Teacher Candidates' Culturally Responsive Teaching Self-Efficacy and Attributional Development: A Multi-Methods Study

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Abstract

The need for educators to utilize culturally responsive pedagogy to support culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) student populations is critical. This research examines the formation of teacher candidates' culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy (CRTSE) and attributional beliefs for teaching CLD learners. Findings inform existing research on teachers' CRTSE beliefs and attributional development as we identify areas for improving educator preparation programs (EPP) and discuss recommendations for transformative institutional change aligned with the Association of Teacher Educators (ATE) teaching standards, which support the need for EPPs to develop teacher candidates' capacity to create inclusive learning opportunities for culturally, socially, and linguistically diverse students. This research also contributes to this professional literature by examining the formation of teacher candidates' CRTSE and attributional beliefs for teaching CLD learners and identifies areas of improvement regarding social justice principles and the application of cultural competence in EPP coursework and practicum experiences.

Keywords: self-efficacy, attribution theory, culturally responsive/culturally relevant teaching

The need for educators to utilize culturally relevant/responsive pedagogies (CRPs) to teach and support diverse student populations is well documented in seminal literature (Banks & Banks, 2019; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2009). This call to action is also reflected in teaching standards, like the Association of Teacher Educators' (ATE) Standards for Teacher Educators,

which delineate the importance of the application of "cultural competence and [promotion] of social justice" (ATE, 2008, p. 4). Likewise, many education colleges include the importance of preparing educational professionals to work with and support diverse student populations in their mission and vision statements.

The stagnant demographics of a majority White teaching force in relation to an increasingly diverse K–12 student population in the United States makes this call to action more critical. Education in the United States, including teacher education, has been constructed on White Eurocentric norms for a predominantly White teaching field, and thus, by design, diverse student populations are denied equal access (Matias & Aldern, 2019). Theoretical approaches to educational pedagogy and practice like CRP seek to intentionally address the "educational debt" that diverse student populations have been burdened with because of inequitable education practices based on assimilationist and deficit mindsets about culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) student populations (Ladson-Billings, 2006).

Deficit perspectives lead teachers to approach cultural and linguistic differences as something to be fixed, and thus, they begin to insist that all students learn to conform to traditional Eurocentric standards in education (Gay, 2014). CRP is a "pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural references to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (Ladson-Billings, 2021, p. 4). CRP is not an exhaustive checklist of strategies but a dispositional approach to pedagogy and teaching that must be consistently developed.

Ladson-Billings (2017) detailed the importance of "leverage points" (admissions, prior to student teaching, certification) in educator preparation programs (EPPs) to ensure that teacher candidates (TCs) are developing the necessary knowledge, skills, and dispositions and thus are

prepared to work with diverse populations of students. However, Siwatu (2011) emphasized that "assisting prospective teachers [to] develop the knowledge and skills associated with culturally responsive teaching may not [alone] accurately predict their future classroom behavior" (p. 360). Weiner's attributional theory (1985) can also provide insight into how TCs attribute their successes and failures in teaching CLD learners to internal factors (e.g., knowledge, teaching skills) or external factors (e.g., students' backgrounds, language barriers). Analyzing attributions can reveal whether TCs hold optimistic (persistence and effort) or pessimistic (discouragement and avoidance) beliefs about their ability to teach CLD learners. Thus, this research focuses on executing said knowledge and skills and examines the formation of TCs' culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy (CRTSE) and attributional beliefs for teaching CLD learners. Findings inform existing research on teachers' CRTSE beliefs and attributional development as we identify areas for improving EPPs and discuss recommendations for transformative institutional change.

Theoretical Framework

It is common to see words like "social justice," "diversity," and "CRP" included in the mission statements of EPPs. Sleeter (2017) suggested that although many EPPs claim to center diversity and equity, they lack the curriculum, pedagogy, and practical experience to develop race-conscious educators. Studies indicate that many EPPs rely on stand-alone courses and or diverse field experiences to prepare their TCs to meet the needs of diverse students and/or satisfy accreditation mandates (Ladson-Billings, 2000). Chaplin (2019) stated that "the abundance of curricular materials that emphasize acceptance and tolerance while deemphasizing critical analysis is problem posing and just one example of how the transformative power of multicultural education can be muted by the dominant narrative for tolerance" (p. 151).

Ladson-Billings (1995) defined culturally relevant pedagogy as "a theoretical model that not only addresses student achievement but also helps students to accept and affirm their cultural identity while developing critical perspectives that challenge inequities that schools (and other institutions) perpetuate" (p. 469). Thus, to develop as culturally relevant practitioners, TCs must have the opportunity to engage in the following continuous process in their EPPs: (1) acquisition of a knowledge base, (2) participation in transformative dialogue about educational practices, and (3) participation in self-analysis (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Thus, development as a culturally relevant practitioner requires an ongoing commitment and engagement in this process of seeking out opportunities to develop knowledge, engage in transformational practices, self-reflect, and then repeat the process; this engagement must be taught and facilitated in EPPs for TCs to engage in it on their own throughout their careers. To gain insight into how TCs view and ascribe their abilities, successes, and failures as developing culturally relevant practitioners, we examined the literature on CRTSE and attributional theory.

Culturally Responsive Teaching Self-Efficacy

CRTSE, extrapolated from Bandura's (1977) seminal research on self-efficacy (SE), is rooted in social cognitive theory. Bandura identified that cognitive factors affect behavior regulation and that SE and outcome expectations (Bandura, 1977, 1986) form expectancy behaviors. Bandura (1977, 1986, 1997) posited that effective functioning is based on more than knowledge and skill (which are inadequate predictors of future behavior). He asserted that the belief in one's ability to execute the action required to achieve the optimal result—or a sense of SE—is required to access and utilize the needed skills. Bandura put forth four sources that informed efficacy beliefs: mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and

emotional/psychological state. These same four sources form the expectancy behaviors of CRTSE.

When a TC's perception of their confidence to execute specific teaching practices is also supported by teachers who have demonstrated expertise in CRP, they can develop high CRTSE (Siwatu, 2007, 2011). When inculcating CRTSE, as in Bandura's (1977) efficacy study, mastery (or performance) experience is the most influential element, followed by vicarious or observational experience through watching a teacher or mentor successfully utilize the pedagogy. CRP is a process of doing; thus, engaging TCs in culturally responsive teaching practices during their EPP is paramount in building TC (SE). When a TC observes CRP (Knoblauch & Chase, 2015) and discerns which responses are appropriate in which settings (Dulany, 1968), there is an increase in their perception of their abilities.

Providing TCs with practicum and field experiences that mirror today's classrooms can impact their attitudes and beliefs (Groulx, 2001), especially when they are supported and mentored by those who provide course curricula and artifacts (Siwatu, 2007) representative of a multicultural environment. Kalchman (2015) maintained that vicarious modeling of CRP for TCs increased confidence in instructing CLD learners. Verbal persuasion in the form of positive feedback from teacher education faculty, cooperating teachers, and practicum supervisors may increase TCs' sense of CRTSE (Bandura, 1977; Siwatu, 2007). High-SE individuals are more likely to be more persistent and open themselves up to new learning opportunities and situations when facing a challenging problem (Bandura, 1993, 1997), which is vital to acknowledge as CRTSE considers TCs' prior interactions with diverse populations and engagement in the continuous process of development as a culturally responsive educator (Siwatu, 2007).

Attribution Theory

In trying to determine the success or failure of something, people turn to themselves and their surroundings for explanations (Forsyth, 1980; Weiner, 1985, 2000, 2010). Weiner (1985) posited there are myriad causal explanations within any activity. The results of actions depend on intrapersonal and environmental factors (Collins et al., 1974; Heider, 1958; Rotter, 1966) that are both constant and fluid (Weiner, 2010) and are affected by controllability (Rosenbaum, 1972; Weiner, 2000, 2010). The perceived causes of a person's success or failure share three common properties: locus, stability, and controllability, with intentionality (the contrast between effort and strategy) and globality as other possible causal structures (Weiner, 1985). According to Weiner (1985, 2000, 2010), preservice teachers' causal attributions about their cultural awareness can predict their knowledge and praxis for teaching CLD learners.

To gain insight into TCs' perception of their abilities, SE, and attributional beliefs, this article's researchers constructed this study utilizing Bandura's (1977) SE framework in conjunction with attributional theory (Weiner, 1985, 2000, 2010) and Siwatu's (2007) culturally responsive teaching competencies. Researchers have posited that exploring SE and attribution theory concerning abilities as a culturally responsive educator gives a more cohesive representation of the experiences and perceptions of TCs and can provide recommendations to inform the transformation of CRTSE in educator preparation programs. The research questions framing the study and data analysis were:

RQ1. How confident are TCs in their ability to implement culturally responsive pedagogies?

RQ2. How do TCs perceive their CRTSE and attributional beliefs for CLD learners?

Method

The researchers used an explanatory multi-methods design. During Phase I, quantitative data were collected to examine the nature of TCs' CRTSE. Follow-up interviews were conducted during Phase II to collect qualitative data from a subsample of five volunteers selected from Phase I TCs to identify their CRTSE-forming experiences and the perceived influence these experiences had on the development of their CRTSE and attributional beliefs for teaching CLD learners. Purposeful sampling was used to engage the Phase II TCs in semi-structured interviews to determine how TCs believed their EPP influenced their CRTSE and attributional beliefs related to working with CLD learners (RQ2).

Context

The data for this study were elicited from TCs enrolled in a university-based, clinically intensive, competency-based EPP in the southwestern United States. In addition to pursuing a generalist early childhood–sixth grade certification, TCs were also enrolled in a Special Populations course sequence, which include six required courses focused on competency-based standards for supplemental certifications in English as a second language, special education, and bilingual education. TCs enrolled in the EPP must complete (1) the required content area methods courses (mathematics, literacy, social studies, and science), (2) a Special Populations course (SPC) sequence (18 credit hours), (3) a year-long clinical teaching residency, and (4) required state content pedagogical and specialty certification exams.

Participants

The sample consisted of 70 senior-level TCs majoring in elementary (n = 65), middle-level (n = 4), and secondary (n = 1) education. Phase I TCs (n = 70) included 66 females and four males. TCs' race/ethnicity included: 57% indicated they were non-White (e.g., Mexican,

Asian, or African American), and 43% stated they were White. Phase II included Phase I volunteers (*n* = 5).

Phase I Data Sources and Data Collection

During Phase I, we administered the CRTSE scale. The CRTSE scale aims to elicit information regarding teachers' efficacy in executing specific teaching practices and tasks associated with teachers who have adopted a CRP (Siwatu, 2007). The CRTSE scale was created based on an in-depth literature review and later validated through a pilot study (Siwatu, 2007). The scale consisted of 40 Likert-type items that required TCs to rate their confidence in their ability to engage in specific CRT practices. To determine how confident TCs are in their ability to implement CRPs (RQ1), TCs' responses to each of the 40 items were summed to generate a total score. TCs with higher scores on the CRTSE scale were more self-confident than those with lower scores who were less self-confident in working with diverse learners. The CRTSE scale was administered in March 2022 during the final semester of the TCs' EPP and the second semester of their year-long clinical placement.

Phase II Data Sources and Data Collection

Purposeful sampling was used to engage five volunteer TCs from Phase I using semi-structured interview questions (Appendix A) to determine how TCs believed their EPP influenced their CRTSE and attributional beliefs related to working with CLD learners (RQ2). Qualitative researchers intentionally sought individuals who could best speak to the research problem being investigated and, because they interacted with TCs while collecting data, the sample size was small (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) to provide opportunities to collect information-rich and relevant data (Patton, 2015, p. 169). The Phase II TCs were valuable in

helping answer RQ2 because they were currently enrolled in an EPP that emphasized CRPs in coursework and clinical experiences.

We utilized grounded theory analysis (Glazer & Strauss, 1967) to analyze the data through inductive, iterative coding that allowed for pattern matching and inculcation of themes. We each compared codes to establish intercoder reliability. Table 1 provides the Phase II TC demographics. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in May 2022 during the final semester of the TCs' EPP and at the end of their year-long clinical placement.

Table 1

Phase II TC Demographics

Participant Pseudonyms	Gender	Ethnicity	Age	School Setting	Grade Level
Ana	Female	Hispanic	18–25	Urban Elementary K–5 Campus	2nd
Bora	Female	Asian	18–25	Urban Elementary K–5 Campus	4th
John	Male	White/non-Hispanic	18–25	Urban Middle School Campus	7th
Beth	Female	White/non-Hispanic	18–25	Urban Elementary PK–3 Campus	K
Marta	Female	Hispanic	26–30	Urban Elementary K–5 Campus	2nd

Results

Descriptive analysis was used to identify patterns, relationships, and trends of the Phase I data to determine how confident TCs are in implementing culturally responsive pedagogies (RQ1). Thematic analysis was used to identify and interpret data patterns and themes of Phase II data to determine how TCs perceive their CRTSE and attributional beliefs for CLD learners (RQ2).

Phase I Descriptive Analysis

TCs' CRTSE means were high in their ability to build relationships with their students: "build a sense of trust in my students" (M = 95.01, SD = 8.54), "help students feel like important members of the classroom" (M = 94.64, SD = 9.05), and "develop a personal relationship with my students" (M = 93.15, SD = 12.70). TCs' CRTSE scale results were also high in items related to their ability to learn about students' interests: "determine whether my students like to work alone or in a group" (M = 91.11, SD = 11.93), "obtain information regarding my students' academic interests" (M = 91.75, SD = 12.84) , "use the interests of my students to make learning meaningful for them" (M = 91.89, SD = 12.91), "implement cooperative learning activities for those students who like to work in groups" (M = 92.79, SD = 16.58) "use the learning preference inventory to gather data about how my students like to learn" (M = 90.06, SD = 14.73), and "determine whether my students feel comfortable competing with other students" (M = 97.78, SD = 14.63). Items related to curriculum design and assessment for CLD learners had means of 89 or lower: "identify ways that standardized tests may be biased towards linguistically diverse students" (M = 88.43, SD = 13.89), "critically examine the curriculum to determine whether it reinforces negative cultural stereotypes" (M = 88.42, SD = 15.03), and "design a lesson that shows how other cultural groups have made use of mathematics" (M = 89.00, SD =

14.44). Furthermore, items related to parent communication also had means of 89 or lower: “communicate with parents regarding their child’s educational progress” (M = 88.94, SD = 16.74) and “structure parent–teacher conferences so that the meeting is not intimidating” (M = 89.60, SD = 16.06). Item-specific means were lowest among the critical components, including “use strategies to minimize the effects of the mismatch between home culture and school culture” (M = 85.81, SD = 16.67), “adapt instruction to meet the needs of my students” (M = 87.18, SD = 14.76), and “revise instructional material to include a better representation of cultural groups” (M = 87.72, SD = 19.01). TCs in this study had a mean score of 3585.01 (SD = 475.93). High scores on the CRTSE scale indicate a greater efficacy for engaging in specific instructional and noninstructional tasks associated with culturally responsive teaching. The scores for TCs in this study ranged from 1365 to 4000. Table 2 includes the means and standard deviations for the CRTSE scale.

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations for Items on the CRTSE Scale

Items	***M***	**SD**
(1) Adapt instruction to meet the needs of my students	87.18	14.76
(2) Obtain information about my students’ academic strengths	87.42	14.65
(3) Determine whether my students like to work alone or in a group	91.11	11.93
(4) Determine whether my students feel comfortable competing with other students	97.78	14.63
(5) Identify ways that the school culture (e.g., values, norms, and practices) is different from my students’ home culture	88.11	14.26
(6) Implement strategies to minimize the effects of the mismatch between my students’ home culture and the school culture	85.81	16.67
(7) Assess student learning using various types of assessments	91.21	17.32
(8) Obtain information about my students’ home life	87.57	16.93
(9) Build a sense of trust in my students	95.01	8.54

(10) Establish positive home–school relations	90.03	13.29
(11) Use a variety of teaching methods	90.69	12.53
(12) Develop a community of learners when my class consists of students from diverse backgrounds	90.60	13.58
(13) Use my students' cultural backgrounds to help make learning meaningful	89.67	13.16
(14) Use my students' prior knowledge to help them make sense of new information	89.75	14.97
(15) Identify ways how students communicate at home may differ from the school norms	97.76	14.86
(16) Obtain information about my students' cultural background	93.18	21.06
(17) Teach students about their cultures' contributions to science	92.36	21.65
(18) Greet English language learners with a phrase in their native language	88.19	16.35
(19) Design a classroom environment using displays that reflect a variety of cultures	89.85	15.03
(20) Develop a personal relationship with my students	93.15	12.70
(21) Obtain information about my students' academic weaknesses	90.29	13.32
(22) Praise English language learners for their accomplishments using a phrase in their native language	90.96	11.66
(23) Identify ways that standardized tests may be biased towards linguistically diverse students	88.43	13.89
(24) Communicate with parents regarding their child's educational progress	88.94	16.79
(25) Structure parent–teacher conferences so that the meeting is not intimidating for parents	89.60	16.06
(26) Help students to develop positive relationships with their classmates	91.50	14.19
(27) Revise instructional material to include a better representation of cultural groups	87.72	19.01
(28) Critically examine the curriculum to determine whether it reinforces negative cultural stereotypes	88.42	15.03
(29) Design a lesson that shows how other cultural groups have made use of mathematics	89.99	14.44
(30) Model classroom tasks to enhance English language learners' understanding	91.60	13.95
(31) Communicate with the parents of English language learners regarding their child's achievement	90.36	15.09
(32) Help students feel like important members of the classroom	94.64	9.05
(33) Identify ways that standardized tests may be biased towards culturally diverse students	90.00	13.43

(34) Use a learning preference inventory to gather data about how my students like to learn	90.06	14.73
(35) Use examples that are familiar to students from diverse cultural backgrounds	88.93	14.62
(36) Explain new concepts using examples that are taken from my students' everyday lives	90.61	13.45
(37) Obtain information regarding my students' academic interests	91.75	12.84
(38) Use the interests of my students to make learning meaningful for them	91.89	12.91
(39) Implement cooperative learning activities for those students who like to work in groups	92.79	16.58
(40) Design instruction that matches my students' developmental needs	92.32	16.95

Phase II Thematic Analysis

Using the methodology described by Lincoln and Guba (1985), semi-structured interviews were transcribed and shared with Phase II TCs to cross-check their responses and corroborate data accuracy. Data from both sources were organized to present the data systematically to answer the research questions. Data analysis relied on analysis of the data across the interviews. Researchers developed a list of codes arising from the RQ2, realizing that new codes may emerge in the analysis. Through coding, researchers looked through the data collected and identified words or phrases that gave information about the questions asked around TCs' CRTSE and attributional beliefs for CLD learners. Codes were sorted into group orders to find common themes, and hand-coding was then used to organize the data. Semi-structured interview data revealed three emergent themes identifying how TCs perceived their EPP, CRTSE, and attributional beliefs for teaching CLD learners.

Theme 1

The EPP provided limited opportunities to plan instruction and teach CLD learners during content methods courses. When asked to share their successes or challenges in teaching CLD learners, TCs identified inadequate resources and a misalignment between course teaching

expectations and students' individualized learning needs in clinical placement as barriers to their teaching success.

John stated that limited resources and support in his clinical placement inhibited his opportunities to plan instruction for CLD learners:

> The problem is that my campus did not have resources - very limited special education teachers. I think I only met with our math person three times all year - that is not how it is supposed to be based on what we learned in our courses.

Ana attributed a disconnect between the EPP methods course expectations and the learning needs of CLD learners in her clinical placement as a barrier to her teaching self-efficacy:

> I think the way we learn to teach reading and math is good, but it does not always align with what happens in our placement. We had to do the lesson exactly as the instructor wanted instead of how our diverse learners needed.

Beth attributed limited opportunities to plan instruction using CRP during her EPP methods coursework as a barrier to her ability to teach CLD learners in her clinical placement:

> The core subjects - math, science, reading, and social studies - need to include more strategies for students that have learning and language needs. I think having opportunities to write and teach lessons specifically for English learners and students with a disability would be helpful.

Theme 2

TCs were confident in applying the specialized pedagogy they learned during their SPC. TCs attributed opportunities to apply CRPs they learned in the SPC during their clinical placements to their perceived success in building relationships with their students. When asked which EPP courses helped prepare her to teach CLD learners, Ana identified specialized

pedagogy and strategies from the SPC for building student relationships as contributing to her teaching confidence:

> I got to know them first. I built a relationship with them so that they would work with me. They were all great, though it took time. I spent the beginning few weeks getting to know what they liked, what worried them, what their goals were, and what motivated them.

John also attributed the knowledge and skills he acquired during the SPC to increasing his confidence in applying specialized pedagogy to help a CLD learner in mathematics:

> One of my struggling students passed an exam with an 82! He had been coming to my tutorials and really made progress. I was able to watch him work problems from start to finish and pinpoint the mistakes. Just being able to teach him strategies was great, and they worked for him.

Beth described how she used the knowledge and skills emphasized during the SPC to implement specialized pedagogy, strategies, and technology to support CLD learners:

> We used audiobooks, apps, and YouTube to help create activities and support in Spanish. The kids really liked this, and it helped bring them into the lessons. Our students really did great once we had the materials we needed to teach them.

Marta shared her confidence-building experiences in supporting CLD learners using specialized strategies she learned during the SPC:

> I learned how to select the best visuals to support our English learners. I also used visuals that connected to things the students were interested in like video games and memes. We used a word wall and journals to give the students resources.

Bora also shared her confidence-building experiences using manipulatives support CLD learners during mathematics instruction:

> I did do lessons with manipulatives a few times and felt like this visual and kinesthetic support really helped my students. I think getting to teach through the different modalities is beneficial for everyone. I want to explore using more manipulatives in my math lessons.

Theme 3

Mentorship for CRTSE should be multileveled. TCs perceived their success in teaching CLD learners to be significantly positively and negatively impacted by their relationship with their mentor teacher.

When asked about the support she received to teach CLD learners during her clinical placement, Ana described positive interactions with her mentor teacher as a contributing factor to her success in applying CRP during instruction:

> I talked to my mentor about my lesson, and she helped me work through what went wrong and how to check for understanding throughout the lesson instead of waiting until the end. Simple really, but I didn't know how to do it at the time.

Bora experienced both positive and negative mentorship. "I talked with my mentor. She helped me understand my behavior so that I could work on observing my students during instruction and taking my cues from them. This helped." However, Bora later stated:

> My mentor was really focused on getting the students ready for STAAR (State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness). This also did not allow me many opportunities to design lessons or implement strategies that I wanted to try. Instruction was very test-driven.

John also believed that his success in teaching CLD learners was negatively impacted by limited mentorship, “I talked with my mentor, but she was overwhelmed and told me that I’d get used to not having all of my students succeed.”

Discussion

Data collected during Phase I were utilized to answer RQ1: How confident are TCs in their ability to implement culturally responsive pedagogies? Results from Phase I of this study indicated TCs were more efficacious in their perceived ability to build relationships with students (Items 9, 20, and 32). Similarly, TCs felt more efficacious in their ability to determine students’ learning needs (Items 3, 4, 34, 37, 38, and 39). These findings could be attributed to TCs’ prolonged clinical placement in a school setting and numerous daily opportunities to engage with students. However, CRTSE items that were more critical indicated lower means (Items 28, 29, and 33). An explanation for this finding could be that most TCs are expected to follow the district’s mandated curriculum and are not permitted to make changes. Therefore, they may not feel comfortable adjusting or critically analyzing the curriculum.

Additionally, items related to parent conferences also had slightly lower means (Items 23 and 24). While TCs in this study spend an entire academic year in their clinical residency, they are not the teacher of record. Thus, they may not be able to lead a parent–teacher conference. Furthermore, teacher preparation courses in the TCs’ EPP do not focus on how to lead parent–teacher conferences or communicate child progress, which would explain the lower means.

Data collected in Phase II were utilized to answer RQ2: How do TCs perceive their culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy and attributional beliefs for CLD learners? Results from Phase II of this study indicate that TCs perceived their lower CRTSE regarding the ability to support CLD learners’ home and school cultures and adapt the curriculum to equitably

represent cultural groups to a lack of knowledge and opportunities to practice implementing CRP in the content methods coursework for mathematics, language, and literacy, science, and social studies (Theme 1). However, TCs perceived their success in building trust and relationships with CLD learners and helping them feel like essential classroom members are attributed to the knowledge and dispositions they developed during the SPC (Theme 2). Further, TCs perceive their success in teaching CLD learners as positively and negatively impacted by their relationship with their mentor teacher during their practicum teaching experiences. While TCs reported having positive relationships with mentor teachers in their responses to Q4 on the semi-structured interview, results from the Phase II data indicate limited transformative dialogue and reflection opportunities during clinical experiences (Theme 3).

Findings from this study are consistent with research by Ladson-Billings (2017), which indicates that TCs need opportunities to engage in the process of knowledge acquisition, participation in transformative dialogue regarding educational practice, and self-reflection. Findings from this study were also consistent with Weiner (1985, 2000, 2010), which suggests that TCs' causal attributions about their cultural awareness can predict their knowledge and praxis for teaching CLD learners.

Limitations

A limitation of the study is that Phase II relied on volunteers from Phase I, which could have resulted in a difference in participating TCs' and nonparticipating TCs' answers to the interview questions. Those who chose to participate could have had a negative bias towards CRP, or vice versa, compared to those who decided not to participate, which could have skewed the interview themes, resulting in more positive or more negative attributional beliefs for teaching CLD learners.

Scholarly Significance and Implications

This study contributes to the literature that illustrates how developing TCs' attributions and SE for teaching CLD learners is critical in developing their ability to teach and support diverse student populations effectively, which requires transformative efforts on the part of EPPs. In learning to grow as a culturally responsive educator in their EPPs, TCs will be equipped to sustain and develop their CRTSE throughout their teaching career, allowing them to support future TCs. Fostering positive attributions and SE in this context also contributes to a more inclusive and equitable educational system. As suggested by the results of this study, EPPs must internalize the value of experiential learning for TCs to enter the teaching profession as confident, culturally responsive educators. Reflective action in EPPs with CRP as a priority requires a commitment to social justice and people affected by injustice. Because CRP relies on a dispositional approach to pedagogy, EPPs must be more intentional in designing curricula and programmatic and systemic strategies to prepare TCs to be race-conscious and facilitate the kind of praxis needed to transform education for CLD learners. However, this is a significant undertaking; thus, future studies should focus on this transformation process and suggestions for teacher educators on how to facilitate this.

Following Standard 2 Cultural Competence of the Association of Teacher Educators' teaching standards, it is essential for teacher candidates first to know their own cultures to develop the capacity among culturally, socially, and linguistically diverse students (ATE, 2008). Through curricula and practicum experiences, EPPs must include opportunities for teacher candidates to examine their dispositions. Carrizales et al. (2022) suggest that multispecialty programs that center the needs of diverse student populations, like emergent bilingual students and students with disabilities, are essential in transforming EPPs to become more equitable;

however, this must be paired with critical multicultural education. In addition, teacher candidates must be provided with opportunities to practice selecting an "inclusive curriculum, use a range of assessment methods, and be proficient in a variety of pedagogical strategies that facilitate the acquisition of content knowledge for all learners" (ATE, 2008) during their content area methods coursework. EPPs must ensure that teacher candidates understand the concepts and definitions of cultural competency and can make the course-to-field connection. This call to action presents a unique opportunity for interdisciplinary work from core content areas (mathematics, science, social studies, literacy) and multicultural education. Social justice is not achieved through a singular event. Still, rather than a collection of transformations that build a new system, all facets of EPPs (coursework, curriculum, and field experiences) must be transformed.

Furthermore, EPPs must listen to their students as they communicate their need to align their coursework with their preservice praxis. TCs' insight directly links theory and practice, enabling EPPs to bridge the gap between coursework and the realities they experience during their practicum experiences. Existing literature on transformative efforts in teacher preparation is mainly theoretical; however, studies such as this one provide the insight needed to build a program with the students being served within it in mind; thus, future studies should center the process of transformation grounded in TC feedback. When TCs reflect on their experiences, they offer a practical perspective on what works and what needs improvement, aiding program administrators in refining curriculum and instructional strategies accordingly. By centering the experiences of TCs in transformative efforts, teacher educators invite them to co-construct transformative efforts and thus be a part of the advancement towards social justice. This process is crucial for TCs of color, as their voices and experiences are often rendered invisible in a system constructed on Whiteness (Anderson & Aronson, 2019). Involving TCs in decision-

making gives them a sense of ownership and agency within their education, which not only enhances their investment in their EPP but also allows them to develop the negotiation skills and dispositions needed to advocate for their student's needs in the future.

Finally, echoing the findings of both Bandura (1971, 1977, 1993, 1997) and Siwatu (2007, 2011), mentors on all levels must model CRP and provide contexts (Knoblauch & Chase, 2015) in which TCs can have the opportunity to develop high CRTSE and attributional beliefs for teaching CLD learners before they enter the field. Mentor teachers set the tone for the school community, and when they incorporate CRP, they convey a commitment to equity and inclusivity, which can influence the broader educational culture. They must embody what it is to be a culturally responsive practitioner and show that it is not just a theory but a practical and necessary component of effective teaching. Classrooms are increasingly diverse, representing various cultures, languages, and experiences; thus, to meet these changing needs, mentor teachers must ensure that TCs are well-equipped to support and empower their students meaningfully. Through intentional crucial conversations and modeling, mentors can provide practicum experiences that are inclusive, equitable, and enriching to support TCs' CRTSE development and attributional SE for today's CLD learners. Mentoring TCs to develop as culturally responsive practitioners allows the mentor teacher to grow in their capacities and thus can transform the educational system. Field experiences could conclude with two culturally responsive educators who can combat deficit mindsets, support CLD students "intellectually, socially, and politically" (Ladson-Billings, 2021, p. 4), and intentionally work to address the long-standing "educational debt" (Ladson-Billings, 2006).

Conclusion

The need for educators to utilize CRP to support diverse student populations is critical. Research indicates that culturally competent teachers who use transformative and justice-oriented curricula and pedagogy create learning opportunities that are inclusive and engaging and that welcome diversity. This research contributes to this professional literature by examining the formation of TCs' CRTSE and attributional beliefs for teaching CLD learners and identifies areas of improvement regarding social justice principles and the application of cultural competence in EPP coursework and clinical experiences.

Understanding how TCs' CRTSE and attributional beliefs are formed can further apprise educational policies and practices to shift most Eurocentric teaching practices in K–12 classrooms to practices steeped in cultural competence. The emergent themes in this research suggest that EPPs need to provide direct instruction in CRP and provide TCs opportunities to plan and implement instruction for CLD learners during EPP core content methods coursework and practicum experiences. If EPPs are to move beyond what Sleeter (2017) referred to as a superficial centering of diversity, they must infuse CRP into every facet of the program, particularly core content coursework. If culturally responsive educators are expected to empower students intellectually and academically (Ladson-Billings, 2021), they must have the opportunity to learn core content in a culturally responsive manner. Another significant theme in this research recognizes the impact of mentor teachers on TCs' perceived success with CLD students. Culturally competent teachers understand how their personal biases can impact the learning process for CLD learners. Findings from this research emphasize the need for EPPs and mentor teachers to examine deficit mindsets they may have and transform dispositions towards cultural

and linguistic differences into practices that empower diverse learners' intellectual, social, emotional, and cultural growth.

Teacher educators, researchers, and policymakers must work together to improve and advance curricula, pedagogy, and strategies that support CLD learners. EPPs must commit to grounding every facet of their programs in cultural competence and thus commit to transformative efforts in teaching methods, course design, clinical experience structures, and school-university partnerships. Many educators initially enter the field through an EPP and go on to hold other school and district leadership positions, and thus reorienting them to focus on cultural responsiveness and not Whiteness, as the system currently does, has the potential to enact multilevel change and truly make significant strides towards social justice.

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APPENDIX A

Semi-Structured Interview Questions (Phase II)

(Q1) Do you have opportunities to teach culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) learners during your student teaching?

(Q2) Tell me about successes that you experience when teaching CLD learners during your student teaching.

- Which courses helped you feel prepared?

(Q3) Tell me about challenges you experience when teaching CLD learners during your student teaching.

- How prepared do you feel to meet these challenges?
- What additional knowledge and skills do you feel that you need?

(Q4) What support did you have in your field placement to help you work with students with diverse learning needs?