TEACHERS' LITERACY PERSPECTIVES AND PRACTICES WITH CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE STUDENTS: FROM THEORY TO CLASSROOM

by

María Soledad Alva
A Dissertation
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of
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Dedication

This study is dedicated to my UTEEM colleagues with whom I embarked on this long journey, to my partner in life, Rodolfo González, to my supportive children, Micaela and Diego González, and to my heroes and parents, Javier Alva Orlandini and Celia Guerrero Baca, who taught me the value of fairness and perseverance.

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Abstract

TEACHERS' LITERACY PERSPECTIVES AND PRACTICES WITH CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE STUDENTS: FROM THEORY TO CLASSROOM

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This multi-case research study explored the literacy perspectives and self-reported practices of a group of teachers who graduated from a Teacher Education Program (TEP) with a culturally responsive (CR) framework. The study also compared and discussed changes over time in an educational system immersed in discourses of efficiency, accountability, and standardization that contradicted the foundations of their TEP.

The teachers selected for the study graduated from a program that aimed to develop teacher candidates' knowledge, skills and dispositions to work confidently, competently and comfortably with culturally and linguistically diverse children and their families. Research in teacher education has shown the importance of integrating diversity courses within teachers' core instruction. The emphasis on this topic in the coursework depends on the TEP's theoretical framework. This study explored the influence of a specific TEP with a strong philosophical stance on the literacy education of culturally and

linguistically diverse students (CLDS) in order to break the cycle of reproduction in education. This study found that teachers struggled to maintain their critical agency and philosophical stance when making instructional decisions. Teachers did not adhere to one discourse, but moved continuously within a continuum of two discourses: culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) and the educational establishment discourse.

This study used critical literacy as its epistemological framework and sociocultural, CR, and multicultural education theories to describe and explain the practices of these teachers: how these teachers solved and circumvented the conflicts between theory and practice in an educational system that, in some cases, contradicted their perspectives about education.

Keywords: culturally responsive pedagogy, culturally responsive dispositions, culturally and linguistically diverse students, English language learners, critical literacy, multicultural education, reproduction in education.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Context and Purpose of the Study

  After working as a special education preschool and elementary grade teacher for 10 years, I entered George Mason University's College of Education and Human Development doctoral program in 2014. I chose to specialize in multicultural and multilingual education with a secondary emphasis in literacy and reading. From an early age, I was always fascinated by the diversity of languages and cultures found in my country of origin, Peru. I entered a private university in Lima to study linguistics and literature, and later I became very interested in sociolinguistics. Sociolinguistics made me aware of how language and power can be used to rationalize and justify uneven social-economic relationships in terms of standard language. I obtained my master's degree in Spanish linguistics in 1997 at Georgetown University and later in 2004 my master's degree in curriculum and instruction from George Mason.

  On entering the Unified Transformative Early Education Model (UTEEM) program at George Mason, I was part of a 2-year master's degree cohort of 19 preservice teachers. As part of the instructional curriculum, this program provided us with opportunities "to work with culturally, linguistically, socio-economically, and ability diverse children and their families" (Kidd et al., 2008, p. 318). During those 2 years, we were exposed to different experiences that helped us develop culturally responsive (CR)

values and dispositions to support our work as teachers as efficiently as possible with a wide variety of students. These experiences allowed us to understand, value, and respect the cultures, languages, and families of our students while reflecting on our own backgrounds and childrearing differences (Sánchez & Thorp, n.d.). The impact the program had in my professional and personal life made me the kind of teacher and researcher I am right now.

In addition to my childhood and graduate school experiences, working as a teacher for 17 years in two different public school districts in Virginia made me aware that my professional degree did not shield me from the sways of politics and research trends. As teachers, we are constantly required to adapt, change, and modify—not to improve our teaching instruction and skills or to enhance our students' learning, which is what should be expected from us, but to please whoever has the power to impose demands on us as teachers.

In these years as a professional teacher, I confronted dilemmas between what I believed was the "best practice" for my students and what I was told I needed to do. Sometimes I was able to stand my ground; at other times I could implement, change, adapt, or modify practices to serve the instructional needs of my students without "violating" the school norms and policies imposed upon me. But many times, I am afraid, I had to compromise in order to keep going. For example, I was challenged to teach literacy following a program based on phonics and using basal readings. The basal and phonic books were not authentic literature, which in some cases caused frustration for students and for me. I had to adhere to practices that fostered the traditional view of

literacy as reading and decoding, knowing that it was biased against other forms of literacies. In order to solve this dilemma, I added authentic literature but had to keep teaching phonics, because it was mandated in our school. As a Spanish elementary teacher, I was also asked not to mix English and Spanish languages ("translanguage"; Canaragarajah, 2013), but to stick to one language because it was not supported by my school ideology, despite the fact that research supports the use of translanguage for learning and teaching purposes, especially when working with culturally and linguistically diverse students (CLDS).

These constant struggles between what I believed was appropriate for my students and what I was required to do inspired this research. This study was driven by Bourdieu's (1977) concept of reproduction in education, and his theoretical concepts of field, capital, and habitus to explain how teachers reproduce the structures of the social system in education: "teaching as transmission of knowledge and literacy as hierarchy of isolated skills" (Huddleston et al., 2020, p. 18).

The purpose of this multi-case study was not to find out who was or was not a successful teacher, but to describe and analyze the literacy perspectives and practices of six teachers who were part of a CR program (Kidd et al., 2005, 2008). The program, UTEEM, which is at the center of this inquiry, is located in the mid-Atlantic area. I graduated from this program in 2004 and continue to teach in a school close to its location. In an era when standardization and accountability permeate all educational levels, the present study focused on understanding how these teachers resolved

problematic issues or dilemmas that arose in their classrooms and challenged their

guiding teaching principles.

Statement of the Educational Problem

The purported main goal of education is to provide equal opportunity for all

students to access the curricula in schools, but we all know that family income, language

of instruction, residential location, race, resources, and teacher quality can be factors that

determine the kind of instruction students receive (Goldenberg, 2011). Other factors that

have influenced the type of instruction students receive in the United States include

legislation. From 2001 to 2015, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act was the most

influential piece of legislation in all spheres of the U.S. discourse about education (Lewis

& Young, 2013). NCLB served as the guiding norm for how we measured the progress of

students, teachers, and schools in the United States (Hutt & Schneider, 2018). For

example, NCLB defined a highly qualified teacher as a teacher who held at least a

bachelor's degree from an accredited institution and was trained in the area they were

assigned to teach (U.S. Department of Education, 2009; this requirement has been

modified under the Every Student Succeeds Act). The question is: Is this criterion enough

or sufficient to be an effective teacher?

Although NCLB has been replaced by the Every Student Succeeds Act, signed by

President Obama in 2015, its spirit continues to be present in accountability and

standardization measures in schools at all levels, even influencing the way teachers are

prepared (the Every Student Succeeds Act and the Title II Higher Education Act; Ro,

2018). The literature on the impact of this test-based accountability context on teachers,

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students, and teacher education programs (TEPs) is extensive and in some cases contradictory. For example, test accountability has been associated with teacher attrition. Some researchers found that NCLB influenced teachers to leave the profession (Dunn, 2018; Glazer, 2018; Ingersoll et al., 2012; Santoro, 2011) while other research studies found no significant effects on turnover (Grissom et al., 2014).

Kincheloe (2011) pointed out there are about 1,025 TEPs in the United States, and these programs graduate approximately 100,000 teachers each year. For Kincheloe, few of these programs understood the demands of high-quality teaching in the 21st century. He defined high quality as "rigorously educated teachers with an awareness of the complexities of educational practice and an understanding of and commitment to a socially just, democratic notion of schooling" (Kincheloe, 2011, p. 228). In other words, Kincheloe believed there was a lack of teachers with a CR disposition and with an understanding of their agent role in education. The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (King & Hampel, 2018) pointed out that in 2015–2016, about 2,300 colleges and universities conferred more than 300,000 bachelor's and master's degrees in education.

From 1987 to 2012, ethnic and racial minority teachers (African Americans, Hispanics, American Indians, and those of multiple races) increased from 12% to 17% of U.S. teachers. In contrast, the percentage of minority students in public schools is much higher and has steadily increased (in 2012, 44.1% of all students were minorities; Albert Shanker Institute, 2015). Current statistical information shows that this trend continues. In Fall of 2018, minority students represented 53% of all students enrolled in U.S. public

schools (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2021a), while minority teachers represented only 21% of all teachers (NCES, 2021b). Ethnic and racial minority teachers continue to be underrepresented in comparison to the percentage of minority students. The reality is that most teachers in U.S. schools are White European-Americans (Albert Shanker Institute, 2015; Rogers & Mosley, 2008; Sánchez & Thorp, 2008; Sleeter, 2001). Most of these teachers graduated from programs that do not practice critical reflection about difficult topics such as race or Whiteness and "how their cultural assumptions and experiences influence their interactions with children and families" (Sánchez & Thorp, 2008, p. 84). Sleeter (2001, 2017) showed that predominantly White institutions do not prepare White teachers to work with students whose backgrounds differ from theirs; the introduction of multicultural courses per se could be rendered ineffective if not integrated as part of community immersion experiences or within a holistic view of TEPs.

Several studies focused on the impact of TEPs on teacher candidates' professional development (Buck & Sylvester, 2005; Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005; Kidd et al., 2008; Nadelson et al., 2012; Stribling et al., 2015; Turner, 2007). However, long-term studies exploring how TEPs impact their graduates' future professional development are scarce (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Hammerness, 2004; Hollins & Guzman, 2005; Sleeter, 2014; Stoddart, 1990, 1993; Whitaker & Valtierra, 2018b). Few have focused on literacy development (Broemmel et al., 2020; Grisham, 2000; Grossman et al., 2000; Hoffman et al., 2005; Parsons et al., 2017; Risko et al., 2008; Scales et al., 2014, 2018; Voss & Kunter, 2020). Still fewer studies have investigated TEPs with a defined theoretical

philosophical approach that offered evidence of effectiveness with diverse populations (Beck, 2016; Gay, 2010; Hammerness & Kennedy, 2019; Ladson-Billings, 1999; Siwatu, 2007; Siwatu et al., 2016; Whitaker & Valtierra, 2018b). The rarest topic within this group of studies is literacy development of CLDS (Clark, 2020; Huddleston et al., 2020; Mosley Wetzel & Rogers, 2015; Mosley Wetzel et al., 2018).

For example, Hollins and Guzman (2005), who studied the evaluation of programs that prepare teachers to work with diverse populations, stated that few studies have examined the extent to which teachers apply the knowledge they have gained in TEPs after completion. Longitudinal studies on literacy development confirmed this fact: changes that could produce a positive impact on students' learning are not always translated into practice (Grisham, 2000; Grossman et al., 2000; Shulman & Shulman, 2004). My study was intended to fill this gap. Often macro factors such as policy and curriculum standardization, as well as meso or local factors such as school resources, school culture, and lack of support, are identified as having greater impact on teacher practices and student learning than TEPs. As Risko et al. (2008) and Cochran-Smith and Zeichner (2005) pointed out, there is a need for studies that help us understand how to construct programs to better prepare teacher candidates for diverse students.

In addition to reviewing seminal literature, which was a fundamental part of my study, I built my literature review using three pathways: search engines, manually checking references of articles, and Google Scholar. The following words and word combinations were used in this search: *teacher beliefs, agency and self-efficacy beliefs, longitudinal research on teacher education programs, teacher preparation programs and*

culturally responsive pedagogy, literacy instruction and CLDS, and *culturally responsive pedagogy/culturally relevant/culturally competent instruction and CLDS/ELL*. I limited my search to studies (peer-reviewed articles, books and dissertations) that were written in English, pertained to U.S. elementary schools, were published in 2000–2020, and did not include preservice teachers. The following educational search databases were used: APA PsycInfo, ProQuest, ERIC, and Education Research Complete.

Although abundant records were returned by these search engines, the majority of the studies did not pertain to this research because they were not longitudinal, did not address the education of CLDS/ELL, and/or did not follow up with teachers from a specific TEP. While a comprehensive search was performed on CR and multicultural education, it is evident from the publication dates that additional and updated research is needed. The databases searched showed a paucity of recent studies on these topics: APA PsycInfo (0), ProQuest (200), ERIC (15), and Education Research Complete (5). Google Scholar search and manual review of references in articles produced better results. However, this could indicate a source of biases, since they relied on the same researchers and similar theoretical orientations.

This study is framed within the critical paradigm in which CR education originated. One of the tenets of critical pedagogy is understanding that teaching and learning take place in a sociohistorical context (Giroux & McLaren, 1989; Kincheloe, 2011; McCaleb, 2013). Critical pedagogy suggests the existence of multiple and competing realities that are struggling for power and hegemony. The role of a critical teacher is to develop deconstructive practices that uncover rather than suppress "the

complexity of the histories, interests, and experiences that make up the diverse voices that construct student subject positions" (Giroux & McLaren, 1989, p. 147). Therefore, within this framework, all cultural and linguistic knowledge that students bring to school is valued (Gay, 2010; González et al., 2005; Gutiérrez, 2008; Kincheloe, 2011; Lankshear et al., 1993; McCaleb, 2013), and it goes beyond appreciation to introduce diversity as a resource in the classroom (Irvine & Armento, 2001; Siwatu, 2007). However, in schools, decisions are made reflecting values that represent a hegemonic, powerful group. These values are presented as neutral and objective, but they are created to reproduce and legitimize class/racial/language inequalities and to maintain the status quo (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). Therefore, one of the objectives of this study was to understand how teachers who had a CR educational foundation about language, culture, and literacy circumvented (or not) the constraints imposed by the school system (English only, core curriculum, standardized assessment, text vs. oral literacy, etc.) in order to apply their teaching philosophy to foster CLDS' literacy development. How did these teachers understand, exercise, and maintain teacher agency within this historical and political moment (Dunn, 2018; Pardo et al., 2012; Shim, 2012, 2014)?

In the light of current social and historical events in the United States in 2020–2021, this topic has never been more relevant and crucial. The inequity of the educational system has become evident with the COVID-19 epidemic and police brutality that precipitated the upsurge of the Black Lives Matter movement. Conversations in schools about racial and economic inequity cannot be delayed and avoided. Both events have

shown the crucial roles that schools and teachers can play in maintaining, challenging, or even abolishing current education practices for CLDS.

Research Questions

This study used a multi-case methodology to describe and analyze six teachers' literacy perspectives and practices to understand the degree to which their teaching philosophy and practice were impacted by the UTEEM program. These teachers were themselves part of a culture: the UTEEM culture. Based on their common experiences and similar perspectives, they shared similar cultural tools and ways of using them. The teachers in this study had different identities, but when they performed as UTEEM teachers, they enacted and adopted a shared UTEEM-engendered social identity in their discourses (Scollon et al., 2012).

The research question "What are these teachers' literacy perspectives and practices with CLDS?" was broken into five sections:

1. Who are these teachers, and what are their backgrounds? How do they believe their backgrounds influence/inform their teaching?

2. What are their current perspectives on literacy, language, culture, and education?

3. What are these teachers doing in their classrooms to foster CLDS literacy development, including elements such as activities, settings, and strategies?

4. How has being part of the UTEEM program influenced teachers' literacy understanding and practices? What are the components of the program they considered pivotal in supporting their pedagogical vision? How successful

have they felt in influencing the literacy learning of CLDS (teacher self-efficacy beliefs)?

5. Can these teachers' theoretical understanding of literacy continue to resist over time the influence of the system and the school culture in which they are involved (school, coworkers, school administrators)? What factors or forces influence their evolution and development (at the micro, meso/local, or macro/global level)? What are the obstacles and protective factors to enact a UTEEM discourse?

Definition of Terms

Literacy

In this study, literacy is perceived as a complex process that is not autonomous from the complexities of local and global sociopolitical forces (Street, 1995). Literacy includes skills and strategies that students need to speak, to understand, and to read and write, as well as skills that help them to understand and change reality or the world (Lewis et al., 2007; Pardo et al., 2012; Torres & Freire, 2002). Street (1995) defined a literacy event, based on Heath (1983), as any occasion in which an activity that involves writing or reading occurs as a mixture of oral and literate features in everyday communication. Literacy practices are defined in a more abstract way: these strategies include literacy events, but also the models of those events and the ideological system that rules them. (Please see pages 54 and 78 for a more comprehensive and contextualized definition of Literacy.)

Culture

Another important term that needs to be contextualized in this study is *culture*. The word means different things to different people (Scollon et al., 2012). However, culture is the way that humans produce, create, sustain, and adapt symbolic structures for and with one another (Heath & Street, 2008). Scollon et al. (2012) preferred to define culture not as a thing, which people have or share, but as a verb. The notion of culture as a verb was introduced by Street (1993) to call attention to the intangible and tangible elements that define how a group of people do things together.

Following this idea, the school classroom is a culture, and teachers' common shared experiences and knowledges are a culture (Scollon et al., 2012). To communicate ideas to their students, teachers use language and other semiotic systems as their primary cultural tools. Because my interest is teachers' literacy understanding, this study focused on the practices, strategies, activities, and perspectives (cultural tools) used by teacher-participants to foster literacy learning in CLDS.

CLDS

Students who speak a language other than English at home have been known according to paradigms that emphasize some characteristics over others. *English language learner* (ELL) has been the preferred term in educational research to emphasize the difficult task of acquiring English while learning academic content as well in mainstream schools, in addition to having a second or third language at home. Other researchers have chosen other terms to emphasize their singular characteristics, for example, *CLDS* (Haley & Austin, 2014) or *dual language learner* (Genesee et al., 2004;

Gutiérrez & Stone, 2000). However, the term *dual language learner* does not accurately describe students who are not only simultaneously or successively acquiring another language at home from birth, but being socialized in cultural patterns that are part of their identity and evident in the different ways they interpret and learn from two different worlds. Therefore, *CLDS* is used and preferred over the other terms in this study.

NCES (2019) indicated that in 2015, 9.9% of students in U.S. public schools were CLDS (ELL) and about 4.9 million students had English as their second or third language. From this total of CLDS, 77.7% were Hispanic (3.8 million students). Nevertheless, the exact number of CLDS is unknown, since the standards and procedures for identifying CLDS vary state by state in the United States (Crawford, 2004). In addition, this group of students is very diverse, and their success depends on many factors outside schools (e.g., background, socioeconomic status, time of arrival) and inside schools (e.g., available resources and teacher quality; Freeman & Freeman, 2011).

Teacher Self-Efficacy

Another term important for this study is *teacher self-efficacy*. Chesnut and Burley (2015) maintained that literature on this topic could be sorted in two groups: studies of teacher self-efficacy as a perception (confidence in their ability) and studies of teacher self-efficacy as behaviors (locus control of outcomes). Dellinger et al. (2008) preferred the term *outcome expectancy* for the latter type of beliefs. They distinguished these generalized beliefs from Bandura's (1997) efficacy expectations of one's capabilities, which are task and situation specific, and not related to outcomes. Dellinger et al. provided support for the argument that outcome expectancies and efficacy expectation

scales measure two different constructs. According to Bandura (1977, 1995, 1997), people's motivations and actions are based more on what they believe than on what they can actually do: "Perceived self-efficacy refers to beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (Bandura, 1997, p. 3). Bandura pointed out that teaching efficacy requires reflection and evaluation of factors such as availability of resources, time constraints, student population, and development of strategies for overcoming obstacles (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). This study defined self-efficacy as teachers' perceptions of their ability to teach CLDS.

Efficacy beliefs can be affected by four main forms of influence: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and physiological and emotional states (Bandura, 1995). In the case of teachers, mastery or successful experiences are the most important ones because they build a strong sense of teaching efficacy. Failures are important as well, but can have a detrimental effect if they occur before a sense of efficacy is firmly established. Vicarious experiences are provided by social models. Cooperative teachers, administrators, mentors, and teacher colleagues provide opportunities for preservice and in-service teachers to observe people similar to them persevering and succeeding in teaching tasks in the classroom. Social and verbal persuasion by administrators or other authorities in the form of positive feedback and encouragement during evaluations or observations also builds teachers' confidence.

A sense of efficacy has been considered pivotal in education research. According to Bandura (1997), self-efficacy expectations are usually better predictors of behaviors because actions depend on people's judgments of how well they will be able to perform.

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Teachers with a high sense of efficacy tend to view difficult students as teachable and regard their learning problems as manageable, if provided with the appropriate motivation (Bandura, 1997). Teacher efficacy beliefs (as outcomes or as expectancy) have been correlated with teachers' behaviors in the classroom (Siwatu, 2007). For example, Bandura (1995) found that teachers with a high appreciation of their teaching abilities tended to persist longer at a task. Blake-Canty (2017) found that a combination of teacher efficacy beliefs and CR practices had a positive influence on the development of math skills in students of color. Teacher commitment to the profession and teacher attrition have also been attributed to teachers' self-efficacy beliefs (Chesnut & Burley, 2015; Glazer, 2018)

Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2017) defined self-efficacy as "individual teachers' beliefs in their own ability to plan, organize, and carry out activities that are required to attain given educational goals" (p. 153). These beliefs are distinguished from students' achievement scores in comparison with other students. On the other hand, when teachers perceive that no amount of effort will have positive outcomes due to uncontrollable circumstances, "self-efficacy beliefs may not predict behaviors" (Dellinger et al., 2008, p. 754).

Teacher self-efficacy beliefs have been advocated as an essential component in TEPs (Siwatu et al., 2016) and in professional development (PD; Yoo, 2016). Siwatu (2011a) pointed out that TEPs have the responsibility of providing field experiences that can infuse self-efficacy beliefs in prospective teachers. Dellinger et al. (2008) found that

self-efficacy scales could also be used to plan appropriate PD experiences for in-service teachers.

Self-efficacy beliefs are contextual in character and can fluctuate depending on the context of the task (Dellinger et al., 2008; Siwatu, 2011a, 2011b). The same teacher can feel comfortable teaching literacy to a group of students whose demographic characteristics are more similar to them, but ill-prepared to teach literacy to another group of students whose demographics are different, for example CLDS. The specificity of self-efficacy teaching beliefs provides more predictability for specific tasks (for example, teaching literacy to CLDS), but the results are less generalizable to other areas (for example, math instruction). In urban school settings, where the greatest percentage of CLDS attend, teacher attrition is higher than in suburban schools (Siwatu, 2011b).

Self-efficacy beliefs, agency, and resistance appear to be related concepts in our literature review. The literature reviewed on this topic has discussed two forms of teacher resistance. First, those who continue at the job exercise their agency by resisting, adapting, and modifying policies and mandates that interfere with their craft (Pardo et al., 2012). Second, those who opt to leave the teaching force express their agency by refusing to compromise their professional commitments (Glazer, 2018; Santoro, 2011, 2017).

Teacher Agency

The term *agency* is recognized in critical literacy as a political and moral practice aiming toward the ideals of a democratic education (Giroux, 2010). This study differs from Bourdieu's treatment of agency in that this study only considered agentive acts—those where choices are made intentionally (Bandura, 1997). Agency requires

willingness, capability to exercise an action, efficacious knowledge, and authority,

meaning the power to "evoke an event or intervene in an event" (Eteläpelto et al., 2013,

p. 49). Agency has been defined as (a) an individual capacity independent of the

determining constraints of the social structure (Archer, 2000; Eteläpelto et al., 2013); (b)

a capacity shaped by structural and historical conditions (Bourdieu, 1994; Priestley et al.,

2012); and (c) a collective phenomenon (Sawyer, 2012). For Bandura (1997), human

agency enacts change on the environment. However, Eteläpelto et al. (2013) suggested

that agency can be manifested not only by changing practices but by maintaining existing

practices or struggling against suggested changes. To exercise agency, we need to have

confidence that we have sufficient skills or self-efficacy beliefs to perform the task.

Agency can be understood positively (to promote a change) or negatively (to resist a

change); therefore, agency should be understood within a specific context, "agency for

doing what." Archer (2000) and Priestley et al. (2012) maintained that agency is more an

ecological capacity that is achieved under ecological conditions: "Agency is a matter of

personal capacity to act combined with the contingencies of the environment within

which such action occurs" (Priestley et al., 2012, p. 196). Bandura (1997) explained that

in social cognitive theory there is not a dualistic split of the self into agent or object; for

him, "it is one and the same person who does the strategic thinking about how to manage

the environment and later evaluates the adequacy of his or her knowledge, thinking skills,

capabilities, and action strategies" (p. 5). Key to human agency is the belief that one has

the power to originate actions for given purposes. In social cultural theory, human beings

adapt and change because they are rooted in a social system. Human beings are not

determined by constraints: "efficacious people are quick to take advantage of opportunity structures and figure out ways to circumvent institutional constraints or change them by collective action" (Bandura, 1977, p. 6). Agency implies the ability to reflect and evaluate to choose among alternatives, and it involves the ability to behave differently from what environmental forces dictate. As Archer (2000) maintained, agential powers "are always conditioned, though not determined, by the socio-cultural context in which people live" (p. 269). Duffy and Hoffman (1999) and Turner (2005, 2007) provided support to the thesis that CR teachers with a strong vision of success or agency tend to show flexibility (capacity to analyze, reflect, and make an instructional decision), adjusting and adapting resources to fit their students' needs despite constraints. Without agency, teachers would be left vulnerable to fluctuations of policies, theories, and contexts.

Priestley et al.'s (2012) qualitative study analyzed three teachers' agency in a time of curricular constraints and assessment imperatives in a school in Scotland where students' attainment was highly valued. They found that despite the macro (educational policy promoting prescribed curriculum and accountability assessments) and meso/micro or local constraints (time tabling, lack of appropriate equipment, etc.), some teachers were able to show agency and provide students with expanded curricular and higher thinking skill activities. These enriching opportunities were possible when teachers chose to apply their professional knowledge within their micro-cosmos or classrooms. The researchers concluded that agency is about teachers having repertoires to maneuver, "possibilities for different forms of action available to teachers at particular points in

time" (Priestley et al., 2012, p. 211). These findings are corroborated by more current studies in the area of literacy teaching (Broemmel et al., 2020; Parsons et al., 2017). In CR pedagogy, Siwatu et al. (2016) argued that teachers "who believe they are capable of successfully carrying out culturally responsive teaching tasks are more likely to enact related pedagogical practices" (p. 278).

Ro (2018) offered a different perspective. Ro's study followed three beginning teachers from different TEPs with a culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) and constructivist approach. The purpose of the study was to explore the possible disconnection between theory and practice in the context of test-based accountability. Each teacher in the study represented high, moderate, and low levels of school accountability. As expected, these teachers felt unprepared to circumvent the accountability expectations, showing disconnection between their preservice education and their current practices "regardless of the accountability contexts and the preparation programs they went through" (Ro, 2018, p. 59). Hammerness and Kennedy (2019) proposed an integrated view between theory and practice through induction programs that support teachers for a longer period of time, fostering teachers' professional development in the school context.

This study adopted a sociocultural approach in which agency is seen as subject centered, temporal, and closely bounded by contextual factors (such as mandates and resources available) but not determined by them (Eteläpelto et al., 2013). This approach to agency is in concordance with Freire's (1970/2003) understanding of human agency in education. Critical pedagogy recognizes the power of human agency and the importance

of providing students with the skills and knowledge needed to expand their capacities as transformational agents. Collective agency is perceived as social empowerment through a community of learners (teachers and students) in which dialogue is used to cooperatively transform the world (Freire, 1970/2003).

Bandura (1995) explained that people strive to exercise control over life events and that the exercise of control degenerates into conflicts of power. Resistance is an unofficial form of the exercise of power and expresses teacher agency (Glazer, 2018; Priestley et al., 2012; Santoro, 2011, 2017).

The following sections discuss the theoretical framework of this study and the UTEEM program guiding principle, as well as the importance of a paradigmatic guiding principle about knowledge construction.

Theoretical and Philosophical Paradigm

This section is an exploration of the paradigm and theory that guided the development of this research study. Understanding the importance of teachers as agents of change requires us to frame this study within a paradigm (Simpson, 2017). Paradigms are sets of philosophical assumptions about the nature of ethics (axiology), the nature of reality (ontology), the nature of knowledge or what can be known (epistemology), or the nature of systematic inquiry or how knowledge is gained (methodology; Mertens & Wilson, 2012). Paradigms are sets of basic beliefs that guide our thinking and work (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). They are dynamic and constantly shifting. Because knowledge is understood as a continuum, boundaries are fluid and are formulated and rearranged

using different categorical concepts (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011; Lincoln et al., 2011).

The terms *paradigms* and *theory* are used sometimes interchangeably and indistinctly; however, there is an important difference. Paradigms are broad metaphysical constructs that include sets of logically related philosophical assumptions (Mertens & Wilson, 2012) revealing "the belief systems that undergird our thinking" (Hatch, 2002, p. 12). Theory is defined by Maxwell (2012) as a structure that is intended to reflect a set of concepts and ideas about the world and the relationships among them. Theory helps us explain and clarify some aspect of how the world works (Maxwell, 2012). Theories are more limited in scope than paradigms, as is the case of critical race theory and feminist theory under the critical paradigm.

This study frames itself within the critical paradigm, but uses what is called "bricolage," borrowing from the constructivist paradigm the incorporation of multiple perspectives through the use of a multi-case research methodology (Yin, 2011). Ontologically, this study considers that although our reality "is shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic and gender values" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018, p. 111), it is not determined by these values because "we construct knowledge [and reality] through our lived experiences and through our interactions with other members of society" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018, p. 115). Through this constant interaction between what we bring and what is imposed on us, we construct knowledge and reality. Epistemologically, I believe that power and control are constantly present in our construction of realities and truths. Historically, power presents as a competition for the

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control of material and cultural capital, in which language is seen as the primary symbolic tool (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

Our theoretical perspectives or lenses are the assumptions we bring to our methodology to guide our research based on our view of the human world and social life within the world (Crotty, 2015). Research questions are part of the methodology and are also influenced by ideological and contextual factors of the study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). The research questions in this study were grounded in critical theory and probed whether teachers' theoretical understanding of literacy was able to resist over time the influence of the system and the school culture in which they were involved. Theorists argue that methodology in the critical paradigm is dialectical, dialogical (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Mertens & Wilson, 2012), and transformative (Hatch, 2002). Language was central in this study, because dialogue becomes dialectical in nature. Dialogue transforms ignorance and structures historically mediated as immutable into more informed consciousness (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). In the case of this group of teachers, dialogue took the form of reflection. In this study, I was interested in how these teachers reflected upon situational power structures with consciousness of their role to change, maintain, or transform them. Freire (1970/2003) pointed out that change is possible, with awareness, conscientization, and struggle from both the oppressed and the oppressor. In this study, teachers epitomized both roles. They were oppressed by mandates that limited their teaching capabilities and instructional decisions, and they took the role of oppressors when they enacted them without reflexivity.

Koro-Ljungberg et al. (2009) pointed out that research in this paradigm addresses issues of equity in order to promote change in communities. We can improve the life chances of students and undermine the structure of inequality by unveiling the sources of oppression and exposing possibilities for change (Hatch, 2002). This study was concerned with the pedagogical literacy practices of teachers who participated in a CR TEP and their ability to respond to the limitations imposed by the school system. As part of the TEP's curriculum, these teachers were exposed to readings, self-reflections, and discussions on social justice to develop and strengthen their dispositions to work with CLDS. Therefore, this study intended to understand how this CR theory looked in practice.

This study was grounded on a critical perspective focusing on issues of power, arbitrary knowledge, conflicts over competing practices and values, control, hegemony, and inequity, which are manifested in specific contextual social situations in schools, asking "what counts as being literate" (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005, p. xviii).

To understand how the system is perpetuated in education (reproduced), we need to turn to language as the primary tool for making meaning (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). For Fecho and Meacham (2007), when we use language, we bring our understandings and experiences into contact with the understanding and experience of others. As language changes, our meanings also shift, or should shift. The reason meanings are maintained is because language is not neutral (Bakhtin, 1986/2013). Linguistic descriptions are not simply about the world, but serve the purpose of constructing the world (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011). Critical researchers discounted

notions of the objectivity of language, demonstrating how "language in the form of discourses served as a form of regulation and domination" (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011, p. 291). Discursive practices are used to regulate what can and cannot be said, who speaks with authority, who must listen, whose truth is valid, and whose is not. That is often what happens in schools reproducing the system. Fecho and Meacham (2007) explained, "Our understandings derived through the transaction of our discourse with that of others yields new discourses, literacies, and literacy practices in a continually generative process" (p. 168). The dialogical capacity of words is limited or denied when we do not allow opportunities for students to make connections (Fecho and Meacham) to the curricula and to create the curricula or access to a capital. Moje and Lewis (2007) called these connections to literacy *Literacies*. Gee (2015) has also used the term *Literacies,* with a capital *L* to indicate the ideological dimension of literacy while the plural indicates the multiple possibilities and realizations of these practices every day in students' primary discourses.

Critical theory applied to education is best represented by Freire's (1970/2003) understanding of the revolutionary power of pedagogy. In his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, one of the readings in the UTEEM TEP, Paulo Freire described education as an instrument of domination when its ideological intent is to indoctrinate students to adapt to the world of oppression instead of questioning and transforming their reality in communion with teachers. Freire claimed the oppressed have the great humanistic and historical task to liberate themselves and their oppressors as well, and to claim their humanity. Teachers have internalized and constructed through experiences this *figured*

world, accepting as single, natural, and objective what Bourdieu called *habitus*, or a set of

dispositions that incline agents to act and react in certain ways (Joseph, 2020).

The UTEEM Program

Teacher candidates enter TEPs with a set of assumptions already established

(Brookhart & Freeman, 1992). It is in this space that pre-established beliefs and the

TEP's philosophical orientation intersect. The requirement of diversity or multicultural

coursework in TEPs is approached differently by each institution. Nadelson et al. (2012)

pointed out that although diversity coursework has become part of the professional

preparation of teachers, only 63% of American universities have diversity requirements

for the students enrolled in their TEPs. Hollie (2019) found that from a random selection

of 25 TEPs in California, only 13 of them explicitly used or referenced CR teaching.

Within the academic world, there are different branches under the umbrella of CR

teaching: other terms used are *cultural compatible, culturally connected, culturally

competent, culturally appropriate,* and *culturally proficient*. Hollie questioned the

similarities and differences among them and the impact of more than 25 years of CR

TEPs on schools. Hollie herself worked under the branch of cultural and linguistic

responsiveness.

TEPs work to develop preservice teachers' dispositions toward diversity using

various methods (Siwatu, 2011b). Yet many preservice teachers are not encouraged to

reflect, to analyze, and to challenge the status quo and their own upbringings. Most

teachers unconsciously practice reaffirmation rather than practicing reform (Collazo,

2017). Turner (2007) argued that it is possible for TEPs to instill CR awareness and to foster CR practices with preservice teachers by the use of a guided vision.

The UTEEM program aimed "to prepare teachers who are willing and able to work with culturally, linguistically, socioeconomically, and ability-diverse young children and their families" (Kidd et al., 2005, p. 347). This 2-year master's-level TEP prepared teachers for endorsements in three areas: early childhood special education (birth to age 5), early childhood education (pre-K to Grade 3), and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL; pre-K to Grade 12; Kidd et al., 2005; Sánchez & Thorp, n.d.). In these 2 years, one semester was focused on working with preschool children and their families, another semester on infants and toddlers, a third semester on kindergarten to third grade, and the final semester included a specialization in one of these age groups and/or ELL. One summer was dedicated to the use of technology in education. Each preservice teacher cohort consisted of around 20 students who were exposed to different learning experiences (Kidd et al., 2005, 2008; Sánchez & Thorp, 2008), such as (a) internships in diverse schools and community settings; (b) collection of families' stories; (c) readings on issues of race, culture, poverty, and social justice; (d) critical discussion of controversial issues regarding race, diverse ability, culture, poverty, and social justice; (e) dialogue and discussion; and (f) critical self-reflection. Teachers developed CR dispositions that guided and shaped their future language and literacy instruction.

Course assignments were diverse, including child portfolios, family language and literacy handbooks, family stories, project-based intersessions, family community curriculum projects, and action research, among others (Sánchez & Thorp, n.d.).

Gathering family stories, according to the authors, allowed UTEEM preservice teachers

to cross the line that separated them from the students by learning directly about each

family's unique life history and experiences that influenced their worldview and affected

the decisions they made for their children. Without these opportunities, these family

stories would have remained unknown to teachers (Sánchez & Thorp, 2008). As often

happens when stories are shared between teller and listeners, these stories created a bond

between teachers, students, and students' families, and they were the starting point for

developing a genuine dialogue (Sánchez & Thorp, 2008). Kidd et al. (2004) pointed out

that gathering stories can increase "the likelihood that teachers will provide culturally

responsive instruction for the children they teach" (p. 69). Stories provide information

that links home and school while deconstructing deficit narratives.

　　Similar strategies are also used as part of the funds of knowledge theory and other

TEPs with shared visions (Buck & Sylvester, 2005; González et al., 1995). UTEEM

preservice teachers were required to engage in activities outside of school to learn more

about their focus family's challenges and strengths and their communities. The preservice

teachers collected stories about immigration, discrimination, childrearing practices,

family activities, and other experiences that were part of the families' daily lives. These

interactions with the families allowed preservice teachers to identify and appreciate their

strengths. They were also able to understand the importance of culture, as well as "the

similarities and differences between their own culture and the culture of their focus

families" (Kidd et al., 2004, p. 68). This was an opportunity for these preservice teachers

to reflect about their own biases and the diversity of ways to think and to do things: "My

way is not the only way—I need to listen and respect, not judge" (Kidd et al., 2004, p. 69). This new knowledge helped the preservice teachers realize effective teaching requires building on what students bring to school, recognizing the value of families' goals and priorities, and responding to these new knowledges by changing, adapting, or creating learning experiences to be meaningful for their students.

Preservice UTEEM teachers reflected endlessly on their own childrearing practices, assumptions, beliefs, and values (Sánchez & Thorp, n.d.). These constant practices made them more aware of their own biases and for some of them, their unknown privileges. It also uncovered "the ways in which their own sociocultural and familial context has shaped their practices" (Sánchez & Thorp, 2008, p. 91), making them discover the default settings they had taken for granted without challenging or taking into consideration other alternatives and perspectives.

Dialogue and dialectical discussions in classrooms were instrumental for these preservice UTEEM teachers to understand other teachers' perspectives and "to see themselves through the lens of another [teacher]" (Sánchez & Thorp, 2008, p. 93).

Internships in communities with diverse populations and staff gave preservice UTEEM teachers meaningful opportunities to interact with culturally and linguistically diverse populations. Research studies on community field experiences have shown that this kind of activity increases preservice teachers' awareness of their own ethnic identity as well as their understanding of diverse populations (Buck & Sylvester, 2005; Hollins & Guzman, 2005).

Communicative exchanges with colleagues and staff with different backgrounds provided new evidence and counter stories: "Without these interactions, pre-service students who have experience with diverse children and families, especially those living in poverty, may have their stereotypes reaffirmed, and assumptions about the resilience of the community may not come to light" (Sánchez & Thorp, 2008, p. 94).

Most of these experiences were "instrumental in contributing to culturally responsive dispositions and teaching practices" (Kidd et al., 2008, p. 316), and should be evaluated, explored, and used by other TEPs as strategies for encouraging cultural responsiveness in teachers. Although the authors acknowledge these experiences had a different impact on each of the candidates, this "multifaceted approach . . . provided multiple opportunities for preservice teachers to interact with issues of culture, race, poverty, and inequalities" (Kidd et al., 2008, p. 328).

The program also emphasized understanding the interdependent roles of language, education, literacy, and culture for students' identity formation. "Through the use of their home language, including Black English Vernacular (BEV) young children develop the socioemotional bond with their linguistic and cultural community and the appropriate communicative style, social competencies, and problem-solving skills linked to their cultural identity" (Sánchez & Thorp, 2008, p. 86). Therefore, one of the program's goals was for UTEEM preservice teachers to understand the importance of the families' strengths—for example, home language and oral storytelling—and encourage parents to continue using both to further literacy and language development (Sánchez & Thorp, 2008).

One of the objectives of this study was to identify those program components that were critical for the formation and preservation of these teachers' identities as CR teachers. This study also sought to determine how these experiences influenced the teachers' understanding of literacy and how these teachers implemented what they learned in the program in their classrooms. From a critical perspective, however, I wanted to understand how they self-identified their role as teachers: as agents of change and resistance, or as reproducers of the status quo?

The UTEEM program had a focus on literacy development with a whole language approach. There were no classes dedicated to teaching literacy as an independent or isolated skill. Two literacy method courses were offered: birth to three and elementary.

The Role of Power and Privilege in Language, Culture, and Knowledge in Schools

The sociocultural framework argues that knowledge is temporary, developmental, internally constructed, and socially and culturally mediated (Ball & Forzani, 2011) by language and power. The importance of language for all human beings, as a vehicle of socialization, learning, communication, and identity, is indisputable. For CLDS, it is also one of several tools for success in school. Vygotsky (1999) pointed out that the primary function of human speech is communication, and in its earliest manifestations it is essentially social in nature. Cognitive development depends on the child's ability to master a language. In the United States, due to a monolingual and hegemonic ideology, CLDS' success is tied to their ability to be proficient in English. As Luke (2003) explained:

They remain pressed to master dominant forms of cultural practice in order to

achieve degrees and kinds of access to and mobility across mainstream political

and economic institutions—some of these dominant forms of practice are

arbitrary forms of symbolic power. (p. 58)

To master the dominant language, in this case English, means more than speaking

grammatically correct English. It means knowing who you are, what variety of language

to use, with whom, and when to communicate (Labov, 1991). This is because language is

socially situated (Gee, 2015). Mastery includes language in use plus knowledge of the

world: "In socially situated language use one must simultaneously say the 'right' thing,

do the 'right' thing and in such saying and doing also express the 'right' beliefs, values

and attitudes" (Gee, 2015, p. 168). These are the patterns of discourse we need to

consider when communicating meaning to others: knowledge about the world, as well as

situational and conditional context (Scollon et al., 2012).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter is structured in three parts and reflects the current state of research on the three strands of my study: TEPs, CRP, and defining critical literacy. The first section summarizes research on the role of TEPs in developing an orientation or a vision in preservice teachers in an era of accountability, standardization, and demographic changes in the United States. The second section is focused on understanding the philosophical underpinning of CRP, its relationship to multicultural education, and how it is implemented in some CR TEPs. The last section proposes a definition of literacy in which practice and theory meet, using a multicultural education perspective and a critical paradigm perspective.

Teacher Education

The Purpose of TEPs

There are about 1,025 TEPs in the United States, which graduate more than 100,000 teachers each year (Kincheloe, 2011). Program orientations, requirements, structure, and experiences vary by state and by university. A high percentage of teachers in schools have undergraduate degrees in education or graduated from alternative programs. Some of these teachers have attended a 4-year or 5-year TEP (in 2017–2018, 42% vs. 58%; NCES, 2019), making it a complex landscape for analysis and comparability (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005). To respond to this array of possibilities and federal policy claims for uniformity, in 2000 the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE, now the Council for the Accreditation

of Educator Preparation [CAEP]), published standards for TEPs. These standards aligned with the language and the spirit of the federal law in terms of standardization and accountability (Cochran-Smith et al., 2018). However, while some researchers believe this accountability and standardization (candidate selection and assessments, rankings, etc.) can provide leverage to TEPs (Darling-Hammond, 2020), others considered that accountability efforts hide policies and practices that reproduce inequity in TEPs (Cochran-Smith et al., 2018; Sleeter, 2017).

Through the Every Student Succeeds Act and Title II Higher Education Act, the scope of federal policy accountability expanded to include TEPs, making TEPs responsible for their student-teachers' performance in assessments and in classrooms. These policies are currently under siege during the writing of this study. Recent research on performance tracking of teachers by their TEPs reflects this trend (Cochran-Smith et al., 2013). There is obviously difficulty in providing research evidence that demonstrates a direct causality chain between TEPs, teachers' perspectives and practices in actual classrooms, and students' outcomes (Cochran-Smith, 2005). As Lenski et al. (2013) pointed out, there are too many intervening influences and experiences to assign causality between these two points. Even between TEPs and teacher practices, the link is not direct.

Being part of a TEP is one of the educational and professional experiences of most teachers (Cochran-Smith et al., 2018). Teacher candidates expect that education courses will have a significant impact in their professional preparation and that field

experience will be an important component of this knowledge (Brookhart & Freeman, 1992).

Cochran-Smith and Zeichner (2005) reviewed research studies conducted from 1980 to 2002 on TEPs. Their review presents an array of quantitative, qualitative, and mixed studies with the purpose of identifying the necessary ingredients in a TEP. Zeichner and Conklin (2008), in one of the chapters in this review, focused on TEPs' impact on their graduates. They cited 38 studies that met their rigorous criteria of peer review, adequate description of the data, and publication in 1986–2002. Most of the 38 studies focused on outcomes: teacher retention, program quality, and teacher recruitment. The authors suggested that the studies compared programs that were not equal or clearly described, providing mixed results. The first group of studies compared 4-year versus 5-year TEPs and provided some evidence favoring 5-year over 4-year programs. The second group of studies compared alternative and traditional TEPs. Results suggested that teachers from alternative certified programs had higher expectations for students of color than teachers from traditional certified programs. Additionally, data about teacher retention were mixed for alternative and traditional TEPs. The third group of studies consisted of four case studies of TEPs that concentrated on novice or first-year teachers. These studies did not provide detailed descriptions of the programs and "fail to link program characteristics with teacher and student outcomes" (Zeichner & Conklin, 2008, p. 697).

Minority teachers continue to be underrepresented relative to the U.S. student population, and most teachers in U.S. schools are White European Americans (Albert

Shanker Institute, 2015; Rogers & Mosley, 2008; Sánchez & Thorp, 2008; Sleeter, 2001; Vázquez-Montilla et al., 2014). Colorblind ideologies and unawareness of one's own racial identity are ways in which "whiteness is privileged and reproduced" (Rogers & Mosley, 2008, p. 109). TEPs should address diversity in their coursework because diversity presents as a challenge for teachers (Scales et al., 2014).

In regard to standards and diversity, a noticeable difference between the NCATE (2008) and CAEP (2018) professional standards is that diversity is no longer a distinct standard, but has been incorporated as a cross-cut theme in all five standards (CAEP, 2018). However, the diversity component was the least understood part of the standards among teacher graduates (Scales et al., 2014).

Hollins and Guzman (2005) found 101 studies on preparing teachers for diverse populations. These 101 studies were selected using three databases: ERIC, PsycLIT, and Sociological Abstracts. They set out to answer the following question: Is there evidence about the contributions of those TEPs which prepare teachers with knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to work with diverse populations? They grouped the studies according to four categories: research on candidates' predispositions, research on preparation of candidates, research on the experiences of teacher candidates of color, and preservice program evaluations. Most of the studies provided inconsistent and inconclusive findings, although they suggested positive short-term impact of TEPs. The studies presented by Hollins and Guzman were focused on preservice teachers, qualitative in nature, small case studies, and required short engagement in the field. The

quantitative studies, on the other hand, employed surveys or questionnaires focused on the candidates' beliefs and attitudes.

Rogers and Mosley (2008) explained that preservice teachers have an ambivalent position about participating in discussions about Whiteness and racism due to a fear of sounding racist. In a society that continues to be highly segregated, it is likely that these White European American teachers have had few opportunities to engage in meaningful interactions with minority populations before starting their teaching careers. Sánchez and Thorp (2008) pointed out that an experiential component is essential in teachers' PD, as well as in TEPs, "to increase their awareness of the stereotypes they may knowingly or unknowingly hold about individuals from cultural groups other than their own" (p. 83). For Sánchez and Thorp (2008), dialogue about cultural mismatches only occurs when preservice teachers recognize the possibility of competing, culturally constructed views that differ from their own. Buck and Sylvester (2005) provided evidence that TEPs where the curriculum explicitly addresses issues of race, gender, and class inequity can foster a positive shift in preservice teachers' assumptions and perceptions of the communities they teach. The evaluation study of their program, with a critical pedagogy theoretical approach, pointed out the importance of providing teacher-students with the appropriate tools to guide them in the construction of their learning experience. Discussions of cultural differences are beneficial for all teachers, even those who are not middle-class White European Americans.

Although they did not study preservice teachers, Harlin et al. (2009) demonstrated that minority teachers are not exempt from holding negative stereotypes of minority

students, such as Black, second-language-speaking, and male students. On the other hand, Gupta's (2006) study provided evidence of the importance of discussing theoretical constructs using teacher-students' own experiences. She found that immigrant and minority teacher candidates' sense of efficacy and positive self-ethnic identity could be enhanced when discussions of child development theories were linked to their concrete experiences. Teacher-student reflections about their own early experiences as learners helped them understand the underpinnings of child developmental theories and appreciate their own funds of knowledge: cultural values, attitudes, beliefs, and practices.

The importance of a strong framework or philosophical paradigm that sustains a TEP has not been addressed often in education research (some exceptions are Buck & Sylvester, 2005; Catlett et al., 2007; Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Grisham, 2000; Hasselquist et al., 2017; Huddleston et al., 2020; Lenski et al., 2013; Risko et al., 2008; Scales et al., 2014, 2018; Shulman & Shulman, 2004; Siwatu, 2011a; Voss & Kunter, 2020). The lack of familiarity with TEP paradigms and CR theory that some teachers demonstrate is worrisome, especially when these teachers teach CLDS (Sleeter, 2017; Vázquez-Montilla et al., 2014). The critical paradigm, which frames this study, argues that there are other competing and valid ideological systems that teachers need to consider when assuming the role of educating children whose backgrounds differ from their own. One of these ideological systems is literacy. TEPs can challenge prospective teachers' assumptions about diversity, and even broaden their understanding of diversity as an asset. Teachers can learn to develop greater sensitivity and empathy toward CLDS, but TEPs need to challenge prospective teachers'

obsolete understandings of literacy and help them develop CR literacy instruction that meets their CLDS' needs (Turner, 2007).

For example, Shulman and Shulman (2004) suggested that accomplished teachers must develop five dimensions to be able to apply what they have learned in a TEP. In their model of teacher learning, teachers require (a) vision, (b) motivation, (c) understanding, (d) practice reflection, and (e) community support to put theory into practice. Being displeased with the status quo and having the knowledge, willingness, and critical reflection to change it is not sufficient when teachers are not surrounded by a supportive community or environment (see also Ro, 2018; Stribling et al., 2015).

Vision or understanding of theory is explained by Brookhart and Freeman (1992). Their meta-analysis found that many teacher candidates viewed teaching as dispensing information rather than dialogical construction of knowledge. Knowledge was perceived as static, not dynamic and interpretative, but conclusive, concrete, and final (Wilson, 1990). TEPs have the task of helping preservice teachers deconstruct their mindsets: "The difficulty is that they believe that's what school is all about—obedience and politeness and respect for the teacher, the one with the goods" (Wilson, 1990, p. 207). Teacher candidates' passiveness and lack of critical reflection mirror years of socialization as disenfranchised learners in a school system that rewards obedience. Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) maintained that schools are settings in which macro conflicts and contradictions over knowledge, power, and competing values are reproduced. Schools reproduce the social inequality of economic life (Bowles & Gintis, 2011). Reproduction of inequality occurs mechanically through ideological discourses that speak of

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meritocracy, efficiency, and technocracy while hiding and legitimizing historical

inequalities. "The educational meritocracy is largely symbolic" (Bowles & Gintis, 2011,

p. 103), because it attaches other values to economic success, and it does not explore how

other factors such as race and social class might influence economic inequality.

Meritocracy and hierarchical division of labor are necessarily intertwined in the name of

efficiency.

Critical pedagogy also advocates for teacher reflection and political action that

deconstructs school practices in order to uncover, rather than suppress, the complexities

of interests, histories, and experiences through student-teacher dialogue (Giroux &

McLaren, 1989; Kincheloe, 2011). Pajares (1992) pointed out that preservice teachers in

TEPs should reflect on political and economic inequalities instead of treating them as

natural or unproblematic. TEPs should successfully encourage critical examination of

these issues during their teacher training. Lack of critical discussion and reflection is

"part of the explanation for the tendency among teachers to function as professional

ideologist for the status quo" (Pajares, 1992, p. 323). It is through the mediation of

habitus of individual agents, in this case teachers, that overlapping fields are maintained

(Shim, 2012). The unreflecting application of categorical distinctions based on arbitrary

values affects the chances of students from subordinated groups (Shim, 2012). Teachers

should be asked to reflect to see differences and strengths in their students, instead of

deficits (Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003).

Gupta (2006) argued that the general assumption is that TEPs educate student-

teachers in research-based theoretical constructs, which they apply to practical situations

once they graduate. This stimulus-response process does not work in education because teachers construct knowledge through their personal experiences (Hammersley, 2005). Hammerness and Kennedy (2019) advocated for an integrated view of TEPs in which vision and teaching practices can lead preservice teachers' learning.

TEPs and Research: Impact on Teachers

Teachers have theories about the world, and these formal and informal theories influence their perspectives and practices. Gee (2015) pointed out that these theories are helpful in order to "go about the business of communicating, acting and living without having to consciously think about everything—all the possible details and exceptions— all the time" (p. 113). Sometimes these theories are harmful in the way they can marginalize people and experiences not taken as "normal" or typical. Gee (2015) called them "figured worlds" or cultural models. Bourdieu explained this phenomenon as habitus: "When habitus encounters a social world of which it is the product, it is like a 'fish in water': it does not feel the weight of the water, and it takes the world about itself for granted" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 127). Teachers' theories or beliefs about the world (and even about themselves) have different degrees of influence on their practices, the way they behave with their students, and the roles they assume and assign to themselves and their students inside the classroom and in society. We can only infer these beliefs from what teachers do or say (Pajares, 1992). Some of these theories are formed through childhood experiences as part of socialization, but others are constructed later in life when they enter TEPs and the teaching profession. Throughout their lives, teachers assimilate, modify, or reject these theories.

Teachers can internalize the discourse of power in the absence of reflexivity (Freire, 1970/2003). Reflection enables teachers to recognize how ideological practices and discourses construct their vision of reality. The problem with discourse is that the beliefs, norms, and values are often not questioned and are taken for granted. The discourse becomes institutionalized and reproduced. The term *cultural reproduction* in education is defined as the maintenance of uneven distribution of cultural capital, for example, materials, texts, books, and technology, which preserves the symbolic interests of a privileged group or class in schools (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). Bourdieu (2003) claimed that symbolic power had this magical ability to legitimize the unequal social system in the name of social order. Teachers have internalized the principles of the culturally arbitrary through "habitus" (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990); however, "habitus is a structuring mechanism that operates from within agents, though it is neither strictly individual nor in itself fully determinative of conduct" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 18). Teachers have a strategic role in the transmission or not of these values. Because of their position as pedagogic authorities, they can resist or acquiesce to mandates (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). Teachers are the ones who finally decide what books to read, what instructional methods to use, and who is successful and who is not in the classroom (Shim, 2014). Moje and Lewis (2007) argued that within the classroom, even with the doors shut, diverse discourses are being populated and competing: school, local community, school district, and state discourses have an influence on teachers' curricular decisions. This statement demonstrates what Bakhtin (1981/2014) called *heteroglossic*

discourses, or the coexistence of contradictory socio-ideological systems that intersect with each other in a variety of ways.

In our current political context, educational policies and their implementation appear to be in conflict with an understanding of CR pedagogy (Ro, 2018). CR pedagogy can be framed within the critical paradigm because it refuses to accept the arbitrariness of the curricular content and practices in schools.

Teachers' Sources of Knowledges. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) distinguished three concepts of TEP knowledge that are reflected in the literature: knowledge *for* practice, knowledge *in* practice*,* and knowledge *of* practice. Knowledge *for* practice is the knowledge generated by university-based researchers and gained in a TEP or in PD opportunities, and it is considered theoretical and formal knowledge. Knowledge *in* practice or in action is learned when teachers have the opportunity to apply and probe the theory in classrooms, sometimes under supervision. It is gained through experience and reflection and can be opposed to formal knowledge. This knowledge, also known as teacher craft, is acquired when a teacher applies competency in the face of an unknown situation. Earlier we called it practical knowledge; it can be generated by a group of teachers/preservice teachers who are part of a professional community. Both of these knowledges enhance a teacher's competence and self-efficacy beliefs, as mastery and vicarious experiences, respectively.

Knowledge *of* practice, on the other hand, is produced by deconstructing and reconstructing binary concepts: theory-practice, school-home, student-teacher relationships (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999). Knowledge is constructed collaboratively

by all those involved, including administrators, teachers, students, and families. In knowledge *of* practice, according to Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999), teachers have a broader understanding of their role as teachers, theorizers, activists, and leaders. Ro (2018) argued that TEPs can have a lasting impact on teachers' professional growth after they leave the program if TEPs focus a significant part of their education on building teachers' capacity for challenging and changing their context, increasing teachers' knowledge *of* practice of the "what," "when," and "where." Together, knowledge *for* practice, knowledge *in* practice, and knowledge *of* practice enhance our self-efficacy beliefs. These self-efficacy beliefs fuel our sense of agency in exercising our vision.

On the other hand, Grisham (2000) pointed out there are three sources of knowledge that contribute to teachers' foundational knowledge and belief systems: personal, practical, and professional experiences. Hedges (2012) found that teachers' personal/life experiences are the primary influence when teachers make instructional decisions, prioritized over theory and research. She argued that teachers' personal knowledge works as a filter for the formal knowledge they are exposed to during their professional learning. Teachers' personal knowledge becomes infused with formal knowledge, which influences teachers' curriculum decisions and pedagogical practices. Her findings challenged the validity of evidence-based practice, confirming Hammersley's (2005) argument about the role of theory in teachers' practices, and she suggested the term *evidence-informed practice* instead.

Professional experiences, in the form of TEPs and PD sessions at schools, are the second source of knowledge. Richardson et al. (1991) found that PD could be ineffective in changing teachers' practices when teachers did not understand the underpinning of a theory or if this new information was not congruent with their beliefs. Their findings corroborated those of Brookhart and Freeman (1992), who reiterated that knowledge and skills incompatible with teachers' beliefs are not applied. Parsons et al. (2016) supported these findings by reporting that teachers applied only those PD elements that aligned with their existing schema without connecting to the whole content. In her study about teachers' beliefs and practice in reading/language arts, Grisham (2000) found that new teachers were influenced by their constructivist TEP approach in their first year at work. However, in later years, practical knowledge (that is, the school teaching culture) became an important source of influence. She explained that when teachers are aware of an incongruency between their theoretical beliefs and their practices, they are also capable of explaining the sources of the inconsistency, such as contextual constraints, whether related to school policy and accountability, students' characteristics, or a combination of both. These findings about teachers' ability to explain their incongruent practices are also confirmed by Stribling et al. (2015) and Ro (2018).

Research on this topic is full of studies providing evidence that teachers' personal knowledge (Anyon, 1980; Collazo, 2017; Clandinin & Connelly, 1987; Hammersley, 2005; Harlin et al., 2009; Hedges, 2012; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Pajares, 1992; Rosenthal & Jacobson, 2006; Shim, 2014; Van den Bergh et al., 2010), practical knowledge (Brookhart & Freeman, 1992; Fránquiz & Ortiz, 2015; Porter & Freeman, 1986;

Sandoval-Taylor, 2005; Shulman & Shulman, 2004), and professional knowledge (Buck & Sylvester, 2005; Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005; Grisham, 2000; Kidd et al., 2004, 2005, 2008; Lenski et al., 1998; Parsons et al., 2015; Poulson et al., 2001; Richardson et al., 1991; Squires & Bliss, 2004; Stribling et al., 2015) can influence practices, positively or negatively.

Examples that show how personal knowledge influences instructional practices positively can be found in Ladson-Billings (2009). Teachers who have experienced marginalization can understand the experiences of those who are marginalized. How practical knowledge influences our instructional decisions was demonstrated by Sandoval-Taylor (2005), who used students' funds of knowledge to build her lessons using ethnographic methods. Professional knowledge guiding teachers' instructional decisions was presented by Poulson et al. (2001), although the authors suggested that teachers' literacy orientation could influence teaching practices, positively or negatively.

Teachers' Literacy Practices. As teachers, we teach the way we believe instruction works most effectively, and these perspectives are based on our theoretical, professional, or practical experiences and backgrounds. In the educational paradigm shift from a behaviorist to a constructivist approach—in this case, to a sociocultural constructivist approach—theories are reflected in teachers' practices in schools through assimilation, accommodation, and restructuring (modification; Piaget, 1923/2002). The research landscape provides evidence that teachers' personal backgrounds behave as lenses and that context influences teachers' literacy practices. Lenski et al. (1998) developed a survey (Literacy Survey Orientation) to measure teachers' theoretical beliefs

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and practices on literacy learning from a constructivist theoretical approach. The researchers found that their tool predicted high consistency between constructivist theory and practice, but that using constructivist strategies did not necessarily mean understanding the underpinning of the theory, or that teachers who had a constructivist orientation knew how to implement these principles in classroom activities. Poulson et al. (2001) found that most effective literacy teachers in their study demonstrated a greater degree of consistency between responses related to their theoretical constructivist beliefs and a hypothetical teaching activity. In other words, teachers who were effectively teaching literacy demonstrated congruency between constructivist theory and practice. In contrast, Collins (2015) found that teachers' practices were not aligned to their theoretical constructivist literacy beliefs due to pressure from federal, state, and local policies.

This study focused on literacy and how teachers from a TEP with a CR theoretical philosophy used, or did not use, this knowledge while working with CLDS. Research on PD has frequently discussed teachers' lack of familiarity with students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, including those living in poverty (Au, 2000; Sánchez & Thorp, 2008; Siwatu et al., 2016; Sleeter, 2017). Often, teachers and other professionals working with CLDS see deficits instead of differences or assets. This deficit model has been one of the restrictive factors that hinder full access to literacy/Literacies for these students (Grant & Wong, 2003). Teachers' unawareness of second language development and cultural differences has been the cause of over- and under-identification of children in special education settings (Artiles, 2017; Sánchez & Thorp, 2008). Minority language children are overrepresented in these settings as well as

being labeled at risk of academic failure (Genesee et al., 2004). As noted by Kucan and Palincsar (2011), these students "may be denied access to instructional opportunities that promote proficient and advanced levels of academic achievement" (p. 344) and offered only basic skills instruction in reading (decoding strategies).

The pivotal role of TEPs in debunking the deficit narrative was demonstrated by Siwatu et al. (2016). The researchers discovered that preservice teachers' self-efficacy doubts about teaching in a CR way originated in an apparent disconnection between coursework and field experiences. These preservice teachers reported that cooperative teachers in their field experiences were not models of CR pedagogy. Because they were unable to use their field experiences as vicarious experiences or models of CR pedagogy, the system was perpetuated. They explained the problem as lack of declarative ("what"), procedural ("how"), and conditional ("when") CR knowledge to be used in specific teaching situations. Self-efficacy doubts among these preservice teachers were produced by cooperating teachers who followed "mandated, scripted curriculum to the extent that teaching in culturally responsive ways might not be prioritized" (Siwatu et al., 2016, p. 289).

On the other hand, Stribling et al. (2015) found that preservice teachers' belief systems about teaching could be disconnected from their teaching practices due to context. In their study, this disconnection between theory and practice was explained as a struggle "with the bureaucratic structure of schools and the policy regulations placed upon them [preservice teachers] and their students" (Stribling et al., 2015, p. 45). These findings are corroborated by Ro (2018), who found that context, such as a school system

of accountability, had a heavier weight on teachers' practices once they left the TEP. Additionally, as mentioned earlier, Collins (2015) found that most teachers in her study did not practice what they believed. She uncovered teachers who self-rated as constructivist in their approach, yet were unable to align their practices with a constructivist theoretical pedagogy, which had negative pedagogical implications, such as ineffective literacy instruction.

Current research provides evidence that teachers are influenced both by historical and cultural dimensions and by more local constraints, such as the school system and resources (Broemmel et al., 2020; Parsons et al., 2017; Ro, 2018). Even though we can study perspectives and practices as separate entities, in general, research is steered toward a "consistency thesis" (Fang, 1996; Grisham, 2000; Poulson et al., 2001; Richardson et al., 1991; Squires & Bliss, 2004) or *congruency.* The latter is a foundational term used in this study.

Research on TEPs with a Focus on Literacy

Developing students' literacy skills is every elementary teacher's responsibility, because literacy cuts across all the school subjects. Although schools divide tasks among different teachers, fostering Literacies is every teacher's job. TEPs differ in their perspective, orientation, approach, and emphasis placed on each area of literacy development.

The International Literacy Association standards are used by some TEPs and state departments of education to train and evaluate reading teachers, reading specialists, and reading teacher educators. Diversity and equity form one of these seven standards for the

preparation of literacy professionals (International Literacy Association, 2018). The International Literacy Association (2018) states the importance of candidates recognizing "how their own cultural experiences affect instruction and appreciate the diversity of their students, families, and communities," emphasizing that diversity needs to be considered an asset in instructional planning, teaching, and the selection of texts and materials.

Risko et al. (2008) provided an extensive review of research on TEPs focused on teaching reading in the United States. The study was concerned with TEPs' impact on teacher candidates' pedagogical knowledge, beliefs, and practices. The research team searched several databases and journals published from 1990 to 2006 and found 233 studies focused on preparing teachers for reading instruction. Only 82 studies withstood the application of quality methodological coherence between theoretical and conceptual arguments, data collection and analysis procedures. Most of the studies selected represented elementary teachers and were qualitative in nature.

It is important to note that Risko et al. (2008) were also interested in the theoretical perspectives of the 82 studies: 73% presented a cognitive or constructivist perspective, 22% a sociocultural approach, 5% a critical theory orientation, and 5% a positivist/behavioral perspective. About the content of the studies, 23 studies (28%) were focused on prospective teachers' beliefs about the reading process and instruction. The authors found many of them were concerned about the theoretical framework used by teachers when teaching reading. Most of the studies showed evidence of a shift from a cognitive-constructivist toward a socio-constructivist approach to reading. The conclusion of most of the studies was that prolonged engagement in schools was a

positive factor in prospective teachers' change of attitude about students' capabilities and their own efficacy capabilities as teachers. In addition, personal writing helped teachers to reflect on their cultural differences while working with CLDS. Other studies relevant to the present discussion provided positive evidence of the use of explicit formats to guide prospective teachers (Mallette et al., 1999). These findings are opposed to others that show the danger of applying mechanical formats, such as scripted mandated curricula, without applying critical thinking from teachers (see also Hoffman et al., 2019; Parsons et al., 2016; Scales et al., 2018). However, Risko et al. recommended caution, since the studies in this group were not longitudinal and were based on few cases.

Grisham (2000) followed 12 teachers for 3 years after they graduated from a TEP with a constructivist approach. One of the most important changes observed in the participants was a shift from their TEP's emphasis on a whole language approach to skill-based instruction to match local influences. The explanation was that teachers had to reflect the context of their current teaching situation and not their former program of affiliation.

Scales et al. (2018) provided evidence that developing professional judgment should be part of the responsibility of TEPs to motivate teachers to reflect on their practices. Recent longitudinal studies on teacher development in the area of literacy appear to support the conclusion that teachers' ideals or visions remain intact despite their shift in practices from what was learned at TEPs to match current local contexts (Broemmel et al., 2020; Parsons et al., 2017).

More longitudinal studies of TEPs with diverse philosophical frameworks are needed. The current study is a multiple-case study. Although it is not a longitudinal study per se, it provides new information about teachers who graduated from a particular TEP from 2000–2012. Understanding what makes these teachers different or not will help us reflect and comprehend how to improve TEPs in order to link theory with practice. In Broemmel et al.'s (2020) study, what prevented teachers from "following the rules" was their search for autonomy, reflective practices, and understanding how to fit within the school system.

CR Teaching and Pedagogy

In CRP, teachers "do not come to *teach* or to *transmit* or to give anything," but rather to learn from their students, with them and about them (Freire, 1970/2003, p. 180). Teachers avoid imposing their own values and ideology. Teachers practice cultural synthesis instead of cultural invasion (Freire, 1970/2003).

There are two main assumptions in CRP, which have their origins in the multicultural education movement of the 1970s. The first assumption is that we live in a society that is pluridimensional and diverse (Gay, 2010). The second is that this diversity does not need to be a problem; it should be a resource and asset for society and schools (Gay, 2010; González et al., 2005; Ladson-Billings, 2009).

The concept of funds of knowledge has its origins in an anthropological project by González et al. (2005), who used students' language and literacy knowledge in Spanish to teach reading in English. Funds of knowledge, as we know it now, is an interdisciplinary theory about the power of social relationships in the construction of

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knowledge. Founded on Vygotsky's (1999) view that learning is social, cultural, and historically mediated, this theoretical approach relies on the premise that knowledge is variable and valuable, and that there are many ways of knowing based on each community's sociohistorical circumstances. Ways of knowing are how people make sense of their daily lives; this knowledge is a strength. In addition, these researchers explained that the educational process can be enhanced when teachers learn about their students (González et al., 2005, p. 6) and contextualize the school material and learning within their lives (González et al., 2005, p. 8). Funds of knowledge theory highlights that students' household lives should be considered the most useful cultural resource for teaching instead of being marginalized. In order for teachers to identify this household knowledge and to introduce it as part of the classroom curriculum or as a resource, they are encouraged to behave as researchers and to visit their students' houses to collect data or information, not in their roles as teachers, but as learners. This idea was named "cultural synthesis" by Freire (1970/2003). The ethnographic visits also provide an opportunity to build a relationship between school and home, and between the teacher and the family.

Gay (2010) pointed out that most teachers view schooling as an effective method for assimilation into the mainstream values of U.S. society. Some teachers consider different treatment of students wrong and unfair, when it is based on cultural, gender, linguistic, or racial considerations, because they believe that they are blind to culture or skin color. CR teaching principles call for a change of perception of CLDS' capabilities from students at risk to students as a promise (Gay, 2010). This perception requires

teachers to take action and make curricular changes (Ladson-Billings, 2009; Moje et al., 2004; Shulman & Shulman, 2004). Students' backgrounds are used as points of reference and motivational devices (González et al., 2005) to maintain students' cultures and to transcend the negative effects of the dominant culture (Ladson-Billings, 2009). Freire and Macedo (2005) argued that it is necessary to unveil the negative narrative that has permeated the education of the oppressed. The educational narrative of CLDS in the United States is characterized by failure (González, 2016). Gay (2010) pointed out the need to change this narrative and turn it into a "story of power pedagogy in the form of culturally responsive teaching" (p. 4)—in other words, a story of academic success for all students.

The link between multicultural education theory and CRP has not been always explicit in the literature. Banks (2004) and Banks and Banks (2013) claimed race, ethnicity, class, gender, and exceptionality are important integrated factors or variables in the discourse and development of multicultural education. Language and religion are factors that have not been included as much in the multicultural education discourse, but they are important to address here too. Banks (2004) also pointed out that multicultural education studies can be organized in five dimensions: (a) content integration, (b) knowledge construction, (c) prejudice reduction, (d) equity pedagogy, and (e) empowering school culture and social structure. Banks (2004) maintained that a historical perspective of the movement is important in order to understand the development and discourse necessary for the restructuring of schools as well as of TEPs. The integration of multicultural education in our model will be discussed in the following sections.

Critical Literacy Defined

Literacy Tenets

In this section about critical literacy, I am combining critical literacy with two philosophical frameworks: multicultural and sociocultural education. However, merely being a CR teacher by using students' funds of knowledge does not turn a teacher into a critical culturally responsive (CCR) teacher in and of itself. An awareness and willingness to change hegemonic structures of power in their classroom does, and I called this willingness *agency*. I argue that a vision or a philosophical framework is necessary, but not in itself sufficient, to perform as an agent of change. I will focus on a critical sociocultural definition of literacy from the dimensional framework used for multicultural education (Banks, 2004; Banks & Banks, 2013). This definition stems from six theoretical assumptions about literacy instruction.

1. Literacy is defined as a social activity embedded in power relations, involving competing models and assumptions about reading and writing processes. Literacy is a social and ideological construct that is represented differently in each society, both formally and informally (Gee, 2015; Heath, 1983; Street, 1995). Literacy as discourse takes advantage of the controversy between the value of oral and written languages. These modes of communication cannot be classified in a binary configuration, such as high literacy versus low literacy, or natural versus acquired skills, or context-dependent versus decontextualized languages, or unidimensional versus multidimensional modes. Each cultural literacy tradition requires a different set of features for

constructing meaning (Street, 1995), which depends on the context of the literacy event.

2. In multicultural and multilingual societies, certain literacy practices are privileged over others (Luke, 2003). Critical literacy demands that we change our understanding of literacy. Literacy includes behaviors and social and cultural conceptualizations that give meaning to the uses of reading and writing. It is Literacy Plus. Emergent literacy experiences start at home, with the parent-child dyad, which creates different patterns of language socialization before students enter schools. In print-laden societies, children experience and develop their concepts of literacy as print from the adults and communities around them (Heath, 1983).

3. Most teachers in U.S. schools are middle-class Americans of European ancestry who speak only English (NCES, 2021a; Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2005). Their experiences differ from those of their CLDS. Most of these teachers understand diversity as a deficit and have low expectations about CLDS' capabilities (Buck & Sylvester, 2005; Collazo, 2017). Their approach to literacy mirrors the hegemonic model predominant in schools instilled by a utilitarian discourse. In U.S. schools, what dominates is a pervasive traditional view of "Literacy" with an uppercase "L" and a single "y" (Gee, 2015; Rex et al., 2010; Street, 1995). Literacy is performed in societies in different ways and it has different practices and realities. Therefore, the term known as Literacies (New Literacies theory) contests the monolingual, monolithic,

autonomous, and decontextualized term known as Literacy (Rex et al., 2010). Researchers and teachers need to question and step out of these current dominant classifications and social forms because they support ideological and discursive forms that negate marginalized competing practices and reproduce inequality in education based on notions of "meritocracy" (Bowles & Gintis, 2011), "colorblindness" (Rogers & Mosley, 2008), and "neutrality" (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990).

4. Teachers need to be knowledgeable about their students and school communities (González et al., 2005) and plan to make clear that many different kinds of *knowledges* and discourses are welcome in the classroom space (Moje et al., 2004). Moll and González (1994) maintain that minority students bring to school deep funds of knowledge, which should be fostered and utilized by teachers. CLDS enter schools bringing these experiences, histories, and perspectives, which are largely excluded from school curriculum and learning opportunities (Gay, 2010; González et al., 2005; Grant & Wong, 2008; Howard & Navarro, 2016; Moje et al., 2004). CR teachers build connections between the knowledge students bring from home and formal reading instruction and school-based reading curricula (Au, 2000; Cummins, 2000; Gutiérrez, 2011; Ladson-Billings, 2009). They may create a space known as *a third space*, bridging the school and home spaces (Gutiérrez, 2008; Moje & Luke, 2009). Research in literacy learning has demonstrated the need to include different sources and kinds of texts

(multiliteracies), which can provide multiple opportunities for success and generalization of skills (Gay, 2010; Haley & Austin, 2014; Moje & Luke, 2009).

5. The requirement to distinguish between reading, decoding, and literacy, or practices and habits, should be the starting point of the discussion of literacy in schools and TEPs. Literacy development does not end when students learn to decode. Luke (1988) pointed out that it is necessary to frame the definition of literacy within epistemic boundaries. For this study, the epistemological boundary is the critical paradigm. In this paradigm, literacy as decoding has the purpose of teaching students functional reading and writing of the word, while literacy as a critical function has the purpose of teaching students how to read the world (Freire, 1970/2003; Freire & Macedo, 2005)

6. Access to literacy knowledge for CLDS in classrooms in the United States is one of the tenets of CR teaching and a recurrent theme in discourse analysis studies on literacy (Rex et al., 2010). Due to the uneven power relationship between these students and schools, schools' deficit discourse continues to negate students' agency and CLDS are perceived as blank slates (Cummins, 2000; Freire, 1970/2003). Genesee et al. (2004) advised against practices that encourage the domination and disappearance of the cultural and linguistic identities students bring to school, as this can be detrimental to students' well-being (Ogbu, 2003).

The aim of this study is to explore some of these teachers' perspectives of language, culture, and literacy and how these teachers implement literacy events with CLDS in their classrooms following a philosophical and theoretical framework, which was most likely acquired during their TEP.

Critical Literacy in the Classroom

Pardo et al. (2012) illustrated how, in the last two decades, educational policy has mandated elementary teachers to narrow the focus of their instruction to skills, enforcing scripted curricula and high-stakes testing outcomes. These mandates also limit their students' opportunities for literacy achievement. In their review of literacy research studies that used discourse analysis as a method, Rex et al. (2010) reported that equitable access was a constant theme in most of the 300 studies reviewed. These studies were concerned about how literacy education can be successfully accomplished for all students, and how literacy is not an autonomous skill, but immersed in social and political interests. The authors also pointed out that discourse analysis has been key in the deconstruction of traditional, binary categories in literacy research and education, such as successful/unsuccessful, abled/disabled, capable/deficit, and central/marginal. In this study, I avoided these terms and other binary categorizations that place some teachers as deficient or unsuccessful, focusing instead on the experiences of these teachers and their literacy perspectives, self-reported practices, and self-reported practical knowledge.

Crotty (2015) argued that within the new paradigms of making meaning, such as the critical-sociocultural perspective, "all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction

between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context" (p. 42). Because all knowledge is constructed socially and culturally, the meanings we exchange are not only conveyed by words, but are also constructed by the participants in communication (Scollon et al., 2012). When teachers shift their perception of students' identities, they also shift their assumption of how knowledge is constructed and what kind of knowledge should be valued in schools. The new paradigm empowers teachers and students and gives them an agent role. Pardo et al. (2012) clarified that in order to teach Literacies in ways that advance social justice, teachers need to be committed and confident, and to take a stand about who they are and what they teach. They defined teacher agency as follows:

> Thus, they are not maintainers of the status quo, but they are actively acting on their values—especially the value of literacy as a means toward social justice—just as they are confronted with situations that threaten to undermine their professionalism and their students' opportunities to learn powerful literacies. (Pardo et al., 2012, p. 3)

In the following sections, I frame my critical view of Literacies within two philosophical frameworks: multicultural and sociocultural education. CCR teachers use CR pedagogy as the vehicle of instruction to accomplish a more equitable education for CLDS.

Content Integration: The Knowledge that Counts in Schools. Content integration is probably the area that has been explored most in CRP research. Content integration is defined by Banks (2004) as literature focused on "what information should

be included, how it should be integrated, and where it should be located within the curriculum" (p. 6). Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) argued that the knowledge traditions and lived experience of marginalized groups are rarely present in the K-12 curriculum. CCR teachers are committed to filling this gap by working toward a double social justice goal: equity and recognition by building on their students' linguistic and cultural knowledge.

There is no agreement among teachers about what constitutes or stands for multicultural Literacies/literacy/literature (Alva, 2015). Teachers often cite as barriers the scarcity of resources and multicultural literature, or content areas with limited opportunities, for example math and science. However, resistance is based more on teachers' conceptual framework of what is a legitimate resource to be used in classrooms and ignorance of their power as authorities or agents to legitimize them. Bourdieu (2003) argued,

> They play their part in constructing the legitimate language by selecting, from among the products on offer, those which seem to them worthy of being consecrated and incorporated into the legitimate competence through educational inculcation, subjecting them, for this purpose, to a process of normalization and codification intended to render them consciously assimilable and therefore easily reproducible. (pp. 58–59)

This legitimization process can be performed by teachers in their practices in their classroom, but teachers have internalized the discourse of educational policies that exclude the voices of minority students in the curricula (Grant & Wong, 2008). Content

integration occurs when teachers explain "concepts, principles, generalizations, and theories" using examples and content from a variety of cultures (Banks & Banks, 2013, p. 16).

Banks (2004) explained how it was necessary in the 1930s for scholars such as Woodson and Du Bois to construct knowledge about African Americans to develop the necessary teaching materials to be used in schools and colleges. Currently, this is the case for multicultural books in schools. However, the reality is there are not many available, especially books that are culture specific and age appropriate. Regarding print texts, multicultural literature "calls attention to people and voices not traditionally written about or included in the body of literature most frequently taught" and has been used as a motivational device (Pentimonti et al., 2011, p. 203). Bishop (1982) identified three categories of multicultural books according to the degree that each book represents the culture. *Culturally neutral books* are books portraying multicultural faces or family members with no specific information included. *Culturally generic books* are books in which a character or characters represent a specific group, but there is little cultural information included about the group. In *culturally specific books,* the character or characters belong to a specific group and there are details that define that particular group without stereotyping (Bishop, 1992). Li (2011) pointed out that when literacy instruction is not made meaningful to minority students, it can have adverse consequences for reading development, such as lack of motivation and achievement. As Gay (2010) pointed out, this does not mean students should be taught only about their culture or

interests, but content should be chosen and delivered in a way that is meaningful to the students it is intended for.

There have been improvements in the text materials chosen for teaching reading in English and other content areas, in terms of the way they portray other cultures, such as African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans, and Asians. However, these materials are still controlled by the dominant groups and continue to undermine other groups' status, culture, and contributions to the American culture (Anderson, 2012; Gay, 2010). The majority of them are written from the mainstream perspective, by White European American authors. Anderson (2012) pointed out that in 2007 94% of the books were written by people from the mainstream culture: of 3,000 books published, 227 were about African Americans (7.6%), 124 about Asian/Pacific Americans (4%), 101 about Latinos (3%), and only 50 (1.6%) about American Indians. Discussion of contentious issues about diversity, such as race and gender discrimination and how the experiences of diverse groups have been ignored, is avoided in these texts; "the unpleasant sides of society and cultural diversity are either sanitized or bypassed entirely" (Gay, 2010, p 131). As Crisp et al. (2016) pointed out, "This is not to imply that exemplary books that challenge dominant discourses and normative representations do not exist; remarkable work has been done and is available for young readers. . . . [But] We need to do more" (p. 29).

Multicultural literature has been used in other content areas, for example in science. Moje et al. (2004) provided evidence that the creation of a third hybrid space between and within home and school enhanced science learning for CLDS. In their study

of literacy learning in the secondary school content areas, they claimed that the distance between home and school knowledge and discourses is epistemological, a matter of "what counts as knowledge to be organized, predicted, tested, expressed, or explained, and what counts as a warrant for validating claims and expressions" (Moje et al., 2004, p. 66). Teachers have the task of developing a third space by engaging students in discussions—and reading and writing activities—that explore not only their local community experiences but the experiences of the communities the students come from (Hoffman et al., 2019).

For Kelley et al. (2015), the purpose of culturally familiar tasks for reading was to provide students with opportunities for academic success that could eventually enhance students' general self-efficacy across academic domains. In their study, middle school students were provided with two different reading tasks (one with a culturally familiar text and another with a culturally unfamiliar text). The results indicated a significant difference in test scores (recall and reading comprehension): "Students had higher test scores on the culturally familiar reading task than on the culturally unfamiliar task" (Kelley et al., 2015, p. 301).

As another example, Fecho and Meacham (2007) used an additive approach to literacy instruction with African American high schoolers. The authors intersected traditional curricular representations (understanding and use of alliteration, assonance, similes, and metaphors) with students' non-traditional literacy practices (hip hop).

Equity Pedagogy and Communicative Patterns. Equity pedagogy is the second dimension of multicultural education theory (Banks, 2004) and probably the one that has

been the object of the most CR studies. It is explained as the dimension in which teachers' educational procedures and delivery strategies and students' frames of reference are in synchrony or congruency. Teachers need to reflect on how they are facilitating the academic achievement of all their students, especially those who are different from them. Critical literacy claims that literacy can be used to empower students to change their lives (Pardo et al., 2012), not because there is something wrong with them, but because it is used as a form of capital in our society. Equitable access to literacy is provided when a teacher who exercises an equity pedagogy disposition takes risks and uses professional knowledge to make instructional decisions that dissent from the default classroom discourse setting.

Research shows how congruency between teachers' educational procedures and delivery strategies on one hand, and students' frames of reference on the other, can enhance school achievement of CLDS (Au, 2000; Gay, 2010; González et al., 2005; Gutiérrez et al., 1999; Ladson-Billings, 1992; Lee, 2004; Parsons et al., 2015; Vélez-Ibáñez & Greenberg, 2005). However, Sleeter (2017) argued that teachers, even those who are cognizant of the tenets of CRP, tend to continue to attribute and interpret students' academic low achievement "to factors within the student and family rather than to pedagogical factors under educators' control" (p. 157). In *Critical Race Theory and the Whiteness of Teacher Education* (2017), Sleeter claimed that most TEPs persist in reproducing White teachers who are not well-equipped to disrupt the deficit paradigm predominant in the education of minority students. Schools need more teachers with CCR self-efficacy beliefs.

Li (2011) demonstrated that these dissonances between home and school patterns originate in different cultural practices of literacy, from identity development to gender roles, and from literacy practices to parental involvement, which most teachers are not aware of (see also Heath, 1983, 1999).

Constructivist approaches to reading comprehension are defined as the ability to extract and construct meaning through interaction with a text. According to this definition, for readers to comprehend a text, they bring to the act their cognitive capacities, motivation, knowledge, and experiences (Purcell-Gates et al., 2016). Student and teacher co-construct meaning by engaging in chains of communicative exchanges. The critical perspective regarding this construction of meaning is that it is the teachers' perspectives that influence these interactions—about the text, within the text, and around the text. Teachers need to provide students "equal access to the floor and to the academic content" (Michaels et al., 2008, p. 285). However, this is not possible with a socially decontextualized, autonomous model of reading that impedes CLDS from access to cultural capital (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Literacy goes beyond learning an isolated skill; it is a continuous and multiphase process. Literacies as social practices should be the starting point, not the end point of research and practices in school (Luke, 1988; Moje & Luke, 2009). Hernandez-Zamora (2010) argued that literate people are not those who decode words, but those who decode the world using literacy to find their voice.

Interactive Discourse Patterns. Researchers who focused on the study of other cultural groups have questioned teachers' directed discourse patterns as the only kind of class interactions (Au, 1980; González et al., 2005; Heath, 1983; Ladson-Billings, 1992;

Phillips, 1984). For example, in school classrooms in the United States, when a teacher asks a question, students answer one at a time; this is known as the unmarked feature. The deviant behavior or the marked feature would be two or more students answering the question at the same time (Au, 1980). O'Connor et al. (2015) identified the need to explore different discourse patterns to deepen students' achievement and understanding. They found empirical evidence suggesting that pedagogically orchestrated and skillful classroom discussions had short and long positive effects on students' math and language arts test scores and understanding of material and texts. These findings support the use of Accountable Talk (Resnick et al., 2015).

For Rueda (2011), CR strategies facilitate comprehension and learning because it reduces the extraneous cognitive load. He also based this on Krashen's principle of comprehensible input (Krashen & Terrell, 1983), which is an important instructional principle of acquiring a second language. Topping and Trickey (2015) showed that when teachers changed their discourse patterns by increasing the use of thoughtful open-ended questions, the teachers' and students' verbal interactions were positively affected. Students increased their participation in classroom discussion both quantitatively and qualitatively and achieved a better understanding of the topic of discussion.

Wilkinson et al. (2015) summarized the current state of research on the effects of text-based discussions to promote reading comprehension. They reported that classroom discourse that promoted students' participation in high-quality discussions about texts had the ability to improve reading comprehension. They pointed out that classroom discourse could be engaging when focused on open-ended, authentic questions eliciting

both extratextual and intertextual connections between text and students' lives. Their meta-analysis of research studies identified nine approaches to conducting effective discussions in the classroom, which, used together, had the potential to increase individual student comprehension and reasoning outcomes. They also showed that the quality of talk was more important than the quantity of interactions between students. Their findings indicated that some of these positive effects could be long lasting and could be transferred to new texts when students were instructed concurrently using whole-class and small-group discussion formats. They suggested that to accomplish these outcomes, there was a need for changes in teachers' discourse and in their understanding of teaching, knowledge, and the role of talk.

Parsons et al. (2015) provided evidence that engagement is essential for literacy learning and reading achievement. The authors discussed that research in reading has identified authenticity, challenging, student-directive, and sustained activities as factors that make literacy tasks engaging. In their study, they found that students identified collaboration and differentiated support for completing tasks to be the most important factors for engagement. According to the authors, finding appropriate engaging activities requires teachers to have knowledge of their students' interests and abilities.

On the other hand, McKeown and Beck (2015) found that the comprehension strategy used most often by teachers continued to be the Initiate, Respond, Evaluate pattern, in which the teacher does most of the talk and most of the cognitive work. They discussed the importance of using other strategies that encourage students to focus on the meaning of the text. One of these strategies is Question the Author, in which students are

encouraged to create meaning as a group through discussion of the context of a shared

text (McKeown & Beck, 2015). Students collectively build connections by using

evidence or reasoning and by responding to the contribution of their peers. This strategy

was found to enhance students' comprehension of difficult texts.

Although research has provided evidence that Accountable Talk led to positive

outcomes for all students, as demonstrated by mean score gains, observations of whole-

group discussions showed that not all students participated equally in them (Clarke,

2015). Clarke's analysis provided an understanding of these students' conceptualizations

of *knowing*. Knowing is a precondition, a process, or an outcome. For these low-

participating students, knowing meant having the correct answer, a precondition, which

deterred them from trying to participate in discussions because only the knowers had *the*

right to speak or be heard. She concluded that teachers are required to change their

discursive culture and responses to students' ideas to increase classroom participation "in

which knowledge and understanding are collaboratively constructed" (Clarke, 2015, p.

178).

Michaels et al. (2008) defined *accountability of knowledge* as fundamental

information or facts that students need to have in order to participate. In order to

participate equally, students need to believe they have the required fundamental

knowledge, which in some CLDS' mindsets they lack due to negative school experiences.

It is the task of a CCR teacher to open the possibilities for student engagement.

Knowledge Construction: Whose Perspective. The sociocultural constructivist

theory states that human development is not simply a matter of biological maturation.

Human development is "enriched and extended through the individual's appropriation and mastery of the cultural inheritance" in activities and in interactions with others (Wells, 2000, p. 54). From this perspective, meaning and learning are constructed in intersubjectivity with others (Bruner, 1996). Our brain does not simply grow up biologically and according to a genetic predisposition (Chomsky, 1972, 1988); the social-linguistic environment has a determinant influence (Vygotsky, 1999). Knowledge is not simply transferred or passed, as it is understood in a behaviorist approach to education. Meaning is constructed and reconstructed through joint activity rather than transmitted from teacher to learner. These ideas are also continued in Freire's (1970/2003) opposition to the vertical patterns consistent with the ideology of banking education: "The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach" (p. 80).

One of the purposes of education is to provide access to curricular knowledge for all students. Knowledge construction is focused on how knowledge reflects ideology, interests, values, and perspectives and how it influences the social, behavioral, and natural sciences. This area is vital for changing negative narratives and deconstructing stereotypes and myths about diverse populations because it challenges paradigms of thoughts and perspectives of dominant society (Banks, 2004; Banks & Banks, 2013). For critical literacy, awareness and appreciation of diversity are of no value without action. Teachers support students in deconstructing how knowledge is built: they "help students to understand, investigate, and determine how the implicit cultural assumptions, frames of reference, perspectives, and biases within a discipline influence the ways in which

knowledge is constructed within it" (Banks & Banks, 2013, p. 17). The question that

CCR teachers ask here is *whose* knowledge? Who decides what knowledge counts in

schools and from whose perspective? CCR teachers can use these conflicts, allowing

students to become the focus of class discussions, and bringing students' attention to their

own cultural models, as well as school and mainstream cultures (Gee, 2015).

Using a critical sociocultural perspective, CCR teachers create a bridge or

scaffolding around knowledge in the student's zone of proximal development, supporting

the student in *constructing* or making sense of the new information in a critical way: a

bridge, in Gee's (2015) words, "to rethinking, to imagining newer and better—more just

and more beautiful—words and worlds. That is why good teaching is ultimately a moral

act" (p. 128). CCR teachers are aware of these power relationships and use their agency

to create opportunities to challenge these assumptions about legitimate knowledge in

their classrooms. Instead of excluding these competing practices and prioritizing their

own, reifying differences, they choose to include their students' literacy practices to

create a more democratic society (Freire, 1970/2003). In Souto-Manning's (2012) study,

teachers behaved as agents of change when they blurred the official and unofficial

curricula and validated their students' unconventional practices by disrupting normative

binaries (school and home knowledge), enriching classroom opportunities for CLDS to

learn.

Students have also appropriated the binary discourse. Moje et al. (2004) described

how students demonstrated many valid scientific knowledges and discourses originating

from their home, community, peers, and popular culture, but were unwilling to share

them in the classroom. They hypothesized that the students had internalized the binary assumption that these two spaces, school and home, should not be merged. For these researchers, texts in schools were used "as colonizers making only certain foreign or outside knowledge and Discourse valid" (Moje et al., 2004, p. 43). Students in these literacy situations could accept or resist the privileged language of academic contexts. Those students who tried to reconcile these competing discourses struggled to maintain their own selves.

The struggle can be reconciled "only if teachers and students incorporate divergent text in the hope of generating new knowledges and Discourses" (Moje et al., 2004, p. 43): a third space (Gutiérrez et al., 1999) or hybrid Literacies (Moje et al., 2004). Transmission of knowledge was identified as the unmarked characteristic, and transformation of knowledge as the marked one that included new forms of activities, such as cooperative learning, shared responsibility, student accountability (Cook-Sather, 2010), dialogic teaching (Parsons et al., 2015; Resnick et al., 2015), creative uses of technology, and New Literacies/multiliteracies (Hannaford, 2016; Steiner & Meehan, 2011). The use of multiliteracies, "those events and practices in which the written mode is still salient, yet embedded in other modes" (Heath & Street, 2008, p. 21), has been supported by research (Alvermann, 2008; Li, 2011). For Haley and Austin (2014), the purpose of multiliteracies was not only cultural engagement, but the facilitation of learning across academic contents.

Luke (1988) argued that textbooks as cultural products "are written and produced by particular historical interpretative communities: groups of academics, teachers, and

curriculum developers operating from paradigmatic assumptions about teaching and learning, and the specific domains of knowledge and competence to be transmitted" (p. 28). This is corroborated by Anderson's (2012) study that reported that most teachers were required to look carefully, and beyond what was offered in the market, to select texts and books that were not biased toward some cultures. It is within teachers' reach to deconstruct harmful stereotypes.

Luke (1988) claimed that selection of texts in the curriculum also "entails the selection of discourse structures and stylistic conventions with which to communicate ideological content" (p. 39). *Text* in its ample sense also included oral texts. Personal narrative or storytelling is the first genre children use to communicate with each other about real past events that have happened to them (McCabe & Rollins, 1994). Research on children's personal narratives has found that many characteristics of these narratives appear to be culturally bound (McCabe & Rollins, 1994; Shrubshall, 1997). Moreover, literature on the subject has reported that the story structure non-mainstream students bring to school often mismatches with teachers' expectations, resulting in a devaluation of these students' language abilities as deficient (Cazden, 1994; Cheatham et al., 2014; McCabe & Rollins, 1984; Michaels, 1981). Gee (2015) discussed the important need to analyze children's discourse, especially for those children who do not fit mainstream norms, unlike middle-class children who benefit from bringing to school a dialect that is closer to the school's standard. Sharing time is identified as a complex situation when teachers' schema does not match those of their students (Cazden, 1994; Michaels, 1981).

Changing teachers' discourse styles by creating a more dialogical and reciprocal approach does not ensure democratic participation when students do not have the linguistic capital necessary to participate in these discussions (Clarke, 2015). Students need to draw from their own resources, such as home-based genres, while practicing new genres introduced in schools (Michaels et al., 2008). Souto-Manning (2012) called these syncretic native practices in which students draw from different and varied resources (formal and informal), "navigating in, out, across and between multiple practices" to construct new literacy practices (p. 390).

Prejudice Reduction. Prejudice reduction is another area explored in multicultural education research. According to Banks (2004) and Banks and Banks (2013), in the history of multicultural education research, efforts have been concentrated on understanding the origin of children's negative attitudes toward racial minorities and developing students' democratic attitudes, values, and behaviors. This can be accomplished by the modification and restructuring of curriculum and instructional materials, or by creating school opportunities for interactions between children of different backgrounds (Ramsey, 2015). But the priority of TEPs, to reduce prejudice in teachers who work with CLDS, is also an important topic (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005).

Buck and Sylvester (2005) found that TEPs with carefully developed courses crafting theory and practice can have positive effects on preservice teachers by interrupting their deficit orientations about others. In their study of a cohort of middle-class White preservice teachers who were enrolled in a CR TEP, the researchers

discussed how the preservice teachers had to confront their biases toward minority students and their unquestioned privileges when placed in urban schools as student-teachers. As part of their curriculum development practice, the preservice teachers were encouraged to search for the funds of knowledge in the schools' surrounding neighborhoods. The task was difficult for some of the teachers, who had to battle against the deficit orientations they had accumulated over years through the dominant deficit discourse. The researchers found that without the guidance of a well-structured program, preservice teachers could not appreciate and uncover the "reservoirs of human strength and talent, as ready-made, untapped educational resources, [that] do exist in urban communities" (Buck & Sylvester, 2005, p. 228).

The use of multicultural literature and students' backgrounds in the literacy curriculum has been linked to successful practices to reduce prejudice, through "lessons and activities teachers use to help students develop positive attitudes toward different racial, ethnic, and cultural groups" (Banks & Banks, 2013, p. 17). The definition of what counts for literacy and who possesses literate competence varies in human history because literacy is a cultural and historical process embedded in power (Luke, 1988). There is an array of studies focused on teachers' use of multicultural books in their classrooms as a teaching strategy (for summaries of these studies, see Freeman & Freeman, 2011; Herrell & Jordan, 2016). Multicultural books provide motivation, increase self-esteem, and are vehicles for learning material. They can also be used to spark meaningful discussions about prejudice (Bennett et al., 2021).

Although the importance of multicultural literacy (MCL) among teachers is recognized, the use of this kind of literature is left as a choice, and it is not systematically included by the majority of teachers. Multicultural texts and books can be used as opportunities for students to learn about themselves or other cultures and can be used as mirrors, windows, or sliding doors to this diversity (Bishop, 1982). However, multicultural education requires willing teachers who are invested in engaging students in thoughtful reflection and critical discussions, in order to use this literature as a significant part of the curriculum in schools. Some literacy researchers (Cazden, 2001; Heath, 1983; Heath & Street, 2008; Ladson-Billings, 1999) have reported that teachers have the ability to exclude or include different literacy practices in order to deny or support student learning. Teachers can create opportunities to reflect and discuss in their classrooms how language differences, such as accents and use of certain vocabulary, are used to discriminate oral practices (Haley & Austin, 2014) and discourage participation.

Empowering School Culture. The purpose of CR teaching is to support potential abilities to learn for all students, especially those who are culturally and linguistically diverse. The last dimension in multicultural education is focused on the role of the school culture and the social structure (Banks, 2004). This area includes research into schools as both institutions and systems. In order to be effective, changes need to be made to school-local culture as well as on the school district level (teaching materials, values and practices, teaching styles, assessments, and curriculum).

The task is not easy on a platform with concurrent discourses. Teachers are part of the school culture and discourse, whether or not they want to be. Power, identity, and

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agency are inconstant "making and remaking" (Lewis et al., 2007, p. 40) of different discourses (school, school district, state, cultural groups, etc.), what Bakhtin (1981/2014) called heteroglossic discourses. It is on this platform that different and competing discourse and cultural models are explored. Despite power struggles, teachers can exercise their agency using their self-efficacy behaviors at the microsphere level:

> The teacher, for example, seems constrained by the activity system of schooling, standardization, and accountability. Although she desires to provide a space for students to discuss issues and topics they care about, she also wished to teach students the skills by which their growth will be measured and to which she was held accountable. Thus, the activity system of schooling, replete with cultural models about what counts as literacy learning (e.g., the ability to make and defend a thesis, the ability to draw from personal experience to make an argument) supported her decision to engage students' perspectives—even on gang practices—in the discussion. (Lewis et al., 2007, p. 41)

CCR teachers can provide a continuity of learning between school and homes against a sustained hegemonic structure based on power (Li, 2011).

As I mentioned in the first chapter, standardization has become the first enemy of diversity (Skerrett & Hargreaves, 2008). Standardization has spread into all areas of education, from assessment to teaching styles, ignoring the fact that students learn differently, and that using a variety of resources and strategies provides fundamental support for educational equity (Gay, 2010; González et al., 2005).

Research affirms the importance of the environment for literacy learning. Understanding the roles that the classroom and school environments play in supporting learning goes beyond providing students with a rich print environment. It includes a shift in the school culture that provides the motivation to learn as a community. Students need to be socialized into communities of practice in which respectful discussions rather than uncritical acceptance are the norm (Michaels et al., 2008). According to Haley and Austin (2014), schools can be responsive to CLDS' literacy needs by promoting opportunities to understand "how language functions politically in their communities and shapes culture" (p. 169) and "how what they are doing in class has an impact in the wider world" (p. 170).

Chapter 3: Methods

Merriam (2009) defined qualitative research as research that is interested in understanding "how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their world, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (p. 5). This study was interested in how a group of six teachers who graduated from a TEP with a defined teaching philosophy interpreted their experiences in the program, to what extent these experiences influenced their perspectives about literacy, and the ways they implemented these practices or not in their classrooms while working with CLDS.

Ravitch and Riggan (2017) pointed out the importance of choosing a methodology that makes "transparent the goals, commitments, frames of reference, guiding concepts and theories, and working assumptions that influence" a study (p. 80). Because this study was focused on how teachers constructed their literacy perspectives and practices based on their intersection with a TEP, a multiple case study design allowed information to be described and compared in order to identify patterns and differences in their perspectives and practices.

Important theoretical assumptions need to be clarified in this chapter. In this study, (a) *Literacies events and settings* are all those activities (written, oral, and other modalities) that are structured around ways of using and talking about written texts in the classroom (Dyson & Genishi, 2005; Heath & Street, 2008), and (b) *Literacies practices* are all those literacy patterns in the classroom that are accepted as the default (official)

and those literacy activities that are seldom explicit in the official life of the classroom (Dyson & Genishi, 2005).

Revisiting the Research Questions

The overarching research question was "What are these teachers' literacy perspectives and practices with CLDS?" In order to respond to this question, I had several sub-questions, which were directed toward understanding these teachers' literacy perspectives and practices and how the UTEEM training program influenced them. Because the study was also interested in how literacy policy influences teachers' practices, questions about teacher agency and teacher efficacy to navigate the educational system were also included.

1. Who are these teachers, and what are their backgrounds? How do they believe their backgrounds influence/inform their teaching?

2. What are their current perspectives on literacy, language, culture, and education?

3. What are these teachers doing in their classrooms to foster CLDS literacy development, including elements such as activities, settings, and strategies?

4. How has being part of the UTEEM program influenced teachers' literacy understanding and practices? What are the components of the program they considered pivotal in supporting their pedagogical vision? How successful have they felt in influencing the literacy learning of CLDS (teacher self-efficacy beliefs)?

5. Can these teachers' theoretical understanding of literacy continue to resist over time the influence of the system and the school culture in which they are involved (school, coworkers, school administrators)? What factors or forces influence their evolution and development (at the micro, meso/local, or macro/global level)? What are the obstacles and protective factors to enact a UTEEM discourse?

In addition, because of the relationship between multicultural education and CR pedagogical practices, I sought to explore these teachers' understandings of MCL: What kind of multicultural literature do teachers use in their classrooms? How do they understand the importance of race, gender, and language issues in their practices? Which CR/MCL practices do teachers believe are important for literacy instruction, and how frequently do they report using them? These questions are embedded in the data collection sources: Semi-Structured Interview (Appendix D) and Survey 2 (Appendix E).

The study used a qualitative multi-case study design, with the support of statistical frequency distribution for triangulation. For example, I used Dedoose (2016) software to find the UTEEM experiences that the participants mentioned as pivotal in their formation as teachers. The study focused on six teacher-participants and their self-reported figured worlds (Gee, 2014a) or classroom culture.

Participants and Settings

Classrooms are considered one of the most crowded spaces in human environments (Cazden, 2001). The importance of language in the classroom is vital, not only because it is the vehicle teachers use to teach and students use to demonstrate how

much they have learned (Cazden, 2001), but because it is also the tool used to make and negotiate meaning of the world (Gee, 2014b), to read the world (Freire, 1970/2003), and to form our identity as literacy learners (Moje & Luke, 2009).

Participant Selection

COVID-19 changed the study design in multiple ways. Initially this study had two parts, Phase 1: Surveys and Interviews and Phase 2: Observations. The participants were selected via convenience sampling because the teachers recruited lived in the same area, were currently in a teaching position, and were willing to participate in the study (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). The participant recruitment procedure that I used in the beginning was to ask former classmates and teachers the whereabouts of UTEEM teachers who were currently teaching nearby and were not part of my cohort. This task was difficult because most of these teachers were spread out around the United States. After identifying at least 20 UTEEM teachers, I contacted them by sending a personal email to request their participation in the study (Appendix F) in the middle of February 2020. I explained to them that I was a graduate of the UTEEM program and that I was interested in learning about their personal experiences in the program and how they were applying this knowledge in their professional lives. Initially eight teachers agreed to participate, and ultimately six teachers participated.

Setting Selection

A strength of this study was that it did not entail one location (school or school division) or classroom setting, but multiple locations and classrooms. Because the theoretical framework claimed that there are micro, meso, and macro forces or spheres

(respectively classroom, school, and school division policies) that interfere with teachers'

practices, the selection of multiple settings allowed for exploring such claims. The

participants' school districts were located on the East Coast of the United States; in total

there were five different settings and four different school districts.

Gaining Permission and Maintaining Confidentiality

The six teachers who participated in the study were sent a link to Survey 1 using

Qualtrics survey software (Appendix C) and a copy of the consent form by email. In the

consent form, I explained to them that the data for this multi-case research study would

be collected through two surveys (Survey 1, Appendix C, and Survey 2, Appendix E) and

one 20-question semi-structured interview (Appendix D). All questions in Survey 1

required responses in order to continue to the following questions. It took approximately

15 minutes to finish (survey time was calculated based on a previous pilot study with

three fellow teachers).

I met with one of the teachers in person at the beginning of March 2020 for the

semi-structured interview after she completed Survey 1. Later in March, all school

divisions in the area closed for in-person learning and transitioned to virtual. I met with

the other five teacher-participants virtually, using two platforms, Skype and Zoom.

Design

This study used a multi-case study methodology with a critical approach. It took

from ethnography the interest of describing the culture of the UTEEM program through

the eyes of the six participants. Qualitative case study research is a bounded system in

which the units of analysis are finite. In this study, a group of teachers who graduated

from a specific TEP and their literacy practices were the units of analysis for the inquiry (Dyson & Genishi, 2005; Merriam, 2009). Merriam (2009) stated that case studies are particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic. Each case study focuses on a particular situation, program, or phenomenon, providing a rich or thick description of the phenomenon under study in order to help the reader to understand this phenomenon. Merriam argued that case study research can be combined using different data collection and analysis methods.

Multi-case study research is based on redundancy and comparison, with the purpose of building a stronger understanding of the particular phenomenon (Merriam, 2009). Bartlett and Vavrus (2017) proposed a dynamic comparative case study (CCS) approach in which practices are always develop within a broader political, social, cultural, and economic environment. Culture and context are interconnected and constructed by the agents' positions and relations. Bartlett and Vavrus maintained that multi-case studies can be variance oriented, interpretative oriented, or process oriented. Process-oriented studies, like this one, are interested in how people, situations, and events influence each other. Although the methodological focus leaned toward process, the study also addressed how participants made meaning of their experience in the UTEEM program.

A 5-week pilot study with a UTEEM teacher took place 3 years ago (Alva, 2018) to measure the validity and reliability of the research tools, including survey items and interview questions, and to calculate the time needed to collect useful data. For this study, it was projected that 3 weeks of observations or about 9 hours of audio recording per

teacher, in addition to other data sources (field notes, artifacts, survey responses and interviews), would be sufficient to respond to the research questions and to secure patterns of behaviors for triangulation (Purcell-Gates, 2011; Ravitch & Riggan, 2017). However, due to COVID-19, observations were not included in the final study design.

Data Sources and Collection Procedures

Data Collection Procedures

The data for the study were collected through surveys (Appendixes C and E) and semi-structured interviews (Appendix D).

Since the goal of this study was to describe the literacy perspectives and practices of a group of teachers who graduated from a specific CR training program (UTEEM), the first step was to identify the extent to which these teachers had these CR dispositions. Survey 1 included 24 items with this purpose, grouped into four categories (self-awareness, community, school, and agency/efficacy), adapted from Whitaker and Valtierra (2018a) and Siwatu (2007). Survey 2 included 18 items with the purpose of identifying these teachers' understanding of literacy and their perspectives and practices. To understand their perspectives or theoretical assumptions (teaching philosophy) and practices in depth, the semi-structured interview process provided an opportunity for dialogue and reflection about the motives of their literacy instructional decisions and the congruency between their teaching philosophy and practices: how they navigated and negotiated an educational system that could be in conflict with what they learned in their TEP. The 20 semi-structured interview questions were based on *The Dream Keepers*:

Successful Teachers of African American Children by Ladson-Billings (2009), who

granted permission for its use by email (1/6/2018).

Table 1 describes the timelines and actions taken in the course of the study.

Table 1

Study Timelines

Participant pseudonym	Email Survey 1 link	Survey 1	Setting	Interview	Email Survey 2 link	Analysis of the data
Nancy	2/02/2020	2/14/2020	Restaurant	3/01/2020	3/13/2020	March-December
Karen	2/15/2020	2/17/2020	Skype	3/23/2020	3/25/2020	March-December
Beth	2/02/2020	2/23/2020	Skype	3/23/2020	3/25/2020	March-December
Carol	2/15/2020	3/16/2020	Skype	3/25/2020	3/25/2020	March-December
Sophia	3/13/2020	3/27/2020	Skype	4/9/2020	4/9/2020	March-December
Meredith	3/13/2020	4/15/2020	Zoom	5/1/2020	5/3/2020	March-December

Data Sources

Memos. Memos are a specific kind of analytical note. In this study, I used the

distinction that Maxwell (2012) provided between descriptive notes and analytical notes.

Memos are different from field or descriptive notes because they address ideas that refer

to the research design itself. Memos are a way to capture the researcher´s analytic

thinking about the data and to facilitate categorization and relationships among the codes and themes, which are developed in the analysis process (Maxwell, 2012). Memos can also be reflective (Dyson & Genishi, 2005), for example, when they address researcher comments on the dynamics of the research site or process. Memos were reviewed after each transcription in order to record how the research developed, to isolate important ideas/codes, and to adjust the design of the study when possible (before the interview).

Teachers' Stories. Learning about teachers' backgrounds and experiences was important in this study because teachers use them as lenses to perceive reality and to filter theory. Their stories were also used to discuss alternative conclusions during the analysis. The study was based on six teacher-participants' stories, which will be covered in more detail in Chapter 4.

The first participant was Nancy, a second-grade teacher with more than 20 years of teaching experience in a suburban school. Karen, the second participant, had 11 years of experience as a teacher and taught second grade in a school with a high percentage of minority students. Beth, the third participant, taught third grade in a Title 1 school with a large percentage of CLDS. Our fourth participant, Carol, had worked at the same suburban Title 1 school since she graduated from UTEEM. She was a kindergarten teacher who provided inclusion in a co-teaching model to students with autism. She was also the only African American teacher in this group of UTEEM teachers. Sophia, the fifth participant, was raised outside of the United States and attended an international school in the Middle East. She was an ESOL teacher for fifth- and sixth-grade students in a Title 1 school. Meredith, the sixth participant, was born in a rural area and attended a

very small elementary school in the South. She had been a teacher for 13 years at the same Title 1 school, and worked as a science coach for elementary students.

UTEEM Experiences. Teachers were questioned about the UTEEM instructional features or components they identified as pivotal for their formation as professional teachers, in order to understand the importance of these experiences in forming teachers who had a strong sense of self-efficacy to teach CLDS.

Surveys. Newcomer et al. (2015) argued that the use of surveys is justified when it is the only way to obtain statistical and reliable information on a phenomenon. Surveys are systematic ways to collect data to obtain factual information about participants' perceptions and behaviors. Hutchinson and Reinking (2011) suggested that it is possible to collect data about both perceptions and views of practice using surveys. In their study, they found that in general, teachers understood the importance of integrating information communication technologies into literacy instruction (perception), but reported a shallow view of integrating them into their instruction (views of practice). There was a gap between teachers' perceptions about the importance of integrating these technologies and their actual instruction and use of them in curricular goals (Hutchinson & Reinking, 2011). In the current study, I used Survey 2 to examine both the importance of CR pedagogy in participants' instructional practices and their reported practices, due to the lack of opportunity for in-person fieldwork.

This study used two surveys. The purpose of Survey 1 (Appendix C) was to identify CR dispositions and self-efficacy beliefs of agency among teacher-participants who graduated from UTEEM. It consisted of 24 items grouped into four subscales: self-

reflection, community, school, and self-efficacy. As pointed out by the literature, developing the knowledge and skills associated with CR pedagogy does not predict classroom behavior (Siwatu, 2011a), but teachers' sense of competence beliefs does (Pajares, 1992; Siwatu, 2007).

Survey 1 was an adaptation of Whitaker and Valtierra's (2018a) Disposition for Culturally Responsive Pedagogy Scale and the work of Siwatu (2007). Whitaker and Valtierra's (2018a) instrument consisted of 19 Likert-scale items that measured teachers' dispositions across three domains: Disposition for Praxis, Disposition for Community, and Disposition for Social Justice. The scale was developed from the literature in the fields of multicultural education, critical pedagogy, and CR teaching, and from the Model Core Standards. This scale has been validated and has an overall reliability value of 0.92. In the current study the Disposition for Praxis subscale was renamed Self-Assessment, based on the fact that most of the items are related to "the extent to which teachers' understanding of themselves affects their praxis" (Whitaker & Valtierra, 2018a, p. 17). The second subscale, Disposition for Community, consisted of nine items with an alpha reliability of 0.87, and in this study was renamed Community. This subscale measured teachers' relationships with others and their ability to create a learning community. Items from this subscale were reworded and modified to better fit the purpose of this study, which could have affected the reliability of the subscale. For example, Item 3, "I value collaborating with colleagues," was changed to "I value collaborating with colleagues, even those with perspectives different from mine." Another example is that the item "I value student differences" was changed to "I value students' diversity in my classroom."

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The last subscale, Disposition for Social Justice, was renamed School, in order to avoid teachers responding with the socially desirable answer. Whitaker and Valtierra (2018a) explained that these items were grounded in critical pedagogy theory, which points out the need for teachers to "acknowledge their own complicity in education's role in social reproduction" (p. 19). The four-item subscale measured "the extent to which teachers recognize schools as sites for the disruption or maintenance of social inequities" (Whitaker & Valtierra, 2018a, p. 19). Two additional items were added to the third subscale (Items 3 and 4 in Appendix C) to address questions explored in this study (the need to change instructional materials and school goals). Subscale 3 in Whitaker and Valtierra (2018a) had an alpha reliability of 0.68.

The current study included an additional dimension, with three questions on teacher agency and efficacy (Bandura, 1977, 1997; Chesnut & Burley, 2015; Siwatu, 2007). An important concept in this study was teacher self-efficacy beliefs. Bandura (1997) pointed out that self-efficacy beliefs are strong predictors of individual behavior. Teachers need to have not only CR dispositions, but also agency and self-efficacy beliefs, in order to implement instructional decisions that affect the lives of CLDS (Siwatu, 2007, 2011b; Whitaker & Valtierra, 2018b). As was indicated earlier in the study, teacher self-efficacy beliefs are defined as "a teacher's belief in her or his ability to organize and execute the courses of action required to successfully accomplish a specific teaching task in a particular context" (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998, p. 233). In the context of CR pedagogy, this refers to teachers' confidence in their "ability to engage in specific culturally responsive practices" (Siwatu, 2007, p. 1091). Because teacher efficacy is

context specific (Chesnut & Burley, 2015), this study assessed teachers' beliefs in their capability to teach literacy to CLDS using a CR framework, without offering item-specific tasks. To ensure that these important constructs were addressed explicitly, three items were added to the Likert scale, following Bandura's (1997) recommendation of a 100-point scale ranging in 10-unit intervals from 0. It was considered that measuring teachers' sense of agency and efficacy regarding CLDS could provide information on how teachers with CR dispositions navigated the educational system in the current times of accountability and politics.

Survey 2 in my study (Appendix E) had the purpose of, in addition to the semi-structured interview (Appendix D), finding complementary information on the participants' beliefs, values, and practices in a systematic way. For example, some of the questions in the survey measured teachers' literacy habits: "How many multicultural books do you have in your classroom library?" (responses: more than 15, 12, 5, 3, 0). Teachers' choices of texts were intended to corroborate teachers' literacy perspectives with literacy practices. Triangulation for validity between Surveys 1 and 2, and the interview, resulted in evidence to support the notion of culture and the congruency thesis discussed in the Teacher Education section of Chapter 2. Teachers demonstrated congruency within the horizontal axis, and conflicted discourses within the vertical axis. The second survey proved to be a useful tool in the pilot study to challenge the consistency thesis and to open a discussion about the need for a new term, *congruency,* more according to evidence-informed practices.

Semi-Structured Interviews. Semi-structured interviews are considered a qualitative method. Newcomer et al. (2015) described them as dialogues between the researcher-interviewer and the participant or interviewee, employing "a blend of closed and open-ended questions, often accompanied by follow-up why or how questions" (p. 493). The interview questions used for the pilot study were adapted from Ladson-Billings's (2009) interview protocol, consisting of 11 questions that addressed issues of student-teacher relationships, cultural and racial mismatches, and the role of the CR educator as a leader in the success of students of color. I changed the phrase *African American youngsters* to *culturally and linguistically diverse students/ English language learners.* Eleven more questions to address the focus of this study related to CLDS were added. These 22 open-ended questions took about 80 minutes in the pilot study (Alva, 2018).

For the final version, I reorganized the order of questions and collapsed them into 20, based on pilot participant input. Of Ladson-Billings's (2009) original interview questions, nine were kept almost the same, one question about discipline was taken out, and two questions about mismatches between what a teacher wanted to teach and had to teach were collapsed into the question "How do you handle possible mismatch between what you want to teach and what you have to teach (kind of materials and resources, type of assessments)?" New questions added to the protocol included whether the participant spoke another language, because sense of self-efficacy increases when teachers are able to communicate with their students and families (Siwatu, 2011a). Questions about TEPs were also added, since one of the purposes of this study was to understand the evolution

of teachers' understanding of literacy. Despite the fact that a question about discipline was removed from the final protocol, this theme was introduced by the teachers themselves on several occasions as an example of mismatch between teachers' and students' expectations about behaviors in school. The interviews ranged from 50–70 min in length. These six participant interviews provided information about the teachers both as individuals and as a group when cross-sectional and comparative analyses were performed (Ravitch & Riggan, 2017; see Appendix D).

Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis took place concurrently with data collection and continued throughout the study as newly collected data were compared. Teacher interviews (Appendix D) took place after some informal analysis of Survey 1 responses was complete, providing an opportunity to clarify teachers' responses. Memos were used when transcribing and analyzing (coding) the teacher-participants' responses to the interview questions. The data analysis strategies used in the study were first and second coding, categorization, and contiguity-based relations (Maxwell, 2012), as well as the homologous CCS framework of Bartlett and Vavrus (2017). The CCS framework compared the cases through three axes (horizontal/teachers, vertical/teacher within school/divisions, and transversal/CRP and UTEEM components), looking for similarities and differences.

Coding, Categorization, and Contiguity-Based Relations

A qualitative study requires conceptual uniformity throughout the design (Maxwell, 2012). Merriam (2009) defined grounded theory as a constant comparative

method of data analysis. In this study, the constant comparison of data provided categories grounded in, and emerging from, these data. Teacher interviews were transcribed and coded using open coding, as well as deductive and provisional codes (organizational, substantive, and theoretical categories)

Maxwell (2012) distinguished between organizational, substantive, and theoretical categories. Organizational categories are "broad areas or issues which you want to investigate, or that serve as useful ways of ordering your data" (Maxwell, 2012, p. 107). They are created prior to the collection of data, interviews, or observations. For some qualitative researchers, coding primarily requires alignment with the research questions (Saldaña, 2015).

Substantive categories are defined as descriptive "categories taken from participants' own words and concepts" (Maxwell, 2012, p. 108). These are generally called "emic" categories, representing the participants' own meanings and understandings, or the participants' own language. Substantive categories are not emic because the researcher interprets them, they are substantive because they are generated by open coding of data (Maxwell, 2012). Open coding is created by careful analysis of the data, looking line-by-line for words or phrases that identify and name specific analytic dimensions and categories. Open coding reflects how the participants attach significance to events and experiences (Maxwell, 2012). On the other hand, theoretical categories are more abstract: "These categories may be derived either from prior theory or from an inductively developed theory . . . They typically represent the researchers' concepts or

what are called 'etic' categories, rather than denoting participants' concepts" (Maxwell, 2012, p. 108).

      First Cycle of Coding. The first cycle of coding started as the conceptual labels emerged from the collected data. Maxwell (2012) and Saldaña (2015) suggested breaking the data into meaningful discrete units. In addition, in my first cycle of coding, I started with *in vivo coding,* or the participants' exact words (Saldaña, 2015) or substantive categories (Maxwell, 2012). Structural and in vivo coding provided me with an opportunity to group data in a way that could be also quantified. For example, I used this process to identify the TEP experiences that teachers considered pivotal in their formation as teachers. A posteriori, I determined how frequently certain words were used by the participants using Dedoose (2016) to tally these experiences for confirmation (triangulation).

      Second Coding Cycle. A second coding cycle was used to review and refine the first and provisional codes identified in the first cycle and to reduce the categories and codes. I used matrixes to display the codes, which helped to organize and identify categories. After performing the analytical coding, I continued reassigning and collapsing categories. Maxwell (2012) defined contiguity-based relations as those that "involve juxtaposition in time and space, the influence of one thing on another, or relations among parts of a text" (p. 106). Instead of looking for similarities and differences, I focused on finding connections between the different kinds of data sources for contextualization (Maxwell, 2012). This process was used to support the CCS analysis, which sees policy as a sociocultural phenomenon, a "political process of cultural production engaged in and

shaped by social actors/ in disparate locations who exert incongruent amounts of influence over the design, implementation, and evaluation of policy" (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017, pp. 1–2).

After transcribing and hand-coding the interviews, I ended up with 17 mother codes or categories. I entered the data into Dedoose (2016) software, broke the data into identifiable excerpts, and assigned two interviews for interrater reliability coding to three different graduate students. The graduate student coders were asked to blind code the excerpts for interrater reliability, for the purpose of exploring divergent perspectives. As explained earlier, this study's epistemology does not support the belief that knowledge is unique. The graduate students were all from the same program, and used the 17 mother codes to corroborate the validity of the codes. Armstrong et al. (1997) discussed the place of interrater reliability in qualitative studies. They sustained that interpretations involve dialogue between researcher and data, and that the researcher's own views have an important effect on the interpretations. Although their study showed that researchers did not have completely divergent interpretations, the themes were reflected within researchers' theoretical frameworks. On the other hand, McDonald et al.'s (2019) meta-analysis found that eight of the nine qualitative studies examined did not use interrater reliability. The authors sustained that interrater reliability may be harmful in qualitative studies where issues of power between researchers are in place, and that it is important to make explicit the reason and the process followed. According to them, however, there may be occasions when interrater reliability in qualitative studies is appropriate; for

example, in large datasets, to develop codes or confirmation of bias. In the current study, the purpose was to explore the possibility of diverse interpretations.

The interrater reliability findings in this study confirmed the findings of Armstrong et al. (1997) and McDonald et al. (2019) that researchers/coders interpreted the data from their perspective and framework, despite the fact that they belonged to the same graduate program and had shared similar classes, as was the case in this study. These coders helped me to review my codes and to reflect on some codes and interpretations I had not considered (for example, White privilege in the case of some teachers, school reproduction as ineffective teaching, and some teacher-participants' avoidance of using the word *race*). It should be noticed that two of the coders confirmed that flexibility is associated with agency, and that some teacher-participants continued to associate CLDS with challenges, which is the discourse of schools.

Because the purpose was not to arrive at an agreement or consensus, a discussion with the other coders was not pursued.

CCS Approach

Bartlett and Vavrus (2017) defined the CCS approach as a systematic case study analysis that "attends simultaneously to global, national and local dimensions" (p. 1), situating the cases on three axes for comparability. CCS has a sociocultural framework because it focuses on policy formation and implementation as cultural and social processes. It analyzes how social actors' practices respond to social forces to produce the social and cultural worlds in which they live: how policy is appropriated (implemented), unfolded, and shaped by the actors and communities (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017).

The three axes are deeply related, and in some cases, overlap. On the vertical axis, policy can be analyzed at micro, meso, and macro levels, which, in the case of educational policies and different schools and school systems, is useful for understanding the level of universality of some mandates. On the horizontal axis, the authors remind us, policy is made locally by teachers, the key actors, who appropriate policy when "they interpret, negotiate, and revise policies on assessment, curriculum content, pedagogical methods, and language of instruction in the classroom" (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017, p. 5). In our case, teachers appropriate policies, but also CRP practices. The transversal comparison analyzes historically how the phenomenon changes over time. In this study, the phenomenon studied was the literacy perspectives and practices of six UTEEM teachers and how and why the CR framework instilled in them by their TEP changed over time.

Measures of Frequency (Quantitative Data)

Mercer (2007) recommended measuring the frequency and co-occurrence of particular words and patterns in spoken language in the analysis of classroom discourses. This method was also used by Pennell (2018) to explore classroom discourse during close reading in Grades 6–8. Pennell used Dedoose to analyze her data in order to understand how classroom discourse shaped meaning construction in readers as they engaged in this close reading strategy. Using frequency distribution and co-occurrence of discourse patterns, she found that students appropriated the discourse moves of their teachers, and that high-order questioning did not always promote cognitive flexibility or alternative viewpoints. I used Dedoose (2016) to analyze the frequency of some terms used in

teachers' discourse, for example the term *individualization*. It was also helpful when I

needed to identify experiences/components in the TEP that were considered pivotal for

these teacher-participants.

Member Checking

Member checking was approached in this study by sending teacher-participants

partial transcripts or excerpts used in Chapter 4. Teacher-participants were asked to

review the transcripts and make changes as needed and to give written feedback on the

tentative interpretations. Teacher-participants confirmed that transcripts were accurate

and reflected their thinking.

Pilot Study

Pilot Study Description

A pilot study took place from January to February of 2018. The participant was a

member of my TEP cohort, a kindergarten teacher in a school system in Virginia. The

primary purpose of the pilot study was to test the validity of the data collection tools. I

visited the teacher's classroom six times and formally observed the teacher and students

on four occasions (1-22-18, 1-24-18, 1-25-18, 1-30-18). The first visit was used to get to

know the children and the last visit to interview the teacher (February 2018). I took field

notes and transcribed and analyzed some of the audio-recorded observations (using my

field notes to select sections of interest from the audio) before I interviewed her. The data

were not analyzed in detail; the first and second codings were not completed until

October 2018. The data analysis was performed comparing the semi-structured interview

transcripts, the field notes of the observations, and the audio-recording transcripts of the

observations, using open coding for categorization. In addition, I used the teacher's responses on the survey (Appendix E) to triangulate all the data for consistency. I will share here some of the findings from the pilot study that were significant for the current study.

Analysis of the data provided some theoretical and substantive categories, as well as some emic concepts about this teacher's understanding of literacy, culture, and language; her perspectives about literacy teaching; and some of her literacy strategies. For example, concerning the principal role of teachers as cultural mediators, the study participant assumed the role of a mediator between the school and parents (Alva, 2018). She said, "I also, because I am a kindergarten teacher, I feel like I am the first face of public education, so we teach students how to go to school, and parents how to go to school."

González et al. (2005) showed that teachers who have opportunities to interact with other cultures demonstrate better dispositions to diversity. The teacher in the pilot study came from a military family (she called herself "a military brat") that traveled around the world, giving her the opportunity to be exposed to other cultures in addition to her own. This awareness was significant in the pilot study and proved to be also a theme in the current study. Personal experiences have significant weight in teachers' practices.

So, I am a military brat . . . so, I was a military kid, and I was a military wife, so I moved around everywhere . . . and I moved a lot, when I was a child, and a student, my dad was in the Air Force until I was . . . an adult so . . . eighteen. I moved eleven, to eleven different places, and I lived in Greece, and I lived on the

island of Crete, and I lived in Germany . . . and I moved every year, eleven years

in a row . . . so I was constantly going to new schools, so . . . this go . . . new

teachers or students, other languages, so I know what is to be the new kid on the

block, and don't know the rules and how to figure things out. (Alva, 2018)

Consistent with research on effective TEPs (Dillon et al., 2011), the participant

shared that her TEP was influential in her perception and understandings of what literacy

is and how literacy is linked to language, culture, and race. This was also corroborated in

the current study.

Even if they had limited exposure to actual books, they had exposure to stories.

So, I found that my AA [African American] students can just naturally see, like,

they can . . . later on in a kindergarten year we ask, "What is, what's the author

trying to tell you?" And in general, my AAs grab the concept, very, very quickly,

because they come to me kind of with an understanding of the big picture idea.

First of all, I am a big proponent that if there are two languages at home,

speak them both at home. Whatever language you speak, speak them. Because

that helps the child to understand language, and at this age we are still

understanding language, and how language works. So, if it is either English or

Spanish, whatever your home language is, if you have books that you can read in

that language, by all means do that. Especially if you are expecting the child to

speak that language. That helps them. Any kind of reading, no matter what the

language is, is going to be helpful to me in teaching reading in English. Because

they will understand how language works. In every language, there is descriptor

words, there is punctuation, there is people's names . . . There are things that are common in all languages that at the kindergarten or first grade, that you are going to be able to tap in, so I will always recommend that.

She also pointed out the importance of some TEP activities, such as field experiences, as part of her preparation as a teacher (Dillon et al., 2011).

That exposure really helped me. To answer your question directly, I think if you can have it at least in your pre-teaching, while you are getting your teaching degree, some part of your experience is an experience where you are the minority, it can be in a Hispanic school, where all are Hispanic children having to learn a different language, to me was very helpful to help me understand. . . . Every teacher could have had that exposure, even if it was just for observation for a week, we were there for a whole semester, I felt that that was very helpful to me later on.

Li (2011) talked about the role of the teacher as a cultural accommodator and mediator in promoting students' learning. This teacher explained her philosophy, consistent with Vygotsky's (1999) understanding of the teacher's role and the concept of the zone of proximal development:

My philosophy of teaching is to accept the child exactly where they are. I keep a quote on the bottom of my signature that's from Fred Rogers that talks about loving, and that loving doesn't mean that you get to decide, that you accept somebody exactly where they are, and then, as it's the teacher's [role] to help that student to move forward.

This teacher also alluded to the impact that her TEP readings and critical reflections had on her own racial awareness:

In my grad school program, the TEP program focused on cultural awareness, so to make you aware from . . . I think that was the first time I realized I was White . . . Until that point, I did not have any idea . . . That I was White . . . hmm . . . so to understand that you are White and what that means. The privilege that comes with that, I was made aware of that in grad school. Hmm, but it did, my grad school program definitely made me aware of, not only cultural differences, but as well as ability differences, because there was this component that had to do with teaching students of different abilities. So, it was a very rich grad school program.

In the current study, as will be explained later, teachers also pointed out how certain components in their TEP (such as readings and discussions) had a pivotal influence in their understanding of Whiteness and social justice.

Findings: Congruency Between Theoretical Framework, Teachers' Perspectives, and Practices

In terms of beliefs and congruency, this pilot study provided some evidence that there was some degree of congruency between the theoretical framework, the teacher's beliefs, and her practice.

The sociocultural framework of this TEP was observed in the teacher's literacy practices, to a degree. For example, the way the teacher approached her relationship with the parents demonstrated a root belief and respect for parents as the students' first teachers. In addition, although the teacher did not visit the students' homes, she

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demonstrated profound knowledge of each of her students (González et al., 2005). The importance of oral development and the use of other languages in the class also demonstrated some of the lessons learned in the TEP. Despite the fact that the participant showed knowledge of cultural resources such as books from different cultures, this kind of multicultural literature was not observed in the classroom or available in the classroom library (Alva, 2018). This lack of multicultural literature contradicted some of the teacher's expressed beliefs and CR philosophy. As Risko et al. (2008) showed, there are beliefs that are highly resistant to change. However, the teacher was aware of the contradiction or incongruency, and cited as a barrier or local constraint to applying her CR philosophy the difficulty of accessing literature in other languages, which also corroborated some research findings (Grisham, 2000).

Conclusions

This pilot study helped me to test the practicality and validity of the data collection tools (Appendix D and Appendix E). These tools were easy to use and provided me with rich information that answered my research questions. In addition, the pilot study helped me to question some assumptions I had before it. After transcribing and analyzing the teacher's answers from the interview and cross-comparing them to the survey answers (Appendix E) and to my field notes and audio-recorded observations, I started to wonder if just being part of a TEP was enough to internalize the philosophical framework of the program. For this reason, I decided to refine the participation selection criteria using the scale developed by Whitaker and Valtierra (2018a), since teachers

might not have internalized the philosophical underpinning of their TEP. The outcomes of this decision are explained in Chapter 4.

The lack of congruency shown in the pilot study appeared to demonstrate that even if a teacher has a strong understanding of CRP, local and/or global factors may interfere with their ability to put it into practice. Those teachers who are able to demonstrate a critical CR disposition may have a more developed sense of agency.

The pilot study helped to refine the term from *consistency* to *congruency* between teachers' perspectives, forms of knowledge, and practices.

Researcher Positionality

Moje and Luke (2009) pointed out the importance of the mutual influence of the researcher's identity and perspective of literacy, and how this perspective shapes identity as a researcher. In the introduction, I mentioned how my background and TEP experiences intervened and influenced the selection of my topic and how these experiences play a critical role in the way I approach research and teaching.

Researchers are not immune to the experiences they are immersed in, and I am no exception. Having majored in Spanish linguistics, I believe that language is the primary way we socialize, make meaning, and form our identity. In addition, being raised in another culture helped me realize that some of my beliefs about literacy are constantly challenged, and sometimes undermined. Certain literacy practices that are valued in one culture are not in another. I realized that some values that we take for granted are socially, historically, and culturally constructed. Within the critical paradigm, there are multiple ways to define literacy, as well as multiple components of identity. In my study,

I was interested in the literacy events or interactions in which teachers and students engaged and how they constructed meaning and identities together. Fecho and Meacham (2007) called these *transactional places*—places where teachers and students are shaped by the texts, but also shape the texts by constructing new meanings and possibilities of the texts, and consequently new texts.

I am aware that my proximity to the program that is the subject of this study could have been a source of concern. To ensure that the teacher-participants chose freely to participate and that their responses were not affected by my previous relationship with them, none of the participants were chosen from my teacher cohort. The use of different data collection sources, systematic data analysis, and member checking provided this study with transparency and trustworthiness, minimizing possible sources of bias.

In addition, addressing possible race, language, and cultural differences between the teachers and myself was important. Being a non-White, CLD teacher and Hispanic could have created an environment of mistrust and power struggle from the White teacher-participants. This was not an issue, I believe. Teachers were honest in their answers and demonstrated trust that the answers in this study reflected their words. However, member checking was introduced at the end of the study and before it was finished.

Bias

As human beings, researchers are prone to the bias of their own prior knowledge, beliefs, and values. My experience as a UTEEM teacher could be a source of bias in my research, since I am also a member of this TEP's culture. In order to diminish or decrease

the interference of my values, beliefs, and biases regarding UTEEM, I looked for support at three stages of the research. First, I asked three graduate students to review the codes used to codify and organize the data, although the codes used by the interrater coders were provided in a list by me. Second, I looked for support from two peers to discuss the conclusions based on the data. Third, I asked for member-checking input to decrease the likelihood that my findings did not represent participants' perspectives and practices on literacy.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are an essential part of research. Glesne (2016) provided an extended summary of the genesis of ethical concerns in research studies, and how these concerns are presented in different theoretical paradigms. In qualitative research, a relationship between researcher and participant can create ethical dilemmas. In order to decrease the possibility of facing these issues, Glesne suggested considering three principles: respect, beneficence, and justice. Respect means doing no harm, maximizing benefits, and decreasing any possibility of harm (Glesne, 2016). In this study, a voluntary informed consent form (Appendix B) was provided to the teachers before engaging in the research effort. Beneficence ensures that the researcher makes every necessary effort to maintain confidentiality, preserve anonymity, and avoid causing emotional distress (Glesne, 2016). I made provisions to secure the data collected and analyzed for my research. I stored the participants' identity and personal information in a secure location. This effort continued in the writing of my dissertation, through the use of pseudonyms and omission of distinguishable characteristics of the site or participants, without

interfering with the credibility of the study. All these details were explained on the participation consent form.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is a necessary requirement in research studies. It is an agreement between the participants and the researcher that their identities will not be revealed to anyone other than the researcher and his or her staff (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). The assurance that only the researcher and those collecting or analyzing the data can identify the responses of individuals increases the trust between researcher and participants. The researcher has the obligation to make every necessary effort to guarantee this requirement. In some cases, the identities are even hidden from the researchers, who use codes for the participants. In my study, I made sure that participants' identities were kept hidden as necessary by using pseudonyms and fictitious names. However, because the study followed a multi-case research methodology with only six participants and one researcher, blind identifiers, which would hide participant identities from other researchers, were considered unnecessary.

Chapter 4: Data Findings

Data Analysis Process

The data analysis strategies used in this qualitative multi-case study, as explained in Chapter 3, were coding, categorization, and contiguity-based relations (Maxwell, 2012), as well as the CCS approach (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017). The CCS framework compared the six cases through three axes (horizontal, vertical and transversal) looking for similarities and differences.

After carefully transcribing the interviews, I read and coded the interviews systematically, manually, one-by-one. Phase 1 of the coding and analysis process was made deductively. In Chapter 3, I addressed the possibility of using a deductive method of provisional codes developed from the literature review (Saldaña, 2015). Some of the anticipated categories that I used were *backgrounds, culturally responsive*, *culturally relevant*, *L(l)iteracies*, *awareness*, *negotiation*, *navigation*, *resistance*, *push back*, *defiance*, *disregard*, *acquiescence/conformity,* and *reproduction*. In Phase 2, I reread the data and coded inductively using open coding. Open coding is defined as a systematic approach of cumulative coding cycles that are grounded in the data (Saldaña, 2015). Phase 1 structural/deductive coding was performed as a scaffolding to organize the data, but faded out once the themes emerged. After the second interview was open coded, I stopped to address some commonalities observed in the coding process of these two interviews. I color-coded the texts to reflect differences among codes: descriptive codes, in vivo codes, holistic codes, and analytical or concept codes (Saldaña, 2015). These

codes reflected teachers' similarities and differences in their responses. These particularities (differences and commonalities) were obvious when the data were laid out later in matrixes based on the questions from the structured interview (structural coding in Saldaña, 2015; organizational categories in Maxwell, 2012). Coding was one of the first strategies used in this study to display the data by topics. Later, the comparison and contrast of the responses allowed a better refinement of the categories. The interview protocol provided a structure for the layout of the answers; however, sometimes the answer to a question was not found immediately after that specific question, but emerged later as part of input to another interview question. This was the natural flow of teachers' responses in the interviews. The final themes were formed by connecting the categories through the interview to provide a context. Maxwell (2012) called this process contiguity-based relations, which "involve juxtaposition in time and space, the influence of one thing on another, or relations among part of a text; their identification involves seeing actual connections between things, rather than similarities and differences" (p. 106). The contiguity-based relations among the data sources (interviews and surveys) will be explicitly explained in each section of this chapter.

Finally, the CCS approach of Bartlett and Vavrus (2017) provided the analytical framework for connecting themes, not only horizontally (comparing the implementation of CRP and policies between teachers), but also vertically (comparing implementation of the same CR concept and policy within teachers and micro, meso, and macro spheres, meaning classroom/school, school division, and federal levels) and transversally

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(comparing how the UTEEM program influence and philosophy developed over time in the teacher-participants).

Teacher-Participants' Backgrounds and Stories

One of the research questions was "Who are these teachers, and what are their backgrounds? How do they believe their backgrounds influence/inform their teaching?" The importance of teachers' identities and backgrounds has been emphasized by research because both work as lenses through which knowledge is filtered (Grisham, 2000; Hedges, 2012). Teacher-participants' background stories were introduced in Chapter 3 as a data source used in this study to understand the lenses they brought with them before they started in the UTEEM program.

The teachers in this study graduated from a TEP with a CR framework. We can assume that the program had an impact on these teachers' perspectives and practices, but as Turner (2007) pointed out, "it does not necessarily enable teachers to translate their cultural understanding into culturally responsive literacy instruction" (p. 12). To understand the perspectives and behaviors of these teachers with CLDS, I decided to use the instrument created by Whitaker and Valtierra (2018a) to measure teachers' CR dispositions at three levels: Disposition for Praxis, Disposition for Community, and Disposition for Social Justice. These subscales were developed from theory on CR and core teaching standards, and they measure teachers' acknowledgement of their own racialized identities, understanding of institutionalized racism, and construction of their role in eliminating Whiteness.

Being part of the UTEEM program was one experience that these teacher-participants underwent in their development as professional teachers, but not the only one. Here are their stories.

Participant 1: Nancy

"At the end it is you, your students and the classroom. You have to do what is best for your students."

The first participant was Nancy, a second-grade teacher with more than 20 years of teaching experience in a suburban school. The demographics at her school included a large percentage of CLDS who had different degrees of competence in Spanish. She was the only teacher from our convenience sample with an undergraduate major in education. She had worked at only two schools in her entire professional career. She was a first-generation American with European immigrant parents. Her father was a Holocaust survivor, a fact that had a big influence on her life. She attended kindergarten to fourth grade at a Jewish school where she learned Hebrew, although she confessed that currently she could only read it. Although her father spoke Polish, she never learned it. She had learned other languages—French, Russian, Italian, and Spanish—although she did not consider herself fluent in any of them. Her experiences learning other languages gave her awareness of the difficulties that learning another language entails. She moved to the Atlantic region of the United States and after searching for a university where she could obtain her teaching degree and license, she chose to start her studies at UTEEM. She considered herself a Type B personality and she believed that it had a big influence on the way she approached problems and dilemmas at school.

Participant 2: Karen

"You kind of go out there believing, at the end of the grad program like 'I can change the world by doing this way,' and you cannot always do that."

Karen had 11 years of experience as a teacher and currently taught second grade in a school with a high percentage of minority students. She explained that about 99% of her school´s student population consisted of CLDS from a Hispanic/Latino background. Karen grew up in a White, middle-class family, but her own school experience was more diverse. She attended a school where 50% of the students were White and the other 50% Black. She said that this provided her with a different view about diversity that her current students lacked. Her undergraduate major was in sociology and religion. She learned Spanish in high school and used this knowledge with her students, although she shared that she was not totally fluent. After switching from a master's degree in social work to education, she started her path at UTEEM. She worked as a preschool autism teacher for 4 years and then moved to another school division, where she performed initially as an itinerant teacher. She had remained there as a first- and second-grade teacher for the last 6 years.

Participant 3: Beth

I think of myself, I am the one who can decide whether or not a student has a certain opportunity. That is a huge responsibility that I have to be thinking about and making sure that I am providing that opportunity for them.

Beth, our third participant, grew up in a White, upper-middle-class family of European background. She attended public school in a suburban, upper-class

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neighborhood, then attended college and finished with a major in history. After college she went overseas to a Central American country, where she learned Spanish and worked as a teacher. She considered herself not a fluent Spanish speaker. After her experience as a teacher in Central America, she returned to the United States to study education. She chose UTEEM, and, since finishing, had worked at the same Title 1 school for 15 years. In this school, 70% of the students required English language services and more than 80% of them were of Hispanic or Latino background.

Participant 4: Carol

> [The] UTEEM program taught me to make a connection with my students as opposed to looking at the curricula and say, "All that he needs is this in order to move on." I am interested more in the students than in pushing curriculum down their throats.

Our fourth participant, Carol, had worked at the same suburban Title 1 school since she graduated from UTEEM 11 years ago. The minority enrollment at her school was 91% and most of the students were Hispanic. She was currently working as a kindergarten teacher who provided inclusion in a co-teach model to students with autism. She was the only African American teacher in this group of UTEEM teachers. She was a career switcher, like most of the teacher-participants in this study. Her undergraduate major was in recreation. After graduating from college, she worked for nonprofit organizations, where she had the opportunity to work as an educator for adults. She then decided to pursue teaching as a profession and chose UTEEM among other possibilities. The opportunity to have a triple licensure was one of several things that attracted her to

this program. She did not speak another language, and this factor sometimes interfered with her ability to help students when they misunderstood the material. She was passionate about making learning fun and engaging.

Participant 5: Sophia

>I will say the majority of the newcomers in fifth and sixth grade have no access to the core curriculum. Though, it is my responsibility somewhat—when you are a classroom teacher and you have that many of them, it is also your responsibility.

Sophia was raised outside of the United States and attended an international school in the Middle East. Her undergraduate major was in sociology with a minor in biology. She was a Peace Corps worker in West Africa. Before enrolling at George Mason, she had the opportunity to work with people with disabilities as a respite care provider, among other duties. After her experience in the Peace Corps, she decided to start her master's degree in education at UTEEM. Although education was not her first choice, at the time of the study she had been a teacher for more than 15 years and held a PhD in education. She was fluent in French, Arabic, and Spanish. She had worked at the same Title 1 school since she graduated from UTEEM. The demographics at her school were: 50% Hispanic or Latino, 15% Asian, 22% White, 5% Black, and 8% Other. Almost 40% of the students required English language services. Sophia was a Head Start teacher for 11 years, then switched to ESOL 4 years ago. When in Head Start, she was one of the few teachers who were part of the reverse preschool inclusion model in her school system (an early childhood education model where students without disabilities are included as role models in special education classrooms). In her Head Start classroom, students had

the opportunity to interact with children with disabilities. In her ESOL classroom, she worked with fifth- and sixth-grade students who had recently arrived in this country. She considered herself a practitioner of a constructivist approach to teaching. She believed in differentiated instruction and engaging students in learning meaningful to them.

Participant 6: Meredith

> For example, when I was teaching second grade one of the main social studies units is about American Indians, Native Americans. And looking at the curriculum and the way it was taught it was just so biased. . . . I ended up redoing the curriculum which always meant that I was way behind, but that is what I did. Because I felt it was more important to have it right. I didn't catch up—that was something that I had to internally struggle with.

Meredith, our last participant, was born is a rural area and attended a very small elementary school in the South. Education was a career change for her. Her undergraduate studies were in liberal arts, with a major in literature. She shared that she always wanted to be a writer. She worked at financial institutions while in college to pay her bills, and then after college she worked full time for an investment firm. Her interest in education was sparked when she worked as a volunteer at her daughter's school. She decided to go back to college to pursue education, but her goal had to wait due to family circumstances. She moved to Virginia, and after careful selection, decided to enroll in UTEEM. She had been a teacher for 13 years at the same Title 1 school. She shared that 80% of the students at her school qualified for free and reduced-price lunches and 70% of the students qualified for English language services. Spanish was the home-language for

70% of the students at her school; some were recently arrived and others were third-generation Spanish speakers. Because the population she worked with was primarily Spanish speakers, she had learned some Spanish by exposure and could understand the gist of conversations. She studied American Sign Language during her time at UTEEM because of the language requirement to graduate.

The data presented in Table 2 were extracted from the interviews and surveys to help with comparison and understanding of the teachers' personal stories.

Table 2

Teachers' Demographic and Professional Information

Teacher	Grade	Years of experience	Other grades taught	Race and gender	Undergraduate major
Nancy	Grade 2	More than 15	ESOL, K-3	White female	Education
Karen	Grade 2	11-15	Autism, Pre-K special education, K-3	White female	Sociology and religion
Beth	Grade 3	More than 15	K-3	White female	History
Carol	Kindergarten	8	K, K-inclusion	African American female	Recreation
Sophia	ESOL	More than 15	Family and Early Childhood Education Program	White female	Biology
Meredith	Science Coach	11-15	K-3	White female	Literature

Note. ESOL = English for speakers of other languages.

The UTEEM Influence: From Theory to Practice

To feel capable to perform an action, it is necessary to have declarative as well as procedural knowledge; this knowledge is acquired through mastery experiences, performance accomplishments, and social-verbal persuasion (Bandura, 1977). Vicarious experiences can be obtained by observing models during TEP field experiences. A research subquestion was "What are the components of the program they considered pivotal in supporting their pedagogical vision? How successful do they feel they are in influencing the literacy learning of CLDS?" Table 3 presents what participants identified as the most influential UTEEM experiences or components that supported their development as teachers and their understanding of education, diversity, child development, and literacy. The table was developed using Dedoose (2016), measuring frequency and context.

Table 3

UTEEM Critical Program Experiences/Components

Experience	Nancy	Karen	Beth	Carol	Sophia	Meredith
Case studies/ethnographies			X		X	
Dilemmas			X			
Individualization/differentiated instruction	X	X		X	X	X
Internships at different locations/exposure to diversity	X	X	X	X	X	X
Readings		X		X	X	X
Reflections	X		X			X

Experience	Nancy	Karen	Beth	Carol	Sophia	Meredith
In-class discussions	X		X		X	X
Building relationships with families (connect)		X	X	X	X	X
Building relationships with students	X	X	X	X	X	X
Social justice focus		X			X	X
Culture focus	X	X	X	X	X	X
Child development	X				X	X

All participants considered the principal characteristic of the UTEEM program to be its focus on the influence of culture and families on students. Most participants found that the child development piece (on how children acquire language and how the brain develops) made this program unique, enabling them to have a broad understanding of literacy.

> How does the brain learn? Because that is going to be the same no matter what your language, no matter what your culture is. There are certain ways that the brain develops. There are certain ways that the brain learns. And there are on top of that language and culture and experiences. That is like the next piece. [Meredith]

> I learned a lot, but I think I did not learn as much as when you are doing it as my first years as an ESOL teacher kind of thing. But I feel we learned a lot about how children acquire language, how children learn how to read. You know, all children acquire language, which was really helpful, I think in helping children acquiring another language. [Nancy]

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Other participants considered the reflection piece central for their training as CR teachers:

I think the best part of the UTEEM training . . . you reflected about everything. The reflection part about everything, I think it was the best part and a lot of classes don't have that. A written reflection and discussion once you got back to class. [Nancy]

All teachers found that placements or internships in diverse settings, such as preschool special education, schools with diverse populations (language, racial, ability, and cultural), and family programs, provided them with the tools to face the challenges of teaching diverse populations, and they thought that not all TEPs had this focus.

I think it was really impactful for me, because I've just never been in a setting like that [preschool special education] and it was [a] very diverse school where there were kids from a lot of different countries. In that class, and I think that was very eye opening, just in terms of . . . Not growing up in the Northern Virginia area, I'd never been around so many children and families who came from such different places. . . . I mean, that is one of the real strengths of our program is that they tried to place you in schools that were very diverse. [Karen]

Some UTEEM graduates had difficulty applying the theory to the daily reality of teaching after they graduated. Others felt the program prepared them for the reality in schools. This knowledge, the latter argued, was gained at their schools, while they were performing as teachers. Nancy reported that she learned a lot in the UTEEM program: "I learned a lot, but I think I did not learn as much as when you are doing it—as my first

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years as an ESOL teacher kind of thing." She felt that she needed some information that was not provided in her UTEEM training in order to be an effective teacher. She continued, "But, as the years have gone on, I think I needed a little . . . like more phonics, a little bit of training. And, then, I was trained as a reading recovery teacher, and that helped me a lot also."

Meredith had another take about her preservice training:

I did not get that [phonics] from UTEEM. I definitely did not. I remember when I had to start teaching kids how to read, a second-grade teacher brought in the whole idea of phonetic awareness or phonics when I was a kindergarten teacher. I did not get that specifically, but what I did know is that I knew that the brain has to make an association with this letter that presents the sound. I understood like how that learning happens. So, "OK, how I am going to do that? How am I going to show that this is the representation of a sound?" I feel like . . . for us to be totally . . . I feel like teaching is an "on the job learning." I don't feel like we could already know everything that we need to know . . . After 13 years, still—I am still learning every day. UTEEM is a way of thinking and understanding and making sense of something as opposed to knowing phonics.

Themes in the Data

As explained earlier, themes were generated by interweaving deductive, and later inductive, coding processes. As argued in Chapter 2, critical teachers with a CR disposition tend to perform within five dimensions: content integration, knowledge construction, equity pedagogy, prejudice reduction, and empowering their school cultures

(Banks, 2004; Banks & Banks, 2013). The interview questions aimed to address these five dimensions, and themes emerged from the structure of the interview. This study intended to respond to five research subquestions:

1. Who are these teachers, and what are their backgrounds? How do they believe their backgrounds influence/inform their teaching?

2. What are their current perspectives on literacy, language, culture, and education?

3. What are these teachers doing in their classrooms to foster CLDS literacy development, including elements such as activities, settings, and strategies?

4. How has being part of the UTEEM program influenced teachers' literacy understanding and practices? What are the components of the program they considered pivotal in supporting their pedagogical vision? How successful have they felt in influencing the literacy learning of CLDS (teacher self-efficacy beliefs)?

5. Can these teachers' theoretical understanding of literacy continue to resist over time the influence of the system and the school culture in which they are involved (school, coworkers, school administrators)? What factors or forces influence their evolution and development (at the micro, meso/local, or macro/global level)? What are the obstacles and protective factors to enact a UTEEM discourse?

The first section of this chapter answered the first and fourth questions. To answer the remaining questions, the results of the study were organized into the following three

subsections. The first section explores these teachers in relationship with CR dispositions and self-efficacy beliefs. CR disposition was defined in Chapter 3 as "values, attitudes and beliefs essential for culturally responsive pedagogy" (Whitaker & Valtierra, 2018a, p. 11). Self-efficacy beliefs refer to perceptions of one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce a teaching task. Agency refers to willingness and capacity to act despite the constraints of the environment. Therefore, I used the structure of Survey 1 to display the teachers' responses to the interview as evidence of their positions and practices as CR teachers and their beliefs of self-efficacy. The categories identified were awareness and reflection (background, perspectives, practices); flexibility and change; connecting with students; connecting with families; democratic instructional decisions; collaboration; and self-efficacy beliefs. In this section, the themes that emerged were (a) awareness, reflexivity, and flexibility as important CR practices for these teachers; (b) building relationships with students and parents as the most important mission of education; (c) collaboration as key for supporting the learning of CLDS and for empowering a school culture in which students' diversity is valued; and (d) teacher agency as an individual and collective continuum where reflection, dialogue, and flexibility are key.

The second subsection presents themes that emerged from the interviews and survey data reflecting how these teachers understood and taught literacy/Literacies to CLDS. The themes that emerged from the data were (a) Literacies as a continuum that encompasses different skills; (b) equity as individualization and differentiation that

requires flexibility (as opposed to standardized practices); and (c) Literacies as making meaning of the wor(l)d.

The third subsection organizes the literacy themes and categories within the dimensions of multicultural education: content integration, equity pedagogy, knowledge construction, prejudice reduction, and school culture. Here the concepts of agency, protective factors, and obstacles are vital. I argue that it is necessary for critical teachers to have the CR knowledge and the agency (enabled by their efficacy beliefs) to perform in these five dimensions, as CCR teachers.

Teachers' Dispositions to CRP

The relationship between teachers' perspectives and practices is complex. In the teachers' responses, different discourses were populated, and sometimes teachers showed contradiction between a CR discourse and a utilitarian discourse within the three axes. Teachers' self-reported practices were often congruent with a CR disposition, although sometimes the practices were closer to evidence-based practices (Hedges, 2012). Sometimes teachers showed practices more in tune with a neoliberal discourse in education, focusing on accountability and standardization.

Whitaker and Valtierra's (2018a) Dispositions for Culturally Responsive Pedagogy Scale was used to measure teachers' CR dispositions. The items were presented on a 5-point Likert scale (originally it was 6). The results of Survey 1 are displayed in Table 4. The validation of this tool was discussed previously in Chapter 3.

In addition to understanding teachers' dispositions, I also wanted to know how confident they felt regarding their ability to teach CLDS. Efficacy theory maintains that

there is a positive correlation between CR practices and feelings of efficacy (see Chapter 1). Therefore, one would expect that the higher teachers' CR self-efficacy beliefs are, the more likely they are to implement CR practices, and vice versa. The questions on Survey 1 can be found in Appendix C. Teachers' answers to Survey 1 were triangulated for trustworthiness with their self-reported practices in Survey 2 and their responses to the interview questions.

Table 4

Teacher-Participants' Scores on Survey 1

Teacher-participant	Pseudonym	Self-Assessment/ Disposition for Praxis	Community/ Disposition for Community	School/ Disposition for Social Justice	Self-Efficacy Beliefs/ Agency
Participant 1	Nancy	30/30	45/45	29/30	290/300
Participant 2	Karen	28/30	42/45	30/30	208/300
Participant 3	Beth	30/30	43/45	28/30	270/300
Participant 4	Carol	30/30	44/45	29/30	220/300
Participant 5	Sophia	29/30	45/45	30/30	276/300
Participant 6	Meredith	30/30	44/45	29/30	248/300

Survey 1 measured four dimensions of disposition: Disposition for Praxis (Self-Assessment), Disposition for Community (Community), Disposition for Social Justice (School), and Self-Efficacy (Teacher Efficacy). The six teacher-participants' responses to the survey items were consistently high on the scale (28-30/30).

Self-Assessment or Disposition for Praxis. Whitaker and Valtierra (2018a) indicated that teachers with a strong awareness of cultural identities are less likely to endorse colorblind ideologies and to downplay how the differences between cultural groups impact equity in education. Items in Dimension 1 were used to confirm or to disprove this correlation about the extent to which these teachers' understandings of themselves related to their self-reported practices. Whitaker and Valtierra (2018a) called this domain Disposition for Praxis; in this study, the term used was Self-Assessment, as explained in Chapter 3, to avoid influencing teachers to use the socially expected correct answer.

Awareness. All teachers indicated that awareness of their cultural background and how it influenced practice was pivotal for their development as teachers. One of the foundations of UTEEM was that teachers, like all human beings, perceive reality through their cultural lenses (Sánchez & Thorp, 2008). It is only with self-awareness and acknowledgement of these lenses that we can address how they impede our view of reality. Implicit biases inform our way of thinking and acting. Nancy explained this as "not having preconceived notions, but knowing that you all have preconceived notions, that kind of thing." The program helped her to challenge her preconceived notions about everything and to see other people's perspectives. Awareness worked for her as an "eye opener" about others (children who speak other languages or have special needs) with whom she previously had limited interactions:

I didn't have much experience working with, I guess, kids who spoke other languages. Even though culturally and everything, I was open to anybody. I didn't

really understand how a child learns a language and things like that. And also, I had no experience with kids with special needs, so like that . . . I did a placement in a special ed preschool program type of thing. So that just, it **opens your eyes** to learning about a whole bunch of different things, like that.

For Karen, awareness of her White middle-class background allowed her to overcome possible bias, knowing that what is the "norm" is not necessarily what is "normal":

I definitely think that there is a certain, there is always going to be some cultural bias that comes in from your background. I grew up White, middle-class. There is kind of an inherent assumption that that's the norm in this country. And so you kind of have to work to overcome that or *remind yourself* that your background isn't the norm for everybody, and it is not "normal."

Of all the teacher-participants, Beth reflected most about her identities. Her experience in another country helped her identify culture "for the first time" and understand the culture she came from:

I am always worried, thinking about the impact of my cultural backgrounds have on the students and how sometimes I feel a wall, at times, that I always try to go around. So I am trying to build my Spanish skills and just continue to make these connections. But for me, I am always *aware* of that and sometimes it can be . . . I don't know what the word is, I guess I am hard on myself on that.

Teachers' awareness of their own social background and marginalization, and of inequity, can also function as an entrance into students' lives when experiences are

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similar. Sophia's understanding of her background allowed her to make connections with students:

> I think my background influences [my instructional decisions] a lot. My dad was an immigrant to the United States. He came here to go to college and because he is a Palestinian, he is a refugee. So, I think that that **understanding** and having grown up as being part of my family . . . I saw what refugees' experiences were like, and I completely understand . . . not completely but I can relate to that.

For Meredith, her experiences growing up in a rural area in the South made her more aware of inequity in public school: "Public school is different for different people." She added:

> So, I grew up in central Florida. I went to school in ███████████. I grew up in a very rural area, just a very small elementary school. I realized by the time I got to college that my school system had not served me well. I was very behind compared to students who had been educated elsewhere. That was **a big wow**, because I was always the smart kid without really having to do anything. That was kind of my first introduction to inequity in education, like difference in different places.

Reflections. Teachers in the program reflected continuously about their childhood experiences, assumptions, beliefs, and values, and how these experiences shaped their teaching practices (Sánchez & Thorp, 2008). Reflection allows teachers to recognize their own biases and privileges and some ideological practices and discourses otherwise hidden (Freire, 1970/2003). All of the participants agreed that assessing and reflecting on

their teaching practices was of great value to understanding "why they do things the way they do." Nancy said:

> I think I do [reflect about my background and how it influences my instructional decisions]; I just don't write them down. I think about them more. Usually maybe something happens, and you start thinking about it more. I feel I reacted this way because of my experiences where this person reacted . . . some young teachers are a little bit maybe judgmental.

According to these teachers, reflection helped them understand dilemmas from other people's perspectives. It helped them find solutions to problems, and maybe better solutions, for example, in the case of Beth:

> Professionally, I spent many years trying to understand the best way to build literacy skills in English in the classroom. And, I started to understand it differently, like more through a cultural lens, through reading and taking classes about ways kids responded or what kids need emotionally. Understanding how my culture impacted how I was teaching. So it kind of shifted from "I want to help them to meet certain standards" to really try to understand the students as a whole. I think when I first started, I was thinking in success according to standards, this is what they should get towards them to move. And that has shifted for me over the years. I think also, in a sense, I have learned a lot about opening my eyes or understanding the backgrounds of kids.

Influence on Practices. Due to the assigned importance of self-awareness and reflexivity, I started the interviews by asking teachers about their backgrounds and if they

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were aware of how their backgrounds influenced their practices. I chose to bring in teachers' personal stories because research (Clandinin & Connelly, 1987; Grisham, 2000) and my pilot study (Alva, 2018) indicated that there is a close link between personal experiences and how teachers will act over time. The lenses are our worldviews, as explained in Chapter 1. They are formed by our experiences growing up, functioning as our primary cultural tool (Gee, 2015), but they can negatively impact the way we teach and the perceptions we have of students' abilities. In the case of this study, I interpreted these experiences as having both negative and positive influences on teachers' search for equity. Our experiences can be a limiting factor or an enriching factor in our ability to teach and to see the strengths that students bring with them.

Teachers showed congruency vertically (school/school systems) and horizontally (classrooms) in their answers within Survey 1 and the interview, in regard to background influences on practices. Nancy shared the story of her father, who was Polish, but who never taught her to speak Polish. Although she did not speak Polish, she was one of the participants most experienced in learning languages. She learned to read Hebrew while attending a Jewish elementary school at a young age. Her interest in learning other languages was clear: she took French for 7 years in high school, she took Russian in college, and she took some Spanish classes after graduating from UTEEM. Nancy said: "I learned Spanish the most because I can use it a lot in the classroom, learning each day. I tried to understand what they ['newcomers'] are saying." These experiences with foreign languages, and with her own father who spoke Polish, probably had an impact on the way she perceived children who spoke another language:

My father spoke five languages or something. He spoke Polish and English, Hebrew, Yiddish, and German. His accent was so thick that I always had to go with him places. He was speaking English, but I had to tell them what he was saying. ***You have to feel it for the kids***. If someone gets sick, they have to take them to translate or whatever. It is a lot of pressure on a little kid. And it is even harder to get from one language to another. I just said it in English because his accent had never got better for some reason. I got used to it.

Karen, Participant 2, was a UTEEM graduate who currently taught second grade. She had worked as a teacher in multiple positions, like most of the UTEEM graduates in this study. She shared that she was raised in a diverse environment with multiple opportunities for exposure to other racial, religious, and social class backgrounds, but with limited exposure to diversity of ethnicity, language, or ability. After college, she was employed by Parks and Recreation working with children, which sparked her interest in education. She responded affirmatively to the question of whether or not she believed her background had impacted the way she taught:

> Having gone to public schools that had a balance of backgrounds has definitely impacted the way I think about schools. It is interesting because here in ▮▮▮▮▮▮ there are not diverse schools. ▮▮▮▮▮▮ is extremely segregated, and so you know, I definitely think about like my experience as growing up of being around kids who didn't look like me in school and how our kids here in ▮▮▮ don't really get to experience that at all. Definitely that kind of [experience] hone my awareness.

Being a teacher in a school where 99% of the student body was Hispanic/Latino made Karen wonder about the harmful effects for her students of lack of exposure to diversity. Ramsey (2015) warned about the dangers of schools with little diversity for students' understanding of equal opportunity and ability to debunk stereotypes.

Beth, Participant 3, was raised in an upper-middle-class family. She indicated that her experience with people from diverse backgrounds (race, religion, ethnicity, language, and social class) was limited when growing up. She did not have experience with people with diverse abilities until later in life. Beth traveled to Central America, where she worked as a teacher: "I really wanted to do service work, going overseas. It was really important, just kind of other ways, living in another culture, coming from my backgrounds, all those things were true to me." There she learned to speak Spanish and identified the meaning of "culture." Like Karen, she believed her background influenced her greatly in her teaching: "Everything about me is in my teaching. The way that I was raised is in my teaching, how I interact with kids, how I speak with them, how I talk with them." This awareness caused her to reflect on her interactions with and expectations about her students, and created self-doubts: "I am always worried, thinking about the impact of my cultural backgrounds have on students and how sometimes I feel a wall at times that I always try to go around."

Carol worked in a kindergarten autism inclusion co-teaching classroom. She believed that her background influenced her teaching, in that she wanted to make teaching fun and meaningful, contrary to her own experience as a student:

I want to make sure my students understand, make sure they are interested. I want

them to be excited about learning. I wasn't excited about learning. When I left

high school, I said, "I don't want to go back to school." I want the opposite of

what I experienced [for my students].

Carol was the only teacher out of the six participants who did not speak another language.

This particularity will be discussed later when I analyze this factor horizontally,

considering how second language proficiency in another language impacts the teacher's

sense of agency and efficacy. Carol grew up in an environment with some diversity in

terms of race, religion, ethnicity, language, ability, and social class. She did not express

specifically how her identity ("being a Black woman") could have influenced her

teaching. During the interview, she explained how growing up she never faced racism

herself, and it was in graduate school that she "experienced racism" for the first time in

an environment where the majority of the teachers were White. I found it puzzling and

contradictory that, while the other teachers in this study defined their identity as White,

she was the only one who did not acknowledge her race until later in the interview.

Prejudice and racism are inherited characteristics in the United States. Speaking about

race is considered "racist" for some White teachers (Rogers & Mosley, 2008; Sleeter,

2001). Minority teachers are not exempted from this feeling (Harlin et al., 2009).

Carol said:

I can't even say that my cohort was very diverse. I don't think that it was all that

diverse. I won't forget. The students that were there, I am gonna say, there may

have been four minorities . . . in our class. Although it was interesting to see their

perspective and their thought processes behind certain things, like . . . I would

never forget. One of our, one person in our cohort had said "colored children."

She was referring to "children of color," but she kept saying "colored children" . .

. and the more she said it, the more I cringed . . . And I mean to the point where I

was just . . . about the fifth time that she said it, I was ready to get up and leave.

And, until that moment, I realized how passionate, how much emotion, how I

would react to that, because growing up I did not experience racism growing up. I

just did not experience it. I have heard about it, but to actually hear someone, a

White woman in my classroom, [say] "colored children" . . . It just had an impact

on me, so much so that . . . that it makes me careful about the things that I say and

allow children to say in my classroom.

At another moment of the interview, when asked about how schools could

reproduce social inequities, Carol spoke about other teachers' real feelings (hidden deficit

expectation) about students at her school: "I think that the school I am in, you have a lot

of opinions about people, about diversity. . . . Negative and positive opinions about how

students learn and about students' backgrounds. I think they are unspoken, but they are

felt." She offered herself as an example:

But if we can have a platform where you can honestly state what it is you like or

don't like about me, and I can hear it without being offended. . . . But as long as

you are showing your racism, as long as you are showing superiority, as long as

you are showing your intolerance to our group of students, and you are not saying

it; then *you* are hindering people from growing. Because although you are not

saying it, I am still feeling it and I am still offended by it.

This is an example of how contradictory the participants' discourses were sometimes.

Labov (2013) maintained that when people engage in personal narratives of interest, their

ability to monitor other components decreases. Carol's awareness of racism probably was

originated earlier, but race continues to be a difficult conversation for all teachers.

Sophia felt she was able to connect with her CLDS because of her similar

background as a child of immigrant people: "I saw what the refugees' experiences were

like, and I completely understand." She considered her background to have a great

influence on her teaching, having lived in the Middle East and worked for the Peace

Corps in West Africa, which gave her the opportunity to live in other societies,

encountering different perspectives and learning different languages.

Meredith currently taught science, but she had also been a kindergarten teacher

for 3 years and a second-grade teacher for 4 years. As mentioned before, Meredith grew

up in a rural area in the South where she had limited experience with people from other

backgrounds. However, she was aware that her background had a huge impact on her

instructional decisions, especially her view of equity in public education. Two personal

experiences shaped her views. The first was her own school experience, when she found

herself "very behind compared to students who had been educated elsewhere." The

second was when she took care of her younger brother and realized he was not going to

be able to graduate from high school because he was functionally illiterate:

He was passed through the entire school system, never learning to read—never.

They had just kind of given up on him. . . . I realized how public education had let

him down and if that had happened to him, then how many other kids was that

happening to?

This is the reality for many CLDS.

Flexibility or Open to Feedback and Change. The participants were asked about

their willingness to be vulnerable and open to change. Teachers' awareness of their own

backgrounds, assumptions, and beliefs opens the possibility to reflect on other

perspectives and possibilities. Vulnerability requires teachers to be open to changing,

modifying, or adapting their assumptions and teaching practices, as needed and/or

required. Flexibility and openness to change were identified as protective factors in our

literature review. Efficacy theory reminds us that teachers with high self-efficacy beliefs

reflect, evaluate, and develop strategies to overcome obstacles (Bandura, 1999). On the

other hand, research on teachers' vision has revealed that teachers who remain on the job

are those who demonstrate an ability to adjust to constraints while retaining their vision

(Broemmel et al., 2020; Parsons et al., 2017; Shulman & Shulman, 2004). The

adjustment takes different forms, such as ignoring constraints, pushing back on mandates,

or changing practices, depending on the teachers' toolboxes. These teacher-participants

demonstrated reflectiveness and willingness to learn from their mistakes, embracing other

perspectives and changing their practices to make them more inclusive or equitable.

For example, when Beth reflected on her language and social interactions, she realized that they were not necessarily the norm for all, and that she might have to modify them:

One example that I really tried to **be cognizant** of is sarcasm. It is often a way of kidding around in my house and communicating. Then I **realized** when I became a teacher that it didn't necessarily, it was not understandable, or could be hurtful at times to my students. That is just an example. Or for instance, my parents, in their cultural background, feelings, and communicating feelings and a push for independence were something that was supported, or communicated, and that was not the case for, when I met families or talked with parents, that is not the same for their child, it sounded like. So those are just examples that come to me very quickly that **I had to really adjust for my idea of how I communicated** and how I should, kind of whom I was. Trying to be more open.

Being flexible is also being open to feedback about one's teaching practices. Carol exemplified this statement, learning from a fellow teacher:

This is the first year I am teaching in a cotaught situation. I have an amazing teacher who works with me. She really helps me reach my students who have autism. She really supports me when I am planning, and she helps me with modifying even further. I thought I was the queen of differentiating things . . . You always have to be in the position to learn. I have learned many things from her. She just showed me how it is okay to break down things even further. Provide more breaks for students who need breaks.

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Flexibility to change was clearly a constant theme among these teachers. CR

teachers are required to be open to criticism and feedback. "Being flexible," as Nancy

summarized it, is one of the UTEEM characteristics. One of the questions in the

interview protocol addressed how the UTEEM program impacted or influenced these

teachers' perspectives: "About your graduate school experience, what are some of the

assumptions that changed as a result of your participation in the program? What

factors/experiences influenced this evolution?"

For Beth, UTEEM challenged her views of family interactions in other

cultures/backgrounds, for example, children living in poverty. Beth referred to this as

"broadening understanding" ("It really **broadened** what literacy meant in other cultures").

Beth also rethought family dynamics and values: "It's hard to put in in words because it

really shifted fundamentally how I saw families and students from other cultures.

Families and students were also diverse in their intellectual [life and] . . . in their abilities

too."

Sophia acknowledged that her assumptions changed, especially concerning

students who lived in poverty. She also changed her view of CLDS from emphasizing

deficits to strengths:

> I think the strengths that they [CLDS] bring is [that] they know another language.
>
> They are competent and literate in another language, even if it is just orally
>
> literate in it. So, they do know another language, it is just transferring that
>
> knowledge to English. Another thing they bring is excitement. All of my kids are

very excited. . . . They are very engaged, and I think they want to learn. They are

eager to learn. And they really want to do good.

Flexibility was also a theme in Carol's discourse: "My philosophy is ***just being***

flexible." She later declared, "The program taught me to look at students individually

instead of the whole class . . . to make a connection with my students as opposed to

looking at the curricula." UTEEM changed her view of education: "I didn't want to be

that teacher who stood in front of students. I wanted them to be excited about learning. I

wasn't excited about learning."

Understanding other people's perspectives was encouraged through many

components in the UTEEM program. The program offered Meredith diverse ways

(diverse field placements, readings, discussions in a safe environment) to gain firsthand

experience of being in someone else's shoes. That changed her perspective about others:

> There were a couple of other students in my cohort who were African American,
>
> and just hearing and trying to wrap my head around and understand what their
>
> experience had been like, was like, continued to be like, that was very pivotal for
>
> me, and, like I said, the exposure, lack of exposure—I had not been around people
>
> who had had those kinds of experiences.

Community or Disposition for Community. The second domain in Survey 1

was Disposition for Community (renamed Community in this study). Whitaker and

Valtierra (2018a) explained that a CR teacher is one who creates a mutual learning

environment with students. The CR teacher places value on building relationships with

students and families, and also with the school community. The dialogical character of

interactions between teacher and students is one of the primary characteristics of CRP. In this domain, teachers were asked about their commitment to being included in students' communities and experiencing Whiteness from a different, marginalized positionality. Two major CR themes were observed when cross-checking with the interview responses: the importance of building connections with students and families and the building of a democratic classroom environment.

Students and Families. All teachers agreed 100% that developing personal relationships with students was important. Moreover, they considered this to be the foundation of education. Some of the teachers' quotes summarize their beliefs regarding the importance of building relationships with students and their families, and especially knowing your students first.

A constant theme in these teacher-participants' responses was viewing students as individuals with identities to be acknowledged, what they consistently called "the whole child." Teachers emphasized the importance of knowing their students, not only academically, but as whole human beings. Beth acknowledged that her knowledge of ESOL, early childhood education, and special education assisted her in:

> . . . really being able to understand and help a young child who came into your classroom. We have some experience *to see them as a whole child.* And, at that time, back in 1997, that wasn't really happening at all. . . . Students were always pulled out. Classroom teachers didn't have understanding of the special ed process. Special ed teachers didn't really have [understanding] of classroom teachers. And ESOL was something . . . serving ELLs in your classroom was

completely, it was really new and different to people to come into our classroom .
. . It kind of shifted from, "I want to help them to meet certain standards" to really
try to understand the *students as a whole*.

Carol voiced the same sentiment: "The program taught me to **look at students**
individually instead of the whole class." This theme will be discussed again in more
detail when discussing the themes that emerged in open coding.

Nancy voiced the importance of knowing what was happening in her students'
lives:

Every morning we have our morning meeting. We do a lot of sharing. I am
naturally invested in their lives and everything. I just make a big deal about what
they are sharing, the foods they are talking about, or anything from home. I found
it so interesting any way. It is not hard or anything. The kids are fascinated, and I
am, "it's so neat," "we are so different," "We learn so much about each other."
So, I am always pushing that. It just makes it natural.

Although individualization is opposed to standardization, she also considered it important
to use assessments to know and keep track of students' progress in the subject areas: "So,
you really have to know assessment, where they are. Are they learning? If they are not,
what do you do to help this child to move forward?"

For Karen, knowing about her students was a way to build a trusting relationship
with them:

So, as far as what works, my philosophy is definitely, **the relationship building**
with kids has to come first. . . . I really want my kids to trust me, to know that I

care about them and love them. Especially for a lot of the kids in my school. Kids

absorb so much . . . And I think, when they **have a solid relationship with their**

teacher it comes so naturally. . . . So, you know, that is definitely, what my

philosophy is. It's based on [trust] . . . there is a whole lot more that goes into it,

obviously.

Beth also prioritized knowing students and building a relationship with them so

students could learn:

I think **getting to know kids and building a relationship with them is what**

works. And . . . when I am getting to know them, I mean really trying to have a

personal relationship where they feel comfortable, taking risks and talking.

Carol described her teaching philosophy as knowing her individual students:

My philosophy of teaching is . . . Do I even have a philosophy? My philosophy is

just **being flexible and to know your students, and to teach them where they are**.

The program taught me to look at students individually instead of the whole class.

It taught me to be **interested in** not just the student who was sitting in front of me

and what they would be doing in my class, but **everything that influences the**

students. What was going on in their personal life.

Sophia taught ESOL to students in fifth and sixth grade. She found that it was

important to provide culturally relevant reading material, but the only way to get those

resources was knowing the student first:

Because they are talking. I mean, I know that. A lot of my things, because I have

so many boys, [the materials] are based on sports. **We talked about their lives in**

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their home countries. What they did. I found out that one of my students was a

horse wrangler—like, he would tame wild ponies, so we talk about horses and

things like that with him. So, it is really getting to know the kids and what they

are interested in. What their lives were like before. For a lot of them, they grew

up, they were living on farms and stuff. So, we talked about farming and what

farms look like in the U.S. and how it is different and how it is the same.

For Meredith, focusing on what students knew helped her see strengths instead of

deficits:

I feel that each person comes in with innate valuable, innate abilities and it is my

job as a teacher to figure it out, how to tap into these abilities and how to . . . *I*

don't like to look at a child and everything in a way that is in a deficit way of

thinking. I like to think about "What can they do?" and "What can I do to help

them do more?" I feel that we don't teach children; I think we facilitate their

learning. I think people are born as learners. From the moment they are born they

are figuring out the whole world around them.

Knowing their students provides teachers with rich knowledge of how to support them: as

Karen said, "different strategies for different types of learners."

Teachers also shared in the interviews that they continued to endorse the UTEEM

belief that building relationships with families must be a priority. It was noticeable that

building connection was a continuum, because in some cases it was just a connection,

letting parents know about their students' progress, rather than a relationship. Teachers

showed a theoretical understanding of families within the CR discourse, but some school-

home connection practices might be considered superficial. That is why instead of *relationship*, I used the term *connection* for this theme. The family theme aligns with this dimension in Survey 1. These teachers learned in UTEEM to value families and their perspectives; to see strength and resiliency in them, regardless of their situations; and to collaborate with them as experts in their students' lives.

For Sophia, her training at UTEEM influenced the way she made instructional decisions:

I have learned that skill from UTEEM: getting to know the family, getting to know the kids, getting to know the community, really having conversations with kids that were useful, even though they were young, it was an important part of UTEEM.

Karen's time at UTEEM provided her with the foundational belief that connections with families are necessary to support students:

I definitely think that the program challenged you to think about issues of social justice and trying to connect with children and families being the most important UTEEM thing. Especially, it was so focused on families and making sure that you are connecting with [them] and where they are coming from. I think that was something that I had probably, like, not given that much consideration to before.

Beth also found that understanding the pivotal role of families in students' education and how culture influences family interactions was a UTEEM contribution:

UTEEM was the first time that I really got to dig into or to see family interactions in another culture, and to also understand that if you were not, if you were poor,

or if you were struggling economically, that there were a lot of really rich ways

that families were supporting and helping their students, especially in literacy.

For Sophia, UTEEM broadened her understanding of being a teacher so that she

aimed to involve not only the student's family, but also the student's community:

I really embraced that way of teaching and I, actually too, as the time progressed

and I went into a PhD, I did a lot with funds of knowledge, and project

approaches, especially that McCaleb book [*Building Communities of Learners*],

that was really influential to me. The McCaleb book really impacted me in ways

to connect the families back to the school.

When I get a newcomer, I always meet with their parents first to really get

an understanding of what school was like, what do they mean they have been in

school for five years? What do they actually feel their children learned in school?

Or were they separated from the children? How much contact [did they have], if

they had any with them, over the time they have been separated from them?

In Meredith's case, UTEEM ingrained in her the idea of different perspectives

and the importance of including families as part of students' education, because they are

the experts in their students' lives:

I think that the thing that it taught me is the idea of perspective. I am not going

into situations being an expert. Going into situations knowing this is what I know

about the brain and this is what I know about how the brain develops and how it

learns . . . but I don't know anything about these families or these children. And,

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in that area they are the experts, and they have valuable things to offer me that are going to help us all get that child to learn and reach their full potential.

Democratic Classroom Environment. This is considered the real characteristic of dialogical and dialectical CR pedagogy in action. Some items in Survey 1 received full agreement, while others did not. All teachers declared that they valued students' input into the classroom rules, that they valued students' diversity in the classroom, and that they viewed themselves as members of the learning community along with their students. The items that did not receive 100% agreement referred to "collaboration with other colleagues, even those with a different perspective" and "collaborative learning in the classroom," which are congruent with a CR pedagogy. When cross-checked with Survey 2 on literacy practices, all of the teachers reported the use of grouping for literacy instruction. The mention of groups does not necessarily indicate the kind of groups used by teachers (collaborative or student/teacher-centered), or the kind of interactions involved, which could only be measured by observing the classroom. The apparent incongruency between these survey answers was partially removed in the interviews when teachers explained their thinking on teachers' and students' roles. All teachers pointed out the pivotal role of listening and choice in their classrooms, which moved them away from a teacher-centered approach.

For example, for Nancy, students were teachers: "Then you learn so much from the kids. I ask them 'teach me this,' that is another way, you know the kids, they all accept each other."

For Sophia, the students constructed their own learning when they were engaged:

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I would say that I believe in a constructivist approach if you want the real term. I think that teaching is . . . Let me describe my most exciting classroom and that is where the kids are involved, when they are engaged in multiple things . . . If I think of younger children; it's: they are involved in centers, they are engaged with their peers, they are doing a project that means something to them. The teacher is a participant of what is happening. It is not just the teacher standing right there, lecturing all day. It is the teacher understanding what each kid needs and how to assess that.

For Meredith, teachers facilitated students' learning and students were in charge of their own learning: "I like to think about 'What can they do?' and 'What can I do to help them do more?' I feel that we don't teach children; I think *we facilitate their learning*." She also mentioned the power of choice and listening to students to understand their thinking. Students took ownership of instructional decisions when she provided choice:

[Choice] is one way, just by being given different ways to show what their understanding is. And I think that is really listening to kids because a lot of times they know what they need, but we have a narrow perception of what it is supposed to look like . . . Something I really had that I have really worked on the last few years is just really *opening myself up to listening to kids*.

Carol specifically defined her groupings as collaborative:

I can group them based on what it is I need them to get from their reading. I may group them based on their writing, but I use the same criteria. I don't separate

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them based on their language ability. We do a lot of collaboration and group

work. The only time they are really separated is when they come to my table for

groups. Sometimes it changes depending on the subject we are teaching, because

if we are teaching math and someone's skills are a little lower, they need a little

more help in one area, then they come to my table to get that individualized help.

The next section discusses the themes that were identified as vital to support

changes in school to improve the chances of success for CLDS.

School/Disposition for Social Justice. The third domain in Survey 1 was named

Disposition for Social Justice by Whitaker and Valtierra (2018a; renamed School in this

study). The authors argued that teachers must be willing to acknowledge their own role in

social reproduction. To implement multicultural education successfully, we must think of

schools as social systems with many variables that are closely related; these variables are

the dimensions (Banks, 2004; Banks & Banks, 2013). Change must occur at all levels in

each of the five dimensions (see Chapter 2 and the third section in this chapter).

Contextual factors have been mentioned in the literature as positive (affordances,

support) or negative (constraints, barriers, obstacles) mechanisms that interfere with

teachers' execution of their perspective (vision or pedagogical knowledge). For Banks

and Banks (2013), empowering school culture is one of the pillars for the implementation

of multicultural education at the micro/local level. It is consistently named in the

literature as a protective factor for teachers to implement innovations and decrease

teacher attrition.

The participants indicated that they believed in the importance of acknowledging how issues of power are enacted in the school environment and how schools can reproduce social inequities. All teachers said they agreed that changes in curricula, materials, instructional delivery, and assessment were needed to improve school achievement of CLDS. All teachers said they valued equity (giving each student what they individually need) over equality (giving each student the same thing). The discourse of CR and UTEEM was present here in all the teachers, but as indicated earlier, the discourse of standardization and assessment was present as well. While these teachers agreed that assessments were biased against minority students, they continued using them for grouping and to make other instructional decisions, because it was part of the reality that they were immersed in. One might consider the use of both discourses as a survival mechanism.

Responses regarding the use of multicultural materials and curricula ranged across a continuum. For example, teachers did not agree on this statement: "I believe that hot topics of conversations with students (e.g. race, gender, sexuality, religion, etc.) should be addressed in classrooms and should be used to promote dialog and critical examination." This statement elicited scattered responses, although one would expect more cohesion (in the affirmative) among teachers with a CR disposition or from a CR framework. Three participants selected "agree," two "somewhat agree," and one "neither agree nor disagree." That only three out of the six teachers believed in the value of introducing topics for discussion to promote critical examination of racism, gender bias, and discrimination in schools is surprising and incongruent with a multicultural

framework. When the survey responses were compared to teachers' interview answers, there was only one teacher who showed some vertical congruency: Nancy. Despite the fact that they did not indicate agreement with this statement, these teachers provided examples of incidents when they took action in dismantling systematic prejudice. The responses to this topic will be addressed in a later section on prejudice reduction, one of the dimensions of multicultural education. In addition, as mentioned earlier, after the contiguity analysis of the data, a strong theme emerged from this dimension. Survey 2 and interview answers were triangulated to support the thesis.

Collaboration with Colleagues and Administrators. The third group of statements from Survey 1 Dimension 2 were clustered here because they had to do with the school environment (Dimension 3) and collaboration with colleagues and administrators. It should be noted that most of these teachers had remained at the same school for a long period of time; four out of the six never changed schools, and one who changed schools did so because she moved to another geographical location after getting married.

As can be observed, the following statements were related: 3 ("I value collaborating with colleagues, even those with perspectives different from mine") and 9 ("I am comfortable with conflict as an inevitable part of the teaching and learning processes"). Based on the coding and teachers' responses in the interviews, these statements were cross-checked with interview questions 9 ("What professional development experiences in your practice as a teacher have had an important impact in your understanding of CLDS literacy development?"), 6 ("Having a diverse class, some

hot topics of conversation are inevitable as part of the teaching and learning processes.

How do you respond to these situations? Why are/aren't these topics important to be

addressed in your classroom?"), and 17 ("Do you believe that schools can reproduce

social inequities? Can you explain how this can happen?").

Collaboration within schools appeared to be a constant and important theme in

these teachers' worldviews. Collaboration is a protective factor and a source of self-

efficacy beliefs. Sometimes the collaboration is within a team, with a school partner, or

with administrators. As explained in Chapter 2, CR teachers take the role of coaches

seeking excellence and sharing responsibility for their students with parents, community

members, and the students themselves (Ladson-Billings, 2009).

Nancy had moved between two schools. She felt her first school was a great place

until a new principal with a different perspective arrived and school testing accountability

increased:

> I think that they [UTEEM] prepared us that way. It is not going to be perfect
>
> where you wind up, your principal might have different views than you do.
>
> Luckily, my very first job at ███████████ I had a great principal for the first
>
> eight years when I was there, whatever. So since then, it has not been quite the
>
> same, I mean the schools are getting much more focus on the testing. . . . It is not
>
> like how it used to be when I started teaching where you can bring more [of] the
>
> culture.

For Meredith, her new position as a STEAM teacher was supported by an administrator. This support helped increase her self-efficacy beliefs about her ability to teach math and science effectively to CLDS.

> I was fortunate in that my principal was like, "We need somebody that [teaches STEAM]." I got to create the position really . . . I continue to . . . I mean, I just . . . I created based on what I think is going to with work with the kids or what they need. I have been very fortunate that my principals have a lot of professional trust in what I am doing, so . . . It is like a special, like when the kids go to PE, music or art, they come to STEAM . . . and they come once a week.

Karen shared that her class was made up totally of CLDS. Sometimes it was an overwhelming task to teach, but having an ESOL teacher to support her and her students' educational goals allowed her to feel capable to address the needs of her students:

> I have been very lucky this year actually, that they started just doing a half-hour block of time where the ESL teacher comes in and works with the level 1 kids as a group, which is the majority of my class. I get the other six or seven. I tried just to work with them on whatever I want. So, it has been so nice, because, I have been able to kind of break things down for them. That has been a really, really nice opportunity to, kind of like, meet them where they are and give them what they individually need. It has been nice too, because when you have kids who speak no English who require such an intense level of instruction, sometimes these other kids get overlooked.

Beth, on the other hand, counted on her grade team for professional support in understanding the standards, her students' needs, and the materials for instruction:

For instance, we have been working really hard on taking AVMR math, which is a math of professional development that really helps me understand the development of numeracy in young children, and that helps me make better instructional matches for the children in my classroom. I am in a professional community that helps me bridge that mismatch.

Carol, who taught in a kindergarten co-ed autism inclusion class, said her school did not offer very much professional development. As a result, she reached out to her school colleagues to fill that void:

My school is not one that offers a lot of professional development. We are not a PD school. Any personal development that I get is kind of informal, I guess, because it is from me reaching out and collaborating with my ESOL team. In the past I had one ESOL teacher who—we worked really well together. Now she is in another grade level. Last year they moved her, because she is so good. But I still use her as a resource, and if I could say it, she is the one who gives me my professional development when it comes to literacy development for ESOL students.

Later, Carol shared that collaboration was a skill she acquired in UTEEM and she believed that some new teachers did not have the same willingness to learn and try new strategies or techniques presented to them by others: "But, teachers who have not gone through the UTEEM program are not as willing to hear them, or even use the resources

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that they bring, and techniques that they bring." Collaboration was necessary but not always easy to accomplish.

The role of ongoing PD in schools to improve and change the school culture is key (Sleeter, 2008). In some cases, these teachers provided support for their school communities, as in the case of Sophia, who had a PhD. She explained that PD in her school division was not differentiated, which created a lot of PDs that did not address her immediate needs as a teacher of students considered interrupted schooling ELs:

> This type of professional development I want, it is not offered. I want something
> that is going to teach me how to work with the 10, the 12, the 13-year-olds that I
> have that have very, very limited understanding of letters or knowledge of literacy
> and who are coming to school. In Spanish when they are tested, they are tested in
> PrePrimer level in Spanish. Like, that is the kind of professional development I
> want. I want to be able to respond to the kids that I actually have sitting in front of
> me. Or I want trauma training. I want to know how to deal with traumatic
> immigration stories, which is 90% of the kids I work with. And those kinds of
> professional developments are not offered. The ESOL department, they try . . .
> They try their best, but again, I really feel that some of them are not differentiated.
> I get asked to do things for them to help them in their professional development
> sessions in developing language.

Meredith looked for support outside the school community, such as in professional groups:

Since I have been teaching, I don't really think I had any professional

development through my school experience that has helped towards

[understanding of CLDS literacy development]. I have sought out other avenues

like conferences, just other different kinds of professional development, like I

said, going to conferences, learning from other people and other communities,

learning from experts in the field.

Despite Sophia's position about the lack of differentiation in PD in her school

division, she valued collaboration. She used to have a collaborative model, co-teaching

with the preschool special education teacher as an inclusion strategy when she taught

Head Start:

I did, I was the only full inclusion teacher, so what would happen is that I'd get all

the students with IEPs [Individualized Education Plans] in Head Start. I team

taught with a special education teacher, preschool special education teacher for 12

years. She always joked that we were, like, married. But it really was, it was a

marriage, we *team taught*. She would come in my classroom. I decided early on

to redo my schedule for Head Start to further strengthen the teaching model.

Currently, in her position as an ESOL teacher, Sophia's team involved an assistant, Sara,

and her students' families. They informed and supported her instructional decisions: "I

also led them in a program with Sara, who is influential in helping with this group of kids

that we have that are not literate in Spanish or not acquiring English as quickly. So that is

where the team teaching comes up."

Sophia noted that collaboration is not always feasible, because it requires that teachers find allies or people with the same mindset. "I am [a] lover of coteaching. I love it. But coteaching has to do with the right person. You can't just say to somebody, 'Hey, you are going to coteach with them this year.' Like, they may not like each other, and it is not going to work."

Self-Efficacy and Agency. In Chapter 1, I discussed the importance of agency and self-efficacy beliefs for a CCR teacher. We also differentiated between agency and efficacy. Efficacy is built on our sense of believing that we have the knowledge and abilities to accomplish a task, and therefore is task sensitive. The knowledge that teachers gain in their TEP and in their daily teaching careers provides them with foundational experiences that build self-efficacy beliefs. The sources of information are threefold: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, and verbal persuasions (Bandura, 1977). Coping mechanisms in the face of adversities or obstacles, and the amount of effort and time put in to accomplish the CR task, will depend on each teacher's self-efficacy beliefs. CR dispositions and self-efficacy beliefs are not enough to grapple with the educational task of teaching CLDS; agency and motivation are needed. Learning from these teachers' stories, and understanding the agency/efficacy model, I realized that teachers analyze and evaluate the task and what is needed to accomplish their purpose and then engage in performing it: learning a language, restructuring the curriculum, learning from students' parents. However, some teachers rated their self-efficacy beliefs lower than expected (for example, Participants 2 and 4, Beth and Carol, Table 4).

Efficacy. Teacher efficacy is belief in one's own capability to accomplish a task. In this study, teachers were asked to rate themselves on a scale of 100 regarding their self-efficacy beliefs in three situations: inequities in the classroom, changes in school environment, and meeting the needs of CLDS. As the latter is most within a teacher's control, I limit my discussion here to teachers' self-rated ability to meet the instructional needs of CLDS. Answers to this item ranged from 70% to 100%, with interview answers spanning the spectrum from feeling not-confident (non-efficacious) to feeling completely confident (efficacious) in their ability to teach CLDS.

Nancy rated her efficacy in meeting the educational needs of her CLDS highly (100%). She shared,

> As someone who grew up amongst many different cultures (New Jersey, very close to New York City), with parents from two different countries and religions; married to a man who is African American; was raised Baptist; raised children who are part African American, Caucasian, Baptist, and Jewish; was a former ESOL teacher; and has taught only in Title 1 schools for the past 24 years, I feel very competent teaching students who are culturally and linguistically diverse. In fact, it's my comfort zone. I make it very clear from day one that we will all learn about each other, from each other, and how exciting it is to have students from so many different backgrounds.

Karen, on the other hand, rated her efficacy in meeting the educational needs of her CLDS at 85%. Karen said, "I feel pretty competent in teaching CLDS just in terms of the experience that I had over the past six years at this school."

Beth rated herself as 70% able to meet her CLDS' needs. When asked to reflect about her ability to teach CLDS, she honestly said:

> I feel confident, but I am the kind of person who has these moments . . . I am worried about, or I am always worried thinking about the impact my cultural backgrounds have on the students and how sometimes I feel a wall at times that I always try to go around. So, I am trying to build my Spanish skills and just continue to make these connections. But for me, I am always aware of that and sometimes it can be, I don't know what the word is, I guess I am hard on myself on that.

Of all the teachers, Beth appeared to continue to reflect most on her "Whiteness" and "middle-class backgrounds," and how her identity continued to be "a wall" between her and her students, preventing her from meeting her students' experiences.

On the other hand, Carol rated herself as 96% able to meet the educational needs of CLDS in her classroom, which is very high. However, Carol shared in the interview that sometimes she did not feel capable of teaching CLDS, and this sense of low efficacy was partly related, in her case, to not knowing the language of her students.

> I don't feel very confident. I do the best that I can with what I have; but because I don't speak the language, I miss a lot of their questions. I miss a lot of their misconceptions, so I don't feel like I am very equipped. I don't feel very competent.

Sophia rated herself as 100% able to meet her CLDS' instructional needs. Mastery experiences and verbal appraisal from administrators and staff at her school had

built up her strong self-efficacy beliefs. She later shared in the interview, "I feel very competent in teaching CLDS. I mean in some ways, I am looked at as the person who helps people in my building. So yes, I feel competent."

Meredith rated herself at 83% able to meet her CLDS' instructional needs. Like Beth, she showed a strong awareness of her identity and acknowledged her complicity in reproduction of the system: "For seeing my own role in a systemic problem or issue or unfairness. Regardless of whether I wanted to be a participant or not, and that I was a participant . . . that was also pivotal for me." When asked directly, she elaborated on her confidence in teaching literacy to CLDS:

> I think that it is something that I am always growing, especially as we have more different children coming from different places. It is really . . . I think once again it goes back to really opening up to different perspectives. So, there are a lot of things I feel very competent and comfortable with, and then there is always something there . . . there is always a child coming from a place that I sometimes never even heard about. . . . I think that I feel confident in my ability to approach that situation, but I feel like there is always new things to learn and new situations coming.

The comparison between the self-rating scale and teachers' responses showed that self-efficacy beliefs can be an accurate predictor of perceived performance (Bandura, 1977) in some teachers. Teachers with a high self-efficacy rating were not always able to provide mastery examples of CR strategies, while other teachers who were able to provide them rated themselves very low. Siwatu (2007) provided a list of examples of CR

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practices that are similar to the pedagogy strategies used by these teachers. In Siwatu's

(2007) study, preservice teachers' self-efficacy beliefs were diminished due to their

inability to communicate with their students in their home language; this was not the case

in this study, since five out of six participants were able to communicate with their

students in Spanish. Not being able to communicate with students using their language

was mentioned as an obstacle by Carol, the only one who did not speak Spanish. I believe

that the low scores on this scale were due to teachers' understanding that CR is a complex

framework that, as in Banks and Banks (2013), requires more than discussing Martin

Luther King Jr. during social studies. It requires critical understanding of their agentive

role to transform systems (see Figure 1). This idea will be elaborated on in Chapter 5.
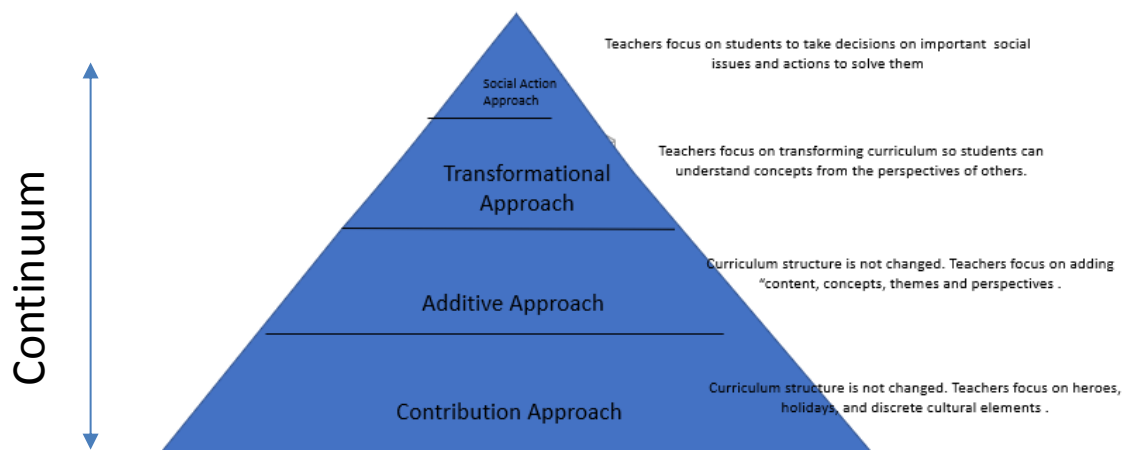

Figure 1. Levels of integration content. Adapted from *Multicultural Education: Issues and Perspectives* (8th ed.), edited by J. A. Banks & C. A. M. Banks, 2013, John Wiley & Sons.

Most participants pointed out the importance of field placements in diverse schools for their development as teachers (vicarious experiences). For them, this was one of the strongest components of UTEEM (see Table 3). However, in some cases these vicarious experiences in the TEP were not the best examples, as Karen explained:

Thinking back on that, like, particular experience, like, I think I didn't have too much contact with families in most of my student teaching. Probably the most was when I did the infant and toddlers one. I feel like when I was in the public schools teaching, I did not have as much communication with families. It is another experience that kind of make you realize how public schooling is. The teachers I was working with, like, that definitely wasn't their primary concern. They were great teachers, but they weren't really concerned with getting, with me having a whole lot of experience with the families.

Social praise or recognition from administrators worked as a source of efficacy experience for these teachers, as Carol explained:

"I don't think I am fit to do it, is there is anybody else?" and they said, "No, you are the only person we can trust to do it." So, I went in very nervous, but I'm just taking it one day at time. Whenever someone suggests that I do [something], then I always try it. Sometimes it works sometimes it doesn't. I spent the summer researching how to work with children with autism . . . And here I am. It has been a positive experience, I've learned a lot and grown a lot. I am glad that they chose me and that they trusted me to work with these students . . . but it was not my first choice.

Even if teachers felt they had the self-efficacy beliefs, they recognized that, on some occasions, their actions did not necessarily match their beliefs or vision. Teachers recognized some obstacles that prevented them from performing within a CR framework.

Teachers voiced that pacing guides were an obstacle or constraint to performing appropriately when teaching CLDS. For Nancy, pacing guides increased pressure on teachers:

> That has been getting worst and worst, I think. . . . There is no leeway on this. In math, we have a calendar. You have this many days to spend on this and this . . . It is ridiculous. There is no way I can teach money for two days. Especially with the group I have this year. I just spent more time. There is so much that I can spend so much longer on. So, I am restricted, more than I used to be.

> Sophia explained:

> I think that the second year on the same grade level makes a big difference because I know the pace, but I completely agree. I feel sometimes in fifth grade they have a lot of science, so they move through the topics at this fast speed, but I am like, "You know that the kids really did not understand it, right?" So, I am the one who is back there reteaching the materials and reteaching that stuff. I am like, "You might be rooting through everything and moving at breakneck speed but even your level 4s and 3s, they don't know, they don't totally understand landforms. You really didn't teach it." . . . I went to the principal and the assistant principal and said, "Look, maybe they are going too fast." If all the ESOL

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students are having to relearn a topic, how is the science really working? Because

okay, the English kids all passed it, and did well, but **something is amiss**.

Not speaking the language of her students undermined Carol's sense of efficacy:

I don't feel very confident. I do the best that I can with what I have; but because I

don't speak the language, I miss a lot of their questions, I miss a lot of their

misconceptions, so I don't feel like I am very equipped. I don't feel very

competent.

She thought having another teacher who spoke the language of her students to coteach

with her would be beneficial, and added:

I do think even if you had a co-taught situation with teachers who don't

necessarily speak that language, I think those students still would benefit. The

benefit would not be as great, but it would be better than just me, you know,

trying to reach them in between here and there.

The same feeling was shared by Meredith; her self-efficacy sense was

undermined by not being able to communicate with her CLDS' parents despite the fact

that she spoke some Spanish:

I think it is my insecurity about not being able to communicate with them in a

way that adults communicate with each other. So, it is tough. I mean, I obviously

keep trying. Most of our parents don't share the same language. It is mostly with

the parents that I don't share the same language.

As she expressed later, she looked to keep the relationship with parents, reaching out to

resources in her school such as parents' liaisons and other bilingual staff:

So, usually that's how I am trying to communicate with the families. Not only do they have the language, but they have the relationship, which I feel like is so important. And so those are the people I go to help me communicate with families.

For some teacher-participants, having to implement scripted curricula made teaching more difficult because of the lack of culturally relevant materials. Karen explained:

It is hard because you have to teach certain things, you just don't get to choose your curriculum and choose the way you teach everything when you are in public schools. . . . Our school district went this year to actually a lot of scripted curriculum. And, it's been very challenging, especially with a class full of English language learners. Very challenging to try to make that fit for them. They even this year told us exactly which books we should be reading aloud for our Read-Alouds every day, which I completely ignored. I chose my own but . . . it's . . . I don't think that UTEEM necessarily did the greatest job of preparing you for what would you do with curricula. What would you do with these things that your school district is inevitably handing you that you have to do? That has been a huge challenge this school year with all this new curriculum handed to us.

All the teacher-participants worked in Title 1 schools. Shortage of resources (appropriate buildings, materials, instructional support, etc.) was one of the factors teachers cited as obstacles or constraints to performing efficaciously when teaching

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CLDS. Sophia believed that she had the efficacy to teach CLDS, but she felt that resource scarcity impeded her from performing effectively:

> I don't feel like I have the resources to really teach the kids. I don't feel that we have enough ESOL resources of ways to teach vocabulary, or ways to teach, do projects based. We definitely don't have the resources to be able to do project based in the real way we should. Yes, I don't think that I have the materials, the space, the resources, the value within the school community. I am valued within my school community for different reasons, because I have been there for so long, but other ESOL teachers are not treated like that.

Karen responded to the interview question on how the schooling experience of CLDS in low-income communities differs from that of White students in middle-class communities by noting the most elemental difference, the school buildings:

> Access to resources for sure, I mean you know when I look at some of the things that we have had in schools for years . . . My school is actually, finally . . . We are getting a brand-new building. We have—we are so overcrowded that we have our entire third, fourth, and fifth grades in trailers. There is even a trailer cafeteria for them. And we are finally getting a brand-new building that is supposed to open next year. But the school is completely rundown, ridden with mice, and mold. It is disgusting and awful . . . You just would not see that allowed in some of the communities out in ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮. That's definitely one way.

Carol believed that having a paraprofessional or another teacher who spoke the language of her students in her class could help her support her students in those

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teachable moments when CLDS had a question. Of course, she knew this would only happen in an ideal situation:

> Don't get me wrong, not all classes need it, not all schools need these cotaught models, but when you have 1,200 students in a school, and 900 of them receive ESOL services, it only makes sense to have an ESOL teacher in every gen ed classroom and make it a cotaught classroom to reach those students.

The same sentiment was shared by Meredith. She expressed the opinion that most classroom teachers were not capable to teach CLDS or special education students:

> Teachers are not taught. They are not given the tools to know how to teach children who are in that situation. The same for children who have special needs. Teachers are given these children and they are put in their classrooms and they don't have the education or the understanding to know how best to help those children. So, that . . . It is not just a few children; it is a lot of children.

Another issue impeding efficacy was PD that was not tailored to teachers' specific interests or students' needs. Four out of the six teachers reported that the PD at their school divisions did not fulfill their needs or the needs of the majority of the students in their schools. Most PDs are one-size-fits-all. As Karen reported:

> Even these people who are giving us professional development about English language learners never worked at a school like ours, because there are so few schools like ours. Seeing a lot of times when people are like "here are ideas for ELLs." It's treating us as if you have these five ELLs over here and everybody else is a native English speaker, which is not the reality in our classrooms. The

reality in our classrooms is everybody is an EL. When you are sitting in this professional development and they are giving these ideas, "Here, just pair a native speaker and an ELL." I don't have any native speakers. That is the challenge. They are trying to give us more professional development that's about working with ELLs, but the professional development has not quite caught up to where our school is.

Professional development experiences are required to meet teachers' needs. Sophia said:

Honestly, I think that for me professional development can be frustrating because it is not differentiated, right? Like you said, I have a large amount of knowledge, but I am sitting in professional development being taught how to read a book. That is pointless to me. I know how to read a book. I probably read better, I am sorry to say, I probably read better than the person presenting. And, now that I have a PhD, to me, I see how we don't do professional development that is responsive to adult learners. I think that this one-stop drop thing is annoying to me.

Standardized assessments were used by these teachers for grouping and to adjust instruction, but on some occasions, they perceived assessments as limitations and burdens placed on teachers. For Meredith, grades and assessments were obstacles that interfered with her ability to equitably teach most CLDS:

I really struggle with a lot of the requirements that, a lot of things that teachers are required to do with students that I feel are not equitable. I feel like that they are not in the best interest of children. There are just a lot of things that are required,

and are happening, that are not right. I have struggled with that my entire career, and it would be the things I have absolutely had to do. Things like grades, which I hate . . . I feel are not appropriate for elementary school students. Testing, which I also feel is not appropriate. The amount of time that is spent in preparing for the test and expecting young children to take these tests. Those were the things that were very difficult for me, that I felt that we are a disservice to the children and to . . . all children, not just the children that I teach, but we have to do it. . . . That was one of the reasons I stopped being a classroom teacher, because I just could not reconcile that anymore, going back and forth with that. Standardized testing is a systemic inequity. For us to have children come into a country, a year later, start taking tests in English and judging them, whether or not we say it or not, we are. That was one of the issues in our school, because our school was considered failing and was in danger of being taken over by the state, because we were not meeting our SOL scores. To determine the success of the school or the success of children based on standardized test scores, that is systemic inequity.

Lack of diversity in schools was perceived by some teachers as an impediment to performing as a CR teacher, reducing and breaking the cycle of prejudice. In this case, the students were not exposed to other students who were different from them. Misunderstandings and stereotypes were maintained because students could not interact with "Others." This was the case in Karen's class:

It is nice how normal it is for them to just being around kids who look different and talk differently. I feel like that is kind of one of the challenges I face now, that

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the kids in my class aren't used to being around kids who are different from them. They don't really understand that that's a possibility, and that is a challenge when issues come up, things about race or language, that they don't have the experience with kids who aren't like them very much.

Agency and Self-Efficacy Beliefs. The power to originate actions for given purposes and the intentionality of our acts define agency (Bandura, 1997). Agency consists of the capability to exercise an action, meaning efficacious knowledge, and authority, meaning the power to intervene (Eteläpelto et al., 2013). Without a sense of efficacy, we will not attempt actions to produce changes. Teachers believe they have the knowledge (CR, foundational knowledge about child development) and skills to exercise their vision and attempt these actions (adding, adapting, and modifying), knowing they are violating what is demanded from them (by doing, not doing, or doing it differently). These actions are intentional and calculated. Teachers do not perceive themselves as inventing the wheel, changing the world, but as acting after careful reflection on the task: reflect, evaluate the feasibility, and find the best strategy to use (Bandura, 1997).

The data suggest that teachers in this study initiated actions on a continuum ranging from acceptance to struggle to resistance. At both extremes, the interactions of multiple discourses can be perceived.

Karen found herself having to change or adapt her lessons to meet school expectations and the needs of her students (in bold and italicized in vivo coding):

It's how much of it can I get away with changing and doing my own way to meet

the needs of our kids. . . . So you do have *to keep the balance* or you are going to

get in trouble for not teaching it the way that they want us to.

Sophia knew the limitations of her actions, but continued to implement her vision:

I would love to be able to have conversations with the whole grade level. How do

we welcome somebody new into our class instead of just being nasty? That's a

school-wide issue. *I can't fix everybody*. I can talk to the kids about how they can

respond to that.

In other cases, teachers took certain practices as "things they had to do" even

though they knew this was a disservice to their students:

I have struggled with that my entire career and it would the things *I have*

absolutely had to do. Things like grades which I hate . . . I feel are not appropriate

for elementary school students. Testing, which I also feel is not appropriate. The

amount of time that is spent in preparing for the test and expecting young children

to take these tests. Those were the things that were very difficult for me that I felt

that we are a disservice to the children and to . . . all children, not just the children

that I teach, *but we have to do it*. [Meredith]

Sometimes, agency was limited due to vertical influences (level of force), such as

the school culture, grade, or teaching subject. Some schools had different requirements

than others, leaving more freedom for some teachers than others:

I mean, the schools are getting much more focused on the testing. I am in second

grade, luckily, because the third and the fifth I guess there is much more pressure.

It is so focused on "Let's get reading a passage and answering questions." It is not

like how it used to be when I started teaching, where you can bring in more the

culture. You know, what are the kids interested in. You cannot do so much of

that. ***You just have to put it in***, I guess. [Nancy]

On some occasions, teachers succumbed to the pressure and decided to move to

other grades or areas where the mandates are reduced. Nancy described this:

I feel pressure to get them to grade level, up to second grade, or at least prepare

them for third grade. Because everything comes down on those teachers. By

kindergarten, first, and second grade you have the same teachers. Third, fourth,

and fifth you have them in and out, in and out. It's too much pressure, I think, for

them.

In summary, teachers showed high scores on Survey 1, which measured

dispositions for CRP in the three dimensions. Teachers' efficacy scores showed variation

from middle to strong self-efficacy beliefs (horizontal analysis; see Table 4). Efficacy

beliefs were not always correlated with consistent CR practices. In their self-reported

practices, teachers showed different levels of CR pedagogy appropriation, revealing

different and contradictory population of discourses. Teachers' lack of congruency can be

explained as contextual influence at different levels (vertical analysis). Transversal

analysis showed a dichotomy: understanding of CR pedagogy was maintained while CR

practices declined. Factors identified as protective were collaboration and making

connections with colleagues, students, and families.

Literacies: A Broader and More Complex Understanding of Literacy

One of the purposes of this study was to learn about these teachers' perspectives on literacy and how being a part of the UTEEM program influenced these perspectives. Two research sub-questions addressed this concern: "What are their current perspectives on literacy, language, culture, and education?" and "What are teachers doing in their classrooms to foster CLDS literacy development, such as activities, settings, and strategies?" I also wondered if the teachers had a narrow or broader understanding of literacy as Literacies, which is more compatible with a CR pedagogy.

The study attempted to assess how forces at macro (federal mandates and policy) and meso (schools) levels affected teachers' perspectives on what literacy is and how teachers applied their understanding of cultural responsiveness in their literacy activities.

Using the CCS design of Bartlett and Vavrus (2017), congruences and contradictions can be found at different levels. Is there congruency or tension between what they consider Literacies (UTEEM understanding of literacy-transversal axis) and their applications in their classrooms (micro or local axis). Are there tensions or conflicts between what teachers believe and what they need to comply with (demands of the meso and macro global axes)? Are the teachers aware of these contradictions? And how do they address these dissonances?

Definition of Literacy. In the interviews, teachers were asked for their definitions of literacy. Most teachers had a complex understanding of literacy, similar to the one described in Chapter 2, as socially constructed and immersed in a system of power relationships. Literacy is performed in societies in different ways, and it has different

practices and realities. For example, Meredith explained her understanding of literacies as making meaning of the world and passing down and preserving knowledge:

I think literacy is communication. And, it is a communication, it's the passing down of knowledge. And, in our culture we value reading and that is the way of communicating. It is a way of passing down knowledge. But I don't believe that is the only kind of literacy. There are many cultures, there is oral tradition, and there is experiential tradition, like people who live in the rainforest and they pass on their knowledge about plants or the religious purposes of plants, knowing things that scientists do not yet know. So to me literacy is a way of communicating, it's a way of passing knowledge from one person to another. It's a way of preserving knowledge.

For Sophia, literacy could take many forms (Literacies) and was multifaceted (listening, writing, reading, and oral production), although she used the term *progression*, which indicated a binary and valued position between oral and written literacies:

My understanding of literacy is that it can take on many forms. It happens in progression. There is a progression on how it happens. I really think that what interested me in UTEEM was the acquisition of a second language. We just learned a lot about that, and I think that thinking about it now, I completely understand how that sequence of events happened. Kids talk and they observe, and they talk. Literacy is multifaceted: It's listening, it's reading, it's writing, it's oral . . . it's the actual pragmatics of reading itself. All of those things go into what literacy is.

This complex understanding of literacy as a multifaceted process was shared by other teachers in this study. Beth said, "I think of literacy as reading, writing, and speaking, both in English and the student's first language." Carol said, "Literacy is—it encompasses writing, reading, understanding, comprehension. I would define literacy . . . I would say that literacy is the ability to read with comprehension and to write with understanding in order to communicate with other people."

All of them shared a constructivist approach to reading as "making meaning of words" or what is read, and they continuously made a distinction between reading and decoding:

I guess like, making meaning and constructing understanding of the world around us. [Meredith]

For me, I try to think of literacy as really that meaning making in the way, when I'm teaching a kid to read, that they are constructing their meaning out of what they are reading rather than just saying the words that are there. [Karen]

Then those kids just keep being passed along and they are not learning the foundational skills. When we went back to ELD [English Language Development], we are reteaching you the foundational skills of English that had not been taught before. We were just saying, so if you can read, then you got it. Well, I know of three or four kids that are word callers, which means they can read it, but they have no clue what it is. And, that really is not practical. So, ELD tries to fight that trend of if we read it, we understand it, this is what the words mean, not just . . . reading to read, it is reading to understand. [Sophia]

I had kids who can read, because they can sit there and decode all the words

on the page, but they have no idea what they are saying. [Beth]

I would say that literacy is the ability to read with comprehension and to

write with understanding in order to communicate with other people. [Carol]

Only one teacher (Nancy) defined literacy as teaching to read. Nancy also shared that she

took some professional development classes to improve her ability to teach reading to

students (phonics), which was not taught at UTEEM:

Back when I was at UTEEM, they did all that, I don't remember what it was

called [Whole Language Approach] . . . where you expose children to books, and

in a literacy rich environment, and they learn, you know, become interested in

reading, and they acquire lots of reading skills. But, as years have gone on, I think

I needed a little like more, phonics, a little bit of training. And then I was trained

as a reading recovery teacher and that helped me a lot also.

These findings about Literacies are different from what Broemmel et al. (2020)

encountered in their study, in which the participants used the term "reading" rather than

"literacy" when referring to literacy instruction, due to the emphasis of the context

surrounding them, in which literacy instruction was focused on reading only.

Teachers have many experiences and are exposed to different and sometimes

contradictory sources of knowledge and discourses of what literacy is, as explained in

Chapter 2. For Beth, her TEP broadened her understanding of literacy:

UTEEM was the first time that I really got to dig in or to see family interactions

in another culture, and to also understand that if you were not, if you were poor,

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or if you were struggling economically that there were a lot of really rich ways

that families were supporting and helping their students, especially in literacy. It

really broadened what literacy meant in other cultures.

Methodology for Teaching Literacy. Table 5 shows responses to Question 17 in

Survey 2, which asked teachers to assign percentages of instructional time dedicated to

oral language, decoding strategies, understanding, fluency, vocabulary, writing, and other

skills.

Table 5

Teacher Literacy Instruction Diet

Teacher	Oral language	Decoding strategies	Developing understanding	Word reading fluency	Increase vocabulary knowledge	Writing	Other
Nancy Grade 2	20	20	20	10	10	20	0
Karen Grade 2	10	10	40	10	20	10	0
Beth Grade 3	25	20	25	5	5	20	0
Carol Kindergarten	25	15	15	10	25	10	0
Sophia ESOL	45	20	20	5	5	5	0
Meredith Science	55	0	15	0	25	5	0

Note. ESOL = English for speakers of other languages.

All the participants in this study agreed that the purpose of reading was understanding and constructing students' own meaning. When they focused on teaching literacy instruction, that was the area they concentrated on (see Table 5), demonstrating a discourse closer to a constructivist approach to reading. During the interviews, I did not ask what methods they used for teaching literacy. However, their survey and interview responses showed a great emphasis on oral language, vocabulary development, and comprehension as the building blocks to literacy instruction. The participants did not demonstrate horizontal agreement (see Table 5). That is, some emphasized comprehension, others vocabulary, and others oral development.

Nancy explained that in UTEEM, she "learned a lot about how children acquire language and how children learn how to read." She added, "But I think I did not learn as much as when you are doing it, [as I did in] my first years as an ESOL teacher." CLDS come to school with a language; they do not come empty-handed. "All children acquire a language" and this language should be used to help them acquire another language.

Karen, on the other hand, used books for her read-alouds that were appropriate for her CLDS' English language skills. She emphasized the development of students' understanding:

With them telling us what books to read to the kids this year. I had to be like, "No, you can't do that because those books won't going to meet the needs of my kids." When I choose books to read aloud, I am choosing things that I think my kids with the lower English levels are going to be able to understand and develop more vocabulary. I tend to choose things where I can kind of get the message to

them through my expression and through the way that I read. They will be able to

understand what is happening. When you got a really like wordy book, with lots

of long descriptions . . . You can't really bring all that across to them. I tend to

choose books that can meet that need, for them to not sit there and completely

tune me out.

Karen used her Spanish skills as needed to support her CLDS' understanding skills, because they spoke only Spanish. Her main concern was ensuring they comprehended the directions.

I use, I generally do my direction in English, and then give a short repeat of it in

Spanish. When I work with, so when I do my reading groups, my six kids who

speak no English are in the same reading group, of course, because they have very

limited English literacy. So, I, and I do, when I am working with that group speak

Spanish to them far more than I would . . . I don't at all with my other groups.

Because I want them to understand what I am asking of them. I tried to always

pair it with the English. As the year goes on, I started to actually release some of

the Spanish to give them more instructions in English because they are

understanding more.

The teachers in this study did not devote the majority of their instructional time to

teaching decoding skills. It was clear that although the ESOL and science coach teachers

were not grade-level teachers, they also taught literacy, which is also this study's

argument. All teachers in elementary schools require knowledge on how to teach literacy

skills to all students.

This was the case for Carol, who advocated for individual goals for students. She explained that in her guided reading group, her students worked on the same skill, such as comprehension, but at a different level of difficulty (book level):

I need for all of them to have that comprehension and so . . . I make it equitable because they have books to match their individual needs at the time. They may all be working on the same skill. So they are all reading and I am listening for fluency, I am listening to see if they understand, but they are being pushed, because that level 2 is listening to that level 10 read, and they are in awe of how they can read, it is encouraging to them. . . . It is like, "OK, they can do it, I can too."

As mentioned before, teachers made a distinction between literacy (Literacies), reading, and decoding. That does not mean they did not on occasion refer to literacy (Literacies) as just reading, demonstrating again the covalence of two discourses. I found that among teacher-participants, their interview responses often revealed competing discourses that reflected their schools' (meso) and school systems' (macro) discourses and their own perspectives (CR pedagogy). However, their disposition toward a CR approach was always present in their discourse about their vision or perspective. The perspective was not static, but developed:

I think that UTEEM provided the foundation, and that, for instance, a lot of courses that I have taken over time [help me] to really understand more about [teaching literacy to CLDS], professionally. I spent many years trying to understand the best way to build literacy skills in English in the classroom. And I

started to understand it differently, like more through *a cultural lens*, through

reading and taking classes about ways kids responded or what kids need

emotionally. Understanding how my culture impacted how I was teaching. So it

kind of shifted from, "I want to help them to meet certain standards" to really try

to understand the *students as a whole*. I think when I first started, I was thinking

in success according to standards, this is what they should get towards them to

move. And that has **shifted for me over the years**. I think also in a *sense I have*

learned a lot about opening my eyes or understanding the backgrounds of kids.

Kids come with a lot of different backgrounds and experiences that *trying to*

figure out ways to value that or to hear that, but I think that I just learned that on

the job experience and reading, and taking classes provided to me through ▮▮▮▮.

[Beth]

Teachers' perspective of literacy influences the way they teach literacy and the

time devoted to enhancing this skill, as expressed in Chapter 2. If teachers believe

literacy is understanding, they will spend more time developing this area. If teachers

believe literacy encompasses oral language, they will focus on developing this skill. The

age of students, the grade taught, and the subjects taught will inform the teacher's

decisions, in addition to students' strengths and needs. Sophia elaborated:

Because I had a very large number of English language learners in Head-Start and

that my kids really made a lot of progress. And always, even now, the

kindergarten teachers that are still there are, "Gosh, we wish you were back in

Head Start because those kids were so prepared. They really spoke English. They

were really engaged." I think that was partially because of *my style of teaching to have them talk, and to encourage them to talk to each other and with me*. There was a lot of relationship . . . I had discussion circles at times . . . we would have circles . . . through doors closed because kids started to talk about things that you wouldn't really want to know about.

Sophia's perspective about the importance of developing oral language skills in her students was supported at her school by changes in her school division. The focus of her program for CLDS switched from reading in English to developing oral English skills. So her emphasis on developing oral language skills was maintained, despite changes in the context (meso/macro) in the curriculum model. She explained:

> I don't know if you know, here in ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮, in the last two or three years we moved to English language development instead of ESOL. So, we teach all pragmatics of language, and that is a big shift for ESOL teachers that have been around for a long time, because they were used to being reading teachers, right? So, they did guided reading. Now, we don't do guided reading, we do actual language development of the English language. . . . My school in particular embraced it, because we have a large percentage of kids that weren't graduating from ESOL after the tenth semester, five years . . . so they are being considered long-term ELs and they are being passed on to middle schools as long-term ELs and that is a real problem. Research just told us if they graduate from ESOL before sixth grade, or in sixth grade, then they are more likely to graduate from high school. . . . We saw a large percentage of kids graduating from ESOL. So it

goes back to the idea that classroom teachers don't necessarily know how to

support second language acquisition or English language learners. So, then those

kids just keep passing along and they are not learning the foundational skills.

When we went back to ELD, we are reteaching you the foundational skills of

English that had not been taught before. We were just saying, "So if you can read,

then you got it." Well, I know of three or four kids that are word callers, which

means, they can read it, but they have no clue what it is. That really is not

practical. So ELD tries to fight that trend of "If we read it, we understand it," this

is what the words mean, not just . . . reading to read, it is reading to understand.

Two of the six teacher-participants shared that when they started to teach, they

felt that the program did not focus enough on preparing them for the task of teaching

phonics as an isolated skill (the discourse of the federal-level culture), since the approach

of the TEP was a whole language approach (UTEEM discourse). Phonemic awareness is

a necessary skill, but should be taught in connection to other skills.

Beth pointed out that she started teaching without the phonics knowledge needed

and expected for her to perform as a teacher. She got the foundational knowledge at

UTEEM (transversal axis), but some skills were required by the school (vertical axis).

These skills were acquired on the job, showing adaptational skills and a transversal

development of her perspectives toward a more standardized discourse. She continued to

build her skills during her professional development as a teacher. This appeared as a

modification of what was known:

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Sometimes when I first got into the classroom there were some things that I

hadn't learned in graduate school that I didn't really understand how, I didn't

have the skills at the time to make it all work. And then as I grew as a teacher and

got further into my career and built my skills, ***then it all kind of fit,*** they seem

more attainable, understandable.

In other cases, teachers shared that the knowledge acquired at UTEEM was the

basis used to pick up the skills that were needed, so the transition was smooth. Here the

knowledge was presented as an addition to what was known:

I did not get that [phonics] from Program. I definitely did not. I remember when I

had to start teaching kids how to read, a second-grade teacher brought in the

whole idea of phonetic awareness or phonics when I was a kindergarten teacher. I

did not get that specifically, but what I did know is that I knew that the brain has

to make an association with this letter that presents the sound. I understood like

how that learning happen. So, "OK, how I am going to do that?"—"How am I

going to show that this is the representation of a sound?" [Meredith]

I feel like . . . for us to be totally . . . I feel like teaching is an "on the job

learning." I don't feel like we could already know everything that we need to

know . . . after 13 years still, I am still learning every day. The Program is a way

of thinking and understanding and making sense of something as opposed to

knowing phonics. [Beth]

Strategies for Teaching Literacy to CLDS. Many of the strategies used by these

teacher-participants can also be found in the study by Siwatu (2007). The themes and

categories of this study are grounded in the data and demonstrate levels in which these strategies can be arranged, following Banks and Banks (2013; see Figure 1). The themes chosen reflect only some of the strategies mentioned by the participants.

Choice. Choice was a constant theme for these teachers. Knowing and listening to students and making choices available were the primary strategies they used in their instructional decisions.

For Beth, choice was her primary strategy when teaching literacy development to CLDS:

> I think that having on me experience also of ESOL about strategies that really help to support ELL in the classrooms: visuals; some specific strategies like share reading, share writing; and **letting kids make their own choices** [about] what to write and which books they are interested in. Those I guess are some values that I think have guided me to the understanding of ELLs in my classroom.

Meredith believed choice was what worked best with CLDS. For her, this was an equitable strategy. Choice and the use of technology allowed students to implement CR project-based assignments in which they were excited to learn.

> I think **one of the main things that I do is I offer choice to the kids**. A choice in . . . how do they show what they know. The choice in kinds of activities [that] work best for them. That is one thing that I do, and not looking at . . . So, when we were talking earlier about literacy, if you have a very narrow definition of literacy as reading, if the science concept is something like the water cycle and I want a child to show what do they understand about the water cycle, one child can

draw a picture, one child can build a model, another child might want a graphic

organizer to draw or write or whatever. Because the child cannot write what they

understand, it does not mean he does not understand it.

Small Groups. Teachers did not agree on how groups should be composed. Five

of the six teachers initially used students' scores on standardized assessments (WIDA,

PALs, DRAs, etc.) to make their groupings. One teacher pointed out that she grouped

students initially based on their behavior—who worked well together and who did not.

After knowing the kids, teachers relied more on their own reports and informal

assessments. For literacy workshops, they usually grouped students based on other

factors besides skills. However for guided reading, the majority of these teachers grouped

students by skills or scores, which are generally decided by standardized assessments.

Groupings were changed continuously, allowing the teachers to work with those

who required more intense support. Carol described how she handled this:

I think just individualizing the education for my students. Some of them have the

same needs and I can work with them in groups of three or four, but with some of

them I need to work one-on-one. And I believe that works. . . . I just believe in

making whatever it takes to make sure that every student is learning.

Relevant Literature. As in the pilot study (Alva, 2018), teachers continued to

identify as one important obstacle the scarcity of relevant texts (books), which continued

legitimizing written forms over other Literacies. The multiple discourses (macro and

meso) can be perceived in teachers' answers:

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I try my best to give them culturally relevant reading material, but I will be

honest, there is not a lot of that out there. I look [at] what they are interested in,

fifth and sixth graders are interested in different things than younger kids are. So,

I tried to get content that is related to their ages and what they are talking about.

Because they are talking. [Sophia]

Some teachers used books that could keep up with students' language

development at the moment, but did not use texts (oral or written) or other material in

students' home language:

When I choose books to read aloud, I am choosing things that I think my kids

with the lower English levels are going to be able to understand, and develop

more vocabulary. I tend to choose things where I can kind of get the message to

them through my expression and through the way that I read. They will be able to

understand what is happening. When you got a really wordy book, with lots of

long descriptions . . . You can't really bring all that across to them. I tend to

choose books that can meet that need for them to not sit there and completely tune

me out. [Karen]

When asked to give examples of MCL materials they used in their classrooms,

teachers mentioned books, but also other formats such as videos, music, and pictures that

enhanced their literacy instruction (see teacher-participants' examples in the Content

Integration section of this chapter).

Use of First Language. Five of the six teacher-participants spoke Spanish and

communicated with their students in Spanish. Although they allowed and even

encouraged students to communicate in their first language, they still preferred that students speak, read, and work in English, again demonstrating conflicting discourses. Some teacher-participants provided students with books in their home language or allowed their students to participate in literacy activities using their home language, but often there was not continuity. Students' first language was used only as a scaffolding or an adaptation/modification during their transition to mainstream language, English.

For example, Carol explained that Spanish was used among her students to communicate and support each other's learning: "In my classroom, I encourage students to speak their home language to each other whenever. You know, if they are collaborating it is perfectly okay to speak their home language. . . . It's okay to speak in our classroom." However, because she did not speak the language, she felt like sometimes she was not able to support them:

> When they are not there [ESOL teachers who speak Spanish], they miss those
> kinds of authentic opportunities to teach, those teachable moments, is what I am
> trying to say. They miss those authentic teachable moments in the classroom.
> Because, a lot of times, you have a student who asks another student in Spanish a
> question, and I don't know what they are saying because obviously I don't speak
> the language.

In contrast, Nancy assigned books in Spanish so students who read in their home language would have access to the content:

> I do smaller modifications where I have something . . . I work with the ESOL
> teachers also, and they bring me books on the same subject, or a little work on the

same thing, so they can get more comfortable and they easily speak, you know, learn some English.

Push-In/Pull-Out. There was no horizontal agreement for which model was the best. Participants all mentioned that it depended on the students. Research has shown the importance of collaboration between classroom teachers and ESOL teachers for successfully implementing co-teaching and push-in models to serve CLDS in mainstream classrooms (McClure & Cahnmann-Taylor, 2010; Peercy & Martin-Beltran, 2012).

For example, Karen believed that both models could meet the needs of students, but that it depended on their specific needs:

As far as push-in and pull-out, I kind of feel that it needs to be a mix of both. Obviously with my class being 100% ESL, when the ESL teacher comes in she can kind of circulate and work with everybody. But I feel like there is some benefit to having groups that are pulled out to work on specific vocabulary skills, especially most of my kids who are brand-new to the country this year; a lot of them had no schooling background.

Beth preferred the push-in model because it allowed students to build a sense of community for the whole class:

I really believe in push-in. So, I definitely feel that push-in is the best model. I work closely with the ESOL teachers in my classroom. . . . So, it is kind of both push-in and push-out, but I think that the push in is in terms of building a sense of community classroom and also how those students probably will have a continuity over their day and to understand what is happening in the classroom to

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be pulled out, it probably . . . I think it could be very difficult to understand the schedule and to build friendships.

For Nancy, the push-in model was preferable over pull-out, especially when teachers believed in collaboration:

I like the push-in model, especially if you have an ESOL teacher that you work very well with. The ESOL teacher the past few years has been wonderful. She pushes in, either like coteaching the whole group, that kind of thing, and then we break off into reading groups, or whatever, different types of math groups.

For Sophia, pull-out was preferred over push-in due to students' needs and difficulties finding a classroom teacher with the same mindset:

I have done both and I find it very challenging. I am a lover of coteaching. I love it. But coteaching has to do with the right person. You can't just say to somebody, "Hey, you are going to coteach with them this year." Like they may not like each other, and it is not going to work. . . . It goes back to the older kids especially feeling self-conscious, not willing to take a risk to talk in the class. And, I know that [depends] how the classroom environment is set up, and I totally agree that if the teacher set up their classroom in a certain way, it would make it less threatening and more of a way for the kids to communicate too; but this is not the reality. So, I have to go with what the reality is, and to me my reality is that pull-out works better for the kids, they progress quicker, they are acquiring more language quickly.

Collaboration. As explained earlier, collaboration was a constant theme in the teacher-participants' discourse. For Carol and Beth, working closely with their ESOL and special education colleagues, planning and instructing, was fundamental for the educational progress of CLDS. This goes back to Ladson-Billings (2009), who emphasized the importance of teachers taking on a coach-role, with success as the goal. Collaboration was a horizontal and transversal theme for all the teacher-participants.

Beth shared the following:

I work closely with the ESOL teachers in my classroom. There is one teacher who comes to co-teach writing and another teacher who comes to co-teach math with me. And we have, I have a separate planning time for each of those teachers during my weekly planning where we meet on a weekly basis to plan lessons. And, at those times that they come into the classroom, but this year has been different . . .

Carol added:

The students who have ESOL services in my classroom seem to test out quicker. The students who had SPED services seem to have reached their special education goals a little bit quicker, and I think it's because of collaboration and my willingness to use the resources and techniques. I believe it is because I embrace those other teachers coming in, where you have other teachers who are just, "This is my classroom," "This is not working," "Students are not listening."

Making Connections with Families: Understanding and Listening. Family connections was a constant theme in all axes, vertical, horizontal, and transversal, and

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aligns with CR literature. For example, it was a factor in studies by Siwatu (2007) and Siwatu et al. (2016); however, this factor should be observed as a continuum. Family connections was a transversal theme in these teacher-participants' discourse, because it is based on values of UTEEM, but family connections have changed. I labeled the theme *connections* because not all connections build relationships with families. Some teachers contact families to inform them about the progress of students, while other teachers reach them to get information about the students, to listen to their stories, and to work with them as collaborators. The use of school interpreters or staff, applications, and other resources have made things easier to communicate when there is a language barrier, but it is definitely a skill that even seasoned teachers continue to develop.

For Beth, the "whole child" included learning from families. That required extra effort on her part to reach them, due to schedules that did not match. The use of technology such as Remind, which translated her messages, was very critical in her exchange of information with parents: "I think being available any time for families, beyond like early in the morning or late in the afternoons or evenings, to communicate with families, translating any information that goes home to families." She visited them at home and listened to their stories: "It is listening really for their experiences, and trying to incorporate their stories and experiences in any way that we can in the classroom."

Sophia also relied on parents to understand and help her students:

When I get a newcomer, I always meet with their parents first to really get an understanding of what school was like, what do they mean they have been in school for five years? What do they actually feel their children learned in school?

Or were they separated from the children? How much contact did they have, if they had any with them, over the time they have been separated from them? Parents, rather than standardized assessments, were the primary source when teachers needed information about their students:

When you talk to their parents, their parents say that they struggled in their home country, they repeated their grades so many times, they were getting ready to drop out of school . . . All these things are happening, but when we go and say, when I look at them . . . I know, there is one in particular, there is something up. There is something cognitively not sticking, the information is not sticking, we are not moving forward, but the powers that be say, "He does not know enough English to test him." "So, we need to find someone in Spanish to test him. He is going to drop out. He has already gotten to that point in his home country, why would you think that is not going to happen now?" I find that is very frustrating. [Sophia]

Building relationships with parents is not easy or natural. Even these teacher-participants struggled with building these relationships:

I guess to summarize, what I am saying is that just like with non-ELL, depends on the parents, some parents I have a relationship, some parents I don't. I don't think that the language is a dictator of the kind of relationship that I had with my parents of ELL students. I think that is the same. [Carol]

But they continued trying, which indicates that self-efficacy beliefs work as a protective and motivational factor:

I always struggle with that and I continue to struggle with it. I think it is my

insecurity about not being able to communicate with them in a way that adults

communicate with each other. So it is tough. I mean, I obviously keep trying.

Most of our parents, we don't share the same language. It is mostly the parents

that don't share the same language with me. [Beth]

Use of Technology. The use of technology and apps has increased among

classroom teachers. Research has encouraged the integration of technology to support

literacy instruction in the mainstream classroom (Hutchinson & Reinking, 2011). Nancy

and Sophia used digital books with CLDS. Meredith used technology to create other

ways or products for students to show what they knew that were not text-based. Choice

was also implemented with this approach:

I was able to get some iPads for our science lab, and we explore a lot with making

videos, making movies, using different apps for them to create lots of different

kinds of products to show what they know and what they understand that are not

necessarily text-based. . . . So, what they did is they had to choose something that

they were passionate about, then they have to figure out what was a question, or

what was something they wanted to know about it. They had to research it, and

then they had to create or make something to show what it was that they learned.

There was a lot of choice, but it was still the same basic form, kind of things but

they have to show and there were a lot of skills involved in that. They have to be

able to research using the computer, using books. Then, they had to be able to

somehow show what it was that they learned, and then the last step was they have

to figure out how they are going to share what they have learned with other people.

During COVID-19, as Sophia and Beth shared, technology was not a choice, but a necessity. Because technology was not an integrated resource in daily literacy instruction, students were not familiar with the knowledge necessary to access some resources. Obviously, the major inequity was not computer literacy, but access to materials such as computers and WiFi (inequity in the times of distance learning will be addressed later in more detail).

Dimensions of Literacies

Open coding was used to find the CR literacy practices that teachers self-reported using in their classrooms with their students (not only with CLDS). This information was crossed with teachers' responses to Survey 2 on teachers' literacy practices. Since pedagogy is not just a matter of methods or strategies, the purpose of this section is to understand how these teachers used strategies to fulfill their perspectives of CR pedagogy when teaching literacy. I elaborated on this list of practices and assigned them to categories in the framework of multicultural education developed by Banks (2004) and Banks and Banks (2013): content integration, knowledge construction, prejudice reduction, empowering school culture, and the different approaches teachers can take from contribution to social action.

Content Integration. The importance of knowing their students, "really knowing them," who they are and where they are in their development, was identified as a transversal, horizontal, and vertical theme in teachers' discourse.

Knowing students and building relationships with them appeared to be inseparable. Students were perceived as a unit, "an inseparable whole." Therefore, relevant academic content was tied with the "knowing." Knowing students and their interests is used as the first jumping-off board for developing literacies that can address their needs (Parsons et al., 2015). The use of multicultural books is considered a content integration resource to make learning relevant for students (Gay, 2010; Gutiérrez, 2008; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Moje et al., 2004). In addition to making it relevant, these teachers used multicultural literature as a resource to make learning interesting and to provide students access to the content (Kelley et al., 2015). Teachers were asked in Survey 2 how often they used multicultural literature in their classrooms. Answers ranged from daily (two out of six) to more than once a week (three) to once a week (one). Survey 2 also asked for three examples of multicultural books they used in their classrooms to understand their concepts of multiculturalism. Some teachers listed specific books such as *Mango, Abuela and Me* by Medina and *The Sandwich Swap* by DiPucchio and Al-Abdullah. Others did not specify titles, but listed items in other formats: videos, pictures, and their students' experiences as multicultural texts, which is very congruent with a broad definition of Literacies.

Survey 2 also asked teachers if they agreed or disagreed (4-point Likert scale) regarding statements that were identified as obstacles in previous research: for example, understanding what MCL is. Because the majority of teachers followed pacing guides, the survey asked if they agreed or disagreed that one obstacle was that MCL was not part of the curriculum. This statement got a variety of answers: two of the six teachers agreed,

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one considered it an obstacle, two thought it was a moderate constraint, and one thought it was to a large extent. Regarding availability of MCL, there was also a variety of responses indicating that this continued to be a constraint, despite the fact that, as was mentioned earlier, there are resources. The following items did not show a variety of answers and teachers did not identify them as obstacles to MCL implementation: "No time in the day to use MCL," "No administrators who support the use of MCL," and "No knowledge of how to integrate MCL."

In content integration, teachers should ask themselves what information or knowledge is included in their instruction as relevant. For example, Carol found that the curriculum did not include many experiences of African Americans and Hispanics. She found a way to stay true to herself and meet the curriculum expectations, showing an additive approach to multicultural education:

One of the things that I incorporated into my classroom is Black history, [and] Hispanic history. [They are] not necessarily in the curricula. If it is something that I want to address, I put in literature, we read about it, and we talked about it. Because, you know, your literacy development, you have to teach about fiction and non-fiction. And, while I use some of the information, some of the books that are in the curricula, I supplement my reading. I always use what is in the curricula first, but we go through those books so fast that it allows me to supplement with some of the things, and some of the topics I want to talk about.

Teachers' answers to Survey 2 matched the framework of multicultural education and can explain how content integration requires agency, self-efficacy beliefs, and

collaboration, which are some themes in teachers' data. The data are interpreted in this study's framework as teachers using their agency to find time to use MCL in their classrooms, despite constraints such as time. Teachers agreed that they had the knowledge needed to integrate MCL in their lessons; this act shows self-efficacy beliefs. However, in this study, not all the teachers agreed that they knew how to fully integrate MCL in their lessons (four out of six). To be able to incorporate multicultural education principles, four of the six required support from administrators or other powerful figures in school, supporting the argument that collaboration within schools acts as a protective factor for the implementation of teachers' perspectives or visions.

Knowledge Construction. The themes found in this dimension are concerned with teachers' ability to disrupt the conventional practices in schools to include the perspective of Others. This dimension challenges the official curriculum, unmarked practices, pacing guides, and standardized assessment mandates that are aligned with the hegemonic discourse of school efficiency. I wondered how teachers approached these dilemmas: Did they use an assimilationist, contribution, additive, transformation, or social action approach (Banks & Banks, 2013)? How did they incorporate their students' or others' perspectives in the school curricula? I was curious about teachers' capacity to be agents of change and break the reproduction circle in schools by analyzing the texts, assessments, and curricula and modifying them as needed to present the perspective of others who have been ignored by the system (Banks & Banks, 2013).

I decided to include the theme of classroom environment here. Teachers created an environment in which all students and their perspectives were welcome:

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One way that I just help them embrace all, everything, all of their needs, all

cultures, because you know we have in our classroom, I called "the melting pot"

now that I have more ESOL students, they are more willing to collaborate. Which

I think is a huge strength, because before, students just want to show off what

they know. Now, I see more of a collaboration with the ESOL students that I

have. [Carol]

Sophia, on the other hand, understood the families she worked with and tried to

find solutions to the problems:

I tell kids read at home for 20 minutes, read something, do something with a word

for 20 minutes a day. And I sat back and then I realized, "How are you going to

read if nobody at your own home reads in Spanish, which is one of them, and then

no one reads English?" So I started a YouTube channel and then I shared with

them, and I read trade books. So I read . . .

In this dimension, teachers made instructional decisions with a horizontal

congruency, but at different levels of intensity (from additive to transforming the

curricula). This variety was explained by Hedges (2012) as teacher-informed practices:

Teachers use the knowledge gained in TEP and their experiences and judgment when

making instructional decisions, but context and self-efficacy beliefs mark the differences

among them. Mastery and vicarious experiences are pivotal for preservice teachers

(Siwatu et al., 2016), I wondered if the experiences in the TEP were able to help build

efficacy beliefs in this dimension. All but one teacher agreed that their TEP provided

them with the knowledge and experience to work with CLDS. However, not all teachers

believed that this knowledge was enough for them to understand how to do that in practice. Some teachers felt that the TEP should have broken down more how to make the curriculum relevant to CLDS. For example, Karen commented:

> And I think programs like UTEEM could work harder on taking the actual day-to-day practical stuff of teaching and breaking it down more. Like, taking "Here is the Virginia SOLs for second grade, let's look at them and determine how to make cultural relevant. How could we make this so . . . that it reaches kids where they are?" I don't feel like, and I assume probably most of our programs, haven't enough where you are actually looking at the day-to-day of teaching and the reality that you have to teach what the state tells you to teach.

This goes back to the need for some preservice teachers to have more support (scripted lessons) and detailed information on how to incorporate CR strategies (Risko et al., 2008) and the importance of induction programs that help transition from theory to practice (Hammerness & Kennedy, 2019)

Other teacher-participants felt they were prepared for the challenge, even if it required rewriting the curriculum to be able to cover the curriculum while still making the learning authentic, as Meredith explained:

> For example, when I was teaching second grade, one of the main social studies units is about American Indians, Native Americans. And looking at the curriculum and the way it was taught, it was so biased. So, I was like, if I am going to teach these kids about these peoples . . . I am going to do it in the most authentic way that I can, being one of those peoples. What the system really wants

you to cover is just the basics . . . Make sure they can say, "What food did they eat? What kind of transportation did they use?" And I don't know . . . There were like three things they need to know about each tribe of people. And I was like, "Oh my gosh, what are we doing?" I ended up *redoing the curriculum,* which always meant that I was way behind, but that is what I did. Because I think it was more important to have it right. I did not do a whole lot of testing with my kiddos. I did a lot of projects. Like if anybody ever questions me, I could be like, "This is everything they learned about these people. They made this diorama that shows this group of people." I just tried to make it as authentic a learning experience as I could . . . without . . . Covering the curriculum and still make it authentic, which is a lot of work. I didn't catch up, that was something that I had to internally struggle with.

Using the CCS framework of Barlett and Vavrus (2017), teachers demonstrated lack of congruency within their own responses when analyzed vertically and transversally. This demonstrates that teachers used different discourses and struggled with activity: implementing and maintaining their perspective on how to teach literacy to CLDS. For example, one teacher had a stance about the need to change the curriculum, but continued to use the curriculum as their primary guide to teach content. In the literature, this inconsistency (which I call *lack of congruency*) between perspectives and practices or self-report practices is explained as the influence of context (Stribling et al., 2015), the lack of a stated vision (Parsons et al., 2017), or simply normal teacher behavior development (Broemmel et al., 2020). This study suggests that the teacher-

participants' behavior can be explained as agency and self-efficacy behavior that reflects

changes in context. Efficacy theory reminds us that teachers' efficacy beliefs are

contextual and depend on the task, so congruency depends on the specific task. They used

flexibility to change what they could, and when they could not, they reflected on the task

to adapt, add, or modify.

For example, despite the fact that Karen continued to use standardized

assessments, she rewrote the assessments to meet her students where they were. She

adapted the material, but at the end she still wondered if the goal of the assessment was

met:

> We started actually last year, my first year in second grade, we started doing
>
> adapted assessments for the newcomer kids, for those with very little English,
>
> doing very picture heavy assessments. Particularly for reading, because in second
>
> grade we are not supposed to read anything aloud to them for reading tasks. So we
>
> give those newcomers different tasks than everybody else in reading. We do have,
>
> because our kids have [Limited English Proficient] plans, we are allowed to read
>
> aloud to them for all the other tasks, math and science and social studies, as far as
>
> like our tests or assessments that you graded and they go towards the report cards'
>
> grades, we do try them. We do try to adapt some things, and we are lucky. In
>
> second grade, we don't have any or very many district tests that we have to give.

In this context of district mandates, as she said, the reality is that students need to take the

assessments. Making adaptations of the tasks was the way Karen reconciled this with her

vision, although from a CR perspective this would be considered an assimilationist

approach. Context was the biggest obstacle. These teachers exercised agency within their classrooms (micro level), but outside them, their agency had limitations.

Teachers demonstrated awareness, but their agency most of the time was limited to instructional decisions they made within their classrooms. Beth elaborated,

I think that schools don't value or . . . value the experiences or progress that, or qualities that many students of color bring to school and so . . . as middle-class students, that is how the schools, that is what is reflected in school. Like working quietly, working independently, no . . . competition, things that for middle-class White is part of our experience. That was my experience growing up. I am cognizant. I am not sure that my experience is necessarily everyone's experience. Children of color or living in poverty. I don't think that that is their experience.

These teachers challenged standardization of practices (giving students the same instruction) by individualizing their instruction. Standardization contradicted their understanding of equity. For Carol, her field experiences (in special education and later in a bilingual program) revealed that the individualities of children were important:

So, that, those two experiences always played in the back of my mind when I am working with my students now. Because, although all of them are the same age, they are all at different places based on their background. So, you can't just go then with a leveled playing field for everyone. You have to look at what they bring with their backgrounds.

For Karen, this also meant developing a mindset that valued students' backgrounds and used them as resources: "Develop that mindset that it is important to treat kids or to look at kids as unique based on their cultural backgrounds."

Yet teachers continued to use the curricula and pacing guides as their points of reference. This is understandable from their explanations:

They are going to be tested on the curricula. So, no matter . . . I have to still expose them to the curricula, because they are going to be responsible for it. So *although I think they don't understand what I am saying and doing, I am still give in to it*. For example, when it comes to writing, making sure I have those sentence starters or sentence frames, using cut-out sentences, and have them put them in order, using very simple sentences along with visual supports to help them along the way. [Carol]

You just don't get to choose your curriculum and choose the way you teach everything when you are in public schools. [Karen]

Prejudice Reduction. As explained in Chapter 2, prejudice reduction in multicultural education is the dimension that focuses on modifying teaching methods and materials to develop students' positive attitudes toward different cultural groups (Banks & Banks, 2013). CR teachers use their knowledge of their students to help them overcome their own prejudices by including developmentally appropriate lessons, conversations, and materials that, although uncomfortable and controversial, are necessary to understand the problem of systemic prejudice. As explained by Giroux (2010), education is not neutral; it is a moral and political act. The themes found in this

study related to this dimension were awareness and disruption of stereotypes, which align with a social action approach (Banks & Banks, 2013). The horizontal, vertical, and transversal data analysis showed no agreement or congruency among teachers, or even within some individual teachers. Teachers did not agree regarding when these topics required discussion and whose responsibility it was to bring them up for discussion. Again, teachers demonstrated this incongruency through multiple discourses and alliances. Survey 1 (question 3.5) addressed this problem, and when those data were merged with teacher-participants' interview responses, it provided a better picture of what was going on here.

Of six teacher-participants, three agreed that hot topics of conversation for students (e.g., race, gender, sexuality, religion, etc.) should be addressed in classrooms and should be used to promote dialogue and critical examination. Two teachers somewhat agreed, and one neither agreed nor disagreed.

Those who agreed with the statement, such as Karen, had a clear vision of why it was important to address these topics, even if they were not part of the curriculum:

I think that they are really important to be addressed. Especially because . . . my kids are growing up mostly in an environment where everybody looks like them. I find it important to kind of ***bring in***, issues of other races or diversity, because there is, let's be honest, there is a lot of racism in our community against African Americans. Sometimes issues like that would come up. I had, unfortunately, kids say bluntly racist thing to the one or two Black kids in the class, in the past, when I had Black kids in my class. I do think it is important to address those issues even

when I don't have African American kids in my class. Obviously, a lot of the curriculum, we are learning about people like Martin Luther King and Jackie Robinson and . . . stuff like that. I found it important to make sure that the kids understand that . . . even though they are not Black, there are issues that they face that they can be discriminated against in the same way. Sometimes they don't quite understand that or realize that yet at this point in their lives. A lot of times they think Black and White means skin color, and they think that lighter-skinned Hispanic kids are White, and the darker Hispanic kids are Black. I think it is important for them to understand that some of these things we learned about us in the past are still happening. And it can affect them.

Sophia was another teacher who embraced the importance of controversial or hot topics for conversation with her students. She believed in her agentive role and brought up topics herself for discussion:

I have brought topics. The one that I thought about is how do we use digital media. . . . How do we use social media and be safe? How do we use social media to connect to our friends that is not dangerous for us and why is it dangerous? I think that knowledge is power, so any of these hot topics that come up, I will . . . I talked with them about it. We talked about immigration, we talked about the realities of . . . some of them having being in immigration prison and what that meant, and how that helped them come in that way and how some of them will never be able to go home. How do they deal with talking to the parent that is not here or to the family members that are not here?

The topics changed according to students' age, but she believed in the power of dialogue and discussion.

> [In Head Start] I totally embraced hot topics. The kids want to talk about it, then we talk about it. With the older kids, it is a lot of conversations about . . . I am thinking in one in particular where a kid was upset because somebody was bullying him, so then the group talked about it. And I talked to the other kid about it. What it was like, they were using pidgin English, joking pidgin English, and the kid thought he was making fun of him. So, it was really a discussion of what is joking and what is not joking, and how do we respond to that when someone does it. And with my boys, it is a discussion all the time. [Sophia]

In her case, Sophia was also aware of the importance of disrupting stereotypes of children with disabilities. She took a stance in the way Head Start was structured at her school. She and her preschool special education partner created a program in which students with IEPs could stay in Head Start and receive support in their areas of need. She used her agency to break with stereotypes by including children with disabilities in Head Start.

> I think it was ***very powerful because they got to know the kids with disabilities***. They got to know the special education teacher. She would help me when I got behaviors. I had pretty much all the kids who had significant behavior problems in the area, too, because some kids were transferred from ███████. They would transfer kids to me, because they were getting kicked out from Head Start, which it was crazy to me. I would take them in, because they were also in preschool special ed, but then they were placed in Head Start in my room.

Addressing prejudice is not only important on the theoretical level, but requires teachers

to take a stance on inclusion. This was the case for Carol; even though she did not choose

her current position, she accepted it and tried to do her best:

> This year I have to adjust to our students who are on the spectrum, you know.
>
> They had limited communication skills. . . . I just have my students to embrace
>
> that. . . . lot of times of course . . . when they can't communicate with you, they
>
> might have a tantrum or they might cry, that's the same for our students who are
>
> on the spectrum. They are trying to tell us something and we are not
>
> understanding, so they are having an outburst and just teaching our students that
>
> some friends, we need to freeze and settle down, because our friend is trying to
>
> tell us something and we need to figure it out what it is. So, instead of them being
>
> afraid or instead of them making fun of this student who is having an outburst,
>
> just settle down.

In Survey 1, Carol agreed that controversial or hot topics needed to be addressed in

schools. However, in the interview, when asked if she addressed them in her classroom,

she said,

> With kindergartners, I don't have a lot of these hot topics. The only things that I
>
> had to address in my classroom is like the "mean kids." "The bullying boys,"
>
> those are the kinds of topics that I have tackled. I guess I had to tackle those in my
>
> classroom. I read books about them. We talked about what good friends look like.
>
> It is okay to not be someone's friend. It is okay not to want to play with someone,
>
> because they did something mean. Those are kindergarten topics.

This was the same attitude that Nancy had, although in Survey 1 she said she agreed somewhat with the statement about the need to address controversial topics: "Some things I do, but some things, I think they need to be addressed, something that they should talk about at home. I kind of stay away from certain things. . . . Because at this age you can only get so deep."

Beth was one of the teachers who neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. She elaborated,

I think that they are very important to be addressed, because for young kids, they will talk, they just talk about them anyways. It is hard for them to focus or to really be happy. If they have these topics that are really concerning them or something like that, it really needs to be addressed.

Beth explained that the "hot topics" emerged from the students, after discussions of topics in the curriculum (civics and citizenship) or as part of personal events:

Two ways that it comes up in my experience, will be like, if I hear a lot of kids discussing it, then we will go on for our meeting. The other way it comes up is often, we do our writing workshop and students will share their writing and it is often very personal and hot topics come up in that. So usually we will let students ask questions, and we will acknowledge if it is a really important subject topic. And then say to the students, "That is really important what you shared today," reminding them "You can talk to the counselor about that if you want to," "say more." . . . That's kind of how it comes up. It is not like, "Let's all sit down and talk about X." I have never experienced [complaints from parents or

administrators] because it has always come from the students. I never . . . well, when it comes through a discussion with . . . Another hot topic for instance is racism and prejudice. But, I never had a parent or an administrator tell me, "Don't talk about that." Other instances, parents have always, if it has been a student bringing it up, it has always been a positive response. I have never had a parent say, "Don't talk about that," or "I don't want the kids to talk about that."

However, certain topics cannot be avoided by the teachers when they are mandated by the curricula or emerge from events in the life of students.

But if it is like, you know, when we are talking about Luther King or learning about something like that, or any of those things all American people learn about, it's also a diverse situation. People want to be accepted, people don't like somebody because of his color or whatever. We just talk about how does that make you feel. How many kids would actually be in this class? . . . We talk about those types of things at that level. [Nancy]

I think when Trump was elected president, it became more of a thing then. The whole school probably . . . The kids, the parents were very Democratic or, you know, that kind of thing. It just took one or two kids saying something positive about Trump, the other kids jump on him. That was in the past, obviously. The first time Trump was elected. Politics are something to talk about at home. Those things, I can't really bring it into the classroom. I don't want the wrong comments. [Nancy]

Meredith was the second teacher who somewhat agreed with the Survey 1

statement about the importance of addressing controversial topics in classrooms.

However, when asked directly in the interview, she explained:

What we have been told is "If the child brings it up, this is what you can say . . .

But you cannot bring this up." I think it is important. I think young children are

already thinking about a lot of these topics . . . and . . . us understanding what

their understanding is and helping them negotiate and navigate that is so

important. Especially when there is misinformation. We don't know the kind of

information they are getting, or if they have, if we don't talk about it. So I feel

like it is very important, and I think it is very doable, to do in a way that is

developmentally appropriate. You don't need to scare children, but to try and say

we are not going to talk about it . . . They know. They are thinking things. They

are knowing when something is not right, or something is not fair. I feel like it is

important to talk about it.

Breaking stereotypes was one of Karen's concerns:

I remember talking in UTEEM about kind of the stereotypes that we get into,

when we are doing something like, that is culturally diverse . . . you don't want to

stereotype your kids. Like, oh! they're Hispanics so we should have . . . a party

with stereotypes like Mexican food and stuff. It is not about that. I think that

sometimes people get caught up in that thinking, that that is diversity. I remember

talking about that in UTEEM and kind of like, you have to go past that to like,

what is actually relevant to your end of your individual students. Because there

is—so many of our kids really are pretty typical American kids, like that is very much their culture, but they have these . . . other things from home that are part of who they are too. You just can't stereotype them based on, "OK, you came from Guatemala." It is about what is relevant to them and to their family.

The power of the curriculum to dictate the topics has to be recognized. It rules what is included or not in classroom conversations. If topics of conversation are left only to teachers' responsibility, they might not occur. For Karen and Beth, these conversations arose cyclically throughout the year. Sometimes they coincide with holidays; for example, September is Hispanic Month, which is an opportunity to talk about immigration and contributions of Hispanics to the history of the United States. In November, when addressing the topic of indigenous people, teachers have an opportunity to bring alternative narratives of United States colonization. In January, Martin Luther King Day is a great opportunity to break stereotypes and talk about racism in America. Sometimes discussions arise when external circumstances occur: for example, the election of Trump and immigration issues, as mentioned by Nancy, were an opportunity for her to talk about immigration policies and how they affected her students' lives.

Empowering School Culture. Teachers are part of the school culture, and sometimes their discourses are aligned with the school discourses. Sometimes their discourses are in contradiction with the school discourse, and that is when internal tension occurs. A strong sense of belonging with the culture of their schools is vital for teachers. In this dimension, collaboration and flexibility were two of the constant themes in teachers' responses. Collaboration and flexibility work as protective factors for

teachers' vision and increase teachers' self-efficacy beliefs. Flexibility was a recurrent theme at all levels and was in relationship with agency. This theme was also identified as being open to feedback. The implications of flexibility will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

Schools are the meso-sphere between the school division system (macro) and the teacher's classroom (micro). Here, teachers' answers to Survey 1 intersected with the interview questions on how social inequalities are reproduced in classrooms. I asked teachers how schools could reproduce social inequalities. Some topics were recurrent, and others were only mentioned by some of the teacher-participants. Topics included the following: lower expectations for CLDS and "dumbing down the curriculum," tracking programs (difficult access to gifted and Advance Academic programs for minorities, ESOL programs, and overrepresentation and underrepresentation in special education programs), the pervasive role of standardized assessments, access and availability of resources for students in Title 1 schools, the rate of suspensions for students of color, teachers not valuing the experiences of CLDS, and improving support systems of CLDS. Some themes were not common to all teachers, but I have included them in this section because of their importance when discussing CLDS. Discipline and tracking programs are some of these.

Collaboration. Having a professional community with shared goals is considered a protective factor for these teachers. For many of the teachers in this study, having a supportive administrator or grade team helped them experience some validation. For

example, Beth considered herself lucky to have a supportive community that acted as a resource, as mentioned earlier.

Carol reached out to her ESOL and special education colleagues to help her support her CLDS and students with IEPs:

> I look to them as the experts. They are more trained, although I had the training. The Sped teacher, and the ESOL teachers who push in, they are collabs, they are more like the experts. I am picking their brains. I am collaborating with them. I ask them to bring resources to our collaborative planning meetings to support our students.

This collaboration was horizontal and vertical in Carol's case:

> Thankfully I am in a school where they have let you do what you want to do as long as your students are growing. So, no I haven't had this experience, but I think that I am just blessed that my principals have been supportive in allowing us to implement things that may not necessarily be in the curricula.

For Carol, collaboration and honest conversations among school staff were key to exposing inequities in schools:

> I think that collaboration is key. I think that starting a conversation and being honest, without being—other people being—offended, I think that is the beginning. I think that the culture we live in, people are afraid to have hard conversations because they feel retaliation. And they fear retaliation and then so I think that as long as you have people and leadership who will attack you, and as long as there are negative consequences for you being honest about how you feel

about social injustices, about differences, I think that people always are gonna be quiet.

I found a certain contradiction in Carol's statements. She found it necessary to have these conversations among adults, but she did not feel they were necessary for children in her classroom. Carol and Nancy, as well, discussed the appropriateness of these controversial topics in kindergarten or primary grades. However, Ramsey (2015) sustained that prejudice is instilled in children at a very early age, which argues in favor of addressing this problem sooner.

Readdressing Discipline Issues. Teacher-participants often discussed in their interviews how inequity in discipline could be an obstacle to equity in schools, and they reflected often about the reasons behind their instructional decisions. They mentioned how at UTEEM they learned the importance of asking themselves, "Why is this student behaving like this?"

Beth wondered if the behavior was really a problem or if she was the problem. This takes a lot of honesty from the teacher:

I have one boy in particular who is constantly moving around, always, one place to another in the classroom. I really think a lot about . . . I want to get further information, or I go to his parents and talk about all of this movement and activity because it's bothering me, or it's because it is really having an impact on how he is learning. How to use that information if I move forward to the local screening committee? It is a lot, there is a lot to think about that can cause inequity.

For Carol, it was an effort to understand her students:

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The program taught me to look at students individually instead of the whole class. It taught me to be interested in not just the student who was sitting in front of me and what they would be doing in my class, but everything that influences the students. What was going on in their personal life? What was happening? What is in their mind when they are coming to our classroom? So, I pay close attention to my students when they enter. Are they smiling? Are they crying? When they are smiling, I want to know why. I want to know what happened. If they are crying, I want to know why they are crying. Did something happen on the bus? Did something happen at home? Is it a memory that makes him upset? Going through UTEEM taught me to be more interested individually instead of the class. UTEEM taught me to make a connection with my students, as opposed to looking at the curricula. Is it time to move on? I am more interested in the students than pushing curricula down throats.

In Sophia's case, she questioned the ability of some teachers to understand the appropriateness of their teaching strategies when they lacked knowledge of second language acquisition. Behaviors were tied to "teachers not understanding students' behaviors":

A woman from ESOL region came down and did a whole chat, like she spoke in Greek or something and did a read aloud, and showed how to do a read aloud, printed out pictures, talked about farms, talked about what the book was about, so that the people could understand it, and be engaged in it, when she is doing the read aloud, right? I will say that 90% of the fifth and sixth grade teachers said I

cannot do that in my class. Yeah, you can. And they never did. They never

embraced that. They never looked at it as something that they needed to do. So,

sitting up in front of a class of . . . I have one classroom where 12 of the 26 kids

are recently arrived, no English, none. And the teacher is sitting up there reading a

chapter book, and then gets upset and tells me, "Well, so and so needs to work on

their behavior, so can you talk to so and so about their behavior?" I am like,

"They are bored stiff crackles . . . like, you are sitting up there reading for half an

hour from a chapter book and 90% of your class has no clue what you are doing."

Of course they are going to act out. Of course they are going to start chatting with

their friends . . . So, you are not instructing them. I will say the majority of the

newcomers in fifth and sixth grade have no access to the core curriculum.

Some teachers explained the hidden curriculum and expectations at their schools

and how important it was to make things more transparent for students:

I think there is a lack of respect from those teachers [the ones who express deficit

perspectives of minority students]. The most behavior problems are in their

classes. Students know when you don't like them. Students know when you are

picking on them. Students see when I do something, they are used to my

consequences. Or, they do something, those are their consequences for the same

actions. They pick up on that stuff, as early as kindergarten. They see the

differences, they know. So, when you have [them], those students respond

differently. And, so I think there is a different impact. [Carol]

Knowing their students and trying to understand their backgrounds was always front line, according to these teacher-participants. What was "normal" was not the norm.

> I was just thinking of a particular child. She was just very outgoing, and what some people might call sassy. Very precocious and curious and interested. And it was interesting when she came, I embraced that right away. It could be perceived sometimes as being naughty. But . . . kids are kids. It was interesting to see some of the teachers be like "No, you can't behave like that," "That is not how we . . ." And quite honestly, I felt like it was sort of a sexist thing, because if it would have been a boy, probably it would not . . . [He would] have been [given] slack in that . . . but . . . I had another teacher who was actually Colombian, which is where this child was from. She was like, "Yeah, she is too Colombian." And I was like, "Why do we want to take that away?". . . "You go, girl."

> And then, on the other hand, we have kids coming from other cultures who are very quiet, which does not mean they don't know anything . . . Because they are not the ones to raise their hands, or they don't really want to do a turn and talk. You have to respect that as . . . That is part of their culture and their upbringing. It is a more quiet way of being interactive. [Meredith]

Tracking Programs. Some programs in schools, such as ESOL and special education, act as tracking programs for some students. The additional support these students require makes them susceptible to misidentification. Most teacher-participants (five out of six) considered that pull-out programs were necessary, based on students' needs and classroom makeup. However, there is research that has questioned pull-out

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models as a segregational practice. Teachers in this study did not find problems with pull-out models. Sophia mentioned how ESOL programs were changing their focus from reading to language development. Some teachers found that schools were creating a problem going from overrepresentation to underrepresentation of CLDS in special education services. Sophia voiced her concerns about this problem:

> I think that mismatch I see is that school districts are not ready for some of the kids they have or how to deal with them. I think the mismatch is the special education issue. I understand, I completely get the overrepresentation, I get that . . . I am totally down with it. But I feel like that when you have a kid who has struggled so much for so long, there has to be another way to get to them before we say, "They don't speak enough English." "He may never speak enough English to be able to be tested." That is frustrating to me.

Equity Pedagogy and Communicative Patterns. Answers related to this dimension showed the teachers' belief that content needed to be modified to take into consideration students' individualities. Adaptations and modifications of materials, assessments, and resources were horizontal and transversal themes. This theme is also related to the themes of flexibility and engagement (Parsons et al., 2015). All teachers emphasized the importance of communicating with their students in their language and using their students' first language as a resource. Some teachers mentioned the importance of acknowledging their own discourse strategies and changing them to match their students' patterns. Others pointed out the importance of dialogue in class and moving away from a teacher-centered model, in which teachers do all the talking and

students all the listening. In the first part of the Themes in the Data section, I explained

how these teachers viewed the democratic classroom environment, which is the central

theme of CRP: a place in which students can participate as a community, a place where

teachers are listeners and students do the talking.

For Meredith, a democratic classroom environment was a place where students

made decisions about their learning:

I think that it is really listening to kids because a lot of times they know what they

need, but we have a narrow perception of what it is supposed to look like . . .

Something I really had that I have really worked on the last few years is just really

opening myself up to listening to kids. . . . I think that is how I differentiate. It is

really listening to them. Listening to their thinking and then that gives me insight,

"This is how I need to approach this kid, this is what could move this kid along to

the next whatever we need to get done."

Carol explained how she felt when other teachers talked about CLDS "not

listening." These teachers attributed CLDS' lack of compliance to misbehavior, but the

consequences of this behavior could be more troublesome, and it was students being

unable to access the content.

[Newly graduated teachers] are eager, but they don't have the patience, the

understanding, they don't have . . . They are just not equipped to go into a diverse

classroom, a class full of English language learners and teach them. They say

things like, "They just don't listen," or "They are not paying attention." And [I]

always ask why, and they don't want to know why. It's always "They are bad,"

and when I ask them, "Do you think they understand it?" they don't even think about those types of things.

The task is not easy and requires that these teachers look for resources inside and outside their schools. The teachers who spoke Spanish—the majority of the participants—used Spanish to help their students transition and decrease their anxiety due to the expectations of speaking a language new to them. For example, Karen used her knowledge of Spanish to ensure her students comprehended the directions. Nancy offered her students the use of electronic books in Spanish so they had access to the content. Sophia described a classroom environment where students felt safe to make mistakes:

I know that does, how the classroom environment is set up and I totally agree that if the teacher set up their classroom in a certain way, it would make it less threatening and more of a way for the kids to communicate too; but this is not the reality. So, I have to go with what the reality is, and to me my reality is that pullout works better for the kids. They progress quicker; they are acquiring more language quickly.

Distance learning was brought up by many of the teachers as an example of inequity in education. The challenges of this new environment and the consequences of distance learning for CLDS will be assessed later by school divisions, but in the minds of these teachers, it was catastrophic.

For Sophia:

██████ has come . . . we are teaching new content after next week and I am still struggling with that. I am still very upset about that. I still don't agree with it. I

don't think we should be . . . My fear is that ▮▮▮▮ is going to say, "Well, we

taught it. The kids accessed this, and they did this, and they did that. And so there

it is." My argument to that is, "They didn't access it. The lower socioeconomic,

the lower English-speaking students did not access it in the way they needed to

access it, or learn it the way they needed to learn it." I think you are seeing it

happening right now.

Karen clarified:

Really thinking about what is happening right now and the fact that our kids

might not be able to finish the school year. You see all these jokes online about

home-schooling, and I am just here sitting and thinking my kids are not getting

any home-schooling. Their parents still have to go to work, I am sure. Their

parents don't have the resources to sit at home and work with them, even if they

are out of work. They don't know what to teach them. They might not have access

to the things that people are posting online. Even if the kids are sitting at home,

they don't necessarily have a tablet, a phone, or a laptop to get online, to get all

these programs. I think that this worldwide experience we are having right now, it

is just going to highlight the gaps even more.

The need to understand CRP as a mindset or theory is key to address changes in

TEPs that see Banks's (2004) five dimensions of multicultural education as a starting

point to change the view of education as a whole. How can we help teacher candidates to

develop a full understanding of their job as CCR teachers?

Chapter 5: Discussion, Implications, and Conclusions

Introduction

Education has always been the site for discussions on visions of how we perceive society should be. Our visions are guided by paradigms and theories about the world. These theories of and about the world are shaped by our experiences, which work as lenses through which we perceive and construct reality. But there are less tangible structures that also shape our vision of reality and in which we are socialized, and these are ideologies. Social forces not only surround teachers, but are also within teachers (Joseph, 2020). Ideologies are systems of beliefs and values that shape the way we think and behave through discourses (Crotty, 2015). The hegemonic discourse that currently shapes education in the United States is the neoliberal discourse of free markets, which can be perceived in laws such as NCLB (Cochran-Smith et al., 2018). Education is about efficiency, standardization, and accountability. CRP provides an approach to democratic education using the framework of multicultural education.

The purpose of this study was twofold: to investigate the impact of a CR training program (UTEEM) on the literacy perspectives and practices of six teachers in schools attended by CLDS, and to learn how these CR teachers' vision survived an educational system immersed in discourses of efficiency, accountability, and standardization, contradicting the foundations of their vision. As the teacher-participants graduated from UTEEM 8–20 years ago, the study also aimed to explore how the program's philosophy changed among these teachers over time, as they were immersed in an educational system

with different aims. I analyzed these teachers' stories and discourses and found that contextual forces (federal and local mandates and school and student demographics) were the principal obstacles that teachers had to overcome in implementing their visions. This study was concerned with the power of social structures over teachers' visions. The results demonstrated that teachers appropriated the hegemonic discourse and the CR discourse in their practices at different levels. Agency and self-efficacy beliefs were identified as necessary affordances to maintain and implement teachers' visions.

A continuum of different discourses (CR and school) was observed in teachers' responses, exemplifying how ingrained they are and how difficult it is to overcome them. Their TEP was found to be a fundamental source of knowledge and resilience necessary to fully use diversity as an asset, but without a community (school or school system, and legislation) that supported their vision, these teachers found it difficult to see diversity as a possibility.

My argument is that teachers have the ability to change the school environment to transform it into an equitable site for all students, especially those who are CLDS and live in poverty. They have the capability and the power, but context (macro and meso) is a strong obstacle. In these cases, agency is used, but not critical agency.

Discussion

Teacher-Participants' Backgrounds

The paradigm that supports this study argues that we construct knowledge and our reality through interactions with others. However, these are shaped but not determined by our social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender values. These social fields

influence our views and practices, creating dispositions toward issues. That is why it is important for teachers to engage constantly in reflective practices, so these dispositions or lenses do not prevent us from seeing reality. The first research subquestion in this study was "Who are these teachers, and what are their backgrounds? How do they believe their backgrounds influence/inform their teaching?"

As explained in Chapters 1 and 3, there are alternative and competing explanations for teacher-participants' strategies in working with CLDS. Because agency and self-efficacy beliefs were considered key in this study, a term was coined here, *CCR teachers*. The importance of teachers' backgrounds can also be used as an alternative explanation, since teachers who applied to the UTEEM program were selected from a pool of teacher candidates. As per our conversation with Drs. Sánchez and Thorp (personal communication, April 2021), teacher candidates were chosen for their affinity with the program goals. Teacher-participants could have had these dispositions toward working with CLDS before entering the program, in which case, the UTEEM program reaffirmed their principles and values. However, three of the six teacher-participants expressed that many of these dispositions toward CLDS were produced during their participation in the UTEEM program, using words such as "make me aware of," "open your eyes," "realize," etc.

UTEEM Culture

In Chapter 1, culture was defined as a verb based on the way people do things (Street, 1993). These teachers belonged to a shared culture because they said and did things in a similar way, based on the knowledge and skills they gained in their TEP. I call

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this shared culture UTEEM culture. As with any culture, their perspectives and practices evolved, sometimes due to natural forces (for example, most teachers had previously done home visits, but did not anymore), or due to the forces of the social structure in which they were immersed (schools) and the mandates they had to follow (NCLB).

All the teacher-participants felt that UTEEM provided them with the dispositions to work with CLDS. Knowledge was perceived as open and flexible. Changes were welcome and expected: "You learned on the job" [Beth]. In Chapter 1, I described some of the experiences and program components that teachers were exposed to from the program's perspective. In Chapter 4, I was able to reconstruct the TEP experiences and components that teacher-participants considered pivotal for the development of their philosophical perspective about how to teach literacy to CLDS. These experiences were important in building their vision, self-efficacy beliefs, and knowledge of CRP. Teacher-participants rated themselves high on the CR dispositions scale (Whitaker & Valtierra, 2018a). This scale was used to identify teachers' dispositions to CRP based on a doubt that my pilot study raised (Alva, 2018). The pilot showed some disagreements between what the teacher said and what was observed. This was corroborated in this study, although self-reporting was used to identify practices instead of observations, due to the lack of opportunities resulting from COVID-19. Their knowledge of CR was high, but the teacher-participants performed using practices not completely in tune with their beliefs and perspectives. These six teacher-participants demonstrated intellectual moves at different levels, using different discourses. Why was that? How could they move effortlessly from one platform to another?

Literacy

Teachers' discourses about what literacy is can be placed on a continuum, from a very broad understanding of literacy as Literacies to a narrower understanding of literacy as reading. Teachers in this study spent more time on the aspects of literacy that they believed would have the most powerful impact on developing the literacy skills of their CLDS, despite pacing guides and other school or school division mandates. The three literacy areas that these teachers focused on the most were oral language development, background knowledge/vocabulary development, and comprehension (listening and reading). These findings demonstrate that these teachers did not follow "evidence-based research findings" that encourage decoding skills, among other recommendations (National Reading Panel, 2000), but they engaged in evidence-informed practices (Hedges, 2012). One of the sources of influence was teachers' understanding of child development and second language development gained in UTEEM.

Equity: Differentiation Is Equity

Teachers in this study believed knowing their students would provide them with the tools to make adaptations and modifications of the curriculum, assessments, and delivery necessary to serve their students' individual needs. Differentiation was seen as equity in their classrooms, and these words were presented together as a constant theme in teachers' discourses. Choice was also associated with equity. Three out of the six teacher-participants believed that providing choice (input and output) equitably addressed students' needs.

Although individualization was the main focus of teachers' strategies with CLDS and students with special needs, some teachers considered this an exhausting task. Therefore, on some occasions, differentiation was not possible. One of the reasons often cited was the demographic composition of the classroom: "You cannot give everybody all the time" [Nancy]; "The challenge for me has kind of been giving each kid what they individually need when their needs are extremely high for everybody" [Karen]. Again, two oppositional discourses were populated: teachers believed it was important to meet the students where they were, but the school expectation was "all students need to be reading at X level." Teachers needed to respond to demands that they called "unrealistic," but they needed to deliver because they were kept "accountable" by the school system.

> Because, I would say, very, very few kids who came to second grade [were]
> prepared for second grade, for second-grade material that the state says we have
> to teach. I have one group, I have out of my 22 kids, I have a group of six who are
> brand new to the country. [They] speak almost no English. Then, I have another . .
> . nine who are relatively new to the country, like were not born in the U.S., or
> were but, there might be some other issues that their English is so very low. Then,
> I have another six or so who were born in the U.S. who have pretty good English
> vocabulary, really good communication, but low literacy skills. That keeps them
> as far as the proficiency task, keeps them on at a level 2, while their speaking and
> listening are probably much higher. I kind of have, as far as the equity piece, meet
> those different groups of kids at different places. [Karen]

Transformative, Additive, Contribution, and Assimilation Approaches

Teacher-participants' self-reported practices also ranged across a continuum. Context, "the reality" in teacher discourses, was that they had to follow mandates and use curricula, assessments, and pacing guides that limited or constrained their practices. *Balance* was also a word used by teachers to demonstrate their commitment to this struggle between what was imposed and what they believed was in students' best interest. Teachers were aware of these contradictions or lack of congruence between discourses and practices. To avoid going against their pedagogical philosophy, they looked for solutions to solve this dilemma, showing flexibility. Most teachers chose to solve the struggle with an additive/modification approach, and few used a transformative approach. The approach depended on their self-efficacy beliefs—how well they felt they were prepared to solve the problem. Self-efficacy beliefs are contextual. Therefore, besides context, teachers' self-efficacy beliefs require analysis of the resources available to them, and they make the difference in whether teachers act or not, and how they act.

The variety in teachers' responses to problems confirmed that self-efficacy beliefs are task-specific and depend on the teacher's toolbox. Without agency, defined as critical reflection and evaluation of the task, self-efficacy beliefs, authority, and the willingness to make a change, change will not occur.

Changes are not a replacement of one practice with another practice. Changes are temporal, partial, and subject to improvement. Changes performed by teachers are similar to changes in language within the structuralist paradigm. They are sometimes imperceptible, but by changing one feature of the system, we change the system.

This ability to adapt to the situation is a characteristic of human beings (Bandura, 1997). In the current study, it was noticed that agency was always associated with flexibility. Flexibility was a theme/category/subcategory present in all teachers' discourses. I first considered flexibility as a necessary component of self-efficacy beliefs; later, the importance of flexibility in teachers' discourses made me think that it should be a theme on its own. The constant association between flexibility and agency (contiguity-based relationship) led me to conclude that they are intimately related, just as reflexivity and evaluation are in agency. As Shulman and Shulman (2004) observed, motivation was necessary for these teacher-participants to recognize when their actions (agency) would have a chance of success and when a mandate could not be reconciled with their vision. Because critical reflexivity and evaluation are necessary components of agency, teachers do not apply their agency to all situations they encounter. Flexibility is the last component that brings an understanding of these teachers' actions to the concept of agency in this study. In their search for "balance," teachers engage in a self-dialectal dialogue: they reflect, they evaluate, and they practice flexibility.

Making Connections with Families

All teacher-participants consistently mentioned that building relationships with families was a priority and that this was a foundational stone learned in UTEEM. It was observed, nevertheless, that it was more a perspective than a practice. The practices are presented as a continuum: some teachers used the family as a resource for creating relevant educational material and learning about students' interests and learning styles,

while some might only connect to communicate about students' progress, concerns in school, and school expectations.

Collaboration

Collaboration was identified as a protective factor in teachers' execution of their perspectives and visions. This does not mean that teachers did not have power conflicts at their schools: almost all teachers described occasions when they did not agree with their colleagues and administrators, but their common goal, students' achievement, kept them committed to their jobs. Teachers found in their coworkers, colleagues, administrators, and district superintendents a source of support, and in some cases, struggle.

Students as Wholes?

An important theme in these teachers' discourse was the continuous reference to students as wholes, as part of a family, a community, and a culture. Students are more than numbers, and they come with many resources to be explored and discovered. Despite this CR discourse, in which teachers looked for funds of knowledge in their students' communities, families, and lives outside school, the existence of the other discourses sometimes was overwhelming, and on occasions led to teachers' despair, despite their high expectations.

> I still believe that everybody is the same, and everybody has the same capabilities. But, the access, the exposure, the parent understanding of the importance of it, it is not the same. And I think that has a big impact on the kids. So [my daughter], she is the age of the Head Start kids that I had for so many years. And I think back to that and I go, "Wow," like it breaks my heart, I mean really. It makes me sad

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and makes me question schooling and things like that. It really does. It makes my heart sad to think, "Will those Head Start kids, how can they ever keep up with her?" You know what I mean? Like, can my sixth-grade kids, that are less literate than she is, really keep up? It breaks my heart. I too worked in high school and looked at the requirements to graduate. I had a group of newcomers in high school, when I did an internship with them in the summer, and I just looked at them and said, "Oh my gosh, these requirements, how are they ever going to do this? How?" I want them to, and I want to do everything I can to help them do it. I just think . . . How? How is that going to happen? [Sophia]

Many teachers in this study shared the same perspective, or the same discourse, regarding how to keep up with high expectations when the resources at home are not the same or the students do not have the same opportunities as the White middle class. I have to remind myself that we cannot provide students with a discourse of possibilities and hope if we don't believe that future exists (Ladson-Billings, 2009)

Implications for Practice

Being a teacher requires not only declarative and procedural knowledge, but knowing how to move between discourses, how to deconstruct discourses, and how to use discourses as needed: the Big D and small d distinction (Gee, 2015). As bilinguals do, teachers need to discover how to dance with them. In linguistics, changes can come from the bottom, from the participants, or from the top (local or federal legislation). Changes that come from teachers and at the level of the classroom will take longer to be observed, and their effects are limited. What keeps these teachers doing what they do, despite the

fact that on occasion they use the big D, is critical agency. Vision is necessary, because in their vision there is hope, but critical agency is pivotal to maintain a balance. Critical agency requires awareness that there is an inequity, reflexivity to understand beyond our perspective, evaluation of the situation and our capabilities (self-efficacy beliefs) to accomplish it successfully, and recognizing that we have the power to make the changes (adaptation, modification, or transformation).

Teachers should be observant that in the equity model (Banks & Banks, 2013), they must accomplish this task in five dimensions. TEPs have a responsibility to provide this knowledge to their student-teachers.

Areas of Future Research

1. The role of their TEP was foundational in these teachers' dispositions to work with CLDS, but their schools were the places where they applied this knowledge in actual social interactions with students and staff. There is a clear need for more collaborative models between TEPs and school districts to sustain and maintain the dispositions and bridge the gap between "what is taught and what is experienced" (Birdyshaw et al., 2017).

2. Collaboration with ESOL teachers was considered vital by these teachers who worked with CLDS. The use of push-in and pull-out models and co-teaching models requires more research.

Recommendations for TEPs

1. The disparity between minority students and teacher populations requires TEP to make changes in their coursework to address these realities. Teacher

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Education Programs can have a lasting influence on their graduates in the way they work with CLDS. This study provides evidence that teachers who graduated from a program with a culturally responsive framework continued to share their program's orientation despite the time elapsed. CR dispositions that were formed during their preparation as teachers continued to inform their perspectives of literacy and pedagogy, and their practices (within a continuum) with CLDS.

2. We need programs like UTEEM that instill in their candidates the importance of reflection, awareness of their differences, and understanding of diversity as an asset. Teacher reflection on their own backgrounds as a continuous pedagogical practice helped these teachers to understand and solve dilemmas from other people's perspectives. CR dispositions and self-efficacy beliefs were built by different and interconnected experiences and components of the program that made them aware that diversity could be a strength and used as an instructional tool. Some of the components teachers pointed out were full-time internships at different locations and in diverse communities, the importance of building relationships within their school communities (collaboration with administrators, colleagues, parents and students), and the influence of culture in children's development of literacy. These experiences were considered pivotal to build and reaffirm their CR teacher identities and dispositions. It is important to point out that most teachers had remained in the same Title 1 schools which, in a time of high teacher attrition, was an

indicator of their commitment to work with this group of students. These diverse experiences should be a requirement in TEPs.

3. Developing teachers' culturally responsive dispositions and self-efficacy beliefs are necessary ingredients in TEPs; but critical agency (as recognizing their roles in reproducing in schools the inequities of the system) is vital. In this study, teachers move constantly within two discourses in search of balance: their TEP's and schools' discourses. TEPs should create opportunities to unveil and deconstruct these discourses; and provide teachers with the tools to reflect on their power to make changes and on their limitations. Reflection provides teachers with the flexibility to adapt, modify and transform the curriculum in search of a balance.

4. The importance of understanding the power of multicultural education in a time of demographic changes and teachers leaving the profession requires TEPs to find a framework that addresses equity in literacy education. Banks and Banks's (2013) model provides a working framework in five dimensions and it should be used by TEPs as a tool to address the problem.

Limitations and Boundaries

Glesne (2016) noted that limitations are related to the delimitations or boundaries of a study. The delimitations are the scope of inquiry clearly set as our research boundaries. Delimitations are those choices over which we have some control. Limitations, on the other hand, are aspects of a study that restricted the research in some way and were beyond the researcher's control, for example, access to some

documentation, time constraints, etc. "Limitations are consistent with the partial state of knowing in social research" (Glesne, 2016, p. 214).

In this study, the criteria used to select participants should be considered a delimitation, since the participants were identified from only one CR program, the UTEEM program. This is also a limitation because only those who agreed to the study were part of it. Another important limitation is that the data were based on self-reporting of practices, as COVID-19 changed the design of the study by making it impossible to conduct observations of teachers in schools. One boundary set by the study was that it examined only teachers' literacy perspectives and self-reported practices.

Appendix A

IRB Approval Letter

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY

Office of Research Integrity and Assurance

Research Hall, 4400 University Drive, MS 6D5, Fairfax, Virginia 22030
Phone: 703-993-5445; Fax: 703-993-9590

DATE: April 23, 2020

TO: Elizabeth DeMulder, PhD
FROM: George Mason University IRB

Project Title: [1528006-3] Teachers' Literacy Perspectives and Practices: From Theory to Practice

SUBMISSION TYPE: Amendment/Modification

ACTION: APPROVED
APPROVAL DATE: April 23, 2020
REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

REVIEW TYPE: Expedited review category #7

Thank you for your submission of Amendment/Modification materials for this project. The George Mason University IRB has APPROVED your submission. This submission has received Expedited Review based on applicable federal regulations.

Please remember that all research must be conducted as described in the submitted materials.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the project and insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed consent form unless the IRB has waived the requirement for a signature on the consent form or has waived the requirement for a consent process. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require that each participant receives a copy of the consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by the IRB prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to the IRB office. Please use the appropriate reporting forms for this procedure. All FDA and sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed (if applicable).

All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must be reported promptly to the IRB.

This study does not have an expiration date but you will receive an annual reminder regarding future requirements.

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of five years, or as described in your submission, after the completion of the project.

Generated on IRBNet

Please note that department or other approvals may be required to conduct your research in addition to IRB approval.

If you have any questions, please contact Bess Dieffenbach at 703-993-5593 or edieffen@gmu.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

GMU IRB Standard Operating Procedures can be found here: https://rdia.gmu.edu/topics-of-interest/human-or-animal-subjects/human-subjects/human-subjects-sops/

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within George Mason University IRB's records.

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<center>**Appendix B**</center>

<center>Informed Consent Form: Teacher Consent</center>

Title: CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHERS' LITERACY PERSPECTIVES AND PRACTICES WITH CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE STUDENTS: FROM THEORY TO CLASSROOM

RESEARCH PROCEDURES
This research is being conducted to understand the literacy perspectives and practices of elementary teachers who graduated from a culturally responsive teacher education program. If you agree to participate, there are four steps in which you will participate. You will be asked to 1) answer a brief 24-item online survey about your teaching philosophy. In case you meet the criteria for the study, you will be requested to 2) answer a second online survey that consists of 21 items; 3) agree to audio-taped observations of literacy activities and interactions with your students conducted in your classroom for a total of no more than 6 hours within approximately three weeks (one 1 hour/90-minute observation to get familiar with your classroom routines and three 1-hour/90 minute observations), and 4) answer a 60-minute interview that will take place at the end of the 3-week observations.

RISKS
There are no foreseeable risks for participating in this research.

BENEFITS
There are no benefits to you directly as a participant other than to further research in culturally responsive literacy practices in elementary classrooms.

CONFIDENTIALITY
The data in this study will be confidential. Your name will not be included on written documents. A pseudonym will be used for each teacher and through the use on an identification key, only the researcher will be able to link data to teacher identities. The audio-taped information will be transcribed and deleted as soon as possible, and the file recordings and transcripts will be stored at George Mason University to maintain confidentiality. Identifiable data such as school name will be disguised to avoid possible recognition, if published.

PARTICIPATION
Your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason. If you decide not to participate or if you withdraw from the study, there is no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. There are no costs to you or any other party.

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CONTACT
This research is being conducted by Dr. DeMulder and Maria-Soledad Alva from the College of Education and Human Development at George Mason University. Dr. DeMulder may be reached at (703) 993-8326 for questions or to report a research-related problem. If you have questions or comments regarding your rights as a participant in the research, you may contact the George Mason University Institutional Review Board office at 703-993-4121

This research has been reviewed according to George Mason University procedures governing your participation in this research. (IRBNet # 1528006-3)

CONSENT
I have read this form, all of my questions have been answered by the research staff, and I agree to participate in this study.

_____ I agree to audio taping.

_____ I do not agree to audio taping.

_____
Print Name

_____   _____
Signature   Date

Appendix C

Culturally Responsive Teachers' Literacy Perspectives and Practices with CLDS
Survey 1

Dispositions for culturally responsive pedagogy scales (adaptation of Whitaker and
Valterra, 2018) and teacher agency self-efficacy (adaptation of Siwatu, 2007).

Q4 INFORMED CONSENT FORM- Teacher Consent Title: CULTURALLY
RESPONSIVE TEACHERS' LITERACY PERSPECTIVES AND PRACTICES WITH
CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE STUDENTS: FROM THEORY
TO CLASSROOM
RESEARCH PROCEDURES
This research is being conducted to understand the literacy perspectives and practices of
elementary teachers who graduated from a culturally responsive teacher education
program. If you agree to participate, there are four steps in which you will participate: 1)
you will be asked to answer a brief 24-item online survey about your teaching
philosophy. In case you meet the criteria for the study, you will be requested to 2) answer
a second online survey that consists of 21 items; 3) consent audio-taped observations of
literacy activities and interactions with your students conducted in your classroom for a
total of no more than 6 hours within approximately three weeks (one 1hour/90 minute
observation to get familiar with your classroom routines and three 1-hour/90 minute
observations once per week), and 4) answer a 60-minute interview that will take place at
the end of the 3-week observations.

RISKS
There are no foreseeable risks for participating in this research.

BENEFITS
There are no benefits to you directly as a participant other than to further research in
culturally responsive literacy practices in elementary classrooms.

CONFIDENTIALITY
The data in this study will be confidential. Your name will not be included on written
documents. A pseudonym will be used for each teacher and through the use on an
identification key, only the researcher will be able to link data to teacher identities. The
audio-taped information will be transcribed and deleted as soon as possible, and the file
recordings and transcripts will be stored at George Mason University to maintain

confidentiality. Identifiable data such as school name will be disguised to avoid possible recognition, if published.

PARTICIPATION
Your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason. If you decide not to participate or if you withdraw from the study, there is no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. There are no costs to you or any other party.

CONTACT
This research is being conducted by Dr. DeMulder and Maria-Soledad Alva from the College of Education and Human Development at George Mason University. Dr. DeMulder may be reached at (703) 993-8326 for questions or to report a research-related problem. If you have questions or comments regarding your rights as a participant in the research, you may contact the George Mason University Institutional Review Board office at 703-993-4121
This research has been reviewed according to George Mason University procedures governing your participation in this research. (IRBNet #1528006-1)
CONSENT
I have read this form, all of my questions have been answered by the research staff, and I agree to participate in this study.

◯ Yes, I agree to participate in the study. (4)

◯ No, I don't agree to participate in the study. (5)

Skip To: End of Survey If INFORMED CONSENT FORM- Teacher Consent Title: CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHERS' LITERACY PERSPECTIV... = No, I don't agree to participate in the study.

Q5 Thank you for answering this survey.

Survey 1
Self-Assessment

Q1 Please reflect and answer if you agree or disagree with the following statements that focus on you as a professional teacher.

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
1. I value assessing and reflecting on my teaching practices	○	○	○	○	○
2. I am open to feedback about my teaching practices	○	○	○	○	○
3. I am aware of my cultural background and its influences on my practice	○	○	○	○	○
4. I am willing to be vulnerable and open to change	○	○	○	○	○
5. I am willing to examine my own identities	○	○	○	○	○

| 6. I am willing to take advantage of professional development opportunities focused on issues of diversity | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Survey 1
Community

Q2 Please reflect and answer if you agree or disagree with each of the following statements that are related to your community interactions and values.

	Strongly agree (13)	Somewhat agree (14)	Neither agree nor disagree (15)	Somewhat disagree (16)	Strongly disagree (17)
1. I value developing personal relationships with students	○	○	○	○	○
2. I value collaborating with families	○	○	○	○	○
3. I value collaborating with colleagues, even those with perspectives different from mine	○	○	○	○	○
4. I value collaborative learning in my classroom	○	○	○	○	○
5. I value student input into classroom rules	○	○	○	○	○
6. I value dialog as a way to learn about students' lives outside of school	○	○	○	○	○

7. I value students' diversity in my classroom	○	○	○	○	○
8. I view myself as a member of the learning community along with my students	○	○	○	○	○
9. I am comfortable with conflict as an inevitable part of the teaching and learning processes	○	○	○	○	○

Survey 1
School
Q3 Please reflect and answer if you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about your teaching beliefs on education and its role in society.

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
1. I believe it is important to acknowledge how issues of power are enacted in the school environment.	○	○	○	○	○
2. I believe that schools can reproduce social inequities.	○	○	○	○	○
3. I believe that changes in curricula, materials, instructional delivery and assessment are needed to improve school achievement of students who are culturally and linguistically diverse.	○	○	○	○	○
4. I believe that school achievement involves more than academics.	○	○	○	○	○

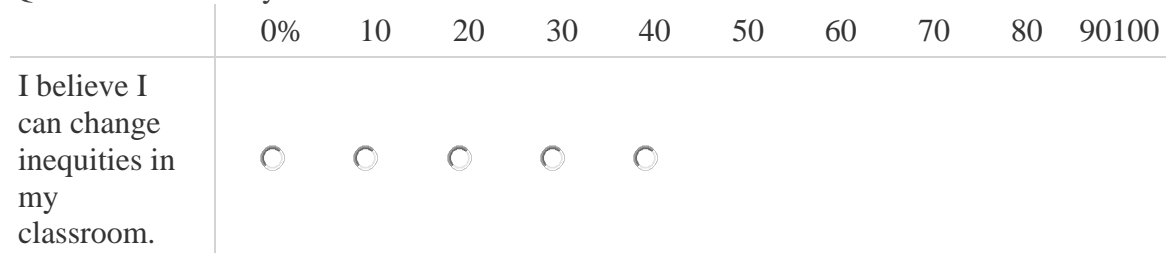| 5. I believe that hot topic conversations with students (e.g. race, gender, sexuality, religion, etc.) should be addressed in classrooms and should be used to promote dialog and critical examination.	○	○	○	○	○
6. I value equity (giving each student what they individually need) over equality (giving each student the same thing).	○	○	○	○	○

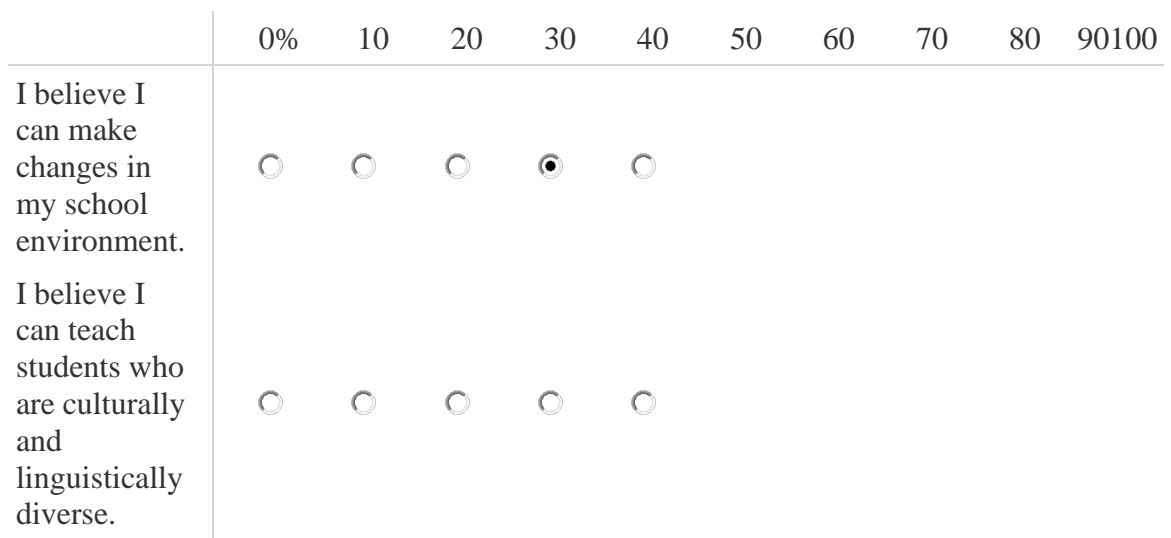Survey 1
Q4 CR Self-Efficacy

	0%	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
I believe I can change inequities in my classroom.	○	○	○	○	○						

	0%	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
I believe I can make changes in my school environment.	○	○	○	◉	○						
I believe I can teach students who are culturally and linguistically diverse.	○	○	○	○	○						

Teachers' Literacy Perspectives and Practices with CLDS

Teachers' Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

Demographic Information
1. Tell me something about your background. When and where were you educated? When and where did you begin teaching?

2. Do you speak other language besides English? Which language?

3. How do you think your background influences the way you teach?

Impact of teacher's participation in the UTEEM Program
4. About your graduate school experience, what are some of the assumptions that changed as a result of your participation in the program? What factors/experiences influenced this evolution?
5. Did you feel that your TEP prepare you to work in diverse school communities?
6. How much of what you know about teaching Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students (CLDS)/English Language Learners did you learn as a result of your teacher training at UTEEM?
7. What is your understanding of literacy? How you define literacy?

Teaching Philosophy
8. How would you describe your philosophy of teaching? What do you believe "works"?

Impact of professional experience/practical knowledge
9. What professional development experiences in your practice as a teacher have had an important impact in your understanding of CLDS literacy development?
10. Have you felt an incongruency between what you have learned in your graduate school and what you have experienced as a teacher in schools?

Content Integration, Teacher Efficacy and Equity pedagogy
11. About the difference between equity (giving each student what they individually need) and equality (giving each student the same thing), can you give me some examples of how can you see the difference in your classroom?
12. What kind of things (adaptations, modifications, use strategies) have you done in the classroom that have facilitated the literacy success of CLDS/English Language Learners?
    What is your opinion on push-in or pull-out models for CLDS? How competent do you feel in teaching CLDS?

Knowledge Construction-CLR component

13. Can you give examples of ways that you value students' diversity in your classroom?
What strengths do CLDS bring to the classroom?
14. How would you describe the kind of relationships you have had with parents of CLDS students? How do you communicate with them if there is a language barrier?
15. How do you decide grouping students in your classroom? Do you group CLDS using the same criteria?

Prejudice Reduction/Advocacy component

16. Having a diverse class, some hot topics of conversation are inevitable as part of the teaching and learning processes. How do you respond to these situations? Why are/aren't these topics important to be addressed in your classroom?

Empowering School Culture

17. Do you believe that schools can reproduce social inequities? Can you explain how this can happen?
18. How do you handle the possible mismatch between what you want to teach and what you have to teach (for example, kind of materials and resources, type of assessments)?
19. How do you believe that the schooling experience of students of color, CLDS and children living in poverty differ from white students in middle-class communities?
20. Based on your TEP experience, what changes would you make to revamp teacher education so that teachers would be more effective with CLDS/ English Language Learners?

Culturally Responsive Teachers' Literacy Perspectives and Practices with CLDS
Survey 2

Literacy Perspectives and Practices

Survey Flow

Q1 Thank you for taking time to answer this 21-question survey.

Q2 How long have you been an elementary teacher?

○ Less than 5 years. (1)

○ 5-10 years. (2)

○ 11-15 years. (3)

○ More than 15 years. (4)

Q3 Prior to your teaching experience, did you have interactions with individuals whose race, religion, ability, economic, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds were different than yours?

	None (1)	Some (2)	Multiple (3)
Racial (1)	○	○	○
Religion (2)	○	○	○
Ethnicity (3)	○	○	○
Language (4)	○	○	○
Ability (5)	○	○	○
Social class (6)	○	○	○

Q4 Did you receive any diversity or multicultural training in your graduate school? If so, please explain if it was one class or part of a class.

○ Yes (1)

○ Don't remember (2)

○ No (3)

Skip To: Q6 If Did you receive any diversity or multicultural training in your graduate school? If so, please ex... = Don't remember

Skip To: Q6 If Did you receive any diversity or multicultural training in your graduate school? If so, please ex... = No

Q5 Please, explain how this multicultural training was integrated in your course work.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Q6 Do you believe your background has an impact in the way you teach? Please explain.

○ Yes (1)

○ No (2)

Q7 Please explain how you think your background influence the way you teach.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Q8 About literacy development, please read the following statements and tell me the extent that you agree or disagree with them.

	Disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Somewhat agree (3)	Agree (4)
1.Literacy development starts at home (1)	○	○	○	○
2. Parents need to read to their children at home to be successful at reading and writing at school. (2)	○	○	○	○
3.There are many ways to be literate. (3)	○	○	○	○
4. Literacy at school may look different than at home. (4)	○	○	○	○
5. Home literacy is important, but what is done at school is more important. (5)	○	○	○	○
6. Teachers need to make an effort, so students' literacy development is fluid between home and school. (6)	○	○	○	○

Q9 How often do you use multicultural literature at school? Please mention some examples of Multicultural Literature that you use at school.

○ once a month (1)

○ once a week (2)

○ more than once a week (3)

○ daily (4)

○ Never (5)

Skip To: Q11 If How often do you use multicultural literature at school? Please mention some examples of Multicul... = Never

Q10 Please write some examples (at least three titles)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Q11 Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about multicultural literacy

	Agree (1)	Somewhat agree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Disagree (4)
Multicultural literature in school is important (1)	○	○	○	○
Multicultural literature is not necessary at school (2)	○	○	○	○
Multicultural literature is not appealing to my students (3)	○	○	○	○
Multicultural literature is motivating to my students (4)	○	○	○	○
My students are too young to appreciate multicultural literature. (5)	○	○	○	○

Q12 In regard to multicultural literature, please indicate the extent to which you believe the following are obstacles to integrating multicultural literature in your literacy/language arts instruction.

	not at all (1)	a small extent (2)	a moderate extent (3)	a large extent (4)
Understanding what multicultural literature is (1)	○	○	○	○
Multicultural literature is not part of the curriculum. (2)	○	○	○	○
There are not many multicultural books available. (3)	○	○	○	○
There is no time in the day to use multicultural literature. (4)	○	○	○	○
The administrators do not support the acquisition of this kind of literature. (5)	○	○	○	○
Understanding how to integrate multicultural literature in the curriculum. (6)	○	○	○	○

Q13 About language art instruction, how frequent do you use grouping in your classroom?

○ Always (1)

○ Most of the time (2)

○ About half the time (3)

○ Sometimes (4)

○ Never (5)

Q14 When do you used grouping in your classroom, what criteria do you use to group your students? Please check all that apply.

☐ Skills (1)

☐ Interests (2)

☐ Topic of Instruction (3)

☐ Experiences (4)

☐ Behavior (5)

☐ Randomly (6)

Q15 How do you decide what the topics of your lesson plans will be? Please rank them from the most to the least influential factor.

_____ Curriculum Content Frameworks (Language Arts, Math, Social Studies, and Science Standards of Learning) (1)

_____ Students' interests (2)

_____ My own experience (3)

_____ Grade team collaboration effort (4)

_____ Current affairs that affect the lives of my students (5)

_____ Other (6)

Q16 Do you use a basal/core reading program to teach literacy?

◯ I am required to follow the school-provided basal/core program with fidelity (materials, pacing and structure) (1)

◯ My school has a basal/core program available and I use it regularly/daily (4)

◯ My school has a basal/core program available and I use it at least twice per week (5)

◯ My school has a basal/core program available and I use it once a week or less (6)

◯ My school has a basal/core program available but I do not use it (7)

◯ My school does not have a basal/core program available (8)

Skip To: Q19 If Do you use a basal/core reading program to teach literacy? = My school does not have a basal/core program available

------

Q17 What core reading (basal) program does you school use?

_____

Skip To: Q18 If What core reading (basal) program does you school use? Is Not Empty

------

Q18 What additional materials do you used to teach language arts/reading that are not part of the basal/core reading program? Please check all that apply.

☐ Guided reading books from my school's bookroom (4)

☐ Guided reading books from my personal collection (7)

☐ Children's literature trade books (8)

☐ Online, subscription-based reading resources such as MyOn, Tumblebooks, RAZKids (9)

☐ Online programs such as Starfall, ReadNaturally, etc (10)

☐ Other (11)

☐ The basal/core reading program is comprehensive, so no additional materials are needed (12)

Skip To: Q20 If What additional materials do you used to teach language arts/reading that are not part of the bas... = Other

Skip To: Q21 If What additional materials do you used to teach language arts/reading that are not part of the bas... = Guided reading books from my school's bookroom

Skip To: Q21 If What additional materials do you used to teach language arts/reading that are not part of the bas... = Guided reading books from my personal collection

Skip To: Q21 If What additional materials do you used to teach language arts/reading that are not part of the bas... = Children's literature trade books

Skip To: Q21 If What additional materials do you used to teach language arts/reading that are not part of the bas... = Online, subscription-based reading resources such as MyOn, Tumblebooks, RAZKids

Skip To: Q21 If What additional materials do you used to teach language arts/reading that are not part of the bas... = Online programs such as Starfall, ReadNaturally, etc

Skip To: Q21 If What additional materials do you used to teach language arts/reading that are not part of the bas... = The basal/core reading program is comprehensive, so no additional materials are needed

✳

Q19 In the previous question you stated that you do not use a provided basal/core reading program for daily instruction. Please check those materials you used to teach language arts /reading and the percentage?

Guided reading books from my school's bookroom : _____ (3)
Guided reading books from my personal collection : _____ (8)
Children's literature trade books : _____ (9)
Online, subscription-based reading resources such as MyOn, Tumblebooks, RAZKids : _____ (10)
Online programs such as Starfall, ReadNaturally, etc : _____ (11)
Other : _____ (12)

Total : _____

Skip To: Q20 If In the previous question you stated that you do not use a provided basal/core reading program for... > Other

Skip To: Q21 If In the previous question you stated that you do not use a provided basal/core reading program for... > Guided reading books from my school's bookroom

Skip To: Q21 If In the previous question you stated that you do not use a provided basal/core reading program for... > Guided reading books from my personal collection

Skip To: Q21 If In the previous question you stated that you do not use a provided basal/core reading program for... > Children's literature trade books

Skip To: Q21 If In the previous question you stated that you do not use a provided basal/core reading program for... > Online, subscription-based reading resources such as MyOn, Tumblebooks, RAZKids

Skip To: Q21 If In the previous question you stated that you do not use a provided basal/core reading program for... > Online programs such as Starfall, ReadNaturally, etc

Q20 In the previous question you answer "other", what additional resources do you used to teach literacy.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

*

Q21 When focusing on teaching literacy/reading strategies to your culturally and linguistically diverse/English language learner students, what percentage of instructional time do you devote to (the total sum should add to 100):

Oral language : _____ (1)
Decoding strategies : _____ (2)
Develop understanding : _____ (3)
Word reading fluency : _____ (4)
Increase vocabulary knowledge : _____ (5)
Other : _____ (6)

Total : _____

Q22 What other area(s) or factor(s) do you consider when teaching literacy instruction to culturally and linguistically diverse/English language learner students?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

End of Block: Default Question Block

Q23 Do you speak other language besides English?
 a. Yes
 b. No
 What other language?
Q24 What is your prefer model for educating CLDS push-in or pull-out and why?

Appendix F

Culturally Responsive Teachers' Literacy Perspectives and Practices with CLDS
Email to Teachers

Good Morning,

My name is Maria-Soledad Alva and I am a former graduate student from the UTEEM

(Unified Transformative Early Education Model) program at George Mason. I am

working on my Ph.D. dissertation at George Mason on ***Culturally Responsive Teachers'***

Literacy Perspectives and Practices with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse

Students. One of my colleagues or former UTEEM teacher has recommended to contact

you, because they consider you can provide me with the insights of what is to be a

culturally responsive teacher for culturally and linguistically diverse students, and how

being part of the UTEEM program has influenced your teaching. I would like to explore

your literacy perspectives and practices in your classroom with culturally and

linguistically diverse students.

The research is focused only on K-3 classrooms. I would like to ask you for your

participation in my research knowing how important it has been for your professional

development being part of the UTEEM program. The study I propose will take about 3 or

4 weeks and it will take not more than 6-7 hours in total. There are four steps in which

you will participate: 1) you will be asked to answer a brief 24-item online survey about

your teaching philosophy (15-30-minute survey). In case you meet the criteria for the

study, 2) you will be requested to answer a second online survey that consists of 21 items

about your literacy perspectives and practices (15-minute survey); 3) audio-taped

observations of literacy activities and interactions with your students conducted in your

classroom for a total of no more than 6 hours within three weeks (in addition to 3 1-

hour/90 minute observations once per week, one 1 hour/90 minute observation to get

familiar with your classroom routines), and 4) a 60 minute interview that will have placed

after the 3-week observation.

During the first visit, I will observe and get familiar with your classroom routines and the

students, and vice versa. During the second, third and fourth visits, I will observe the

morning meeting, circle time or literacy group activities (one hour or the duration of the

activity), audio-record, and take field notes about your interactions with the students and

responses. Within one week interval, I will meet with you again for a final 60 minute

interview about your literacy instructional decisions or your motivation of doing what

you do in the way you do it. I will send you back the analysis of my observations for your

feedback within the next five months. Your name or any identifiable information will be

kept private and confidential, and if published I will use a pseudonym. Your

collaboration will be greatly appreciated, and it is totally voluntarily. You can decide at

any time to leave the research.

Thank you very much for considering participating.

Maria Soledad Alva
IRBNet # 1528006-1
PhD Student at George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development

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Biography

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