

Culturally Responsive Teaching



المدرسة العالمية الأمريكية
UNIVERSAL AMERICAN SCHOOL
FESTIVAL CITY

Al-Futtaim Education Foundation

Better Serving Our Arab Students

Author:
Sabrina C. Sambola



Centre for Education Action Research

الجمعية الفطيمية للتعليمية Al-Futtaim Education Foundation

Introduction



Background

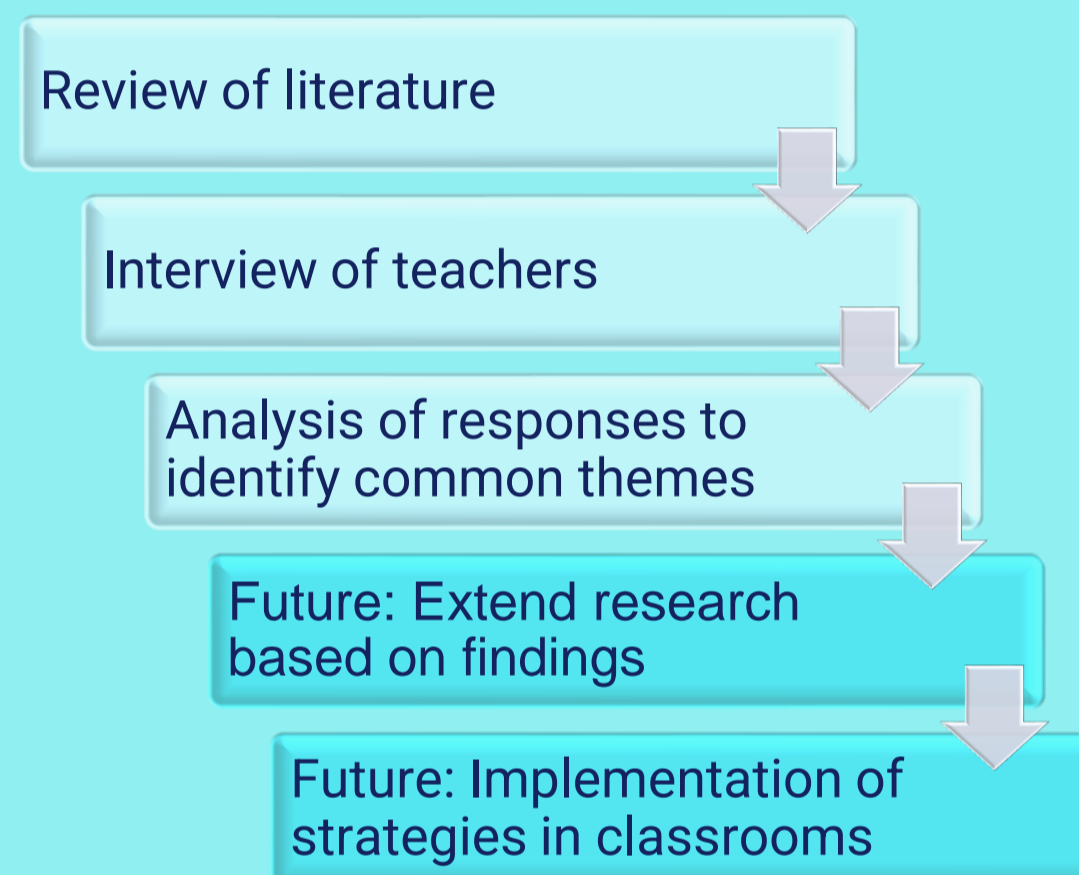
In the UAE, there are many Arab students who are being taught by teachers from other cultures. Moreover, many of these students are taught in schools that are based on different cultural systems (British, American, IB, etc.). Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) is a research-based approach to teaching that honors students' cultures, languages, and experiences by incorporating them into the landscape of the school (Tanase, 2020). The implementation of CRT can result in increased motivation, engagement, and progress for all students (Tanase, 2020).

Research Question

- What culturally responsive strategies might be useful in supporting educators of other cultures in teaching Arab students?

Research

Research Action



Analysis

The analysis of the interview data resulted in several common themes including:

- caring relationships
- culturally appropriate communication
- culturally relevant curriculum
- strategic selection of instructional practices

"Sometimes the students bring the most valuable insights as to how they want to be taught, how they need to be taught, what they need to learn." - Teacher A

Methodology

A multiple case study method was used to complete this research. The sample consisted of two "western" teachers working at private American curriculum schools in the UAE with significant Arab student populations. Each teacher participated in a semi-structured in-person interview. The interviews were reviewed to find common themes across the case studies.

Results

- Focus on building relationships with students and ensuring that students know you care
- Work to understand local customs, traditions, and ways of communicating
- Use visuals in the classroom
- Use curricular resources beyond the [American-centric] texts which students may be able to better relate or may be more culturally appropriate
- Involve families in representing their cultures in the classroom (i.e. read-alouds, role play space, cultural talks, etc.)
- Provide opportunities for group work

Conclusion

Discussion

While this study is a good start to identifying CRT strategies to support Arab students, it is only the first step in a process. Some ways to continue the learning journey include:

- Expanding the study to include more teachers, as well as adding student and parent perspectives
- Focusing in on individual areas from the results, identifying specific strategies to implement, and testing for their effectiveness

Reflections

The research process has left me with more questions and a desire to keep moving forward with the study. Although I did not reach the implementation phase, there are some key results for educators to consider. I look forward to getting the chance to refine, extend, and study some of these findings.

References

Tanase, M. (2020). Is good teaching culturally responsive? *Journal of Pedagogical Research*, 4(3), 187–202.