



**CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY AND STUDENTS
ENGAGEMENT IN TEACHER TRAINING COLLEGES WITHIN THE
BAMENDA MUNICIPALITY**

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ABSTRACT

This study examined Culturally Responsive Pedagogy and Student Engagement in Teacher Training Colleges in Bamenda Municipality. Specifically, the study sought to investigate the extent to which culturally responsive pedagogical practices influence student engagement within teacher training institutions. To achieve this purpose, two specific research objectives were formulated and corresponding hypotheses were established to guide the investigation.

The study adopted a concurrent nested mixed-method research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative research paradigms to provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. From the target population, a sample of 200 student teachers and teacher educators from teacher training colleges was selected through the simple random sampling technique, constituting the accessible population of the study. Data were collected using two principal research instruments: a structured four-point Likert-scale questionnaire for the collection of quantitative data and a semi-structured interview guide designed to elicit qualitative data from teacher educators. Data analysis was carried out using a methodological triangulation approach to enhance the validity and robustness of the findings. Quantitative data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques, whereas qualitative data were subjected to thematic content analysis. Inferential analysis was performed using regression analysis to test the formulated hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. The reliability of the research instruments was established using the Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient, with values ranging from 0.70 to 0.844, demonstrating satisfactory levels of internal consistency and instrument reliability.

The findings of the study revealed that dimensions of culturally responsive pedagogy, including the use of learners' mother tongue, communal teaching and learning activities, exert a statistically significant influence on student engagement. These findings underscore the critical role of culturally responsive practices in fostering meaningful student

KEYWORDS

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, Students Engagement, Teacher Training Colleges.

participation and enhancing learning experiences within teacher education contexts.

Based on these findings, several recommendations were advanced. First, educational institutions and relevant stakeholders should establish continuous professional development opportunities aimed at strengthening teachers' cultural awareness, sensitivity, and competence to effectively address the cultural diversity of learners within classroom environments. Second, learner-centered instructional approaches, such as collaborative group discussions, problem-solving activities, experiential learning, and hands-on instructional strategies, should be systematically integrated into classroom practice to promote active participation, critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative competencies among learners. Furthermore, teacher educators should intentionally adopt culturally relevant pedagogical approaches that incorporate instructional materials, experiences, and strategies reflective of learners' diverse cultural backgrounds, with the objective of fostering inclusiveness, improving student engagement, and enhancing overall educational outcomes.

This study contributes to the growing body of literature on culturally responsive pedagogy by providing empirical evidence on its significance in promoting student engagement within teacher education institutions and emphasizing the need for pedagogical practices that are responsive to the sociocultural realities of learners.

INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly interconnected and globalized world, educational institutions have evolved into dynamic and multifaceted environments characterized by a complex interplay of cultures, languages, belief systems, and diverse lived experiences. Contemporary classrooms increasingly represent intricate mosaics of identities and perspectives that profoundly influence teaching and learning processes. While such diversity presents unparalleled opportunities for enriched educational experiences and broader intellectual engagement, it simultaneously introduces substantial pedagogical challenges for educators who are expected to cultivate inclusive learning environments that recognize, affirm, and effectively respond to the distinctive cultural backgrounds and experiences of all learners. Within this rapidly evolving educational landscape, culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) has emerged as a transformative instructional paradigm designed to promote meaningful student engagement through the deliberate integration of learners' cultural experiences and identities into the educational process.

As educational institutions continue to witness unprecedented levels of demographic and cultural diversification, the necessity for pedagogical approaches capable of effectively addressing the educational needs of all learners has become increasingly imperative. Consequently, understanding the influence of culturally responsive pedagogy on student engagement within teacher training colleges has become a matter of considerable academic significance, particularly in relation to preparing future educators to function effectively within multicultural and increasingly diverse educational contexts. This study therefore seeks to examine the extent to which culturally responsive pedagogy enhances student engagement while simultaneously contributing to the development of

culturally competent educators equipped with the requisite knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for addressing the complexities of contemporary educational environments.

Culturally responsive pedagogy is fundamentally grounded in the premise that learners' cultural identities and experiences exert substantial influence over their educational interactions, perceptions, and overall learning trajectories. According to Gloria Ladson-Billings (2021), culturally responsive pedagogy emphasizes the recognition, validation, and purposeful utilization of students' cultural backgrounds as valuable educational assets capable of facilitating meaningful and authentic learning experiences. This pedagogical orientation establishes conditions that enable learners to perceive themselves as valued participants within the educational process, thereby enhancing intrinsic motivation, promoting active participation, and improving overall academic achievement.

The significance of culturally responsive pedagogy in fostering student engagement remains profoundly important, particularly among learners from historically marginalized and underrepresented communities who frequently experience varying degrees of disconnection within conventional educational frameworks. According to Sharroky Hollie (2021), culturally responsive instructional approaches play a pivotal role in bridging the disconnect between learners' sociocultural realities and formal educational expectations, thereby strengthening students' sense of belonging, identity affirmation, and perceived educational relevance.

Empirical scholarship further underscores the transformative capacity of culturally responsive pedagogy within teacher education programs. For instance, Matthews et al. (2023) observed that teacher candidates who were exposed to culturally responsive instructional methodologies demonstrated significantly higher levels of instructional self-efficacy, professional confidence, and preparedness in engaging with diverse student populations. Correspondingly, Johnson and Smith (2022) asserted that culturally responsive pedagogy transcends the mere enhancement of cultural awareness by equipping prospective educators with practical competencies and pedagogical proficiencies essential for creating engaging, equitable, and inclusive learning environments. Consequently, the integration of culturally responsive pedagogy within teacher education curricula serves as a strategic mechanism for cultivating educators who possess not only cultural competence but also the instructional capabilities necessary for effective educational practice.

Furthermore, the incorporation of culturally responsive pedagogy within teacher preparation programs aligns fundamentally with contemporary educational policies and professional standards that prioritize principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, and social justice. The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE, 2021) emphasizes the imperative of preparing educators who possess the capacity to teach effectively within culturally and linguistically diverse educational environments. Consequently, embedding culturally responsive pedagogical principles within teacher education curricula not only satisfies institutional and professional expectations but also contributes significantly toward developing educators capable of addressing the diverse educational needs of learners while simultaneously promoting enhanced student engagement and improved academic outcomes.

Continuous professional development (CPD) equally constitutes a critical dimension in advancing culturally responsive teaching practices among educators. According to Linda Darling-Hammond (2020), sustained professional development initiatives centered on culturally responsive practices provide educators with continuous opportunities to refine instructional strategies, expand cultural understanding, and enhance pedagogical effectiveness. Supporting this perspective, Gordon Louis

(2022) reported that comprehensive and well-structured professional development initiatives substantially improve teachers' capacities to engage effectively with culturally diverse learners. Similarly, Desimone (2021) established that educators participating in sustained professional development programs focused on culturally responsive practices reported increased levels of student engagement accompanied by notable improvements in academic achievement.

Beyond its contribution to enhancing classroom participation and academic performance, culturally responsive pedagogy also serves as an important catalyst for developing learners' critical thinking capacities and social consciousness. Through encouraging students to critically examine cultural differences, societal realities, and existing systems of inequity, culturally responsive pedagogy facilitates the development of a deeper understanding of issues relating to social justice and human diversity. According to Christopher Emdin (2020), culturally responsive teaching encourages learners to engage in critical reflection concerning their identities and the broader sociopolitical structures that shape their experiences. Such critical consciousness constitutes an essential prerequisite for developing informed, socially responsible, and actively engaged citizens capable of contributing meaningfully to their communities and society at large.

Moreover, the role of teacher educators in modeling culturally responsive instructional practices remains indispensable within the teacher preparation process. As prospective educators observe, experience, and engage with culturally responsive pedagogical approaches throughout their training programs, they become increasingly inclined to internalize and subsequently implement such practices within their own professional contexts. This modeling process generates a multiplicative effect extending beyond teacher training institutions into primary and secondary educational settings. Consequently, teacher education programs that prioritize culturally responsive pedagogy contribute not only to the professional development of future educators but also to the broader transformation of educational systems through the advancement of inclusive, equitable, and culturally sustaining learning environments capable of positively influencing future generations of learners.

Background

The historical foundations of culturally responsive pedagogy can be traced to the broader sociopolitical transformations associated with the civil rights movements of the 1960s and 1970s, which brought significant attention to persistent systemic inequities within educational systems. During this period, scholars and educational reformers increasingly challenged traditional educational structures that marginalized learners from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Among the most influential contributors to this discourse was Gloria Ladson-Billings, whose scholarship played a pivotal role in articulating the necessity for educational approaches capable of affirming and building upon the cultural identities and experiences of learners. Ladson-Billings (1994) emphasized that educators must develop a profound understanding and appreciation of students' cultural backgrounds as an essential mechanism for enhancing academic achievement and educational success. Her work established a conceptual foundation for culturally responsive pedagogy as an instructional framework concerned not only with improving academic performance but also with promoting cultural competence and educational equity.

During the 1980s and 1990s, the concept of multicultural education gained substantial prominence within educational discourse, emphasizing the importance of incorporating diverse perspectives and experiences into curricula and instructional practices. Educational scholars increasingly recognized that traditional educational models frequently reflected dominant cultural narratives while

marginalizing alternative viewpoints and experiences. Among the leading contributors to this scholarly movement was James A. Banks, whose contributions significantly advanced discussions concerning educational diversity and inclusion. Banks (1993) proposed a comprehensive framework of multicultural education encompassing content integration, knowledge construction, prejudice reduction, and equity pedagogy. These foundational elements subsequently informed the principles of culturally responsive pedagogy by reinforcing the notion that educational processes should reflect and respond effectively to learners' sociocultural realities.

The concept of culturally responsive pedagogy gained increasing prominence within educational literature during the late 1990s and early twenty-first century. During this period, scholars increasingly emphasized the significance of integrating students' cultural experiences and identities into instructional practices as a means of improving educational outcomes. Among the prominent contributors to this evolving body of scholarship was Geneva Gay, who substantially contributed to the conceptual development of culturally responsive teaching practices. In her influential work, *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice*, Gay (2000) argued that culturally responsive teaching extends beyond improving academic performance by simultaneously fostering learners' sense of belonging, identity affirmation, and personal relevance within educational contexts.

As culturally responsive pedagogy continued to gain scholarly recognition, it became increasingly associated with broader theoretical perspectives, particularly constructivist and critical pedagogical theories. Constructivist theorists such as Lev Vygotsky emphasized the centrality of social interaction and cultural context within learning processes, proposing that knowledge construction occurs through experiences that are meaningful and socially situated (Vygotsky, 1978). Similarly, Paulo Freire advanced principles of critical pedagogy by emphasizing the necessity of empowering marginalized populations and challenging oppressive societal structures through education (Freire, 1970). Collectively, these theoretical perspectives provided a robust intellectual foundation for culturally responsive pedagogy, reinforcing its emphasis on student engagement, empowerment, and social justice.

In recent years, the implementation of culturally responsive pedagogy has assumed increasing relevance within teacher training institutions. As educational environments become progressively diverse, future educators must be equipped with the pedagogical competencies and knowledge necessary for effectively engaging learners from diverse sociocultural backgrounds. Consequently, teacher preparation programs have increasingly recognized the importance of integrating culturally responsive pedagogy within their curricula to prepare educators capable of addressing the educational needs of all learners. This emerging paradigm reflects the understanding that culturally responsive teaching should not be perceived merely as a supplementary instructional strategy but rather as an indispensable component of effective pedagogical practice (Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

Empirical evidence has consistently demonstrated that culturally responsive pedagogy contributes significantly to enhanced student engagement and academic performance. Ladson-Billings (2014) indicated that when educators incorporate culturally relevant instructional materials and pedagogical strategies into classroom practices, learners are more likely to perceive themselves as valued participants within the educational process, thereby strengthening motivation and academic commitment. Furthermore, culturally responsive pedagogy facilitates the establishment of positive

and meaningful relationships between educators and students, which remain fundamental in creating supportive and effective learning environments.

Conversely, toward the latter part of the twentieth century, student engagement emerged as a critical construct within educational scholarship and practice. The increasing scholarly attention devoted to student engagement can be attributed largely to educational reforms emphasizing active learner participation as an essential component of effective teaching and learning processes. Paris (2004) conceptualized student engagement as a multidimensional construct encompassing behavioral, emotional, and cognitive dimensions. This conceptualization broadened traditional understandings of educational participation by highlighting not only students' involvement in academic activities but also their emotional investment and cognitive commitment to learning experiences.

As educational systems increasingly recognized the significance of student engagement in promoting academic success, it became evident that fostering engagement represented an essential strategy for improving educational outcomes, particularly within diverse classroom environments. The historical origins of student engagement can be linked to earlier educational theories emphasizing motivation and active learning processes. In the early twentieth century, John Dewey introduced foundational principles of experiential education by advocating for learning environments that encourage active student participation (Dewey, 1938). Dewey argued that learners achieve more meaningful educational outcomes when engaged in activities closely connected to their interests, experiences, and realities. His progressive educational philosophy challenged traditional approaches centered on rote memorization and advocated instead for interactive and participatory learning experiences.

As educational scholarship continued to evolve throughout the twentieth century, researchers increasingly examined the relationship between student engagement and academic achievement. The National Research Council (2004) published findings emphasizing that students who demonstrate higher levels of engagement are more likely to achieve stronger academic performance and exhibit positive educational behaviors. This perspective reinforced the argument that engagement should not be regarded merely as a consequence of effective teaching but rather as a fundamental component of the educational process itself.

During the late 1990s and early 2000s, empirical scholarship further refined the conceptualization of student engagement. Fredricks et al. (2004) categorized student engagement into behavioral, emotional, and cognitive dimensions. Behavioral engagement refers to learners' participation in academic activities, including attendance and task completion; emotional engagement encompasses students' feelings of belonging and interest within educational settings; while cognitive engagement involves the investment of mental effort and intellectual commitment toward learning tasks. This multidimensional framework provided educators with a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms through which engagement can be fostered across educational contexts.

The emergence and increasing prominence of culturally responsive pedagogy during this period further enriched scholarly discussions concerning student engagement, particularly within teacher training institutions. According to Ladson-Billings (2014), culturally responsive pedagogy emphasizes the recognition and affirmation of students' cultural identities and experiences within the learning process. As teacher preparation programs increasingly integrated culturally responsive principles into their curricula, educators recognized that culturally relevant instructional practices could substantially enhance student engagement. By establishing meaningful connections between educational experiences and learners' sociocultural realities, educators could foster stronger senses

of belonging, relevance, and motivation, thereby encouraging active participation in learning processes.

Similarly, Gay (2000) argued that incorporating learners' cultural references into instructional practices not only validates their identities but also creates educational environments conducive to meaningful participation and engagement. This convergence between culturally responsive pedagogy and student engagement underscores the necessity of preparing future educators to implement culturally responsive practices capable of resonating effectively with diverse student populations.

Consequently, teacher preparation programs have increasingly acknowledged the importance of equipping future educators with pedagogical strategies and competencies necessary for fostering meaningful engagement among diverse learners. Such efforts represent an essential step toward creating inclusive educational environments capable of promoting equitable educational opportunities and improved academic outcomes for all students

The Use of Mother Tongue and Students Engagement

The use of mother tongue in education has attracted considerable scholarly attention in recent years, particularly within the discourse on culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) and student engagement. Mother tongue, commonly understood as the first language acquired by learners, occupies a central position in shaping identity formation, cognitive development, social interaction, and educational attainment. Contemporary educational scholarship increasingly recognizes language not merely as a medium of communication but as a powerful sociocultural resource that influences how learners construct knowledge and engage in educational experiences. Several scholars have examined the pedagogical implications of integrating students' mother tongues into classroom instruction, emphasizing its significance in fostering inclusive, equitable, and participatory learning environments.

According to Gay (2020), culturally responsive pedagogy advocates for the recognition and incorporation of students' cultural backgrounds and lived experiences into instructional practices. This perspective strongly aligns with the use of mother tongue instruction because it validates learners' identities and nurtures a stronger sense of belonging within educational settings. Integrating students' first languages into the teaching-learning process creates an inclusive educational environment that acknowledges and respects linguistic diversity. Culturally responsive teaching extends beyond superficial acknowledgment of cultural differences; rather, it requires educators to understand learners' sociocultural realities and strategically employ such knowledge to enhance instructional effectiveness. The incorporation of mother tongue in classroom instruction serves not only as a means of affirming students' cultural identities but also as an avenue for increasing motivation, participation, and engagement in learning activities.

Empirical evidence suggests that the use of mother tongue in educational contexts contributes significantly to improved academic outcomes. Cummins (2021) argues that when learners are permitted to utilize their native languages within educational environments, they develop a heightened sense of acceptance, inclusion, and emotional security. Such emotional connectedness constitutes a critical determinant of student engagement, as learners who perceive themselves as valued and understood are more likely to participate actively in classroom activities and exhibit sustained commitment to their educational pursuits. Furthermore, the use of mother tongue facilitates meaningful communication between teachers and learners, thereby strengthening pedagogical interactions and enhancing the quality of feedback processes.

The relationship between mother tongue instruction and culturally responsive pedagogy is further elaborated by Paris and Alim (2022) through the concept of culturally sustaining pedagogy. These scholars contend that educational systems should move beyond simply acknowledging students' cultural identities toward actively preserving and sustaining them, including their linguistic heritages. Incorporating learners' native languages into educational practices contributes to the creation of learning environments that celebrate linguistic plurality and encourage students to take pride in their cultural heritage. Such an approach is consistent with the principles of culturally responsive pedagogy, which emphasize the creation of supportive, affirming, and inclusive classroom contexts. Additionally, Mercer (2020) posits that collaborative learning environments that permit learners to utilize their mother tongues promote deeper conceptual understanding and facilitate the development of critical thinking skills. By encouraging students to engage in discussions using their first languages, educators can stimulate richer intellectual interactions and enhance higher-order cognitive processes. The use of a common linguistic medium among learners further promotes effective collaboration, strengthens peer relationships, and encourages active participation in group-based learning activities.

The integration of mother tongue into instructional practices also serves as an important mechanism for bridging the cultural divide between home and school environments. Learners from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds frequently experience challenges in connecting their home experiences with institutional educational expectations. The use of mother tongue instruction enables educators to establish meaningful connections between learners' lived experiences and classroom content, thereby making learning more relevant and contextually meaningful. Moll et al. (2021) emphasize that this approach enables educators to draw upon learners' cultural funds of knowledge, thereby enhancing both engagement and motivation.

Furthermore, García and Wei (2020) assert that supporting the use of both learners' mother tongues and additional languages promotes additive bilingualism rather than subtractive bilingualism. Additive bilingualism facilitates the acquisition of additional languages while preserving learners' linguistic and cultural identities. Such an approach strengthens students' confidence in their language abilities and contributes positively to increased participation and engagement across diverse linguistic contexts.

The effective implementation of mother tongue instruction within culturally responsive pedagogical frameworks depends significantly on the role of teachers. Educators must critically reflect upon their assumptions and potential biases concerning language use and linguistic diversity in educational settings. Milner (2021) emphasizes that teachers occupy a pivotal position in cultivating inclusive classroom environments in which all languages are recognized and valued as legitimate resources for learning. Consequently, professional development initiatives focused on culturally responsive teaching practices are essential for equipping educators with the competencies necessary to integrate mother tongue instruction effectively.

From a policy perspective, Skutnabb-Kangas (2022) argues that educational systems should acknowledge linguistic diversity as a valuable educational resource and provide the institutional support necessary for implementing mother tongue instruction across varying educational contexts. Policy frameworks that advocate multilingual education contribute substantially toward creating equitable and inclusive learning environments capable of addressing the needs of diverse learner populations.

Similarly, Bosma et al. (2023) define culturally responsive teaching as an educational approach that utilizes the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse learners to make educational encounters more meaningful and pedagogically effective. This approach emphasizes integrating learners' backgrounds into instructional processes to foster a sense of belonging and improve academic achievement. Mother tongue instruction constitutes a fundamental component of culturally responsive pedagogy because it enables learners to establish meaningful connections with their cultural identities while facilitating effective learning experiences.

Research consistently demonstrates that mother tongue education positively influences academic achievement, cognitive development, literacy acquisition, and social integration. Studies indicate that learners instructed in their first languages frequently demonstrate superior academic performance and higher levels of literacy and numeracy proficiency. The use of mother tongue also creates an atmosphere of psychological security, allowing learners to engage in educational activities with greater confidence and ease. Enabling learners to discuss, collaborate, and express ideas in their native languages strengthens social relationships and reinforces their sense of identity, which remains fundamental for cognitive and social development.

Moreover, mother tongue-based multilingual education has emerged as an increasingly important educational approach that utilizes learners' native languages as foundational tools for acquiring additional languages. This perspective recognizes the critical role of language in shaping learners' experiences and identities while simultaneously challenging traditional monolingual and monocultural educational paradigms. Consequently, integrating mother tongue into instructional practices has become an essential strategy for promoting educational equity, fostering student engagement, and enhancing overall learning outcomes within culturally diverse educational environments.

Communal Learning Activities and Students Engagement

The concept of communal learning activities has increasingly gained recognition within contemporary educational discourse, particularly in relation to culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) and student engagement. According to Gay (2018), communal learning activities may be conceptualized as collaborative educational experiences designed to encourage learners to work collectively, exchange knowledge, and construct understanding through shared interactions. This educational approach aligns closely with the principles of culturally responsive pedagogy, which emphasize recognizing, valuing, and integrating learners' cultural backgrounds and lived experiences into instructional processes. Culturally responsive pedagogy advocates the use of students' cultural references as essential components of learning experiences, and communal learning activities provide a practical avenue for achieving such educational objectives. Beyond merely acknowledging cultural diversity, these activities validate learners' identities while creating opportunities for meaningful interactions that strengthen both engagement and educational outcomes.

Communal learning activities have substantial potential to enhance student engagement by fostering a strong sense of community, belonging, and social connectedness within the classroom environment. Milth (2021) highlights the significance of developing educational environments that affirm learners' cultural identities and lived experiences. Collaborative learning structures create spaces where students can articulate their cultural perspectives and engage meaningfully with peers. Such validation of cultural identity represents a fundamental component of learner engagement and

motivation, as students are more likely to participate actively in educational activities when they perceive that their perspectives are respected, acknowledged, and valued.

Beyond fostering engagement, communal learning activities contribute significantly to the development of higher-order cognitive abilities, including critical thinking and problem-solving competencies. Collaborative educational tasks typically require learners to collectively analyze information, examine diverse viewpoints, negotiate meanings, and arrive at shared solutions. This process not only enhances cognitive engagement but also facilitates the development of essential interpersonal competencies such as effective communication, teamwork, negotiation, and conflict resolution skills. According to Emdin (2019), these competencies are indispensable for both academic achievement and success within broader societal contexts, thereby reinforcing the importance of communal learning as an integral element of culturally responsive educational frameworks.

Furthermore, Parisca (2022) suggests that communal learning activities can be intentionally designed to reflect and accommodate the cultural diversity present within educational environments. Educators can structure instructional activities and projects around culturally relevant themes and issues, enabling learners to critically examine their identities and experiences within broader curricular contexts. Such an approach not only strengthens student engagement but also promotes the development of critical consciousness by encouraging learners to reflect critically upon their sociocultural realities and the broader social structures influencing their experiences. This perspective aligns with the principles of culturally sustaining pedagogy, which emphasizes preserving and nurturing students' cultural identities while simultaneously preparing them to function effectively within increasingly diverse societies.

The significance of communal learning activities in promoting student engagement is further supported by the concept of funds of knowledge, which refers to the culturally grounded knowledge, experiences, and competencies that students acquire from their families and communities. Integrating communal learning activities that draw upon these existing knowledge systems enables educators to create educational experiences that are more authentic, meaningful, and contextually relevant for learners. When students recognize that their cultural experiences are valued and incorporated into classroom instruction, their levels of motivation and engagement are likely to increase substantially. The relationship between communal learning activities, culturally responsive pedagogy, and student engagement is also reinforced through the principles of social-emotional learning (SEL). Collaborative learning environments provide valuable opportunities for learners to develop critical social and emotional competencies, including empathy, communication, emotional regulation, and collaborative problem-solving skills. These competencies are fundamental for cultivating positive interpersonal relationships and establishing supportive learning environments that facilitate academic and personal growth.

According to Facione (2020), communal learning activities also serve as effective mechanisms for promoting critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. Through collaborative tasks and projects, learners are encouraged to analyze content critically, evaluate evidence, consider multiple perspectives, and synthesize diverse ideas to generate informed conclusions. Critical thinking encompasses processes of reflection, analysis, interpretation, and reasoned judgment, all of which are strengthened through collaborative educational experiences. Communal learning activities therefore provide rich contexts within which learners can engage collectively in these cognitive

processes, resulting in deeper conceptual understanding and improved knowledge retention. Such emphasis on critical inquiry aligns closely with the objectives of culturally responsive pedagogy, which seeks to empower learners as active and informed participants in their educational journeys. Moreover, research on student motivation further substantiates the effectiveness of communal learning activities in promoting engagement. Deci and Ryan (2020) argue that intrinsic motivation constitutes a critical determinant of student engagement and academic achievement. Collaborative learning experiences can strengthen intrinsic motivation by fostering learners' perceptions of autonomy, competence, and social relatedness. When students participate in meaningful collaborative activities, they often develop a stronger sense of ownership and personal investment in their learning processes. This sense of motivation is further strengthened when learners observe their cultural identities and experiences being authentically reflected within curricular content and instructional practices.

The role of educators in facilitating communal learning activities within culturally responsive frameworks is essential for ensuring their effectiveness. Teachers must intentionally design collaborative experiences that encourage meaningful participation while demonstrating sensitivity to the diverse cultural backgrounds represented within the classroom. Milner (2021) emphasizes that culturally responsive educators understand the importance of establishing strong relationships with learners and cultivating inclusive classroom environments characterized by mutual respect and openness. By creating classroom cultures that value diversity and encourage active participation, educators can maximize student engagement in communal learning experiences.

Similarly, Villegas and Lucas (2020) contend that teacher preparation programs should prioritize the development of culturally responsive teaching competencies that promote educational equity and inclusion. Equipping teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary to design and facilitate communal learning experiences can significantly enhance the capacity of educational institutions to foster learning environments that support both student engagement and academic achievement.

Empirical evidence from diverse educational contexts further demonstrates the effectiveness of communal learning activities in enhancing student engagement. Research conducted by Kahn et al. (2021) revealed that implementing collaborative group projects in culturally diverse classrooms resulted in increased student participation, motivation, and interpersonal connectedness. Students reported feeling more invested in their educational experiences and more connected to their peers when engaged in communal activities that allowed them to share and explore diverse cultural perspectives. These findings underscore the value of integrating communal learning activities into culturally responsive pedagogical frameworks as a means of strengthening student engagement.

Additionally, communal learning activities can function as important mechanisms for bridging home and school cultures. Moll et al. (2020) argue that utilizing students' funds of knowledge—particularly the cultural resources and experiences derived from their home environments—can substantially enrich instructional practices. Collaborative learning activities provide learners with opportunities to integrate their cultural experiences into classroom interactions while engaging with peers in meaningful ways. Such connections between home and school environments not only strengthen student engagement but also affirm learners' identities and validate their lived experiences within educational contexts.

Theoretical Framework

Cultural Pluralism Theory by Therese Tchombe (1999)

Cultural pluralism theory, as articulated by Therese Tchombe, provides a foundational framework for understanding the complexities of cultural diversity within educational settings. This theory posits that multiple cultural identities should coexist and be recognized within society, particularly in educational contexts. The relevance of Tchombe's cultural pluralism theory to the research study on culturally responsive pedagogy and student engagement is profound, as it highlights the importance of acknowledging and valuing diverse cultural backgrounds in fostering an inclusive and engaging learning environment. Culturally responsive pedagogy is an educational approach that seeks to recognize and incorporate students' cultural backgrounds into the teaching and learning process. Tchombe (2021) asserts that culturally responsive pedagogy aligns closely with the principles of cultural pluralism, as both frameworks emphasize the importance of diversity as a strength rather than a challenge. In this regard, culturally responsive pedagogy serves as a practical application of cultural pluralism within educational settings, aiming to create equitable learning opportunities for all students. By integrating the principles of cultural pluralism into pedagogical practices, educators can enhance student engagement by making learning more relevant and relatable to students from diverse backgrounds. The significance of cultural pluralism in education is particularly evident in multicultural contexts where students come from various ethnic, linguistic, and socio-economic backgrounds. Tchombe (2022) argues that embracing cultural pluralism allows educators to create a more inclusive environment that validates the identities of all students. In teacher training programs, particularly those in regions like Bamenda Municipality, where cultural diversity is prominent, it is essential to prepare future educators to implement culturally responsive teaching practices that reflect the diverse experiences of their students. This preparation involves recognizing the unique needs of students from different cultural backgrounds and developing pedagogical strategies that resonate with their lived experiences. A key aspect of culturally responsive pedagogy is its emphasis on building strong relationships between educators and students. Tchombe (2023) highlights that positive teacher-student relationships are foundational for fostering engagement and motivation in diverse classrooms. In culturally pluralistic environments, where students may feel marginalized or disconnected from the curriculum, establishing trust and rapport becomes paramount. Teacher training programs must emphasize the importance of relational pedagogy, equipping future educators with the skills to cultivate meaningful connections with their students. By prioritizing relationship-building, educators can create a supportive atmosphere that encourages active participation and engagement among all learners. Tchombe's cultural pluralism theory underscores the necessity of critical self-reflection among educators regarding their own cultural biases and assumptions. This self-awareness is crucial for future teachers, as it enables them to recognize how their own backgrounds may influence their teaching practices (Tchombe, 2024).

In multicultural settings like Bamenda Municipality, where cultural diversity is prominent, it is imperative that teacher training programs emphasize the importance of critical consciousness among future educators. By fostering an awareness of systemic inequalities and cultural biases, teacher training colleges can equip their students with the tools necessary to create inclusive classrooms that promote equity and social justice. Culturally responsive pedagogy also emphasizes collaborative learning as a means of promoting student engagement. Tchombe (2025) asserts that cooperative learning experiences allow students to share their diverse perspectives and learn from one another.

In teacher training colleges in Bamenda municipality, incorporating group projects, discussions, and peer teaching opportunities can foster a sense of community among students while enhancing their understanding of different cultural viewpoints. Collaborative learning not only enriches the educational experience but also prepares future educators to implement similar strategies in their own classrooms, thereby promoting engagement among their future students. Tchombe's emphasis on dialogue and communication as fundamental components of cultural pluralism aligns with the goals of culturally responsive pedagogy. Effective communication between educators and students is vital for understanding individual needs and fostering an inclusive classroom environment (Tchombe, 2023). In municipality where linguistic diversity may pose challenges, teacher training programs should prioritize strategies for effective communication that respect and honor the linguistic backgrounds of students. By equipping future educators with skills to navigate language barriers and promote inclusive dialogue, these programs can enhance student engagement and create a more equitable learning environment.

The integration of cultural pluralism into teacher training programs has broader implications for educational policy and practice. By advocating for culturally responsive pedagogy grounded in the principles of cultural pluralism, teacher training colleges can influence systemic change within the educational landscape (Tchombe, 2020). As future educators graduate with a strong understanding of cultural diversity and its significance in education, they can become advocates for inclusive practices within their schools and communities. This advocacy is essential for addressing issues of equity and social justice in education, particularly in contexts where marginalized voices may be overlooked. Research has demonstrated that culturally responsive teaching practices lead to improved academic outcomes and increased student engagement (Hollie, 2021; Milner, 2022). In Bamenda Municipality, where students may face challenges related to cultural disconnection or marginalization, the implementation of culturally responsive pedagogy informed by cultural pluralism can help bridge these gaps. By creating a curriculum that reflects the diverse experiences of students, teacher training colleges can foster a sense of belonging and encourage active participation in the learning process. In addition to enhancing student engagement, the integration of cultural pluralism into teacher training programs can have lasting effects on educational outcomes. Tchombe (2021) emphasizes that teachers who understand and appreciate cultural diversity are better equipped to address the unique needs of their students. This understanding not only enhances student engagement but also contributes to improved academic performance and social-emotional development. As such, teacher training programs must prioritize culturally responsive pedagogy as a core component of their curricula.

The Theory of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy by Gloria Ladson-Billings (1994)

Ladson-Billings (1994) posits that culturally responsive pedagogy is rooted in three main components: academic success, cultural competence, and critical consciousness. These elements are essential for fostering an educational environment where all students feel valued and capable of succeeding academically. In the Bamenda Municipality, where students come from various ethnic backgrounds, the implementation of culturally responsive pedagogy can help bridge cultural gaps and promote a sense of belonging among learners. By recognizing and validating the cultural identities of students, teacher training colleges can cultivate a more engaging and supportive educational atmosphere. The concept of academic success within culturally responsive pedagogy

emphasizes high expectations for all students. Ladson-Billings argues that educators must not only acknowledge the cultural backgrounds of their students but also challenge them to achieve their fullest potential (Ladson-Billings, 2021). In the context of teacher training colleges in the Bamenda municipality, this means that educators must develop curricula that reflect the diverse cultural experiences of their students while maintaining rigorous academic standards. Such an approach not only enhances student engagement but also prepares future teachers to implement similar strategies in their own classrooms. Cultural competence, the second component of culturally responsive pedagogy refers to the ability of educators to understand and appreciate the cultural backgrounds of their students. This understanding allows teachers to create lessons that resonate with students on a personal level, thereby increasing engagement. In the Bamenda municipality, where cultural diversity is prevalent, teacher training programs must prioritize cultural competence as a core component of their curriculum. By equipping future educators with the skills necessary to navigate and celebrate cultural differences, these programs can foster an inclusive environment that encourages active participation from all students. Critical consciousness, the third element of the framework, involves teaching students to recognize and challenge societal inequalities. This aspect of culturally responsive pedagogy is particularly relevant in the context of Bamenda municipality, where issues of social justice and equity are central to the educational experience. By encouraging future educators to engage critically with their own cultural identities and those of their students, teacher training colleges can promote a deeper understanding of the systemic barriers that affect marginalized communities (Ladson-Billings, 2020). This critical perspective not only enhances student engagement but also empowers future teachers to advocate for social change within their classrooms and communities. Culturally responsive teaching practices can lead to increased student engagement and improved academic outcomes (Gay, 2020; Villegas Lucas, 2021). In the context of teacher training colleges in Bamenda municipality, implementing culturally responsive pedagogy can help address issues of disengagement that may arise from a lack of cultural relevance in the curriculum. By incorporating culturally relevant materials and teaching strategies, educators can capture the interest of their students and foster a sense of ownership over their learning experiences.

Statement of the Problem

Culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) has gained recognition as an effective educational approach that acknowledges and incorporates students' cultural backgrounds into the learning process. This pedagogical framework offers several benefits, including increased student engagement, improved academic achievement, and enhanced self-esteem among learners. By recognizing and valuing the diverse cultural identities of students, culturally responsive pedagogy fosters an inclusive learning environment that encourages active participation and promotes critical thinking.

In the context of teacher training colleges in the Bamenda municipality, the implementation of culturally responsive pedagogy is crucial for preparing future educators to effectively engage with a diverse student population. However, there is a significant gap in understanding how culturally responsive pedagogy is currently being utilized in these institutions and its impact on student engagement. Despite the recognized benefits of culturally responsive pedagogy, many teacher training colleges may still rely on traditional pedagogical approaches that do not adequately address the cultural needs of students. This can lead to a lack of engagement among teacher trainees, who may feel disconnected from the curriculum and less motivated to participate in their learning.

Furthermore, without a strong emphasis on culturally responsive practices, future teachers may enter the workforce unprepared to meet the needs of their diverse student populations.

The problem, therefore, lies in the inadequate integration of culturally responsive pedagogy within teacher training programs in Bamenda Municipality. This inadequacy may hinder student engagement, resulting in lower levels of participation, motivation, and overall academic success. Consequently, it is essential to investigate how culturally responsive pedagogy can be effectively implemented in these colleges to enhance student engagement and better prepare future educators for their roles in diverse classrooms.

Objectives of the study

Main Research Objective

To investigate the effects of culturally responsive pedagogy on student engagement in teacher training colleges in Bamenda municipality

Specific Objectives

- To examine the effects of the use of mother tongue on student engagement in teacher training colleges in Bamenda municipality.
- To investigate the effects of communal learning activities on student engagement in teacher training colleges in Bamenda municipality

Research Questions:

To facilitate the process of data collection and formation of hypothesis, the following questions were asked by the researcher.

Main Research Question

What are the effects of culturally responsive pedagogy on student's engagement in teacher training colleges in Bamenda municipality?

Specific Research Questions

- What are the effects of the use of mother tongue on student engagement in teacher training colleges in Bamenda municipality?
- What are the effect of communal learning activities on student engagement in teacher training colleges in Bamenda municipality?

Research Hypothesis

Main Research Hypotheses

H₀: Culturally responsive pedagogy has no significant effect on student engagement in teacher training colleges in Bamenda municipality.

H_a: Culturally responsive pedagogy has a significant effect on student engagement in teacher training colleges in Bamenda municipality.

Specific Research Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant effect on the use of mother tongue on student engagement.

H_{a1}: There is a significant effect of the use of mother tongue on student engagement.

H₀₂: Communal learning activities have no significant effect on student engagement.

H_{a2}: Communal learning activities have a significant effect on student engagement.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The concurrent nested mixed research design was used in this study. The study combined both qualitative and quantitative research paradigms. To begin with, in order to collect quantitative data, the descriptive survey design with the aid of structured questionnaires was used to gather data from the participants of this study. This study made use of the descriptive survey design because it required a representative of the sample or entire group from which numeric descriptions were collected and analysed and further used to generalize culturally responsive pedagogy

Qualitative data was collected using the phenomenological approach with the aid of an interview guide made up of open ended questions. This approach explores the essence of human experience and understanding the meaning they attribute to those experiences. This model recognizes that there is no single objective reality instead, that everyone experiences things differently. Also, phenomenology helps the researcher to deeply understand individual experiences by examining how participants interpret and make sense of those experiences within unique contexts. Such qualitative data was used to bolster the quantitative data that was obtained from the questionnaires. To this respect the study was triangulated in many different ways.

Area of the Study

The study was carried out in Bamenda municipality of Mezam Division of the North West Region of Cameroon.

Population of the Study

The population for this study included all student teachers and teachers in teacher training colleges located within the Bamenda Municipality. This population was chosen due to their direct involvement in teaching and learning practices, making them relevant to the study’s objectives with respect to this, over 327 participants made up the target population.

Table 1: Distribution of target population

S/N	Name of school	No of teachers	No of students
1	GBTTC Bamenda	51	90
2	Calasaz Teacher training college Menteh	10	24
3	St Andreus Bilingual teacher training college Bamenda	5	30
4	Senti Bamenda	10	46
5	Star Bilingual TTC Bamenda	4	10
	Total	80	200

Source: Researcher’s field survey (2026)

Accessible Population

The accessible population of this study comprised of 200 respondents selected from teacher training colleges in the Bamenda Municipality

Table 2: distribution of accessible population

S/N	Name of school	No of teachers	No of students
1	GBTTC Bamenda	5	90
2	Calasaz Teacher training college Menteh	5	26
3	St Andreus Bilingual teacher training college Bamenda	4	28
4	Senti Bamenda	3	24
5	Star Bilingual TTC Bamenda	3	12
	Total	20	180

Source: field work (2025)

Sample Size

The sample size for this study was made up of 180 Students teachers and 20 teachers of teacher training colleges in Bamenda Municipality.

Sampling Techniques

This study made use of the convenient sampling techniques to choose the area to work with that was Bamenda Municipality. The researcher found this technique appropriate because Bamenda was the safest place in the Region. The simple random sampling technique was used to select participants from the various schools such that each of them had equal and independent chance of being selected. The resulting samples were therefore unbiased and represented the entire population. The Snowball sampling technique was employed to identify teachers through referrals.

Instrument for data collection

For the quantitative data, the researcher used a 4 point Likert Scale questionnaire to collect data. Structured questionnaire was used for student teachers to measure perceptions of engagement and exposure to culturally responsive pedagogy.

Additionally, an unstructured interview Guide was used for lecturers to obtain detailed insights into their pedagogical practices and cultural considerations in the classroom. The researcher also had the opportunity to prop and prompt based on the indicators to get more information from the respondents.

Administration of the Instrument

The questionnaires were personally administered and supervised in the schools by the researcher, with the assistance of some teachers of the schools. Before administration, the researcher had to make direct visits to the schools to obtain authorization from the school authorities. The student teachers carried out the exercise by filling the questionnaires and returning them to the researcher immediately. The researcher explained some areas of the questionnaires which the respondents did not perfectly understand. Questionnaires were administered and collected to the end of the exercise in order to ensure that the right persons completed the questionnaires. Questionnaires were distributed and collected in person during scheduled classroom visits, while interviews were conducted with some teachers.

Method of Data Analysis

Quantitative data from the questionnaires was analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean, frequency, percentages) and inferential statistics (correlation and regression analysis) using SPSS version 20.0

Qualitative data obtained from the interviews guide was analyzed with the aid of a well demarcated phase labelled thematic content analysis and pre-coding, to identify common patterns and narratives related to culturally responsive teaching and student engagement. By the end of the coding exercise, a code list was derived that summarized the major ideas that came from the qualitative data. A code in this context is an umbrella term that summarizes the ideas for example a given idea could be expressed in different ways by different respondents and an umbrella code was then used to group them. This was done with the support of Atlas T. 5.2(Atlas T. GMBH 2006).

FINDINGS

Findings of this study are presented in line with the research questions under investigation

Research Question One: To examine the effects of the use of mother tongue on students engagement in teacher training colleges in the Bamenda Municipality

Table 3: The use of the mother tongue and students engagement in TTCs in the Bamenda Municipality

Items	Responses				Mean	STDEV
	SA	A	D	SD		
Using my mother tongue in class encourages me to participate more actively	30 (16.7%)	90 (50.0%)	36 (20.0%)	24 (13.3%)	2.7	0.8
Teaching with the mother tongue makes learning more interesting and engaging	18 (10.0%)	30 (16.7%)	102 (56.7%)	30 (16.7%)	2.2	0.8
New concepts are understood better when explained using the mother tongue.	0 (0.0%)	120 (66.7%)	30 (16.7%)	30 (16.7%)	3.3	0.7
The class becomes more-lively and interactive when the mother tongue is used alongside English language.	30 (16.7%)	30 (16.7%)	7 (40.0%)	48 (26.7%)	2.2	1.0
Using home language to teach builds a stronger foundation	30 (16.7%)	90 (50.0%)	36 (20.0%)	24 (13.3%)	2.7	0.8
Teachers should occasionally use local languages to clarify complex ideas	30 (16.7%)	54 (30.0%)	36 (20.0%)	60 (33.3%)	2.3	1.0
Use of the mother tongue in the classrooms negatively affects academic performance	30 (16.7%)	54 (30.0%)	30 (16.7%)	66 (36.7%)	1.7	1.1
Total average	24	66.85	39.57	40.28	2.53	0.88

The Table shows that 16.7% of the respondents strongly agreed that using their mother tongue in class encourages them to participate more actively 50.0% agreed, 20.0% disagreed while 13.3% strongly rejected the idea with the mean of 2.7 and the standard deviation of 0.8. Also, 10.0% of the respondents strongly agreed that Teaching with the mother tongue makes learning more interesting and engaging, 16.7% agreed, 56.7% disagreed while 16.7% strongly opposed the opinion

with the mean of 2.2 and the standard deviation of 0.8. Furthermore, 0% of the respondents strongly affirmed that New concepts are understood better when explained using the mother tongue, 66.7% agreed, 16.7% refuted, 16.7% strongly opposed the opinion with the mean of 3.3 and the standard deviation of 0.7. Meanwhile of 16.7% of the respondents strongly accepted that the class becomes more lively and interactive when the mother tongue is used alongside English language, 16.7% agreed, and 40.0% disagreed while 26.7% strongly rejected the idea with the mean of 2.2 and the standard deviation of 1.0. Meanwhile of 16.7% of the respondents strongly accepted that using home language to teach builds a stronger foundation, 50.0% agreed, and 20.0% disagreed while 13.3% strongly rejected the idea with the mean of 2.7 and the standard deviation of 0.8. Meanwhile of 16.7% of the respondents strongly accepted that Teachers should occasionally use local languages to clarify complex ideas, 30.0% agreed, and 20.0% disagreed while 33.3% strongly rejected the idea with the mean of 2.3 and the standard deviation of 1.0. To proceed, 16.7% of the respondents strongly agreed that Use of the mother tongue in the classrooms negatively affects academic performance, 30.0% agreed, 16.7% disagreed while 36.7% strongly disagreed to the fact with the mean of 2.61 and the standard deviation of 0.83.

Verification of hypotheses one

H01: There is no significant effect on the use of mother tongue on students' engagement.

Table 4: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.814 ^a	.663	.652	13.803

The model summary table shows that a moderate positive relationship ($R = 0.814$) exists between: mother tongue and students' engagement. Furthermore, R-Square for the overall model is 0.663 with an adjusted R of .652.

Table 5: Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	3.365	2.924			1.151	.000
	mother tongue	.782	.102	.814		7.683	.000

The table for regression coefficients indicates that the regression equation is given by students' engagement = $3.365 + 0.782 \times \text{mother tongue}$. Thus, when there is mother tongue, the students' engagement is at 3.365 but when mother tongue increases by one-unit, students' engagement increases by 0.782. This increase is significant as indicated by the pvalue of 0.000.

Table 6: ANOVA for mother tongue

Model	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	11246.257	11246.257	59.028	.000 ^b
Residual	5715.743	190.525		
Total	16962.000			

The ANOVA table shows that F (59.028) with $p = 0.000$. This suggests that there is a significant effect of mother tongue on the students' engagement. Consequently, H_0 was rejected and H_{a1} up held it can therefore be concluded that mother tongue has a significant influence on students' engagement.

Table 7: Analysis of qualitative data on mother tongue

Questions	Categories	Themes	Code descriptions	Groundings	Quotations
How do you feel when you use your mother tongue in the teaching and learning process?	affirmative	mother tongue in the teaching and learning process	happiness and	all	“.....free and happier.....”
In what ways can the use of mother tongue affect classroom participation?	yes	classroom participation		majority	“.....it can foster effective teaching and learning.....”
What challenges or benefits have you noticed when the mother tongue is incorporated into teaching?	affirmative	challenges or benefits	or multiple mother tongue	Almost all	“.....multiple mother tongue in one class making it difficult and lessons flow easily for those that understand.....”
Can you describe how often the mother tongue is used during instruction in your college?	yes	using mother tongue	One period per week	minority	“.....one period per week.....”
Does learning in the mother tongue help the learners comprehend lessons better? Please explain	yes	learning in mother	in the yes	all	“.....yes. When their particular mother tongue is used.....”
Do you think the use of mother tongue supports learning	accepted	using mother tongue	it may not and it may	Almos all	“.....it may and it may not.....”
Would you like using your mother tongue in teaching?	agreed	using mother tongue	understanding mother	majority	“.....yes, if the learner understands my mother tongue.....”

Research Question Two: To investigate the effects of communal learning activities on student's engagement in teacher training colleges in Bamenda municipality

Table 8: Communal learning activities

Items	Responses				Mean	STDEV
	SA	A	D	SD		
Teaching my classmates a topic makes me more active in the learning process.	42 (23.3%)	30 (16.7%)	30 (16.7%)	18 (10.0%)	1.8	1.2
Peer teaching makes lessons more interesting and boosts my motivation to learn.	42 (23.3%)	30 (16.7%)	30 (16.7%)	18 (10.0%)	1.8	1.2
My retention of knowledge increases when I participate in peer teaching .	0 (0.0%)	120 (66.7%)	30 (16.7%)	30 (16.7%)	2.5	0.7
Connecting theory to practice in community projects helps me understand the material better	18 (10.0%)	96 (53.3%)	42 (23.3%)	24 (13.3%)	2.8	0.8
Group discussions help me to feel more enthusiastic about completing the course work	0 (0.0%)	30 (16.7%)	30 (16.7%)	120 (66.7%)	2.5	0.7
Communal learning helps me connect classroom theory to real life experience	0 (0.0%)	30 (16.7%)	24 (13.3%)	114 (63.3%)	1.5	0.7
Communal learning activities are not exposed in this institution	30 (16.7%)	60 (33.3%)	60 (33.3%)	30 (16.7%)	2.5	0.9
Total average	18.85	56.57	35.15	50.57	2.20	0.88

The Table shows that 23.3% of the respondents strongly accepted that teaching their classmates a topic makes them more active in the learning process ,16.7% agreed, 16.7% disagreed while 10.0% strongly rejected the idea with the mean of 1.8 and the standard deviation of 1.2, with a ranking .Also, 23.3% of the respondents strongly agreed that Peer teaching makes lessons more interesting and boosts their motivation to learn, 16.7% agreed, 16.7% disagreed while 10.0% strongly opposed the opinion with the mean of 1.8 and the standard deviation of 1.2.

Furthermore, 0% of the respondents strongly affirmed that their retention of knowledge increases when they participate in peer teaching, 66.7% agreed, 16.7% refuted, 16.7% strongly opposed the opinion with the mean of 2.5 and the standard deviation of 0.7. An overwhelming majority of 10.0% of the respondents strongly accepted that connecting theory to practice in community projects helps me understand the material better, 53.3% agreed, and 23.3% disagreed while 13.3% strongly rejected the idea with the mean of 2.8 and the standard deviation of 0.8. Also, 0.0 % of the respondents strongly agreed that Group discussions help them to feel more enthusiastic about completing the course work, 16.7% agreed, 16.7% disagreed while 66.7% strongly disagreed to the fact with the mean of 2.5 and the standard deviation of 0.7. Again, 0% of the respondents strongly agreed that

Communal learning helps them connect classroom theory to real life experience, 16.7% agreed, 13.3% disagreed while 63.3% strongly disagreed to the fact with the mean of 1.5 and the standard deviation of 0.7. Again, 16.7 % of the respondents strongly agreed , 33.3%agreed that Communal learning activities are not exposed in this institution, 33.3% disagreed while 16.7 % strongly disagreed to the fact with the mean of 2.5 and the standard deviation of 0.9.

Verification of hypotheses Two

Table 9: Ho2 for Communal learning activities have no significant effect on students’ engagement.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.754 ^a	.568	.554	15.628

The model summary table shows that a moderate positive relationship (R = 0.754) exists between: Communal learning activities and students’ engagement. Furthermore, R-Square for the overall model is 0.568 with an adjusted R of 0.554

Table 10: Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)		4.040	3.333		1.212	.235
1	Communal learning activities	.848	.135	.754	6.281	.000

The table for regression coefficients indicates that the regression equation is given by students’ engagement = 4.040+ 0.848 x Communal learning activities. Thus, when there is Communal learning activities, the students’ engagement is at 4.040 but when Communal learning activities increases by one-unit, students’ engagement increases by 0.848. This increase is significant as indicated by the p-value of 0.000.

Table 11: ANOVA for communal learning activities

Model		Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	9634.693	9634.693	39.447	.000 ^b
	Residual	7327.307	244.244		
	Total	16962.000			

The ANOVA table shows that $F(39.447)$ with $p = 0.000$. This suggests that there is a significant effect of Communal learning activities on the students' engagement. Consequently, H_02 was rejected and H_a2 up held. It can therefore be concluded that Communal learning activities has a significant influence on students' engagement.

Table 12: Analysis of qualitative data on Communal learning activities

Questions	Categories Themes		Code descriptions		Groundings
			Quotations		
Do you commonly use group or communal learning activities in your classes?	affirmative	communal learning activities	better understanding	majority	".....yes, For better understanding....."
How do such activities influence or motivate learners to learn and participate actively?	yes	Learning and participating actively	discovery learning	all	".....learn from peers and discovery learning....."
In your experience, how do communal learning methods affect collaboration among students?	affirmative	collaboration among students	community growth	majority	".....positively. It helps to build the sense of community growth....."
Can you share an experience where a communal learning activity helped your learner to better understand a concept?	yes	understanding concepts	project agro farming	Almost all	".....in the project agro farming, the methodology of planting plantains and trees in the community....."
What improvement, if any would you suggest for using communal learning in your institution?	yes	communal learning	encouragement	minority	".....excitement learning to curiosity which results to encouragement...."
Do you plan field trips, service learning or local community projects as part of your lessons	accepted	local community projects	better understanding	all	".....yes, I do for better understanding....."
What communal learning activities do you find most effective and interest?	agreed	communal learning	local community projects	Almos all	"..... local community project....."

	Response				Mean	STDEV
	SA	A	D	SD		
I feel more engaged when lessons are connected to my cultural background	42 (23.3%)	78 (43.3%)	24 (13.3%)	36 (20.0%)	2.7	1.0
Cultural inclusiveness in teaching improves my attention	42 (23.3%)	84 (46.7%)	18 (10.0%)	36 (20.0%)	2.6	1.0
Culturally diverse lessons encourages me to think critically and creativity	48 (26.7%)	78 (43.3%)	24 (13.3%)	30 (16.7%)	2.8	1.0
I feel motivated to contribute in class when my identity is valued	48 (26.7%)	84 (46.7%)	24 (13.3%)	24 (13.3%)	2.8	0.9
I feel excluded in classroom activities when my culture is not reflected	78 (43.3%)	36 (20.0%)	18 (10.0%)	48 (26.7%)	2.5	3.3
Culturally relevant teaching improves my participation and performance	42 (23.3%)	84 (46.7%)	18 (10.0%)	36 (20.0%)	2.7	1.0
Culturally responsive pedagogy can improve my classroom engagement	48 (26.7%)	78 (43.3%)	24 (13.3%)	30 (16.7%)	2.8	1.0
Average total	49.75	74.57	21.45	34.28	2.7	1.35

Table 13: Student Engagement To proceed, 23.3% of the respondents strongly agreed that they feel more engaged when lessons are connected to their cultural background , 43.3% agreed, 13.3% disagreed while 20.0% strongly disagreed to the fact with the mean of 2.7 and the standard deviation of 1.0. Moreover, 23.3% of the respondents strongly agreed that Cultural inclusiveness in teaching improves their attention 46.7% agreed, 10.0% disagreed while 20.0% strongly disagreed to the idea with the mean of 2.6 and the standard deviation of 1.0. Above all, 26.7% of the respondents strongly accepted that Culturally diverse lessons encourages them to think critically and creativity, 43.3% agreed, 13.3% disagreed while 16.7% strongly rejected the idea with the mean of 2.8 and the standard deviation of 1.0. Again, 26.7% of the respondents strongly accepted that they feel motivated to contribute in class when their identity is valued, 46.7% agreed, 13.3% refuted while 13.3% strongly rejected the idea with the mean of 2.8 and the standard deviation of 0.9.

Again, 43.3% of the respondents strongly accepted that they feel excluded in classroom activities when their culture is not reflected, 20.0% agreed, 10.0% refuted while 26.7% strongly rejected the idea with the mean of 2.5 and the standard deviation of 3.3. Moreover, 23.3% of the respondents strongly agreed that Culturally relevant teaching improves their participation and performance, 46.7 % agreed, 10.0% disagreed while 20.0% strongly disaffirmed to the idea with the mean of 2.7 and the standard deviation of 1.0 . Above all, 26.7% of the respondents strongly accepted that Culturally responsive pedagogy can improve their classroom engagement , 43.3 % agreed, 13.3% disagreed while 16.7% strongly rejected the idea with the mean of 2.8 and the standard deviation of 1.0.

Table 14: Analysis of qualitative data on Student Engagement

Questions	Categories	Themes	Code descriptions	Groundings	Quotations
In what specific ways can teaching be more culturally responsive	affirmative	teaching	introduction, objectives and instructional material	majority	“.....for example, introduction, objectives and instructional material.....”
Do some students feel excluded in classroom activities when their cultures are not reflected do you feel	yes	classroom activities	diversified cultures	all	“.....sometimes since we have diversified cultures it does.....”
Culturally responsive teaching improves student engagement	affirmative	Culturally responsive teaching	yes, it does	majority	“.....yes, it does.....”
What practices can most positively affect student engagement	yes	student engagement	local environment	Almost all	“.....practices that are tailored to their local environment and reflect their culture.....”
Do you students feel more motivated to contribute in class When their identities are valued	yes	motivation	yes	minority	“.....yes, they do.....”
How can culturally diverse lessons help the students	accepted	cultural diversity	cultural background	all	“.....it will meet many cultural background practices.....”
Does your school offer opportunities for students to discuss cultural issues in your classroom?	agreed	opportunities for students	agreed	Almos all	“.....yes, because it motivates learners to actively participate in class.....”

Table 16: Summary of findings

Research questions/ hypothesis	Descriptive statistics	Inferential statistics	Qualitative findings
Research questions one: How does mother tongue affect students' engagement? Hypothesis one: Ho: There is no significant effect on the use of mother tongue on students' engagement.	Majority of the respondents (average of 2.53) agreed with the terms that mother tongue affect students' engagement	Consequently, Ho ₁ was rejected while Ha up help. It can therefore be concluded that mother tongue affects students' engagement	Almost all of them grounded the idea meanwhile the quotation says yes. When their particular mother tongue is used
Research questions two: How do Communal learning activities have a significant effect on students' engagement? Hypothesis two: Ho2: Communal learning activities have no significant effect on students' engagement.	Majority of the respondents (average of 2.20) agreed with the terms that Communal learning activities have a significant effect on students' engagement	Consequently, Ho ₂ was rejected and Ha ₂ up held it can therefore be concluded that Communal learning activities have a significant effect on students' engagement	Almost all of them grounded the idea meanwhile the quotation says learn from peers and discovery learning

DISCUSSION

The discussion of findings is done under each research question whereby literature was used to support the findings.

The use of mother tongue and students' engagement in teacher training colleges in the Bamenda Municipality

The finding revealed that Majority of the respondents agreed with the terms that mother tongue affect students' engagement. Inferentially, Ho₁ was rejected while Ha up help. It can therefore be concluded that mother tongue affects students' engagement. Qualitatively, almost all of them grounded the idea meanwhile the quotation says yes. When their particular mother tongue is used, they understand better. These findings are in line with Cummins (2021) who opines that when students are allowed to use their mother tongue in the classroom, they experience a greater sense of belonging and acceptance. This emotional connection is crucial for fostering student engagement, as students who feel valued and understood are more likely to participate actively in their learning. Furthermore, the use of mother tongue can facilitate communication between teachers and students, allowing for more meaningful interactions and feedback. The relationship between mother tongue and culturally responsive pedagogy is further explored by Paris and Alim (2022), who advocate for culturally sustaining pedagogy. They argue that education should not only acknowledge but also sustain students' cultural identities, including their linguistic backgrounds. By incorporating the mother tongue into instruction, educators can create a learning environment that celebrates linguistic diversity and empowers students to take pride in their heritage. This approach aligns with the principles of culturally responsive pedagogy, which emphasize the importance of creating a supportive and inclusive classroom environment.

Mercer (2020), asserts that collaborative learning environments that utilize students' mother tongues can foster deeper understanding and critical thinking skills. By encouraging students to communicate in their first language, educators can facilitate richer discussions and promote higher-order thinking. The use of mother tongue can promote collaborative learning among students. When students share a common language, they are more likely to engage in group work and discussions, leading to enhanced social interactions and peer learning. Furthermore, the integration of mother tongue into

the curriculum can help bridge the gap between home and school cultures. Many students from diverse linguistic backgrounds may struggle to connect their home experiences with school expectations. By using the mother tongue in instruction, educators can create relevant connections that resonate with students' lived experiences.

Similarly Moll et al. (2021), point pined that this approach allows educators to tap into students' cultural funds of knowledge, which can enhance engagement and motivation. According to García and Wei (2020), when educators support the use of both the mother tongue and additional languages, they promote additive bilingualism rather than subtractive bilingualism. This approach allows students to maintain their linguistic heritage while developing proficiency in a second language. Consequently, students feel more confident in their language abilities, leading to increased engagement in both their mother tongue and additional languages. The role of teachers is critical in implementing mother tongue instruction effectively within culturally responsive pedagogical frameworks. Educators must be aware of their own biases and assumptions regarding language use in the classroom. According to Milner (2021), teachers play a pivotal role in creating an inclusive environment where all languages are valued.

Professional development opportunities focused on culturally responsive practices can equip teachers with the skills necessary to integrate mother tongue instruction effectively. According to Skutnabb-Kangas (2022), educational policies should recognize the importance of linguistic diversity and provide resources for implementing mother tongue instruction across various educational contexts. By advocating for policies that support multilingual education, educators can contribute to creating more inclusive and equitable learning environments for all students.

Again, Bosma et al. (2023) dfined culturally responsive teaching as cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant and effective. This approach involves incorporating students' backgrounds into the curriculum, fostering a sense of belonging and promoting academic achievement. The use of mother tongue is a crucial aspect of culturally responsive pedagogy, as it allows students to connect with their cultural identity and learn more effectively. Research has shown that mother tongue education can promote academic achievement, cognitive development, and social integration. For instance, studies have found that students who are taught in their mother tongue tend to perform better academically and have higher levels of literacy and numeracy. The use of mother tongue in education provides students with a sense of security, enabling them to learn with ease and comfort. When students are allowed to discuss and work in groups using their native language, they can relate and have a sense of identity, which is essential for their social and cognitive development. This approach also acknowledges the importance of language in shaping students' identities and experiences, challenging traditional monolingual and monocultural perspectives. Incorporating mother tongue into instruction can be particularly beneficial for students who may not be fluent in the dominant language of instruction. By using their native language, teachers can create more inclusive and effective learning environments that promote academic achievement and student engagement. Furthermore, research has highlighted the importance of mother tongue-based multilingual education, which involves using students' native languages as a foundation for learning additional languages.

Communal learning activities and students' engagement in teacher training colleges

The finding revealed that Majority of the respondents agreed with the terms that culturally relevant teaching/learning materials have a significant effect on students' engagement. Inferentially, H_{04} was rejected and H_{a4} up held. It can therefore be concluded that culturally relevant teaching/learning materials has a significant effect on students' engagement. Qualitatively, almost all grounded the idea meanwhile the quotation says they yes, because it motivates learners to actively participate in class. These findings are in line with Gay (2018) who says that the concept of communal learning activities can be understood as collaborative educational experiences that encourage students to work together, share knowledge, and learn from one another. This approach aligns closely with the principles of CRP, which advocate for recognizing and valuing students' cultural backgrounds and experiences. Culturally responsive pedagogy involves using students' cultural references in all aspects of learning, which can be effectively achieved through communal learning activities. These activities not only validate students' identities but also create opportunities for meaningful interactions that enhance engagement and learning outcomes. Communal learning activities can significantly improve student engagement by fostering a sense of community and belonging.

Milth (2021) highlights the importance of creating learning environments that affirm students' cultural identities and experiences. Communal learning activities provide a platform for students to express their cultural backgrounds and engage with their peers in meaningful ways. This validation of cultural identity is crucial for fostering student engagement and motivation, as students are more likely to participate actively when they feel that their voices are heard and valued. In addition to enhancing engagement, communal learning activities can also support the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Collaborative tasks often require students to work together to analyze information, discuss different viewpoints, and arrive at collective solutions. This process not only promotes cognitive engagement but also encourages students to develop essential skills such as communication, teamwork, and conflict resolution. According to Emdin (2019), these skills are vital for success in both academic and real-world contexts, making communal learning activities an essential component of a culturally responsive curriculum.

Parisca (2022) suggested that, the implementation of communal learning activities can be tailored to reflect the cultural diversity of the student body. Educators can design projects that incorporate culturally relevant themes and issues, allowing students to explore their identities and experiences in relation to the curriculum. This approach not only enhances engagement but also promotes critical consciousness, as students are encouraged to reflect on their cultural backgrounds and the broader social context in which they live. Culturally sustaining pedagogy involves actively supporting students' cultural identities while also preparing them for a diverse society. The impact of communal learning activities on student engagement is further supported by the concept of funds of knowledge, which refers to the cultural and experiential knowledge that students bring to the classroom from their families and communities. By incorporating communal learning activities that leverage these funds of knowledge, educators can create more meaningful and relevant learning experiences. The relationship between communal learning activities, culturally responsive pedagogy, and student engagement is further reinforced by the emphasis on social-emotional learning (SEL). Communal learning activities provide opportunities for students to develop social and emotional skills, such as empathy, communication, and collaboration. These skills are essential for fostering positive relationships among students and creating a supportive learning environment.

According to Facione (2020), communal learning activities can also promote critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. When students collaborate on tasks or projects, they are encouraged to think critically about the content and explore multiple viewpoints. Critical thinking involves analyzing information, evaluating evidence, and synthesizing ideas to make informed decisions. Communal learning activities provide a rich context for students to engage in these processes collaboratively, leading to deeper understanding and retention of knowledge. This emphasis on critical thinking aligns with the goals of CRP, which seeks to empower students as active participants in their own learning. Moreover, the effectiveness of communal learning activities in promoting engagement is supported by research on student motivation. According to Deci and Ryan (2020), intrinsic motivation plays a crucial role in student engagement and achievement. Communal learning activities can enhance intrinsic motivation by fostering a sense of autonomy and competence among students. When students collaborate on tasks that are meaningful to them, they are more likely to feel a sense of ownership over their learning. This intrinsic motivation is further amplified when students see their cultural identities reflected in the curriculum and classroom practices. Facilitating communal learning activities within CRP frameworks is critical for ensuring their success. Teachers must be intentional in designing activities that promote collaboration while also being sensitive to the diverse cultural backgrounds of their students. According to Milner (2021), culturally responsive teachers recognize the importance of building relationships with their students and creating an inclusive classroom environment. By establishing a culture of respect and openness, educators can encourage students to engage fully in communal learning experiences.

Conclusion

Diverse student needs in the classroom, as well as student demographics, continue to change. This presents a challenge for in-service teachers to meet the demand of all students in the classroom. Diverse students have different experiences culturally and academically, and their way of learning and perceiving the world should not count as a weakness, but rather as strength. It includes school-based elements like traditional classrooms that promote segregation, strong teacher bias on diversity as well as culturally diverse teacher training, and ethnic discrimination among teachers and students. Achievement gaps have a profound impact on students and their individual expectations of being accepted, understood, and valued by their teachers and peers.

Students might not feel comfortable at school or remain optimistic about their education if the level of uncertainty and anxiety intensifies for students. However, if educators interact more with their students by making the learning environment supportive, inclusive and secure, by making the students cultures reflected in their lessons, the students can be more engaged during lessons, leading to better academic outcomes.

Recommendations

Based on mother tongue, integrating mother tongue into education can significantly enhance student engagement. By allowing students to learn initially in their mother tongue, concepts become clearer, leading to better understanding and increased confidence, this also fosters a stronger connection between students and their learning environment and promotes a more inclusive and culturally responsive classroom. Therefore the mother tongue should be incorporated into school programs.

Based on teachers' cultural competence, Cultural competence in education has to emerged as a critical area of focus in contemporary educational discourse, aiming to create inclusive learning environments that celebrate diversity and promote equitable opportunities for all students Also, opportunities should be made available for teachers to be empowered in cultural aspects which will make them culturally competent and ready to students diverse cultures in the classrooms.

Based on communal learning activities, Techniques such as group discussions, problemsolving tasks, and hands-on experiments are effective ways to engage students and make lessons interactive. These methods not only keep students involved, but also help them develop creative thinking and collaborative skills.

Based on culturally relevant teaching/learning materials, culturally relevant teaching involves using materials and strategies that reflect students' diverse backgrounds and experiences to enhance engagement and learning. This can be achieved by incorporating culturally relevant content, using local examples such as stories, riddles, folklores fostering positive relationships, and creating an inclusive and supportive classroom environment. By valuing students' cultural identities, teachers can make learning more meaningful and empowering.

Implications of the Results

Many of the participants understood that policies and procedures were needed to garner the support for Culturally Relevant Teaching implementation. This would ensure students of diverse ethnicities, religions, and lifestyles feel included and accepted.

Also, the results of this study suggest that educators find value in using Culturally Relevant Teaching with students from diverse backgrounds. The three components are academic achievement, cultural competence, and sociopolitical consciousness. The majority of the participants shared how Culturally Relevant Teaching improves student involvement, feeling connected to the learning community, and creates a sense of belongingness.

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