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The Sociohistorical Evolution of the Language of Culturally-Based Pedagogy and its Impact on Teacher Education

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Abstract

The purpose of this literature review was to examine how language is used to describe and advance culturally-based pedagogy to critically reflect on the language employed in teacher education research. Our intent was to understand the terminology that has moved conversations of equity, diversity, and cultural ways of knowing to the center of urban education research and practice. Findings indicate the discourse of culturally-based pedagogy relies upon: (1) the exploration of the construct of culture, (2) the knowledge of the socio-historical context of specific terminology, and (3) a perspective that discourse is generative and dynamic.

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Teacher education has acknowledged a need for a workforce that is as racially, culturally, economically, and linguistically diverse as the students who are entering classrooms (Lucas & Villegas, 2011; Nieto, 2017; Sleeter, 2011). The teacher and teacher candidate pool has shown little change over the years, as the majority of people becoming teachers still self-identify as female, white, and middle-class (National Center for Educational Statistics [NCES, 2018]. While teacher education programs continue their attempts to diversify their candidate pool, a significant cultural mismatch exists between the backgrounds of teachers and their students. According to Kinloch and Dixon (2018), most teachers have little to no direct knowledge of the concepts, histories, and cultural practices of their students' communities and the complexities of teaching in urban classrooms—classrooms located in dynamic spaces of significant size and density within complex sociocultural, economic, and racial contexts (Milner & Lomotey, 2014).

In understanding the context of urban, the authors align our thinking with Leonardo and Hunter (2007) in the belief that "the urban is socially and discursively constructed as a place, which is part of the dialectical creation of the urban as both a real and imagined space" (pp. 780–781). The *real* is reflected in concrete neighborhood boundaries and the policies impacting the geographic locale. The *imaginary* is imbued with contested and contentious perspectives created in imaginations, dramatically affecting "urban education because [the urban setting] socially and culturally constructs the people who live in it as well as their needs" (pp. 780–781). We recognize the language used to give meaning to the terms *urban* and *urban education* has been understood in a variety of ways and through approaches that give rise to deficit perceptions (Milner, 2012a; Welsh & Swain, 2020).

Educating teachers to be effective in urban schools requires an understanding of what it means to be *urban* and the cultural context of students' lives within the broader sociopolitical conditions that deeply impact perceptions of urban districts (Dixson et al., 2014; Milner & Lomotey, 2014). Scholarship shows practices that incorporate students' cultures and communities are foundational and vital to responsive, effective teaching (Gay, 2010; Paris & Alim, 2017; Shevalier & McKenzie, 2012), and these practices have proven to raise the academic and social achievement of all learners (Dee &

Penner, 2016; Gay, 2010; Milner, 2015; Saifer et al., 2011). However, cultural matching alone does not ensure student success, especially if teachers' practices are embedded in Eurocentric pedagogy, regardless of their cultural backgrounds (Emdin, 2016). Student-teacher relationships can be strained by age, economic, gender, ability, and other identity differences. Without an understanding of these differences, this mismatch can manifest in lower student achievement and disengagement with learning (Goldenberg, 2013; Howard, 2019), as well as affect teacher burnout, attrition, and retention (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Hughes, 2012).

Moreover, just focusing on hiring teachers of color[1] is problematic, because they become a panacea to cultural matching, and pressure is placed on these teachers to become role models with an expectation that their presence will "solve systemic and institutional challenges ingrained in school districts" (Milner, 2016, p. 417). This practice of expecting teachers of color to have strong connections with every student of color is unsound. A racial match with students does not guarantee a natural rapport with each student (Griffin & Tackie, 2016; Milner, 2006). Furthermore, the racial and cultural teacher/student mismatch is not new. The U.S. has had a serious absence of teachers of color since the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* (1954) era when many Black educators were pushed out of the public school system and replaced with white educators (Dougherty, 2004; Milner & Howard, 2004). For many reasons embedded in the sociocultural, racial, and economic contexts (Milner, 2015), there is a need for professional development in culturally-based pedagogy that takes into consideration "the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse [and other] students [and has been shown] to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them" across many boundaries (Gay, 2018, p. 36).

However, the language used to describe instruction that views and addresses cultural, linguistic, economic, ethnic, racial, ableist, and gendered differences varies broadly. For example, Ladson-Billings (1994) refers to *culturally relevant pedagogy*, while Au and Kawakami (1994) label similar practices as *culturally congruent instruction*. Gay (2002) and others (Sleeter, 2011; Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995) identify practices that are akin to relevant or sustaining practices as *culturally responsive pedagogy*; notwithstanding, some of these scholars have used the terms *culturally and linguistically responsive teaching and learning* (Gay, 2018; Hollie, 2012; Sleeter, 2011). More recently, Paris (2012; Paris & Alim, 2017) has chosen the term *culturally sustaining pedagogy* to represent transformative schooling that seeks to sustain linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism.

The purpose of this literature review was to examine how language is used to describe and advance culturally-based pedagogy to critically reflect on the

language we employ in teacher education research in our local context. Recognizing the inconsistent and/or lack of shared vocabulary in research and teacher education for urban schools (Howard & Milner, 2014; Milner, 2012c), our intent was to understand the frameworks and terminology that have moved conversations of equity, diversity, and cultural ways of knowing to the center of educational research and practice. In doing so, we recognize language is shaped by and guides our understanding within historical, socio-cultural, and political contexts. Our exploration acknowledges the dynamic and varied nature of language and the nuances of local context in facilitating teacher professional development in culturally-based teaching practices. Our study was guided by the following research question: How can a comprehensive review of literature on the language of culturally-based pedagogy (CBP) inform how teacher professional development can be facilitated to empower and build agency across an urban university-school district partnership?

To understand our process, we first describe the context for our study, explain our methodology for our literature search, and discuss our findings in alignment with the broader research question framing our argument:

1. How is the concept of culture constructed?
2. What is the relevance of the socio-historical context of culture on urban education?
3. What is culture's relation to academic achievement, cultural competence, and socio-political consciousness?
4. How has the generative and dynamic discourse about CBP contributed to our understanding of it?
5. How will our understanding of CBP terms support our broader study, value its participants, and move us forward in developing the critical consciousness necessary for a shared vision of CBP?

Study Context

This literature review is a foundational step in a larger research project examining and supporting 12 professional development schools in a Midwestern urban school district engaged in implementing CBP. The focus district is in a city of 600,000 people and is widely known for being the most racially segregated urban area in the U.S. (Nelsen, 2015). We rely on Milner's (2012a) typological framework (i.e., urban intensive, urban emergent, and urban characteristic) to describe our setting as an *urban emergent* city based on the population size of less than 1 million; however, it is a city thick with many of the challenges of larger *urban intensive* locales (Milner, 2012a). The city has a long history of housing and

employment discrimination "due to a unique settlement pattern and an entrenched white power structure" (Nelsen, 2015, p. 9) that still exists today. The schools within the district mirror the patterns of racial and economic segregation that persist within the urban area of this study.

In describing this school district, we also consider the conclusions of Welsh and Swain (2020) in their study of the relationship between the descriptive conceptualizations of urban education and the quantification of "the degree of 'urbanness' of districts in the United States" (p. 91). Welsh and Swain look closely at Milner's (2012a) work; however, omitting Milner's *urban characteristic* category as a workable typology for their own findings. Notwithstanding this omission, they conceptualize urban education as (a) dynamic and complex; (b) a continuum of conditions; (c) understood through the presence of educational inequality; and (d) rejecting deficit perspectives to focus on assets existing in local urban settings. Although we align with these understandings, we caution that some of the variables within the design represent deficit characteristics commonly associated with urban areas (i.e., single "mom," poverty, and renters).

In our work, we emphasize the sociocultural characteristics of the urban typological framework (Milner, 2012a) to recognize factors outside of our local schools that directly affect what happens within the schools (i.e., housing, employment, mobility) (Milner, 2012b; Milner & Lomotey, 2014; Noguera, 2014). However, accurately describing the urban qualities of the district and city of this study necessitates a composite of the sociohistorical and racial-political landscape; the clearly delineated proximity of poverty and privilege; and the "rich array of excellence, intellect, and talent among the people" (Milner, 2012a, p. 558) that is often disregarded in descriptions and reports of this complex urban environment.

With this complexity in mind, when the district administrators came to us with their concerns about student performance and teacher turnover, we committed to a socio-cultural conceptualization of urban education in designing our work. Within this context, we are collaborating in a 3 to 5-year longitudinal study to address the mismatch between teachers and students and the implementation of CBP.

To further understand our context, the teacher candidates enrolled in the partnering university are predominantly female. Table 1 displays the gender composition of teacher candidates across years in all disciplines throughout the university programs, demographics that are consistent with national averages (NCES, 2018). Similarly, Table 2 displays demographics by race that also follow along national norms (NCES, 2018). However, Table 3 illustrates that the partnering school district enrolls a student body that is almost 90% students of color with a teacher workforce of over 70% identifying as white,

Table 1. Urban Education Teacher Candidate Demographics by Gender and Year.

Academic year	Female (%)	Male (%)
12–13	74	26
13–14	71	29
14–15	73	27
15–16	76	24

Note. In percentages.

Table 2. Urban Education Teacher Candidate Demographics by Race and Year.

Academic year	White (%)	Of Color (%)
12–13	84	16
13–14	79	21
14–15	84	16
15–16	75	25

Note. In percentages.

Table 3. Urban School District Teacher-Student Demographics.

Teachers 2015 to 2016		Students 2015 to 2016	
White (%)	Of Color (%)	White (%)	Of Color (%)
71.3	28.7	11.5	88.5

Note. In percentages.

demographics that reinforce the need for a more diverse, culturally competent teacher workforce.

The intent of the broader study is to align CBP, curriculum, and dispositions between the school district and the university with the ultimate intent of fostering CBP and diversifying the teacher workforce. To begin such an endeavor, we conducted this literature review to guide us in exploring the language used to identify, understand, and describe our culturally-based work.

A Critical Discourse Perspective

In the past several decades, educational researchers have drawn from critical discourse frameworks to more fully understand issues centered on the

relationship of language, education, and society (Rogers et al., 2005). We draw from a critical discourse framework to conceptualize, understand, and determine our stance regarding the language of CBP. A critical discourse analysis (CDA) presumes language use is a social undertaking wherein social and linguistic structures are deeply connected. We aligned our perspective with language use at a macro level to consider the social context in which the language of CBP has been fostered (van Dijk, 2006), and the ways that language, beliefs, and power merge to influence the social construction of meaning (Gee, 2011; Orelus, 2017). According to Wodak and Meyer (2015), discourse is "so socially consequential, it gives rise to important issues of power" (p. 6). This critical discourse perspective provided us with an understanding of language and ideology as concerted acts (Mullett, 2018; van Dijk, 2006; Wodak, 2001) that are significantly impacted by the historical and sociocultural context in which they occur. All discourse has a nuanced historical orientation with which no absolute interpretation can be made (Wodak & Meyer, 2015). A critical approach is necessary in the context of language dominance, privileged speakers, and hegemonic forces, because expressions of language are never neutral, and they are greatly impacted by time and place (Gee, 2011; Orelus, 2017; Wodak & Meyer, 2015). We consider the issues of power and language dominance in more depth in the discussion section.

We chose a macro level critical discourse position to develop an understanding of our role as teacher educators within a highly-charged sociopolitical context (Orelus, 2017). In reviewing the scholarship, we took a qualitative analysis approach to recognize and reflect upon our role in choosing language deemed valuable for this study. A critical discourse lens provided us a framework to evaluate the cross-sectional link between the dominance of the educational institution and its role in creating acceptable terms and mores for educators in an urban setting (Carey, 2013). In doing so, we maintained a constant awareness of the power relationship that exists when we position ourselves as the "speakers" and our audience as the "listeners" (van Dijk, 2007). A critical discourse framework is a qualitative methodological match within the urban context because of the way this approach views discourse as highly consequential to the social constructs that give rise to power structures both inside and outside school (Milner, 2012b).

Methods

To understand variations in terminology, their derivation in meaning, and their adherence to philosophies regarding CBP, we reviewed current and/or

foundational research on CBP. The steps aligned with Mullett (2018) who summarized key frameworks of CDA posited by scholars such as Fairclough (2001); van Dijk (1993); Wodak (2001). According to Mullett (2018), this framework "outlines a set of objectives in broad terms, giving the analyst space to select methods that best fit the scope and goals of the research problem" (p. 123).

Literature Search

During the first stage of the critical discourse framework—selecting a discourse—our general search of *culturally-based pedagogy* led primarily to U.S. research journals. Although we value a pluralistic viewpoint, we were drawn to U.S. publications that addressed the locality and context of our work. Teacher education journals that focused on urban education, educational equity, justice, and diversity were given preference in our search, because we felt they would provide articles that addressed our own educational context and help us clarify the terms we would use in our study.

Once the discourse was selected, we engaged in the second stage of the framework by locating and preparing our data sources through a search of primary terms that included *culturally responsive pedagogy*, *culturally relevant pedagogy*, *culturally responsive practices*, and *culturally relevant practices* - terms that we knew were being used by the leading scholars in the field. We also decided on these search terms based on the terminology used by our school district partners and in our own university teacher education program. In addition to searching specific journals, we accessed the following databases: Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), Academic Search Elite-EBSCO Host, and Research Gate. All research studies concerning the topic of CBP, in some derivation mentioned above, were gathered for review with special focus given to articles published between 2008 and the present and older publications considered generative, foundational, or influential to the field. During the second stage, we identified 127 articles that exhibited culturally-based instruction. Employing our CDA lens, we asked each other "How are issues of equity and power represented in this article?" This questioning process established our commitment to a critical framework that moved us beyond structural and surface discourse to identify and analyze language that interrogated hierarchies of power and systems of inequity (Mullett, 2018; van Dijk, 2006).

Based on our ongoing conversations during the second stage, where we read titles and abstracts of the articles, we selected 61of the 127 articles as the third stage of the study. As part of our discourse, we could not separate the educational context from the historical, sociocultural, and political context

Table 4. Summary of Search Terms.

Primary search terms	Secondary search terms
Culturally responsive pedagogy	Culturally sustainable practices
Culturally relevant pedagogy	Culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy
Culturally responsive practices	Reality pedagogy
Culturally relevant practices	Multicultural education
	Spiritually responsive pedagogy
	Critical culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy
	Culturally sustaining civic engagement pedagogy

(Milner & Lomotey, 2014; Noguera, 2014; Welsh & Swain, 2020), because we acknowledge that the urban education lens embodies what happens both inside and outside of schools (Milner, 2012b; Milner & Lomotey, 2014; Noguera, 2014). Thus, we chose articles that introduced, referenced, and defined language of CBP in terms of power and equity across time.

These conversations led to the fourth stage in our process, where we identified overarching themes among the texts. These discussions revealed definitions and re-imaginings of CBP, which prompted us to return to our literature search to broaden our conceptualization. Additional terms were chosen based on discussions we had about the implementation of CBP specifically in teacher education. These terms are outlined in Table 4 to illustrate how we moved from the broader, foundational theories that brought us to the generative and dynamic terms. The fifth and sixth stages of our process formed the analysis.

Literature Analysis

In our analysis of the literature, we examined the external and internal discourse factors found in each of the selected texts. We considered how the social context and practices (Milner, 2012a; Noguera, 2014) informed the text (external) and examined the language for indications of the text objectives (internal). Through this process, we identified emerging sub-categories that included:

- Culturally sustaining, -relevant, -empowering, or -responsive pedagogy;
- Dimensions of culturally responsive pedagogy;
- Cultural competence (or socio-political consciousness or critical consciousness);
- Asset-based cultural competence; culturally responsive pedagogy and academic achievement;

- Culturally responsive standards and school districts;
- Culturally responsive pedagogy and professional development;
- New teacher identity, efficacy, and alignment to diversity;
- Experienced teacher identity, efficacy and alignment to diversity; and
- Demographics in alignment with university-school district partnerships.
- These subcategories guided us in determining the context in which specific terminology was used. Once the subcategories were established, topics were randomly assigned to two researchers who read the complete article to discern the language themes that emerged. The researchers made annotations to share with each other, exploring where and how articles supported or illustrated trends in the subcategories. From there, we convened for a series of weekly meetings over an academic semester to engage in critical conversations about the language and terminology of CBP. These sessions provided the space to interrogate how our positionalities as researchers influenced our coding and interpretation of the texts. Further, these conversations provided the basis from which our analysis of the social, historical, and political orientations of culturally-based terminology occurred, leading to the emergence of our findings. All articles and notes were stored in a shared, digital repository.

Limitations

Our intent was to review relevant literature on CBP to inform our teacher development research and practice. One of the limitations of this approach is that research and practices describing CBP are numerous. Consequently, it was not possible to capture all the nuanced language used to describe CBP, because some research that addresses CBP may not have been labeled as such. Thus, the authors may not have collected and reviewed literature with divergent identifying language. We also recognize that within the scope of this study, we have not captured all the existing forms of language to address the spectrum of discourse and dynamic definitions existing across urban education (Milner, 2012a; Welsh & Swain, 2020). Since a systematic review of all relevant literature was bound by the researchers' choices, we acknowledge the likelihood that existing pertinent literature was excluded.

The search was also limited to main journals publishing educational research, because we considered these journals to be strong representations of how CBP was developing as a field of study. Lastly, we value an ethos of inclusivity, cultural pluralism, and the wealth of global knowledge; however,

we focused on research based in the U.S. because of the relevancy of the U.S. context to our larger study.

Findings

Through our process, we found elements that illustrated what matters in the goal to understand the language of culturally-based teaching. Findings indicate the discourse of CBP relies upon: (a) the exploration of the construct of *culture*, (b) the knowledge of the socio-historical context of specific terminology, and (c) a perspective that discourse is generative and dynamic.

The Construct of "Culture"

Scholarship shows that effective urban teachers require an understanding of the cultural context of their students' lives (Dixson et al., 2014; Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Morris, 2004); however, our findings confirm that there are broad interpretations as to how culture is identified and incorporated into teaching practices. According to Paris and Alim (2017), "Understanding what counts as culture in theorizations of teaching and learning is particularly important, as culturally relevant and equity-oriented pedagogies are often misunderstood and taken up in ways that diverge from their original intent" (p. 252). Thus, we examined the literature for how the concept of culture is represented in teacher education.

Culture has been defined broadly as the learned language, beliefs, values, and behaviors infused into every aspect of our lives (Evans & Gunn, 2011). Banks (2006) uses a definition of culture that includes "aspects of a person's identity such as race, religion, language, sexual orientation, gender, and social class" (Banks, 2006, as quoted in Evans and Gunn, 2011, p. 2).

Conversely, Hammond (2015) defines culture as the "way that every brain makes sense of the world . . . to turn everyday happenings into meaningful events" (p. 22). Hammond distinguishes between three levels of culture: surface, shallow, and deep. Surface and shallow levels relate to accepted daily rules and traditions. Deep culture embodies our funds of knowledge (Moll & González, 1994) that are based on lived histories and cultural knowledge and skills essential for family and community well-being.

Howard (2019) states that culture matters because it influences and determines daily living, mediating human behavior in complex and misunderstood ways. Gay (2002) reinforces the importance of understanding culture. She asserts, "Culture encompasses many things, some of which are more important for teachers to know than others because they have direct implications for teaching and learning" (Gay, 2002, p. 107). According to Gay (2002), the

"many things" that have direct implications include an ethnic group's cultural values, traditions, communication, learning styles, contributions, and relational patterns.

Sleeter (2018) details various views of culture across the years. She explains that anthropologist Ward Goodenough (1976) defined culture as "the concepts, beliefs, and principles of action and organization that . . . could be attributed successfully to the members of that society" (p. 4 as quoted in Sleeter, 2018). Sleeter (2018) reports that white teachers often fail to see themselves as cultural beings, identify what white culture entails, and think culture is a concept brought into the U.S. from other countries. Zygmunt-Fillwalk and Clark (2007) document that white, female preservice teachers view culture as a phenomenon unique to "minority groups." Similarly, Ladson-Billings (1994) observes that teachers often "believe that culture is what other people have . . . [and because their] own cultural backgrounds remain unexamined, they have no way to challenge their intrinsic assumptions" (pp. 131–132). Correspondingly, Love (2019) sees culture as a "group's knowledge production process that occurs as they understand and respond to their reality and create ways of being to survive or thrive" in the everyday world (p. 128).

Paris and Alim (2017) interrogate perceptions of culture and how those perceptions affect teaching practices within "nondominant communities" (p. 249). They caution that a limited understanding of culture contributes to "narrow conceptions of learning, resulting in reductive frameworks evident across scholarship that grow out of very different sensibilities, intellectual traditions, and political aims" (Paris & Alim, 2017, p. 249). Paris and Alim (2017) propose a pedagogical approach that seeks to sustain culture and works to reclaim what was lost to marginalized communities. They state, "a notion of culture that expects regularity, variance and change helps us resist the dichotomies that are too often employed in studying, teaching, and understanding the practices of cultural communities and their members" (p. 251).

Our findings suggest that defining culture is highly dependent on the perceptions of those who shape the language used to define the construct of culture, and definitions of culture are powerfully impacted by the influences of the cultural context in which the defining occurs. Given the importance of understanding the term *culture* with respect to the implementation of CBP in student learning (Howard, 2019; Paris & Alim, 2017), the varying definitions of culture present in our field (Gay, 2002; Hammond, 2015; Love, 2019; Paris & Alim, 2017), and the lack of understanding of culture (Sleeter, 2018), we realized the importance of acknowledging the value of these multiple perspectives in culturally-based educational work. In doing so, we sought to establish language that represented our local urban context and had promise

of directing our work in culturally-based teacher development. To better understand our conversation regarding CBP terminology, we present them in their socio-historical context.

The Relevance of the Socio-historical Context

The language of CBP is dependent upon and powerfully impacted by socio-cultural and political forces over time. Our second finding from this literature review illuminates the relevance of the socio-historical context in our examination of how the language of CBP has changed. We learned that the evolution of terminology happened because of the influences of time and place. We noticed that the language of certain frameworks was impacted by the socio-cultural and political events and discourse that preceded those frameworks. Although we did not set out to take a historical perspective in our implementation of this literature review, we found historical relevance was significant to our insight into the current culturally-based discourse in education.

It is documented that U.S. history is fraught with deficit and exclusionary language in descriptions of culturally and linguistically diverse groups of students (Giroux, 2015; Smitherman, 1977; Valencia, 1997), specifically ways in which the term *urban* is used synonymously with conditions of deficiency (Boutte & Johnson, 2014). In the time of the Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka (1954) legislation and the advent of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, deficit educational practices dominated classrooms. Paris (2012) states,

> Deficit approaches to teaching and learning, firmly in place prior to and during the 1960s and 1970s, viewed the languages, literacies, and cultural ways of being of many students and communities of color as deficiencies to be overcome in learning the demanded and legitimized dominant language, literacy, and cultural ways of schooling. (p. 93)

During this time, discourse emerged that focused on the experiences of students of color. Terminology associated with this work included the *intergroup relations movement, ethnic studies*, and *multiethnic education* (Nieto, 2017). In the 1970s, multicultural education evolved as a separate field "as a result of increased attention by African American and other scholars to the education of African American and other students of color who had long been poorly served by public schools" (Nieto, 2017, p. 1). Multicultural education grew out of the context of the Civil Rights movement that pushed issues of equity and racial and economic justice to the forefront (Banks, 2019). The tenets of multicultural education challenged and rejected deficit discourses that perceived children as *culturally deprived, culturally disadvantaged*, or as

living in a *culture of poverty*. Multicultural education has challenged deficit discourses, proving to be highly influential in addressing the needs of the diverse students who now attend K-12 schools in the almost 50 years that have followed (Banks, 2019; Nieto, 2017; Sleeter & Grant, 2009).

As shifts have occurred in the demographic, cultural, and linguistic landscape in public schools, so has the terminology and discourse surrounding instructional practices. Paris (2012) summarized the 1970s and 1980s as periods in time where difference approaches and resource pedagogies became the language of culturally-based work. Difference approaches recognized students' ways of knowing (i.e., languages, literacies, and culture) as equal, but different from, dominant Eurocentric teaching and learning approaches (Howard, 2019). Resource pedagogies challenged deficit perspectives to reconceptualize students' ways of knowing. Still, resource-oriented approaches often assume students' resources are the catalyst to accessing the dominant school culture. Emerging from the resource pedagogies' perspective is the work conceptualizing funds of knowledge (Moll & Gonzalez, 1994).

The discourse in the 1990s emphasized issues of equity and power. The work of Banks (1995) highlighted the notions of advocacy and change, which prompted the use of the term *transformation.* Banks' foundational and generative framing of multicultural education called for five dimensions: (1) content integration, where resources across cultures and disciplines are used for educational purposes; (2) knowledge construction, in which teachers support students to develop a critical mindset regarding assumptions about how and who influences the construction of knowledge; (3) prejudice reduction, that supports positive racial and ethnic attitudes within students; (4) equity pedagogy, where teachers use different teaching practices and styles to support the diverse student populations in their classrooms; and (5) empowering school culture and social structure, that brings the other four together to develop a healthy and safe educational environment for all its members. Multicultural education curriculum reform was a way to change the basic assumptions of the curriculum to guide students in "viewing concepts, issues, themes, and problems from several ethnic perspectives and points of view" (Banks, 1996, p. 246). Banks moved this discourse toward a social action approach, which emphasized goals of educating students for decision-making, social criticism, and social change. However, Banks (1995) argues that in implementing a multicultural education curriculum, most educators focus their work on content integration, asserting that they must progress beyond this starting point to the other dimensions. Banks' (1995) understanding that teachers need to be exposed to culturally-based teaching practices beyond just strategy development still holds true today.

In contrast to Banks' use of the term *transformation*, Nieto (2017) describes other re-conceptualizations of multicultural education that emerged during this time as *critical multicultural education* (Giroux, 1992; McCarthy, 1988), *critical multicultural transformation* (May, 1999; Sleeter, 1995), *revolutionary multiculturalism* (McLaren & Giroux, 1997), and *critical care* (Noddings, 1992). According to Nieto (2017), the 1990s inspired an emphasis on critical pedagogy and critical literacy.

The multicultural education reform period was the backdrop for the work of Ladson-Billings' *The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children*, which begins with a compelling socio-historical account to describe the urgency of placing culturally relevant pedagogy at the forefront in teacher practice. This scholarship emerged in a time when the discourse of deprivation began to change, but according to Ladson-Billings (1994), "the negative connotation remained" (p. 9). Ladson-Billings (1994), drawing on the tenets of critical pedagogy (Giroux & Simon, 1988), defined *culturally relevant pedagogy* as a method of teaching that "empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (pp. 16–17). To achieve an effective level of cultural knowledge, Ladson-Billings (1995) suggests a threefold pedagogical framework that includes (a) academic achievement, where students experience a rigorous but culturally appropriate curriculum and teachers have high expectations of them while employing critical, real-life examples relevant to learners; (b) cultural competence, where teachers and students learn about their cultures and encourage each other to explore other cultures to inform their learning; and (c) socio-political consciousness, where teachers use culturally relevant pedagogy effectively to build awareness of different cultural norms and values and cultivate the skills necessary to critique how society and its institutions appropriate culture to produce and maintain social inequities.

In agreement with Banks (1996), Ladson-Billings noted that "few have taken up the sociopolitical dimensions of the work, instead dulling its critical edge or omitting it altogether" (p. 77), with implementers altering her idea in unrecognizable ways. Thus, Ladson-Billings (2014) revisited her concept of culturally relevant pedagogy, acknowledging the need for her theory to develop more fully to one that "shifts, changes, adapts, recycles, and recreates instructional spaces to ensure that consistently marginalized students are repositioned into a place of normativity—that is, that they become subjects in the instructional process, not mere objects" (p. 76). Ladson-Billings found this shift in the work of Paris (2012), with a bow to his term *culturally sustaining pedagogy*, and in the work of McCarty and Lee (2014), with their concept of *culturally revitalizing pedagogy.* She felt that combined, both

concepts generate a dynamic *remix* of her own theory. Paris's and McCarty and Lee's work will be discussed more fully in the next section in relation to their "symbiotic relationship" (p. 83) to Ladson-Billings (2014).

These characteristics of culturally relevant pedagogy, rooted in the field of multicultural education (Banks, 1996; Nieto, 2017), are similar to the work of Gay (2002), Lee (2009), and Powell et al. (2016) that seeks to educate the whole child, empower students, transform educational practices, incorporate teaching practices that allow for multiple forms of expression, and create meaningful bridges between students' home and school.

The socio-historical and political context of the language of CBP is highly relevant as it carries the accounts of social and economic discrimination, separate-but-equal ideologies, substandard conditions, deficit paradigms, and exclusionary practices. We learned that the socio-historical aspects of discourse are vital to a genuine and comprehensive understanding of cultural work in teacher education.

A Generative and Dynamic Discourse

Since the introduction of culturally relevant pedagogy by Ladson-Billings (1994) and Banks' (1995) five dimensions of multicultural education, the idea of what constitutes CBP has been extended by various scholars because, as Ladson-Billings (2014) indicates, "our pedagogies must evolve to address the complexities of social inequalities" (p. 77). In our examination of the terminology used in research on CBP, we learned the significance of discourse as generative and dynamic. We use the term generative to identify the directionality of the discourse, that is, a discourse that continues to build on the robustness of a concept, approach, and philosophy of education that has the potential to impact the lives of students of all cultural, racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic dispositions. Although a variance is evident in the terms used to define CBP, the use of multiple terms has allowed researchers to broaden the dialogue surrounding what can be considered culturally responsive and how it can be practiced.

This robust and generative dialogue has expanded the opportunities for practitioners in teacher education to find nuanced applications of different approaches. We believe this dialogue is important, since each classroom and school community represents its own local context. We found that the different terms within the discourse do not represent attempts to challenge the validity of one approach over another or to create a value proposition between them. Rather, these perspectives have ignited a rich conversation that is still just beginning. This generative and dynamic quality of our finding was evident in the discourse that extends our thinking and shapes our language in teaching that is framed in the cultures of the learners.

For instance, Au and Kawakami (1994) supported the idea of *cultural congruence* that aims to make schooling a beneficial experience for diverse learners. Cultural congruence asserts that "students of diverse backgrounds often do poorly in school because of a mismatch between the culture of the school and the culture of the home [which provides students] less opportunity to learn [because instruction is presented in a way that is] inconsistent with the values and norms of their home culture" (Au & Kawakami, 1994, p. 6).

Building on Ladson-Billings' (1994) work, Gay (2002) defines *culturally responsive teaching* as "using the cultural characteristics, experiences and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively" (p. 106). Gay (2002) observes that academic knowledge will then be more personally meaningful. To successfully implement culturally responsive pedagogy, Gay (2002) asserts that educators must "acquire detailed factual information about the cultural particularities of specific ethnic groups . . . to make schooling more interesting and stimulating for, representative of, and responsive to ethnically diverse students" (p. 107).

Broadening Gay's (2002) concept, Hollie (2012) presented the idea of *culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy* as the "validation and affirmation of the home (indigenous) culture and home language for the purposes of building and bridging the student to success in the culture of academia and mainstream society" (Hollie, 2012, p. 23). Hollie (2012) expresses the need to emphasize the language aspect of culture, because there is "nothing more cultural about us as humans than the use of our home language" (p. 20).

Herrera et al. (2012) use the definition of *culturally responsive teaching* in alignment with Gay (2002), yet expand on it to go beyond culturally responsive pedagogy to also focus on students' language and linguistically responsive practices that would impact their success in classrooms. Herrera et al. (2012) assert that including students' cultural elements in classroom instruction strongly connects the culture and expectations of the school and the cultures that students bring to school experiences. Similarly, Lee (2009) developed *cultural modeling*, a framework connecting students with cultural text through higher order literary interpretation and criticism. Other scholars have examined culturally responsive practices through the creation of linguistically responsive teacher frameworks (Lucas & Villegas, 2011; Walqui, 2011), bi- and multilingual models of teacher development (Bauer & Gort, 2012; Faltis & Valdés, 2016; Valenzuela, 2016), and instructional paradigms for effective English language learning (Calderón et al., 2011; Echevarría et al., 2004).

Paris (2012) uses the term *culturally sustaining pedagogy* (CSP) as a response to Ladson-Billings' (1995) culturally relevant pedagogy. However, Paris (2012) argues that being culturally relevant does not go far enough, arguing that CSP "seeks to perpetuate and foster—to sustain—linguistic,

literate, and cultural pluralism as part of the democratic project of schooling" (p. 93). Taken further, CSP embraces "youth culture's counterhegemonic potential while maintaining a clear-eyed critique of the ways in which youth culture can also reproduce systemic inequalities" (Paris & Alim, 2014, p. 85). Paris and Alim (2017) observe that CSP "sees the outcome of learning as additive rather than subtractive" (p. 1) and sustains communities that have been marginalized by the current educational system.

Correspondingly, McCarty and Lee (2014) introduced the idea of *critical culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy*. This approach addresses "the sociohistorical and contemporary contexts of Native American schooling" (McCarty & Lee, 2014, p. 103). CSRP has three components (McCarty & Lee, 2014): attending directly to asymmetrical power relations and the goal of transforming legacies of colonization; recognizing the need to reclaim and revitalize what has been disrupted and displaced by colonization; and affirming the need for community-based accountability. Ladson-Billings (2014) finds their theory, along with Paris' (2012), an extension of her original concept of culturally relevant pedagogy—moving her ideas forward to reclaim and restore culture as in McCarty and Lee (2014), and to consider global identities that are hybrid, fluid, and complex as in Paris.

Hammond (2015) maintains that culturally responsive teaching is a powerful mindset that will help close the achievement gap (see Milner, 2010 for discussion on the opportunity gap). According to Hammond (2015) this type of teaching is one that builds relationships and uses "cultural knowledge as a scaffold to connect what the student knows to new concepts and content in order to promote effective information processing" (p. 15).

Comparatively, Emdin (2016) adapted aspects of culturally relevant pedagogy in his concept of *reality pedagogy*, which "focuses on privileging the ways that students make sense of the classroom while acknowledging that the teacher often has very different expectations about the classroom" (p. 30). Emdin (2016) asserts that the successful implementation of reality pedagogy focuses on teaching and learning beyond the physical walls of a school. For educators, this means exploring students' everyday lived experiences and observing practices and norms that can become foundational to teaching and learning. Another experiential dimension of CBP was put forward by Gist (2017), who sees a teacher's ability to incorporate students backgrounds to enhance their learning, with it becoming a "living organism that has the power to create anew and awake in the students' minds and hearts new possibilities" (pp. 289–290).

Further, Lingley (2016) introduced the concept of *spiritually responsive pedagogy*, which aims to build interconnections for a common good and support personal agency through spiritual resources, challenging "oppressive

schooling practices through the inclusion of marginalized epistemological and ontological perspectives. (p. 7) Correspondingly, *body-soul rooted pedagogy* (Sosa-Provencio et al., 2018) aims to use instructional practices to remedy wounds that have been afflicted upon the academic, psychological, emotional/spiritual well-being of marginalized communities, through the "wholeness of mind, body and spirit" (p.1).

Kuttner (2016), in a more macro view, introduces the notion of *culturally sustaining civic engagement pedagogy* that encourages educators to "value the civic skills, knowledge, and attitudes already embedded in youths' cultural communities as part of a broader project of redefining what it means to be a 'competent and responsible' member of a society . . . rather than promote a hegemonic view of the 'good citizen'" (p. 531).

The findings about generative and dynamic discourse in teacher education requires vigilance in understanding the socio-historical significance of the language we use and a recognition that we are working in the historical moments that will define future constructions of CBP. It is through these findings, defining culture, probing socio-historical contexts, and analyzing the generative and dynamic discourse of CBP that our work with our school district-university partnership was conducted.

Discussion

In our examination of the language used to describe CBP in teacher education, we found it important to first understand the construct of culture through critical discourse analysis. How could we base our work with an urban school district in culture if the construct was elusive to us (Leonardo & Hunter, 2007)? Initially, our researchers aimed for consensus. We set out to establish clearly delineated definitions of CBP, organizing frameworks to determine which ideology most closely suited our intentions. However, as Howard and Milner (2014) suggest, we learned that understanding the discourse is more complex due to the inconsistent and/or lack of shared vocabulary (Milner, 2012c) in researching teacher education for urban schools. The language of equity and justice has a history and evolution that made its way to the present because of many who fought for cultural, linguistic, and human rights (Nieto, 2017). We also learned that although we value a shared language, consensus felt absolute and limiting when constructing meaning (Gee, 2011; Orelus, 2017). The generative and dynamic qualities of the discourse of CBP broadens the possibilities for how pedagogy can be critically explored (Mullett, 2018; van Dijk, 2006; Wodak, 2001). Specifically, we focus on the utility and complexity in each of the schools in our larger study as we learn about the unique school communities within the larger *urban emergent* context.

Herein lies the essence of why CBP matters in the context of urban schools and remains relevant to *urban intensive, urban emergent*, and *urban characteristic* environments (Milner, 2012a). The physical, sociocultural, economic, and political shifts in the U.S. have created changes in learning environments resulting in a paradox (Howard & Milner, 2014) that illustrates "while urban schools and communities have witnessed the type of diversity that the United States supposedly cherishes, the manner in which children in urban schools have been served has been far from ideal" (p. 199). Moreover, the changes in urban schools are not solely about demographics. It is the trend toward racial and economic segregation occurring in cities that results in severe inequities and persistent deficit beliefs about urban schools and the students who attend them, trends that urban teachers need to understand to be effective (Dixson et al., 2014; Milner & Lomotey, 2014). This is why a critical look at the language we use about students and schools matters. Language evokes perceptions and meanings that lead to the ways individuals think about and interact with others (Gee, 2011; Orelus, 2017; Wodak & Meyer, 2015).

Through a critical discourse framework (van Dijk, 2006; Wodak & Meyer, 2015), we have examined the language of CBP to critically reflect on the language we employ in our school-university partnership that exists in a city widely described as the most racially and economically segregated city in the U.S. (Nelsen, 2015). CBP matters because the realities outside schools deeply impact what is happening within the schools (Milner, 2012b; Milner & Lomotey, 2014; Noguera, 2014). This understanding is essential to our commitment to CBP pedagogies that acknowledge the social, economic, and cultural localities of each school (Leonardo & Hunter, 2007).

To fully articulate why CBP matters in the urban context, we needed to understand the complexities of examining our language usage in supporting our schools and how that understanding reaches past our specific context. Alongside our findings, we noted cautionary conclusions from various critical scholars. Banks warns that often in his five dimensions of multiculturalism, most educators focus their work on the first dimension, content integration (Banks & Tucker, 1998). He asserts that implementers must progress beyond this starting point to the other key practices. Ladson-Billing (1994, 2014) echoes this concern in her work. Embodying culturally grounded practices means teachers are supported in the development of critical mindsets, bias reduction, and equity-oriented teaching, so that the school community is empowered to unsettle dominant norms and standards (Banks, 1996). The critical discourse framework guided us in identifying language that either perpetuates the dominance of the educational institution or appropriately disrupts the language persistent in deficit and

exclusionary perspectives. The former was revealed in ways that CBP has been misconceived (Ladson-Billings, 2014; Sleeter, 2011). The latter shows itself in the ways linguistic manifestations of power are revealed, so that interruptions can ensue. A critical discourse framework gave us an approach from which to explore the relationships between educational practices and social contexts, specifically related to assumptions about students, inequality in learning conditions, and oppressive teaching practices.

Sleeter (2011) cautions that CBP "is often understood in limited and simplistic ways" (p. 12), observing that interpretation and implementation of CBP further gets confused by the derivation in terms. Hollie (2012) parallels Sleeter's (2011) observations in contending that "the term culturally responsive teaching has become a cliché, buried in the grave of educational terms that are cast about like ghosts in books, state mandates, district initiatives, and conference themes" (p. 18). Hollie (2012) adds that culturally responsive teaching has "superficial interpretations [which have led to] obscure attempts at implementation in districts, schools, and classrooms" (pp. 18–19). These observations lead Hollie (2012) to push the field to "agree upon one term and one meaning" (pp. 18–19). We share the desire for a collective discourse that will strengthen the efforts of culturally-based work; however, we will unlikely compromise the value of multiple perspectives that extend our thinking and push us to consider emerging critical frameworks. The dynamic discourse urges us to constantly consider the shifting socio-political and economic conditions and challenges us to continue reflecting on who is benefiting and whose knowledge is holding the most merit.

Extending why CBP matters is the deeper discussion in urban environments (Milner, 2012a) and consideration should be made as to how the constructs of culture, urban education, and culturally-based practices have shifted alongside the ever-changing demographics. Our findings demonstrate that the space and locale of learning environments are essential in the ways CBP is understood and implemented. Beyond this construct of space and locale and through our critical discourse analysis, we have found that the transformation of language matters (van Dijk, 2006; Wodak & Meyer, 2015). We acknowledge the significance of the evolution of CBP from scholar to scholar across time. Yet, it is not enough to recognize and interrogate the language of CBP. We have learned to ask how the language of CBP and urban education–two terms grappling with identity, each difficult to define—have transformed (Leonardo & Hunter, 2007; van Dijk, 2006). The findings from this literature review will contribute to how we operationalize CBP within our school-university partnership throughout this research project and how it reflects on our understanding of urban (Milner, 2012a).

Concluding Thoughts and Next Steps

We needed to understand the construct of culture and the historical, sociocultural, and political weight that the language of CBP carries. This process informs our work with the school district that has invited us to build a professional community of learners to foster culturally-based practices. It is not our role as teacher educators and researchers to establish and dictate the language that describes the culturally-based practices within schools, nor is it the administrator's role who recruited us to apply for our grant. Yet, as researchers and teacher educators we can generate an understanding of how existing language intersects with the declarations and intentions of the school partners. Writing this literature review has given us a platform from which to reflect on and articulate a framework that deepens the conversation. As a result, our study has revealed three important considerations.

First, in attempting to apply our ideas across our university education programs and district partner, we came to an understanding of terms that most accurately described our work. However, through the act of creating this literature review, we came to realize that we could not impose our understanding of CBP on others doing similar work. How cultural work is defined can only happen when the voices of the cultural group being described are at the forefront. It is only through these voices that the language of culturally-based educational work can be realized. In trying to find the terms that best identified what we would be enacting, we realized the localized nature of designing CBP. Therefore, we understand that the construct of culture is dynamic and must be analyzed and enacted through a localized, community-based lens. Hence, CBP is understood in a variety of ways that can affect individual classrooms, educators and student(s), schools, and districts.

Second, as we studied the terminology used to characterize CBP, we could not ignore the language that is used to describe students, families, and communities. We noted the deficit and exclusionary language that has been used throughout the decades of research we examined. We reflected on language and ideology as concerted acts (van Dijk, 2006; Wodak, 2001) and the ways that terms of marginalization continue to be routine in educational programs, policy, and research. Terms of deficiency (*minority, struggling, limited*), nomenclature of partiality (*English learner, free and reduced*), demonstrative adjectives of otherness (*these* children, *those* families), and blatant omissions of participant groups are persisting. Paris (2019) cautions, "Educational research often name people and communities not as they are but as the academy needs them to be along damaging logics of erasure and deficiency" (p. 217). We continue to grapple with the designations used to describe the communities of learners in our work, and we understand our

language encounters as opportunities to deepen understandings of others, especially in the discourse related to effective practices, achievement disparities, standardization, and teacher evaluations that greatly impact urban schools (Milner & Lomotey, 2014).

Finally, in writing this review of literature we came to understand the need for larger studies that examine how CBP is implemented in classroom interactions. Sleeter (2011) argues that research in teacher education needs to address the strengthening of culturally responsive pedagogy to "further an agenda [that] must clearly articulate the nature of culture as it is lived every day and relationships between culture and learning, as well as forms of racism that continue to perpetuate achievement disparities" (p. 20).

With Sleeter's directive in mind, the authors of this review, in collaboration with the teacher educators at our university and the teacher leaders across the partner school district, move forward in a 3 to 5-year longitudinal study that addresses the following goals: (a) Align university programs and personnel to culturally-based instructional framework; (b) Work alongside educators in our partnership to create and sustain environments that "reclaim and restore" (McCarty & Lee, 2014) cultural ways of knowing that are central to learning in urban environments; and (c) Utilize culturally-based professional development practice centers to recruit, develop, and retain educators that effectively meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse learners.

This review of literature marks our move forward with our district partners to engage in an examination that seeks to understand the most effective means to align and develop the critical consciousness at both the university and school district concerning CBP in urban learning environments. Moreover, we acknowledge that, in taking on the work of this study, we must be mindful of the power dynamic already institutionalized in the schools in which we will be working and how those power dynamics may alter or attempt to control our intentions.

To accomplish this, we are working with the school district to support the creation of 12 professional development schools focused on studying and implementing culturally-based teaching practices, which are led by teacher leaders within each school. This larger research project encompasses an extensive and multidimensional approach to examining culturally-based pedagogical practices in teacher education. In agreement with Sleeter (2011), we believe there is much work to be done to determine what effective CBP looks like in classrooms and how it connects to equitable practices that improve student learning, not only in the U.S., but across the globe. This literature review has given us a perspective on language from which our work can begin.

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Note

1. Throughout this research, we use the nomenclature "students of color," "children of color" or "teacher of color" to refer to K-12 students and teachers who identify as Black, Latinx, Asian, Pacific Islander, Indigenous People, children of mixed heritage, and other forms of identity that indicate the diverse populations attending and working in U.S. schools. We have chosen these terms over others such as "non-white" or "minorities" that denote a deficit perspective and perpetuate notions of white as the standard or the dominant culture.

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