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## Preparing Bilingual Teachers to Enact Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy

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# Chapter 12

## Preparing Bilingual Teachers to Enact Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Bilingual students and teachers in the U.S. live in a context where linguistic and ethnic minorities are associated with inferiority. Preparing bilingual teachers of color without explicit attention to issues of race, language, and power would maintain and feed the vicious cycle of linguistic hegemony. With the goal of preparing critically conscious future bilingual teachers equipped to enact culturally sustaining pedagogy (CSP), the authors centered issues of race, language, and power alongside bilingual instructional methodology and theories of bilingualism in their respective bilingual teacher preparation programs. Drawing on bilingual teacher preparation course material, student reflections, and bilingual teacher candidate interviews, they illustrate how two bilingual teacher preparation programs take two distinct approaches to developing bilingual teachers' critical consciousness and CSP practices. In this way, they outline how bilingual teacher educators can prepare and support bilingual teachers to enact CSP with their K-12 students.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Bilingual students and teachers in the U.S. live in a context where linguistic minorities are associated with inferiority (Flores & Rosa, 2016; Suarez, 2002). Derogatory beliefs about bilingualism, and Spanish-

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English bilingualism in particular, can have a negative influence on bilingual education in a variety of ways (Flores, 2016). After repeated messages that their ways of speaking are deficient, bilinguals have reported fear of speaking either language (Winstead & Wang, 2017), decreased confidence, and negative attitudes towards their own language (Arce, 2004; Briceño, Rodríguez-Mojica, Muñoz-Muñoz, 2018; Ek, Sánchez, & Quijada Cerecer, 2013; Fitts, Winstead, Weisman, Flores, & Valenciana, 2008). Some of the negative messages bilingual students receive come from school, where heritage Spanish speakers encounter English hegemony that devalues the Spanish language. We have shown that heritage Spanish speakers faced linguistic purism and elitism in their educational experiences, in their early schooling, in secondary settings like their Spanish World Language methods classes and in higher education (Briceño, Rodríguez-Mojica, Muñoz-Muñoz, 2018). Such ideological pressures undermined their home variety of Spanish and their communicative confidence. These experiences denigrated students' home register of Spanish to the extent that, in their opinions, their Spanish was so incorrect that it prohibited them from becoming bilingual teachers (Briceño et. al, 2018).

In California, where we prepare bilingual teachers, Proposition 227 significantly limited bilingual education opportunities in 1997. Since then, most students have been educated in English-only contexts (Ochoa, 2016), leaving heritage Spanish speakers<sup>1</sup> insecure with their academic usage of their home language (Briceño et. al, 2018). The resulting bilingual teacher shortage is currently preventing an expansion of bilingual programs even after the 2016 passage of Proposition 58, which supports multilingual education in California schools (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). This ongoing, vicious cycle of linguistic hegemony must be interrupted to ensure culturally and linguistically appropriate instruction for all students (Guerrero & Guerrero, 2008).

Bilingualism and bilingual education have the potential to resist linguistic hegemony (Suarez, 2002). Countering the harmful messages bilingual K-12 students receive and fostering supportive language ideologies is critical to the long-term success of bilingual education. Chávez-Moreno (2019) calls for research that explicitly connects bilingual teacher preparation pedagogy to race and also shows how bilingual teacher preparation programs support candidates to develop critical consciousness in their students. This chapter adds to the literature by addressing both these tasks, showing how two universities prepare bilingual teachers to enact Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy (Paris, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2017) to counter the harmful, and often internalized, messages bilingual K-12 students receive.

We argue that bilingual teacher candidates (BTCs) must experience the examination and undoing of internalized deficit ideologies that may result in their enactment of harmful pedagogical practices before they teach with a CSP lens. Drawing on bilingual teacher preparation course material, student reflections, and BTC interviews, we illustrate how two bilingual teacher preparation programs take two distinct approaches to developing bilingual teachers' critical consciousness (Palmer, Cervantes-Soon, Dorner, & Heiman, 2019) and CSP practices. We share course readings and activities from our bilingual teacher education programs designed to develop candidates' critical consciousness and draw on candidate reflections and interviews to share their (re)examination of their own experiences and practices. In this way, we highlight the critical role bilingual teacher preparation in higher education plays in developing future bilingual teachers' perspectives and CSP practices. We outline how bilingual teacher educators can prepare and support bilingual teachers to enact Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy with their K-12 students. We close the chapter by sharing lessons learned derived from our experiences as bilingual course instructors. Throughout the chapter we use the term "bilingual" to refer to people who have varying degrees of bilingualism or multilingualism (Valdés, 2001).

## **BACKGROUND**

In this section, we explain the need to employ a raciolinguistic (Flores & Rosa, 2015) approach to bilingual teacher preparation that explores how linguistic and racial beliefs about minoritized students are enacted in bilingual classrooms. Then, we discuss the importance of developing critical consciousness and ideological clarity in implementing Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy (Paris, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2017) in bilingual classrooms. We show how they can counter hegemonic discourse about students of color by exposing beliefs and institutionalized structures that reinforce normalization of the White middle class that “others” students of color.

### **A Raciolinguistic Approach to Bilingual Teacher Preparation**

Racism in the U.S. has traditionally been seen through a black / white lens, leaving racism against Latinx peoples as somewhat nebulous, but intimately connected to language (Galindo, 2011). In Latinx communities, racism is often expressed through a nativist lens, as it is understood or expected that those who are born in the U.S. “should” speak English (Galindo, 2011). As a result, we employ raciolinguistics (Flores & Rosa, 2015) to illustrate the ways bilingual practices and people are valued or devalued depending upon the racialized identity of the language user rather than the linguistic practices falling short of a particular –and arbitrary– standard. In the U.S., culture, identity, and power are deeply entrenched with bilingualism (Ceballos, 2012; Flores, 2016; Musanti, 2014). Linguistically minoritized bilingual speakers are perceived as not bilingual enough (Cervantes-Soon et. al, 2017) while white bilingual students are praised for their linguistic efforts (Rosa, 2016). Like other scholars (e.g., García & Wei, 2014; Kibler, 2017), we employ the term “linguistically minoritized” for speakers of home or community languages other than English to emphasize that “their home/community language resources are often disregarded by powerful institutions, discourses, and individuals” (Kibler, 2017, p. 27).

At school, Latinx bilinguals report being ridiculed (Winstead & Wang, 2017) and corrected for using the language they acquired at home (Briceño et. al, 2018; Ek, Sánchez, & Quijada Cerecer, 2013). These practices are disrespectful of home language and cultural practices, and limit students’ academic opportunities. The linguistic differences of students classified as English Language Learners (ELLs) are emphasized in school when compared to monolingual English speaking students, and those differences are used to marginalize ELLs (Bondy, 2011). In fact, Juárez (2008) referred to the ELL label as “a racialized and political category” (p. 243) because of the negative perception it created for language minoritized students. She argued that the label racializes language, fosters white normativity, and therefore interfered with a bilingual program’s social justice mission.

Even within Spanish-English Two-Way Immersion (TWI) settings that state as goals the development of biliteracy, bilingualism, high academic achievement, and cross-cultural competence (Howard et. al, 2018), the needs of white English dominant students are prioritized (Cervantes-Soon, et al., 2017; Meshulam & Apple, 2014; Morales & Maravilla, 2019; Wiese, 2004). In Meshulam and Apple’s (2014) study, neoliberal policies that promoted equality over equity ignored the unique needs of diverse communities, privileging White students and reproducing social inequalities. Similarly, Wiese’s (2004) study of teachers’ instructional decisions in a Two-Way Immersion program revealed that race significantly influenced the teachers’ perceptions and instruction. In one class, African-American students were perceived as struggling in English literacy and therefore received literacy instruction in English only; they did not have access to biliteracy instruction despite being in the TWI class (Wiese, 2004). While the

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Latinx students had access to biliteracy instruction, they received the least instructional attention (Wiese, 2004). The teacher's beliefs about students based on their race limited the instructional opportunities and attention the students received.

### **Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy**

Building on Ladson-Billings' (1995) theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, CSP seeks to deepen the orientation toward valuing and maintaining languages and cultures that tend to be minoritized by systemic inequalities (Paris, 2012). The goal of CSP is "to perpetuate and foster—to sustain—linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of the democratic project of schooling" (Paris, 2012, p. 95). CSP asks educators to sustain students' and communities' cultural and linguistic competence while simultaneously offering access to academic achievement as defined by the dominant culture (Paris, 2012).

In order for teacher candidates to enact CSP, teacher education programs must produce decolonizing educators who teach in humanizing and revolutionary ways (Domínguez, 2017). Traditionally, teacher education has taken place on the colonizer's terms; to help candidates achieve decolonizing pedagogy, teacher preparation programs must enable candidates to question implicit and deeply held beliefs, assumptions, and values that perpetuate coloniality and influence every aspect of education (Domínguez, 2017). Domínguez (2017) identified 5 central components to decolonizing teacher education, including: (1) displacing colonial epistemologies and replacing them with epistemologies reflective of youth and community wisdom; (2) engaging candidates with frameworks of race that capture the dynamic ways in which youth racial and cultural identity is being produced and reimagined; (3) rethinking how field experiences position the expertise of educators in relation to youth and community knowledge; (4) confronting coloniality and creating alternative frameworks and identities endowed with hope and possibility; and (5) unpacking coloniality and exploring liberation in the daily work of teaching. Incorporating these five components as foundations for a teacher preparation program should produce educators who are prepared to enact CSP in their classrooms (Domínguez, 2017).

With its focus on sustaining communities' linguistic and cultural strengths, CSP is particularly relevant for bilingual education. However, bilingual education programs tend not to explore the question of whose bilingualism gets sustained. Since the U.S. is a contact zone for Spanish (Pratt, 1991), the varieties of Spanish acquired in the United States are in constant contact with English and each other, and are stigmatized compared to Peninsular Spanish (Flores & Rosa, 2015). With the colonizer's form of Spanish being valued over the varieties of the colonized (García, 2014), the Spanish registers of the heritage speakers who participate in bilingual education or Spanish World Language classes are often not respected (Briceño et. al, 2018; Ek, Sánchez, & Quijada Cerecer, 2013; Winstead & Wang, 2017). Emphasizing CSP practices with BTCs may enable them to help bilingual children retain confidence and pride in their home language practices and reinforce their identity as potential future bilingual educators. As such, enacting CSP practices with BTCs should be a priority in bilingual pre-service programs.

### **Developing Critical Consciousness and Ideological Clarity as a Form of CSP**

Language ideologies are cultural perceptions of languages, language users, and language varieties (Granados, 2017) and are related to social, economic, and political power (Woolard, 2005). Teachers' ideologies affect their interactions with diverse students (Gallo, Link, Allard, Wortham, & Mortimer, 2014; Jiménez, Smith, & Martínez-León, 2003) and influence their instruction (Martínez, Hikida, &

Durán, 2015). Teacher preparation programs and K-12 school systems tend to neglect the topic of ideologies (Alfaro & Bartolomé, 2017a). We argue that addressing the concept of language ideologies and developing ideological clarity in bilingual teacher preparation will better address this systemic issue and mitigate the current cycle of linguistic oppression (Rodriguez-Mojica, Briceño & Muñoz-Muñoz 2019; Guerrero & Guerrero, 2008).

Including critical consciousness as a fourth pillar of TWI is one way to combat inequalities within bilingual spaces (Cervantes-Soon et al., 2017; Palmer, Cervantes-Soon, Dorner & Heiman, 2019). With foundations in critical language studies, border pedagogies, and critical pedagogies, critical consciousness calls bilinguals to locate their identity within historical power structures, colonization, imperialism, and otherness, “to examine one’s position, how it is “read” and how it relates to power” (Cervantes-Soon et al., 2017, p. 419). To combat inequality in bilingual spaces, it is imperative to recognize and question the power structures and ideologies that shape one’s understanding of schooling. In bilingual settings, instead of true integration and developing understanding among racial groups, “symbolic integration” occurs in which different racial communities are superficially polite to one another, but do not mix socially or lessen stratification despite ongoing contact (Muro, 2016). Yet, our review of the California state requirements, *The Teacher Performance Expectations* (Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2016), for teacher preparation programs shows that programs are not required to interrogate systemic oppression that results from English hegemony and the privileging of White English dominant students and families that may lead teachers to feel ambivalent or negative toward speakers of languages other than English (Lee & Oxelson, 2006).

Despite the linguistic and cultural oppression bilingual candidates encounter, they show strength by reclaiming their language and using it for liberation of future generations by becoming bilingual teachers (Cervantes-Soon, 2018). For, when a teacher actively resists the hegemony of English, students do also (Shannon, 1995). Wong and colleagues (2017) showed how the development of critical consciousness and language ideologies in bilingual teacher education enabled a first-year teacher to counter neoliberal curriculum. Another study showed that developing BTCs’ critical consciousness enabled them to examine their own and their students’ biliteracy in the current and historical contexts of linguisticism, racism, and oppression, and to engage in decolonizing pedagogy with their own students (Rodriguez-Mojica & Briceño, In press). We argue that developing critical language ideologies should be a significant focus in bilingual teacher preparation, as it is necessary for creating emancipatory educational spaces and identifying and disrupting hegemonic structures, practices, and ideologies that permeate schooling (Alfaro & Bartolomé, 2017a).

## **PREPARING BILINGUAL TEACHERS TO ENACT CULTURALLY SUSTAINING PEDAGOGY**

The work described in this chapter was motivated by our previous research showing heritage Spanish speaking teacher candidates’ experiences with linguistic purism and concerns that their Spanish was not good enough for them to teach in Spanish (Briceño et. al, 2018). As we explain above, the state of California does not require that teacher preparation programs interrogate systemic oppression. Continuing to prepare bilingual teachers of color without explicit attention to issues of race, language and power would maintain and feed the vicious cycle of linguistic hegemony. When we found strongly internalized hegemonic beliefs about language in bilingual teacher candidates, we set out to revise the bilingual

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teacher preparation courses at our respective universities. Our goal was to prepare critically conscious future bilingual teachers by providing bilingual teacher preparation that centered issues of race, language and power alongside bilingual instructional methodology and theories of bilingualism. In our positions as bilingual authorization coordinators and bilingual course instructors, we revised courses to guide bilingual teachers in the examination and undoing of internalized deficit ideologies that may result in their enactment of harmful pedagogical practices.

We begin by describing the bilingual teacher preparation programs. Then, we discuss how our respective universities aimed to prepare bilingual teachers to enact Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy (Paris, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2017). University 1 provided program-level support to enact CSP while University 2 provided support within the bilingual courses. In addition, we provide examples of in-class activities designed to further conceptual and practical understandings of CSP and share how these bilingual course revisions contributed to shifting perspectives of our BTCs.

### **The Bilingual Teacher Preparation Programs**

**University 1's** Bilingual Authorization Program (BAP) aims to develop “Bilingual teachers [who] engage critically with the multiple levels of their sociolinguistic context, and implement a vision where there is equity for different communities of speakers.” In its vision of social justice, it “incorporates the identity and power component of language” and emphasizes care, which “implies nourishing the linguistic identity of their students and their communities.” Aligned with the California State University system’s goal of providing accessible higher education to local populations, University 1’s BAP bilingual teachers are recruited from the community and overwhelmingly serve in local schools upon graduation. As such, the program by design critically engages cross-curricularly with the contextual issue of rampant income inequality and its intersectional implications in a geographic area with great economic disparities. One of the most nefarious ramifications is elite bilingualism (Flores, 2013; Cervantes-Soon, 2014) and the resulting power imbalances among racialized populations in the schools and districts where the candidates will be working.

Program 1 prepares multiple subject bilingual teachers, approximately 90 percent of whom identify as heritage Spanish speakers. Its curricular structure follows an embedded model, in which students who are pursuing a bilingual authorization engage in course sections conducted by bilingual faculty specifically designed to differentiate for the bilingual and English-only student teachers sharing the space. Historically, under pressures of under enrollment and teacher shortage sweeping California (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017), bilingual candidates were a minority among English-only peers. Faculty in the program worried about the subtle but certain consequences: lack of opportunities for reciprocal support among peers typically found in cohort models; restricted spaces for Spanish maintenance and expansion; constrained resources for differentiation to empower bilingual professional identity. The interactions among all these factors are detrimental to the individual and collective bilingual teacher identity and demanded program-level modifications to resurface the program’s transformative vision. Eduardo, in collaboration with Allison and other bilingual faculty, designed and launched the revised bilingual authorization program emphasizing CSP practices in the Spring of academic year 2018-19.

**University 2** is a private religious university with an explicit social justice mission. The university’s social justice mission has propelled initiatives aiming to increase the number of teachers committed to serving the Latinx community by offering a Spanish bilingual authorization program for single and multiple subject students and significant financial assistance to defray the cost of enrollment. Like University

1, nearly all BTCs at University 2 are heritage Spanish speakers, grew up in the local community and teach as interns in local schools. BTCs at University 2 enroll in all the same courses as teacher candidates not pursuing a bilingual authorization and are required to complete three additional courses in Spanish for the bilingual program. The three additional bilingual program courses are: Latina/o Language and Culture, Bilingual Foundations, and Bilingual Methods. BTCs may enroll in an optional fourth course also taught in Spanish, Bilingual Seminar. Claudia revised these courses to develop BTC's critical consciousness and the undoing of harmful deficit ideologies that could support the enactment of CSP in bilingual classrooms.

Since we planned to continue fine-tuning courses as we worked to support the enactment of CSP, we began to document course activities, candidate reflections and emerging shifts in BTC perspectives. The bilingual course instructors gathered course material and reflected on course activities as a way to document revisions and activities. To gauge BTC shifts we administered a quick write online poll at University 1 and engaged BTCs in interviews at University 2. The online quick write was open-ended and allowed for the collection of responses from seven bilingual candidates. Three BTCs at University 2 participated in an interview about their shifting perspectives and shared their bilingual course reflections. We draw on these sources to describe the bilingual course revisions, in-class activities and the shifting perspectives of our BTCs.

### **University 1: Program-level Support to Enact CSP**

University 1 addresses the double need to sustain bilingual teachers who, in turn, would sustain bilingual students through program-level modifications that include additional bilingual spaces and wrap-around services infused with the tenets of Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies. For example, BTCs are required to participate in a bilingual seminar taught in Spanish that, through reflective activities, encourages BTCs to employ their diverse communicative repertoire in their local field placement experiences. Wrap-around services include consultation and advising guided by the BTCs' needs and vision for self-transformation. These developments have been possible due to a marginal increase in enrollment and efforts by the college's leadership to provide human and financial resources that could lead to financial sustainability. In this regard, the college is supporting the growth of multilingualism by implementing CSP-inspired leadership and allocation of resources. In University 1's program, CSP is expanding horizontally and vertically, bidirectionally between faculty and higher levels of leadership.

### **Developing a Conceptual Understanding of Culture and What We Hope to Sustain**

All students in University 1's teacher preparation program engage actively with the conceptual frameworks of Culturally Relevant Pedagogies (Ladson-Billings, 1995) and Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies (Paris & Alim, 2017) in opposition to the assimilationist inertia of schooling. For example, they engage with CRT and CSP in their foundations course on educational sociology their first semester in the program. Students are expected to read Ladson-Billings' "Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy" (1995) and Paris and Alim's "What are we seeking to sustain through culturally sustaining pedagogy? A loving critique forward" (2014) and relate them to the preceding course content, namely different layers of intersectional oppression (race, class, gender, etc.).



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The following took place in the summer of 2019 and illustrates how the program worked to develop an initial conceptual understanding of CSP. Bilingual Seminar students took Paris and Alim's question and made it their own: If anything, what should be sustained/preserved about your culture in schools? If anything, what should be let go of your culture in schools? Eduardo prompted students to identify their cultural background, and to consider what they hoped to sustain. He added the following question to explore cultural agency as a concept: How would you empower the agency of students to determine what is preserved and-or reflected in the curriculum? Then, Eduardo asked students to respond to the question as an online quick write exercise. He collected and analyzed the responses thematically to identify both recurring and salient concepts and BTC ideological positionings.

BTC's responses reflected CSP conceptual nuances along an ideological spectrum. For example, one response argued *"La cultura estadounidense [que] se caracteriza por su optimismo y la idea de que si trabajas duro, sin pisotear a los demás, puedes lograr tus metas y tu "sueño americano"* ("Culture in the United States is characterized by its optimism and the idea that if you work hard, without walking over others, you can achieve your goals and your "American Dream"). This candid response allowed the class to engage in conversations about nation-state discourses and culture. Going deeper, this candidate showed her ideological complexity and critical approach to curriculum in the following response: "I think that everything that is part of culture should be kept. Even if there are negative aspects it should be kept for the purpose of historical reference. The reason it should be all parts is that one person does not know what part of, let's say, Mexican culture another student might be attached to." While it is problematic to define "everything that is part of a culture," the response's second sentence opens up to a more fluid conception of culture in which individual student attachment (versus prescribed curricular definitions of culture) may determine what is worth sustaining.

Other responses problematized the often-arbitrary groupings of individuals and the process of boundary-making that follows when cultural membership separates insiders from outsiders. A heritage Spanish candidate advocated to "Allow students to share regional traditions without being grouped with another individual. Allow and push students to pick one specific tradition rather than lumping everything together." Once again, this response presented the class with a fertile discussion point around the notions of student agency, and the teacher's role in "allowing" and "pushing" interactions with cultural constructs.

This reflection exercise aimed to highlight a central tension of the concept of "culture". The bilingual Teacher Performance Expectations (Bilingual TPEs) which in California determine credentialing and the content of teacher preparation programs have a CRP-inspiration: "4.5 Candidates demonstrate an understanding of intercultural communication and interaction that is linguistically and culturally responsive" (CTC 2009), and exhibit a dependence on nation-state discourses of culture:

*"5.1 Candidates demonstrate knowledge of the country/countries of origin, including geographic barriers, demographic and linguistic patterns, and the ways in which these affect trends of migration, immigration and settlement in the United States." (CTC 2009)*

Reconciling such expectations with the postmodernist conception of culture in CSP as fluid, historically and locally situated presents faculty and students with a policy and practice conundrum: What will we sustain? Who has the agency to determine what is sustained? How do we operationalize the bilingual TPEs to sustain multilingual students across contexts? Ultimately, one recurring theme among these bilingual candidates whose critical awareness this exercise intended to stimulate can be summarized in this response: "Creo que CSP es importante porque los estudiantes realmente tienen voz y pueden elegir

lo que quieren aprender y lo que es relevante para ellos.” (“I believe that CSP is important because the students really have a voice and can choose what they want to learn and what is relevant to them”). This response exemplifies the call for a dialogic approach to bilingual instruction which, in line with CSP tenets and Dominguez’s five decolonizing principles (2017), provides students with curricular agency.

## **University 2: Course Support to Enact CSP**

One of the Bilingual TPEs asks that BTCs understand socio-economic, ethnic, racial and gender differences among Latinos and impacts on acculturation and socialization. To address this requirement and develop BTCs’ critical consciousness, Claudia aimed to explicitly explore the role of socio-economic, ethnic, racial and gender differences, racism and discrimination within the Latinx community in the U.S. Claudia hoped to invite introspection and critical dialogue about their role in Latinx racial and power dynamics. BTCs engaged with Cruz-Janzen’s (2010) “Latinegras: Desired Women – Undesirable Mothers, Daughters, Sisters & Wives” and Santiago’s (2019) “Güeras, Indígenas y Negros: A Framework for Teaching Mexican American Racial/Ethnic Histories”. In small groups, the class prepared to discuss racism and anti-indigeneity within the Latinx community in conversation with Dr. Santiago, the author of one of the readings, via Zoom video conferencing. With Dr. Santiago and Claudia, the class explored their own experiences and complicity with racism and anti-indigeneity and began to discuss ways to disrupt the practices within their Latinx communities, families and schools. As a class, they discussed racist, sexist and anti-indigenous beliefs deeply ingrained in some elements of Latinx culture and arrived at a shared understanding that as heritage Spanish speaking Latinx BTCs, they hoped to disrupt such harmful cultural beliefs. In this way, BTCs at University 2 disagreed with University 1’s BTC response that negative elements of a culture should be sustained for historical reference. One possible explanation for this disagreement could be that many of the BTCs at University 2 reflected on and shared personal experiences with sexism, racism and anti-indigeneity within their own community and families that they refused to perpetuate. Anna, a heritage Spanish speaking BTC, expanded on such hurtful experiences rooted in anti-indigeneity in an interview conversation with Claudia.

Anna shared that her Mexican parents equated beauty with blonde hair and blue eyes. She remembered hurtful comments from her mom: ““you look better in colored contacts or you (would) look better if you dyed your hair blonde.” Her dad too admired White women’s blonde hair and blue eyes. Anna shared that she learned to dislike her brown skin, dark hair and eyes. She said, “I always wanted to be like a White person, you know?” As an adult and mother, Anna now understood that her parents wanted her to assimilate to the U.S. as a way to minimize challenges Mexican immigrants face in the country. She, however, wanted to disrupt the cycle of anti-indigeneity within her family by ensuring her young daughters heard “you are enough” and working to empower them as women, Latinas and Spanish speakers. Similarly, Inez, another heritage Spanish speaking BTC, shared painful experiences of being isolated from her family when she went against sexist beliefs expecting women to remain at home and not prioritize their own education. She consciously worked to prevent that cultural message from being passed down to her children and succeeded. Her two adult daughters attended prestigious universities and one was pursuing an advanced degree. Like these BTCs, others in the class began to name their role as the oppressed and oppressors and worked to undo and disrupt intergroup tensions.

In Bilingual Foundations, alongside a traditional reading on the history of bilingual education in the U.S., students read Dr. Flores’s “A Tale of Two Visions: Hegemonic Whiteness and Bilingual Education” (2016) that explored the raciolinguistics of hegemonic Whiteness in a historical analysis of bilin-

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gual education. By reading both texts side-by-side, the class developed understandings of the history of bilingual education in the U.S. and discussed how race and power have framed competing visions of bilingual education.

Reflecting on these readings and the class discussion, Neftalí, a heritage Spanish speaking BTC, shared that he appreciated and agreed with many of the ideas within the race radicalism vision, but he worried that anything perceived as radical would call too much attention and be “shut down”. He struggled with having to “play in the White field, the White game” in order to gain power to create change and “knowing that sometimes you have to suppress parts of you...”. Neftalí shared that he’s “a lot less scared now” but before he worried “about saying the right thing and not being White enough or teaching the White way.” To explain how his shifting perspective and lessening fear was impacting his practice, he shared that he engaged a student in discussion when a Latinx student jokingly questioned his immigration status during a class read aloud. Instead of ignoring the comment, Neftalí recounted, “I stopped reading. I told them that it wasn’t appropriate because a lot of us were experiencing that (fear) and he didn’t know if I had a green card.” Considering what contributed to the shift, he said “I think after the (Bilingual Foundations) class I felt a lot more comfortable touching on those topics. Or at least I had a little more knowledge to make me more confident to do it.” Neftalí humanized the immigrant experience during a time of great national anti-immigrant discourse and invited further conversation about the topic after class. In this way, his instruction fostered cultural pluralism in a way that could lead to positive social transformation. Claudia, drew on Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) to further assist BTCs to see how CSP could be implemented in practice.

### **Challenging Deficit Ideologies in Bilingual Education via Theatre of the Oppressed**

Brazilian activist Augusto Boal developed Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) in 1979 (Boal & McBride, 1979). Boal was heavily influenced by Paulo Freire and hoped TO would motivate people to “**explore, show, analyze and transform** the reality in which they are living” (Midha, 2010, p.8). Theatre of the Oppressed breaks the division between actors and audience by involving the audience in problem solving and acting that could transform social inequities. In this way, TO is a powerful way for teachers to practice challenging the many forms of oppression in schools and become better prepared to take action against marginalizing behaviors when they happen. Midha’s (2010) guide describes the possibilities of using TO with educators. The guide was a fundamental source of support as Claudia aimed to move bilingual teachers from understanding culturally sustaining pedagogy in theory to aligning their instructional practice and actions with CSP. The goal of TO in this bilingual teacher preparation class was twofold: to assess bilingual teacher candidates’ understanding of deficit ideologies through the plays and to promote a sense of advocacy to combat deficit ideologies in schools via practiced role-play.

To understand theoretical foundations of bilingualism, including deficit and assets-based ideologies, and how theory is connected to practice, students engaged with Alfaro and Bartolomé’s (2017b) chapter on developing ideological clarity and Cervantes-Soon’s and colleagues (2017) article about developing critical consciousness in bilingual education spaces as a way to challenge inequalities in bilingual programs. The class arrived to class having completed the readings and they participated in peer-facilitated small group discussions about the texts. Following the small group discussions, the class engaged in whole group discussion to further develop their connections from theory to practice. Next, the bilingual teacher candidates were asked to select one deficit ideology (meritocracy, assimilation, and linguistic

deficiency) that they wanted to explore further through their development of a Theatre of the Oppressed (Boal & McBride, 1979) mini-play. Each mini-play would illustrate one of the deficit ideologies in practice. Development of Theatre of the Oppressed mini-plays included character development, assigning of actors to group members, scene development and rehearsal. These activities occurred over a 1.5 hour period the class session before they were to perform their plays to the class.

On the day of the TO performances, each group performed the mini-plays in their entirety as the rest of the class observed, considered the deficit ideologies being enacted and identified moments and actors that could intervene to disrupt the outcome. Claudia emphasized that they should look to *all* actors, central or not, to intervene for a more socially just outcome. In the second performance, the bilingual teacher candidate audience called out “stop” to pause the play at different scenes where they hoped to intervene. Upon calling “stop”, the bilingual teacher candidates explained what they wanted an actor to do and say and either assumed the role of the actor themselves or asked the actor to change their script to perform the intervention proposed. The class “rewinded” the mini-play to allow performance of the recommended intervention and the cast modified their performance accordingly. The play continued after each stop as the actors performed the resulting changes prompted by the intervention. At the end of each performance, the class discussed the deficit ideology performed, the interventions recommended and how a similar scenario might evolve at their respective school sites. Throughout this discussion, the class centered issues of race and power.

The following TO storyline illustrates one of the mini-plays the class developed to illustrate a linguistic deficiency ideology. Susana, a student teacher at the beginning of her teacher education program, is observing her bilingual mentor teacher in a first grade dual language classroom. The scene opens with the classroom teacher reviewing concepts learned and posing questions to the class in Spanish. Theo, an English dominant student in the class, immediately turns to Juan and in a whisper, asks him with help translating his English response to Spanish. Juan, a Spanish dominant student, whispers the translation and both students eagerly raise their hands to answer the teacher’s question. The teacher calls on Theo and Theo beams as he shares his response in Spanish. The teacher compliments him on his developing Spanish use and the lesson continues. In her observation log, Susana notes that English dominant students seem to be fully participating during Spanish time and the teacher makes concerted efforts to provide them with additional Spanish language practice by calling on them to answer more questions.

The next scene opens and it is clear that Susana is now observing the English language designated class time and peers are once again seeking help from one another with Spanish-English translations. This time, however, when Juan attempts to seek English help from Theo, Theo ignores his requests for help. Still, Juan raises his hand to answer the teacher’s question about the story under discussion. The teacher calls on Juan and Juan responds, “The um, *relámpago*, it scared the boy.” The teacher corrects Juan’s use of the Spanish word *relámpago* with the English word “lightning” and tells him that he needs to work harder to use only English during English time. Juan turns his gaze to the floor. Susana is noticing that Theo and his English dominant peers dominate the class discussion during English time and, because the teacher makes concerted efforts to call upon more English dominant students in Spanish time, they also participate more during the designated Spanish time. Spanish dominant students, however, are participating less and less in class.

After the first performance, the class comments that the play illustrates a meritocratic ideology where Theo is praised for his developing Spanish while Juan is reprimanded for not working hard enough to only use English during English time. It is illustrative of a meritocratic ideology, they explain, because it places blame on the individual student for not working hard enough and frames improvement as the

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result of effort alone without attention to power dynamics in class and society. And, the class adds, they see hints of a linguistic deficiency ideology when Juan was corrected while Theo was praised for his developing Spanish. A BTC argues that this positions Juan and students like him as lacking while positioning students like Theo as superior.

In the second performance, the class paused the play at multiple points in an effort to intervene. For example, in one intervention, the student teacher walked over to Juan and Theo and reminded Theo of moments when he received help in Spanish and his peers helped him even when they also had their own work to complete. The student teacher grounded her talk with being a good community member and friend, suggesting that Theo provide the same kind of help he received when he was struggling in Spanish. In another intervention, the classroom teacher corrected her own response to student language production and made a conscious effort to praise and correct all students equally.

The program-level supports, course readings, reflections and class activities we describe were embedded within bilingual teacher preparation to support the enactment of CSP practices in bilingual classrooms. University 1 implemented program-level supports in the form of a newly implemented Bilingual Seminar and consultation and advising of BTCs rooted in CSP. University 2 revised bilingual teacher preparation courses to add explicit attention to critical consciousness and language ideologies as a form of CSP. Grounded in the realities, restrictions and possibilities at our respective universities, we worked to sustain our BTCs and support their enactment of CSP in their classrooms.

## **FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS**

Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy as a praxis of Freirean emancipation and research holds great promise for bilingual communities. Much remains to be explored and documented in the transition from CRP to CSP, from teacher-driven sensitivity to culture to pluralistic and democratic redefinitions of what is to be sustained by schooling processes (or CRT 2.0, as rebranded by Ladson-Billings in her response to Paris and Alim's loving critique). As such, CSP holds great promise for the field of bilingual education across the world, and specifically in our universities' home state of California where new legislation seems to reflect a new era and open disposition toward multilingual education. Longitudinal research studies describing challenges BTCs and teachers experience implementing CSP practices and how they navigate these challenges could shed light on supports needed to sustain implementation.

The implementation of CSP requires sustaining minoritized teachers *and* empowering them to sustain their future students. Accordingly, bilingual teacher preparation may also benefit from additional critical pedagogies that could contribute to the decolonization of higher education. Such research should focus not only on the transformations in bilingual teachers' perspectives but also document how shifting perspectives transfer to teachers' instructional strategy repertoire. In essence, this line of inquiry resonates with the decades-old question about the influence of teacher preparation on actual practice: How do we sustain bilingual teachers to sustain their bilingual students?

Lastly, there is a need for research that employs an intersectional approach to CSP. While much of the emphasis in the field has been placed on the construct of race, taking a wider critical approach that reflects the multilayered nature of identities and the concerted work of multiple oppressions is urgently needed. Both universities in this study serve BTCs whose personal and professional experiences are also inextricably conditioned by other sociological constructs such as gender, class, or sexual orientation, to name a few. These intersecting forms of oppression were illustrated by Anna's and Inez's description

of challenges with race and gender expectations. As we support future bilingual teachers, we engage with the assets and challenges of our BTCs' intersectional identities. Therefore, it is crucial to consider the porous, overlapping, multidimensional categories and cultures that we aim to sustain as we move towards positive social transformation in bilingual classrooms.

## CONCLUSION

Our implementation of program- and course-level supports to promote CSP practices in bilingual classrooms illuminates the potential for CSP at multiple levels in higher education. We show how we prepare bilingual teachers to enact CSP through our courses at the instructor level and at the administrative level through decisions to implement additional bilingual spaces in the form of University 1's Bilingual Seminar and additional advising support. This multi-layered support and commitment to CSP calls for collaboration between leadership and course instructors. CSP-inspired bilingual teacher preparation requires continuous exploration of challenging topics and analysis of personal experiences and beliefs that impact classroom practice. Importantly, we argue, bilingual teacher preparation requires a conceptual understanding of CSP *and* an understanding of how to enact CSP in practice. We hope the program-level supports, course readings, reflections and class activities we describe here assist bilingual teacher educators in preparing bilingual teachers to enact Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy.

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## KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

**Bilingual Teacher Candidates (BTCs):** Are pre-service students in bilingual authorization pathways in a teacher preparation program.

**Critical Consciousness:** Is the development of sociopolitical and historical understandings that recognize that the legacies of colonialism continue to subjugate People of Color. Individuals learn to reflect on oppressions and discern the differences in power and privilege in order to develop ideological clarity about the purpose of schooling, question power and privilege, disrupt deficit thinking, and consider alternative understandings of the “underachievement” of particular student groups (Palmer et al., 2019).

**Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy (CSP):** Is based on Ladson-Billings (1995) theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy. CSP seeks to deepen the school’s orientation toward valuing and maintaining languages and cultures that tend to be minoritized by systemic inequalities. The goal of CSP is to foster linguistic and cultural diversity with the goal of democratizing schooling. CSP requires educators to sustain students’ and communities’ cultural and linguistic competence while simultaneously offering access to academic achievement as defined by the dominant culture (Paris, 2012).

**Heritage Spanish Speaker:** Refers to teacher candidates who grew up in a home or community where Spanish was spoken, and who may have varying levels of Spanish/English bilingualism (Valdés, 2001). For heritage speakers, the home/community language is often a minority language (Suarez, 2002) spoken by a minoritized group. Although some of the participants in this study were born in Spanish-speaking countries, we include them in this term because they now live in the U.S., where Spanish is a minoritized language.

**Linguistically Minoritized:** Refers to speakers of home or community languages other than English to emphasize that their home or community language resources are often not valued by institutions such as schools (Kibler, 2017) and may be considered “non-standard” varieties of a language.

**Raciolinguistics:** Explores the ways bilingual practices and people are valued or devalued depending upon the racialized identity of the language user rather than the user’s actual linguistic practices falling short of a particular—and arbitrary—standard (Flores & Rosa, 2015).

**Theatre of the Oppressed:** Is a Freirean inspired theatre developed by Brazilian activist Augusto Boal (Boal & McBride, 1979). Theatre of the Oppressed aims to show, explore, analyze and transform social inequities.

## **ENDNOTE**

- <sup>1</sup> We employ the term “heritage Spanish speaker” to refer to teacher candidates who grew up in a home or community where Spanish was spoken, and who may have varying levels of Spanish/English bilingualism (Valdés, 2001). For heritage speakers, the home/community language is “often a minority language within a nation-state” (Suarez, 2002, p. 515). Although some of the participants in this study were born in Spanish-speaking countries, we include them in this term because they now live in the U.S., where Spanish is a minoritized language.