

# [Critical] Multilingual and Multicultural Awareness in the Pedagogical Responsiveness of Literacy Educators<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

*This study examined the elements of [critical] multicultural awareness ([C]MA) and [critical] multilingual awareness ([C]MLA) identified in the pedagogical responsiveness of five literacy teacher educators (LTEs), the factors that influenced such awareness, and the ways in which these forms of awareness shaped educators' pedagogical responsiveness in literacy. Findings based on data from LTEs' Scholarly Personal Narratives (SPNs) and comprehensive bi-weekly reports showed that educators reflected certain elements of [C]MA and [C]MLA as they worked with teachers to support writing instruction for culturally and linguistically diverse students (CLDs). Factors influencing awareness were assumptions based on otherness and teaching experience, positioning, observations related to literacy expertise, and discipline. Awareness, in turn, influenced educators' pedagogical responsiveness as they developed the ability to capitalize on linguistic and cultural difference. Implications for teacher educators' awareness and responsiveness are highlighted.*

**Keywords:** literacy, teacher educators, multilingual, multicultural, awareness, diversity

Across the globe and in the United States, emphasis continues to be placed on how teachers develop the capacity to meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students (Aronson & Laughter, 2016; Krakouer, 2015; Lehtomaki et al., 2017; Watkins et al., 2016). Specifically, in the United States, clear evidence shows that literacy and English language arts (ELA) teacher educators can play a key role in preparing teachers to address cultural and linguistic diversity (see Aronson & Laughter, 2016 for a review; Risko et al., 2017). Notwithstanding, an increasing and general misconception persists

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<sup>1</sup> Funding was provided by U.S. Department of Education (Grant No. U215N120013-14). We have no conflicts of interest to disclose. Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Patriann Smith, 4202 E. Fowler Avenue, Tampa, FL 33620, [psmith4@usf.edu](mailto:psmith4@usf.edu)

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about the ineffectiveness of literacy/ELA teacher preparation programs to adequately prepare teachers for diversity in U.S. schools (Risko et al., 2017). This misconception, which questions the effectiveness of teacher preparation programs wherein literacy educators function, is reflected in efforts to enhance teacher quality that minimize and sublimate the role of literacy/ELA teacher educators, many of whom work toward ensuring that teachers adequately address diversity in literacy knowledge, literacy application, and ongoing experience with teacher development in literacy instruction and assessment (Risko et al., 2017). We argue in this study that identifying explicitly the ways in which literacy/ELA educators develop awareness concerning their capacity for addressing diversity in schools is critical if these educators are to remain central to the adequate preparation of literacy/ELA teachers for diversity in American schools (Haddix, 2017; Smith, 2016; Smith et al., 2020; Smith & Warrican, 2021).

Of the many factors that impact the ability to respond to difference, awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity has proven to be crucial to pedagogical practice (e.g., García, 2008, 2015; Karadeniz & Incirci, 2016; Nieto, 2000; Rorrer & Furr, 2009). More recently, critical multicultural (Roxas et al., 2017) and critical multilingual awareness (García, 2015) have also become central to the ability to respond to diversity. Critical multicultural awareness (CMA) (Roxas et al., 2017), an extension of the multicultural education movement, is derived from the notion that critical multicultural education must move past romanticizing and studying “the other” and instead bring the voices of non-dominant individuals to the table. Critical multicultural education extends beyond multicultural awareness, in which individuals become knowledgeable about people and events unfamiliar to them, toward becoming aware of predispositions such as biased views and adopt a worldview that incorporates varying perspectives (see Nieto, 2000). It suggests that individuals reflecting CMA are *also* aware of the norms that reinforce or challenge various forms of oppression, of their role in contributing or deconstructing these norms, and of how they contribute to or reenact the power structures that adversely affect non-dominant populations (Nieto & Bode, 2008; Roxa et al., 2017). Together, multicultural awareness *and* critical multicultural awareness (referred to in this study as *[critical] multicultural awareness* or *[C]MA*)<sup>4</sup> emphasize the individual’s reflection on self as a result of engaging in discourse with diverse others in a social context that reflects multiple forms of cultural diversity.

In tandem, critical multilingual awareness refers to an awareness of plurilingualism. Such an awareness requires the development of an asset-orientation toward the linguistic varieties of those who are multilingual, an understanding of the approaches used to advocate for linguistic groups that have been historically oppressed, and an intent to help all teachers understand how ways of using language in society have been naturalized

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<sup>4</sup> Critical Multicultural and Critical Multilingual Awareness: MA as used in this study refers to “multicultural awareness.” MLA as used in this study refers to “multilingual awareness.” CMA as used in this study, without brackets, refers to “critical multicultural awareness.” CMLA as used in this study, without brackets, refers to “critical multilingual awareness.” [C]MA as used in this study, with brackets, refers to the combination of MA and CMA. [C]MLA as used in this study, with brackets, refers to the combination of MLA and CMLA. Thus, the brackets, when used with [C]MA means that we are referring to both MA and CMA. Similarly, the brackets, when used with [C]MLA means that we are referring to both MLA and CMLA.

(García, 2015). At the core of critical multilingual awareness (CMLA) is “the understanding that language is socially created, and thus, socially changeable to give voice and educate all students equitably” (García, 2015, p. 6). CMLA draws from and extends previous conceptions of multilingual awareness (MLA). As applied to literacy, these previous notions of MLA involve: (a) knowledge of the social and pragmatic norms of the language an educator uses to support literacy—proficiency; (b) knowledge of the subject matter of the language, grammar, phonology, vocabulary, and how it impacts literacy—analysis; and (c) ability to create opportunities for learning language through literacy in the classroom—pedagogy. CMLA includes and extends beyond these notions of MLA to *also* incorporate additional features, which when applied to literacy, include: (d) awareness of the ways that literacy draws from plurilingualism for democratic citizenship—plurality; (e) awareness of how literacy reinforces or challenges colonial and oppressive histories—critical; and (f) awareness of how literacy uses language to reflect its unending social creation and change—transformative (García, 2015). Multilingual awareness taken together with critical multilingual awareness, introduced in this study as [critical] multilingual awareness or [C]MLA, can function as a lens to examine the ways in which English acts as the primary language in which teacher educators demonstrate proficiency, analysis, pedagogy, and awareness in their support of literacy in U.S. classrooms.

Multilingual and multicultural awareness have thus previously been touted as critical for the development of cultural and linguistic responsiveness because of their ability to help teachers acknowledge, address, advocate for, and sustain students’ cultural and linguistic differences (García, 2015; Nieto, 2000; Scherff, 2012). The usefulness of multilingual and multicultural awareness for teachers suggests that their critical components—[critical] multilingual and [critical] multicultural awareness—can *also* help to determine how teacher educators develop responsiveness to difference in much the same way that they expect teachers to do so in diverse schools (see García, 2008; Karadeniz & Incirci, 2016; Nieto, 2000; Rorrer & Furr, 2009; Smith, 2018).

In response, the purpose of this study was to describe the features of [critical] multicultural and [critical] multilingual awareness identified in the pedagogical responsiveness of five literacy teacher educators (LTEs), the elements that influenced this awareness, and the ways in which this awareness influenced educators’ pedagogical responsiveness as they worked with in-service teachers and their culturally and linguistically diverse students (CLDs) in five underperforming schools. The research concerning teacher educators’ ability to respond to linguistic and cultural difference reflects a tendency to focus on and raise questions about teacher educators’ perceptions of the CLD teachers whom they prepare, their knowledge for working with CLD K-12 students, and their ability to model appropriate ways (i.e., pedagogies) of addressing cultural and linguistic diversity as they work with CLD learners and their teachers in K-12 classrooms (see de Jong et al., 2013; Haddix, 2017; Lucas & Villegas, 2013). Though teacher educators often have limited understandings of how to respond to certain differences in language and culture (Gay, 2014), they can learn to respond to difference using several avenues, one of which is through the use of [C]MA and [C]MLA (i.e., Smith, 2016, 2018; Smith et al., 2020). Awareness can help educators to modify perceptions, knowledge, and pedagogy that in turn, allows them to adequately prepare

teachers for diverse student populations (Smith, 2016; Smith et al., 2020). Thus, this study addressed the following questions:

1. What features of [critical] multicultural awareness and [critical] multilingual awareness are reflected in the pedagogical responsiveness of five literacy teacher educators as they support teachers and culturally and linguistically diverse students in classrooms within a research-practice partnership?
2. What factors influence the features of [critical] multicultural awareness and [critical] multilingual awareness reflected by the educators?
3. In what ways do the features of [critical] multicultural awareness and [critical] multilingual awareness reflected by the educators influence educators' responsiveness as they support teachers and culturally and linguistically diverse students in classrooms?

Providing insights about the role of such awareness in LTEs' responsiveness to diversity will allow other educators to understand how they too can examine and identify their awareness as they work to develop responsiveness to diversity in schools.

The study begins with a review of the relevant literature, presents methodological decisions guiding the study, and subsequently discusses findings and recommendations for future research. In this study, we use the term "teacher educators" to refer to those educators typically working within the university setting who prepare K-12 in-service and pre-service teachers for U.S. schools. We use the word "teachers" to denote those who (are prepared to) teach K-12 learners in U.S. schools. By "diversity" in this study, we refer broadly to cultural variations reflected in "an amalgamation of human activity, production, thought, and belief systems" (Ladson-Billings, 2014, p. 75), "characterized by heterogeneity that constantly changes with time" (Smith et al., 2017, p. 194). Finally, the term "linguistically diverse students" is used to refer to those who speak at least two languages and/or dialects.

### **Literature Review: Educators' Responsiveness to Cultural and Linguistic Diversity**

Examinations of teacher educators' approaches to cultural diversity (e.g., Dixon & Dingus, 2007; Galman et al., 2010; Harper & de Jong, 2004; Merryfield, 2001; Nelson & Guerra, 2014; Pang & Park, 2011; Roy-Campbell, 2013) tell us that these educators continue to face challenges in addressing cultural and linguistic diversity as they support pre- and in-service teachers in K-12 classrooms. Explorations have been made with regards to teacher educators' cultural responsiveness (Han, 2016; Merryfield, 2001), reactions to race, effects of grappling with whiteness in practice (e.g., Galman et al., 2010), linguistic proficiency, and expertise and knowledge in relation to cultural responsiveness (Harper & de Jong, 2004; Pang & Park, 2011; Roy-Campbell, 2013). These examinations revealed that teacher educators have remained unsure of how to generate critical discussions with teachers about changing demographics in schools. They were rarely able to address their own beliefs and predispositions regarding race, power, and inequality in ways that challenged teachers to be culturally competent in schools. Furthermore, teacher educators showed significantly limited exposure to concerns, coursework, and expertise related to linguistically diverse populations, and identified no significant difference in pedagogical approaches for CLD K-12 students.

Much like the evidence about educators' approaches to cultural diversity, research on teacher educators' experiences with language difference shows that they also struggle to support teachers in this regard as they try to meet the needs of the CLDs (Haddix, 2017). Though knowledge about language differences (i.e., linguistic diversity) plays a crucial role in the preparation of teachers in addressing the needs of CLD populations, educators have shown significantly limited exposure to concerns about students' various languages. They have limited coursework, demonstrate a lack of expertise in relation to English language learners (ELLs), and often see no significant difference in the pedagogical approaches needed for linguistically diverse learners as compared to those who often reflect a monolingual norm (O'Hara & Pritchard, 2008; Pang & Park, 2011; Roy-Campbell, 2013; Smitherman & Villaneuva, 2003).

Teacher educators who come to understand and respond to cultural differences need time, space, openness to change, multilingual and multicultural awareness, as well as experiences with practice, boundary-crossing, and transformational learning (de los Ríos & Souto-Manning, 2015; D'Haem & Griswold, 2017; Dixson & Dingus, 2007; Han, 2016; Howe & Xu, 2013; Merryfield, 2014; Smith, 2016, 2018; Williams & Berry, 2016). Despite variability in teacher educators' responsiveness (Li, 2017), research indicates they are also better able to relate to students when they know more about language and culture by developing awareness of difference in their teaching practices (Costa et al., 2005; Smith, 2016).

### **Conceptual Framework: Awareness and Pedagogical Responsiveness**

Two conceptions, awareness (described earlier) and pedagogical responsiveness, discussed next, framed this study.

### **Culturally Relevant, Culturally Sustaining, and Linguistically Responsive Pedagogy**

Conceptions of culturally relevant, culturally sustaining, and linguistically responsive pedagogy proved useful for understanding how awareness influenced educators' pedagogical responsiveness during literacy instruction. Culturally relevant pedagogy involves the enhancement of students' academic success, cultural competence, and sociopolitical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 2014). In keeping with [C]MA, the conception of culturally relevant pedagogy helped to challenge current notions of culture as static and limited to depictions of specific nations states, ethnicities, or religious groups. This notion, along with Ladson-Billings's articulation of culturally sustaining pedagogy, allowed us to consider the "multiplicities of identities and cultures that help formulate today's youth culture" (Ladson-Billings, 2014, p. 82; Paris, 2012), as well as the "within-group" and "across-group" cultural practices necessary for cultural competence (Paris, 2012, p. 95). In conjunction, linguistically responsive pedagogy—the use of guidelines for integrating principles of learning with principles of language to support students' language difference (see Lucas & Villegas, 2013)—provided a lens to examine educators' pedagogical responsiveness to students and teachers' literacy needs across a range of linguistic groups (e.g., Li, 2017; Lucas & Villegas, 2013).

Together, the integrated conceptions of awareness and pedagogical responsiveness helped to examine how features of educators' awareness were reflected in the social context of the research-practice partnership and provided a basis for identifying the ways

in which this responsiveness influenced educators' pedagogical responsiveness in literacy. Specifically, [C]MA acted as a lens for understanding educators' awareness of culture and its influence on their pedagogical responsiveness to teachers and students in schools. By extension, [C]MLA allowed for an understanding of how pedagogical responsiveness was demonstrated towards standardized and non-standardized varieties of English (and in some cases, Spanish) literacy and literacies in classrooms.

## **Methodology**

### **Context of the Study**

Exploring the awareness of participants for responsiveness occurred in the context of an emerging research-practice partnership (RPP) between a southwestern research university (SRU) and the neighboring Cleveland District (CD)—both pseudonyms. Research-practice partnerships are intentionally designed collaborations to investigate problems of practice for improving district outcomes (Coburn et al., 2013; Quartz et al., 2017). Research is developed based on the needs of the school district in which practitioners and researchers share ownership and responsibility of the work in a joint manner. Using intentional designs to organize the work with one another is critical and usually begins with a data-sharing agreement to inform school improvement (Coburn & Penuel, 2016).

Like other successful RPP collaborations (Coburn & Penuel, 2016; Coburn et al., 2013; Ralston et al., 2016), the partners, SRU and CD, developed a formalized memorandum of understanding outlining responsibilities of the educators and schools, a shared agenda involving teacher professional development in literacy instruction, codified procedures for disseminating findings to stakeholders, and specific classroom-based practices and curricular decisions in the content area of literacy development designed to impact student achievement. Table 1 depicts elements of the RPP.

At the time of the study, CD was comprised of approximately 30,000 students, 23.5% of whom were White, 58.7% Hispanic, and 13.7% African American, as designated by the district. Over 64.5% of the students in CD were classified as economically disadvantaged, over 30% classified as receiving special education, and 5.8% classified as bilingual or English language learners. CD administrators had noticed significantly low scores on their district-wide and state assessments for literacy achievement and requested that we work with their underperforming schools to support teachers with literacy instruction.

In this yearlong (2015–2016) collaborative study between CD and SRU, the five literacy teacher educators (LTEs) visited designated classrooms in their schools for at least six to eight hours a week from September 2015 through May 2016. Their primary responsibility was to investigate the effectiveness of balanced literacy implementation in the overall literacy achievement of students as determined by an increase in test scores. The LTEs relied on a model of balanced literacy in their collaboration that integrated interactive read-alouds, modeled or shared writing, interactive writing, guided writing, independent reading and writing, guided reading, and shared reading (Chen & Mora-Flores, 2006) (see Table 1). During this process, participants liaised with school administrators and instructional coaches, debriefed with teachers regarding their practice,

modeled teaching literacy content to teachers, co-taught CLDs with teachers, and/or provided support to CLDs while teachers instructed students in classrooms. As most of the K-12 students in the underperforming schools with whom participants worked were culturally and linguistically diverse, experiences within the emerging RPP provided an opportunity to tap into the LTEs’ awareness concerning language and culture.

**Table 1**

*Overall Goals for Year One of the RPP: Improve Reading Motivation, Self-Efficacy, and Achievement*

Common elements of reading intervention in year one of the RPP	Data collection across schools in the RPP	Social interaction between LTEs and stakeholders at middle school in the RPP	Social interaction between middle-school LTEs and other LTEs in the RPP
<p>Readers Workshop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guided reading</li> <li>• Shared reading</li> <li>• Independent reading</li> <li>• Interactive read-aloud</li> <li>• Word study</li> </ul> <p>Literacy Teacher Educators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend and coordinate professional learning communities (PLCs)</li> <li>• Scaffold teachers in PLCs and in classrooms</li> <li>• Co-plan, co-teach, observe, and support teachers in classrooms</li> <li>• Provide resources to teachers and guide teachers their use of these for reading instruction</li> </ul> <p>Initiatives Undertaken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community read-aloud: invited readers from professional community</li> <li>• Rewarding motivation to read: monthly book giveaways</li> <li>• Individual student conferences: self-regulation and goal setting for literacy</li> <li>• Field trips: creating background knowledge experiences for writing</li> </ul>	<p>Data Collected in Spring 2016: Artifacts, field observations, interview transcripts, interest interviews, reading self-efficacy, LTE bi-weekly narratives</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Biweekly planning with principal and literacy coach to establish yearlong procedures for data collection &amp; implementation around reading</li> <li>2. Weekly support for instruction (as possible) in three literacy teachers’ classrooms</li> <li>3. Bi-weekly reporting based on standard protocol to university &amp; grant personnel based on narrative</li> </ol>	<p>1. Monthly Meeting of LTEs to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Debrief, share, reflect, determine areas for refinement and improvement in implementation and data collection</li> <li>• Begin compiling data based on work with schools</li> <li>• Draft and submit conference proposals based on preliminary findings</li> <li>• Begin preparing manuscripts for disseminating research</li> </ul> <p>2. Bi-weekly reporting to university and grant personnel</p>

While RPPs have previously centered on in-service support for literacy development and pedagogy (Coia & Taylor, 2002; Comber & Nixon, 2011; Cremin, 2006; Kennedy, 2010; Pomerantz & Pierce, 2013) and on how they make an impact to address diversity in schools (see Barton & Bevan, 2016), little research explores how educators work within these partnerships to address student diversity and the ways it affects literacy practices. Given the role of concepts such as experience in practice and time and space in cultivating responsiveness to diversity, as identified earlier (Smith, 2018), we add to this body of literature by providing insights into how the five LTEs demonstrated awareness, and in turn, responsiveness for addressing diversity for CLDs within such a context.

### **Design**

We used an interpretive design (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003), drawing primarily from Scholarly Personal Narratives (SPNs) (Nash & LaSha Bradley, 2011) to guide this study. Epistemologically, our inquiry was based on the notion of knowledge as socially constructed and therefore, the decisions made during the research process were premised on an interpretive qualitative design (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). An important ontological tenet of the interpretive perspective that guided this study stems from the basis of reality as subjectively constructed, influenced by meanings and understandings developed through lived experiences (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Thus, narratives were chosen as the primary sources for understanding the ways in which the educators in this study reflected awareness, the elements that influenced their awareness, and the ways in which they came to be responsive in their practice working with teachers and students in the schools. As Rodríguez (2002) has observed, narratives “find life and prosperity” through interpretation, and “compelling narratives stretch us,” causing us to be open to novel and varied ways of viewing the world (pp. 4–5).

### **Participants**

This study included five primary participants purposefully sampled based on their roles as LTEs assigned to work with K-12 schools in the district by the dean of the college engaged in the RPP. Secondary participants consisted of three groups: (a) two LTEs, (b) teachers with whom LTEs worked, and (c) the CLD K-12 students with whom each interacted in assigned schools. LTEs all held doctoral degrees and had taught for at least five years in a K-12 setting before becoming faculty members.

As LTEs, our aim as the primary participants in this study was to examine our awareness and responsiveness while working directly with teachers and their K-12 students in classrooms to improve the literacy practices of teachers and the literacy performance of CLDs. Authors one (Petal) and two (Jill)—literacy teacher educators (LTEs) at SRU—were each assigned to one classroom within designated K-12 schools in CD and functioned as two of our study participants. Author three (Beth)—an LTE in a nearby college and third participant—served as a school district partner and worked as a program coordinator of CD-based literacy interventions for the entire academic year. Ally and Roland—the fourth and fifth primary participants—were also assigned to classrooms within designated K-12 schools in CD and served at SRU but did not function as authors of this work.

Ana (Author four) and Jasmine (Author five)—literacy teacher educators (LTEs) at SRU—joined the RPP later in the spring of 2016, replacing two of the primary participants from the 2015–2016 school year. Jasmine is White and monolingual and Ana is Asian and multilingual. These two LTEs engaged in the partnership for a very limited period, and thus we identify them as secondary participants. Their iterative involvement shaped the review and development of this manuscript to help us to move beyond our emic lenses through their outsider (i.e., etc) perspective on our findings and analysis (Hultman Özek et al., 2012). Also functioning as secondary participants were the teachers and CLDs with whom we worked as LTEs in our assigned K-12 classrooms.

Of the five primary participants, four (Ally, Beth, Jill, Petal) were female, and one (Roland) was male. Just like the CLDs, the group of LTEs who functioned as primary participants in this study was culturally and linguistically diverse, bringing unique conceptions about diversity and a willingness to confront their previous perceptions. Table 2 provides the demographics of our five primary participants and Table 3 describes the school contexts in which we worked. All names used to represent participants are pseudonyms.

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**Table 2**

*Participant Demographics*

Name	Race	Gender	Immigrant to United States?	Mono-, bi-, or multilingual?	Newly appointed to school district?	Role in designated public school
Ally	Hispanic	Female	No	Bilingual (Spanish and English)	No	Literacy teacher educator assigned to elementary school (2015–2016)
Beth	White	Female	No	Monolingual (English)	Not appointed as LTE to Specific Schools	District personnel supporting school (2015–2016)
Jill	White	Female	Yes	Monolingual (English) but raised in a multilingual context	Yes	Literacy teacher educator assigned to elementary school (2015–2016)
Petal	Black	Female	Yes	Bilingual (English and French Creole)	Yes	Literacy teacher educator assigned to middle school (2015–2016)
Roland	Hispanic	Male	No	Bilingual (Spanish and English)	Yes	Literacy teacher educator assigned to elementary school (2015–2016)

**Table 3**  
*Classroom and School Demographics by Participant*

Assigned Participant	Distinct Characteristics of Participant Classroom	Assigned Grade levels	*Composition of student population in school			
			African American	Hispanic	White	Economically Disadvantaged
Ally	Dual language classrooms	Pre-K-2 <sup>nd</sup> grade	3.9%	92.7%	3.0%	87.5%
Beth	Not applicable	Not applicable	3.9%	92.7%	3.0%	87.5%
Jill	Predominantly African American	1 <sup>st</sup> grade	56.1%	45.3%	1.3%	76.3%
Petal	Predominantly African American	7 <sup>th</sup> grade	51.8%	39.9%	2.0%	88.4%
Roland	Predominantly Hispanic and Bilingual	4 <sup>th</sup> grade	19.6%	75.1 %	4.7%	91.3%

*Note.* \*Demographic information derived from State Report cards from individual schools for 2016.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

Primary data undergirding our analyses in this study took the form of Scholarly Personal Narratives (SPNs) (Nash, 2004; Nash & LaSha Bradley, 2011) and secondary data took the form of bi-weekly reports, all of which were developed by LTEs. Primary data collected in the form of five Scholarly Personal Narratives (SPNs) (Nash, 2004; Nash & LaSha Bradley, 2011) were developed and compiled by the five primary participants toward the end of the academic year. The SPN protocol for obtaining these narratives was comprised of 32 prompts where participants *storied*, that is, described in narrative form, accounts of their experiences with assigned schools to document the evolving nature of their [C]MA and [C]MLA and to identify how their awareness affected their pedagogical responsiveness. A copy of this SPN protocol is available in Appendix C.

Secondary data took the form of 40 bi-weekly reports that included artifacts of student work and teacher instruction naturally occurring based on participants' work in the schools over the course of the academic year. The bi-weekly reports acted as an ongoing journal or narrative account of participants' individual experiences with teachers and students, reflecting descriptions of activities undertaken in the schools. These were shared with stakeholders on an ongoing basis throughout the course of the academic year. Primary forms of data provided the basis from which to conduct analyses and secondary forms of data were used to determine the degree to which insights from primary data sources could be verified.

## **Data Analysis**

Working from an interpretive design, we used thematic analysis of the narratives to identify codes, develop categories, and collapse these into themes, focusing on awareness in participants' personal and social engagement with the teachers and their students as we responded to cultural and linguistic difference while supporting literacy practice in the schools (RQ1). Employing deductive analysis, we identified features of awareness based on our conceptual framework in the SPN data. These features are later reflected in our findings (RQ2). Thereafter, working inductively, we identified codes, as well as corresponding categories and themes in the narratives about the factors that affected participants' awareness in the SPN data, exploring how these factors influenced their pedagogy in the RPP context for the duration of the academic year (RQ3). Examples of our data analysis processes for each research question are delineated in Tables A1, A2, and A3 in Appendix A. Finally, our secondary sources of data were then reviewed to confirm or disconfirm findings from these analyses of our primary data.

## **Researcher Positionalities**

As indicated earlier, a number of us functioned as participants while also authoring this work. This unique position meant that we brought specific experiences from our backgrounds to the analysis of our own work that caused us to move from self who functions as the "primary audience for the study" and "aims to improve practice and ...learning" to "the larger audience of teacher educators" (i.e., subjectivity vs. objectivity; Borko et al., 2007, p. 9). Beth—a White monolingual LTE who had worked in the district for an extended period and was familiar with the CLDs in our assigned schools—brought to the study her understanding about how literacy instruction often needed to be adjusted to meet the needs of CLDs. Ally and Roland, Hispanic LTEs who had lived in the city where the school district was housed for an extended period of time, were familiar with the broader cultural and linguistic contexts within which students operated and the requirements of teachers in this setting. Jill, also a White LTE, but an immigrant to the United States and new to the city and school context, was in the process of learning about the ways in which CLDs required literacy supports in the schools, as well as how teachers could best receive instruction from her about how to provide this support. Petal, a Black LTE and also an immigrant to the United States, was in a similar position as Jill.

The varied experiences and backgrounds that we each brought were informed by our notions about diversity and about how responsiveness through literacy should occur in schools. There were times when we differed in our perspectives regarding how specific excerpts from the data should be interpreted and used, as well as instances in which we were cognizant of the need to be honest about our findings, while also being sympathetic with instances where the portraits we painted of ourselves were not always perfect. Cognizant of such tensions regarding subjectivity and objectivity in this dynamic, we maintained trustworthiness and credibility (Maxwell, 2013) through the visibility of our data collection and analysis processes and by providing examples of excerpts from our analytical process (Merriam, 2009) for educators seeking to learn from our work. Through these processes, our collective roles as researchers and participants—"plural positionality" (Louis et al., 2017, p. 678)—allowed us to maintain a trustworthy representation and enhance transferability of this work.

### **Findings**

In this study, we set out to determine the features of [C]MA and [C]MLA as reflected in the pedagogical responsiveness of five literacy teacher educators as they supported teachers and culturally and linguistically diverse students in classrooms within a research-practice partnership (RQ1). We wished to also identify factors that influenced the features of [C]MA and [C]MLA reflected by the educators (RQ2). Our third goal was to describe the ways in which the features of [C]MA and [C]MLA reflected by the educators influenced their responsiveness as they supported teachers and culturally and linguistically diverse students in classrooms (RQ3). We now present findings from our analyses in relation to our three research questions by first describing the features of [C]MA and [C]MLA reflected by the educators. Following this, we describe elements of the partnership that influenced the features of awareness reflected by the educators. We subsequently discuss features that influenced the educators' responsiveness as we supported teachers and CLDs in classrooms. Quotations used throughout the findings that follow represent excerpts from the Scholarly Personal Narratives of participants.

#### **Features of Critical Multicultural Awareness and Critical Multilingual Awareness**

In response to RQ1, our findings showed that participants together displayed all but one feature of critical multicultural awareness (see #1–6, #8–14 in Appendix B). As shown in Tables B1 and B2, participants reflected a significantly high degree of awareness in relation to pedagogical responses that can be used or misused when addressing erroneous assumptions, various forms of oppression, and dominance in teaching literacy to CLD students [27]. For instance, four out of five participants reflected an awareness of pedagogical responses used or misused to address erroneous assumptions about learning based on teaching to the test, which deterred students from authentic writing. Roland stated that there was an emphasis on the test that prevented him from working with teachers to “try out new approaches or even tested and proven approaches because they simply didn’t fit the agenda” and that would have led to more “authentic reading and writing.”

Participants also described awareness of the ways in which building trust helped to alleviate assumptions about how literacy functioned to limit students’ performance in the schools. Beth shared how her “unique role [was] to find ways to align and integrate the literacy work so that administrators and teachers do not isolate literacy work into events and or silos of work” so that she could empower the partnership and “build long-term trust.” Through this process, participants identified opportunities for reflecting awareness as identified in Tables B1 and B2 in Appendix B concerning the use and misuse of power at the individual, social, institutional, and global levels [2], knowledge of multiple cultures [2], and instances where students functioned as subject [3]. Other significant manifestations were awareness of other cultures [11] and awareness of skill for acquiring knowledge and awareness of other cultures [11].

The findings also illustrated that participants displayed all six features of critical multilingual awareness (see #15–20 in Table B2 in Appendix B). As shown in Appendix B, participants seemed significantly aware of social and pragmatic norms of the language an educator uses to support English literacy, that is, importance of English language proficiency [13]. They also seemed highly aware of the ability to create opportunities for

learning language through literacy in the classroom, that is, opportunities for pedagogical responsiveness based on diversity [11]. Participants reflected awareness of the social and pragmatic norms of the English language in literacy by highlighting discrepancies between students' oral language proficiency, home languages, and the language(s) required in ELA and literacy classrooms in the schools. Jill stated that she did "encounter some children who [she] perceived to have difficulty with language," such as a male student of African American heritage whom she had difficulty understanding. Petal, an immigrant Black multilingual educator, explained what it was like to be aware of language difference from her instruction of students as a non-American English language speaker. She shared that it was "not enough to sound like [she] was speaking English correctly as this seemed to present a greater barrier to students than connect [her] to them in [her] interactions with them around literacy" because her "accent as well as [her] tendency to speak English in a way that differed from students was something that distracted them from learning." Petal believed that "while [she] could not change the way [that she was] accustomed to speaking English, [she] realized that [she] could monitor students' responses to the way [she] spoke" and use this to gauge her responses to students. Participants recognized the need to develop additional awareness with the subject matter of the language—grammar, phonology, vocabulary. They also noted how this awareness impacts literacy—analysis [4], as well as how literacy interacts with language to reflect its unending social creation and change—transformative [2].

#### ***Opportunities for Developing Additional Awareness***

Apart from instances where they reflected [C]MA and [C]MLA, the participants recognized that more progress could be made to develop awareness. For instance, in participants' SPNs, there was a need to address assumptions that affected the ways in which we responded to CLDs, some of which included helping students indicate to teachers the ways in which yelling affects the students and to determine the discipline practices used by parents that had been found to be effective with their children. These assumptions seemed to be based on the notion that African American students were familiar with certain patterns of behavior, literacies, and responses to this behavior in the home. Participants also recognized that there were instances for better understanding the differences between equity and equality and how these differences could be revisited in supporting CLD students' literacies and teachers' literacy goals. As reflected in their SPNs produced based on their work in schools, participants realized the importance of "creating an apprenticeship mindset focused on equity" that also recognized the equality of all students as humans "for supporting teachers and CLD learners with instructional strategies that focus on academic language and literacy [that are] crucial to growing successful learners," and for being open to students within sub-populations reflecting forms of behavior that deviated from what we were typically used to. For instance, participants recognized that Hispanic students could represent pride in culture in ways that went beyond regarding "their race/ethnicity, culture, heritage/familial language" as the major elements of which to be proud. A similar recognition was made with regards to African American students in terms of ways of addressing behavioral issues for these students beyond ensuring that they became "script writers, rappers, choreographers, artists, etc." Participants noticed that assumptions could not be made that these children did not have enough opportunities to interact with adults or older siblings in a "non-

reprimanding role.” Recognitions such as the above allowed participants to identify opportunities for moving beyond approaches that romanticized students when adopting a celebratory approach to difference that would allow for the co-creation of a culturally responsive environment where “CLD learners find the courage to take academic risks and develop [a] growth mindset...”

### **Factors Influencing Awareness**

In response to RQ2, participants reflected that LTE perceptions of students and teachers, as well as contextual elements within the partnership, influenced awareness. LTE perceptions influencing awareness were visible in assumptions about otherness and assumptions based on teaching experience.

#### ***Assumptions About Otherness***

Our findings showed that participants’ awareness was affected by whether they held perceptions of being similar to or different from students and by teachers’ and students’ perceptions of the participants’ “otherness”—that is, their seeming difference—in their interactions within the schools. In undertaking the study, participants had initially and implicitly considered that Petal—the Black vernacular-speaking LTE who worked with predominantly African American middle school students—would be considered similar to these students. Participants had also assumed that Ally and Roland, the bilingual Hispanic LTEs, would be similar to their Hispanic students. By default, they expected that Beth and Jill, the two White monolingual LTEs, would be different from their predominantly Hispanic and African American student populations. However, contrary to some of these initial presuppositions, a number of participants appeared to be perceived as other in certain ways by either students or by their teachers. This otherness related to race, ethnicity, language, and nationality, and to perceptions regarding similarities and differences in these elements between LTEs and the students and teachers that they served.

**Otherness Based on Perceived Similarity.** Those participants who were supposedly racially and linguistically similar to the students in our schools—Ally, Roland, and Petal—developed awareness that was sometimes congruent with the expectations above, but in many cases, challenged assumptions about how participants perceived similarities in language and culture between themselves and students. For instance, Ally, a U.S.-born Hispanic educator who had lived and worked in the United States for her entire life, developed CMA revealing that much like her expectation, she was perceived as similar by most teachers and administrators at her predominantly Hispanic-serving bilingual school. Ally shared, “I do not think they saw me as very different from them. Much like the adults, the learners treated me as if I fit right into their worlds.” Ally and Roland developed CMLA concerning assumptions about Hispanic teachers and about students’ language based on their bilingual backgrounds, many of which did not always characterize the students who seemed similar to them. Sharing her assumption and student perception in relation to assumptions about the language of a predominantly Hispanic student population, Ally explained that she “did not see many differences between [herself] and [her] students,” as they all shared the same ethnicity and (Spanish-speaking) language background.

Similarly, in relation to language, Roland, the Hispanic participant who spoke English and Spanish fluently, reflected MLA when he learned that the predominantly Hispanic student population at his school had very little oral or written knowledge of Spanish. Speaking of his assumptions about language difference, Roland explained that he “very closely resembled the majority of the kids at [name of school]—kids of color, lower middle class/poor, bilingual” whom he thought he could identify with more because of the shared ethnicity but who “didn’t speak Spanish all that well if at all.” He shared, “I assumed, one day, that a student who was Hispanic would understand a concept better if I brought in Spanish root words, prefixes, suffixes, but he had no clue what I was talking about. I learned that not all Hispanic children are bilingual.” In sharing about assumptions of the socio-economic status of her students, Ally reflected her CMA, stating that she was surprised that she had not previously realized that a number of students were not from the local community and were more affluent than she had expected. Petal, the Black immigrant participant, developed CMA that she was considered other despite working with a predominantly African American student population at her assigned school. Describing her assumptions about race, Petal shared that as a scholar of African descent, she “felt that perhaps [the African American students] might be able to relate to [her], and much like the research [had] said, be more responsive because [she and her students] shared some affinity in terms of race.” She noted though, that the students viewed her as different, leading her to realize that her race was not a sole basis for connecting with Black students and she described that “relationship building” beyond race was crucial.

**Otherness Based on Perceived Difference.** The recognition that participants who were supposedly different from students—Beth and Jill—were met with the expected treatment in certain cases, but with unexpected treatment in other instances, influenced their awareness. For instance, as expected, Beth’s MA was influenced based on being othered by the predominantly Hispanic and African American adolescent students at her school. She commented that the students “definitely viewed [her] as different—age, race, language” and asked questions that let her know this. In contrast, Jill, the White immigrant participant, reflected CMA when she realized she did not feel othered by her predominantly African American primary-grade students who seemed completely uninhibited by her skin color, noting that “the children in the classroom welcomed [her],” “were excited when [she] came into the class,” “would give [her] hugs” and “dandelions” after recess, as well as ask her to read to them or be read to.

#### ***Assumptions Based on Teaching Experience***

Our findings reflected that teaching level, perceptions of teachers, and perceptions of students were all elements based on teaching experience that influenced awareness. In certain cases, the teaching level to which participants were accustomed influenced awareness. For instance, Ally described developing MLA when she realized her language use had typically been targeted toward adults and therefore presented a challenge for the elementary learners with whom she interacted. Describing her struggle, she explained that this challenge “was mostly due to their age and developmental level since she came from a secondary teaching background and needed to adjust her language.” Petal developed CMLA when she observed how her use of standardized English, typically

deployed with graduate students, posed a challenge for communicating with adolescent students. She stated, “I learned that it was not enough to sound like I was speaking English correctly,” which she typically did while teaching at the graduate level. Notwithstanding, the notion of “correct” or “appropriate” English reflected by Petal also appeared to signal a lack of CMLA based on her implicit adherence to the White listening subject in determining the degree to which she approximated the desired form of English (see Flores & Rosa, 2015; Rosa & Flores, 2017).

The participants seemed to have experiences about whom they perceived students to be that influenced their awareness. Ally explained developing MA through maintaining openness to learning by “going in with a mind open to new learning” and gaining “insights into the students, their abilities, and what worked and did not work for them from a cultural, linguistic, or literacy standpoint.” Beth also shared similar views that influenced MA, stating that as a “learner and co-participant in [her] interactions with students, especially CLD students...” she did “not walk in the shoes of the majority of [her] students,” which led to her interest in their stories, dreams, strengths, and challenges. Petal reflected CMA when she was presented with previous and conflicting notions about low-income students and the priority of their parents in relation to learning, sharing that she “heard teachers talk about as well as observed students who failed to have money for any instructional materials but be very focused on obtaining very expensive shoes and clothing, etc.” and realized then that judging these motives did not matter.

#### ***Elements of Context Influencing Awareness.***

Contextual elements within the partnership that appeared to influence awareness were positioning, observations related to literacy expertise, and discipline.

**Positioning.** Certain students positioned participants based on their academic expectations, and this seemed to influence participants’ MA. Beth explained that “students question[ed] the need for certain academic skills because they ‘are not going to college.’” Some of the students saw the college-going culture as an unrealistic goal because of funding, family support, and/or a perception of their lack of academic skills needed to succeed in higher education. Teachers and stakeholders also positioned participants in relation to their role in schools, influencing awareness. Describing this situation, Beth shared, “A fourth-grade student at my school looked at her teacher when I walked in the classroom and said, ‘Mrs. X, here is the lady from downtown that comes to check on you.’” Clarifying, Beth reflected the impact on MA in her position as a central office administrator, which created initial suspicion about why she was at the campus, and explained how building trust and developing transparent, collaborative relationships between campus staff and district staff would require a lot of work because teachers felt disconnected and unwilling to let the “outsiders” facilitate literacy instruction. Similarly, Jill explained,

I believe that they are afraid that I will take over their classrooms. At first I was perceived to be a ‘trouble maker’ or ‘rabble rouser’ as she [the teacher] claimed that when I came to the classroom, the children would regress in their behavior.

In contrast, Ally observed that her principals included her “in so many conversations, and seemed to value and respect [her] insight.” Petal concurred, “My experience with the Literacy Coach and Principal was phenomenal.” The ways in which both students and teachers positioned participants was based on the expectations for these individuals within the RPP, leading participants to discover the multicultural awareness needed for (re)negotiating the ways in which participants were perceived in the schools.

**Observations Related to Literacy Expertise.** The participants’ [C]MA seemed to be affected by the impact we believed our literacy initiatives had on students and teachers. For instance, Ally shared about how she bridged literacy gaps between home and school in ways that influenced MA through community read-alouds where community members also came to read to the students at the same time, giving each child a copy of the book *Niño Wrestles the World* by Yuyi Morales. Similarly, Jill became aware of how she influenced a teacher’s adoption of literacy strategies, sharing that the teacher began to “see the benefit of giving the students choice as they [wrote],” “publish[ed] their work,” “g[ave] praise to her students’ writing,” and “engage[d]” her students in more authentic writing. Petal concurred, explaining how CMA came from demonstrating to herself and others that students had an intrinsic interest in literacy by showing teachers “that these students did have an interest in books, did want books, read books, and would persist in reading” if they had opportunities for “self-regulation around reading tasks as well as a process of ownership for managing their goals in relation to reading growth.”

The participants’ awareness also seemed to be affected by their perceptions and observations of teachers’ literacy expertise, characterized by low academic expectations for students revealed in their lack of confidence, planning, and pedagogical expertise in literacy classrooms. For example, Ally’s CMA was influenced by previous assumptions about teacher candidates’ reluctance to work with students in low-income schools, leading to her relief when she saw the sincerity of the teachers’ passion for improving literacy education for students. In contrast, Beth developed CMA based on her observation that teachers typically needed guidance in working with students because they lacked confidence in creating a student-centered literacy-based classroom. Mirroring Ally’s previous assumptions, Beth’s CMA stemmed from what she described as a “culture of low expectations (from adults) that limited the quality of student production,” which seemed similar to Jill’s situation. Beth shared that teachers were “accustomed to scripted curriculums, overreliance on worksheets, teaching skill development” and had been “immersed in the culture of standardized testing for so long” that it was difficult for them to “envision developing authentic and purposeful reading and writing activities.”

**Discipline.** Participants reflected that recognizing the culture of discipline in the schools and understanding how it stemmed from misunderstandings about how to relate to students influenced their CMA. For example, Roland shared his disturbance about “how poorly behaved some of these kids” were and about how they disrespected authority. Jill added, “Since the children enjoyed having me come and giving them published copies of their writing the teacher saw this as a way of punishment for misbehavior.” Her comments about stakeholders’ responses to disciplinary incidents of this nature reflected her CMA; she observed that she was displeased by a comment in the schools that the “children of African American descent were more likely to talk out of

turn, interrupt teachers, back talk to them, and cause disruptions in class compared to the children of Hispanic descent” in ways that led to such lowered expectations.

Petal, on the other hand, was conflicted about discipline as reflected by resulting CMA in relation to expectations for behavior based on discrepancies between students’ home and school cultures. She stated that the discipline of students seemed to take priority over focusing on instructional goals and so, determining whether [she] was supposed to be helping with discipline, at first, or whether [she] would need to be working on the instruction, was a major conundrum.

In contrast, Beth’s CMA reflected her sorrow about the emphasis on compliance for students. She shared, “I was somewhat frustrated and heartbroken when I walked into a sterile classroom that placed more importance on compliance than empowering students to be learners, dreamers, writers, and communicators.”

### **Influence of Awareness in the Responsiveness of Educators**

In response to the third research question, participants’ narratives reflected that awareness influenced their cultural and linguistic responsiveness as they developed the ability to capitalize on difference within and across groups and identify and use “social currency.”

#### ***Capitalizing on Difference***

The participants appeared to use their awareness to respond in ways that capitalized on difference both within and across groups.

**Differences Within Groups.** Participants described how they used CMA to focus on differences within what is typically perceived by many as a homogenous group. For instance, Petal, a Black female educator, reflected the use of CMA to capitalize on difference between herself and predominantly Black students in culturally responsive ways that helped them to be open to viewing race from a new perspective. She noted that “by demonstrating differences in the way [she] spoke, perhaps dressed, and/or behaved when compared to them, the students could recognize that it [was] not the color of their skins that made them different or who they were, but rather, their personalities.” Ally, a Hispanic female bilingual educator, also seemed to reflect CMA and CMLA that led her to focus on culturally responsive pedagogies despite seeming and feeling like she was very similar to students in terms of ethnicity, language, and culture. She explained that she tried to make everything they read relevant to each child by asking open-questions. This application of such pedagogy allowed Ally to dismantle the assumption that being similar to students would naturally allow her to meet their literacy needs (see Phillip & Brown, 2020 on teachers of color as an only solution).

**Differences Across Groups.** During their time in the schools, participants learned that those who were visibly White and perceived themselves to be clearly different from students—Beth and Jill—seemed less inclined to have assumptions about CLDs’ language use and were more open to obtaining insider knowledge about students that could help them relate to linguistic differences between themselves and students. For example, Beth seemed to reflect CMA that led her to be culturally and linguistically responsive, where she created a “safe, calm space for them to take academic risks” like “inserting a quote from one’s ‘abuela’” or by listening to their words and stories. Using

CMLA, Jill explained how she demonstrated linguistic responsiveness to one of her African American students to better understand him given that her background as a White, middle class, northeastern woman differed significantly from this learner. Beth, too, described how her CMLA led her to demonstrate cultural and linguistic responsiveness as she “acknowledged differences and found commonalities” by “helping several students find ways to integrate their voice, their culture, their language into their personal narratives, celebrate their work and ... become empowered by taking control over their writing choices.” Beth also “provided academic language scripts, guiding questions, intentional work to recognize formal and informal language registers” in response to comments such as the following made by a bilingual student:

This is school. You are not supposed to use Spanish in essays. My teachers would hate that! ... you don't get it. My teacher doesn't want Spanish words in my English essay; she just wants a thesis statement, five paragraphs, a conclusion, and it has to be typed. I just need to follow directions, not get creative!

**Identification and Use of Social Currency.** Participants used “social currency,” a term proposed by Beth in her SPN to refer to maximizing opportunities presented for success, as they effectively supported teachers and administration based on CMA during their work in schools. This notion of social currency alluded to by Beth appears to mirror the concepts of social and navigational capital identified in Yosso's (2005) framework of community cultural wealth. Social currency, for Beth, denoted social capital with its networks of people and community resources that provide both instrumental and emotional support to navigate through society's institutions. Social currency, to which Beth referred, also seemed to embody navigational capital—the skill of maneuvering through social institutions such as educational spaces while interacting with peers, teachers, etc., as well as through structures such as low expectations and hostility toward students from certain geographical regions.

Reflecting social currency based on these forms of capital, Ally, the bilingual Hispanic female participant at a predominantly Hispanic bilingual elementary school, used the welcoming nature of stakeholders at her school to demonstrate the usefulness of her role at the school. She stated that she saw herself bringing “something unique” to her school because the principals and literacy coach “set it up that way,” meaning that they allowed her to have the interaction that caused her to be welcomed in this setting. She used this CMA to be culturally responsive: coordinating meetings with the stakeholders as she implemented a community read-aloud, helping with the parent literacy night, working with students to write poetry, and stepping in to “work with groups of students at designated times, freeing teachers to work more closely with struggling students.” Similarly, Beth described how developing CMA about CLDs resulted in the most positive experience at her school where “several collaborative planning sessions were used to support the lesson design of integrating literacy into authentic student-centered products.” She explained that she had “opportunities to plan [Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration, Organization and Reading to Learn: WICOR] instruction targeted specifically for CLD learners” and to “work with teachers other than English Language Arts teachers to design lessons that embed literacy into all content areas and empower teachers and CLD students.” Varying slightly, Petal, the multilingual Black immigrant

female participant, recognized that her principal, coach, and certain teachers at her predominantly African American middle school were receptive while others seemed less open to her as she tried to support sixth-grade literacy in their classrooms. She used this CMA to build the capacity of teachers from whom she had support, guiding them to reflect on increased student motivation, and eventually convincing other teachers of her commitment to student literacy achievement at the school.

In comparison, Jill and Roland, who felt that they were othered, that is, made to feel like they were different, in their school contexts where teachers perceived them to be an additional challenge, used CMA to seek avenues for impact. In much the same way, Jill spoke of using CMA to bypass the teacher and working to console a first-grade student because he could not understand why his teacher had marked his writing and asked him to rewrite it. This student had yet to have formal instruction in editing and revising his work and therefore did not understand his teacher's intentions or her expectations for the writing task. However, Jill later reflected how her CMA helped with social currency to navigate the context, sharing that she boosted the self-efficacy of a teacher who "had only two years of experience," "low self-efficacy", and "felt she was not as good as the other first grade teachers" by "showing her strengths," being "selective" in her critique of the teacher, "focusing more on writing development," and pointing out positive changes in student behavior. Roland too—aware of the restrictions in teaching children to read and write according to the state-mandated tests based on the administrative requirements at his predominantly Hispanic elementary school—indicated, "I could see where we could do better, but we didn't." Notwithstanding, this LTE bypassed teacher requirements and using CMA, offered more authentic solutions to students for reading and writing when he realized he could not implement his ideas because the teacher with whom he worked was intent on "teaching to the test."

In certain cases, the participants relied on social currency from other stakeholders to facilitate intervention. Jill recalled how her CMA helped her to intervene with a teacher by having a discussion with the principal. She explained that she "talked to the principal about this incident and together [they] talked to the teacher," assuring the teacher that she was not present to disrupt her classroom but to be a source of support, which led the teacher to see her in a different light. Ally, too, shared about an intervention when she faced resistance from a teacher, explaining that the principals and literacy coach redefined her role and changed her assignments when the teacher did not seem open to any sort of feedback that she had to offer. Ally later described how her CMA helped her recognize a time when she should have intervened, explaining that a teacher who had initially resisted her support in the classroom stopped her in the hall as she was walking her students back from lunch, asking, "So what did you think of my teaching?" She indicated that while she did not have a response at the time, her CMA helped her to realize that she should have gone to her classroom after school that day and written notes for the teacher.

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

Our findings from this study indicated that the educators reflected all but one element of [C]MA and they reflected all features of [C]MLA. Among the features of CMA reflected, the educators all seemed to focus more readily on awareness of

pedagogical differences for responding to the needs of CLD students in literacy, which aligned with a significant focus on knowledge of unfamiliar people and events and awareness of other cultures. They recognized the need to focus more intently on the multiple identities that the CLD students reflected as advised by Paris and Alim (2014) and on the role of student as “subject” (Smith & Richards et al., 2017). In doing so, they realized that they could better understand how power was used and misused in the RPP. They were also able to acknowledge the critical nature of multicultural awareness in adopting a critical stance that Scherff (2012) argues is useful for addressing beliefs and predispositions concerning race, power, and inequality in ways that challenged them to be culturally responsive in schools (Ladson-Billings, 2014).

The ability of the educators to capitalize on differences within and across groups and to identify and use social currency across a myriad of contexts suggests that the participants in this study demonstrated cultural and linguistic responsiveness based on features of CMA. Further, they used additional instances based on assumptions about CLDs in the schools to developing CMA and CMLA in their practice. Their capacity to reflect pedagogical responsiveness in navigating classroom situations and contexts while they approached discipline helped address challenges for literacy instruction of CLD students at their designated schools. They were also led to interrogate the implicit racial bias that tends to be directed toward African American and Hispanic children based on the assertion that they are more likely to be aggressive and delinquent, and therefore tend to be dealt with more punitively (see Hannon et al., 2013).

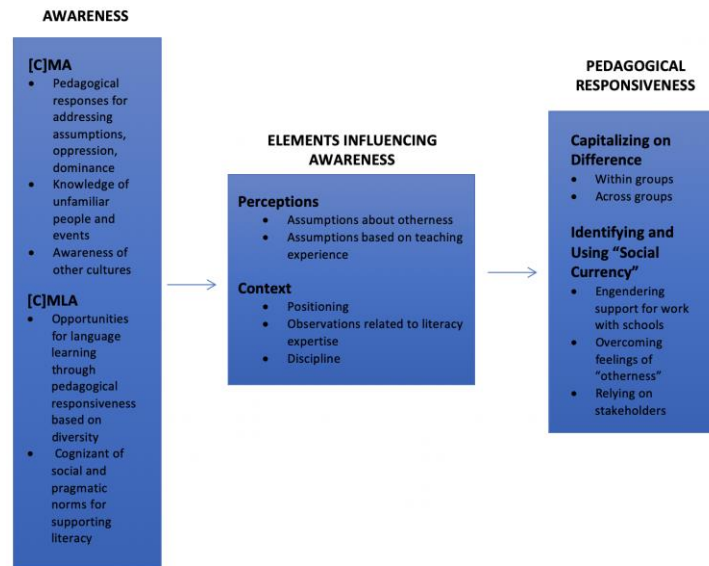
Among the features of [C]MLA, the educators seemed to focus more readily, in much the same way that they did for [C]MA, on the awareness of pedagogical differences for responding to the needs of CLD students in literacy. This seemed to align well with their emphasis on the social and pragmatic norms of the language used to support literacy reflected by [C]MLA as they developed proficiency. It also appeared to explain why focusing on the subject matter of English, as well as other languages and their grammar, phonology, and vocabulary was useful for identifying how the educators impacted literacy in analyzing language with CLDs. The educators learned that an emphasis on pedagogy based on differences steeped in language and culture and a focus on proficiency of English language, coupled with limited critical awareness of how literacy can either reinforce or challenge colonial and oppressive histories, was useful for developing additional [C]MA. Based on these findings, they recognized the need for additional [C]MA that can draw from plurilingualism for democratic citizenship and from students’ popular cultures (Petroni, 2013) as has been deemed critical (Costa et al., 2005) for deconstructing representations of power in relation to culture (Smith, 2018). In doing so, it will become easier for the educators to use [C]MLA to disrupt notions of power surrounding language that are crucial for addressing assumptions about language difference (García, 2015; Harper & de Jong, 2004) in literacy.

Beyond these micro-level indications, the evidence overall has shown that awareness matters in understanding the pedagogical responsiveness of the five LTEs. As illustrated in Figure 1, educators’ responses to students and teachers in the RPP were influenced largely by specific features of awareness. In examining how their responsiveness was influenced by awareness, the educators recognized, through examination of narratives, the importance of creating spaces within RPP interactions where teachers could be privy

to their thoughts about awareness, thoughts that could have been overlooked without the critical insights obtained from the collaborative nature of this research process.

**Figure 1**

*Interrelationships Among Features of Awareness, Elements Influencing Awareness, and Pedagogical Responsiveness*



The study lends support to the influential role of elements—perceptions (of students and teachers) and context—within an RPP, as shown in Figure 1, for identifying how awareness in an RPP relates to responsiveness that reflects capitalizing on difference and identifying and using social currency. Beyond the significance of using these findings about awareness to enhance how LTEs support teachers and CLDs in classrooms, our findings also extend previous research that proposes the use of RPPs as a basis for addressing diversity in schools (Barton & Bevan, 2016; Coburn & Penuel, 2016; Weinstein & Worrell, 2016) by illustrating how educators use awareness in such a context to attend to difference. In doing so, this study highlights the importance of making intentional collaborative research efforts of literacy educators' responses to cultural and linguistic diversity a key element of partnership work. It also confirms the usefulness of having literacy educators use narratives in the form of SPNs (and otherwise) (see Louis et al., 2016) as a means of obtaining their insights about difference that illuminate their awareness regarding language and culture (Smith et al., 2020). Though modest, the transferability of this work is useful for considering how SPNs, in conjunction with collaborative research, can facilitate the professional development of LTEs for diversity across national and international contexts.

Through these findings, this study contributes to the existing body of work on literacy/ELA teacher educators' awareness for responsiveness to linguistic and cultural diversity and extends knowledge about how literacy educators across the globe might

develop awareness in responding to differences in students' languages and cultures (García, 2008; Smith et al., 2016; Smith, 2018). Based on this study, those who oversee literacy educators and wish to prepare them to reflect responsiveness in schools as they work with teachers and CLDs can:

1. Invite literacy educators to first focus on the self by engaging with their own [C]MA and [C]MLA before looking outward to focus on responsiveness for teachers and CLDs in diverse classrooms;
2. Extend beyond multicultural and multilingual awareness in literacy preparation courses, and create opportunities for literacy educators to use SPNs to reflect on their [C]MA and [C]MLA as they work in partnerships such as the one described;
3. Identify and assist literacy educators with the process of collaborative (and often uncomfortable) discussions regarding [C]MA and [C]MLA by enabling them to select and retain partners in school districts where there is much diversity accompanied by a negative connotation of CLDs based on academic performance, regardless of their assets;
4. Provide literacy educators with opportunities to engage with other educators whose diverse viewpoints are dissimilar to their own as a basis for enabling them to be honest regarding their [C]MA and [C]MLA based on interactions with teachers and CLDs in schools;
5. Develop research-practice partnerships with school districts where literacy/English language arts (and other) educators from various schools and classrooms, in conjunction with teachers, K-12 students, and school administrators, can bring a research lens to the data emerging from these ongoing partnerships in ways that highlight the missing insights regarding [C]MA and [C]MLA.

Despite the implications of this study, it is not without limitations. First, the sampling of LTEs who were selected and assigned to schools based on their availability as scholars in the RPP meant that there was no broader group of faculty from which to draw in conducting this study. Second, this was the initial year of the RPP and thus, all stakeholders within the partnership, including the LTEs under examination, were in the process of learning how to undertake their roles, and do so effectively. Third, ideally, we would have liked to have teachers and school administrators besides Beth be a part of the narration of this work so that their perspectives would become more visible in our analysis. However, this was not possible given the overwhelming nature of this first phase of implementation of the RPP. Fourth, in spite of the modest insights from this work, it is not generalizable to other educators given the limited number of educators. Nonetheless, the study can inform other similar populations and contexts.

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Appendix A

Table A1

Data analysis process for research question 1: What are the features of [critical] multicultural awareness and [critical] multilingual awareness reflected by the educators?

Code based on multicultural awareness (MA) in conceptual framework	Frequency per participant	Frequency across participants	Interaction in the RPP (Personal and social engagement between LTEs, teachers and students as LTEs responded to linguistic and cultural difference)	Examples of corresponding excerpts identified in data based on MA code	Examples of corresponding assertions identified in data based on MA code
Aware of instances where forms of diversity are deconstructed or are essentialized	Ally: 5 Petal: 2 Roland: 1	8	1. Hispanic bilingual LTE interaction with CLDs while co-teaching in bilingual classroom	1. "I assumed, one day, that a student who was Hispanic would understand a concept better if I brought in Spanish root words, prefixes, suffixes, but he had no clue what I was talking about. I learned that not all Hispanic children are bilingual." [Roland] [Deconstructed]	1. All Hispanics are bilingual
			2. Black multilingual LTE interaction with CLDs while co-teaching in and reflecting on predominantly African American classrooms	2. "However, being at [name of school] taught me that there was much more to race in addressing issues of diversity as I tried to work on literacy with a predominantly AA population." [Petal] [Deconstructed]	2. All Blacks naturally connect
			3. White monolingual LTE interaction with CLDs while co-teaching in and co-planning for predominantly African American classroom	3. "I hope with this performance art project that the school will see a lower number of behavior problems as the students engage in becoming script writers, rappers, choreographers, artists, etc." [Jill] [Essentialized]	3. All African American children want to be creative artists
			4. Hispanic bilingual LTE interaction with CLDs while co-teaching in and co-planning for bilingual classroom	4. "I realized that I did not immediately know which children were native Spanish speakers and which were native English speakers...I learned not to take anything for granted when it comes to language. The language and literacy experiences are as varied as the children in the classroom... Each [child] has a language story." [Ally] [Deconstructed]	4. Each Hispanic child is an individual
			5. Hispanic bilingual LTE interaction with CLDs while co-teaching in bilingual classroom	5. "Oddly enough, the kids who I thought I could identify with more because of the shared ethnicity didn't speak Spanish all that well if at all" [Roland] [Deconstructed]	5. All Hispanics speak Spanish

Note. Analytical process: Deductively identified conceptual framework codes in data based on educators' interaction in the RPP in relation to their personal and social engagement with the teachers and their CLDs as we responded to cultural and linguistic difference while supporting literacy practice.

**Table A2**

*Data analysis process for research question 2: What elements influenced educators’ awareness?*

Inductive codes derived from raw data	Context, time, and place in the RPP (when and where in LTEs’ experiences in the RPP as they responded to linguistic and cultural difference)	Examples of corresponding excerpts identified in data based on MA code	Corresponding category and sub-categories	Corresponding theme
1. Difference in Spanish and English	1. Initially vs. Later while co-teaching in classroom in RPP	1. Initially: “I did not see many differences between myself and my students, as we are all learners and readers and I am of the same ethnicity and [Spanish-speaking] language background as many of the children.” vs. Later: “I realized that I did not immediately know which children were native Spanish speakers and which were native English speakers...I learned not to take anything for granted when it comes to language. [Ally]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perceptions influencing awareness               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Assumptions about otherness                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Otherness based on perceived similarity</li> <li>▪ Otherness based on perceived difference</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perceptions and contextual elements influencing awareness</li> </ul>
2. Difference in socio-economic status	2. Later vs. Before while analyzing data from classroom in RPP	2. Later: “Something that was a bit surprising to me was the number of students who are not from the local community.” vs. Initially: I should have known this beforehand, due to the dual language program, which attracts people from other parts of [city], who are not low-income and English language learners.” [Ally]		
3. Similarity in race	3. Initially vs. Later while interacting with students across classrooms in RPP	3. Initially: “As a scholar of African descent, I felt that perhaps they might be able to relate to me, and much like the research has said, be more responsive because we shared some affinity in terms of race.” vs. Later: “However, being at [name of school] taught me that there was much more to race in addressing issues of diversity as I tried to work on literacy with a predominantly AA population.” [Petal]		

*Note.* Analytical process: Inductively identified codes, categories, and themes in the “context, time, and place” of narratives about the factors that affected educators’ [C]MA and [C]MLA.

**Table A3**

*Data analysis process for research question 3: In what ways did the features of awareness reflected by educators influence their responsiveness*

Examples of inductive codes derived from raw data	Context, time, and place in the RPP (looking across beginning, middle, and end)	Examples of corresponding excerpts identified in data based on MA code	Corresponding category	Corresponding theme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximizing opportunities for success with stakeholders based on MA</li> <li>• Maximizing opportunities for success with school planning sessions based on MA</li> <li>• Maximizing opportunities for success with receptiveness based on CMA</li> <li>• Maximizing opportunities for success with teachers based on CMA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beginning</li> <li>• Middle to end</li> <li>• Middle to end</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I do see myself as bringing “something unique” to [name of school], but only because the principals and literacy coach set it up that way. They were very deliberate in defining my role with the students and teachers.” [Ally]</li> <li>• “...Several collaborative planning sessions were used to support the lesson design of integrating literacy into authentic student-centered products... [I had] opportunities to plan WICOR instruction targeted specifically for CLD learners.’ [Beth]</li> <li>• “This teacher only had two years of experience, and her self-efficacy was low. She felt she was not as good as the other first grade teachers. I had to boost her self-efficacy by showing her strengths and what she was doing right. I had to be very selective in my critiques. I did not want my comments to add to her feelings of inadequateness. Thus, I tried to focus more on writing development and point out the changes of behavior or particular children (how they were becoming more engaged with their writing).” [Jill]</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification and use of “social currency” (i.e., maximizing opportunities for success using available resources)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Influence of awareness in the responsiveness of educators</li> </ul>

*Note.* Analytical process: Inductively identified codes, categories, and themes in continuity across the beginning, middle, and end of the study to determine how features of awareness influenced educators’ pedagogy in the RPP.

**Appendix B****Table B1***Features of [Critical] Multicultural Awareness Reflected by Literacy Teacher Educators*

*Features of [Critical] Multicultural Awareness		Representation	
		Frequency Across Participants	**Examples of Features
1	Knowledge of unfamiliar people and events	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learning how to understand the underlying meaning behind students' resistant behaviors</li> </ul>
2	Aware of own predispositions	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognizing assumptions made about student socio-economic status</li> </ul>
3	Ability to incorporate varying perspectives	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learning about the backgrounds of children and teaching them about one's own background</li> </ul>
4	Aware of other cultures	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifying the differences across sub-populations</li> </ul>
5	Knowledge of multiple cultures	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using knowledge of culture beyond one's own to find commonality</li> </ul>
6	Aware of skills for acquiring knowledge and awareness of other cultures	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Asking questions to learn about new cultures</li> </ul>
7	Aware of instances where culture is romanticized	-	-
8	Aware of instances where an "other" is treated as subject and/or object	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Growing the skill set of students</li> </ul>
9	Aware of instances where forms of diversity are deconstructed or essentialized	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All Hispanics are bilingual</li> <li>All Blacks naturally connect</li> </ul>
10	Aware of voices of both minorities and majorities and differences within these	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Immigrant Blacks and American Blacks bring differences to each other when they connect</li> </ul>
11	Aware of erroneous assumptions, injustice, and oppression across a range of dominant ideologies	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Black students interrupt, cause disruptions</li> <li>Children from low socio-economic backgrounds don't like books</li> </ul>
12	Aware of the use and misuse of power at various levels	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishing norms that result in invisibility of student language and culture</li> </ul>
13	Aware of the role in deconstructing or reinforcing incorrect or oppressive norms and forms of power at all levels	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low expectations</li> <li>Inappropriate classroom management strategies</li> <li>Rigidity of instruction</li> </ul>
14	Aware of pedagogical responses that can be used or misused to address erroneous assumptions, various forms of oppression and dominance at varying levels	27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using questions to learn from CLDs</li> <li>Disallowing or not instructing the use of cultural artifacts and references in writing</li> <li>Overreliance on worksheets</li> <li>Teaching of skills at the expense of strategies</li> </ul>

*Note.* \*Numbers 1–6 are features of MA. Numbers 7–14 are features of [C]MA. Each feature represents a code. Numbers 15–17 are features of MLA. Numbers 18–20 are features of [C]MLA. Each element represents a code. \*\*Excerpts from the data that reflect these features are visible throughout the second and third sections of the findings that relate to research questions 2 and 3.

**Table B2**

*Features of [Critical] Multilingual Awareness*

*Features of [Critical] Multilingual Awareness		Representation	
		Frequency Across Participants	**Examples of Features
15	Aware of social and pragmatic norms of the language an educator uses to support literacy—proficiency	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflection of difference in oral language</li> <li>• Usefulness of Spanish language background for connecting with Spanish-speaking students</li> <li>• Differences between the language of educators and the African-American students</li> </ul>
16	Aware of the subject-matter of the language, grammar, phonology, vocabulary and how it impacts literacy—analysis	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neither English nor Spanish knowledge</li> <li>• Challenge with written English while seeming excellent in Spanish</li> </ul>
17	Aware of ability to create opportunities for learning language through literacy in the classroom—pedagogy	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching English through Spanish literacy</li> <li>• Embedding literacy in content areas</li> </ul>
18	Aware of the ways that literacy draws from plurilingualism for democratic citizenship—plural	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role of various slangs</li> <li>• Using home language to enhance writing</li> <li>• Differences in dialects across countries</li> </ul>
19	Aware of how literacy is used to reinforce or challenge colonial and oppressive histories—critical	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of relevant literature</li> <li>• Disallowing Spanish in English essays</li> <li>• Disallowing Spanish speaking in classrooms</li> </ul>
20	Aware of how literacy uses language to reflect its unending social creation and change—transformative	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dynamic nature of dialect and of language</li> </ul>

*Note.* \*Numbers 15–17 are features of MLA. Numbers 18–20 are features of [C]MLA. Each element represents a code. \*\*Excerpts from the data that reflect these features are visible throughout the second and third sections of the findings that relate to research questions 2 and 3.

**Appendix C**  
Scholarly Personal Narrative Prompts

**ADVOCACY FOR CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE LEARNERS:  
LEARNING FROM THE LESSONS OF LITERACY EDUCATORS IN UNDERPERFORMING  
SCHOOLS**

**SECTION A**  
**GENERAL QUESTIONS**

1. In general, describe your experiences working at (assigned school).
2. What are the most positive aspects of your experience working at (assigned school)?
3. What are your most negative aspects of your experience working at (assigned school)?
4. Do you perceive your role as one that brings “something unique” to your assigned school? If so, please describe fully what you perceive to add to the institution by working at assigned school.

**SECTION B**  
**EXPERIENCES PREPARING TEACHERS AT ASSIGNED SCHOOL**

1. How would you describe your interactions with teachers at your assigned school?
2. How would you describe the experiences of the teachers working to teach literacy to CLD learners at your assigned school? What did you perceive about the teachers’ literacy instruction with CLD students that differed from your expectations? Please explain differences in expectations between you and the teachers in terms of how they approached CLD learners. Please provide examples.
3. Have you ever experienced feeling inadequate or inept to deal with the challenges faced by teachers in teaching literacy to CLD learners at your assigned school? If so, please describe? If not, please describe the ways in which you felt capable of dealing with the challenges that teachers faced in teaching literacy to CLD learners.
4. What is the most positive experience you have had preparing teachers to teach literacy to CLD learners at your assigned school? Please describe. Provide examples.
5. What is the most negative experience you have had preparing teachers to teach literacy to CLD learners at your assigned school? Please describe. Provide examples.
6. What did you learn about your multicultural awareness as you worked to prepare teachers to teach literacy to CLD learners at your assigned school? What factors would you say influenced this awareness?
7. What did you learn about your multilingual awareness as you worked to prepare teachers to teach literacy to CLD learners at your assigned school? What factors would you say influenced this awareness?

8. How do you perceive a change in who you were and how you taught as a result of working to prepare teachers to teach literacy to CLD learners at your assigned school?

**SECTION C**  
**EXPERIENCES WITH CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE**  
**STUDENTS AT ASSIGNED SCHOOL**

1. How would you describe your interaction with CLD students at your assigned school?
2. What are your perceptions about the focal challenges faced by CLD learners at your assigned school? What are your perceptions about the focal challenges faced by CLD learners in literacy at your assigned school?
3. Do you perceive that CLD learners face challenges with language? Cultural adjustment? If so, in what ways did you perceive that these challenges were faced?
4. Did you perceive that you understood the experiences of the CLD learners at your assigned school? What did you perceive about the CLD students as you worked at the assigned school that differed from your expectations? Please explain differences in expectations between your previous notions and your current notions. Please explain how CLD learners played a role in helping you develop your current notions. Please provide examples.
5. Have you ever experienced feeling inadequate or inept to deal with the challenges faced by CLD learners at your assigned school? If so, please describe.
6. Have you ever experienced feeling capable of dealing with the challenges faced by CLD learners at your assigned school? If so, please describe the ways in which you felt capable of dealing with these challenges.
7. In what ways do you view yourself differently from the CLD learners? What ways do you see differences? What ways do you see similarities?
8. Did CLD learners perceive you to be different from them? If so, what experiences have informed you that they perceive you as different from them?
9. Have you had situations in which CLD learners treated you in ways that made you feel like you did not belong or did not understand them? If so, please describe how they related to you that provided you with evidence about how they considered you to be different.
10. Have you had situations in which CLD learners treated you in ways that made you feel like you did understand them? If so, please describe how they related to you that provided you with evidence about how they considered you to be similar.
11. What is the most positive experience you have had as you interacted with CLD learners at your assigned school? Please describe. Provide examples.
12. What is the most negative experience you have had preparing teachers to teach literacy to CLD learners at your assigned school? Please describe. Provide examples.

13. What did you learn about your multicultural awareness as you interacted with CLD learners at your assigned school? What factors would you say influenced this awareness?
14. What did you learn about your multilingual awareness as you interacted with CLD learners at your assigned school? What factors would you say influenced this awareness?

#### **SECTION D**

##### **CULTURAL AND LANGUAGE DIFFERENCES AT ASSIGNED SCHOOL**

1. What was your general feeling overall as you addressed the language needs of CLD learners and as you prepared teachers to teach literacy to these learners? How did your awareness of their cultural difference affect your responses?
2. What was your general feeling overall as you addressed the cultural needs of CLD learners and as you prepared teachers to teach literacy to these learners? How did your awareness of their cultural difference affect your responses?
3. What has been your general feeling about how CLD learners interpreted your use of language to interact with them as you prepared teachers to teach literacy to these learners at your assigned school?
4. What has been your general feeling about how CLD learners interpreted your response to their cultural differences as you interacted with them in your preparation of their teachers to teach literacy to these learners at your assigned school?
5. What struggles or challenges you faced, if any, from CLD learners as you responded to their cultural differences in your preparation of their teachers to teach literacy to these learners at your assigned school? Describe.
6. Please share any other thoughts, sentiments, and perceptions you may have about your experience working at your assigned school that provides insights into your learning about your multilingual and multicultural awareness.

**Thank you for participating in this inquiry.**