

# Preparing culturally and linguistically responsive teachers of multilingual learners through teacher research

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## Abstract

This article presents an overview of Project ELEECT (English Learners' Educational Excellence Capitol Teacher Training Project), a U.S. Department of Education-funded program designed to prepare teachers in Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Pedagogy (CLRP) for multilingual learners (ML). The purpose of Project ELEECT is to promote educational justice for MLs by revising a Master of Arts + ESL Licensure program for pre-service teachers and creating a professional development program for in-service teachers. It prepares pre-service and in-service teachers of MLs in CLRP through teacher research, and specifically offers a novel professional learning tool, which we call Impact on Learning Studies (IOLS). This teacher research tool represents a framework for the systematic and intentional self-study of their teaching practices. In this article, we lay the foundations for a research agenda that investigates pre-service and in-service teachers' understanding and implementation of CLRP, documents concrete examples of CLRP in various classroom contexts, and examines the efficacy of teacher research initiatives to prepare teachers in CLRP. Project ELEECT prepares teachers to invite students' cultural and linguistic experiences into their classrooms, create spaces for CLRP, and foster critical consciousness in learning settings, thus taking a major shift towards cultivation of anti-racist dispositions in education.

**Keywords** teacher education, linguistically responsive pedagogy, culturally relevant pedagogy, multilingual learners, teacher research

## 1. Introduction

We are at a critical juncture for educational justice in this country. The COVID-19 pandemic interrupted schooling for thousands of students, further widening gaps in schooling outcomes between historically marginalized youth and their more affluent counterparts. This has compounded the historical inequities resulting from the miseducation of generations of students of color (Lewis, et. al, 2022; Kuhfeld, et. al, 2022; West & Lake, 2021). Within schools, teachers remain the most impactful factor for student success. While the student population becomes increasingly more racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse, the teaching force remains overwhelmingly white and female – even as research finds that a diverse teaching force results in strong benefits for all students (Goldhaber et al., 2019; Rafa & Roberts, 2020). The teaching force also is under strain. High levels of stress and burnout contribute to turnover in the field and result in critical teacher shortages (Pressley, 2021; Robinson, et al, 2023; Steiner & Woo, 2021). These shortages often are exacerbated in areas that serve the students with the

greatest needs, creating an unjust cycle that is deeply linked to larger structures of poverty, racism, and other forces of marginalization across local, state, and national levels (Sutcher et al., 2016; 2019; Warren, 2014).

Educational justice is a linchpin for social justice, and is predicated on an anti-racist, equity-oriented, culturally and linguistically responsive teaching force (Levinson, 2022). Anti-racism is an active process to recognize, interrupt, and dismantle racism at the structural, institutional, and personal level (Kendi, 2023). An equity orientation situates students with the greatest need at the center of decision-making. A culturally and linguistically responsive approach to education decenters the normalized cultural and linguistic identity of learners and values and affirms all students' cultural knowledge, practices, languages, and ways of being in schools (Bassey, 2016; Cochran-Smith & Keefe, 2022; Ladson-Billings, 1995; 2009; Paris, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2017). As it equips all students to achieve academically, it also fosters students' cultural dexterity and develops students' ability to critique social inequity. A culturally and linguistically responsive approach to teacher education moves us closer to educational justice (Cochran-Smith, 2020). This is

especially relevant for multilingual learners (ML)<sup>1</sup> who are situated at the nexus of multiple axes of inequity. This includes a history of structural patterns which have worked to concentrate racialized students, including MLs, into neighborhoods and schools along lines of race and class. It also includes current patterns of gentrification, which stand to impact the dynamics of access in neighborhoods and schools across the country.

In our teacher preparation program, the Georgetown University Teacher Residency Program, we believe that fostering an effective teaching force for MLs could be a catalyst for educational justice across the country. Funded by a 5-year US Department of Education National Professional Development grant, Georgetown University's English Learners' Educational Excellence Capitol Teacher Training Project (Project ELEEECT) extends the reach and impact of our teacher residency program through two avenues. As a group of faculty leading Project ELEEECT, we aim to transform the education of MLs by (1) preparing 36 new teachers through our MA in Educational Transformation and licensure teacher residency program and (2) strengthening the professional repertoire of 100 in-service teachers through a hybrid professional development certificate program. Anchored by an anti-racist lens, Project ELEEECT integrates culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogical approaches for literacy instruction, with intrapersonal dispositional development for aspiring and experienced teachers strengthening the teaching force across the career trajectory. These efforts are iteratively informed and strengthened by an active research agenda, which collects data at multiple intervals from the partner schools, residents, mentors, and professional development participants as well as from student learning artifacts.

The purpose of Project ELEEECT is to serve as a catalyst for educational justice in linguistically, racially, and socially diverse settings, such as Washington, DC, the context of this work. In this paper, we provide a conceptual overview of how Project ELEEECT responds to the needs of MLs and their teachers in this city's unique schooling landscape. We first review the challenges of preparing teachers of MLs, both nationally and regionally. We then review the conceptual underpinnings of Project ELEEECT and our conception of educational justice, after which we more specifically discuss the ways in which this project responds to the social justice needs of MLs and their educators through both its pre-service and in-service teacher education initiatives. We conclude by articulating the research agenda that will inform the empirical work that stems from this project. This article serves three purposes. First, it serves as a review of literature, with the intention to identify knowledge gaps, related to the challenges of preparing teachers of MLs and the role of culturally and linguistically sustaining pedagogy (CLRP) in teacher preparation. Secondly, it provides the conceptual foundations for a novel contribution of Project ELEEECT, which is to integrate CLRP in teacher preparation through

teacher research. Finally, it serves to articulate the project's emerging research agenda, which is constructed to empirically explore the gaps in knowledge that are highlighted throughout the article.

## 2. The Challenges of Preparing Teachers of MLs

The question of how to effectively prepare teachers of MLs is a challenging one due to a general lack of consistency in how MLs are understood and labeled, how they are educated, and how their teachers are prepared (Leider et al., 2021). As the most rapidly growing group of students in the US, minoritized MLs are largely misunderstood in both research and practice and are often "bureaucratically labeled [as] English Learners" (Alfaro, 2018, p. 4). Research demonstrates that how teachers perceive and treat their MLs directly impacts their learning outcomes (Cho et al., 2023; Pettit, 2011; Polat et al., 2019). This challenge is exacerbated when teachers misunderstand the intersection of the cultural, linguistic, and socio-political circumstances their MLs face.

This national lack of consistency in the preparation and credentialing of teachers of MLs is also reflected in DC, specifically, where the PK-12 schooling landscape is complex, fragmented, and marked by a confusing array of governmental agencies and entities that can lay claim to at least some role in the governance of public schooling in DC (OSSE, 2022). Three elements of this governmental structure predominate: 1) the extensive enrollment of students in publicly-funded but independently-operated, charter schools; 2) a system of mayoral control, rather than school board-control, within the traditional public school system (DCPS); 3) the lack of DC statehood means that school children and their parents are not represented within federal policy-making structures, despite paying taxes at the federal level. Note that charter schools – which educate nearly half of all DC students who attend publicly-funded schools – do not require teachers to be certified.

A top priority for teacher preparation programs in the DC area is the need to train teachers who reflect the racial, cultural, and linguistic diversity of the city (Miles & Shockley, 2022) and to provide teachers curricular standards that are rooted in an antiracist lens (Sutter & Jue, 2021). According to a recent report from the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), while there are approximately 26 MLs for every teacher, less than half of those teachers are certified to teach English as a Second Language (ESL) (2022). In fact, there is one ESL-certified teacher in the District of Columbia for 60 MLs (OSSE, 2022). While teacher training clearly has an impact on the quality of teachers (Cochran-Smith, 2003), it is worrisome that nearly half of the MLs in DC are educated in schools that do not require certification. Thus, there is a chronic and persistent undersupply of teachers with the knowledge and skills required to meet the needs of MLs appropriately

for MLs more generally. However, we recognize that the current data related to ELs is not fully reflective of the cultural, linguistic, and academic diversity of MLs in Washington, DC.

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<sup>1</sup> We use the term Multilingual Learner (ML) to reflect linguistically minoritized students including, but not limited to, students labeled as English Learners (ELs) by schools. We discuss data related to ELs because it gives us some insight into the current educational landscape

and effectively.

Critical and justice-oriented research has identified a need to understand MLs' learning circumstances more deeply, as well as to make space to draw on their individual, family, and community knowledges as learning resources (see for example, Catalano & Hamann, 2016; Darling-Hammond et al., 2020; Ramírez, Faltis, & de Jong, 2018). For the most part, the preparation of teachers of MLs focuses on aspects of teaching that include instructional methods, content-area instruction, assessment, differentiation, and data-informed instruction (Kananu Kiramba et al., 2022). However, other important parts of the knowledge base of teaching MLs include understanding how local, state, and federal policies impact MLs and how they are taught (Coady et al., 2020), as well as the ability to apply flexibility to teaching MLs (Whitehead & Greenier, 2019). García and Kleyn (2013) argue that all teachers must deeply understand MLs and their families, have knowledge of how language and multilingualism work, and an awareness of how language, culture, and identity are co-constructed in classroom contexts.

In sum, MLs face inconsistency in both how they are educated and how their teachers are educated. In this section, we have reviewed evidence of the challenges related to preparing teachers of MLs and how those challenges manifest nationally and locally. Ultimately, MLs still do not receive a comparable education, in terms of access, opportunities, or outcomes, compared to their monolingual peers. We take this as evidence of a gap in both conceptual and practical knowledge of effective pedagogies for MLs, and what potential impact they have on MLs' academic outcomes. As teacher education is one area where we can respond to this challenge, we now turn to defining the conceptual tenets of what we refer to as Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Pedagogy (CLRP), as a framework for better preparing teachers of MLs.

### 3. Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Pedagogy for MLs

We see CLRP in schooling contexts, content, processes, and personnel as key to educational justice for MLs. Disrupting generations of oppressive education practices requires the reimagining of how learning and teaching occur in classrooms. Educators who are culturally and linguistically responsive are essential to these efforts (Akiba et al., 2010). This means that the teaching force must grow to reflect the lived experiences of all students more closely and must be equipped to value and validate diverse lived experiences.

Drawing on multiple bodies of literature, we define CLRP as those instructional practices that 1) recognize and counter deficit-based perceptions of racialized, multilingual students and their language practices (Flores & Rosa, 2015; Rosa & Flores, 2017); 2) reject monoglossic enactments of multilingualism in schools to incorporate all of students' linguistic resources for learning (García et al., 2021); 3) center students' lived realities and cultural experiences to facilitate learning while developing their sociopolitical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 1995; 2022);

4) evaluate and counter structural inequities in pedagogy and in advocacy within their school settings (Gay, 2010); and 5) teaching with critical consciousness (Cervantes-Soon et al., 2017). Teachers of MLs must be able to analyze how larger structural dynamics may play into their school-level practices as they design pedagogies and policies.

To provide teachers with CLRP training and tools starts with the intention to design learning contexts, communities, experiences, and assessment practices that center the ways of knowing, ways of being, and ways of doing language of Black, Indigenous, and students of color (Paris, 2012). In other words, training teachers in CLRP means to prepare teachers to embrace and connect students' cultural knowledge, lived experiences, and unique perspectives to promote equity and solidarity across culturally and linguistically diverse communities. More generally, the purpose of CLRP is to not only facilitate students' academic achievement, but also their ability to critique existing social orders and question dominant power structures in their communities from an explicitly anti-racist stance (Paris & Alim, 2017).

When it comes to teaching MLs with CLRP, translanguaging is a key theoretical and pedagogical approach that centers the dynamic and flexible ways that MLs draw on the entirety of their communicative resources and practices to participate in the classroom (García, 2009). Specifically, a translanguaging stance calls on teachers of MLs to not only open space in the classroom for MLs to engage in non-standard language and literacy practices, but also to prepare students to critically interrogate the ways that language and power, at a sociopolitical level, shape the educational opportunities, experiences, and outcomes of MLs of color (García, Johnson, & Seltzer, 2017; Otheguy, García, & Reid, 2015; Li Wei & García, 2022). Some research has already explored integrating translanguaging in teacher education, mostly focused on challenging preservice teachers' beliefs about translanguaging and unpacking opposing language ideologies (Barros et al., 2020; Deroo & Ponzio, 2019, 2021; España, Herrera, & Garcia, 2019; Gorter & Arocena, 2020; Martínez et al., 2015; Musanti & Rodríguez, 2017; Rodríguez et al., 2021). In the context of this work, we push against narrow definitions of translanguaging pedagogy that position it as only a linguistically responsive pedagogy, in which it is only used to scaffold content comprehension and literacy development for MLs. Instead, we take a critical stance towards translanguaging pedagogy and view it as one that aims to fulfill all four tenets of CLRP, as defined here. Part of the purpose of Project ELEEECT is not just to prepare teachers to use it in their own classrooms, but also to explore innovate ways to teach with translanguaging as a CLRP in our teacher residency program.

Teachers continue to need further support and agency to learn about, implement, and innovate with CLRP as a potentially more equitable pedagogical approach for MLs (Min et al., 2022). While there is a wealth of theoretical knowledge about CLRP, there is a persisting research gap between the conceptual tenets of CLRP and their practical applications in teacher education. We take as an important starting point the need to better understand what CLRP looks like in practice. Therefore, a

central focus of Project ELEECT is to prepare teachers to explore the pedagogical applications of CLRP through teacher research, and to use these activities as tools to empirically document their teaching practices.

## 4. Teacher Research as Professional Development

Professional learning activities that implement teacher-centered collaboration and teacher research have proven to be effective in preparing teachers to support all learners, not just MLs (Akiba & Liang, 2016; Clandinin & Connelly, 1995). Johnson and Golombek (2020) make the case that teacher educators must prepare future teachers to engage in self-inquiry, asking them to interrogate who they are and who they wish to become in terms of their pedagogical practices for MLs. Teacher research can provide such opportunities, as it asks practitioners to identify problems in their professional and community contexts with the goal of change or improvement through intentional pedagogical action (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993; 1998; Stremmel, 2007; Stringer, 2007). It can take a wide variety of forms, but generally involves research practices conducted by teachers, both individually and collaboratively, to better understand and serve the academic and socioemotional needs of their students. It stems from teachers' context-specific self-reflections and is carried out through intentional and systematic examination of teaching and learning in their own classroom contexts (Cochran-Smith, 2005; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999).

Teacher research supports both pre-service and in-service to develop skills of critical self-reflection and increases their professional autonomy (DiLucchio & Leaman, 2022), both of which are vital to CLRP. To implement CLRP effectively requires that teachers engage in critical reflection on their own social positionalities as they relate to power, oppression, and schooling so that they can account for them and respond to those of their students (Gay, 2010; Rutten & Wolkenhauer, 2023). It also requires teachers to implement pedagogies that are effective for student learning and growth. As such, teachers need space to engage in critical, reflexive inquiry that considers their actions, student learning, and the sociopolitical dynamics in which these occur. A stance of reflective inquiry serves teachers' professional and social justice needs as it centers their knowledge and expertise for change in the classroom (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2015).

## 5. Exploring CLRP through Teacher Research

Project ELEECT is a unique initiative that seeks to enhance the education of MLs by providing professional development opportunities for practicing teachers and a graduate education-based licensure pathway for aspiring teachers. By creating a collaborative learning environment, teachers at various career-points can integrate CLRP into their professional practice, thereby improving the educational outcomes of MLs (Yoon, 2023). Project

ELEECT has two goals. The first is to strengthen a pathway for pre-service teachers of multilingual learners to attain a K-12 ESL teacher certification and a master's degree in one year through a residency-based program that combines coursework and clinical experiences in partner schools. The second goal is to provide professional development to in-service teachers to support their ability to implement culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogies (CLRP) into their instruction for MLs.

Through its two overarching goals, Project ELEECT engages educators at all stages of their careers. Aspiring teachers benefit from a residency-based educator preparation program that overcomes structural barriers to entry into the profession. Practicing educators committed to the profession, youth, families, and communities also seek professional development activities to continually develop their skills in response to emerging research and the needs of diverse learners. Leading educators or mentor teachers have the opportunity to grow professionally through reflective practice and mentoring aspiring teachers, thereby magnifying their impact on the education system. A unifying factor of the initiative is job-embedded training oriented toward CLRP that is implemented for teachers at all three positions.

### ***Goal 1: Widening the pipeline of teachers for MLs in DC***

Georgetown University's teacher preparation program involves full-time residency in DC schools, where preservice teachers work as co-teachers and undertake teacher preparation coursework. The program emphasizes CLRP that supports justice-oriented approaches to instruction for MLs. Project ELEECT will provide 36 preservice teachers a pathway to MA + ESL licensure that includes training on effective, data-driven instruction for MLs rooted in the theoretical and sociopolitical commitments of CLRP.

Research indicates that residency program graduates consistently have higher retention rates than their peers at the three- and five-year mark (Guha et al., 2017; Silva et al., 2014; Solomon, 2009). A growing body of research indicates the effectiveness of teachers prepared in residency programs regarding improved student academic outcomes (Marshall et al., 2021; Papay et al., 2012). Taken together, research indicating the effectiveness of educators prepared through residency-based programs, along with the higher retention rates for residency programs graduates, demonstrates the strong potential a residency-based teacher preparation program must contribute to an effective, stable group of teachers of MLs.

The project aims to recruit and retain a diverse group of participants, including those from traditionally underrepresented groups in the teaching profession. The program includes a number of interlocking and reinforcing elements: 1) a targeted recruitment plan; 2) a residency-based model in which preservice teachers receive a salary and work full-time in DC schools as resident co-teachers in collaboration with a school-based expert mentor-teacher; 3) a concurrent program of teacher preparation coursework over the course of twelve months that is purposefully intertwined with their teaching experience; and 4) a commitment to place residents in high-needs schools to ensure residents gain extensive clinical hours of

experience with students with the greatest need. The program also implements a deep and intentional commitment to asset-based pedagogies, which are proven to support MLs across instructional contexts.

**Goal 2: Preparing in-service teachers to meet the needs of their MLs**

The second goal of Project ELEECT is to design and implement a professional development (PD) program for in-service teachers in K-12 education to improve their skills in teaching with literacy instruction approaches rooted in CLRP for MLs. The program utilizes a focused needs assessment and multiple modalities, such as workshops, coaching, in-person instruction and asynchronous on-line sessions, classroom observations, and targeted feedback. The project will provide a hybrid PD program for 100 in-service teachers over four years, to cohorts of 25 teachers. The English Learners Equity and Excellence Professional Development Certificate is designed to provide DC teachers with CLRP knowledge and skills they need to effectively teach MLs. The course is applicable to teachers in various content areas and settings and focuses on developing tools and practices that center anti-racist frameworks for literacy instruction, such as culturally relevant (Ladson-Billings, 1995), culturally-sustaining (Paris & Alim, 2017), and translanguaging pedagogies (García, 2009). The course also emphasizes equitable practices to support content literacy growth in any subject area to promote academic excellence.

The modules in the course cover various topics related to multilingualism, raciolinguistic ideologies, culturally relevant pedagogy, and more. Through online and in-person discussions and meetings, the course aims to establish an environment for fair, equitable, and meaningful exchange of ideas, critical reflection on teaching practices, and bridge the gap between conceptual coursework and practical classroom experiences. By the end of the course, teachers are able to identify the influence of raciolinguistic ideologies, conduct equity assessments, and apply CLRP in their professional contexts.

The final weeks are dedicated to critical self-reflection and encourages participants to reflect on their personal, professional, and collective growth and development as culturally and linguistically responsive teachers. The course aims to generate spaces for collective discussion, professional networking, and collaborative learning through online discussion boards, remote group meetings, and in-person meetings. The goal is to establish an environment for fair, equitable, and meaningful exchange of questions, concerns, experiences, and ideas, and to create a bridge between conceptual coursework and practical classroom experiences that reflect the goal of more equitably teaching multilingual learners.

Although Project ELEECT consists of specific goals for pre-service and in-service teacher training, there are two important components of teacher preparation that run across both goals. Specifically, we ask participants to engage in practitioner-led research through the use of *Impact on Learning Studies*, as a hallmark feature of both goals. We discuss each in more detail in the following section.

## 6. Teacher Research through Impact on Learning Studies

A hallmark feature of the current residency-based MA + ESL Licensure curriculum are multiple course assignments called Impact on Learning Studies (IOLS), in which students examine the impact of their practice on K-12 student learning outcomes in various ways. These teacher research studies are conducted at multiple intervals throughout the year and require our candidates to identify specific questions related to their instruction, collect and utilize a variety of instructional and student data, and interpret its significance as to inform their future instruction. These assignments are incorporated consistently across the candidates' program of study. Generally, teacher residents are asked to lead and generate a written report for a research project that examines some issue of language and literacy development for MLs in their instructional contexts. They share relevant background information about the ML student(s) they work with, generate research questions and a data collection plan, analyze data, connect findings to other relevant research or literature, and share their results with their cohort of colleagues. As teacher candidates apply new practices and collect real student data in their residency placements, these IOLS activities also serve as an important avenue for training and professional development through teacher research.

In the professional development portion of Project ELEECT, an important priority is to improve in-service teachers' ability to use student data to inform small group literacy instruction for MLs aligned with CLRP. For in-service teachers, the IOLS consists of four parts. First, teachers identify a practical question, issue, or challenge related to their literacy practices, then plan a strategic change in practice that aims to implement CLRP. Teachers then document the implementation of their change in practice, collect and analyze data related to its results, and critically reflect on their significance for future practice. Finally, teachers reflect more deeply on the data and what it tells them about the success of their change in practice and what they learned about engaging CLRP for MLs. They are also asked to articulate further questions or specific ways in which they will continue their line of inquiry into future practice. For each IOLS cycle, the professional development participants present a written or oral report of their IOLS to the rest of their colleagues in the course. This creates an important opportunity for teachers to collaboratively examine the implications of their research studies and the ways in which they could extend to a variety of instructional contexts.

## 7. Conclusions and Implications

Beyond the project activities described so far, an overarching purpose of Project ELEECT is to respond to gaps in research and practice-based challenges related to anti-racist and equity-oriented education for MLs highlighted earlier in the article. Taking these gaps into consideration, Project ELEECT will investigate numerous related research questions throughout its duration.

Therefore, the purpose of this final section is to articulate our emerging research agenda and how we aim to contribute to research gaps related to how teachers learn about and implement CLRP for MLs. Our research agenda consists of three primary questions or areas of interest, from which other research threads will certainly emerge.

First, we are interested in learning about both pre-service and in-service teachers' ability to understand and implement effective, evidence-based pedagogies for MLs. We are interested in research questions, including: (1) How do pre- and in-service teachers understand CLRP? (2) What school-based factors facilitate the implementation of CLRP? (3) What school-based factors hinder the implementation of CLRP? We will collect data through coursework and class artifacts (such as IOLS), semi-structured interviews, and classroom observations to specifically investigate how the teachers across both project goals understand and implement literacy and content-area instructional strategies for ML with CLRP, and the extent to which they are able to do so consistently. In exploring this question, we hope to contribute some consistency in the knowledge base of effective content-area and literacy instruction for MLs.

Second, our research agenda also aims to build connections between the conceptual knowledge of CLRP and its applications in both instructional practice and teacher preparation. We take as an important starting point the need to better understand what CLRP looks like in practice. Given the complex nature of DC's schooling landscape, it is important to identify many empirical examples of concrete ways that it can take shape as an approach rooted in education justice for MLs, such as critical literacy (Freire & Macedo, 1987), culturally relevant pedagogies (Ladson-Billings, 1995), and culturally sustaining pedagogies (Paris 2012; Paris & Alim, 2017). Therefore, our second research purpose is to document affirmative examples of CLRP across multiple classroom contexts. We will document these examples primarily through classroom observations across three cohorts of pre-service and in-service teachers.

Third, we will examine two specific ways to support both pre-service and in-service teachers' operationalization of CLRP and teacher research. We will specifically explore the intersection between the two through the use of IOLS activities. We use the IOLS as a pedagogical tool to generate opportunities for teacher research for pre-service and in-service teachers, as well as an avenue to provide professional development. Additionally, we draw on IOLS as a methodological tool to collect evidence of teachers' pedagogical orientations, practices, learnings, and reflections. From this data, we will analyze how teacher research can support the development of CLRP, and the extent to which IOLS serves as a tool for this. In our pre-service program, students will engage IOLS assignments in the majority of their courses. Further, we will collect at least two IOLS examples from three-cohorts of in-service teachers in the professional development program.

We do, however, anticipate some limitations related to the project's research agenda. For example, empirical tools that can move beyond documentation of affirmative examples of CLRP are not consolidated in an instrument

that systematically captures the extent to which teachers are able to effectively implement CLRP. In other words, we are currently limited to descriptive analysis of CLRP in practice rather than a prescriptive analysis of teachers' ability to effectively engage CLRP. In general, measuring a teacher's ability to teach for equity, social justice, and diversity is a challenge that teacher educators face across a variety of contexts (Chang & Cochran-Smith, 2022). Further, classroom observations and IOLS assignments as tools of data collection are limited in providing evidence and the extent of that evidence about teachers' knowledge, perspectives, learnings, and dispositions towards social and educational justice. What they do not capture are the contextual factors that shape, and often inhibit, teachers' agency to practice self-led inquiry (Taylor & Lelliot, 2022). Empirically tested and validated tools would contribute to the second research purpose of Project ELEEECT that will support teachers' abilities to implement effective examples of CLRP in practice. This would further allow teachers to identify teaching practices that improve educational achievement of MLs. This represents a possible avenue for methodological innovation.

To conclude, this article proposes a research agenda that examines multilingual learners, teachers, and schools functioning in a highly complex, multi-layered system of educational inequity. Educational and social justice require a dispositional change in all stakeholders that can be imbibed into a training program that allows analytical development of the larger structural dynamics interplaying in school level practices, pedagogies, and policies. Project ELEEECT responds by preparing teachers who invite students' cultural and linguistic experiences into their classrooms, create spaces for CLRP, and allow them to evaluate their sociopolitical consciousness in learning settings, thus taking a major shift towards cultivation of anti-racist dispositions in education.

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### Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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