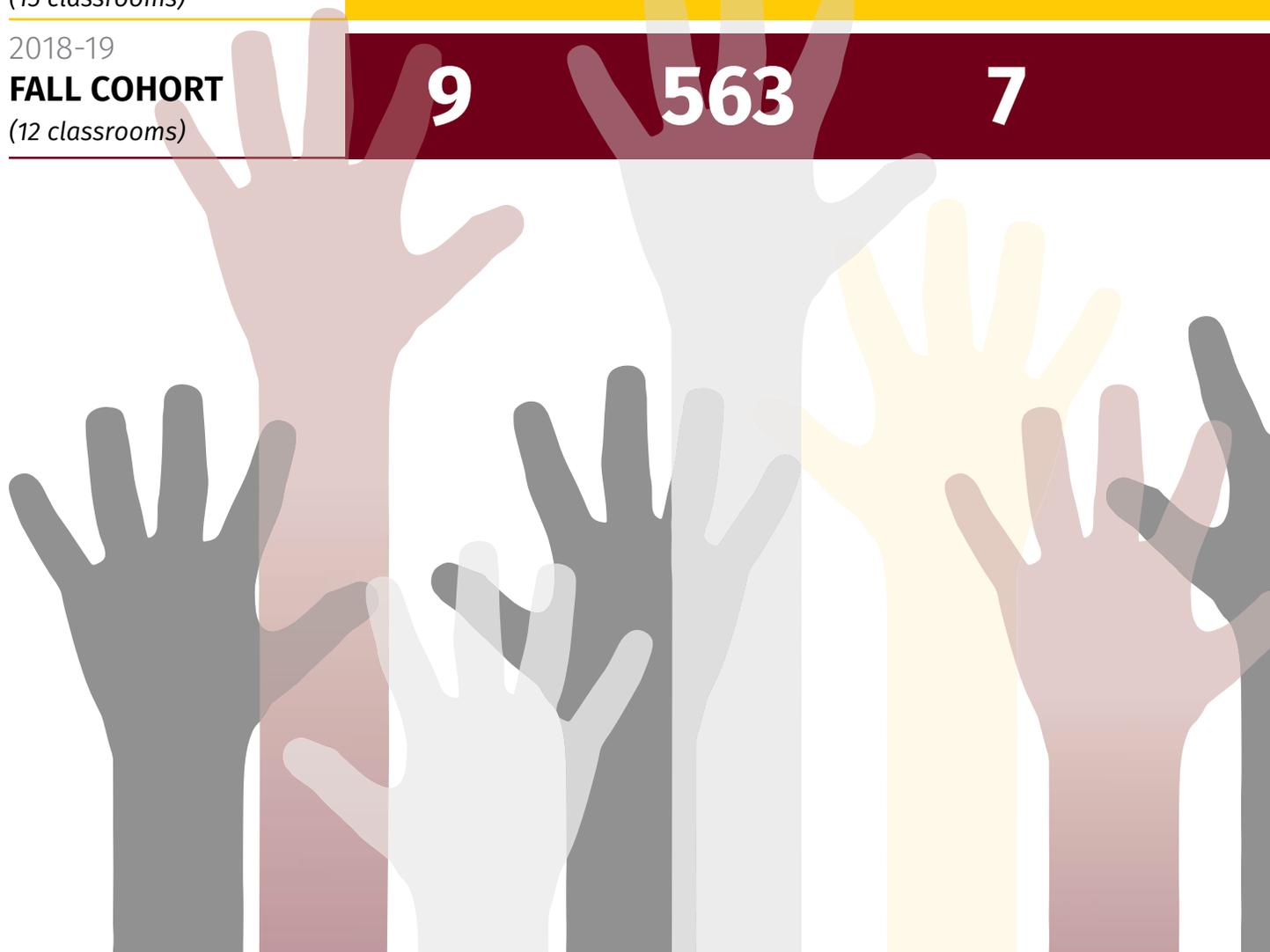
### FALL COHORT

(12 classrooms)

9

563

7





TELEPHONE CALLS



EMAILS



MENTORING HOURS

**TOTAL TOUCHES**

<b>69</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>157.10</b> (56 visits)	<b>1,262.10</b>
-----------	------------	------------------------------	-----------------

<b>12</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>279.50</b> (105 visits)	<b>900.5</b>
-----------	------------	-------------------------------	--------------

<b>26</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>224.2</b> (184 visits)	<b>972.20</b>
-----------	------------	------------------------------	---------------



# 2017-2018 Summer Cohort Data Stories

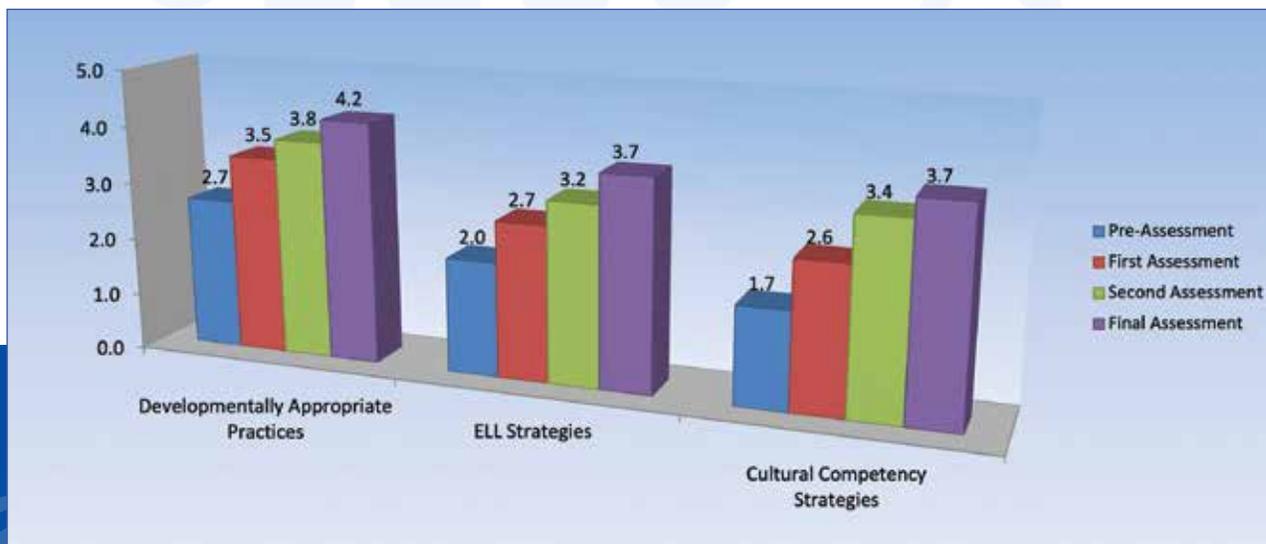


The Summer Cohort consisted of eight teachers from Carteret, Hamilton and Trenton, N.J., in grades preschool to fifth. This group received 21 hours of professional development followed by 56 on-site technical assistance visits (**157 mentoring hours and 1,262 touch points**). Classroom design is a key component of creating an inviting setting for diverse learners to feel comfortable and accepted throughout their instruction. When analyzing the improvements related to classroom design from the pre-assessment to the final assessment on the 5-point scale, the greatest improvements for the Summer Cohort observed were in culturally competent and English Language Learner (ELL)

practices. The mean score for culturally competent classroom design strategies increased by 2 points on the 5-point scale between the pre-assessment and final assessment, while the mean score for ELL strategies increased by 1.7 points. The significant improvements in classroom design reflect the teachers' enthusiasm to incorporate new cultural artifacts and materials corresponding to the diversity of their students. A full analysis of the teachers' progress in improving their classroom design to be culturally and linguistically responsive through each of the three domains is included in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1:

Overall Changes in Classroom Design for Summer Cohort Using the Culture and Language 5-Point Assessment Scale





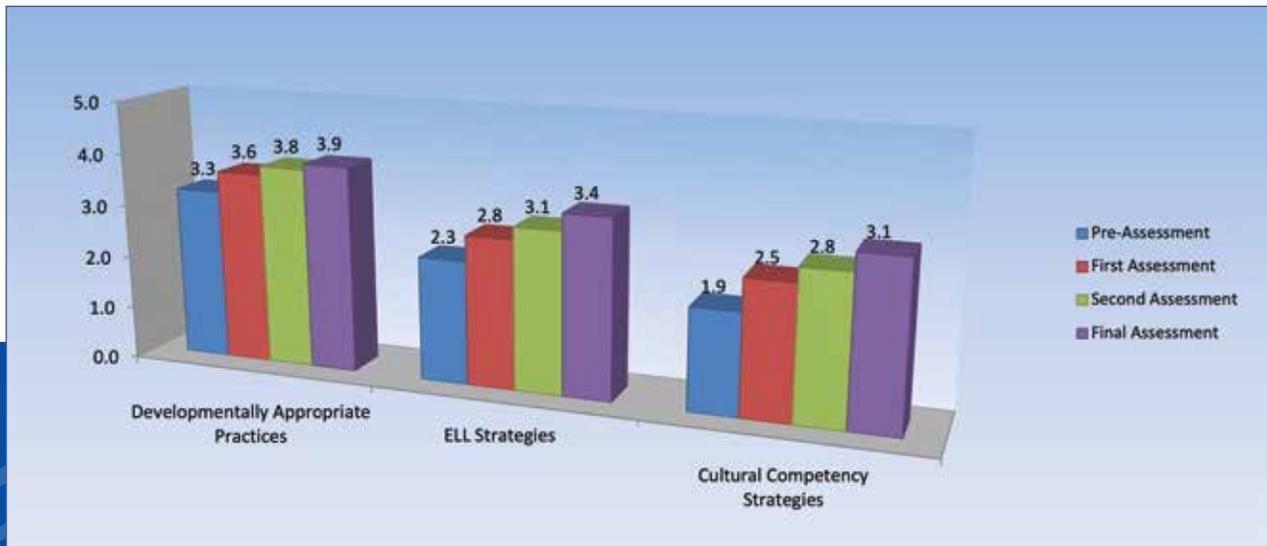
## The Summer Cohort's Teaching Rhythm and Temperament Results



Teaching rhythm refers to how the lead and ESL (English as a Second Language) the lead, assistant, and ESL teachers work cooperatively to support culture and language through co-teaching and small group instruction. The teaching temperament also assesses the teachers' degree of empathy toward diverse learners, as well as the teachers' disposition toward students and parents that do not speak English. When analyzing the improvements of teaching rhythm and temperament from the pre-assessment to the final

assessment, the greatest improvements for the Summer Cohort were in the domains of culturally competent and ELL strategies. The mean score for the culturally competent strategies domain increased by 1.2 points, and the mean score for ELL strategies increased by 1.1 points on the 5-point scale throughout the course of the ELL Institute program. A full analysis of the teachers' progress in improving teaching rhythm and temperament through each of the three domains is included in Figure 2 below.

**Figure 2:**  
Overall Changes in Teaching and Rhythm for Summer Cohort Using Culture and Language 5-Point Assessment Scale



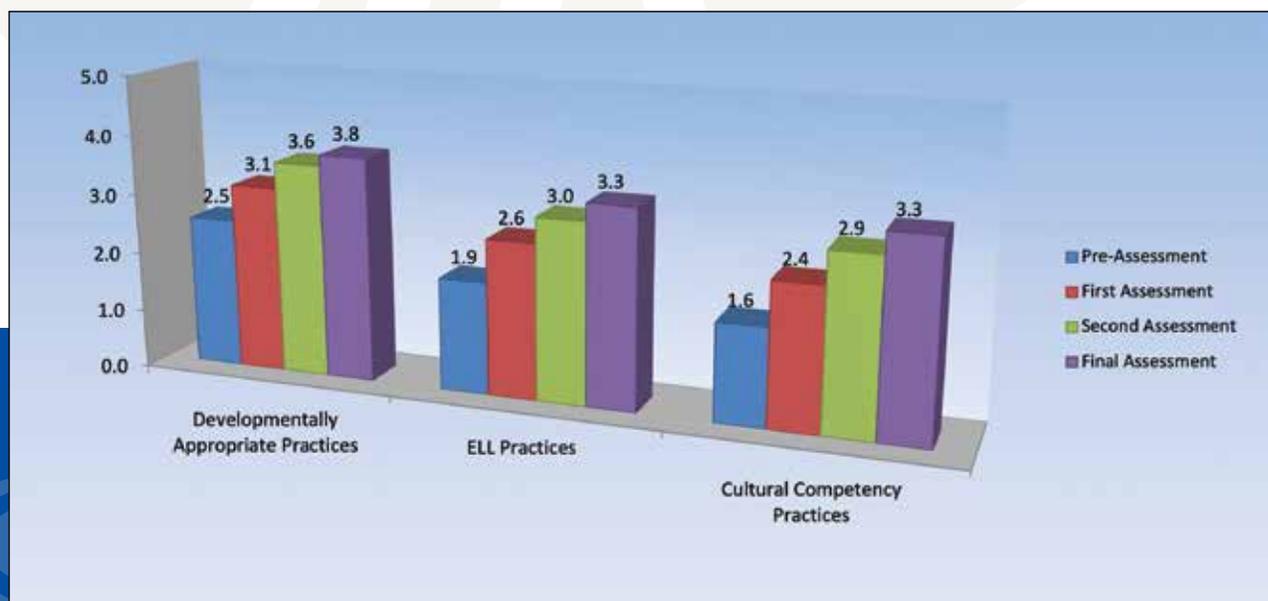
## The Summer Cohort's Instructional Practices Results

An overarching goal of the Culture/ELL Institute and Mentoring Program is to increase the use of culturally and linguistically responsive instructional strategies within early childhood and elementary classrooms. When comparing the instructional strategies pre-assessment to final assessment results, an analysis demonstrates notable improvements in all three domains. The greatest improvement for the Summer Cohort observed were in cultural competency strategies. The mean score for cultural competency

instructional practices increased by 1.7 points on the 5-point scale between the pre-assessment and final assessment. Moreover, the mean score for ELL practices increased by 1.4 points, and developmentally appropriate practices by 1.3 points, throughout the course of the Cultural/ELL Institute and Mentoring Program. A full analysis of the teachers' progress in improving overall instructional strategies through each of the three domains is included in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3:

Overall Changes in Instructional Practices for Summer Cohort Using Culture and Language 5-Point Assessment Scale

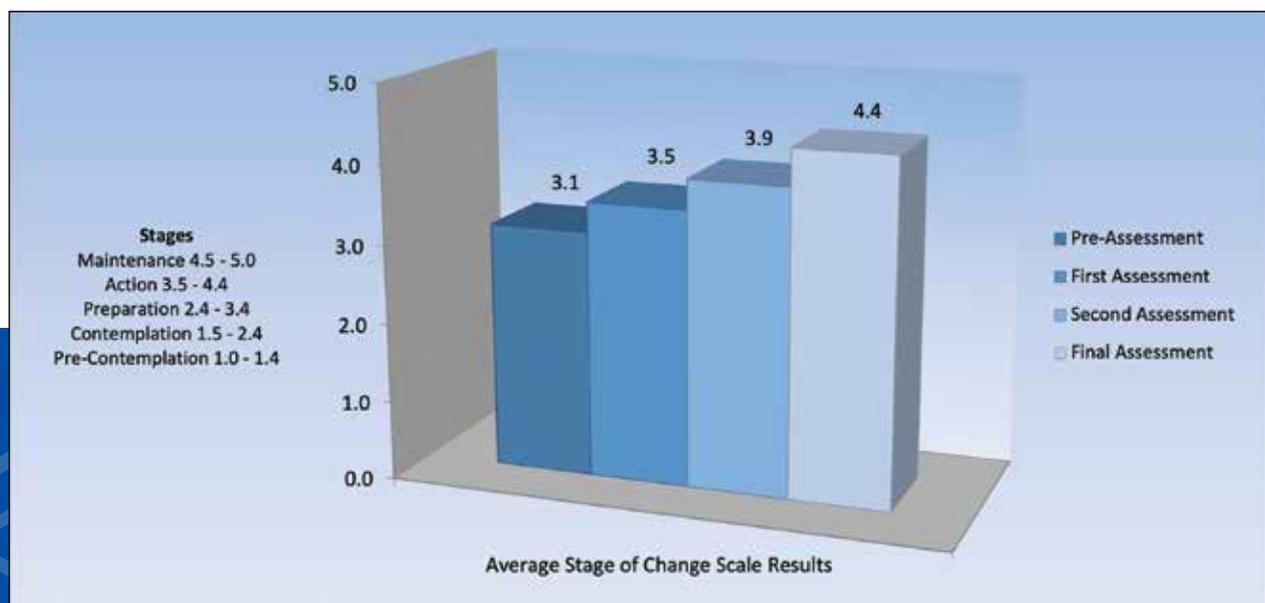


## The Summer Cohort's Stage of Change Scale Results

In addition to the Culture and Language 5-Point Assessment Scale, the Culture/ELL Institute and Mentoring Program utilized the Stage of Change Scale developed by the Children's Institute in Rochester, New York, to assess the teachers' progress in transforming their thinking and practices. The Children's Institute Stage of Change Scale measures teachers' general dispositions and readiness for change using seven indicators that ranks the teachers' overall stage of change using the following stages: Pre-contemplation (not ready to change), Contemplation (thinking about change), Preparation (ready to change), Action (actively engaged in change) and Maintenance (maintaining changes with vigilance). The Stage of Change Scale measures teachers' general dispositions and readiness for change using seven indicators: intention to change, awareness

of a need to change, seek information, effect on children, overcoming obstacles, social support and professional identity. Process through the stages is not always linear; individuals may move back and forth through stages or revisit them in a spiral pattern (Peterson, Baker, Weber, 2010). When applying an analysis of the participating teachers' average scores through the Children's Institute Stage of Change Scale, the Summer Cohort were in the Preparation Stage during the pre-assessment. By the final assessment, the teachers evolved in their thinking to be in the Action Stage, indicating they were engaged in incorporating new practices and making the changes necessary to create a welcoming and supportive learning environment for diverse learners. A full analysis is presented in Figure 4 below.

**Figure 4:**  
Average Stages of Change Results for Summer Cohort Using the Children's Institute's Stage of Change 5-Point Scale

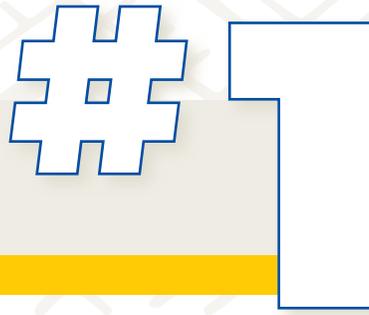


# 2017-18 Summer Cohort Photo Gallery





# Success Story



## Silvia Raines, *First Grade Bilingual Teacher*

**Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School, Trenton, New Jersey**

I was born in Paterson, New Jersey, and raised in Bolivia, South America, from 3 months old to 17 years of age. At 17, I came back to the United States leaving my family and friends in Bolivia. I speak two languages: Spanish and English. I experienced firsthand what we call “culture shock,” having to learn a new language, new customs, even the food that I found to be so different! This is why I relate so well with my students and their families. I understand what they are going through, and I am able to help them in a more effective way because of our similar experiences. I earned my master’s degree in education from Rutgers University and, afterward, completed a program in Spain for my bilingual license. I’ve been teaching bilingual first grade in Trenton for the past 14 years. It has been the most rewarding journey as I have the opportunity to touch the lives of my first graders, at a very crucial age. I love the arts in all its forms, and I have tried to incorporate it in

my practices. Participating in this program was amazing and inspiring! I learned a lot from all the coaches, especially my mentor, Liliana. It provided me with more ideas as to how to embrace even more my students’ cultures. It made such an impact in my practice as I always try to deliver a more authentic teaching experience to my students.

Ms. Raines classroom was vibrantly decorated to celebrate the diversity of her students. Since all her students were from Latin and South American countries, she maximized their time together to include stories from their culture and the Spanish language in which they primarily dominated. Ms. Raines was very skilled in making her cultural literacy moments come alive using multicultural attires, cultural artifacts, visuals, gestures, music, dances, animated voices and rich vocabulary. The teacher knew how to connect with students utilizing cultural nuances and familiar terms of endearment that mirror the



student’s families’ practices. The classroom assignments connected with the students’ cultures and their immigrant experience. One assignment included creating a poster of what the students left behind in their countries and their journey to rebuild their lives in the United States. For Thanksgiving, each family shared a traditional platter with their classmates and parents were invited for lunch. Liliana Attar, mentor, recalls fondly Ms. Raines and her long coaching calls that demonstrated the teacher’s eagerness to learn and make her classroom environment and instruction more culturally and linguistically responsive.



Based on mentor assessments, as well as strong and consistent improvements noted on the 5-point scale, Silvia Raines made significant gains to improve her teaching practices. Her program mentor observed Ms. Raines achieve improvements in her classroom design by adding culturally and linguistically responsive pictures and photos as well as materials and supplies. The mean score for culturally competent classroom design increased by 3 points on the 5-point scale throughout the course of the program.

Ms. Raines also significantly improved her teaching rhythm and temperament to incorporate culturally competent practices throughout the course of the program. The mean score for culturally competent strategies increased by 2.2 points on

the 5-point scale between the pre-assessment and final assessment visits. Specifically, she demonstrated substantial improvements in the strategies of providing choices to the students as well as helping all learners participate regardless of proficiency level.

During the four assessment visits, Ms. Raines also enhanced her instructional strategies to best meet the needs of her diverse learners. Her most improved ELL and cultural competency strategies include starting slowly with what children know, repetition, utilizing literacy activities as well as involving parents in a meaningful way to enhance learning outside of the classroom. The mean score for ELL strategies increased by 1.9 points on the 5-point scale, while culturally competent

instructional strategies increased by 2.8 points on the 5-point scale by the third and final assessment visit.

The Stage of Change Scale indicated that Ms. Raines transformed her thinking about incorporating language and culture into her teaching practices. During the pre-assessment visit, Ms. Raines was in the Preparation Stage and beginning to think about how to change her instructional practices. By the final assessment, Ms. Raines' score on the Stage of Change Scale increased by 2.5 points on the 5-point Stage of Change Scale. Now, in the Maintenance Stage, Ms. Raines has actively changed her classroom practices and consistently incorporates new strategies she learned throughout the program.

## Silvia Raines, *First Grade Bilingual Teacher*

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School, Trenton, New Jersey



### Program Strategies Adopted:

- > Utilized literacy activities such as read-aloud, poems, word wall, etc.
- > Incorporated students' culture and language into the daily curriculum and learning experiences
- > Built vocabulary and conversation in English and home language
- > Started slowly and with what students knew
- > Used props and gestures that double the message and increase comprehension
- > Used repetition
- > Utilized home language (Spanish) for both instructional content and directions
- > Extended and expanded into other content areas
- > Incorporated Latin music into the lesson plan
- > Utilized cultural pictures and photos of students' families in the classroom
- > Used English and home language of Spanish in print
- > Engaged parents in a meaningful way.

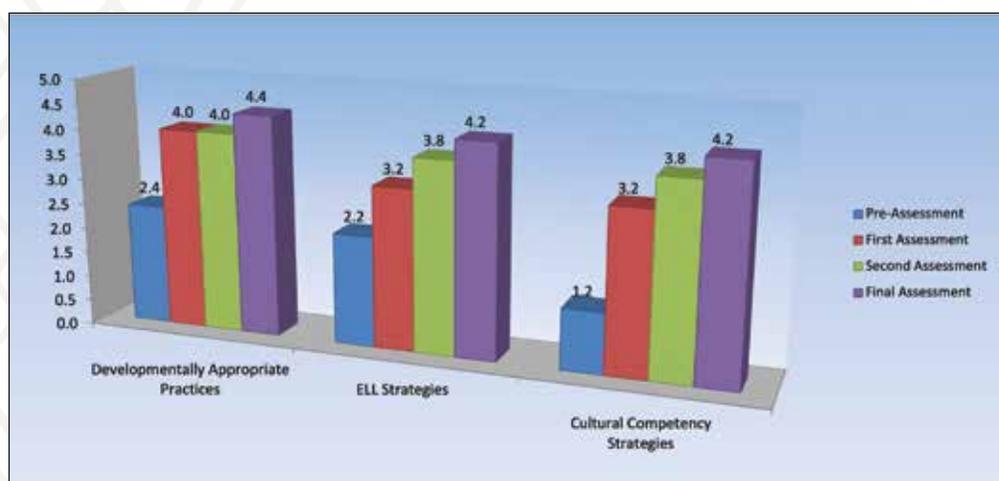
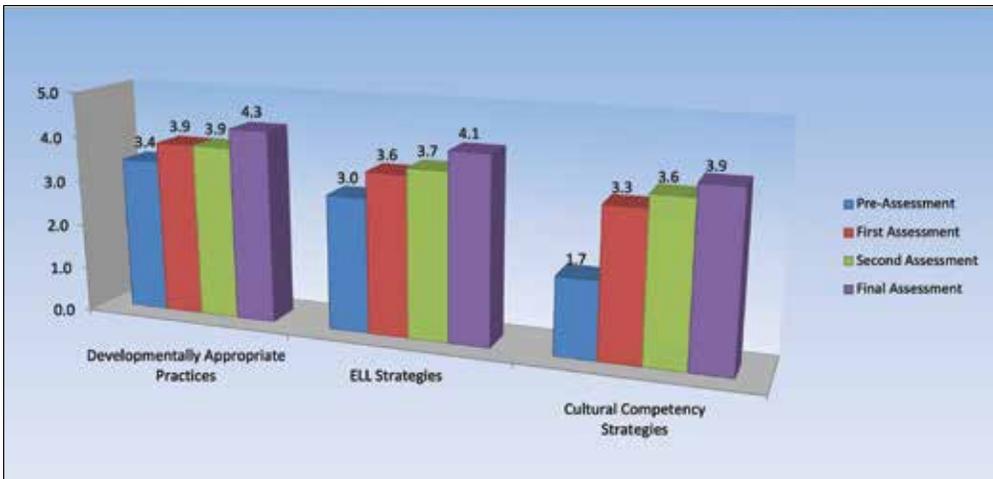


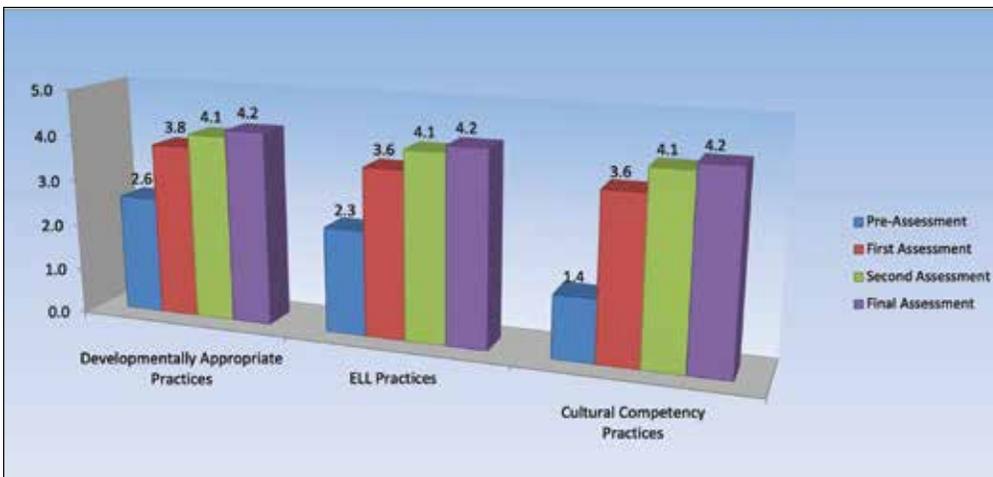
Figure 5:

Changes in Classroom Design Using Culture and Language 5-Point Assessment Scale

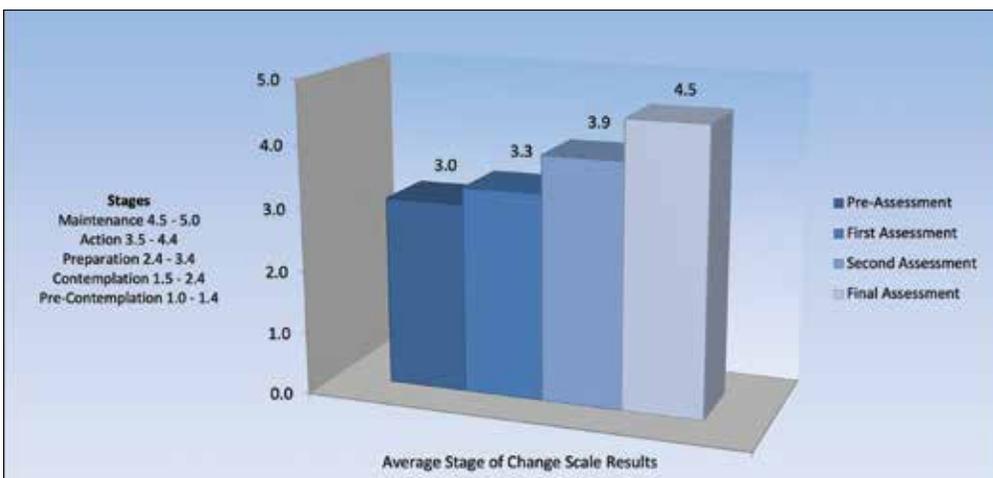
**Silvia Raines, First Grade Bilingual Teacher**  
 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School, Trenton, New Jersey



**Figure 6:**  
 Changes in Teaching Rhythm and Temperament Using Culture and Language 5-Point Assessment Scale



**Figure 7:**  
 Changes in Instructional Strategies Using Culture and Language 5-Point Assessment Scale



**Figure 8:**  
 Stages of Change Results Using the Children's Institute's Stage of Change 5-Point Scale

## Success Story

# #2

### Erica Brooks, *Second Grade General Ed. Teacher* **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School, Trenton, New Jersey**

My name is Erica Haradon-Brooks. My family originates from various European countries including England, Ireland, Sweden, Denmark, France and Wales. Even though my family lives all over the United States currently, we still get together at least once a year to celebrate Christmas. I have a 16-year-old daughter that is very interested in psychology and dance. I worked at MLK Elementary School for three years, and the last year I was employed there, I participated in the Culture/ELL Institute and

Mentoring Program. I was able to apply many of the strategies I learned in my classroom to promote student engagement by incorporating role-play, songs, art and stories from different students' cultures, which heightened the interest of all the learners. This allowed me to have greater impact on the students' academic growth. I learned valuable strategies that I now employ as an ESL teacher. I only speak English, so I rely on a wide variety of scaffolds to help students learn English as a second language. This is my third-year teaching ESL at Paul Robeson Charter School in Trenton, New Jersey. I have taught various subjects and age ranges for more than 10 years, but teaching ESL is my absolute favorite. Since our educational system has unfortunately reinforced the systematic racism that still exists in our country, I am a part of a school community committed to explicitly promoting equity. We were named a Lighthouse District last year for our gains in academic achievement and



equity. As a school, we made the decision to celebrate students' culture through making changes in our uniform policy, letting students talk during transitions, and implementing a culturally rich curriculum. While working at MLK as a general education teacher in 2018-2019, Erica Brooks worked to engage her predominately African American students and a few Latino students in celebrating their heritages. She acquired a unit of drums from around the world to help in this effort. While conducting her cultural literacy moment, she wore a West African Dashiki (shirt) and extended the lesson from literacy to music and writing



about drums. The students each had to do research and an essay on a drum from around the world. Ms. Brooks also allowed the students to record their drum rhythm on her iPad and view them later. In other lessons, Ms. Brooks explored weaving in other countries such as China, Egypt, Guatemala, Ghana, India, Mexico, Pakistan, and Peru. Angie DeFazio, her mentor, mentioned in her reports that Ms. Brooks made progress incorporating the students' culture into her lessons while meeting curriculum standards. Ms. DeFazio witnessed the excitement of the teacher and the students as they played the drums and talked about the origins of the drums. Ms. Brooks worked throughout the Culture/ELL Institute and Mentoring Program to improve her classroom environment and instructional practices to better meet the needs of her culturally and linguistically diverse students. Ms. Brooks achieved progress in enhancing her classroom design by adding culturally competent elements in learning centers as well as displaying pictures, photos and print materials. The mean score for culturally competent classroom design increased by 2.8 points on the 5-point scale during the program. Ms. Brooks improved her teaching rhythm and temperament throughout the course of the program.



The strongest improvements were observed in the domain of cultural competency, with the mean score increasing by 1.8 points on the 5-point scale. Ms. Brooks' most improved cultural competency strategies between the four assessment visits included helping all children participate regardless of proficiency level, discipline strategies as well as modeling and facilitating exploration. Ms. Brooks also enhanced her instructional strategies to best meet the needs of her diverse learners. Most improved cultural competency strategies included using props and gestures, talking about the here and now, repetition, extending and expanding, incorporating the children's culture into the daily curriculum as well as involving parents in a meaningful way. The mean score for culturally

competent instructional strategies increased by 2.4 points on the 5-point scale by the third and final assessment visit. The Stage of Change Scale indicated that Ms. Brooks worked diligently to transform her thinking as well as integrate language and culture into her teaching practices. During the pre-assessment visit, Ms. Brooks was in the Preparation Stage and beginning to think about how to change her instructional practices. By the final assessment, Ms. Brooks' score on the Stage of Change Scale increased by 1.5 points on the 5-point Stage of Change Scale. Now in the Maintenance Stage, Ms. Brooks has improved her classroom design and instruction, and continues to incorporate new strategies she has learned throughout the program.

## Erica Brooks, *Second Grade General Ed. Teacher*

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School, Trenton, New Jersey



### Program Strategies Adopted:

- > *Used English and Spanish print*
- > *Utilized gestures and props to double the message and increase comprehension*
- > *Displayed photos of students in the classroom*
- > *Utilized cultural materials in classroom and wore cultural attire for a lesson*
- > *Demonstrated cultural literacy moments with expanded activities that related to students' cultures*
- > *Helped all students participate regardless of proficiency level*
- > *Modeled and facilitated activities to explore cultures and languages*
- > *Started slowly and with what children knew*
- > *Incorporated the students' cultures and languages into the daily curriculum and learning activities.*

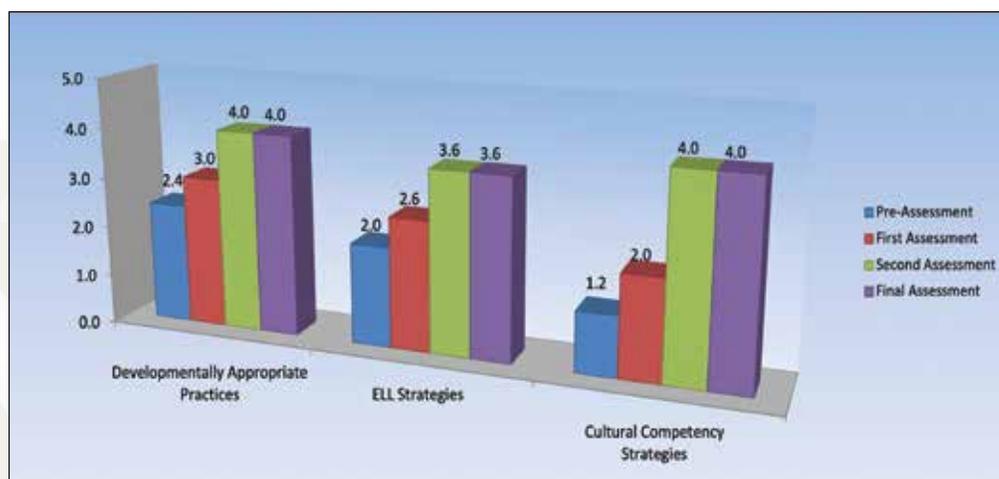
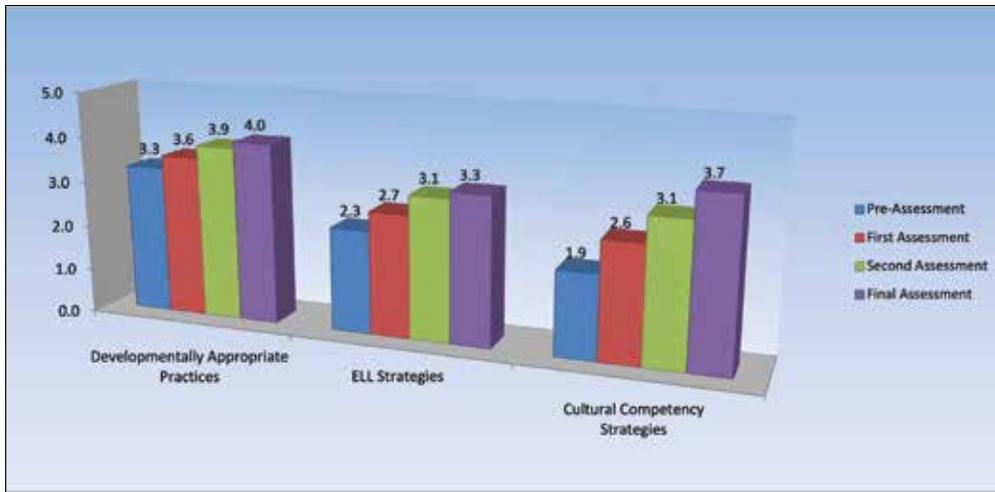


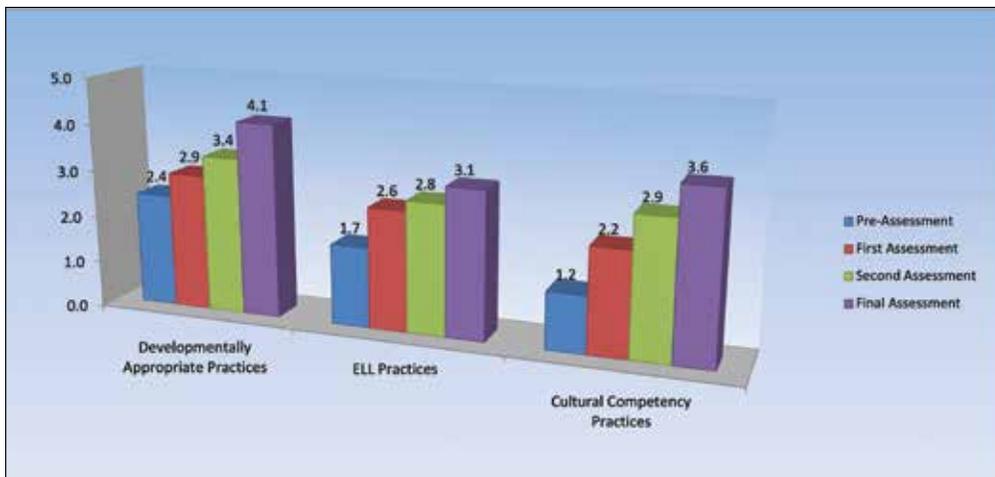
Figure 9:

Changes in Classroom Design Using Culture and Language 5-Point Assessment Scale

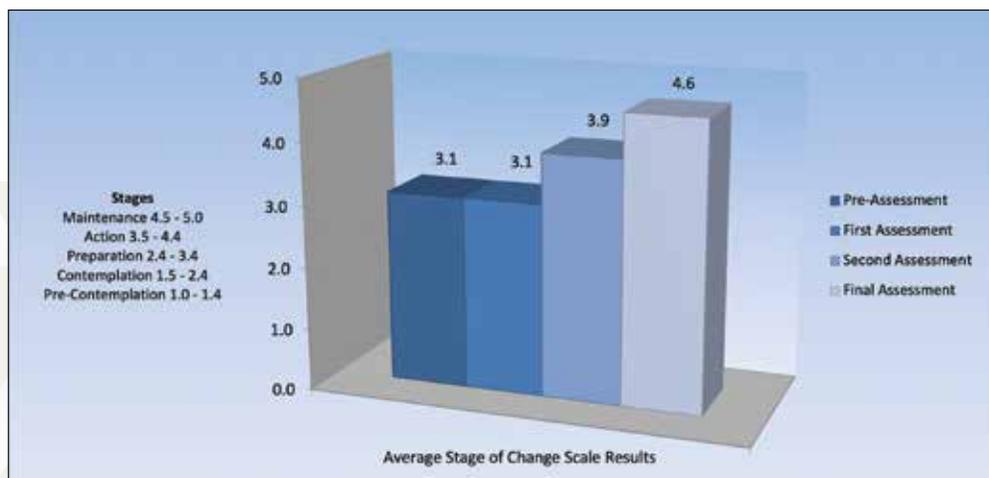
**Erica Brooks, *Second Grade General Ed. Teacher***  
**Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School, Trenton, New Jersey**



**Figure 10:**  
**Changes in Teaching Rhythm and Temperament Using Culture and Language 5-Point Assessment Scale**



**Figure 11:**  
**Changes in Instructional Strategies Using Culture and Language 5-Point Assessment Scale**



**Figure 12:**  
**Stages of Change Results Using the Children's Institute's Stage of Change 5-Point Scale**

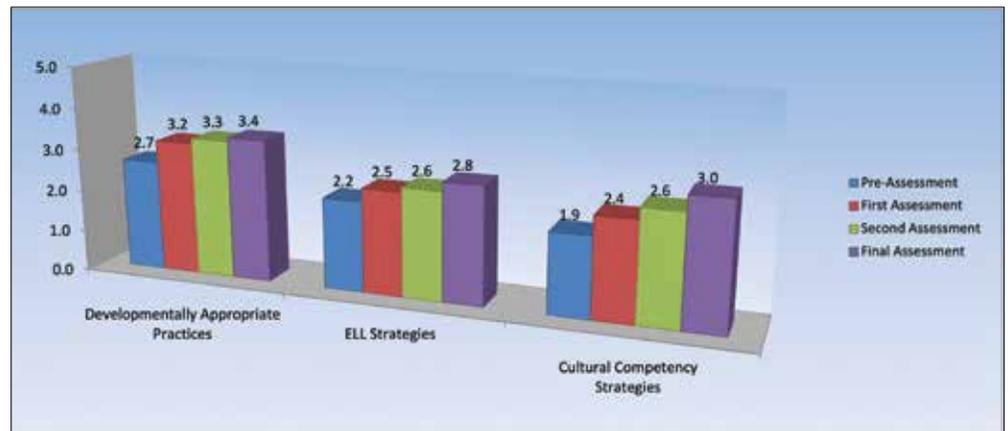
In 2018, the Culture/ELL Institute and Mentoring Program model, at the behest of the Trenton Public School District, was condensed to serve 15 teachers in grades kindergarten to fifth at one school, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School. The traditional program was shortened to provide a 7-week intensive intervention consisting of initial instruction, then mentoring. The cohort received 16 hours of professional development followed by 105

on-site technical assistance visits (280 mentoring hours and 900.5 touch points). When analyzing the mean scores for classroom design from the pre-assessment to the final assessment on the Culture and Language 5-point Assessment Scale, the MLK Cohort demonstrated steady improvements. A full analysis of the teachers' progress in improving their classroom design through each of the three domains is included in Figure 13 below.

Figure 13:

MLK 7-Week Program,  
Trenton, New Jersey

### Changes in Classroom Design Using the Culture and Language 5-Point Assessment Scale



## Instructional Practice Results for the MLK Cohort (7-Week Intervention Program):

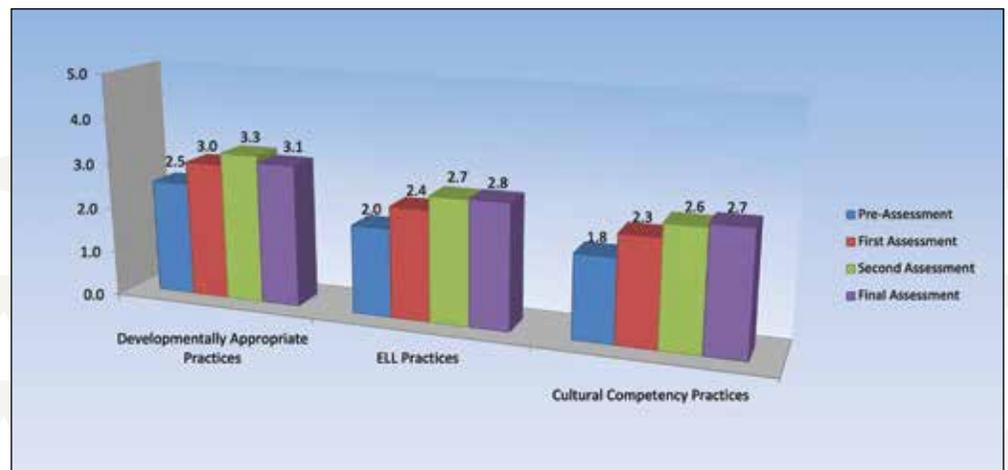
Within MLK 7-week intervention program, the strongest improvements in instructional practices were observed in the adoption of culturally competent strategies, with the mean score increasing by 0.9 points on the 5-Point Assessment

Scale. A full analysis of the teachers' progress in improving their instructional practices through each of the three domains is included in Figure 14 below.

Figure 14:

MLK 7-Week Intervention,  
Trenton, New Jersey

### Changes in Instructional Practices Using the Culture and Language 5-Point Assessment Scale



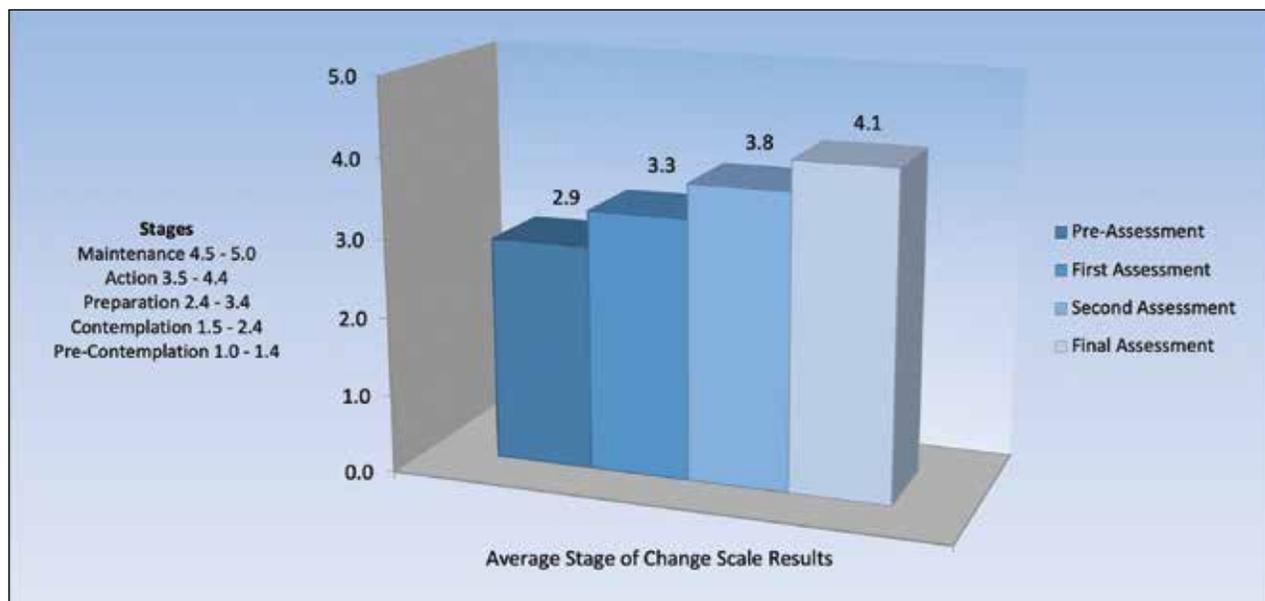


## Stage of Change Scale Results for the MLK Cohort (7-Week Intervention Program):

When applying an analysis of the MLK teachers' average scores through the Children's Institute Stage of Change Scale, on average, the 15 teachers who participated in the condensed program were in the Preparation Stage during the pre-assessment. By the final assessment at seven weeks, the teachers quickly evolved in their

thinking to be in the Action Stage. The Action Stage indicates the teachers were engaged in applying new practices and strategies to create welcoming and supportive learning experiences for diverse students. A full analysis of this transformation is presented in Figure 15 below.

**Figure 15:**  
MLK 7-Week Intervention, Trenton, New Jersey  
**Average Stage of Change Scale Results Using the Children's Institute's Stage of Change 5-Point Scale**



## Comparison Analysis of the MLK Cohorts

To substantiate that the 9-month mentoring model is better and yields greater results than the 7-week intervention, our independent evaluator conducted a comparison of teachers at MLK who participated in the 9-month program and those who participated in the 7-week program. Moreover, the data revealed that the thinking and disposition of teachers who wanted to become more culturally and linguistically responsive and who made the commitment to change, scored higher on

both programs' evaluation measures despite which program they were in. Luz Castillo who participated in the 7-week intervention program had comparable scores with the teachers who participated in the 9-month program.

In the domain of classroom design, the MLK teachers who participated in the 9-month program increased their adoption of culturally competent strategies by 2 points on the 5-point scale, which

is nearly double the 1.1 point increase observed within the 7-week MLK intervention program who did not commit. Moreover, the mean scores observed during the final visit for the 9-month MLK teacher cohort vastly differed. Within the adoption of ELL strategies, the 9-month cohort had a final mean score of 3.7 points on the 5-point scale, while the 7-week cohort only achieved a final score of 2.8 points.

In the domain of instructional practices, the strongest improvements were observed in the adoption of culturally competent strategies, with

the mean score increasing by 0.9 points on the 5-point scale. While this progress is notable, these gains were not as significant as the improvements achieved by the MLK teachers who participated in the full 9-month Culture/ELL Institute and Mentoring Program. The MLK teachers who participated in the full program increased their adoption of culturally competent strategies by 1.7 points on the 5-point scale, which is nearly double the 0.9 point increase observed within the 7-week MLK teacher cohort.

## Stage of Change Scale Results MLK 7-Week Program:

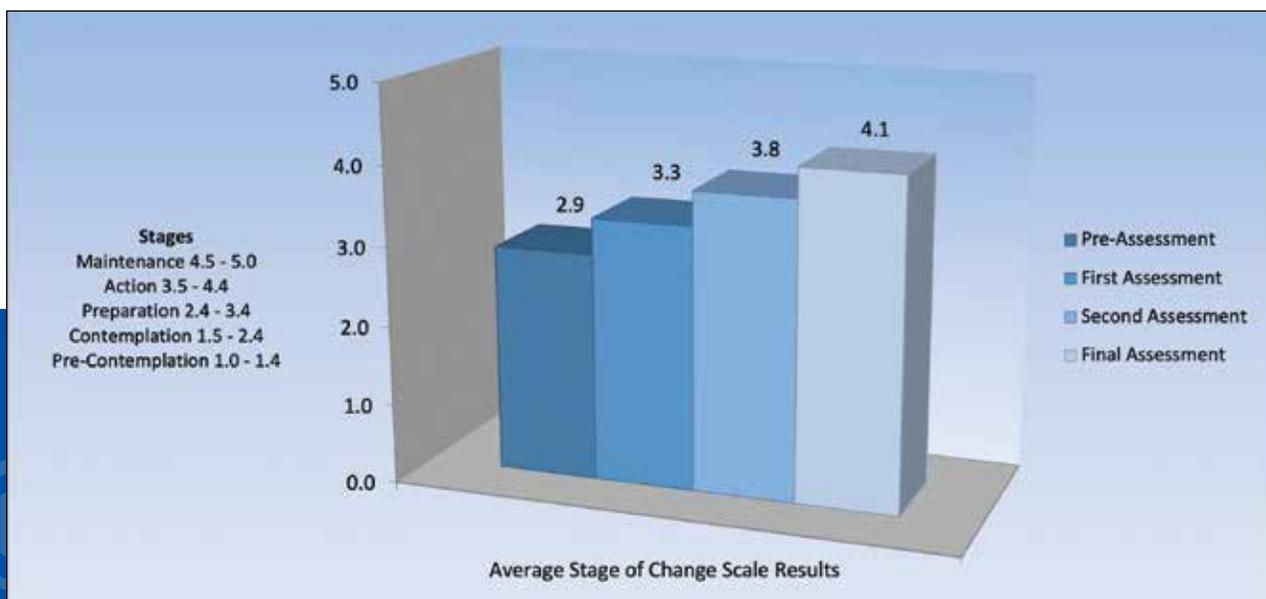
When applying an analysis of the MLK teachers' average scores through the Children's Institute Stage of Change Scale, on average, the 15 teachers who participated in the condensed program were in the Preparation Stage during the pre-assessment. By the second assessment, and further seen in the third assessment, the educators quickly

progressed their practices and thinking around cultural competency to enter the Action Stage. The mentor reports indicated that the teachers were engaged in applying new practices and strategies to create welcoming and supportive learning experiences for diverse students. A full analysis of this transformation is presented in Figure 16 below.

Figure 16:

MLK 7-Week Program

**Average Stages of Change Results Using the Children's Institute's Stage of Change 5-Point Scale**



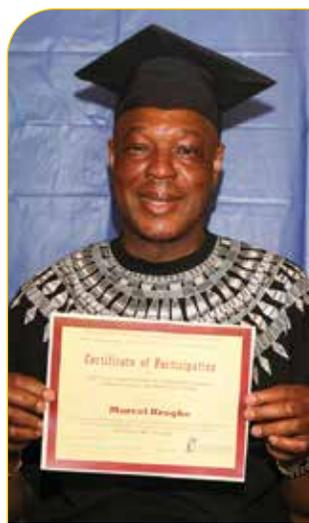
Some of the lessons learned through this comparison of the MLK teachers who participated in the full 9-month program and those who participated in the condensed program are teachers needed more time for the translation of content into actual practices to support diverse students, more time for reflection between visits to sustain their change in thinking and strategy adoption. Anecdotally, teachers indicated their change of thinking about the value of culture and language as it supports academic achievement, which is evidence in their Stage of Change Scale scores. However, given more time the MLK condensed cohort could have been afforded the opportunity to make substantial change in instructional strategies as well.

To gather more evidence that teachers in the 7-week intervention needed more time and support, the classrooms in the initiative were revisited the following academic year in October 2018 to measure what strategies were still being utilized. Of 13 classrooms revisited, four classrooms still demonstrated strong evidence of the program strategies, six demonstrated some strategies implementation, and three could use further supports and time for strategies adoption.

The buy-in of teachers and the support of school leaders including district leadership is critical for teachers to make the paradigm shift in their thinking and practices. These shifts can lead to the incorporation of students' cultural identity and cultural linguistic wealth as values to the learning table. Through these additional visits to the classrooms as a check-in point, teachers collectively received 31 additional hours of mentoring/technical assistance.

We have concluded from our comparison analysis on the 9-month program and 7-week program that the 9-month intervention model is more effective in providing teachers the opportunity to engage in professional development, monthly mentoring and adequate reflection on the art of culturally responsive pedagogy. More time would have further allowed teachers to commit to engaging diverse learners and newcomers in a way that values their cultures and languages in a meaningful way and not as an afterthought. There can be no short cut to the model if the goal is to transform thinking and practices to yield the same results year after year.

# 2017-18 MLK Cohort Photo Gallery





## Success Story

# #3

### Luz Castillo, *First Grade Bilingual Teacher*

**Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School, Trenton, New Jersey**

Hola! Hello! My name is Luz Elenia Castillo, and I am a bilingual first grade teacher. I have been working for Trenton Public Schools for 9 years, but I have been teaching as a bilingual elementary teacher for 19 years. I was born and raised in New York City, but my parents are from Puerto Rico. We always spoke Spanish at home, and I learned the traditions of the Puerto Rican culture including the food my mom prepared, “arroz con gandules” (rice and pigeon peas), “empanadas” (beef turnovers), and “pernil” (pork shoulder) on special occasions like Christmas or parties. We did not celebrate The Three Kings Day like in Puerto Rico, but we celebrated Santa Claus instead. I enjoyed the fact that family gatherings were very important. We always played dominoes at home with our relatives, and my mom always celebrated birthdays for my brother and me. I am always proud of my roots growing up because I was taught the traditions of my parents and the traditions of American culture, even

though the public school did not recognize our ethnic culture and background. Two years ago, I wanted to try something different in my classroom. I signed up for the Culture/ELL Institute and Mentoring Program at Thomas Edison State University. I was amazed how it transformed me as a teacher and my teaching practices. The way I was including culture in the curriculum was not enough. I had only included culture for Hispanic Heritage Month and on holidays, but I never learned how to include the students’ cultures in all content areas. I had started something that sparked interest in my students’ lives. It all started with plants and growth. Then I developed a thematic unit on corn. With the assistance of my mentor, we developed a project that involved the parents as well as the students. I had never seen my students get so excited with a project and it helped me gain their trust. It opened a world of possibilities in the learning process because I included their culture and backgrounds. I hope other teachers will participate



in this program and try the cultural and linguistic strategies that engage their students.

Ms. Castillo is an extraordinary teacher of two languages. She beautifully engages her students in both English and Spanish with enthusiasm, humor, positivity, and rich vocabulary. Ms. Castillo utilizes props, visuals, and cultural artifacts to double the message and scaffold the students in their understanding of cultural pride and diversity. Georgina Criado-Hall, mentor, stated in her report that throughout the mentoring process, Ms. Castillo became more intentional about including all the countries represented by her students into her lessons. She involved parents in class projects by asking them to share cultural



artifacts, cultural dishes for a recipe book they were developing and invited them to come share their stories with the class. Ms. Castillo spoke to the students and parents in their native language of Spanish and often shared with them the benefits of being bilingual. She also provided students the choice to reply to questions in the language they most felt comfortable whether English or Spanish.

While participating in a condensed version of the Culture/ELL Institute and Mentoring Program, Ms. Castillo strongly progressed in enhancing her classroom design to be culturally and linguistically welcoming for all learners. The mean score for developmentally appropriate classroom design increased by 1.8 points, with ELL and culturally competent strategies both improving by 1 point on the 5-point scale throughout the program assessments. Ms. Castillo made significant

changes to her teaching rhythm and instructional practices to best meet the needs of diverse students. Throughout her assessment visits, there were notable improvements in the use of ELL strategies. The mean score for ELL teaching rhythm and temperament strategies increased by 1.5 points on the 5-point scale during the program.

Ms. Castillo also enhanced her instructional strategies to better reflect the home languages of her learners. Most improved ELL instructional strategies included talking about here and now, utilizing one-to-one, small group

the third and final assessment.

Furthermore, the Stage of Change Scale indicated that Ms. Castillo progressed in her thinking about changing her instructional practices to fully incorporate culture and language. During the pre-assessment visit, Ms. Castillo was in the Preparation Stage, and beginning to take steps to change her classroom practices. By the third and final assessment, Ms. Castillo's score increased by 1.4 points on the 5-point Stage of Change Scale placing her in the Action Stage. This improvement indicates that Ms. Castillo not only made



instruction and using songs with children's names. The mean score for ELL instructional strategies increased by 1.9 points on the 5-point scale, with a final score of 4.8 points during

changes to her classroom design and instructional practices, but that she was committed to consistently incorporating these new strategies.

## Luz Castillo, *First Grade Bilingual Teacher*

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School, Trenton, New Jersey



### Program Strategies Adopted:

- > Talked while doing to double the message to increase comprehension
- > Used props and gestures to help increase comprehension
- > Extended and expanded cultural lessons into other content areas
- > Utilized literacy moments to connect with students' cultures
- > Built vocabulary in both English and students' home language of Spanish
- > Used both English and Spanish for instructional content and directions
- > Incorporated students' culture and home language into daily curriculum and experiences
- > Engaged parents in meaningful ways by asking them to bring cultural items into the classroom and participate in family projects.

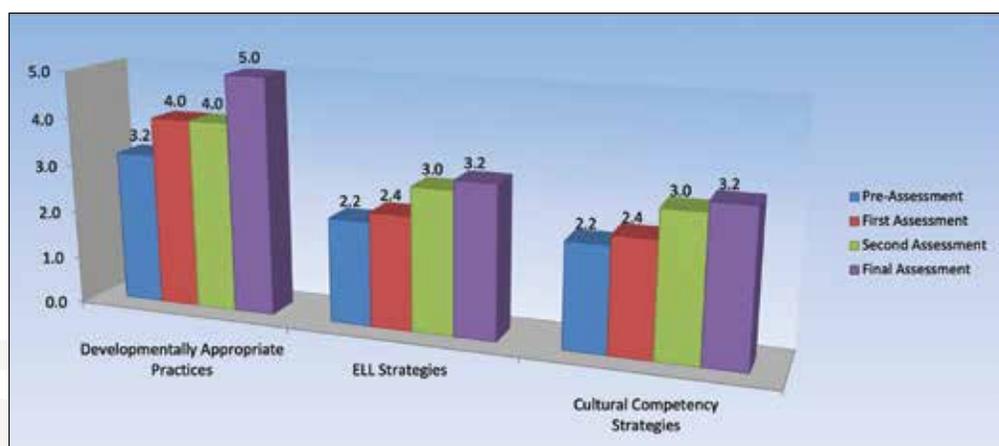


Figure 17:

Overall Changes in Classroom Design Using Culture and Language 5-Point Assessment Scale

# Luz Castillo, *First Grade Bilingual Teacher*

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School, Trenton, New Jersey

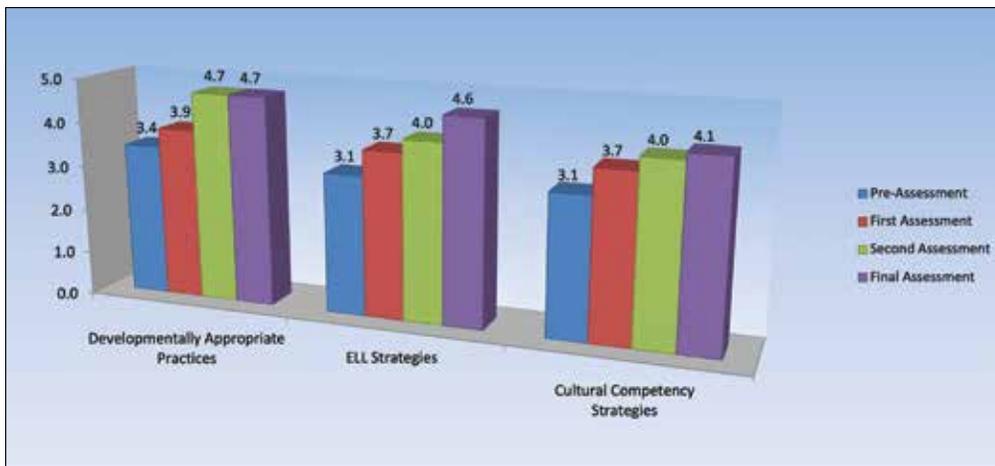


Figure 18:  
Overall Changes in Teaching Rhythm and Temperament Using Culture and Language 5-Point Assessment Scale

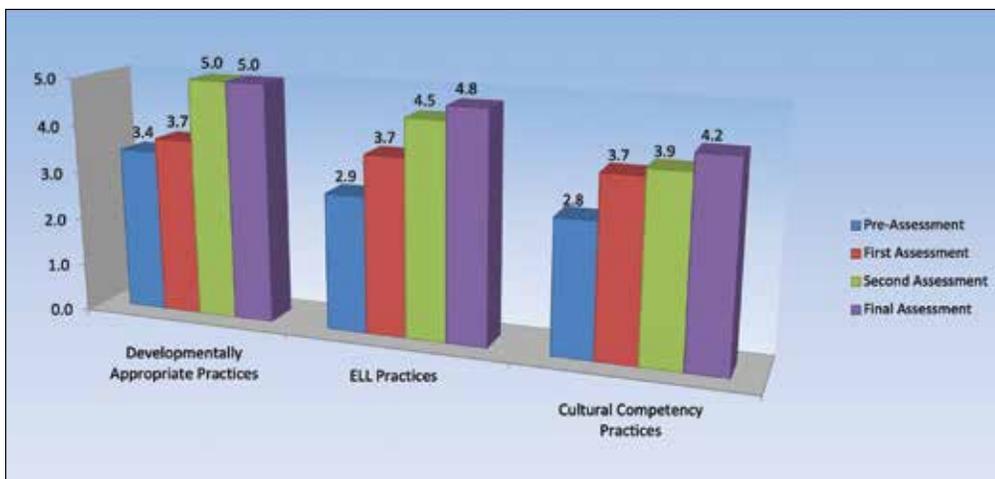


Figure 19:  
Overall Changes in Instructional Practices Using Culture and Language 5-Point Assessment Scale

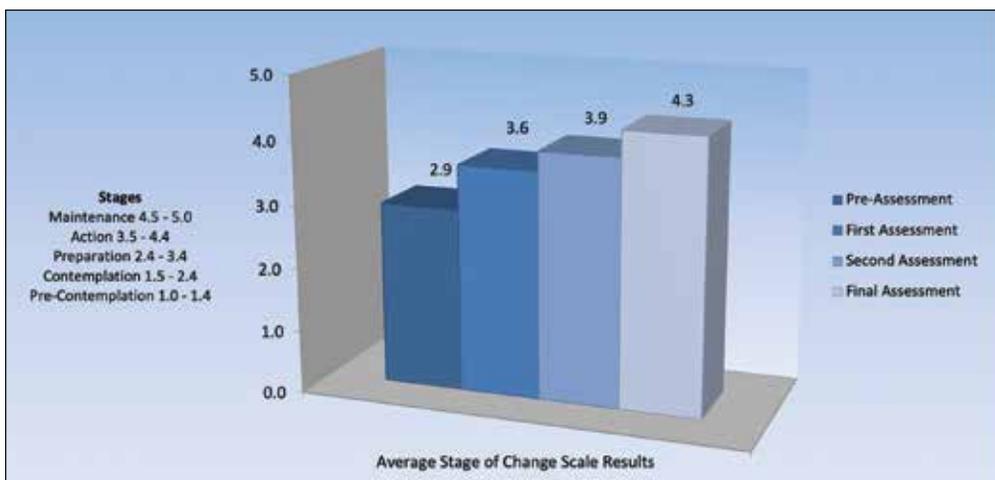


Figure 20:  
Average Stages of Change Results Using the Children's Institute's Stage of Change 5-Point Scale

# 2018-2019 Fall Cohort Data Stories



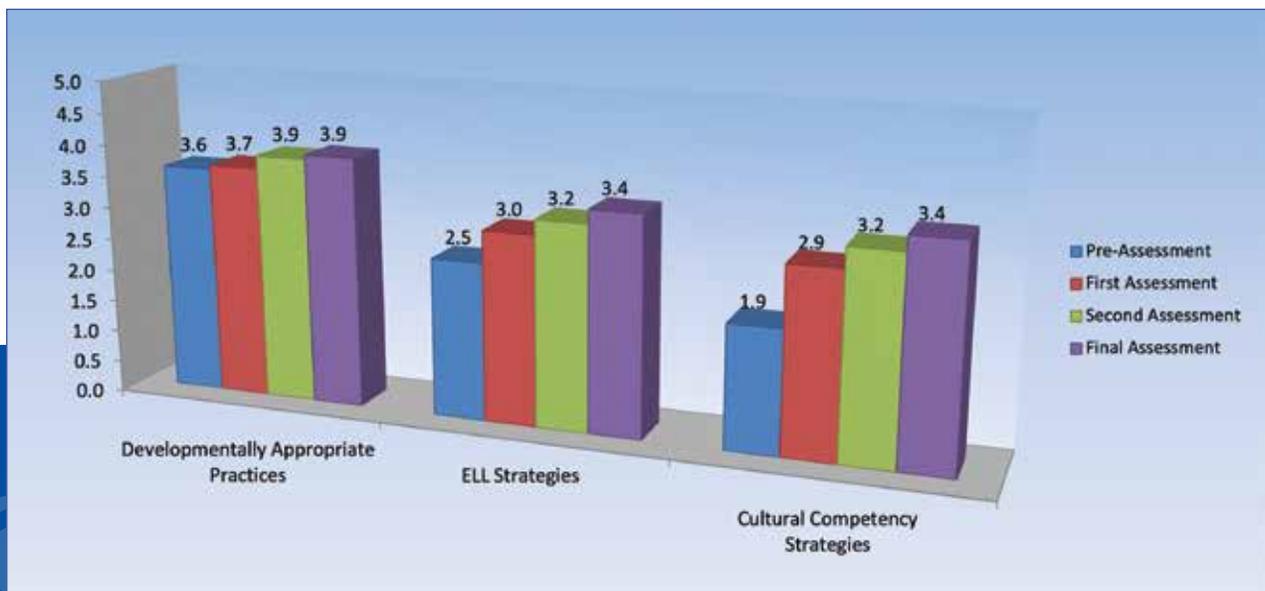
The Fall Cohort consisted of 12 teachers in Carteret Public Schools and Trenton Public Schools, New Jersey, in grades kindergarten to fifth. This cohort received 21 hours of professional development followed by 184 on-site technical assistance visits (**224 mentoring hours and 972 touch points**). The diversity among the participants in terms of age, ethnicity, education level/credentials and teaching experience varied (see demographic chart on page 10-11).

Classroom design is essential to creating a welcoming, comfortable, and accepting setting for children to reach their full academic and developmental potential. When analyzing the improvements related to classroom design from

the pre-assessment to the final assessment on the 5-point assessment scale, the greatest improvements in the **Fall Cohort** were observed in culturally competent practices. The mean score for culturally competent classroom design strategies increased by 1.5 points on the 5-point scale between the pre-assessment and final assessment. The greatest improvements in culturally classroom design practices included an increased use of print as well as adding posters and art that were reflective of the diverse learners. A full analysis of the teachers' progress in improving their classroom design to be culturally and linguistically responsive through each of the three domains is included in Figure 21 below.

Figure 21:

Overall Changes in Classroom Design for Fall Cohort Using the Culture and Language 5-Point Assessment Scale





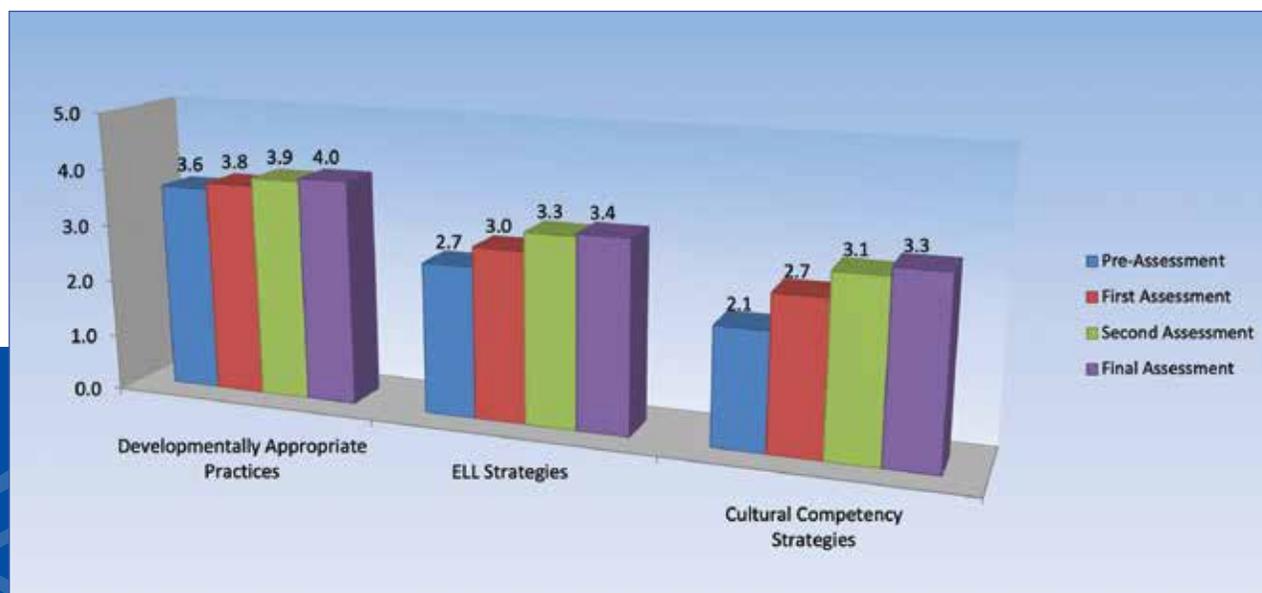
## The Teachers' Rhythm and Temperament Results for the Fall Cohort



Teaching Rhythm and Temperament refers to the ability of the lead, assistant, and ESL teachers working cooperatively through their co-teaching and small group instruction to support student learning and development. The teaching temperament assesses the educators' empathy for diverse learners as well as their disposition toward students and parents that do not speak English. When analyzing the improvements of teaching rhythm and temperament from the pre-assessment to the final assessment, the greatest improvements were in the domain of culturally

competent strategies. The mean score for the culturally competent strategies domain increased by 1.2 points on the 5-point scale throughout the course of the Culture/ELL Institute and Mentoring program. The greatest improvements in culturally competent teacher practices included modeling and facilitating exploration as well as helping all children participate in classroom activities regardless of their proficiency level. A full analysis of the teachers' progress in improving teaching rhythm and temperament through each of the three domains is included in Figure 22 below.

**Figure 22:**  
Overall Changes in Teaching Rhythm and Temperament for Fall Cohort Using the Culture and Language 5-Point Assessment Scale



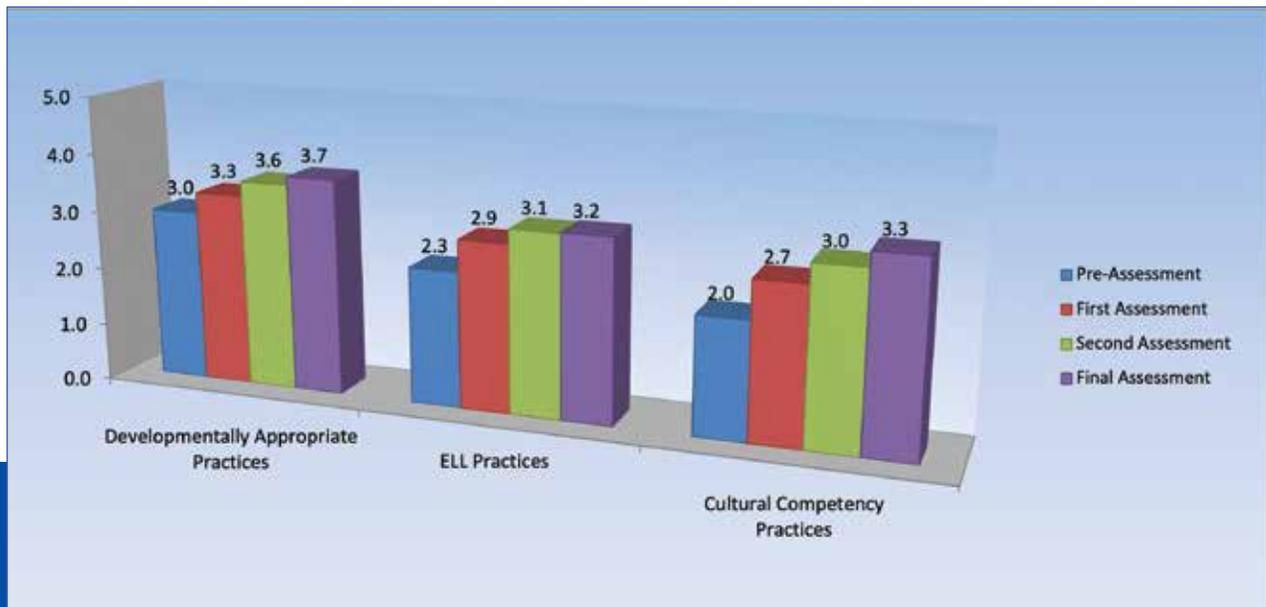
## The Instructional Practice Results for the Fall Cohort

When comparing the instructional strategies pre-assessment to final assessment results, an analysis demonstrates notable improvements in all three domains. The greatest improvement was observed in increasing the incorporation of cultural competency strategies. The mean score for cultural competency instructional practices increased by 1.3 points, and the mean score for ELL practices increased by .9 points on the 5-point scale throughout the course of the Culture/ELL

Institute and Mentoring Program. The strongest improvements in culturally competent and ELL instructional practices were noted in the educators' abilities to incorporate the children's culture and language into the daily curriculum and learning experiences, extending and expanding concepts, and talking about the here and now. A full analysis of the teaching teams' progress in improving overall instructional strategies through each of the three domains is included in Figure 23 below.

Figure 23:

**Overall Changes in Instructional Practices for Fall Cohort Using the Culture and Language 5-Point Assessment Scale**



## Stage of Change Results for the Fall Cohort

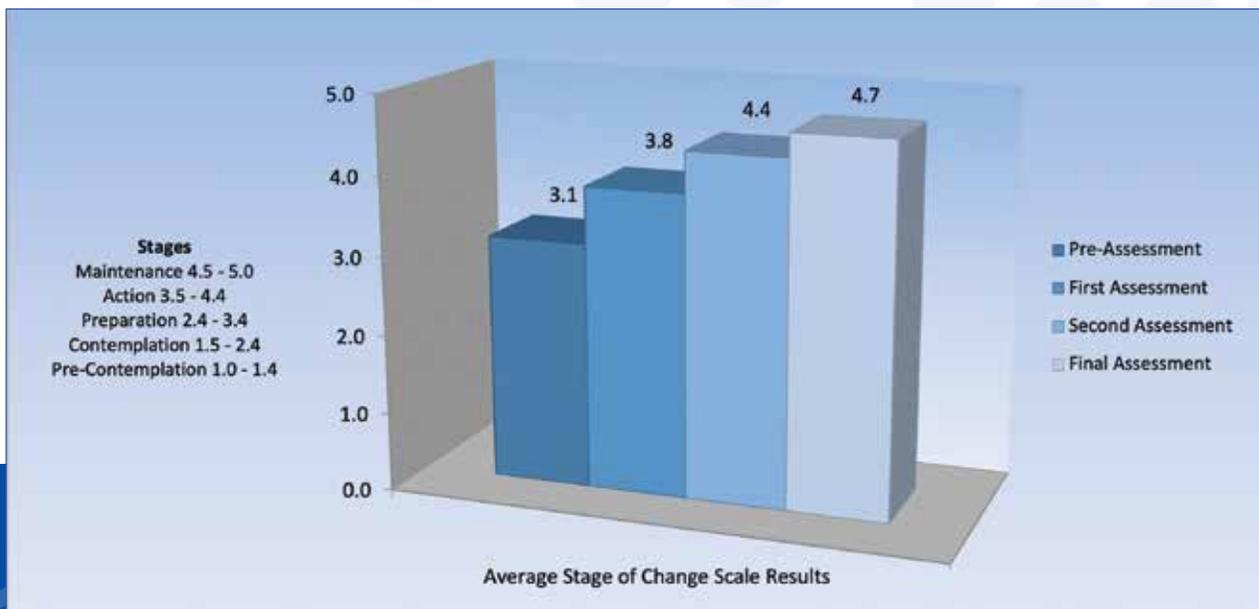


When applying an analysis of the participating teachers' average scores using the Children's Institute Stage of Change Scale, overall, the teachers were in the Preparation Stage when assessed prior to beginning the Culture/ELL Institute and Mentoring Program. During the second and third assessment, the educators evolved in their thinking placing them in the Action

Stage. At the final assessment, the educators had reached the Maintenance Stage, indicating they made significant changes to create a supportive learning environment for all students, and were routinely incorporating new practices and strategies. A full analysis is presented in Figure 24 below.

Figure 24:

Fall Cohort Average Stages of Change Results Using the Children's Institute's Stage of Change 5-Point Scale



# 2018-19 Fall Cohort Photo Gallery





## Success Story



### Daisy Sanchez, *Third Grade Bilingual Teacher* Parker Elementary School, Trenton, New Jersey

My name is Daisy Sanchez, and I am a third-grade bilingual education teacher. I am a graduate from the University of Texas at Austin where I received a bachelor's degree in K-6 Bilingual Education. I am a proud daughter of immigrant parents that originated from Mexico, and I grew up with family in Texas. I am married to my high school sweetheart who serves in the United States Air Force and together we have two children. Due to my husband's job I have had the opportunity to teach in both Texas and New Jersey, which has in turn given me such valuable and unique experiences with the students I have been able to teach.

While growing up, I was blessed to celebrate both of my cultures, languages, and customs. Now, as a bilingual teacher, I am dedicated to instilling that into my students and their families. I believe that it is important that they stay true to their native language and culture for them to continue to flourish as their own person being not only bilingual but bicultural as well.

As a result of being a part of the Culture/ELL Institute and Mentoring Program at Thomas Edison State University, I was surrounded by other educators who also value the identity of their students. The program served as such an important reminder as to what is my "why" for teaching and being in the classroom. In addition, I was given the tools and support for me to accomplish my goal as a bilingual teacher. I am forever thankful for the experience and support I received from the program as I continue to grow alongside my students as an educator.

Throughout her assessments, Ms. Sanchez worked to redesign her classroom to reflect the diversity of her students. Ms. Sanchez added a puzzle piece display with a "What I am" sign that included each of the students and the teacher's families' photos as well as drawings that the students created. She also created a mural of pictures of different famous Hispanic people and a sign, "ELLOS PUEDEN Y USTEDES



PUEDEN" (THEY CAN DO IT AND YOU CAN DO IT). In addition, flags from different countries around the world were displayed in the classroom. This progress was reflected in the classroom design assessments, with the strongest improvements noted in the use of print, drawings, and photos. Overall, the mean score for culturally competent classroom design increased by 1.0 point on the 5-point scale throughout the course of the program.

Ms. Sanchez worked to improve her teaching rhythm and temperament to create a more effective learning environment for her students. The strongest progress was



noted in incorporating culturally competent strategies including modeling and facilitating exploration, helping all children participate regardless of proficiency level and interacting with children. The mean score for culturally competent teaching and rhythm and temperament increased by 1.3 points on the 5-point scale throughout the assessment visits.

Throughout the program, Ms. Sanchez was intentional about reflecting the students' cultures in her instructional practices. As noted during Ms. Sanchez's final assessment, she worked diligently to incorporate the goals and objectives of the program into her daily interactions with the students. An analysis of the Culture and Language 5-Point Scale reflects these observations, with the strongest progress noted in Ms. Sanchez's incorporation of culturally competent instructional practices. The most improved strategy was

incorporating the children's culture and language into the daily curriculum, with notable gains in utilizing literacy activities, one-on-one instruction, and small groups. The mean score for culturally competent instructional strategies increased by 1.3 points on the 5-point scale throughout the program assessments.

The Stage of Change Scale indicates that Ms. Sanchez greatly transformed her thinking and instructional practices throughout the program. During the pre-assessment visit, Ms. Sanchez was in the Preparation Stage. Ms. Sanchez's score on the Stage of Change Scale increased by 1.6 points on the 5-point Scale. By the final assessment Ms. Sanchez scored 4.6, placing her in the Maintenance Stage. This level of change indicates that Ms. Sanchez has transformed her classroom and practices to consistently incorporate new strategies learned throughout

the program and is consistently continuing to incorporate these practices.

Her mentor, Lilita Attar, stated that Ms. Sanchez was always very intentional about the stories and poetry that she selected to assure they were culturally relevant, rich in content and interactive. She was positive, enthusiastic, and warm with her students. Ms. Sanchez used different activities to help students connect with their cultural stories. She made good connections and asked questions that made the students reflect on their family immigration experiences. While the students worked, music from each of the countries (Honduras, Guatemala, Puerto Rico, Mexico, Dominican Republic, and Ecuador) played in the background. Ms. Sanchez developed a good rapport with her students to support their cultural esteem as well as their academic performance.

## Daisy Sanchez, *Third Grade Bilingual Teacher*

Parker Elementary School, Trenton, New Jersey



### Program Strategies Adopted:

- > Displayed students' and teacher's families' photos in the classroom
- > Extended and expanded lessons into other content areas
- > Utilized literacy moments to connect with students' cultures
- > Utilized both English and Spanish for instructional content and directions
- > Incorporated students' culture and home language into daily curriculum and learning experiences
- > Started slowly and with a familiar concept or cultural nuance that the students knew.

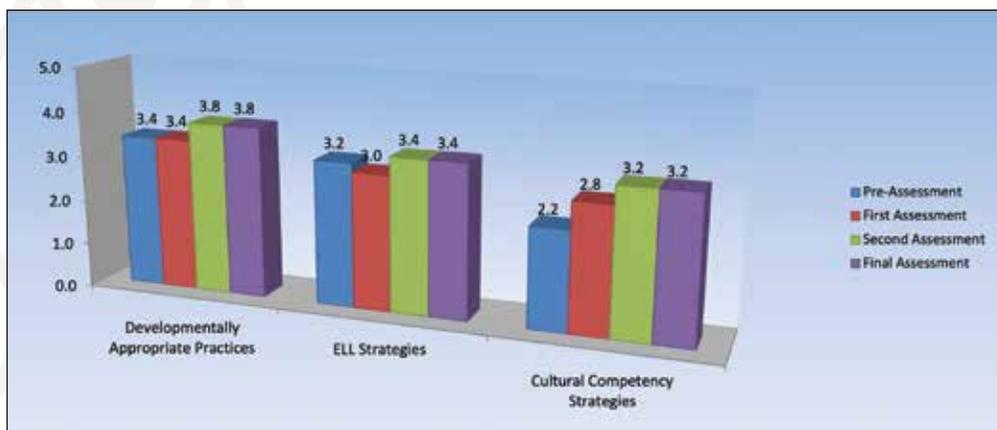


Figure 25:

Overall Changes in Classroom Design Using Culture and Language 5-Point Assessment Scale

# Daisy Sanchez, *Third Grade Bilingual Teacher*

Parker Elementary School, Trenton, New Jersey

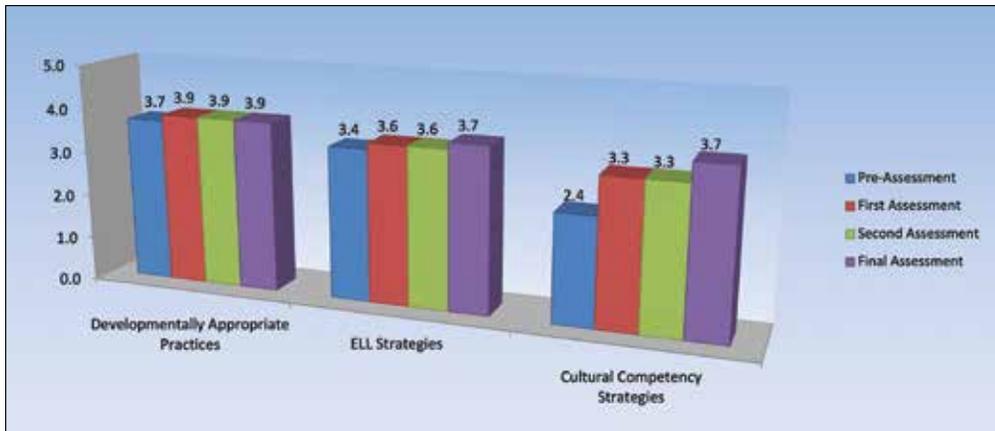


Figure 26: Overall Changes in Teaching Rhythm and Temperament Using Culture and Language 5-Point Assessment Scale

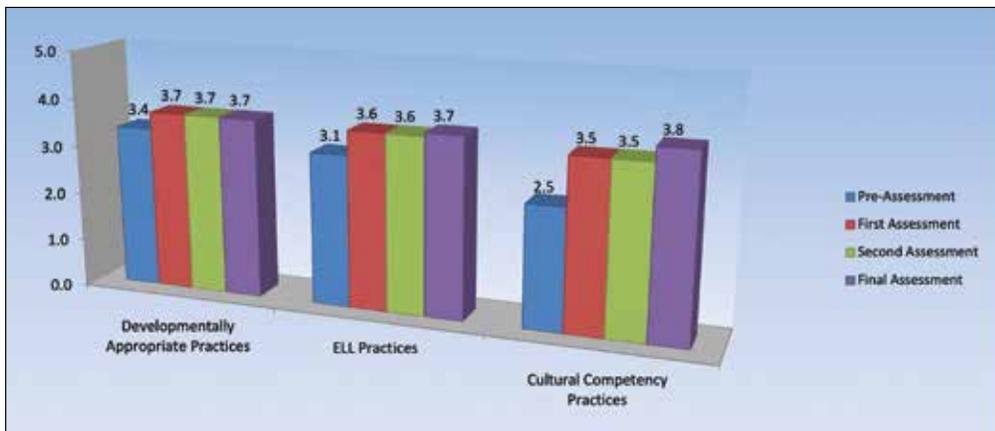


Figure 27: Overall Changes in Teaching Rhythm and Temperament Using Culture and Language 5-Point Assessment Scale

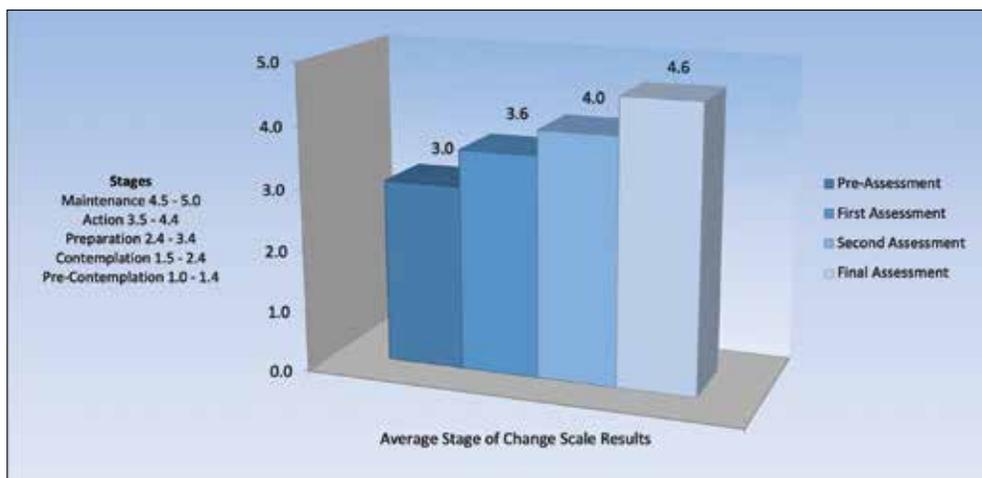


Figure 28: Overall Changes Using Stage of Change 5-Point Assessment Scale

# Taking a Closer Look at the Fall Cohort Trenton Subset

## Classroom Design Results for Trenton's Teachers

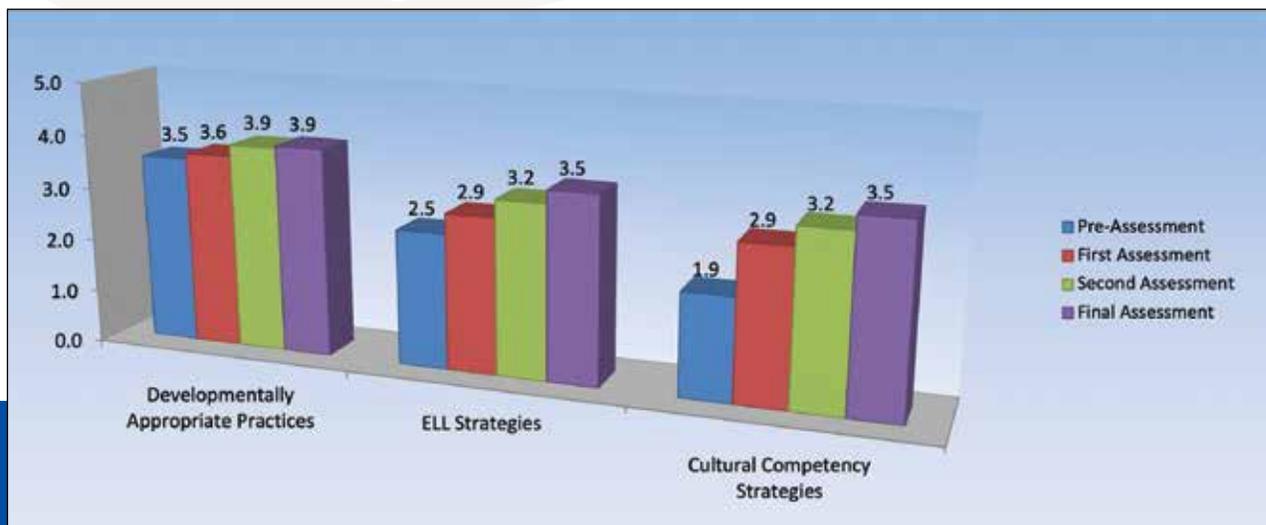
Eight Trenton educators participating in the program worked to improve their classroom design to create a supportive and welcoming environment for culturally and linguistically diverse students. The strongest improvements observed were in the adoption of culturally competent classroom design practices, including the inclusion of photos and art as well as materials and supplies reflective

of the cultures and ethnicities present within their classroom. The mean score for culturally competent classroom design strategies improved by 1.6 points on the 5-point scale throughout the course of the program. A full analysis of the educators' progress in improving classroom design through each of the three domains is included in Figure 29 below.

Figure 29:

Trenton's Teachers (Subset)

**Changes in Classroom Design Using Culture and Language 5-Point Assessment Scale**



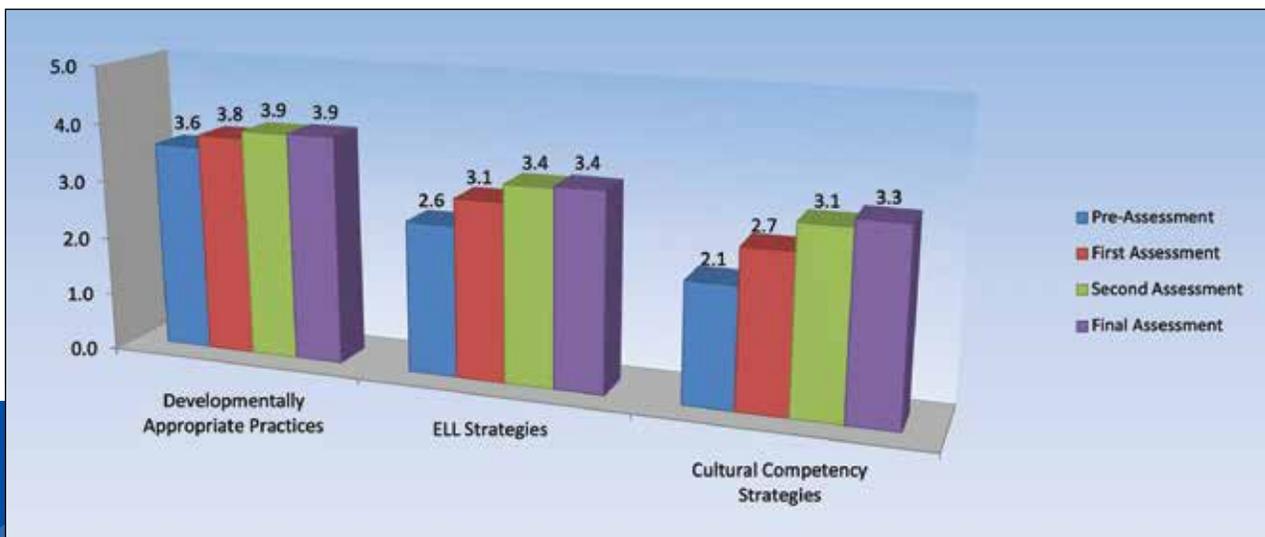


## Teaching Rhythm and Temperament Results for Trenton’s Teachers

Trenton educators enhanced their teaching rhythm and temperament throughout their participation in the program. The greatest improvements were observed in the adoption of culturally competent teaching rhythm and temperament strategies, with educators enhancing their discipline strategies, helping all students read regardless of their proficiency level as well as modeling

and facilitating exploration for their students. Throughout the course of the program, the mean score for culturally competent teaching rhythm and temperament strategies improved by 1.2 points on the 5-point scale. A full analysis of the educators’ progress in improving teacher rhythm and temperament through each of the three domains is included in Figure 30 below.

Figure 30:  
Trenton’s Teachers (Subset)  
**Changes in Teaching Rhythm and Temperament Using Culture and Language 5-Point Assessment Scale**



## Instructional Practice Results for Trenton's Teachers

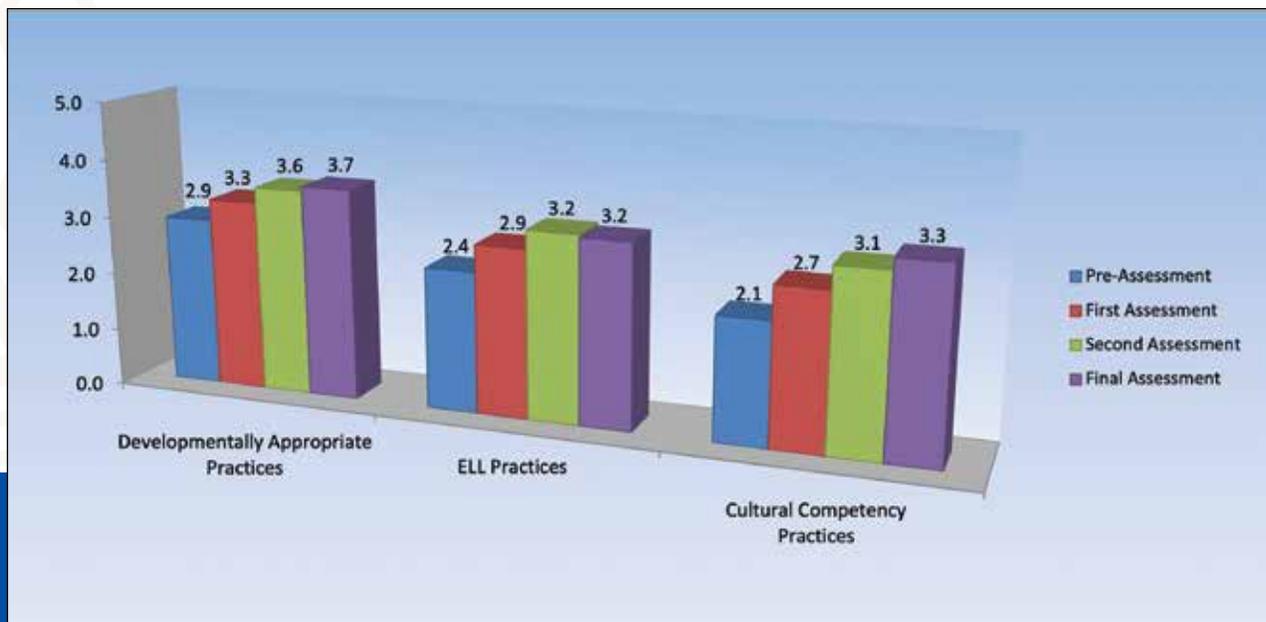
As the Trenton educators become more culturally and linguistically competent, the greatest improvements were observed in the adoption of culturally competent instructional strategies. The mean score for culturally competent instructional strategies improved by 1.2 points on the 5-point scale throughout the program assessments. The most improved instructional strategies included

extending and expanding concepts, incorporating the children's culture and language into the daily curriculum, and learning experiences as well as using props and gestures. A full analysis of the educators' progress in improving classroom design through each of the three domains is included in Figure 31 below.

Figure 31:

Trenton's Teachers (Subset)

**Instructional Practices Using Culture and Language 5-Point Assessment Scale**

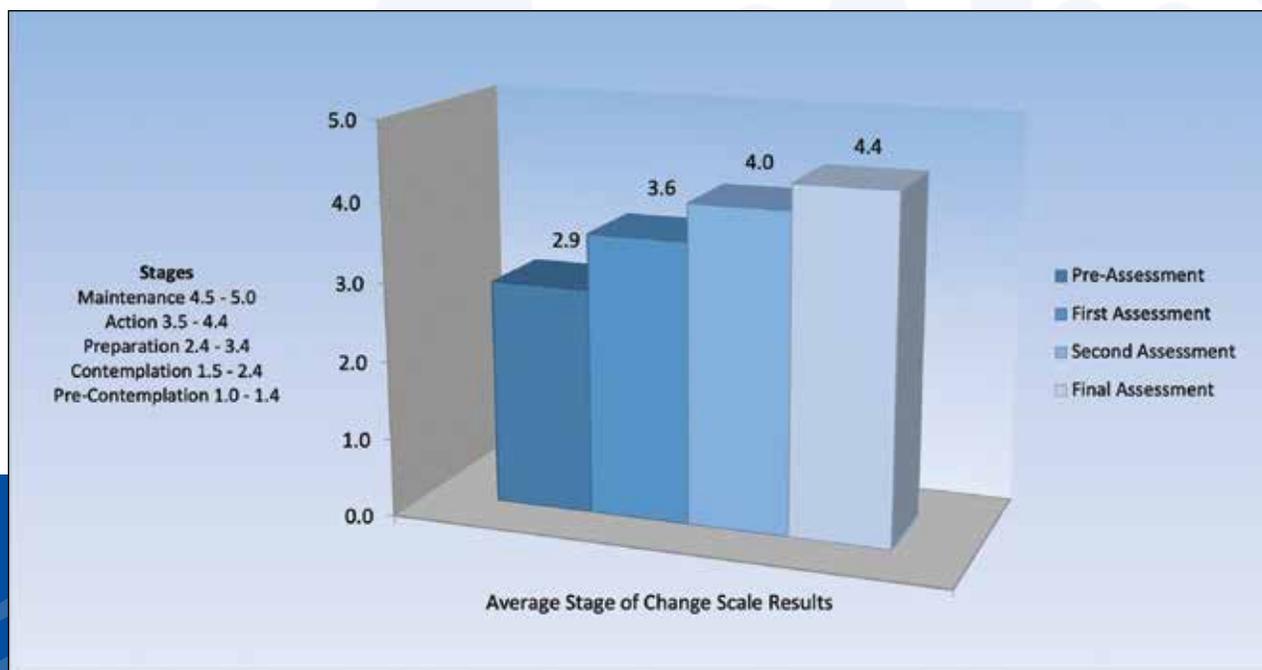


## Stage of Change Scale Results for Trenton's Teachers

The Stage of Change Scale results suggest that the Trenton teachers transformed their thinking and instructional practices while completing the program. When observing the educators at their pre-assessment visit, the mean score indicates the teachers were in the Contemplation Stage and beginning to think about how to change their instructional practices. By the first assessment

following the Institute, the Trenton educators entered the Action Stage and began to make concrete changes to their thinking and culture and linguistic practices. By the final assessment, the educators progressed to the highest level of the Action Stage, represented by the score of 4.4 indicating that they were actively engaging in new thinking and reflective of new practices.

Figure 32:  
Trenton's Teachers (Subset)  
Changes in Stage of Change Using Culture and Language 5-Point Assessment Scale



# The Carteret Public School Teachers

## 2017-2018 Cohort



## 2018-2019 Cohort



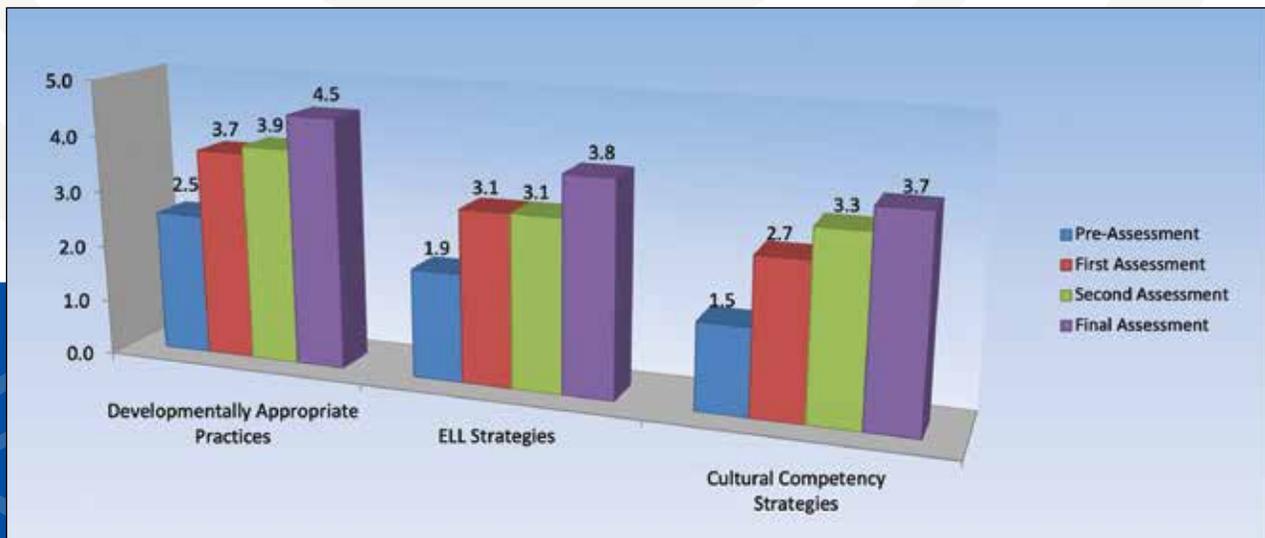
# The Carteret Cohorts: Two Years of Data across Three Domains (Subset)

## Classroom Design Results for Carteret’s ESL Teachers

In the **2017-2018 program year**, the Culture/ ELL Institute and Mentoring Program enrolled three ESL teachers that supported five general education teachers in kindergarten to fifth grade from Carteret School District. The Carteret teachers achieved tremendous progress in improving their classroom design, teaching rhythm and temperament as well as instructional strategies throughout the course of the ELL Institute and Mentoring Program. When analyzing the mean scores for the subset of Carteret teachers, the greatest improvements were observed in culturally competent strategies and developmentally

appropriate practices. The mean score for culturally competent strategies increased by 2.2 points on the 5-point scale, while the mean score for developmentally appropriate practices increased by 2.0 points from the pre-assessment to the final assessment. These improvements demonstrate the significant progress achieved by the Carteret teachers to create welcoming classroom environments representative of their diverse learners. A full analysis of the teachers’ progress in improving their classroom design through each of the three domains is included in Figure 33 below.

**Figure 33:**  
Overall 2017-2018 Carteret’s ESL Teachers’ (Subset)  
**Changes in Classroom Design Using the Culture and Language 5-Point Assessment Scale**



## Classroom Design Results for Carteret's ESL Teachers

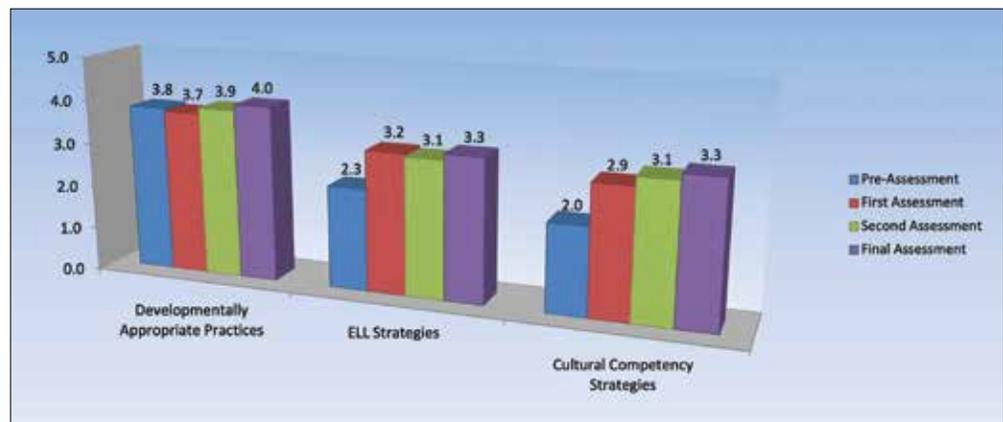
In the **2018-2019 program year**, the Culture/ELL Institute and Mentoring Program enrolled four teachers from the Carteret School District (two kindergarten teachers, one special education teacher and one ESL teacher that supported three general education classrooms). The Carteret teachers achieved tremendous progress in improving their classroom design, teaching rhythm and temperament as well as instructional strategies throughout the course of the Fall Institute and Mentoring Program. Carteret educators worked to create more comfortable and welcoming learning environment to facilitate their

student's learning by improving their classroom design. The most notable improvements observed throughout the assessment visits was the adoption of culturally competent strategies that included adding cultural materials and supplies, as well as posters and art that reflected the students' background and heritage. The mean score for culturally competent classroom design improved by 1.3 points on the 5-point scale throughout the program assessments. A full analysis of the educators' progress in improving classroom design through each of the three domains is included in Figure 34 below.

Figure 34:

Overall 2018-2019 Carteret's ESL Teachers (Subset)

Changes in Classroom Design Using the Culture and Language 5-Point Assessment Scale



## Teaching Rhythm and Temperament Results for Carteret's ESL Teachers

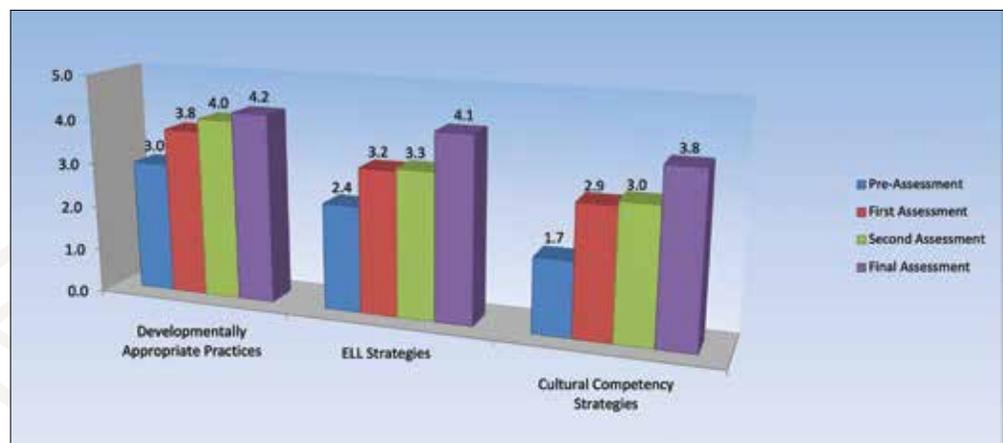
The Carteret ESL teachers greatly improved their teaching rhythm and temperament from the pre-assessment to the final assessment, with the greatest improvement in the domain of culturally competent strategies. The mean score for culturally competent strategies increased by

2.1 points throughout the course of the program. A full analysis of the Carteret teachers' progress in improving teaching rhythm and temperament through each of the three domains is included in Figure 35 below.

Figure 35:

Overall 2017-2018 Carteret's ESL Teachers' (Subset)

Changes in Teaching Rhythm and Temperament Using Culture and Language 5-Point Assessment Scale



## Teaching Rhythm and Temperament Results for Carteret’s ESL Teachers’ 2018-2019

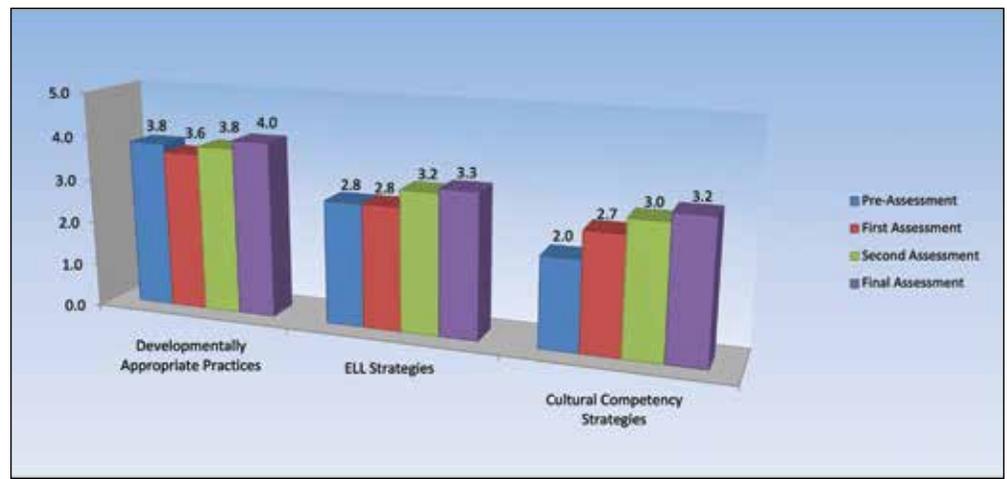
Throughout the assessment visits, the mean score for culturally competent teaching rhythm and temperament strategies improved by 1.2 points on the 5-point scale. Educators improved their skills to help all students participate regardless of

their proficiency level as well as interaction. A full analysis of the educators’ progress in improving teaching rhythm and temperament through each of the three domains is included in Figure 36 below.

Figure 36:

Overall 2017-2018 Carteret’s ESL Teachers’ (Subset)

**Changes in Teaching Rhythm and Temperament Using the Culture and Language 5-Point Assessment Scale**



## Instructional Practices Results for Carteret’s ESL Teachers 2017-2018

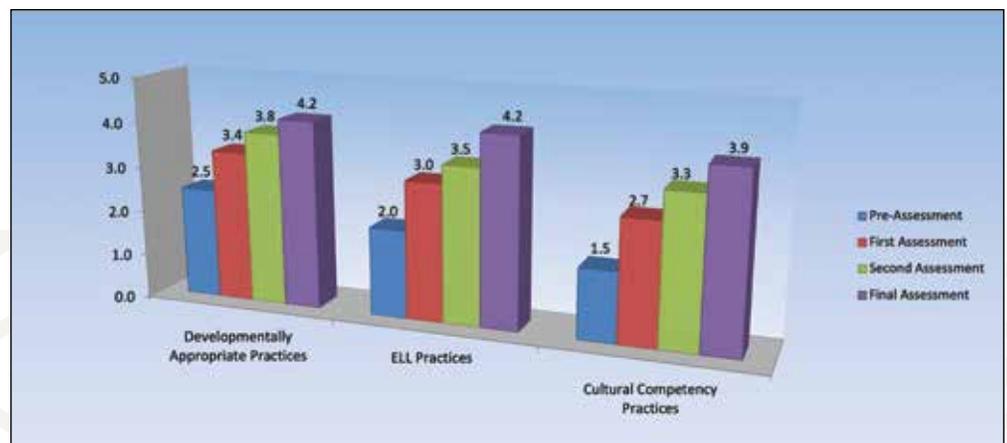
When comparing the instructional strategy pre-assessment to final assessment results, an analysis of the assessment visit data demonstrates notable improvement in all three domains. The greatest improvement was observed in the incorporation of culturally competent and ELL strategies. The mean score for culturally competent instructional practices increased by 2.4 points on the 5-point

scale between the pre-assessment and final assessment. Furthermore, the mean score for ELL practices increased by 2.2 points on the 5-point scale. A full analysis of the Carteret teachers’ progress in improving overall instructional strategies through each of the three domains is included in Figure 37 below.

Figure 37:

Overall 2017-2018 Carteret’s ESL Teachers’ (Subset)

**Changes in Instructional Practices Using Culture and Language 5-Point Assessment Scale**



## Instructional Practices Results for Carteret's ESL Teachers' 2018-2019

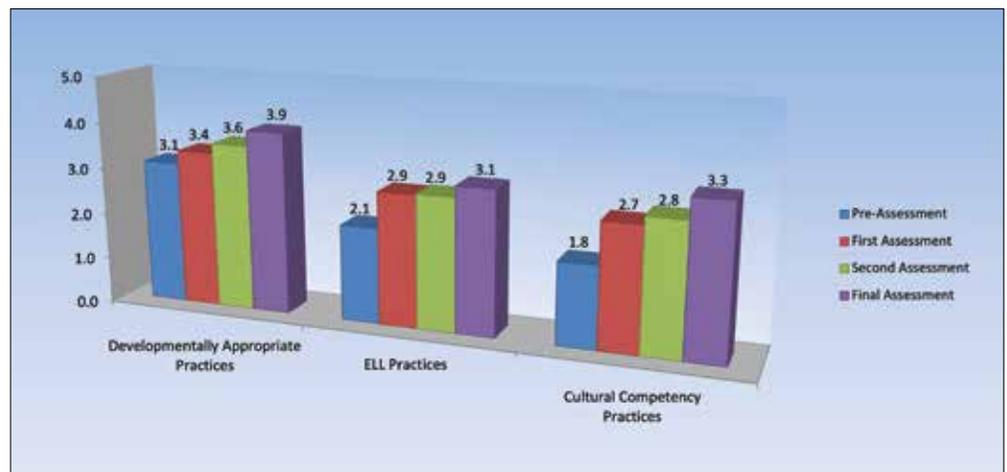
Throughout the program, the Carteret educators worked to enhance their instructional strategies to best meet the needs of their diverse learners. The most notable improvements were observed in the adoption of culturally competent strategies, with educators making the greatest improvements incorporating the children's culture and language into the daily curriculum as well as extending

and expanding learning experiences. The mean score for culturally competent instructional strategies improved by 1.5 points on the 5-point scale throughout the program assessments. A full analysis of the educators' progress in improving classroom design through each of the three domains is included in Figure 38 below.

Figure 38:

Overall 2018-2019 Carteret's ESL Teachers' (Subset)

### Changes in Instructional Practices Using the Culture and Language 5-Point Assessment Scale



## Stage of Change Scale Results for Carteret's ESL Teachers' 2017-2018

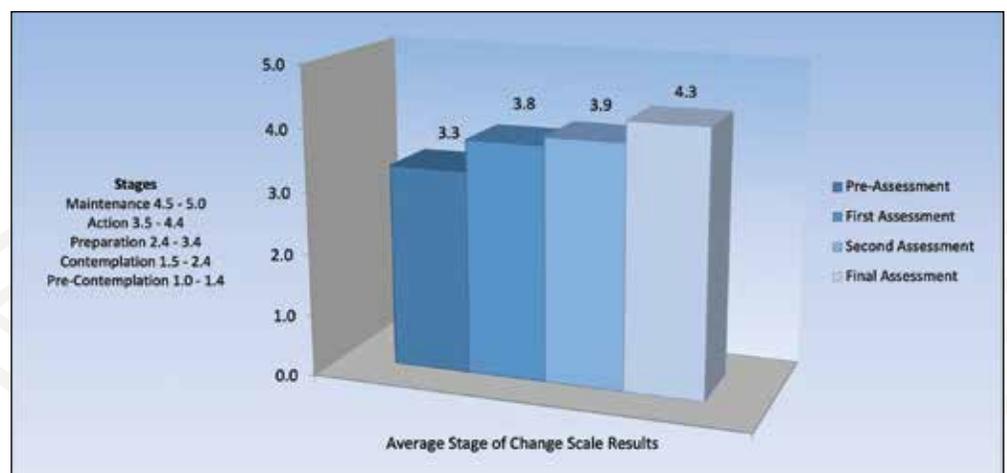
When comparing the average scores through the Stage of Change Scale, overall, the teachers were in the Preparation Stage during the pre-assessment. By the final assessment, the teachers evolved in their thinking to be in the Action Stage, indicating

they were engaged in incorporating new practices to create a fully supportive cultural and linguistic learning environment for all learners. A full analysis is presented in Figure 39 below.

Figure 39:

Overall 2017-2018 Carteret's ESL Teachers' (Subset)

### Average Stages of Change Results Using the Children's Institute's Stage of Change 5-Point Scale



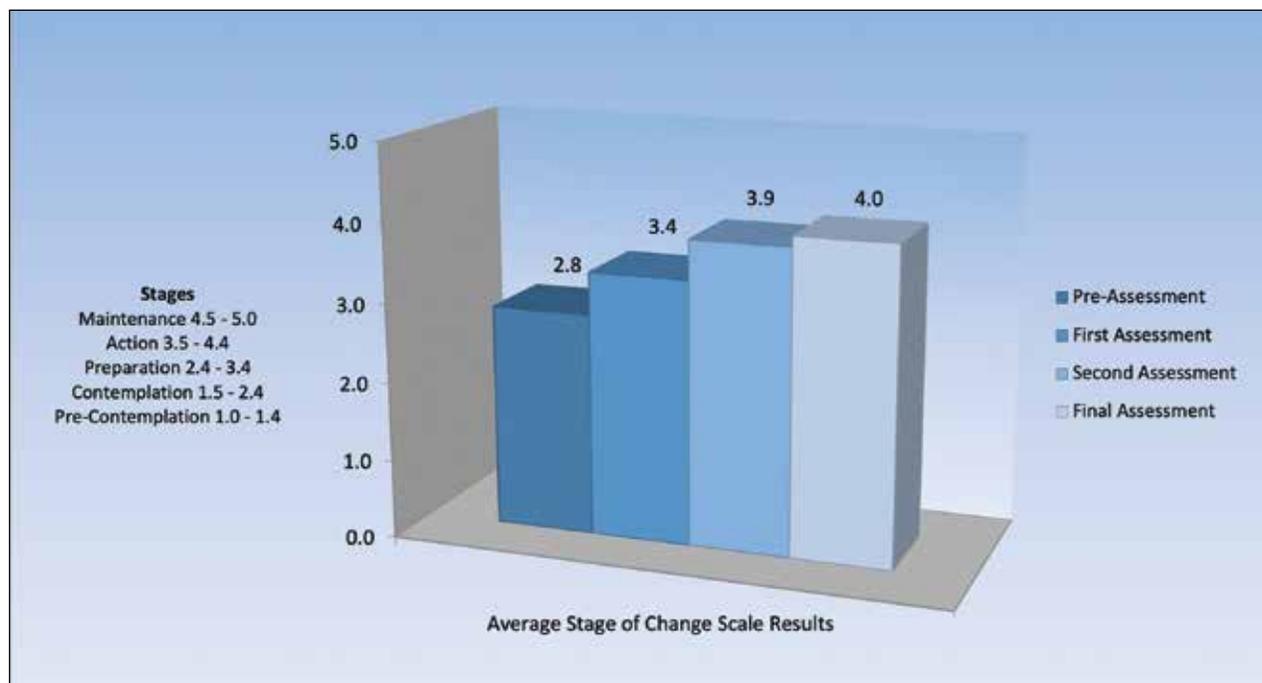


## Stage of Change Scale Results for Carteret’s ESL Teachers’ 2018-2019

An analysis of the Stage of Change Scale results for the Carteret educators indicates that the teachers evolved their thinking and instructional practices while completing the program. During the pre-assessment visit, teachers were found to be in the Preparation Stage and were poised to transform their thinking to make necessary changes to their instructional practices. By the second assessment,

the Carteret educators entered the Action Stage with a score of 3.4. By the final assessment, the educators’ mean score was a 4.0, indicating that they had progressed within the Action Stage and were actively engaging in new thinking and classroom changes to create more culturally and linguistically responsive experiences for their students.

Figure 40:  
Overall 2018-2019 Carteret’s ESL Teachers’ (Subset)  
**Average Stages of Change Results Using the Children’s Institute’s Stage of Change 5-Point Scale**



# Success Story

# #5

## Ritu Chauhan, *ESL Teacher*

**Nathan Hale Elementary School, Carteret, New Jersey**

Hello! My name is Mrs. Ritu Chauhan. This is my 29th year in teaching profession, of which the last 6 years have been at the Carteret School District as an ESL/bilingual teacher. From a young age, I was very clear that I always dreamed of and wanted to be a teacher. I was born and raised in New Delhi, India. I am fluent in Hindi, Punjabi, and English. I went to Delhi University for both undergraduate and graduate studies. I have a double master's degree in education and political science. I have also earned a Teaching Certificate in Pre-K to third, Bilingual and ESL from Kean University. My family comprises of a wonderful and loving husband and two adorable adult children. I believe in incorporating students' culture and language in the classroom as it lowers their affective filter and enhances their positive self-esteem. It provides them with a safe space where they are seen, valued, cared for and respected. Students not only construct a deeper understanding of their

own culture, but they also become aware of the other cultures around the world as they begin to understand themselves in relation to other cultures.

Children and their families from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds bring along with them a great deal of knowledge and expertise. We can build on these assets to teach children what they need to learn in school. The overall goal for me as a teacher is to learn about each student and their family members and connect with them, and then incorporate that knowledge to create a more authentic learning environment. Working with children who come from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds is a humbling and fulfilling experience, as diversity is especially close to my heart. As educators and catalysts of future generations, I believe that it's our responsibility to promote cultural awareness amongst children right from a young age.



Nilajah Abdullah, mentor, had nothing but great reviews of Ritu Chauhan, ESL teacher, and the several general education teachers she collaborated with in multiple grades. The teachers successfully transformed their classroom environments to reflect the cultural aspects of their learners through visual and performing art activities, print rich with English and at least three other dominant home languages Spanish, Punjabi, and Hindi. They have transformed their teaching practices to include the use of culture and home language into the everyday curriculum. This was evident through the constant use of world maps,

globes, and extending and expanding concepts within the content areas of math, science, social studies, technology, and art helping all learners to thrive because the teaching and learning was relatable. As they continued to grow within the 26 strategies, they created an environment and learning experience that relayed positive messages to their learners like “I belong here,” “Me and my family matter” and, most importantly, “I can!”

While all the Carteret School District classrooms made strong improvements throughout the course of the program, Rita Chauhan (ESL teacher) and collaborating teachers, achieved the most significant improvements across the program in creating a culturally and linguistically welcoming classroom. The most significant enhancements included enhancing their teaching rhythm and temperament as well as



their instructional strategies in the domains of ELL and culturally competent strategies. Ritu demonstrated tremendous growth in her teaching rhythm and temperament to be more culturally competent by improving classroom routines and transitions, modeling and facilitating exploration, helping all children regardless of proficiency level co-teaching and co-decision making. The mean score for culturally competent strategies increased by 3.5 points on the 5-point scale, to reach 4.9 points by the fourth assessment visit.

Throughout the program, this teacher and her cooperating teachers made significant progress in transforming and enhancing their instructional strategies. In analyzing mentors' assessments using the Culture and Language 5-Point Scale, the

most notable improvements were made across all three domains in incorporating developmentally appropriate practices, culturally competent strategies, and ELL practices. In each domain, this teacher and her colleagues received nearly the highest possible score on the 5-point scale during the final assessment visit. In the domain of culturally competent practices, the strongest strategy improvements included talking while doing, utilizing literacy activities, using second language for both content and direction, and incorporating the children's culture and language into the daily curriculum and learning experiences. The mean score for culturally competent instructional strategies increased by 3.3 points on the 5-point scale between the pre-assessment and final assessment.



## Ritu Chauhan, *ESL Teacher*

Nathan Hale Elementary School, Carteret, New Jersey

The Stage of Change Scale further indicated that Ms. Chauhan changed her thinking about the importance of culturally and linguistically responsive classroom practices.

During the pre-assessment visit, Ritu was in the Preparation Stage, and beginning to think about changes to their instructional practices. By the third and final assessment,

this teacher increased by 1.2 points on the 5-point Stage of Change Scale, placing her in the Maintenance Stage.

### Program Strategies Adopted:

- > *Co-teaching and co-decision practices were adopted*
- > *Expanded vocabularies in both English and home languages*
- > *Incorporated the children's culture and home language into the daily curriculum and learning experiences*
- > *Built vocabulary in English and home languages (Punjabi, Spanish, Urdu, and Arabic)*
- > *Talked about the here and now valuing what students knew*
- > *Extended and expanded lessons into other content areas*
- > *Infused more cultural and linguistic artifacts and materials into the curricula.*



Ritu Chauhan, *ESL Teacher*  
 Nathan Hale Elementary School, Carteret, New Jersey

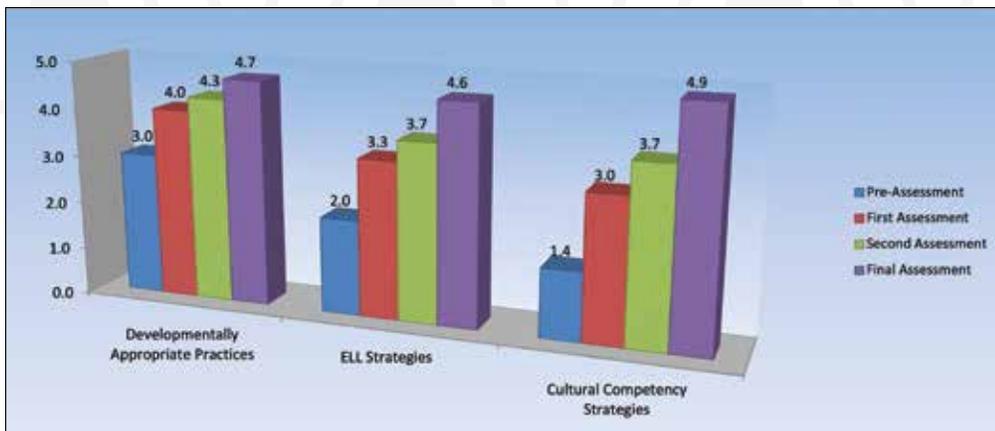


Figure 41:  
 Changes in Teaching Rhythm and Temperament Using Culture and Language 5-Point Assessment Scale

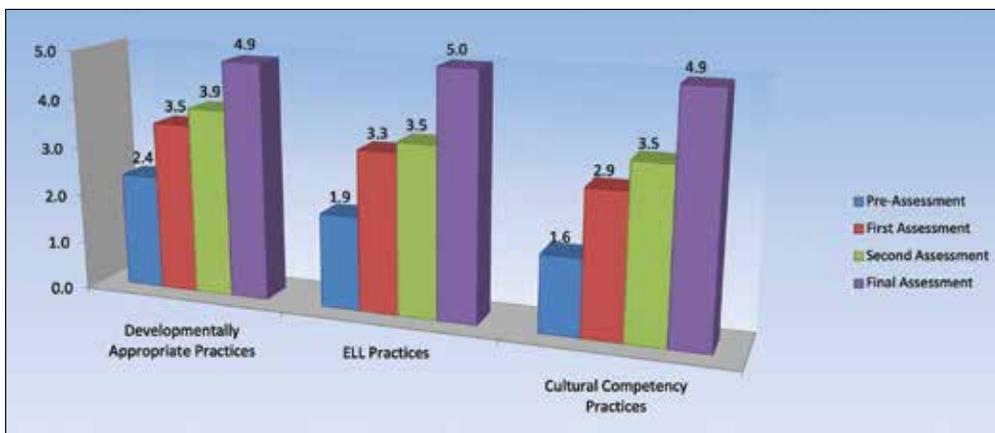


Figure 42:  
 Changes in Instructional Practices Using Culture and Language 5-Point Assessment Scale

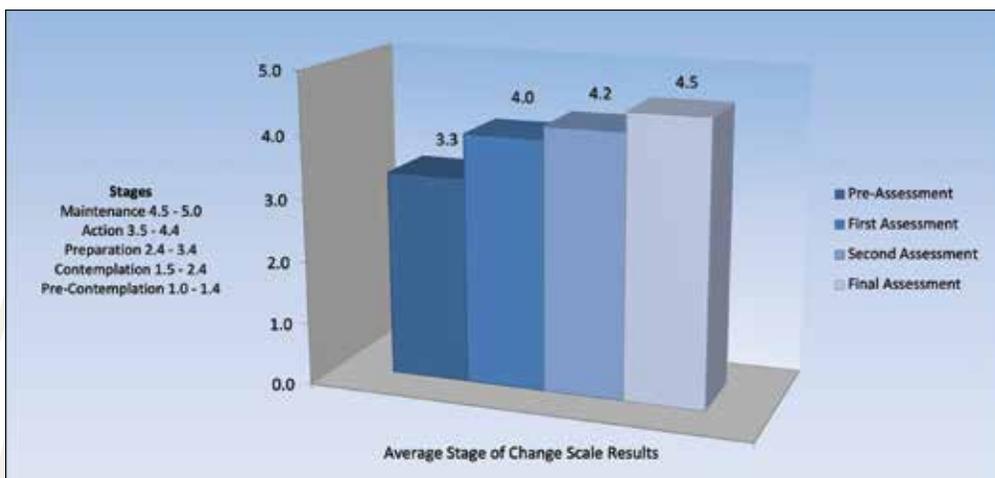


Figure 43:  
 Stages of Change Results Using the Children's Institute's Stage of Change 5-Point Scale

## Success Story

# #6

### Kimberly Barker-Gerritse, *ESL Teacher* Nicholas Minue Elementary School, Carteret, New Jersey

I have been teaching in Carteret for 15 years and, prior to Carteret, I worked in private schools for two years. I started as a regular elementary school teacher but now work with the ESL population. I love learning from them and their families as well, so I decided to go back to school to obtain my ESL certification. I have been an ESL teacher for nine years. I am a third generation American. My great-grandparents are from Ireland, and I will be traveling to Ireland in April 2020 to visit. Unfortunately, I only speak English, but I am trying to learn Spanish. I have been fascinated about learning different cultures ever since I met my husband whose parents emigrated from the Netherlands. I remember going to his house for the first time and when I walked in, no one was speaking English. This wowed me. They all seemed like me but spoke a different language with different customs.

I enjoyed learning how we were each different and yet the same, even though we grew up in different settings, countries

and with different beliefs. It opened my eyes to the world and to different people. I love to expose myself to different cultures so I can be open minded about all people and the world. It has become my passion, and I enjoy exposing my own children to other cultures as well. As a family, we have traveled to many countries and have visited half of the United States. I even see in my children how they are curious and want to learn about other cultures. When my children were younger, we had au pairs from Brazil and Columbia, and my children loved learning about their culture as well as sharing the American culture. It has helped me be a better person and to raise my children to be more tolerant and accepting of all people. We all have the same goals and wants in life, but we may not all look the same or practice the same religion, but the more we know the more we can learn. My favorite books are *The Kite Runner*; *Enrique's Journey*; *The Book of Unknown Americana*; *Princess: A True*



*Story of Life Behind the Veil in Saudi Arabia; and The Invisible Girls.*

I am not just an ESL teacher who teaches only English, I am their ESL teacher that helps them feel welcomed, safe, and best of all, to learn from them. I love bringing into the lesson their cultures and languages. This in return, allows them to open and respond to me, and try their new language. In addition, they love when I show an interest in them and they teach me about their cultures and languages, which makes them want to try harder for me.

Ms. Barker-Gerritse referenced the three classroom rules as she guided student's behavior.



The rules are posted on the classroom wall and are written in English, Punjabi, and Spanish. Ms. Barker-Gerritse used finger over closed lips for quiet gesture. She also used thinking gestures as they discussed the story. She used a book about families to carry out a small group literacy lesson. As Ms. Barker-Gerritse manipulates the book, she modeled how to turn pages and how to use the pointer finger while reading. Ms. Barker-Gerritse was consistent with her

cultures during discussions and read aloud activities. She used cultural music from around the world. Ms. Barker-Gerritse and collaborating teacher work together to create curriculum content and classroom experiences that support student's culture and home



languages in the kindergarten classroom. The classroom environment continues to reflect the cultures of the students their families and the teachers in the room through photos, artifacts, posters and art. Nilajah Abdullah, mentor, stated, "I am overall impressed with the progress Ms. Kimberly is making with the classroom environment and her teaching practices. When I sit and debrief with Ms. Kimberly, I really enjoy my mentor/coach role which supports her transformation. Ms. Kimberly is making her way to becoming culturally and linguistically competent in her practices because she is intentional about implementing the 26 program strategies. It makes the mentoring and coaching experience exciting and effective."

Kimberly Barker-Gerritse

demonstrated significant gains to improve her teaching practices. The program mentor observed Ms. Barker-Gerritse achieving progress in improving her classroom design by adding culturally and linguistically responsive pictures, photos, art, and learning centers materials. The mean score for culturally competent classroom design increased by 1.8 points on the 5-point scale throughout the course of the program.

Ms. Barker-Gerritse also enhanced her teaching rhythm and temperament to



best respond to the unique needs of diverse learners. In the domain of teaching rhythm and temperament Ms. Barker-Gerritse showed the most improvement in ELL and culturally competent strategies that included providing choices to the students, modeling and facilitating exploration as well as routines and transitions. The mean score for both ELL and culturally competent instructional strategies increased by 1.8 points on the 5-point scale between the pre-assessment and final assessment visit.



incorporation of culture into the curriculum. She used home language to help students transition from large group to snack time. She allowed the students to share their opinions and knowledge about their

## Kimberly Barker-Gerritse, *ESL Teacher* Nicholas Minue Elementary School, Carteret, New Jersey

The most substantial progress in instructional practices was observed in the adoption of culturally competent strategies, including using songs with student's names, involving parents in a meaningful way, starting slowly with what children know, and utilizing props/gestures. The mean score for culturally competent instructional strategies increased by 1.8 points on the 5-point scale between

the pre-assessment and final assessment visit.

The Stage of Change Scale overwhelming indicates that Ms. Barker-Gerritse underwent a profound transformation in her thinking and instructional practices throughout the course of the program. During the pre-assessment visit, Ms. Barker-Gerritse was in the Contemplation Stage and only beginning to think about how to change her

instructional practices. By the final assessment, Ms. Barker-Gerritse's score on the Stage of Change Scale increased by 2.7 points on the 5-point scale. Reaching the highest possible score, Ms. Barker-Gerritse was in the Maintenance Stage, indicating that she had changed her classroom and practices to consistently incorporate new strategies learned throughout the Institute and subsequent mentoring sessions.

### Program Strategies Adopted:

- > *Incorporated the use of small group instruction*
- > *Used gestures to help students figure out words*
- > *Encouraged students to use their home languages (Spanish, Punjabi, and Urdu) to reinforce the meaning of vocabulary words*
- > *Teacher used different languages to greet students (Punjabi, Spanish and Urdu)*
- > *Incorporated cultural (Punjabi) music to transition activities*
- > *Incorporated the students' cultures and languages into the daily curriculum and learning experiences*
- > *Added multicultural materials and books into the classroom*
- > *Displayed photos of the students inside and outside of the classroom.*

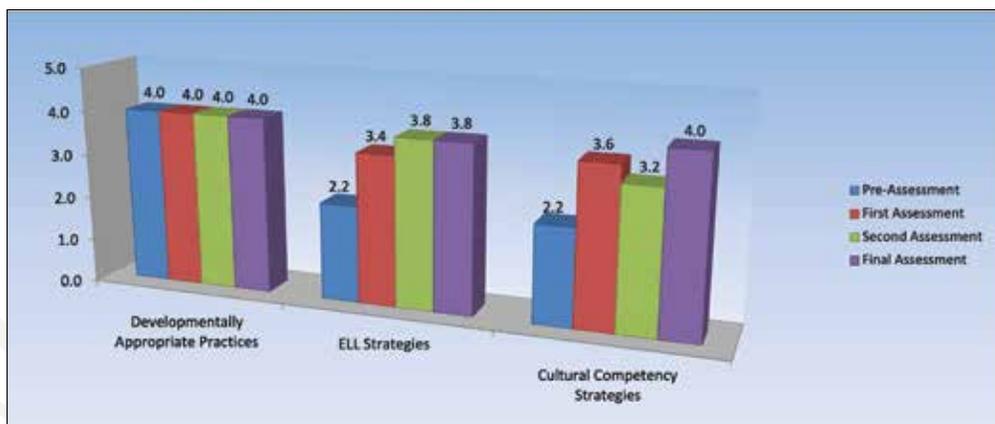


Figure 44:

**Changes in Classroom Design Using Culture and Language 5-Point Assessment Scale**

Kimberly Barker-Gerritse, *ESL Teacher*  
 Nicholas Minue Elementary School, Carteret, New Jersey

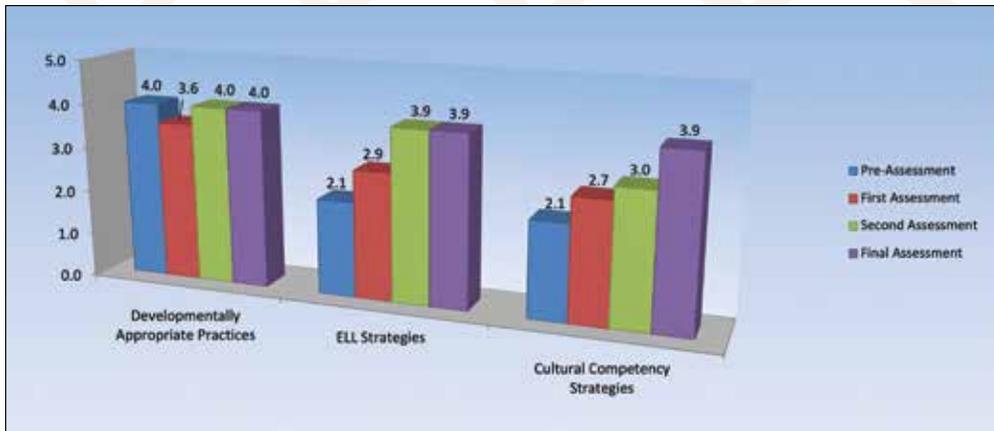


Figure 45:  
 Changes in Teaching Rhythm and Temperament Using Culture and Language 5-Point Assessment Scale

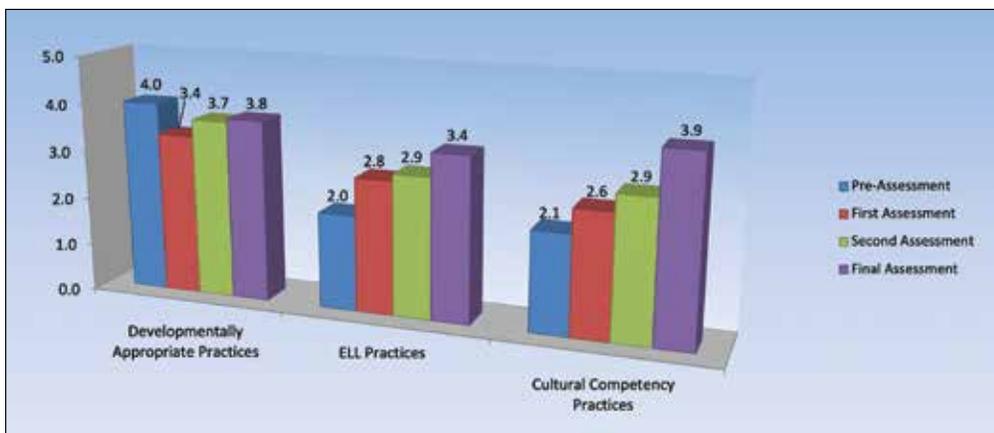


Figure 46:  
 Changes in Instructional Practices Using Culture and Language 5-Point Assessment Scale

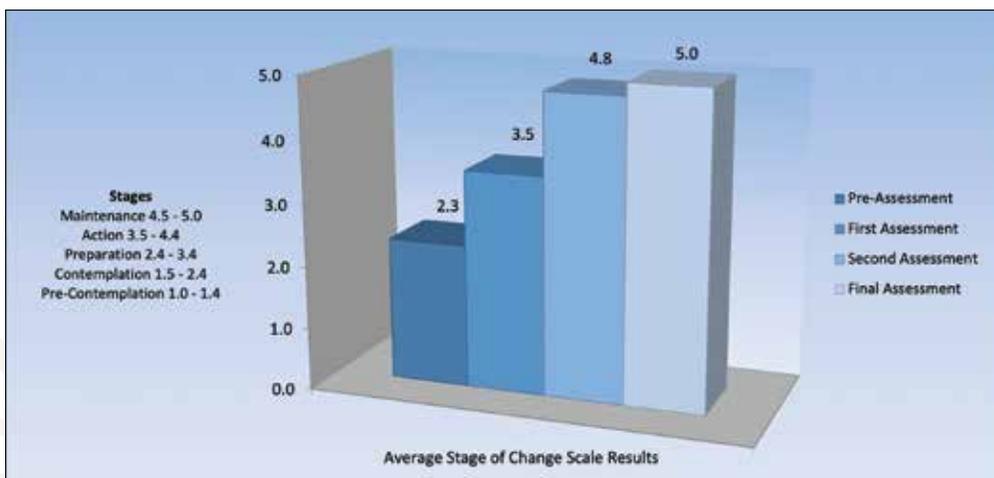


Figure 47:  
 Stages of Change Results Using the Children's Institute's Stage of Change 5-Point Scale

# Conclusion

## **The New Jersey Cultural Competency and English Language Learners Institute and Mentoring Program with its a 13-year evidence-based model, has perfected the art of cultural conversations, which affords teachers the opportunities to examine their thinking and teaching practices when working with diverse students who are culturally and linguistically rich.**

The first step in any problem is awareness. After we are aware of cultural disparity, we can develop solutions and adopt strategies that celebrate culture and language as a significant part of students' education. The Program has heightened the assets, resources, and strengths that diverse students bring to the learning table, so they are valued and validated. We have seen the transformation process in all three cohorts of teachers who participated in the professional development series coupled with mentoring and coaching. The model has proven that our core program strategies are transferable from grade to grade and work in bilingual, dual, general education and special education spaces. The results of reflective practice and a newfound creativity has benefited teachers, parents, and students in becoming more culturally and linguistically responsive in their thinking and practices. Coaching and mentoring is at the heart of this program and yields the results for both mentors and teachers to learn from each other as they document lessons learned for others to follow.

The Culture/ELL Institute and Mentoring Program challenged teachers who work with diverse learners to sustain a culturally responsive pedagogy that ignites their passion for teaching once again while connecting with their diverse students in real and substantial ways. These shifts in thinking and practices assisted educators to use culture and language as a springboard for

curricula, academic success, and cultural esteem that changes the educational landscapes for students enrolled in the participating classrooms. Becoming a culturally responsive educator is not a one and done proposition that can be resolved with attending a few professional development seminars on diversity. This complex and profound cultural proposition requires an intentionality that is committed to on-going cultural conversations about the importance of culture and language in the classroom and in schools, the adoption of best practices and investment of resources and time to transform schools' culture, teaching practices, parent engagement and students' success continually. This program is needed in both teacher preparation programs as well as in-service professional development. On-going professional development opportunities that are not rushed allow for deeper conversations and sustained change.

Other recommendations that can support teachers becoming culturally and linguistically competent could include courses on diversity and the hiring of more diverse and multi-lingual teachers that have strong ties with the community and can help translate their cultural knowledge into internal cultural conversations with their colleagues. These efforts must value diversity as a necessary ethos for all students to expand their lenses to deal with their own bias and appreciate others as citizens of a global community in which each member has a stake. Classroom practices and curricula must reflect diverse students to support their socioemotional and cognitive development. Wherever there are diverse students, culturally and linguistic strategies are imperative for their success and the affirmation of what diverse students bring to the learning table. School leaders and teachers are called to be global transformers that are opened to learning everyday

about the value of diversity, equity, and inclusion. When we know that students' cultural identity is strongly tied to their academic success, it prompts us to adopt new ways of thinking and being with

diverse students that reduces unconscious biases inside and outside of the classroom so we can see students for who they really are—global citizens with much to offer the world.

## New Jersey Cultural Competency English Language Learners Institute and Mentoring Program

**289 TEACHERS, 161 CLASSROOMS IN 94 SCHOOLS**

<b>13 COHORT YEAR</b>	Number of Teachers	Number of Classrooms	Number of Schools
2007-2008	24 teachers	15 classrooms	9 schools
2008-2009	26 teachers	12 classrooms	9 schools
2009-2010	21 teachers	7 classrooms	5 schools
2010-2011	15 teachers	8 classrooms	7 schools
2011-2012	22 teachers	12 classrooms	7 schools
2012-2013	28 teachers	12 classrooms	10 schools
2013-2014	12 teachers	10 classrooms	9 schools
2014-2015	28 teachers	16 classrooms	9 schools
2015-2016	37 teachers	18 classrooms	13 schools
2016-2017	23 teachers	12 classrooms	7 schools
2017-2018	41 teachers	23 classrooms	3 schools
2018-2019	12 teachers	16 classrooms	6 schools
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>289 Teachers</b>	<b>161 Classrooms</b>	<b>94 Schools</b>

*22 Municipalities in New Jersey: Blackwood, Bloomfield, Camden, Carteret, Delanco, East Orange, East Windsor, Elizabeth, Hamilton, Hightstown, Hillsborough, Irvington, Jackson, Jersey City, Montclair, Newark, Paterson, Perth Amboy, Princeton, Ringoes, Trenton and Union.*

# References



Berdecia, A. & C. Kosec. (2017). *World Changers: Inspiring Cultural and Linguistic Excellence in Children, Parents, and Teachers*. John S. Watson Institute for Public Policy of Thomas Edison State University.

Carver-Thomas, D. (2018). *Diversifying the Teaching Professions: How to Recruit and Retain Teachers of Color*.

Council of Chief State School Officers (2018). *A Vision of Guidance for a Diverse and Learners-Ready Teacher Workforce*.

Ferdman, B.M. (1990). *Bridging home and school with culturally responsive approach*. The Free Library by Farlex.

Ferdman, B.M. (1990). Literacy and cultural diversity. *Harvard Educational Review*. 60(2), 181-204.

Garcia O., S.I. Johnson, & Kate Seltzer. (2017). *The Translanguaging Classroom: Leveraging Students Bilingualism for Learning*. Caslon, Inc. Philadelphia, PA.

Hollie, S. (2012). *Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching and Learning: Classroom Practices for Student Success*. Shell Education Publishing, Inc. Huntington Beach, CA.

Howard, T.C. (2010). *Why Race and Culture Matter in Schools: Closing the achievement gap in America's classroom*. Teachers College Press.

Katzenmeyer M.H. & G.V Moller. (2009). *Awakening the sleeping giants: Helping teachers develop as leaders*. Corwin-A Sage Company, Thousand Oaks, CA.

National Association for the Education of Young Children. (2009). Where We Stand: On Responding to Linguistic and Cultural Diversity. Retrieved from: <http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/positions/diversity.pdf>

National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition & Language Instruction Educational Programs (NCELA). (2011). The Growing Numbers of English Learner Students. Retrieved from: [http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/files/uploads/9/growing\\_EL\\_0910.pdf](http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/files/uploads/9/growing_EL_0910.pdf)

National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition Elevating English Learners (ELS): Program for Newcomer Students. Retrieved from [https://ncela.ed.gov/files/feature\\_topics/newcomers/ElevatingELs\\_ProgramsForNewcomerStudents.pdf](https://ncela.ed.gov/files/feature_topics/newcomers/ElevatingELs_ProgramsForNewcomerStudents.pdf)

National Education Association. (2011). A NEA Policy Brief: Professional Development for General Education Teachers of English Language Learners. Retrieved from: [http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/PB32\\_ELL11.pdf](http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/PB32_ELL11.pdf)

Palmer, P. (1997). The Heart of a Teacher: Identity and Integrity in Teaching. *Change Magazine*, Vol. 29:6, 14-21.

Peterson, S.A., A. Baker, & M. Weber (2010). *Stages of Change Scale for Early Education and Care 2.0 Professional Manual*. Children's Institute, Inc. Rochester, New York.

Prochaska, J.O., J. C. Norcross, & C. C. DiClemente. (1995). *Changing for Good: A Revolutionary Six-Stage Program for Overcoming Bad Habits and Moving Your Life Positively Forward*. Avon Books. New York

Prochaska, J.O. & J. C. Norcross. (2003). *Systems of Psychotherapy: A transtheoretical analysis*. Fifth Edition. Brooks/Cole a division of Thomson Learning

Rush, D.D., & M.L. Sheldon. (2011). *The Early Childhood Coaching Handbook*. Paul Brookes Publishing Co.

Tabors, P.O. (2008). *One Child, Two Languages: A guide for early childhood educators of children learning English as a second language*. Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

Teaching Strategies. (2003). *Starting Points video training series: Teaching English language learners*. Teaching Strategies, Inc.

U.S. Department of Education (2016). *The State of Racial Diversity in the Educator Workforce*.

# Program Acknowledgment

## Program Financial Partners

- > Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation
- > Princeton Area Community Foundation
- > PNC Charitable Foundation
- > TD Charitable Foundation
- > The John S. Watson Institute for Public Policy of Thomas Edison State University
- > Trenton Public Schools
- > Wells Fargo Regional Foundation

## Thomas Edison State University Staff

- > Joseph Youngblood II, J.D., Vice Provost and Dean, John S. Watson School of Public Service
- > Barbara George-Johnson, M.P.H., J.D., Executive Director of the John S. Watson Institute for Public Policy
- > Ana I. Berdecia, M.Ed. Director, Center for the Positive Development of Urban Children
- > Constance Oswald, Associate Manager, John S. Watson Institute for Public Policy

## Staff/Consultants/Mentors

- > Ana I. Berdecia, MEd, and Certified Coach (Program Director)
- > Kamili O. Leath, MS, Project Coordinator
- > Caitlin Kosec, M.P.P., Independent Evaluator for the Project
- > Dee Bailey-Gittens, Certified Teacher (Faculty)
- > Angela DeFazio, Certified Teacher (Mentor)
- > Odessa Davis, MA (Mentor)
- > Liliana Attar, Certified Teacher (Mentor)
- > Marilyn Quintana, MA (Mentor)

- > Renee Abdullah, MEd (Mentor)
- > Merlene Taylor, MEd M. SC. (Faculty)
- > Kiya Green, MEd (Faculty)
- > Georgina Criado-Hall, MA (Faculty)
- > Ginamarie Ramirez, MSW (Faculty)

## Special Thanks to:

- > Dr. Fred McDowell, Superintendent of Trenton Public Schools
- > Elizabeth DeJesus, Chief Academic Officer, Trenton Public Schools, New Jersey
- > Sandra Iturbides, Supervisor ESL/Bilingual Programs, Trenton Public Schools, New Jersey
- > Leslie Septor, Supervisor of Humanities, Elementary, Trenton Public Schools, New Jersey
- > Maritza Abreu, Interventionalist Teacher, ESL/Bilingual Office, Trenton Public Schools
- > Kimberly Page, Principal of Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School, Trenton Public Schools
- > Rosa Diaz, Superintendent of Carteret Public Schools
- > Maria Romero, Former Supervisor ESL/Bilingual Programs, Carteret Public Schools, New Jersey
- > Erika Barrett, Principal, Nathan Hale Elementary School, Carteret Public Schools
- > Christian Zimmer, Principal, Private Nicholas Minue Elementary School, Carteret Public Schools

# Writers' Biographies

## Ana I. Berdecia, MEd and Certified Coach



Ana I. Berdecia is the senior fellow/director of the Center for the Positive Development of Urban Children (CPDUC) at the John S. Watson Institute for Public Policy of Thomas Edison State University and the founder/program director for the New Jersey Cultural Competency and English Language Learners Learning Institute and Mentoring Program. Berdecia has extensive experience working with diverse families and children as an administrator, university professor, program developer, trainer and consultant. Prior to joining the University, Berdecia served as the executive director of the Puerto Rican Community Day Care Center, Inc., in Trenton, New Jersey. Berdecia served as an adjunct faculty at Mercer County Community College (New Jersey) for seven years where she taught Introduction to Early Childhood Education, Infant and Toddler Development, Curriculum and Methods, and the Educational Field Experience courses. Berdecia earned her BA in sociology with a minor in women's studies and a master's in education with a specialization in early childhood from The College of New Jersey, in Ewing. She also holds a New Jersey Standard Teaching Certificate in Preschool through 3rd grade and has experience teaching preschoolers and third graders. In addition, Berdecia has a post-graduate certificate in Infant Mental Health from the YCS Infant and Preschool Mental Health Institute and Seton Hall University, in South Orange, New Jersey. In addition, Berdecia is a certified coach, trainer, and speaker through the John C. Maxwell International Certification Program. She also has her own coaching and training practice, Potential Pathways, LLC. Berdecia has received four awards for her outstanding work with children and families: the Aletha Wright Excellence in Early Care and Education Award; the YWCA Tribute to Women Award; the Trenton Music Makers' Partnership Award, and the Montclair State University, Center for Autism and Early Childhood Mental Health's Roots and Wings Award and Luminary Speaker. Berdecia is from a rich Puerto Rican, Caribbean culture. She resides in Ewing, New Jersey, with her husband and is the proud mother of two adult sons, Adan and Gabriel, and two daughter-in-laws, Kathryn and Staicy as well as the grandmother to three adorable grandchildren, Daniel Luis, Jericho Sebastian, and Hope Grace.

## Caitlin Kosec, MPP

---



Caitlin Kosec is an independent consultant as well as the Development and Communications Manager for the Urban Peace Institute. Throughout her career, Kosec has worked to improve community safety and advance education reform as well as expand social services available in low income communities. Kosec previously served as the Grants and Communications manager for Interfaith Community Services in San Diego, California, supporting the organization's efforts to empower vulnerable families. She also propelled the Urban Peace Institute's efforts to create safe and healthy communities as a development manager for Advancement Project in Los Angeles. For more than a decade, Kosec has provided program evaluation and research to support the New Jersey English Language Learners and Cultural Competency Institute and Mentoring Program, an early childhood education professional development program organized by The John S. Watson Institute of Public Policy at Thomas Edison State University. Kosec holds a Master of Public Policy degree from Johns Hopkins University, in Baltimore, Maryland, with a concentration in education policy and nonprofit management and a Bachelor of Arts degree in history from the University of Mary Washington, in Fredericksburg, Virginia. Early education is of particular interest to Kosec and her husband, as they are proud parents to two active preschoolers Emilia, and Adeline.

# Writers' Biographies



## Kamili O. Leath, MS

---



Kamili O. Leath is the chief operating officer (COO) of Leath and Associates, LLC, a human development and training organization. As a consultant and speaker, she brings a wealth of knowledge, skill and ability with her “down-to-earth” approach to teaching and learning. She has worked in the nonprofit sector at colleges and universities providing support and assistance to graduate and undergraduate students. She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology from Arcadia University, in Glenside, Pennsylvania, and a Master of Science in Christian Counseling from Carin University, in Langhorne Manor, Pennsylvania. Leath conducts workshops and provides technical assistance for child care centers and churches as well as businesses. Leath has a passion to see young children grow and succeed. She wants to see every preschooler develop and thrive in an excellent environment. She believes that every young child can succeed with appropriate support in an appropriate setting. Leath was an adjunct faculty at Mercer County Community College (New Jersey) and Bloomfield College, in Bloomfield, New Jersey, where she taught Introduction to Early Childhood Education, Introduction to Education, Special Topics in Childcare, and Pathways to Adult Learning. She also taught several Child Development Associates (CDA) courses for profit and nonprofit child care centers. Leath also served as a program director and the associate director for Family Strength Associates, Inc., a nonprofit counseling and professional development organization. As the program director, she implemented and coordinated several cycles of a 14-week family program aimed at increasing family cohesion and communication. As the associate director, she developed and managed the NJ Child Care Training Program calendar of workshops, 120 events annually throughout the State of New Jersey. Leath is an African American who comes from a family filled with many cultural traditions. She currently resides with her husband and four children (three sons and one daughter) in Moorestown, New Jersey.

## Ashley Reid, MA, MDiv

---



Ashley Reid is a writer, spiritual care provider, and program management professional. An invested advocate and community worker, she brings a diverse wealth of experience and knowledge in community building and social justice work. Ashley has been published on the Our Bible App and Chimes Magazine offering articles and resources around spiritual development, empowerment, and liberation. Additionally, Ashley has offered her skills in program management and group facilitation around cultural competency and inclusion in educational spaces through the Center for the Positive Development of Urban Children (CPDUC) at the John S. Watson Institute for Public Policy of Thomas Edison State University. She has also volunteered her group facilitation skills around social justice issues and empowerment through her platform DivinelyMade.Org and various community organizations such as the Marin Interfaith Council, and the Redwoods Senior Living Community in Marin County, California. A Trenton, New Jersey native, Ashley holds her Bachelor of Science in Print Journalism from North Carolina A&T State University, Master of Arts in Management from the Wake Forest School of Business, and Master of Divinity from San Francisco Theological Seminary. She is a proud Aggie and HBCU alumna, a cat mommy of an energetic tuxedo named Samson, a devoted daughter and sister, and a global citizen deeply invested in the communal justice, healing, and restoration of those oppressed in society.

# THOMAS EDISON STATE UNIVERSITY

---

THE JOHN S. WATSON INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY

**THE LEADER IN ONLINE EDUCATION**