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(Re)conceptualizing family-school partnerships with and for culturally and linguistically diverse families

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ABSTRACT

Family-school partnerships between special education personnel and culturally and linguistically diverse families can be fraught with disrespect and cross-cultural and linguistic barriers. As a ‘wicked problem,’ the negative interactions culturally and linguistically diverse families have over time with professionals operate as mechanisms to disempower families, further resulting in inequitable and unbalanced family-school partnerships. That said, I propose a (re)conceptualization for special education teacher preparation research and practice to support the expansion and transformation of school personnel’s interactions and collaborations with culturally and linguistically diverse families. I thread two existing frameworks: community cultural wealth and ecological resilience to imagine this (re)conceptualization. Then, I discuss implications for institutional change, including transformations in thought, research, practice, and policy.

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In the United States, family-school partnerships in education decision-making processes are foundational to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004; Elbaum, Blatz, and Rodriguez 2016; Leyser and Kirk 2011). Family input is critical to developing supportive, family-centered services for young children with disability labels (Harry 2008) and has a positive impact on student achievement through the school years (Toldson and Lemmons 2013; Ward, Strambler, and Linke 2013). Research shows that family-school partnerships are helpful in determining special education service delivery (Haines et al. 2015), increasing access to inclusive education (Francis et al. 2016; Soodak 2004), and fostering community connections outside of school (Cooper 2009; Epstein 2018). When parents are valued members of special education school teams, the opportunities to inform schools about their youth’s strengths, needs, and preferences increases (Kalyanpur, Harry, and Skrtic 2000; LaRocque, Kleiman, and Darling 2011). More so, procedural safeguards within IDEA (2004) ensure family involvement at every stage of the process including eligibility, placement, and planning for post-school trajectories (Turnbull, Stowe, and Huerta 2007). Fundamentally, family-school partnerships are essential.

Despite the innumerable encouraging consequences of family-school partnerships, school professionals, who are predominately white and middle-class, struggle to partner

with culturally and linguistically diverse families (M. M. Burke 2017; Wong and Hughes 2006), particularly in and through special education processes focused on supporting their children and youth with disability labels. Research confirms family-school partnerships with culturally and linguistically diverse families to be fraught with disrespect and cross-cultural and linguistic barriers within education systems (Jegatheesan 2009; Park, Turnbull, and Park 2001). Families feel discrimination and devaluation when interacting with professionals in order to make education-related decisions (Alvarez-McHatton and Correa 2005; Lai and Vadeboncoeur 2013). When family members are not considered experts possessing critical knowledge, the interactions are negative and disempowering (Angelov and Anderson 2013; Salas 2004). In response, culturally and linguistically diverse families may approach professionals with suspicion due to their intimate knowledge and experience with schools' inequitable and racist educational practices (Crozier 2001; Harry, Klingner, and Hart 2005). At the same time, families may reposition in response (Davies and Harré 1990) to school personnel's deficit-laden perspectives with anti-deficit approaches reinforced by cultural wealth (Allen and White-Smith 2018) and creative acts of resistance (Lalvani and Hale 2015).

Layered, complex social problems like the one mentioned above are considered 'wicked problems' (Rittel and Webber 1973, 160). Every wicked problem can be a symptom of another problem and the cyclical nature of wicked problems further result in 'no stopping rule' (Rittel and Webber 1973, 162). Said differently, the process of creating reciprocal family-school partnerships is directly related to the ways in which we understand how they are reproduced. Furthermore, the way we understand inequitable family-school partnerships relates to how we seek and act towards solutions. That said, inequitable family-school partnerships with culturally and linguistically diverse families connect to discrepancies in access, opportunity, and justice due to a long history of racial domination and inequality in the United States (Auerbach 2007; Yull et al. 2014). The historical legacy of beliefs about race, language, gender, and ability, based on white supremacy, are intertwined in complex ways (Artiles 2014; Annamma, Connor, and Ferri 2013; Lareau and Horvat 1999). For example, through scientific racism, including eugenics (Burke and Castaneda 2007) and intelligence testing (Croizet 2012), scientists have attempted to prove individuals from non-dominant racial, linguistic, and ethnic groups inferior to justify segregation and inequitable practices (Du Bois 1920). Because school professionals are also members of society, the ideology of racial domination is prevalent in school policies, practices, and discourses as reflected in the beliefs and assumptions of social norms (Bonilla-Silva 2017; Gillborn 2016; Reid and Knight 2006; Skrtic 1995).

White epistemology positions culturally and linguistically diverse families and their children and youth as *Others* (Du Bois 1903, 1989]1903, 1989; Leonardo 2002). By *othering*, school personnel discount familial expertise and judge childrearing and family involvement as inadequate (Kalyanpur 1998; Leonardo 2002). When students are also considered *Others*, they are situated as *less than* their white peers (Annamma and Morrison 2018; Broderick and Leonardo 2016). Unaware of the legacy of *whiteness*, school personnel engage in debilitating practices (Puar 2017) that minoritize students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, further perpetuating racial domination and inequality (Leonardo and Broderick 2011). Moreover, a statistical overrepresentation of labeled and referred culturally and linguistically diverse students

exists in special education, resulting in placements within segregated special education classrooms (Blanchett, Klingner, and Harry 2009; de Valenzuela, Copeland, Qi, and Park 2006; Fierros and Conroy 2002). This deficit-laden perspective uses the ideas of *culture* and *language* to justify discrimination against culturally and linguistically diverse children, youth, and families (Artiles 2014).

Discriminations maintain adverse educational experiences and outcomes and often culturally and linguistically diverse children and youth feel unsafe, unwelcome, and unsuccessful in school (Fazel 2015; Goff et al. 2014). This process begins from the point of entry into school, including while culturally and linguistically diverse children are in pre-school (Flückiger, Diamond, and Jones 2012) and can continue throughout their educational trajectories (Crenshaw, Ocen, and Nanda 2015; Garver and Noguera 2015) into post-secondary institutions (Parker et al. 2017). When children experience harmful and traumatic schooling they are more likely to experience similar negative feelings and experiences about school, including powerlessness and devaluation, in school once they are parents or adult-age family members (Harry, Klingner, and Hart 2005). This presents families with multiple jeopardies, including the consequences of white normativity projected on race and ability throughout childhood and then into adulthood (Broderick and Leonardo 2016; Crozier 2001; Leonardo and Broderick 2011). The complexities entangled in pervasive racial domination and inequality negatively impact children, youth, and families, and undeniably impact family-school partnerships (Harry 2008). Due to the cyclical nature of the impact of family-school partnerships on achievement and opportunity for culturally and linguistically diverse learners, the challenge of partnership and collaboration is a symptom of racial domination and inequality (Delgado and Stefancic 2001; Doane and Bonilla-Silva 2003; Rollock et al. 2014). Consequently, this paper seeks to reimagine and (re)conceptualize reciprocal and equitable family-school partnerships with and for culturally and linguistically diverse families. Next, I examine historical and contemporary frames for family-school partnerships as background for a proposed alternative transdisciplinary frame.

A historical framing of family-school partnerships

Historically, family-school partnerships in special education, particularly with culturally and linguistically diverse families, were framed from a deficit and deviance perspective (Bogdan and Knoll 1995; Kalyanpur, Harry, and Skrtic 2000). This destructive perspective was reinforced by research and policy positioned from several powerful deficit-laden angles. For example, research (e.g., Moynihan 1965) and policy briefs (e.g., Coleman et al. 1966) cited detrimental effects of home environments of culturally and linguistically diverse families living in poverty without citing structural oppressions and power inequities. This frame was also reinforced by ideations that disability had a negative impact on the family, resulting in stress, maladjustment, and parental separation and divorce (Nichols 1981; Wolfensberger 1967). Moreover, the assumption of ‘disability’ itself was pejorative locating problems of learning solely within the child rather than in recognition of reciprocal relationships between personal characteristics and the environment (Sailor 2017). In response, educational researchers worked to expose the deficit-laden frame and subsequent implications for culturally and linguistically diverse families and children.

Three empirical studies from the late 20th century are examples of this disclosure. In 1991, Kalyanpur and Rao uncovered how educational professionals conveyed a lack of trust and respect for culturally and linguistically diverse families. Their findings illuminated how professionals maintained a deficit-laden focus rather than one that concentrated on the strengths and assets of the child and their family. A few years later, Kalyanpur (1998) argued that visiting professionals working in a Native American community practiced with an absence of cultural responsiveness and considered the local culture(s) to be deficient and a hindrance. The professionals in this study made negative assumptions about parenting skills and styles, attempting to impose their own cultural beliefs on child rearing, parent-child interactions, and what constituted knowledge (Kalyanpur 1998). The following year, Harry and colleagues (1999) exposed service providers' lack of cultural reciprocity when engaged in an ethnographic and participatory research study with seven culturally and linguistically diverse families. The authors claimed a culturally reciprocal stance informs family-professional partnerships by centering the collaboration in the family's unique ecocultural heterogeneity, rather than a generalized social norm. These three studies exemplified the negative interactions culturally and linguistically diverse families were experiencing within family-school partnerships at the time and had been experiencing for years prior. These findings embodied the impact the families' experiences had on future collaborations with school personnel as well as their child's academic and social experiences and outcomes.

A contemporary framing of family-school partnerships

More recent scholarship has utilized other frames to uncover the inequitable partnerships many culturally and linguistically diverse families experience with school personnel. For example, researchers have framed qualitative inquiries with a culturally responsive, cultural relevance lens (Harry, Klingner, and Hart 2005; Lea 2006; Zionts et al. 2003). Researchers have coupled a culturally responsive, cultural relevance lens with an additional focus on collaboration (Blue-Banning et al. 2004; Lord Nelson, Summers, and Turnbull 2004). Other studies have been framed by federal special education legislation (IDEA 2004), including Jegatheesan (2009) and Aceves (2014). Bronfenbrenner's framework (Keyes 2002) and Bourdieu's social and cultural capital (Lareau 2001; Lareau and Horvat 1999; Lian and Fontáñez-Phelan 2001; Trainor 2010a, 2010b) have also been used to frame qualitative inquiry examining family-school partnerships. Irrespective of frame, researchers have examined interpersonal and structural aspects to define successful and unsuccessful partnership experiences. I outline some of the abovementioned studies below.

The themes of disrespect and mistrust resonated across studies. In fact, families have identified cultural and linguistic barriers and disparate views of ability. For example, when interviewing Black families of children with disability labels, Zionts and colleagues (2003) found levels of respect and comfort were intimately tied to family satisfaction with the education system. In 2005, Harry and colleagues uncovered professional unwillingness to partner with families, trust their viewpoints, and include them in the processes. The authors conducted observations of meetings and interactions between professionals and families as well as observations of classroom interactions between

school personnel and students. Interviews with families and professionals further supported the findings.

While both Jegatheesan (2009) and Aceves (2014) embodied a frame focused on the legislative objective of Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (2004), the authors tackled the problem quite differently. Through semi-structured interviews, Asian American mothers of children with disability labels informed Jegatheesan (2009) that professionals needed to learn about Asian culture as well as experiences of mobility (e.g., immigrant, migrant, refugee). The theme of cultural and linguistic barriers was also visible in the author's findings. Aceves (2014) studied the impact of family training workshops with mixed-methods data collection. The study examined family training workshops, developed collaboratively by an urban school district and a non-profit, community-based parent agency. The author found trainings improved Latinx parents' access to and knowledge of community resources. Aceves (2014) concluded that future work in community agency-school partnerships must intentionally involve the voices of school staff on connecting with families of children with disability labels.

Similar to a 2001 study by Lian and Fontáñez-Phelan, Trainor (2010a) examined family advocacy for children and youth with disability labels. Trainor (2010a) expanded the frame to incorporate the nuances of advocacy and capital. The Latinx, Black, Multiracial, Native, and white families Trainor (2010a) interviewed unveiled four approaches to advocacy: intuitive advocate, disability expert, strategist, and change agent. The families used these approaches as resources to ensure some level of collaboration with professionals unwilling to partner in education decision-making. From the interviews, Trainor (2010a) inferred that no approach had consistent effective results, but intuitive approaches were less likely to result in family's preferred outcomes.

In sum, culturally and linguistically diverse families experience mistrust and disrespect from school professionals, who are predominately white, female, and middle-class (de Bruïne et al. 2014; Milner 2010). Professionals are positioned as experts while familial funds of knowledge and dynamic forms of human capital are condemned and marginalised (Skrtric 1995; Tomlinson 2016). This reality impacts decision-making processes and ultimately, a child's participation and progress in school. Scholars have examined the tensions that arise from or are cultivated within family-school partnerships for education decision-making from varied lenses or theoretical frameworks. These studies have exposed interpersonal and structural motivations that deter family-school partnerships with culturally and linguistically diverse families from becoming reciprocal and equitable. While these frameworks have been paramount in exposing the deficit-laden perspectives of school professionals as well as the deep, systemic levels of mistrust and disrespect, I propose a (re)conceptualization to reframe the inquiry. In other words, reimagining reciprocal, equitable family-school partnerships requires a different lens for new possibilities.

Next, I introduce two existing frameworks, community cultural wealth (Yosso 2005) and ecological resilience (Gutiérrez 2016; Walker and Salt 2012). I propose blending these two frameworks will generate a transdisciplinary theoretical lens (Choi and Pak 2006) to center future special education teacher preparation, research, and practice. Further, this lens could be applied to research examining family-school partnerships. My hope is that this (re)conceptualization will result in transformative interactions, liberating families typically silenced in special education processes. First, I outline the

implications of community cultural wealth for family-school partnerships between school personnel and culturally and linguistically diverse families. Then, I explore how blending community cultural wealth with an ecological resilience frame creates an even more robust and sustainable (re)conceptualization of family-school partnerships with and for culturally and linguistically diverse families.

Community cultural wealth intersects with ecological resilience thinking

I propose an alternative transdisciplinary frame that capitalizes on community cultural wealth (Yosso 2005) and ecological resilience (Gutiérrez 2016; Walker and Salt 2012) for special education teacher preparation, research, and practice. To familiarize, community cultural wealth is grounded in critical race theory (Yosso 2005). Over the years, multiple disciplines have influenced critical race theory including law, sociology, history, ethnic studies, women's studies, and education (Yosso, Villalpando, Delgado Bernal, and Solórzano 2001). As the name suggests, ecological resilience originated in the field of ecology (Walker and Salt 2012). This theoretical blend (see Figure 1) focuses on the funds of knowledge and strengths of culturally and linguistically diverse families and local communities (Chiu et al. 2014; Schippers and Van Boheemen 2009; Yosso 2005). A strengths-based focus unlocks the potential to develop and maintain family-school partnerships grounded in respectful communication, trusting relationships, and reciprocal partnerships (Morningstar et al. 2013). When school professionals partner

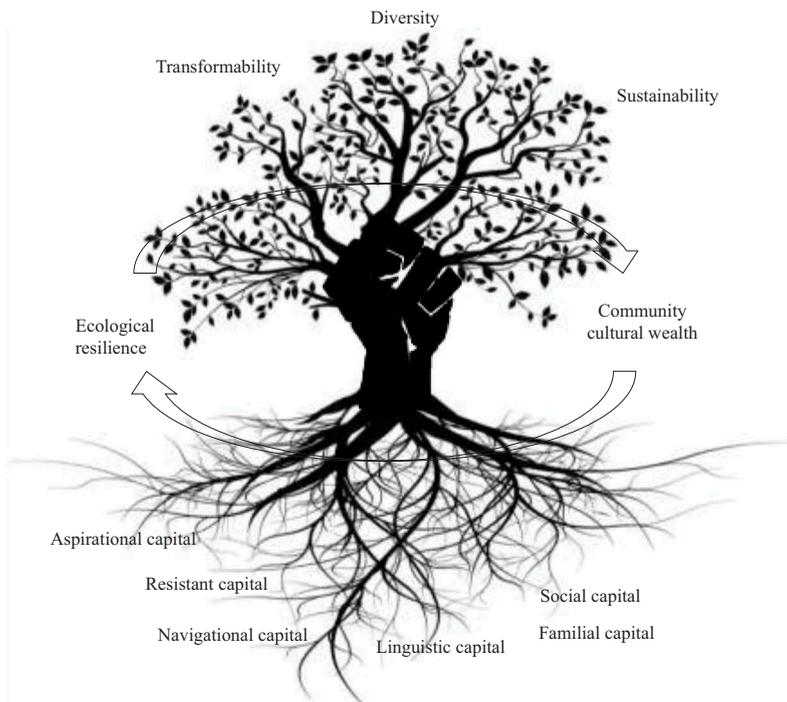


Figure 1. Alternative transdisciplinary framework for school professionals partnering with culturally and linguistically diverse families with children and youth who may have disability labels.

with families with an asset-laden focus, then reciprocal and equitable family-school partnerships are imaginable.

Community cultural wealth for family-school partnerships

In 2005, Yosso conceptualized *community cultural wealth*. As research has shown, non-dominant forms of human capital, the types of capital culturally and linguistically diverse families have, are typically criticized and ignored by school professionals (Lea 2006; Martinez-Cosio and Iannacone 2007). In 2005, Yosso introduced community cultural wealth as an alternative theory to challenge traditional interpretations of Bourdieuan capital theory (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977). According to Bourdieu's capital theory, economic capital (wealth, income, and property) competes with cultural capital (knowledge, culture, and educational credentials) for power and prestige whereby economic capital is the dominant principle of hierarchy (Bourdieu 1980; Swartz 1997). Yosso (2005) claimed that Bourdieu's theoretical stance on the hierarchical nature of economic, cultural, and social capital had been misinterpreted in educational research and schooling practices. This misinterpretation reinforced and reproduced the ignoring and/or rejecting of epistemologies, resources, and axiological commitments of culturally and linguistically diverse communities, families, and students by the most powerful groups (white, middle class). Furthermore, Bourdieu's conceptualization and positioning of cultural capital was reductive and monolithic (Lareau and Weininger 2003), based on a narrow notion of what culture is and an omission of the oppressions of racism (Crozier 2001) and linguisticism (Rosa and Flores 2017). In other words, Bourdieuan capital theory has been used over time in schools to uphold a hegemonic social 'norm' and position culturally and linguistically diverse families as insignificant partners and their children and youth as deficient learners (Yosso 2005). Consequently, I posit that if special education teacher preparation research and practice centers the nuances of and inherent gifts encompassing community cultural wealth, then a relational and interactional transformation between school professionals and culturally and linguistically diverse families is imaginable. Next, I briefly discuss the six forms of community cultural wealth (Yosso 2005).

Community cultural wealth is comprised of six forms of cultural capital students bring with them from their homes and communities to school (Yosso 2005). The six forms are dynamic and contextual, building on and supporting one another. As mentioned above, *aspirational capital* relates to and overlaps within each of the other forms of capital. It refers to 'the ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future' (Yosso 2005, 77). This form of cultural wealth draws on the narratives of Latino/a families who maintain high aspirations for their children's future despite low educational outcomes (Delgado Bernal 2002; Delgado-Gaitan 1994; Yosso 2005). *Linguistic capital* refers to the social and intellectual skills realized through the communicative experiences of multilingualism. Culturally and linguistically diverse students and families bring numerous language and communication skills to school including storytelling, communicating through visual art, music, or poetry, and multiple social tools such as translating for familial responsibility (Orellana et al. 2003). *Familial capital* is the 'community history, memory, and cultural intuition' (Yosso 2005, 79) that is cultivated and celebrated among kin (Delgado Bernal 2002). Familial capital expands

the conceptualization of family to include extended family, neighbors, and friends. Familial capital also focuses on an obligation to community wellbeing. *Social capital* refers to networks of people and community resources (Yosso 2005). Social capital is not only emotional support but also the resources and information people from culturally and linguistically diverse ancestries provide to one another to ‘attain education, legal justice, employment, and health care’ (80). *Navigational capital* denotes the skills for operating through and within social institutions (Yosso 2005). Navigational capital supports culturally and linguistically diverse families and students as persons maneuver through social institutions historically created to marginalise racial, cultural, and linguistic diversity (Solórzano and Villalpando 1998). Finally, *resistant capital* refers to the skills and knowledge(s) cultivated through acts of resistance that challenge inequities (Freire 1973, 2000; Yosso 2005). Resistant capital is demonstrated in the multiple dimensions and forms of resistance that culturally and linguistically diverse families, students, and communities engage in response to the oppressive legacies of imperialism (Delgado Bernal 2002; Freire 1973, 2000; Yosso 2005). The six forms of capital within community cultural wealth overlap and support one another, preserving, sharing, and shaping knowledge and skills across families and communities.

Community cultural wealth embodies the strength and diversity of culturally and linguistically diverse students, families, and communities (Yosso 2005). It is through this collective strength and capacity that culturally and linguistically diverse students, families, and community respond to school systems and larger social ecological systems. Therefore, community cultural wealth is generative from within the context of racism and imperialism but also connected to a broader racial and social justice movement. This broader racial and social justice movement embodies the concept of ecological resilience discussed below.

Ecological resilience for family-school partnerships

Ecological resilience describes how a community renegotiates inequitable systems. Like Gutiérrez (2016), I used the term *ecology* loosely to represent the woven roots of culture, in all its challenged and dynamic forms. Ecological resilience, a community’s capacity to absorb disturbances without shifting to an alternate stable state, is key to sustainability (Walker and Salt 2012). Resilience thinking, one response to re-mediating failing ecosystems, seeks to examine and engage communities and systems within a changing world as the people within them build capacity amid disruption (Gutiérrez 2016; Walker and Salt 2012). The focus on social ecological systems, of humans and nature, provides a framework for observing how families, students, communities, and systems change and cope with disturbance. It also provides a framework for interacting with culturally and linguistically diverse families and cultivating family-school partnerships. Resilience thinking celebrates the roles of diversity, transformability, and sustainability in/as ecological resilience (Walker and Salt 2012). It is through this strengths-based, asset-laden blended frame that school personnel position themselves for reciprocal and equitable family-school partnerships.

Diversity, transformability, and sustainability have important and interconnected roles within the framework of ecological resilience. Understanding their roles within

social ecological systems supports the reimagining of family-school partnerships. When blended with community cultural wealth, *diversity* is the variety of individuals, ideologies, historicities, and practices present in social ecological systems like families, schools, and communities (Walker and Salt 2012). Diversity is strength, it is not deficit (Gutiérrez 2016). The greater the diversity, in response and function to change, then the greater the ability to adapt to change. Diversity also relates to flexibility and options (Walker and Salt 2012). With restricted diversity, options and resources are limited, thus reducing a community's capacity to respond. A sociological system needs diversity. Diversity is necessary for transformability. *Transformability* refers to the capacity to create new systems when social, economic, and ecological conditions are untenable (Gutiérrez 2016; Walker and Salt 2012). Some communities have greater capacity for transformability and to re-mediate a functional system. This focus is not on fixing a system but on reorganizing and re-mediating systems of activity (Gutiérrez 2016). Diversity and transformability are essential for sustainability (Walker and Salt 2012). *Sustainability* is the ability of a community to maintain indefinitely, without declining and impacting the social welfare or resource base (Walker and Salt 2012). Like diversity and transformability, seeing historically is necessary for sustainability (Gutiérrez 2016). Sustainability requires a dynamic model of culture that values diversity and culture as assets (Gutiérrez 2016). Schools and professionals can use the roles of diversity, transformability, and sustainability to reimagine family-school partnerships with culturally and linguistically diverse families. This reimagining embraces families as empowered partners with multiple strengths and as essential partners in education decision-making processes and student learning and growth.

Reimagining family-school partnerships and interactions with culturally and linguistically diverse families from the viewpoint of community cultural wealth blended with ecological resilience situates families (and communities) as 'designers of their own futures' (Gutiérrez 2016, 192). From an 'ecocultural theoretical perspective' (189), culturally and linguistically diverse families develop and maintain community cultural wealth and work towards the future with hope (and will continue to). As mentioned above, this blended frame is reflective of the cumulative impact of historically inequitable practices and events, including the destruction of rich material and cultural resources, that families have experienced over time due to colonization, segregation, and forced assimilation (Gutiérrez 2016; Walker and Salt 2012) while maintaining the rich strength, resistance, and hope present within families and communities. Professionals can reimagine family-school partnerships with the support of this blended frame and react. This (re)conceptualization has implications for institutional change based on thought, research, practice, and policy.

Implications for systems change

Reimagining family-school partnerships with and for culturally and linguistically diverse families that are truly equitable, trusting, and reciprocal holds myriad implications. In the next section I describe thought, research, practice, and policy implications but-tressed by the proposed fusion of community cultural wealth and ecological resilience thinking. While this is not an exhaustive list of implications, it is critical to imagine

change that involves concepts and beliefs but also spans action across research, practice, and policy.

Thought implications

A (re)conceptualization for reaction involves transformations in thought. Thought implications are cyclical. Meaning, they can have a profound impact on the way families are perceived by professionals and then, partnered with. Moreover, thought implications can impact how families are valued and respected by professionals. That said, changing thinking can also impact research, practice, and policy (discussed later). In this section, I describe two underlying processes (interrogating power and self-reflection) that school personnel must engage in to support for transformations in thought.

First, shifts in thought must interrogate how current structural and interpersonal power inequities are reproduced by systems and processes. Structural and interpersonal power can be examined in context and the inherent reality of professionalized power dynamics in family-school partnerships must guide this awareness (Author et al. 2017). For example, power inequities exist in the interactions school personnel have with families due to beliefs that the teachers are the experts and the family members are the experts' assistants (Matthiesen 2015). Negative interactions happen in less formal meetings such as when Arab parents visit their child's school in the western suburbs of Sydney (Markose and Simpson 2016) or in more formal meetings when South African and American parents of children with disability labels meet with schools about educational placements (Yssel et al. 2007). In other words, interactions and meetings act as vehicles for institutional racism (and linguisticism) within the current educational system that school personnel are complicit in (Angelov and Anderson 2013) and schools have the power to change these mechanisms.

Second, self-reflection and examination support shifts in thought. Cultivating and maintaining family-school partnerships with culturally and linguistically diverse families requires special education personnel continually engage in self-examination (Yull et al. 2014). As part of this self-examination, partnering with families different from one's own cultural and linguistic background requires deep consideration and reflection on societal and personal biases, stereotypes, and deficit-laden judgments of family care and knowledge (Cooper, Riehl, and Hasan 2010; Lampert et al. 2014). Examining bias includes scrutinizing societal and personal biases (implicit and explicit) while also engaging in on-going and deep interpersonal reflection concerning one's understandings of intersecting structural oppressions (e.g., racism, sexism, ableism, linguisticism). Tools, including bias tests, support groups, and professional development seminars centered on anti-racist (e.g., Blakeney 2005) and anti-ableist pedagogy (e.g., Broderick and Lalvani 2017), can support special education personnel. Critical discourse analysis also examines how unequal power relationships are further reproduced through the discourse we use (Lai and Vadeboncoeur 2013). In sum, these practices afford special education personnel opportunities to examine societal and personal biases, resist oppressive institutional cultures, and transform their professional practices.

That said, shifts in thought can actually legitimize familial funds of knowledge that culturally and linguistically diverse families hold, honor, and cultivate. Shifts in thought demand professionals in special education authentically value familial funds of knowledge and the multitude of community cultural wealth students and families hold, share, and bring to school and other spaces of learning. Valuing with authenticity requires listening with care and compassion (Kinloch and San Pedro 2014). Moreover, valuing with authenticity signifies respecting diversity in thought and action (Nelson, Prilleltensky, and MacGillivray 2001). In fact, valuing with authenticity can promote power sharing in problem solving. In sum, combining the practices of examining structural oppressions and personal self-examination with value change creates a paradigm-shifting mechanism for reimagining family-school partnerships between education personnel and culturally and linguistically diverse families (Bryan and Henry 2012), particularly for special education professionals).

Finally, reimagining and repositioning families as experts promotes trust and fosters reciprocal and equitable family-school partnerships. It is equally critical for special education personnel to cultivate family-school partnerships that embody elevated levels of trust. Like a cycle of reorganization where small events can powerfully shape the future (Walker and Salt 2012), trust will only be realized when professionals view families as experts and educators. Typically, school staff view culturally and linguistically diverse families as information receptors instead of as empowered, active agents in their child's education. According to Ishimaru and colleagues (2015), parent and family expertise resides in a family's cultural wealth, collective agency and leadership, political power, and lived experiences. Therefore, schools and professionals must respect familial epistemic authority and uphold student learning inside and outside of the school setting. Respecting familial epistemic authority has the power to restore and repair social ecological systems and networks, including family-school partnerships (Ishimaru, Barajas-López, and Bang 2015). The shift away from dismissing to fully embracing families as experts in the teaching and learning of their children leads to more trust. That said, trust is imperative for reciprocity and equity in partnership.

Although shifts in thought are integrally ripe with difficulty, changes in how special education personnel understand themselves and the families they partner with can support a transformation. Paired with the proposed blended framework, the mechanisms of interrogating power inequities and reflecting on self and society can support school personnel in truly adjusting value and viewing families as experts and educators. With transformations in thought, reimagining family-school partnerships with culturally and linguistically diverse families becomes possible.

Research implications

A (re)conceptualization for reaction involves a transformative research stance and agenda. Two similar research stances embodying a collective process of knowledge construction and praxis are participatory action research (Gaventa 1988) and community-based research approaches (Bergold and Thomas 2012). In addition, research focused on interrogating teacher and researcher beliefs about families and subsequent actions partnering with families are also necessary for a (re)conceptualization. Next,

I discuss how research can be a mechanism to cultivate and advocate for equitable and just partnerships between families and schools.

Participatory and community-based research approaches incorporate collective processes of knowledge production and reflection within the research design (Bergold and Thomas 2012). Similarly to the ways communities of practice disrupt and/or create new roles and relations between schools and families, participatory and community-based research approaches interrupt normative power dynamics between researcher and participant by attending to critical historicity, relationality, and power (Bang et al. 2015) of inequitable family-school partnerships. By definition, historicity is more than personal and cultural histories. It is used to propel ecological resilience and sustain diverse social ecological systems (Walker and Salt 2012). Relationality relates to the ways in which all things are interconnected, dynamic, and mutually reciprocated across family-professional relationships (Bang et al. 2015). By attending to power, families critique deficit perspectives and exclusionary mechanisms (e.g., racism, linguisticism; LeChasseur 2014; Reynolds 2015) and define what social and racial justice means for families and schools (Bang and Vossoughi 2016). In sum, participatory and community-based approaches transform research wherein inquiry is *with* and *alongside* culturally and linguistically diverse families rather than simply *for* families (Kinloch and San Pedro 2014).

A (re)conceptualization for reaction also involves research that vigorously works to shift power imbalances between schools and families by focusing on teacher beliefs and actions concerning culturally and linguistically diverse families. In fact, teachers may create stereotypes based on a few negative experiences with culturally and linguistically diverse families and may not value the varied ways in which families are involved in their child's lives (Souto-Manning and Swick 2006). Recently, scholars have exposed how pre- and in-service teachers made assumptions about how Black and Asian American families care for their children and how much they value education (Puchner and Markowitz 2015). In addition to teacher beliefs and actions, educational researchers must also examine their beliefs about and actions towards culture and culturally and linguistically diverse families in their scholarship. This includes examining power differentials in the inquiry process and engaging in epistemic reflexivity (Arzubiaga et al. 2008). In sum, how one views their role as a researcher impacts their assumptions and consequently their positioning of culturally and linguistically diverse families.

Practice implications

A (re)conceptualization for reaction requires transformation in practice. Ideally, changes in thought and research support a shift in practice that interrogates power inequities by promoting relationship-building and reciprocal learning (Cooper, Riehl, and Hasan 2010) as well as culturally sustaining professionalism (Paris 2012), particularly for special education professionals.

Cooper and colleagues (2010) suggested school professionals implement communities of practice in order for families and school professionals to engage in relationship building and reciprocal learning. Communities of practice (Wenger 1998) are intentional sites for learning and social action that support the co-development of family-

school partnerships. As participants in communities of practice, families, community members, and school personnel develop new epistemological stances as they question the social constructions of race and disability. In these intentional spaces, learning as a group process affords new understandings, relationships, and roles. As Cooper, Riehl, and Hasan (2010) reiterated, it takes time for real transformation to happen within communities of practice. Therefore, through sustained engagement and open dialogue (Cooper, Riehl, and Hasan 2010), family-school partnerships can become sites of collaboration influenced by familial cultural practices and patterns. In sum, communities of practice can shift power dynamics and between families and schools resulting in more equitable, just, and mutually beneficial partnerships.

Paris (2012) affirmed *culturally sustaining pedagogy* as teaching practices that are not only responsive and relevant but that seek to cultivate and sustain linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism. I humbly seek to expand this pedagogical posture to professionals engaged in collaborative educational decision-making with culturally and linguistically families with children and youth with disability labels. In the ways that culturally sustaining pedagogy is responsive of the 'cultural experiences and practices of young people' (Paris 2012, 95), equitable family-school partnerships need to be responsive to the cultural experiences and practices of families. In other words, culturally sustaining professionalism involves promoting and sustaining familial funds of knowledge and community cultural wealth through innovative culturally sustaining pedagogy and family-school partnership practices. Through an ecological resilience lens, culturally sustaining professionalism capitalizes on the diversity of multiethnic and multilingual communities. It also promotes transformability by creating new systems of collaboration (Walker and Salt 2012). That said, pre- and in-service teachers must be taught, not only the importance of partnership, but also how to partner with families (Quezada 2014) through communities of practice and culturally sustaining professionalism. In sum, it is through these diverse shifts in thought, research, and practice centered in the tangled roots of community cultural wealth and ecological resilience that school systems support family-school partnerships between education personnel and culturally and linguistically diverse families.

Policy implications

Finally, a (re)conceptualization for reaction requires an examination of color-evasive racial ideology in education and society (Annamma, Jackson, and Morrison 2017) focused on the families most commonly left out of policy and practice – culturally and linguistically diverse families (Angelov and Anderson 2013).

In 2014, Wells analyzed education policy and reform revealing a commitment to color-evasive racial ideology in United States education systems similar to that within United States law where acknowledging race was conflated with being racist and therefore educators were encouraged to ignore race. The author cited two central educational reforms – the standards/accountability movement and free-market school choice policies – that were framed as outcome-based solutions to the racial achievement gap but did not directly address race or educational or societal issues related to race despite 'research findings reveal[ing] the profound role of race in education' (Wells 2014, 12). The author recommended national,

state, and local policymakers heed the significant value of racially and ethnically diverse schools, districts, and communities by interrogating the geographic, physical, and political barriers that perpetuate segregation in public schools. Embracing the essence of community cultural wealth, Wells (2014) also recommended that policy agendas support curriculum, teaching, and assessment that honor and ‘tap into the educational benefits of diversity’ (18). This includes educational policies that ‘support and argue for educational programming, in schools and communities, that use the experiences of communities of color in service of promoting racial literacy’ (DiAquoi 2018, 16). Further, a community cultural wealth and ecological resilience thinking blended frame would more comprehensively support local and national reauthorization that intentionally sought familial input from culturally and linguistically diverse families (M. M. Burke and Sandman 2015). The framework would support family input for policy reauthorizations by safeguarding families as equitable, essential partners with epistemic authority. In sum, policymakers must recognize that diversity in families and communities is enriching and vital to democratic and societal transformability and sustainability.

Conclusion and summary

Inequitable family-school partnerships between special education personnel and culturally and linguistically diverse families is a multifaceted ‘wicked problem’ (Rittel and Webber 1973). Although policies have been enacted to ensure families are involved in their children’s education (Turnbull, Stowe, and Huerta 2007), school professionals, who are predominantly white and middle-class, continue to fail to equitably partner with culturally and linguistically diverse families (Lalvani and Hale 2015; Trainor 2010b). The complexities of inequitable partnerships impact children and families across the lifespan from children feeling unsafe and unwelcome in school (Stambaugh and Ford 2015) to experiencing a lack of success in school (Toldson and Lemmons 2013; Ward, Strambler, and Linke 2013).

Therefore, I posit a transdisciplinary framework blending community cultural wealth (Yosso 2005) and ecological resilience thinking (Gutiérrez 2016; Walker and Salt 2012) is necessary to engage school systems and personnel in cultivating and sustaining reciprocal family-school partnerships with and for culturally and linguistically diverse families. The proposed frame supports the ideological disruption necessary for transformative change, revealing how the beliefs and actions of racial domination and ability discrimination prevalent in school systems and processes reproduce inequitable partnerships for education decision-making and special education service-delivery options. Simultaneously, community cultural wealth (Yosso 2005) and ecological resilience thinking (Gutiérrez 2016; Walker and Salt 2012) position families and local communities as knowledge generators (Delgado Bernal 2002) resisting and leading with ingenuity as the artists and engineers of their futures (Gutiérrez 2016; Paris and Winn 2014).

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