

The Continuum of Racial Literacies: Teacher Practices Countering Whitestream Bilingual Education

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An equitable education for linguistically minoritized and racialized-Othered youth fosters their biliteracy and critical consciousness about racial ideologies. Yet little is known about how or whether secondary-level dual-language bilingual-education programs and teachers seek to enhance students' critical consciousness—especially as a means of grappling with racist ideologies. Drawing together literacy and race studies in education, I theorize a continuum of racial literacies, then employ it to examine dual-language curriculum and instruction practices. I use interview and classroom-observation data to reveal that a racially diverse dual-language program offered more racial-literacy practices on the hegemonic end of the continuum than the counterhegemonic end. Using teachers' practices as an index of their program's stance on racial literacy, I argue that the program provided a whitestream bilingual education: it offered biliteracy schooling through hegemonic racial-literacy practices that perpetuate white supremacy. The teachers' successes and challenges speak to the need for structural attention to resources, training, and program-wide support for critical-racial-literacy practices. I conclude the article by joining calls for bilingual education to enhance youths' critical-racial consciousness, adding racial to signal the need to be intentional in teaching about and countering racism, colonialism, and imperialism.

For racialized-Othered¹ youth marginalized by systemic inequalities based on immigrant status and/or language, bilingual education has the potential to provide equity by nurturing their language repertoires and by advancing antiracist, anti-imperialist, and decolonizing understandings. Indeed, enhancing students' knowledge of past and present structural racism and using critical pedagogy to teach them how to act against oppression are crucial to educational equity (e.g., Cabrera et al., 2014). Yet the bilingual-education field historically has been focused, arguably, on language acquisition (Grinberg & Saavedra, 2000), leaving learning about sociopolitical racial issues as a peripheral consideration, despite the fact that many students in bilingual education are racialized as Others. Owing to the United States' race-evasiveness² and bilingual education's narrow focus on language, some bilingual-education teachers do not view teaching to understand and combat racial injustices as an important facet of education. Moreover, U.S. society's racist ideologies may cause critically minded teachers to face intimidating

challenges and tense discussions when they engage their students about race and racism (e.g., DeNicolò & Fránquiz, 2006; Thomas, 2015).

Debates have emerged about whether particular models of bilingual education serve the needs of students from marginalized communities in terms of fostering their achievement, languaging practices, and critical consciousness (e.g., Palmer et al., 2014, 2019). Many bilingual-education models exist; among them, *dual language* (hereafter DL, as it's commonly called; a.k.a. *two-way*) is a model that serves students from two language-dominant groups (e.g., Spanish and English) in the same classroom. The dual-language model aims to deliver high academic achievement, bilingualism/biliteracy, sociocultural competence, and, more recently, critical consciousness. Although scholars have long called upon bilingual education to teach critical consciousness (e.g., Darder, 1991), empirical research on how or whether DL counters racist hegemonic ideologies and enhances students' critical consciousness is still nascent (J. A. Freire, 2019).

Educators and scholars need to know more about dual-language teachers' practices and the challenges they face in employing racial-literacy methods in order to learn how to implement equitable dual-language programs. With this knowledge, they can help support teachers to navigate racial issues in settings where biliteracy is the common social-justice goal. Toward these ends, this study asks: What racial-literacy practices does a dual-language program offer youth? What successes and challenges do dual-language teachers experience when engaging in critical-racial-literacy practices?

I start this article by discussing relevant literature on DL teaching about race and by explaining the study's conceptualization of teacher practices and theoretical framework, the *continuum of racial literacies*. Then, I describe the context and methodology. The main section presents five themes that feature curriculum and instruction examples of the racial-literacy practices that a racially diverse dual-language program offers students. I then theorize about the possibility of DL providing an education that offers opportunities for enhancing students' understandings of structural racism. I conclude by considering the implications of DL's incorporation of critical-racial-literacy practices.

This article contributes (1) a new framework for theorizing racial literacy; (2) to a stronger connection among scholarship on critical literacy, racial ideologies, and bilingual education; (3) an ethnographic study of a secondary-level dual-language program's teaching practices pertaining to racial literacies; (4) analysis showing DL offering and countering a *whitestream bilingual education*; and (5) the construct *critical-racial consciousness*.

Relevant Literature and Theoretical Perspectives

In conceptual pieces, bilingual-education scholars have called for dual-language education to combat its "whitening" by centering the goal of developing youths' critical consciousness (e.g., Palmer et al., 2019). Critical consciousness, as Paulo Freire (1973) conceptualized it, posits education as a site where people can both learn about their oppression and take actions toward liberation. But advancing

students' critical consciousness is difficult in the context and *modus operandi* of U.S. schooling, which is "founded on the practices, principles, morals, values, and history of white Anglo-American culture" (Urrieta, 2004, p. 454). American schooling often offers "whitestream"³ (Urrieta, 2004) curriculum and instruction, meaning that it erases nondominant epistemologies, normalizes racist ideologies, and regards counterhegemonic ideas as inappropriate for schools.

Because of the conflicting aims of schooling, U.S. bilingual education harbors two rival visions: one framed through what Flores (2016) calls "race radicalism," which seeks to counter hegemonic ideologies, and the other guided by what Flores calls "liberal multiculturalism," which positions bilingual education as a tool for assimilating into status-quo power relations. A liberal-multiculturalism approach, I add, also emphasizes individual prejudice over scrutinizing structural racism and stresses that interracial contact promotes tolerance and justice—ideas inspired by Guinier's (2004) concept of "racial liberalism"—instead of critical consciousness. Flores claims that the liberal-multicultural vision is most dominant in bilingual education, which I infer means that many teachers' approaches to DL are not conducive to critical consciousness.

When scholars have examined critical consciousness in bilingual education, they have found that elementary teachers face obstacles ranging from a lack of time, culturally relevant materials, and knowledge, to their own misconception that social justice topics are inappropriate for young children (J. A. Freire & Valdez, 2017). Juan A. Freire (2019) examined how elementary-level dual-language teachers incorporated pedagogy to advance DL's bicultural and sociopolitical-consciousness (i.e., critical-consciousness) goals. He found that teachers mostly taught from mainstream perspectives—for example, presenting the contributions of minoritized people without holding hegemonic ideologies and structures up for scrutiny. Research has yet to examine critical-consciousness teaching in secondary-level DL, where attention to critical issues may be more common than at the elementary level. However, research suggests that the model of a secondary-level dual-language strand program affects DL's implementation and goals (de Jong & Bearse, 2014), which might also affect the teaching of critical consciousness.

In secondary-level DL, studies that examine power and ideologies without explicitly looking at the development of critical consciousness show how, at times, DL does not aim to enhance critical consciousness. Hegemonic ideologies hinder educators from achieving this goal (Forman, 2016; Hernandez, 2017), even in secondary-level dual-language programs with many Latinx youth (Freeman, 2000). Research that examines student perspectives also suggests dual-language students are not explicitly taught counterhegemonic ideologies (Dworin, 2011), let alone critical perspectives on race and racism. To take language ideologies as an example, McCollum (1999) followed children through their entire middle-school dual-language experience and showed how students felt their teacher corrected and thus devalued their "vernacular Spanish," which contributed to students valuing English over Spanish.

Few researchers investigating bilingual education and racism have centered their inquiries on critical consciousness and racial ideologies. The majority of

bilingual-education scholarship on race and racism examines language-restrictive (e.g., English-only) contexts or dual-language-education policy issues (Chávez-Moreno, 2019, 2021a). Thus, researchers know little about what dual-language teachers think about race and racism or about their practices for cultivating youths' understanding of racial oppression. Examining instruction is also important because even if teachers voice critical beliefs about education, their practices may not reflect them. Meshulam and Apple (2014) found that teachers in an elementary dual-language school with an antiracist mission and "overtly critical multicultural curricula and pedagogy" (p. 655) had to make concessions because of restraints such as high-stakes testing. Nonetheless, scholarship suggests that some bilingual-education teachers still take up the challenge of antiracist teaching through practices that challenge institutional racism. López (2008) presents one teacher who infused antiracist pedagogy into her ninth-grade math classroom conducted in Spanish, where all students were Latinx. López's research shows that antiracist pedagogy plays an essential part in empowering youth and nurturing their resilience in the face of anti-Latinx sentiment. Research has yet to describe how secondary-level dual-language programs incorporate antiracist teaching, or to elucidate the challenges faced by dual-language teachers who aim to develop youths' biliteracy and critical consciousness about racial ideologies.

Conceptualizing Teachers' Practices

As the previous examples show, a school's structures and expectations for its teachers can mediate how teachers think, talk, and teach. Yet the examples also depict teachers as agentic professionals whose actions can carry out or challenge district structures and policies. Combining these ideas, I view teacher practice as not only reflecting but also constructing the program's approach to teaching literacy/language and to teaching about racial issues. I draw from a conceptualization of teachers as institutional agents whose actions, when *aggregated*, "effectively become the public policies they carry out" (Lipsky, 2010, p. xiii, original italics). Without disregarding a school's structures and pressures on teachers, I suggest that the dual-language teachers' collective practices help to create the program's stance on teaching about racial issues and antiracism. In other words, by including many of the teachers in a particular dual-language program in the study, I can conceptualize their curriculum and instruction practices as a collective that determines whether and how their program offers schooling that perpetuates or counters hegemonic understandings of racial ideologies. This approach can help the field to understand how dual-language programs are providing equity in the form of opportunities to develop youths' critical consciousness.

To focus on curriculum and instruction with the potential to cultivate critical consciousness about racial ideologies, I use a framework I call the *continuum of racial literacies*.

Continuum of Racial Literacies

Literacy studies has had, since Paulo Freire, critical-literacy scholarship that examines people's engagement with texts, writing, and discourse. This scholarship

includes contributions toward understanding how critical literacy relates to the development of identity (particularly of racialized-Othered youth), bilingualism, and/or critical consciousness (work often advanced by Latina/Chicana and other scholars who are also racialized as the Other; e.g., Cervantes-Soon, 2017; de los Ríos & Seltzer, 2017; DeNicolo & Fránquiz, 2006; Martínez-Álvarez et al., 2015; Martínez-Roldán, 2003; Medina, 2003; Pacheco & Gutiérrez, 2009).

This study is indebted to the aforementioned scholars and to literacy scholars (often scholars who are racialized as the Other) who have argued that educators should explicitly teach about race and racism (e.g., Greene & Abt-Perkins, 2003; Rogers & Mosley, 2006; Skerrett, 2011). This list includes Sealey-Ruiz (2013), who has called for educators to practice racial literacy, which is pedagogy that engages in conversations about race and racism. Sealey-Ruiz (2011) understands racial literacy as an essential skill that “requires reading our racialized world in an analytic way in order to offer problem-solving strategies to counter the racism that exists” (p. 118). Skerrett (2011), in a study examining the knowledge and practice of teachers of English, has noted that effective racial-literacy instructional practices were “sustained and strategic . . . and anchored in an anti-racist stance” (p. 318). Their and others’ work has exposed how literacy teaching needs to attend to the underlying systemic oppressions tied to race. Research at the intersection of critical literacy and race is less prevalent in studies of bilingual contexts, yet bilingual-education research would benefit from literacy research that engages racial ideologies. This study extends previous scholarship into bilingual-education contexts and employs a nuanced framework for differentiating among distinct racial literacies that I introduced in a previous publication (Chávez-Moreno, 2022).

Building on calls for educators to teach about race and racism, I constructed a *continuum of racial literacies* framework which can be used to examine a broad range of literate practices in and outside of schooling environments (Chávez-Moreno, 2022). The framework’s critical literacy foundation is based on a sociocultural-historical view of literacies as context-dependent, fluid, and ideological social practices (P. Freire & Macedo, 1987; New London Group, 1996; Pacheco & Gutiérrez, 2009; Street, 1984). The framework rests on the assumption that all people living in a racist society are racially conscious—they learn to interpret situations from a racial perspective and thus can engage in hegemonic or counterhegemonic meaning-making. Given this assumption, I conceptualize *racial literacies* as the sociocultural practices around reading, writing, and discourse that people—consciously or not, hegemonically or not—use to make meaning of racial ideologies.

Because the continuum of racial literacies framework allows the analyst to conceive of all literate practices as conveyors of racial literacies, whether from a race-evasive or antiracist orientation, the continuum distinguishes between *hegemonic* and *counterhegemonic racial literacies* (see Figure 1). This distinction helps challenge race-evasiveness and its normalization by highlighting how even literate practices without explicit or intentional racial lessons teach to make meaning of racial ideologies.

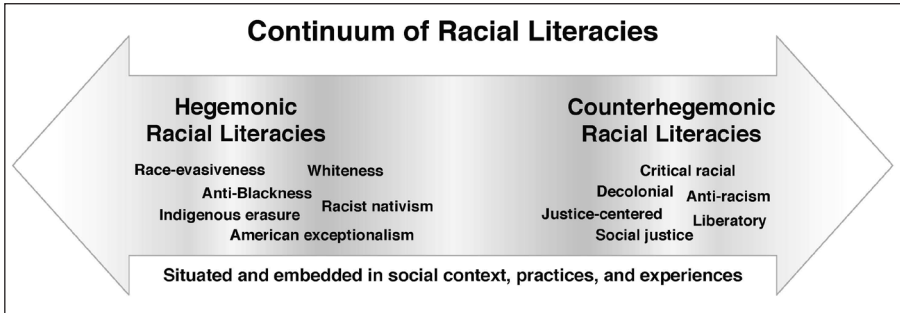


FIGURE 1. *The continuum of racial literacies framework*

I define *hegemonic racial literacies* as meaning-making practices that maintain dominant racist ideologies (e.g., race-evasiveness; see Figure 1). In education, these practices perpetuate the modus operandi in most U.S. schools: *whitestream schooling*. Whitestream schooling manifests itself in formal and informal curricula and race-evasive pedagogy, even if only implicitly. Hegemonic racial literacies perpetuate whitestream schooling and inequity by, for example, teaching liberal multicultural ideologies and not engaging in practices that lead to antiracist actions.

Counterhegemonic racial literacies are meaning-making practices that challenge white supremacist ideologies (see Figure 1). Education practices on this side of the continuum contest whitestream curriculum and pedagogy in their own ways by scaffolding students into learning about and challenging hegemonic logics of power, race, language, imperialism, and/or colonialism. The counterhegemonic approach that I focus on in this study is critical-racial literacies. This approach moves beyond liberal multiculturalism and the misunderstanding that racism is an individual prejudice correctable through interracial contact and an emphasis on tolerance. To promote equity, this approach maintains that students must scrutinize structural racism, and it rejects the model of bilingual education as a tool for assimilation that results in consolidation of status-quo power relations.

Critical-racial-literacy practices aim to foster what I call *critical-racial consciousness* (Chávez-Moreno, 2022), a lens that challenges race-evasiveness and liberal multiculturalism and contemplates counterhegemonic ideas and practices (similar to how Brown, 2016, described “critical racial literacy”). I conceptualize critical consciousness by drawing from Paulo Freire (1973), but insert *racial* because the United States’ race-evasiveness is normalized, necessitating explicit attention to racial ideologies. The critical-racial-literacies approach highlights the importance of developing critical-racial consciousness, which can develop antiracist actions (i.e., one identifies racist inequities and commits to action that has the potential to produce antiracist policies). Antiracist actions can both emanate from and help to produce critical-racial consciousness; thus, their relationship is more reciprocal than unidirectional and linear (see Figure 2). As Freire (1973) emphasizes, critical

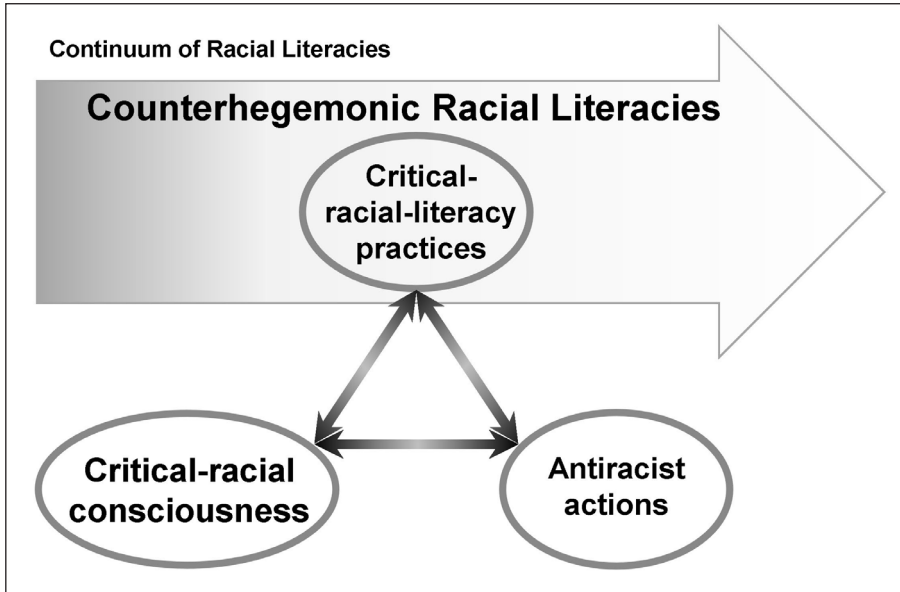


FIGURE 2. *Highlighting the counterhegemonic-racial-literacies end of the Continuum of Racial Literacies and critical-racial consciousness*

action is important, so, I argue, an analysis of critical-racial consciousness should address antiracist actions, even if only to expose their sparseness or absence.

In Figure 2, the smaller arrows indicate that, as Guerra's (2004) discussion of *nomadic consciousness* rightly argues, we never achieve critical consciousness, which is always changing. Rather, we "engage in social practices and experience social conditions that lead to various forms of consciousness . . . that follow no predetermined sequence" (Guerra, 2004, p. 10) and that depend "on the social circumstance of the moment and the way an individual elects to position herself in relation to those circumstances" (p. 13).

I use the continuum of racial literacies framework in this study to examine teachers' racial-literacy practices and reveal how DL offers youth opportunities to cultivate their critical-racial consciousness. While I recognize the importance of examining youths' antiracist learning both in and out of school, this study focuses on dual-language teachers' racial-literacy practices because educational researchers need to explore what opportunities DL offers students to build their critical-racial consciousness and take action. This does not assume that youth lack critical consciousness and that teachers must help them attain it (Guerra, 2004; Pacheco & Chávez-Moreno, 2021). Rather, I assume that educational equity must include schooling that develops further critical-mindedness and action, and that these practices deserve study.

Context

I studied a racially diverse dual-language strand program at two schools, which I selected because they offered secondary-level dual-language education that served many Latinx students. These schools were considered a community, since students from Borane Middle School (BMS; all names are pseudonyms) most often continued this dual-language program at Amlie High School (AHS). Most of the dual-language students had been in DL since early elementary school. The program controlled for classrooms to consist of about 50% Spanish-dominant students (i.e., Latinxs); the English-dominant students were mostly White with some Latinx and Black students.

BMS structured the program to offer students 50/50 Spanish/English every day through its mandatory dual-language courses, which included Spanish language arts (SLA), English language arts (ELA), social studies/history and science in Spanish, and math and one elective in English. At times, I observed BMS teachers in the same dual-language subject area planning their lessons together, illustrating the program's cohesiveness. AHS's DL was less structured. Because AHS students self-selected their courses, students could elect to have semesters without courses in Spanish, which were limited to SLA and social studies/history electives.

Both schools claimed to work toward social justice, but dual-language teachers saw the dual-language program as more "culturally relevant" than the rest of the school, which had ideologies that supported whitestream schooling. The program's mission was to develop bilingualism, biliteracy, and sociocultural competence while achieving academic excellence; this was seen as its social-justice stance.

Methodology

This critical ethnography is informed by critical theories and aims to examine the processes and practices that affect equity (Carspecken, 1996). I draw from a sociocultural and research paradigm that understands social practices such as pedagogy to be embedded in power relationships—that is, shaped by cultural, historical, and political forces.

I started my inquiry with two conflicting assumptions—a tension that kept my mind open to divergent findings. I anticipated that because of white normativity in education and societal taboos against teaching about racial ideologies, I would find teachers who did not incorporate these issues into their pedagogy. However, I also thought that because of the community's progressive reputation, reactions against the larger sociopolitical anti-Latinx/immigrant context, and DL's intention to improve Latinx achievement, teachers might encourage counterhegemonic logic through their teaching.

Participants

I recruited participants through purposive and snowball sampling. A total of 13 teachers (7 middle school, 6 high school; 10 self-identified as White, 2 as Latinx, 1 as "of color") out of the 15 dual-language teachers in the two schools volunteered.

The participants represented all the subjects in the dual-language program and were licensed teachers. About half of the teachers had emergency bilingual-education licenses, and 7 of the participating teachers had fewer than 6 years of experience (the range was 2 to 30 years of teaching).

Positionality

As a Mexican immigrant secondary-level student, I sought Spanish-language instruction but had to settle for subpar courses geared toward foreign-language learners. I finally had relevant Spanish courses in college. There, I also experienced critical-racial-literacy practices that enhanced my critical-racial consciousness. My background informs my study of teaching practices and my assumption that an equitable education includes developing critical consciousness.

Like this study's teachers, I have experienced successes and disappointments when teaching about racial ideologies. Additionally, as a former public school teacher, I have taught in schools with restrictive accountability practices that impede teachers' attempts to live up to their own social-justice goals. Sharing my background with participants helped me relate to them and become a participant observer from whom teachers felt comfortable asking for advice.

Data Techniques

This study relies on classroom observations, interviews, and post-observation informal conversations with teachers. For trustworthiness, I employed prolonged engagement, triangulation using multiple sources, and member checking with participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Data collection lasted 17 months (February 2016–June 2017).

I conducted participant observations in classrooms (totaling 180 hours), which I documented through ethnographic field jottings (Emerson et al., 2011). After an observation, I wrote extended field notes to elaborate on my jottings, and I took analytic field notes to record my questions and analysis. I focused on teachers' language/literacy practices, enacted curriculum, and lessons on racial issues, even when the latter were only implicit. When possible, I chose to attend classes that addressed germane topics.

With each of the 13 participants, I conducted at least one in-depth ethnographic interview (Spradley, 2016) using a semistructured, open-ended protocol that elicited narrative responses. Teachers were invited to two interviews (three teachers were unable to schedule the second interview before the study's end) and informal discussions after observations. The interviews ranged from 60 to 90 minutes, and all were audio-recorded and transcribed. I tailored each interview based on previous information (observations, documents) and asked participants for explanations, descriptions, and contrasting information about pedagogical choices and observations. Interviews allowed me to notice similarities and differences in how participants understood and experienced DL, their instruction, and race/racism. I used the post-observation discussions to ask questions and/or let teachers elaborate on their reflections about what transpired in the classroom.

Data Analysis

I adapted LeCompte and Schensul’s (2013) three-stage analytic recursive process for data analysis. The Stage 1 analysis occurred during fieldwork and helped me become familiar with and condense the data. I employed two different, initial sentence-by-sentence inductive codings: (1) using the participants’ words (“In Vivo,” Saldaña, 2013, p. 91) and (2) forming gerund codes to extract action, interaction, and consequences (e.g., *reading, writing, discussing race*; “process coding,” Saldaña, 2013, p. 96). In Stage 2, immediately after data collection, I coded using broad deductive codes (e.g., *equity/justice, language/literacy, whiteness, race/racism*). These helped me make comparisons across data and identify recurring patterns and discrepancies. In Stage 3, after time away from data collection, I used *race-evasive, sustained/strategic*, and *antiracist* as deductive codes. I constructed five themes to theorize what racial-literacy practices DL offered, with attention to critical-racial literacies.

Findings

The five themes denote points on the continuum of racial literacies (see Figure 3). In each theme, I give representative and divergent examples that show which racial-literacy practices the program and teachers—explicitly or implicitly—offered. The examples, when aggregated, show that teachers’ practices place the program’s stance on racial literacy mostly on the hegemonic end of the continuum. The discussion of the last theme, featuring critical-racial-literacy practices, is the lengthiest in order to highlight these practices. Although I mention specific teachers to illustrate a theme, a teacher’s pedagogy was not always characterized by just one of the themes. Often, where teachers’ practices fell in the continuum of racial literacies varied, reflecting the challenges that teachers faced in delivering an education toward critical-racial consciousness. Additionally, some of the data examples could fit in different themes, and, although Figure 3’s classifications may seem decisively organized, I was uncertain how to judge the positioning of the hegemonic racial literacies in relation to each other.

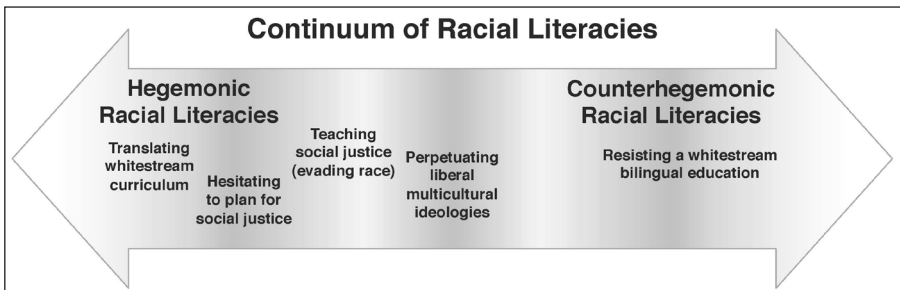


FIGURE 3. Findings positioned in the continuum

Translating Whitestream Curriculum

One practice located on the continuum's hegemonic-racial-literacies side was teachers' use of Spanish translations of the English mainstream curriculum. Teachers cited a lack of time and the necessity to provide students with access to the mainstream curriculum as two reasons for translating curriculum. The school district promoted the idea that a school should not determine the student's curriculum, thus encouraging schools to align their curriculum with that of the district. Consequently, as a strand program, the dual-language courses generally aligned with the school's mainstream curriculum, which mostly delivered hegemonic racial-literacy practices not aimed at enhancing students' critical-racial consciousness.

One teacher shared that for her course's curriculum, the district "made a big thick book and it was just the translation of the text into Spanish." Some dual-language teachers felt pressured to use the translated materials and to teach from the mainstream curriculum of their school. Ms. Nader (BMS; teacher of color⁴) shared: "The expectation was that our curriculum looked very similar to the rest of the school's curriculum." Indeed, for the majority of teachers, a major goal of DL was to give students access to the mainstream curriculum.

Many teachers also said they translated their lessons, confirming my classroom observations. When dual-language teachers taught, for example, a history course in English and another in Spanish, they planned for their English course and then translated any material not in Spanish for the dual-language course. The teachers explained that their heavy workload and limited time did not allow them to plan two different lessons for the same subject. Consequently, some teachers simply taught their dual-language courses using a Spanish translation.

The district's inadequate funding of DL also contributed to the translation of curricula. All teachers mentioned that DL had fewer resources than the rest of the school. Ms. Lucas (BMS; White) shared:

While the ELA counterpart to curriculum instruction gets a whole team of people working on the teacher support materials, the bilingual side just doesn't have equal funding, equal manpower. So that makes it hard. We didn't even have textbooks for social studies except for online ones and they were just translations.

When talking about the drawbacks of the translations, most teachers stated that they were bothered by the errors in translated resources, including Ms. Lucas, who noted, "There were so many errors. So, you'd have to go back through and correct things." Even though the translations had drawbacks, most teachers used them to provide students with the amount of Spanish input the dual-language model required. Only two disagreed with translating primary documents (e.g., the preamble to the U.S. Constitution) from English into Spanish. They believed these documents should not be translated even though the district had designated social-studies courses as contributing to the dual-language model's 50% of language input in Spanish. Thus, most teachers' main concerns were about giving ample and "accurate" (error-free) Spanish.

Only one mentioned the drawback that translating mainstream curriculum molded the dual-language program into a reflection of the whitestream curriculum's racial-literacy teachings. Ms. Nader critiqued the program's transmission of hegemonic ideologies: "So, we are following similar sequences of curriculum and just translating it. So that means it has the values of mainstream U.S. white schooling, translated into Spanish." She shared that much of the dual-language program offered a curriculum that maintained the status quo by mirroring English curricular materials.

In keeping with research in elementary-level DL (J. A. Freire & Valdez, 2017), I found that DL's model and strand limitations affected teachers' delivery of critical curricula. The lack of resources and support and the need for translations taxed teachers' time, jeopardizing even the common biliteracy goal and a fortiori the peripheral goal of critical-racial consciousness. I argue that even while DL develops Spanish and eschews remedial curricula (Alanís & Rodríguez, 2008), these factors make for a schooling experience that is mainly a Spanish translation of the school's English whitestream curriculum, offering few opportunities for critical-racial-literacy practices.

Hesitating to Plan for Social Justice

All teachers except one (a science teacher) talked positively about teaching for social justice, which to them seemed to mean addressing societal problems affecting minoritized groups. Still, some expressed trepidation about engaging in these practices because of discomfort and/or a lack of training. This led to the second example on the continuum that displayed hegemonic racial-literacy practices: teachers' hesitation meant that they did not plan critical-racial-literacy practices.

Discussing whether the program's mission encouraged teachers to address racial and social-justice issues, one teacher shared, "As teachers, everyone talks about it, but it's not something that's woven in with intention. That's kind of left up to the teacher if we're going to teach that way or not." Though they talked about it, seven teachers reported hesitating to plan social-justice lessons. For example, Mr. Hughes (AHS; White) seemed uncomfortable with the idea of planning to teach social justice, as this interview exchange demonstrates:

Laura: Could you tell me about what it means for you to teach with a social-justice perspective?

Hughes: I would say that I value it, but I don't include it in my instruction often. It isn't very evident in my instruction.

Laura: When you say it's not evident, can you tell me more about that?

Hughes: [*pause*] I *would* like to. And I don't actually know why I don't do it more.

Laura: What do you think it is that you're not doing or would like to do?

Hughes: I have not made a learning objective around identifying, explaining, or fighting social injustice. Sometimes I fear I don't know how, like opening up Pandora's box a little bit, and not knowing how or what to do once I open it. Personally, I'm very interested in it, but that doesn't really show in my

classes. Or maybe it's because I've had experiences in other schools where my personal opinion wasn't in the mainstream, whereas here it probably is. I mean [AHS] is a pretty progressive, liberal-minded school, but I haven't always been in schools like that. Maybe I just haven't developed the skill set because of that.

Because Mr. Hughes did not plan learning objectives that addressed social justice and because the status quo was whitestream schooling, his teaching was likely to lead to hegemonic racial literacies (even if unintentionally).

Notwithstanding his hesitation, Mr. Hughes felt that the program provided social-justice teaching:

My personal goal is, yeah, I absolutely believe in teaching social justice. We haven't talked about that as a particular focus of the program, but in knowing the teachers that teach and how they teach, I know that it is in the program a lot, not because it's a stated program goal, just because it's a passion, just kind of naturally tends to be a passion of those that are drawn to the profession.

Other dual-language teachers shared Mr. Hughes's hesitation to teach with an eye toward social justice; they stated that learning about and addressing injustice were important, but likewise felt unqualified to delve into the controversial issues that critical-racial-literacy practices force one to confront. Assuming that colleagues teach about social-justice issues may lead teachers to reason that their own efforts are unnecessary, when actually, few dual-language teachers planned critical-racial-literacy practices (as I note later, only four teachers regularly incorporated these practices).

While teachers may express critical opinions about education and believe that DL teaches for social justice, their beliefs cannot come to fruition unless these same teachers plan critical-racial-literacy practices; intentions alone are not enough to transform DL into an antiracist project (Milner & Laughter, 2015). That said, while their lesson-planning decisions may not reflect their stated beliefs, these teacher practices still help to form the dual-language program's stance toward racial literacy. All told, teachers' hesitations, combined with their translations of whitestream curriculum, meant that a majority did not plan scaffolded lessons for enhancing youths' critical-racial consciousness.

Teaching Social Justice (Evading Race)

The third point in the continuum shows that the dual-language program offered racial-literacy practices that sometimes evaded the topic of race and racism, even while students engaged in provocative discussions about social justice invited by the teachers.

Some teachers interpreted the dual-language program's social-justice dimension as that of providing biliteracy and connecting to international issues, not domestic racial problems. For example, for International Women's Day and a protest called A Day without a Woman, Ms. Thomson (AHS; White) asked her

SLA class to write in their diary what they thought about sexism. After 10 minutes of writing, she asked students to share with the class. After two turns, I observed a White male student declare in English that males also experience sexism. The following field note describes how the interaction incorporated racial literacies:

Another White male student countered that like racism, sexism is about power, so minorities can't be racist, and women can't be sexist against men. This prompted students to debate the difference between sexism and racism. A Black male student animatedly stated that racism and sexism aren't the same thing because women make up 50% of the population, thus racial minorities are discriminated against because they're the minority.

Ms. Thomson's writing activity unexpectedly prompted students to make meaning of racism and sexism. Without much teacher engagement in the debate, students displayed racial literacies in the discussion, at times sharing both hegemonic and counterhegemonic ideas.

Even as more students joined the debate, Ms. Thomson transitioned to the next activity, but during breaks students continued comparing racism to sexism. After the class, Ms. Thomson told me the lesson did not go as planned because she felt the discussion on race had deviated from a discussion of women's rights. She saw the students' intersectional analysis as off-topic, and thus transitioning to the next activity was an attempt to remove the debate from instruction time—a manifestation of race-evasiveness in her teaching.

Other conversations with Ms. Thomson suggested that she felt ill-equipped to handle racial issues. Weeks before this class, she had expressed reservations about incorporating racial issues into her teaching:

Laura: Could you tell me about your ideas about teaching issues like justice, race, and racism in your dual-language classes?

Thomson: I do think there's a lot of potential for integrating social-justice stuff, especially with all the issues with immigration rights, and racism, and that kind of thing. . . . I'd really like to make it more a curriculum that involves a lot more global issues, not necessarily social justice, but certainly there is some social justice in there. It's just maybe, I'm not coming in with that as the major goal in mind. I'm not saying I shouldn't, but I think I haven't had the social-justice training, that's not really my area of knowledge or expertise. I think in the future it would be really nice to integrate that a little more.

Later in this interview, Ms. Thomson shared that she wanted the program to take a global perspective on language and culture, for example by following the International Baccalaureate curriculum. Although she did not explicitly say this, my observations and other chats with her suggest that her hesitations about teaching with an emphasis on social justice stemmed from a reluctance to address racial issues. Indeed, Ms. Thomson felt that her role was that of an expert on language and culture; thus, the social-justice issues that she incorporated were, in her view, connected to language and culture, not race.

When I asked Ms. Thomson whether she felt she could teach controversial topics like racism, she shared that she did not perceive any outside restrictions on what she could teach:

I feel like in [city name] you can teach anything and get away with it [*we laugh*]. I feel very supported in the sense that when I want to talk about things that are difficult issues, like we did the gang unit last year, and I didn't get any blowback by anyone. I suppose in a more conservative district there might be. I feel like whatever I would want to teach, I could. I think that's a goal for the future, in the next few years. I'd love to do an International Business class taught in Spanish, or Intercultural Communication.

Ms. Thomson taught units on immigration, local gangs, and women's issues—units where students read into race. However, like most other teachers, she did not believe that a main objective of the program or her courses was to teach racial issues and antiracism. Instead, Ms. Thomson saw the program as an avenue for promoting internationalism and understood social justice as about exploring different perspectives.

The sociopolitical context and frequent materialization of racial issues in discussions provided many opportunities for teachers to include critical-racial-literacy practices. Yet they faced obstacles to incorporating these practices, such as a misconception that race/racism did not intersect with other social-justice issues, which meant they avoided racial matters when teaching about social justice (Pollock et al., 2010; Skerrett, 2011). Even when students showed interest, some teachers did not engage with students' dialogic meaning-making around racial ideas. I argue that these race-evasive practices yielded teaching that did not explicitly encourage counterhegemonic ideologies—and that this evasion, in turn, meant that the dual-language program skewed toward the continuum's hegemonic side.

Perpetuating Liberal Multicultural Ideologies

A fourth way DL offered racial-literacy practices was also on the hegemonic side of the continuum: teachers perpetuated liberal multicultural ideologies even while seeming to provide a social-justice education. Social-justice discussions often promoted liberal multicultural ideologies such as cultural acceptance, awareness of differences, and helping those less fortunate.

The following classroom observation shows how dual-language students were exposed to hegemonic ideologies about helping those in need. In Mr. Ochoa's (AHS; White, Spanish immigrant) 10th-grade social studies class, an 11th-grade student visitor presented her plans for a competition sponsored by a U.S.-based nonprofit that funds projects helping women and children in "regions ravaged by war and famine." She planned to travel with a group to educate Guatemalans about the environment and clean water, as this abbreviated field note demonstrates:

The White dual-language student used a PowerPoint to ask for the class to vote for her project. Her project was to educate about the environment because the Guatemalan people have problems with water. Ochoa praised her for going out and using Spanish she learned from the dual-language program to help Latin American countries in need.

He said he would've loved to have had her social consciousness when he was young. The other students also seemed impressed with her plans.

This example shows how youth were presented with a lesson that had the potential to develop hegemonic racial literacies. Additionally, it suggests that the dual-language program had not exposed students to the United States' imperialist role in Guatemala's history (confirmed by other data). Neither the students nor Mr. Ochoa problematized the visitor's plans to go to Guatemala and do this patronizing charity work. Mr. Ochoa knew of U.S. interference in Latin America (something he expressed in informal conversations with me), yet he commended the student's project and did not comment on Americans' voluntourism.

It was unclear to me whether Mr. Ochoa worried that in calling attention to these issues he would have risked dampening the student's enthusiasm. Regardless, the lesson illustrates hegemonic racial-literacy practices that perpetuate liberal multicultural ideologies, which emphasize individual actions over changes to structural racism and encourage the belief that interracial contact alone promotes justice. And although the student's project involved action, it is difficult to imagine how the action would lead to antiracist outcomes given its underlying assumptions. Notably, I did not observe teachers developing projects with students that elicited antiracist actions or countered colonial racist ideologies through solidarity work, which is rooted in ethnic studies and race-conscious approaches that bring light to global and domestic inequities and historical racism.

Even when teachers incorporated racial topics, the teaching at times perpetuated liberal multicultural ideologies. For example, Ms. West (BMS; White) wanted to present critical perspectives to her sixth-grade ELA dual-language students. She showed her classes the documentary *Precious Knowledge*, about the banning of Tucson High School's Mexican American Studies Program. This field note captures some of the students' reactions:

During the film, students were really angry (putting arms in the air) and even screaming at the White politicians, "How could they do that!" After viewing the film, Ms. West asked students to write a response to the question on a PowerPoint slide, "How did the racial inequalities make you feel?" Students responded feeling angry and could not believe the politician would take away a popular program.

Ms. West believed it important for dual-language students to learn about the injustice of dismantling Tucson's Mexican American Studies Program, and even named the problem as "racial inequalities." But, in a demonstration of how challenging it can be to scaffold conversations on institutional racism, Ms. West's question encouraged conversation about race from the standpoint of feelings and limited the discussion to condemnations of individual callousness rather than inviting commentary on systemic educational disenfranchisement.

This finding aligns with other research (e.g., Philip et al., 2017; Thomas, 2015) to suggest that critically minded teachers may want to incorporate critical-racial-literacy practices, but need support in designing and scaffolding as they seek to enhance students' critical-racial consciousness and antiracist actions. Without

district structures helping to undergird their work, dual-language teachers' efforts to provide a race-radical bilingual education are constrained.

Theorizing a Whitestream Bilingual Education

Before presenting teachers' critical-racial-literacy practices, I discuss one key finding: that the dual-language program offered more practices in the hegemonic-racial-literacy end of the continuum than the counterhegemonic end. I argue that the program, in not cultivating sustained and strategic critical-racial-literacy practices as a collective, reflected what I theorize as *whitestream bilingual education*. Whitestream bilingual education offers biliteracy schooling through hegemonic racial-literacy practices in curriculum and pedagogy, mediated by district and school structures. A whitestream bilingual education disfigures educational equity by assuming that DL *innately* provides equity and alleviates racism. Without policy and instructional attention to critical-racial-literacy practices, it does not consistently offer and scaffold opportunities to develop youths' biliteracy, critical-racial consciousness, and antiracist actions. A whitestream bilingual education thereby erases bilingual education's race radicalism and privileges liberal multiculturalism, which perpetuates white supremacist and racist ideologies.

However, there were instances where individual educators' pedagogy incorporated critical-racial-literacy practices, as shown below.

Resisting a Whitestream Bilingual Education

In the final example on the continuum and the furthest on the counterhegemonic end, I present how teachers resisted a whitestream bilingual education. Teachers who employed critical-racial-literacy practices had two connected challenges to doing so. First, they faced a lack of active support and professional development. Even though some of these teachers saw their district as progressive, they perceived their administration as passively rather than actively supportive of teachers who took this approach. Neither the district nor the administration stood in their way, but they did not overtly support the process or offer professional development. Second, some teachers felt they had to choose between adhering to the program's allocated Spanish time and bringing in a critical perspective. The teachers who felt strongly about engaging in critical-racial-literacy practices shared how they had to spend a lot of time looking for materials in Spanish, or else bring in critical perspectives that were in English. In sum, because the program did not have an official stance on social-justice teaching, teachers with this priority planned their own curriculum and lessons with little to no support.

Four dual-language teachers believed that their work was not just about developing biliteracy, but also about enhancing students' critical-racial consciousness through strategic and sustained critical-racial-literacy practices. For example, Ms. Schloss (AHS; White) engaged in such practices in her Latin American studies elective by including a unit about racial hierarchies and patriarchy in colonial Latin America and connecting this to current injustices. One activity had students listen to hip-hop songs by Ana Tijoux. After listening and reading the lyrics, Ms. Schloss invited students to discuss questions on "Somos Sur," such as:⁵

1. What are the connections you see between Ana Tijoux's lyrics and the racial hierarchical system of the Spanish colonists?
2. Considering the racial history of Latin America, why do you think Tijoux raps about the connection between Latin Americans and Africans?
3. Considering the fact that Tijoux is a modern artist and thinking of your own experiences and knowledge, what can be said about the legacy of the racial hierarchical system that the Spanish colonists imposed?

With these questions, Ms. Schloss attempted to prompt discussions where students connected colonial histories to current conditions and to their own experiences. She elaborated on her reasoning for teaching in critical ways:

I take a more critical view of history, like critiquing racial hierarchy or exploring what are the implications or results of it, similarly with patriarchy. I think that ethnic studies set me on that path, I'm drawn to critiquing systems of power. One of the things the program advances is this idea of social justice and creating a critical consciousness in students. . . . That idea of developing critical lenses for students and helping them see social inequities and the results of social inequities is something that's important to me.

In this manner, Ms. Schloss incorporated racial issues into bilingual education, and had a clear goal of cultivating students' critical-racial consciousness. Importantly, by juxtaposing Ana Tijoux songs alongside sources about racial hierarchies in colonial Latin America (e.g., writings by Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz), Ms. Schloss's unit provides an illustration of expanding the types of textual examples offered to students in ways that might more readily lead to a critical analysis of racial ideologies.

Still, the lack of active support from the administration meant teachers spent a lot of time planning and nevertheless felt their lessons were ineffective. Ms. Schloss commented that she had to purposefully push herself to look for contemporary songs in Spanish that highlighted social-justice themes, yet most of her students' discussions lasted only a few minutes. When I spoke with Ms. Schloss after the "Somos Sur" lesson, she reflected on her repeated disappointment in trying to get students to engage in discussions: she mostly "gave up" on discussions and instead did activities like defining unknown words, because when she invited students to talk, they did not engage. Ms. Schloss's lesson may be inspiring for its critical-racial-literacy practices, but she saw it as unsuccessful.

Another dual-language teacher who wanted to address social justice, Ms. West, brought in current societal issues when teaching ELA to her sixth graders. For example, she planned a unit linking the school-to-prison pipeline of racialized-Othered students to the district's new and controversial Behavior Education Plan, a discipline policy which some criticized for its non-punitive approach. Ms. West presented about the United States' unfair criminal sentencing rates of Latinx and Black people, and she was upfront with the students about the district's Behavior Education Plan: "The reason we have it is because, if you look at statistics of suspensions in our districts, they will mirror jail rates." This information and the

connections between schools and prisons surprised and interested the students. Ms. West explained that the district was trying to break the school-to-prison pipeline by changing its discipline approach. She linked the statistics to recent local news about the city's police killing of a Black youth. The class read an article from a local magazine with interviews of a Black Lives Matter activist and different people in the city "trying to make a difference." These critical-racial-literacy practices invited the class into a lengthy discussion about police shootings.

Ms. West had political clarity about addressing racial and social-justice issues in her ELA courses, and she worked to have students read about "whatever is current" and connect it to "their experience." Along with contemporary events, she introduced historical figures to her students, such as lesser-known activists of the Black Civil Rights Movement. The class read Phillip Hoose's book *Claudette Colvin: Twice toward Justice*, about a youth activist Ms. West described as "the teenage girl who refused to give up her bus seat before Rosa Parks did, and why they chose not to make her the sole expression for the movement." Ms. West was struck that "the kids really got into it because she was their age and they were so mad, 'Just 'cause she's a teenager, they just went and asked Rosa Parks to do the same thing and Claudette did it first.'" The students commented on signs that read: "No Blacks, No Dogs, No Mexicans." Ms. West reflected, "Even the order of that sign the kids wanted to talk about: 'They put dogs above Mexicans, Ms. West,' and I was like, 'Yeah.' We went there because they wanted to." The book prompted the class not merely to learn "a lot about segregation;" Ms. West also followed students into shaping the critical-racial-literacy practices in which they engaged.

This account demonstrates how Ms. West guided students toward meaningful engagement with these issues, then followed their interests and let the discussion be led by what they noticed. By encouraging students to make sense of racial issues through close reading, Ms. West honed their capacity to critique the structural dimensions of, say, the school-to-prison pipeline.

Although not easy endeavors, these teachers' practices show what bilingual-education teachers can do to support both biliteracy and critical-racial consciousness.

Toward Critical-racial Literacies in Bilingual Education

By looking holistically at these dual-language teachers' practices, this study lends support to policy analyses that suggest bilingual education has relinquished race radicalism in favor of a liberal multicultural vision (Flores, 2016; García & Sung, 2018). Still, my research shows how dual-language teachers can work toward race radicalism and include critical-consciousness components, with a friendly amendment to previous scholarship (J. A. Freire, 2019; Palmer et al., 2019): I argue that in order to work toward equity, dual-language education must explicitly include critical-racial-literacy practices to cultivate critical-racial consciousness and advance antiracist actions. Otherwise, it risks reflecting a whitestream bilingual education. My research leads to several implications.

Programs and Teaching

Districts need to remove institutional constraints that prevent teachers from engaging in critical-racial-literacy practices. The fact that the dual-language program I researched was a strand program intent on aligning its curriculum with that of the rest of the school meant that even critically minded teachers felt compelled to translate mainstream curriculum. While dual-language programs provide some linguistically marginalized and racialized-Othered students with a superior alternative to remedial curricula (Alanís & Rodríguez, 2008), I argue that DL must not default to the mainstream curriculum. Instead, DL should offer curricula that support students' development of critical-racial consciousness and engagement in antiracist actions. To do so, dual-language programs need political clarity about the necessity of incorporating critical-racial-literacy practices, even with young students.

Teachers with critical dispositions can rarely rely on district-level curricula to provide critical materials because it can prove controversial when K–12 schools offer counterhegemonic education (Cabrera et al., 2014). Unsurprisingly, a clear need exists for more developed Spanish-medium, *critical* curricular materials. If teachers are to employ counterhegemonic curricula for bilingual programs, they need resources and a sequenced curriculum. Schools should look to the dual-language teachers with critical dispositions for guidance on how to encourage critical-racial-literacy practices schoolwide; this way, they can ensure that the onus of implementing such an approach rests on institutional structures and not individual teachers. At the same time, other critical teachers may provide better support for colleagues in getting the resources they need to avoid painting English as the language with a monopoly on criticality.

Having stated the need for counterhegemonic materials in Spanish, dual-language teachers could consider how to incorporate English-language critical materials through a translanguaging approach (e.g., de los Ríos & Seltzer, 2017; Palmer et al., 2014). Teachers could see translanguaging as a viable and appropriate option, and use these materials purposefully, instead of following a strict language-separation ideology and feeling guilt about using English materials that advance critical-racial-literacy practices.

Looking outside bilingual-education models to classrooms and spaces that model multilingual and critical-racial consciousness learning may also prove useful for dual-language teachers and programs. Scholarship shows that teachers can develop students' linguistic repertoires while using critical-racial-literacy practices (e.g., de los Ríos & Seltzer, 2017), and this study's findings corroborate this finding with the important caveat that teachers offering this pedagogy were in the minority.

Overall, teachers offered few opportunities for youth to develop critical-racial consciousness or engage in antiracist action. This implies that dual-language teachers need to include and scaffold antiracist action in their lessons. Because this study did not examine student learning related to critical-racial consciousness or antiracist action, future research on dual-language classrooms could take up

this inquiry and consider how racial diversity affects the learning and teaching of these topics.

Teacher Training and Development

That dual-language educators do not feel trained to teach about racial issues is unsurprising given that bilingual-teacher preparation traditionally separates linguistic and racial ideologies. In light of the dilemmas raised by teachers, bilingual-teacher education should develop educators' understanding of structural inequities related to racism, colonialism, and imperialism (Chávez-Moreno, 2021d; Motha, 2014). It also ought to prepare teachers for critical-racial-literacy practices that address contentious issues such as white nationalism and xenophobia (e.g., Stevens & Stovall, 2010), particularly since many bilingual youth will be immigrants and/or racialized as Others.

My study's implications support calls to build teachers' capacity for critical-racial-literacy practices (e.g., Rogers & Mosley, 2006; Sealey-Ruiz, 2011; Skerrett, 2011). Training could present research that demonstrates how rigorous teaching is not at odds with critical-racial consciousness (Cabrera et al., 2014). Like other learning and development aimed at equitable practices, bilingual-teacher preparation should teach candidates how to scaffold critical-racial-literacy practices.

My research suggests that critically conscious teachers engaged with racial issues more than their counterparts, pointing to the importance of the teacher's ideology (Bartolomé & Trueba, 2000; Chávez-Moreno, 2021b). However, this study, like others (Philip et al., 2017), shows that even critically inclined teachers may not know *how* they should teach in order to best cultivate students' critical-racial consciousness. Teacher educators and researchers could work with teachers to investigate how to develop these practices and become more knowledgeable about enhancing critical-racial consciousness. If teachers constantly feel unsuccessful when employing critical-racial-literacy practices, they may give up on the endeavor. Thus, teachers need support to work toward improvements. Additionally, teacher preparation should emphasize the importance of learning and teaching about racial ideologies as an ongoing inquiry (Pollock et al., 2010) in which they may not have all the answers, but in which they, like Ms. West, should have conviction and political clarity.

Without being clearly committed to critical-racial-literacy practices, DL cannot hope to counter hegemonic ideologies or provide an equitable education to linguistically marginalized and racialized-Othered youth. Not offering students opportunities to enhance their critical-racial consciousness is a more commonplace manifestation of white supremacy than brazen racial hostility, but it is damaging just the same. Change occurs through a collective dismantling of racist policies and structures, and bilingual education can help to challenge whitestream schooling by systemically supporting critical-racial-literacy practices.

NOTES

1. I use *racialized Others* instead of *people of color* to refer to Asian American Pacific Islander, Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and Muslim/Arab people and those at the intersections. My usage of *racialized* signals that racialization happens not only through physical characteristics but also through other constructed “differences,” such as language, immigration status, and relationship to land, that serve to dehumanize and result in grave material consequences for racialized people (see, Chávez-Moreno, 2021c). Whites are also racialized, but they are not racialized as “Others.”
2. I use *race-evasive* instead of *colorblind*, *colormute*, or *color-evasive* to unsettle ableism and to avoid propagating the idea that racialization is based solely on physical characteristics.
3. A term from Sandy Grande exposing the whiteness in the so-called “mainstream” (see Urrieta, 2004).
4. To honor confidentiality, I omit descriptions beyond teachers’ school and self-identified race and gender.
5. To maintain article brevity, I translated from Spanish to English these questions and other interactions that were in Spanish.

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