

The Impact of a School-University Multicultural Read-Aloud Project on Pre-service Teachers' Pedagogical Understandings

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ABSTRACT: This school-university partnership research explored how multicultural literature read-alouds impacted the pedagogical understandings of elementary pre-service teachers. The study explores the intersection of multicultural education, Professional Development School standards, and the achievement gaps of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students in the partnership. Participants included 54 convenience-selected pre-service teachers in a methods course who read aloud books to urban, CLD students in field-based classrooms. Analysis of reflective responses revealed the participants' pedagogical understandings most often related to (a) sociocultural learning/teaching practices utilized in delivering the read-aloud, (b) students' efferent responses in taking away cultural knowledge, and (c) knowledge gained from multicultural literature. Discussion of the partnership role in facilitating the participants' understandings included (1) the role of diverse field placements, (2) the co-teaching model of mentoring, and (3) multiculturalism content in the methods course. This research demonstrates a need for examining how multicultural read-alouds might also impact cooperating teachers' pedagogical understandings.

NAPDS Essentials Addressed: #1/A comprehensive mission that is broader in its outreach and scope than the mission of any partner and that furthers the education profession and its responsibility to advance equity within schools and, by potential extension, the broader community; #3/Engagement in and public sharing of the results of deliberate investigations of practice by respective participants

Introduction

As elementary schools across the United States (U.S.) continue to increase in racial, ethnic, linguistic, and economical diversity, there is a pressing need for creating a culture of equity in which schools work for *all* children (Linton & Davis, 2013; Ming & Dukes, 2006). Educators are challenged to

facilitate culturally relevant learning environments in which they show an understanding of themselves and their students in terms of culture, race, ethnicity, gender, language, and economics. Understanding students' lived experiences begins with an individual recognition of the learner—a key instructional strategy that culturally competent teachers rely upon in designing and implementing

effective teaching (Pang, Stein, Gomez, Matas, & Shimogori, 2011). The use of multicultural literature is one teaching technique that affirms students' identities by drawing from their cultural, linguistic, and historical "funds of knowledge" (Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonzalez, 1992, p. 133). Multicultural literature creates opportunities for teachers to reflect upon their own cultural beliefs and habits, spurs transformations within teaching approaches (Szecsi, Spillman, Vázquez-Montilla, & Mayberry, 2010), and provides literacy tools that "function as a major socializing agent" for students (Sims Bishop, 1990, p. 561).

Because combining students' learning backgrounds and literature materials imbued with their cultural patterns is an effective teaching practice, this methodology can be used to develop teachers' cultural competencies. Cultural competence or the "ability to teach students from cultures other than your own" (Ming & Dukes, 2006, p. 42) may be particularly challenging for today's primarily Caucasian, female teachers (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 2013; Hefflin, 2002). These skills are essential as U.S. teachers face elementary classrooms with increasing numbers of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students.

To help U. S. teacher candidates acquire the necessary dispositions, knowledge, and skills to become culturally competent, teacher education programs typically provide different diversity experiences, such as incorporating multicultural education courses (Keengwe, 2010). While *gaining* knowledge is beneficial, Dantas (2007) argues that immersing teacher candidates into experiences that require them to apply their knowledge of multicultural theories by designing culturally specific teaching practices is central to their development. Professional Development School (PDS) partnerships between universities and schools are one approach that offers opportunities for such immersion. In PDS partnerships, stakeholders "work together to develop future

teachers and practicing teachers' competence to work with diverse learners" (Lee & Herner-Patnode, 2010, p. 223; Neopolitan & Tunks, 2009). Unfortunately, Lee and Herner-Patnode (2010) note there are few studies relating the impact of Professional Development Schools (PDS) on teacher candidates' development of culturally competent pedagogies to meet the needs of their CLD students.

Moreover, while practicing teachers are supportive of culturally responsive teaching, Black's (2010) findings indicate that they do not often implement such practices, like the use of multicultural literature, in their classrooms. Thus, because university-school partnerships "advance a concept of shared responsibility for teacher preparation...and ensure that teachers know how to work closely with colleagues, students, and the community...[as well as] provide a rich and substantive field experience" (Hobbs, Cabral, Ebrahimi, Yoon, & Al-Humaidan, 2011, p. 145) for teacher candidates, it is important for the partners within a PDS to investigate not only how teachers are trained to be effective, but how specific teaching techniques impact their developing cultural competencies.

Purpose Statement and Research Question

The purpose of this study was to explore how elementary pre-service teachers' pedagogical understandings were impacted by the use of multicultural literature during read-alouds in the literacy curriculum. After exposing pre-service teachers to multicultural literature and then providing opportunities for them to engage and reflect upon its use in real teaching/learning environments within the PDS settings, the study aimed to investigate if and how such methodology helps pre-service teachers learn about culturally responsive teaching (Szecsi et al., 2010). While previous research indicates that pre-service and in-service teachers' varying experiences with multicultural literature does lead to increased

cultural awareness, knowledge, and skills (Montero & Robertson, 2006; Nathenson-Mejía & Escamilla, 2003), this investigation explored teacher candidates' use of multicultural literature within a PDS. Because the school-university partnership shares responsibility for educating teachers with methodology that more effectively meets the needs of its CLD students, feedback from this research on the read-aloud practice hoped to "strengthen the work of the PDS" (National Association of Professional Development Schools, 2008, p. 6). Specifically, the research question guiding this study asked "How does reading aloud multicultural literature impact the pedagogical understandings of pre-service teachers?"

Conceptualizing the Purpose of the Study

Conceptualizing the purpose for this research involved integrating principles of multicultural education with the standards of Professional Development Schools and relating them to observed diversity within the PDS. Helping pre-service teachers connect multicultural education practices to real teaching experiences in PDS settings was thought to foster their awareness of how pedagogy impacts CLD student achievement.

Multicultural Education

Banks (2002) maintains that multicultural education assumes that ethnic and cultural diversity enriches U.S. society, its schools, and increases the ways in which people perceive and solve personal and public problems. However, to be efficiently implemented in academia, Banks (1994) suggests that dimensions of the knowledge construction process and equity pedagogy be delineated in terms of curriculum design. Actualizing the processes of multicultural education are made more explicit when prospective teachers are immersed in diverse contexts with culturally

responsive teachers who model an awareness of their students' backgrounds and then translate that knowledge into effective, equity-focused pedagogies (Dantas, 2007).

Professional Development School Model

A defining characteristic of the Professional Development School model is its preparation of new teachers in real world settings in which actual teaching practices take place. The National Council for Accreditation or Teacher Education—formerly NCATE but now CAEP—identifies five specific standards that frame the PDS model (NCATE, 2001). Standard IV or "Equity and Diversity" shares a connection to the dimensions of multicultural education. Practicing teachers and pre-service teachers must ensure equitable learning outcomes for all students by adhering to practices that systematically address gaps in achievement among ethnic and racial populations of students. PDS partners work to develop pre-service teachers' skills of equity pedagogy (Banks, 2002) by providing rich, diverse, placement settings.

Diversity of the Setting

Such settings exist within this study. To explain, the Teacher Quality Partnership (TQP) was formed in 2009–2010 and joined two key partners—Midwestern State University (MWSU) (pseudonym) and the Local Educational Agency or Midwestern Unified School District or MWUSD (pseudonym)—as well as other community partners. The TQP emphasizes goals of urban education and meeting diverse student needs, particularly in terms of literacy skills, in its coordination of sixteen schools (MWSU Teacher Quality Partnership, 2012).

Fostering a culture of equity is important for MWUSD, as it is the largest school district in the state, with 50,103 students. Of these students, 74% are economically disadvantaged compared to the state average of 47.6%. Sixty-

three percent are ethnically diverse, with Hispanics comprising the largest populations (29.6%). In the last five years, the number of English Language Learners has increased from 14.3% to 18.89%, compared to a 9.8% state average (KS Department of Education, 2006; KS Department of Education, 2011).

Confronted with diversity challenges, the PDS elementary educators are striving to meet the educational needs of their students, with recent improvement noted in all students' achievement scores (MWUSD, 2012). Importantly though, within the TQP, a particular response to these challenges has been to place MWSU elementary teacher education candidates in clinical field settings whereby they gain first-hand experience with racially, ethnically, culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse students and communities. Candidates learn about "practice in practice" (Darling-Hammond, 2006, p. 122) with teams of district and university professionals who advance co-teaching (Bacharach, Heck, & Dahlberg, 2010). They complete 195+ hours of fieldwork in Core 1, Core 2a, and Core 2b pre-student teaching experiences, prior to semester-long student teaching internships.

Systematically, student achievement data are collected as one measure for determining the effectiveness of the PDS (Mid-Western Teacher Quality Partnership, 2012). Unfortunately, even with recent gains, the district's ethnically diverse third graders' state assessment reading scores reflect nearly twice as many students on academic warning as Caucasian students, with a 10.6% average of these ethnic populations compared to only 5.6% of Caucasian students (KS Department of Education, 2011). In short, while the TQP partners recognize the gaps in CLD students' academic learning and place high value on training candidates in highly diverse elementary schools to support CLD students, the partners continue to have literacy achievement concerns for CLD students within MWUSD.

Investigation of deliberate teaching practices within the setting. Embedded in the PDS standards are essential elements that advance a commitment to studying teaching practices that better meet the academic needs of CLD students (NAPDS, 2008). Deliberate investigations of literacy practices, like read-aloud routines, reflect such study. In MWUSD, the district's literacy vision is operationalized through a literacy instructional and delivery organizational timeframe, identified as the Elementary Reading Model (MWUSD, 2012). Designed to support instruction for key components of reading, it also provides for writing instruction, student independent reading with teacher conferencing, and teacher read-alouds.

Literature Review

Wood and Salvetti's (2001) work, relative to read-alouds and a child's successful literacy development, provides a basis for investigating the read aloud routine. Reading aloud to children is often cited as most needed for foundational reading skills (Fox, 2013). Moreover, Carrell's (1987) investigation showed that reading culturally familiar content impacts one's reading comprehension positively. In this way, by considering diverse students' backgrounds in selecting instructional materials and practices, novice and practicing teachers offer CLD students opportunities to connect reading to their lived experiences (Banks, 1994; Ming & Dukes, 2006). Because of these connections, Hefflin (2002) suggests CLD students learn best when reading appropriate and authentic cultural materials, like multicultural children's literature. Montero and Robertson (2006) define multicultural literature as works reflecting the themes, values, attitudes, and ideas of a culture often marginalized by the dominant European-American culture.

Reading this genre of literature allows CLD children opportunities for making meaning more visible (DeNicolo & Fránquiz, 2006). In a broader sense, González-Jensen

and Sadler (1997) assert that read-alouds of multicultural literature are practices that benefit not only CLD students' literacy development, but also the children and teachers from the mainstream culture.

Theoretical Framework of the Study

Two theories shape the framework guiding this study of how reading aloud multicultural literature impacts the pedagogical understandings of pre-service teachers: (1) socio-cultural learning/teaching theory and (2) reader response theory. Because learning is influenced by language and culture, the views of social constructivism appear particularly applicable to the teaching of literacy. According to Meacham (2001), "socio-cultural theorists have provided the conceptual language and empirical evidence to conceive of and utilize diversity as an educational and literacy learning resource" (p. 190). Vygotsky's (1986) learning theory suggests that "learning does not take place in cognitive isolation, but within the context of activities and social interaction largely informed by the day-to-day contingencies of culture" (Meacham, 2001, p. 192). Educators must become aware that "culture is at the heart...of education" (p. 8) and that "teaching is a contextual and situational process" (Gay, 2000, p. 21). Consequently, socioculturally-centered teaching—utilizing CLD students' "cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles" (Gay, 2000, p. 29) to make learning relevant and more effective—is a key theory guiding this research.

Dantas (2007) uses Gay's term of cultural broker to explain how effective teachers bring the diversity of their students into the learning/teaching process by bridging home to school. She cautions that teachers' use of literacy practices are informed by their backgrounds (often different from students), so they must consciously strive to reflect cultural responsiveness by selecting literacy

practices and methodology drawn from their students' funds of knowledge. To do this, Banks (2002) recommends teachers become learners with their students and employ practices like inquiry, cooperative learning, or stimulations and role-play. Multicultural literature can provide an additional medium for engaging students in reading, thinking, and learning.

Reader response, therefore, is a second key theory guiding the study. In other words a reader's transaction with a multicultural text involves an examination of the various social conditions that shaped his/her stance in responding and interpreting. In conceptualizing a reader's response to literature, Rosenblatt (1986) asserted that transactions between a reader and text occurred within a particular context and meaning came about because of this interplay. She characterized reading in which attention is centered predominately on what is to be extracted and retained as *efferent*, whereas *aesthetic* reading reflects attention to feelings, ideas, and situations relative to one's lived-through experiences. Lewis (2000) argues that transactions with multicultural literature, specifically, should involve more than just personal, aesthetic responses. Teachers need to help their students "question the discourses that shape their experiences as well as resist textual ideology that promotes dominant cultural assumption" in order to spur *efferent* responses (Lewis, 2000, p. 261). By broadening their aesthetic stances to consider others' perspectives and think *efferently*, readers take on the lens of social action thinking.

Methodology of the Study

Design of the Study

The study took place during the fall and spring semesters of 2011–2012 within MWSU and its TQP elementary settings. Because the study was exploratory in nature and the participants' understandings were described in terms of self-reflectivity to given prompts,

the strategy of inquiry was a case study (Creswell, 1998). A qualitative case study methodology was selected because the purpose was to gather descriptions of the participants' understandings and their perceptions of a particular teaching experience. Because the case was bounded (Creswell, 1998) by the PDS during a specific phase of the participants' teacher preparation program, consideration of their perspectives was thought to offer valued feedback to the PDS partners.

Participants in the Study

Participants included 54 pre-service teachers—53 females and one male teacher candidate—in their second core block of methods coursework (approximately junior year) who had completed diversity course/field work (human growth and development, exceptionalities, and cultural issues). Of these 54 pre-service teachers, 49 are Caucasian, two are African American, two are Hispanic, and one is Asian. The study utilized convenience sampling, as the multicultural picture book read aloud was a required assignment for all the MWSU pre-service teachers in the literacy methods class. Participants in the study were volunteers from the literacy methods class.

To explain more about the participants' methods coursework, in this Core 2a Block, teacher candidates learn literacy and social studies content and pedagogy in scheduled methods classes, but they also practice delivering content effectively via 90+ hours in a given field placement setting that is supported by a cooperating teacher, a building liaison, and university supervisor. Pre-service teachers are required to plan, prepare, implement, assess, and reflect upon six literacy and social studies lessons, in addition to reading aloud one multicultural picture book.

Data Sources in the Study

Primary data collection consisted of 44 of the 54 participants' written reflective responses to

two of four given prompts: (1) "What did you notice about the multicultural read aloud? What was a noted strength?" and (2) "Implementing multicultural literature relative to my CLD students has helped me...". Other questions were "Why was this particular book selected? How did it *match* the funds of knowledge of this particular class/group of students?" and "What would you need to do differently next time?". Ten participants' reflective responses were either incomplete or reflected responses that were not aligned to the two specific prompts. The reflective responses were analyzed as *key* to describing how the pre-service teachers perceived their personal understandings of teaching (pedagogical) practices. The researcher considered the second prompt as relative to pedagogy (the practice of multicultural literature), even though it was not specific to the implementation of the read aloud event.

Materials Selected for the Study

Selection criteria for reviewing and then purchasing the participants' multicultural literature first included extensive research relative to the Children's Literature Comprehensive Database (www.childrenslit.com). Literary specialists' analyses (including literary awards) for book recommendations were considered in selecting (1) quality texts and illustrations that reflected ethnically diverse cultures, (2) picture books written and/or illustrated by insider authors and illustrators, (3) varying dual language formats of English and minority languages in the texts, and (4) recent publications of various genres and interests of children's literature. Because all the participants taught in grades kindergarten through five, the search focused on picture books exclusively. As an example, *The Cazuela that the Farm Maiden Stirred* (Vamos, 2011), a cumulative tale written in both Spanish and English, was a considered book because its playful tale, creatively illustrated as folk art, shows the traditions of oral storytelling and the value of cooperation.

Procedures for Implementing the Read Aloud

Prior to implementing the read aloud, the participants engaged in various activities. To begin preparing, the pre-service teachers (1) participated in content presentations of knowledge construction and equity pedagogy (Banks, 1994), picture book viewings, and collaborative examinations of multicultural literature in terms of Hancock's (2008) evaluative criteria. Secondly, each MWSU pre-service teacher (2) observed and collected contextual information regarding their elementary students, such as a child's background cultural experiences, interests, and primary language spoken at home. (3) All pre-service teachers were expected to view and reflect upon their cooperating teachers' effective read-alouds (i.e., before, during, and after reading questions; emphasis on vocabulary development, etc.). (4) Each pre-service teacher selected two or three potential multicultural picture books by drawing upon his/her observations of the students' background experiences. (5) In collaboration with his/her cooperating teacher, each participant then decided on a particular multicultural picture book. (6) All pre-service teachers researched his/her book and created interactive, online posters to showcase compiled information (e.g., author, the illustrator, vocabulary related to customs/traditions, history, etc.). (7) Using this information, each pre-service teacher designed lesson procedures for delivering the read aloud within the MWUSD Reading Model.

Data Analysis of the Study

To begin the data analysis, the researcher read, reviewed, and re-read all the written reflective responses as a means of uncovering and telling the participants' understandings. Peer scrutiny by three MWSU colleagues prompted the researcher to rethink, reread, and review the data analysis process repetitively. These processes facilitated the researcher's reliance upon constructs from both sociocultural

learning/teaching theory and reader response theory in the analysis. Using the idea unit as the unit of analysis (Chafe, 1987), the researcher categorically aggregated (Creswell, 1998) each idea in relation to its properties. According to Chafe, an idea unit is a unit of intonational and semantic closure in oral or written texts. By examining the single ideas presented, the coding of the students' perceptions of teaching practices using multicultural literature emerged to reflect patterns—patterns that related to sociocultural learning/teaching theory, reader response theory, and to each other. To check for categorical membership accuracy, the researcher and graduate assistant both reread the reflections again to determine if the patterns reflected actual excerpts in the participants' reflective responses.

Trustworthiness initially involved peer debriefing of the coding methodology by a faculty member from another institution (Creswell, 1998). To increase credibility, though, peer scrutiny (Shenton, 2004) occurred, as additional MWSU colleagues challenged assumptions in the data analysis process and offered critical feedback. Because each colleague offered expertise (Shenton, 2004) due to his/her varying backgrounds (quantitative research, qualitative research, multicultural education), triangulation through peer scrutiny bolstered the trustworthiness.

Results of the Study

To answer the study's question, "How does reading aloud multicultural literature impact the pedagogical understandings of pre-service teachers?" the following results are presented in terms of the participants' reflective responses to the two following prompts.

Prompt #1: "What did you notice about the multicultural read aloud? What was a noted strength?"

A summary of the findings (including definitions of codes and coding examples) related to

Table 1 Codes, Coding Examples, and Percentages of Reflective Responses of Participants' Perceptions of Strengths of the Multicultural Literature Read Aloud Event

	Responses Reflective of Sociocultural Teaching		Responses Reflective of Reader Response to Literature	
	Acting as Cultural Brokers	Literacy Teaching Practices that Depicted Cultural Responsiveness	Aesthetic Responses to the Literature	Efferent Responses to the Literature
Cultural Knowledge Construction / Understanding Culture				
<u>Definition of code:</u> Making aspects of culture visible	<u>Definition of code:</u> Bringing diversity into the learning process	<u>Definition of code:</u> Interactive learning process	<u>Definition of code:</u> Attention to lived-thought and personal connections to literature	<u>Definition of code:</u> Attention to ideas/experience extracted or retained from literature
<u>Coding example:</u> ...captivated at how Rosa Parks and other African Americans were treated...	<u>Coding example:</u> ...students were able to discover events that they or family members had to persevere to meet their goal...	<u>Coding example:</u> ...making them be a part of the story by pretending to be on an airplane and taking a tour [of Iguaçu]	<u>Coding example:</u> ...drew a picture of their own calabash animal that best represented themselves...	<u>Coding example:</u> ...student said he didn't know there was a Latina [Supreme Court] Justice...
13/124 10%	23/124 19%	38/124 31%	18/124 14%	32/124 26%

this prompt is presented in Table 1. Patterns of the participants' responses reflect elements of sociocultural learning/teaching and reader response theory in terms of noted strengths of the read aloud practice. Specifically, in terms of sociocultural learning/teaching, the participants reflected on the elements of constructing cultural knowledge for their students, acting as a cultural broker (Gay, 2000), and using teaching practices in delivering the read aloud that depicted themselves as culturally responsive. In terms of reader response, the participants' responses describe the strengths of the read aloud in terms of how they considered their elementary students' aesthetic and efferent stances in attending to and interpreting the multicultural literature.

Responses Reflective of Sociocultural Teaching

Cultural knowledge construction/understanding culture. According to Banks (2002), a teacher's development of culturally relevant pedagogies involves constructing cultural knowledge that includes an historical and cultural knowledge of ethnic groups and ways of studying their experiences. Teachers help their students build cultural knowledge by making it visible and situating it in within the contexts of human behaviors and events (Dantas, 2007), such as in experiences with multicultural literature. In this study, ten percent of the participants perceived the book as a teaching strength, in that it was the actual tool for making culture visible. To illustrate, one pre-service teacher shared, "The book was able to show the students the diversity not only in their classroom, but also in books that they read. The students didn't know that there were books out there in other languages beside English." Another responded, "The strength of the read aloud would be the actual reading of the book...as they never heard of the book and were really paying attention to the story."

Constructing cultural knowledge for other pre-service teachers meant making the learning more tangible in other ways. To explain,

one pre-service teacher chose a particular book for her gendered-based reading group of girls and reflected that “we also made empanadas to further their understanding. . . . The girls really enjoyed talking about each other’s culture as well as making the empanadas. Several of them asked me for the recipe so they could make them at home.”

Acting as cultural brokers. Banks (2002) maintains that teachers help students to understand how knowledge is constructed by making explicit the influential aspects of one’s frame of reference and perspective (among other aspects). Thus, while the participants’ reflective responses revealed how the read aloud built their students’ cultural knowledge, their written perceptions more often described the strength of the read aloud as bringing “diversity of the students’ and families’ funds of knowledge into the learning/teaching process” (Dantas, 2007, p. 79). Such cultural brokerage, according to Gay (2000), occurs when teachers transform knowledge of their students’ distinctive backgrounds into effective instruction. Such a transformation is reflected in this participant’s reflective response:

One strength of my read-aloud was definitely the response from the class, especially the Hispanic students. As I read and we discussed the Spanish words and the culture, I could really see my Hispanic students opening up. During previous discussions I’ve observed in the class, they tend to be shy and not say much. As we talked, they really liked sharing their knowledge with the class.

Similar to this reflective response, another pre-service teacher wrote that a noticed strength was her students “told stories about piñatas they have had or seen.” Other participants reflected similarly about the children’s involvement in the reading: “The students were able to correct me on some of the Spanish words that I could not pronounce right,” and “The students started saying the Spanish words with me, which was awesome!”

Literacy teaching practices that depicted

cultural responsiveness. Dantas (2007) cautions that teachers frequently employ literacy teaching practices that reflect dominant mainstream school literacies. She suggests that teachers’ bridge-building to connect their students’ cultural and linguistic backgrounds to school must also consider the selection process of methodology. In this manner, Gay (2000) maintains that culturally responsive pedagogy is strengthened when teachers and students learn together. Banks (2002) recommends teaching practices that vary widely and elicit students’ interaction. In this study, 31 percent of the participants’ reflective responses illustrated the strength of the read-aloud as being their use of particular teaching practices in reading aloud the book. The researcher considered the participants’ reflectivity of these teaching practices as indications of their self-perceptions of cultural responsiveness. To illustrate, one pre-service teacher noticed the strength of inquiry, as she led her students to translate the Spanish language of the book:

Showing them the two vocabulary words, I had them look for them throughout the book—to try and figure out the language. . . . I asked them to look at the illustrations. . . . A few of them tried to guess what one of the vocabulary words were, but I continued through with the book before answering right or wrong. . . . When we came to other Spanish words, I had them look at the illustrations and how each word was used in the sentence. Together we came up with the meanings in English. . . .

As examples of how simulation was employed, one pre-service teacher wrote that her “opener” was a perceived strength because the class “wondered what I was doing and they wanted to know why I had only given pieces of candy to some of the students and not others. I was teaching the word justice [to help them understand how Dolores Huerta helped in the fight for the betterment of farm

workers with Cesar Chavez].” Another pre-service teacher wrote, “What amazed me the most was when some of the students in the ‘red group’ were angry because they knew the rules were unfair to the ‘purple group.’ I was so proud. When we discussed segregation and integration in the book, many of the students had so many questions. . .”

Responses Reflective of Reader Responses to Literature

Aesthetic responses to literature. In addition to noticing the sociocultural teaching aspects of implementing (reading aloud) multicultural literature, the participants’ responses reflected an awareness of how this particular practice elicited their students’ lived, aesthetic connections during reading by allowing them to draw upon their own background experiences (Rosenblatt, 1986). Most often, the pre-service teachers noticed how the literature evoked their CLD students’ attention, as is exhibited in this candidate’s reflection of reading aloud *Pelé* to her first graders:

. . . [the strength was] the simple fact that I chose a book about soccer. I knew how much my students love soccer because they tell me about it often. I instantly had their attention because the topic was something they were interested in. Also, some students were enthusiastic about the book being translated into two languages. My Spanish-speaking children lit up when they saw both languages on the page.

Several participants’ reflective responses revealed the teaching strength as being “students expounded on personal experiences,” which they considered as fostering their students’ critical thinking of the literature. A pre-service teacher wrote: “I liked that the students understood that without events like Ruby Bridges, they would not have all the friends they have today. One student even looked at her friend, raised her hand, and said, ‘I wouldn’t have been her friend like I am now.’”

Efferent responses to literature. Twenty-six percent of the pre-service teachers’ reflective responses indicated a noted strength of the read-aloud as being their students’ efferent stance in terms of what was retained following the read-aloud. In this sense, the participants’ responses reflected how the picture books became more than just a literary work to be interpreted in relationship to personal experiences. Often-times, students retained specific words emphasized by their pre-service teachers’ during the read-aloud, as indicated in reflective responses like, “They learned the new vocabulary words quickly.” However, the participants also considered that their students’ asking of questions and discussing of events following the read-aloud reflected a taking away of knowledge: “They asked lots of questions” and “The students were able to come up with clever ideas to expand upon ideas [presented in the read-aloud].”

Prompt #2: “Implementing multicultural literature relative to my CLD students has helped me. . .”

In responding to this second related literacy practice prompt, the participants reflected specifically upon reading aloud multicultural literature as a teaching practice (pedagogy). As demonstrated in Table 2 (which also includes definitions of codes and coding examples), the candidates’ responses overwhelmingly reflected how they considered multicultural literature a tool for gaining knowledge.

Gaining knowledge via multicultural literature facilitated the participants’ understandings about (a) their own self-identities, (b) other cultures, and (c) their elementary students. In terms of embracing an equity pedagogy (Banks, 1994), multicultural literature, as one candidate stated, “. . .has helped me get out of my box of my cultural practices and see what other cultures are. . .it’s allowing me to learn new things. . .[and] the CLD students respect that I am making the attempt to learn with them.” Additional evidence of

Table 2 Codes, Coding Examples, and Percentages of Participants' Reflective Responses to Implementing Multicultural Literature

<i>Knowledge about Self</i>	<i>Knowledge about Other Cultures</i>	<i>Knowledge to Understand Students</i>
<u>Definition of code:</u> <i>Introspection and critical awareness</i>	<u>Definition of code:</u> <i>Acquisition of specific cultural knowledge</i>	<u>Definition of code:</u> <i>Willingness to learn about students and nurture their cultural competence</i>
<u>Coding example:</u> <i>.. see that my students grew up differently than I did and come from different backgrounds and have different families than I do. . .</i>	<u>Coding example:</u> <i>.. recognize that different cultures have different ways of expressing themselves. . .</i>	<u>Coding example:</u> <i>.. importance of making sure students see themselves in what they are learning</i>
14/56 25%	18/56 32%	24/56 43%

this pattern in their reflective responses is indicated in the following excerpts:

- “I think reading multicultural books is a good way for me to understand my students, for them to get to know me better, and for us to know another culture better. . .”
- “. . . to become more aware of the students and their backgrounds. . .”
- “. . . to gain a new perspective. . . [and] broaden my horizons. . .”
- “. . . to learn myself. And I have so much to learn.”

Discussion

In this study, the participants' reflective responses of the pedagogical impact of multicultural read-alouds highlighted the importance of sociocultural learning/teaching—constructing cultural knowledge for students, acting as a cultural broker, and using teaching practices in delivering the read aloud that reflect cultural responsiveness. Their reflective responses also revealed the ways in which elementary students' demonstrated aesthetic and efferent stances in thinking and interpreting the picture book. The results indicate that the participants most often considered how they delivered the read-aloud and their students' efferent responses in taking away cultural knowledge from the literature as teaching strengths. Such acquisition of equity

pedagogy relates to the Multicultural Education Consensus Panel's (Banks, Cookson, Gay, & Hawley, et al., 2001) recommendations for teacher learning. Specifically, the results suggest, as this participant noted, the teaching practice of reading aloud multicultural literature is “[helping] me to be more open-minded towards having a multicultural curriculum that I would teach.”

To unpack how the PDS played a role in the teacher candidates' pedagogical understandings or teacher learning, the researcher considered three elements as relative to their written self-reflectivity: (1) the diversity of the PDS schools in which the participants were placed; (2) the co-teaching mentoring model (Bacharach, Heck, & Dahlberg, 2010) between cooperating teacher and teacher candidates; and (3) the focus on multicultural education in the literacy course. As noted, the participants' placements included elementary schools with much cultural and linguistic diversity (MWUSD, 2012). The pre-service teachers' reflectivity showed their increased cultural awareness and knowledge as they interacted with CLD students and observed theoretical knowledge actualized in real, teaching contexts by culturally responsive teachers. Because of the PDS' emphasis on co-teaching, the nature of the participants' collaboration with their cooperating teachers in planning and preparing for the read-aloud may have influenced their noticing of particular teaching practices. Additionally, because the

literacy methods course emphasized the pre-service teachers' building of cultural knowledge of both children and the picture book prior to the read-aloud, a knowledge of how multicultural literature "create[d] a connection between themselves and students" emerged (Ming & Duke, 2006, p. 46). In gaining an understanding of how readers' respond both aesthetically and efferently by drawing from their cultural and linguistic backgrounds, the pre-service teachers were able to reflect upon how their elementary students are "shaped by social, political, and historical conditions" (Lewis, 2000, p. 260). Such awareness is illustrated in this pre-service teacher's reflective response:

I used to feel like by reading a story like Emma's [*That's not fair! Emma Tenayuca's struggle for justice*/*No es justo! La lucha de Emma Tenayuca por la justicia* (Tafolla & Teneyuca, 2008)], I might offend someone or make them feel badly because of how terribly people have been treated in the past, and even now, because of their culture. I can now see that it is very important to address these issues out loud and be able to discuss them openly. . .

Limitations of the Study and Future Directions for Research

A number of limitations impact the generalizability of the study: the small, convenience sample of participants, minimal information about participants' background experiences with diversity, the implementation of only one read-aloud event, and the limited understanding of cooperating teachers and the participants' pre- or post-coursework or field work. An added limitation is the nature of the second reflective prompt, "Implementing multicultural literature relative to my CLD students has helped me. . ." because of its relationship to a graded task in the participants' literacy course.

This study does provide an example of how the PDS philosophy and goals can begin to facilitate a teacher's culturally responsive skills

and dispositions for teaching CLD students effectively at the onset of his/her professional career rather than later on in life. Culturally responsive pedagogy is challenging for most novice and practicing teachers and will require more than one assignment in a literacy methods courses to reflect effective implementation. Certainly, added research into how the participants may or may not apply cultural knowledge during the student teaching internship (for example) is needed. As previously mentioned, a key limitation of the study is that it only investigated the reflectivity of the pre-service teachers. How the pre-service teachers' reading aloud of multicultural literature impacts their cooperating teachers' pedagogical understandings, cultural knowledge, and implementation of cultural responsive teaching practices should be a "next steps" research endeavor—particularly because of the nature of the TQP and its emphasis on co-teaching.

Implications for Educators in School-University Partnerships

In this research project within MWUSD and MWSU's TQP, the pre-service teachers reflected the pedagogical impact of reading aloud multicultural literature as it related to (a) culturally responsive aspects of socioculturally teaching, (b) a reader's aesthetic and efferent responses to literature and (c) tools for increasing personal cultural knowledge that aid in effective teaching of CLD students. Currently, because the participants' teacher training encompasses a co-teaching and team-based approach for immersion into CLD classrooms, more dialogue between faculty and cooperating teachers seems doable. Lee and Herner-Patnode (2010) suggest, "to move [pre-service teachers] from methods courses to real world application" (p. 229), school and university partners must collaboratively craft ways to better facilitate culturally responsive teaching practices. As this study showed, the use of multicultural literature is one effective methodology for advancing the notion of such responsiveness. ^{SUP}

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