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Reframing Venerable Standpoints about Language and Learning Differences: The Need for Research on the Literate Lives of Latina/o Language Minority Students

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Despite the empirical attention that has been devoted to Latinas/os, language minority (LM) students, and students with learning disabilities (LD) as three separate subgroups, limited attention has been given to Latina/o students that fall into both LM *and* LD student categories. The literacy experiences of students living at the intersection of ethnic, language, and ability differences have been under-examined. This article calls for new insights into the literate lives of Latina/o LMs with LD, and posits that reframing cognitive models of literacy, sociocultural approaches, and resource pedagogies can offer a more comprehensive view of literacy and population complexity.

Keywords: language-minority, ELL, reading, literacy, learning disability, Latina/o

Literacy[1] is a critical learning arena in the U.S. education system as reflected in substantial investments in research and practice methods geared toward improving literacy outcomes. Unfortunately, language minority[2] (LM) students have literacy outcomes far below that of their English-proficient peers (Cheung & Slavin 2012; Kena et al., 2015). This is particularly relevant for Latina/o students that experience unexpectedly low performance in literacy that often receive a diagnosis of learning disabilities (LD). With current accountability standards placed on student subgroups (including Latinas/os and LMs), Latina/o student literacy development, as measured on standardized achievement assessments, has been a continuous and growing concern in the U.S. education system as the fastest growing U.S. student population continues to struggle in literacy (Lesaux, 2012; U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, 2013, 2015).

Latinas/os constitute a complex population with considerable within-group variability linked to race, social class, gender, national origin, generation in the US, and

perhaps most prominently, language differences, often operationalized in terms of language proficiency or type of language (e.g., Spanish, Portuguese). The convergence of a burgeoning complex population with poor literacy outcomes becomes more complicated when Latinas/os have special language or learning needs. This is a real concern, for there is evidence of disproportionate representation of Latinas/os and ELs in the LD category (the largest special education group) in some regions of the US (Artiles, Rueda, Salazar, & Higareda, 2005; Sullivan, 2011).

Literacy, the life blood of education, is a cultural practice that has been institutionally defined over time with tools, activities, and assessments that measure students' competence as literate beings. The problem at hand is that Latina/o LM students with LD are expected to engage in literacy activities in school that neglect important domains of activity in which this population participate and display ample competence (e.g., out of school activities). This is the case, in part, because traditional school conceptualizations of literacy do not take into account that all students use literacy practices across different activity systems (e.g., home, school). Therefore, a question awaiting empirical verification is whether and to what extent the longstanding low school literacy performance of Latinas/os with and without LD is mediated by a limited understanding of the literacy competencies these students possess. In turn, this alternative perspective for framing the educational challenges of Latinas/os has important implications for future research on literacy learning of Latina/os with LDs. Thus, the purpose of this article is twofold, namely to (a) argue that the longstanding literacy problems of Latina/o LMs with LD is grounded in part in a lack of attention to population complexity and (b) outline a literacy framework that draws from standpoints that attend to the intersectional identities of Latina/o LMs with LD.

We begin by contextualizing the research problem with a description of population trends; specifically, Latina/o student growth in the US with particular attention to diversity *within* this population via a brief discussion of the new Latina/o diaspora. We then situate this population growth within an account of the school-aged Latina/o population's literacy outcomes and describe how students of color, including Latina/os have experienced educational inequities via disproportionate representation in special education. We critique, in the next section, how institutional practices have negative consequences for this growing and diverse population. We also appraise the assumptions of the constructs of *learning* and *literacy* traditionally used in the education of LM Latina/o students, calling attention to alternative viewpoints. We conclude with a call for research methods that will advance our understanding of literacy practices for subgroups of Latinas/os with and without LDs.

Population Changes: Latinas/os, Linguistic Minorities, and Disabled Students of Color

The Latina/o population in the US is increasing, while the White population is decreasing over time (Stepler & Brown, 2015). Latinas/os skyrocketed from being 4.5% of the U.S. population in 1970 to 17.1% in 2013 (Stepler & Brown; U.S. Census Bureau, 2011); it is projected to become 19.4% of the population by 2020 and 30.3% by 2050 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). Between 2000 and 2011 the Latina/o representation increased by 56% compared to non-Latina/o growth at 45% (U.S. Census, 2012), which

means Latinas/os accounted for more than half of the U.S. population growth. This growth is attributed to both a natural increase (64%) and migration from other countries (36%; U.S. Census Bureau, 2012).

This population growth exacerbates challenges and tensions in the U.S. educational system (Allard, 2013; Ginocchio, 2014; Wortham, Clonan-Roy, Link, & Martinez, 2013), particularly due to the low literacy performance of this student group (Kena et al., 2015; Lesaux; 2012). Poor literacy outcomes reflect not only the lack of opportunities that affect Latina/o students' preparedness for school, but also the questionable quality of education that is available to this increasingly diverse population. Although federal policies require instructional services for English language learners (ELL) and students with disabilities (i.e., Title III, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA]), there is little attention to the complexity of the Latina/o population. Latinas/os are largely discussed and even researched as if they were a monolithic group, when in fact there is not only abundant heterogeneity, but also complexity in their demographic growth patterns (Mize, 2013; Villenas, 2007). The Latina/o diaspora provide insight into this complexity.

The past forty years of Latina/o population growth in the US has demonstrated considerable variation in diaspora via geographies and rates. Scholars have referred to the demographic pattern that began in the 1990s as the "new Latino diaspora" (Hamann & Harklau, 2010; Wortham, Murillo, & Hamann, 2002; Wortham et al., 2013). The new Latina/o diaspora refers to Latina/o migration to states which historically have not experienced Latina/o populations wanting to settle in areas like the South and some parts of Midwestern regions of the nation, whereas the traditional Latina/o diaspora refers to the states and regions historically populated by Latina/os (see Table 1; i.e., Southwest and some states in the Southeast, Midwest, and Northeast).

Table 1

The New Latina/o Diaspora

State	2000 population	2010 population	2013 population	% Growth 2000-2013
South Dakota	10,101	20,883	27,406	171.3
South Carolina	94,652	231,807	252,726	167.0
Tennessee	116,692	286,779	309,453	165.2
Alabama	72,152	181,638	189,289	162.3
Kentucky	56,922	130,485	141,084	147.9
Arkansas	85,303	181,598	203,460	138.5
Maryland	230,992	474,088	531,370	130.0
North Carolina	377,084	805,016	866,936	129.9
North Dakota	7,429	13,818	16,387	120.6
Delaware	37,811	73,868	81,066	114.4

Note. Modified from the Stepler, R., & Brown, A. (2015). Statistical portrait of Hispanics in the United States, 1980-2013. Retrieved from http://www.pewhispanic.org/2015/05/12/ statistical-portrait-of-hispanics-in-the-united-states-1980-2013/

       To illustrate, in the 1970's the traditional Latina/o diaspora made up 5% of the U.S. population, 75% of which were of Mexican origin living predominantly in the Southwest, 15% Puerto Rican origin primarily residing in the Northeast, and 7% Cuban origin occupying southern Florida (Massey, 2012). Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, and Texas are regarded as traditional diaspora states (Hamann & Harklau, 2010; Stepler & Brown, 2015). Sixty percent of the Latina/o population was native-born, and of those foreign-born, 63% were of Mexican origin, 9% Puerto Rican, 8% Central American, 6% South American, and 4% Cuban (Massey, 2012). However, contemporary demographic trends show the fastest growth is occurring in states that have not traditionally had large Latina/o populations (see Table 1). Ginocchio contends, "[Latinas/os] now live in places where they are the distinct minority and biculturalism and bilingualism are far from the norm" (2014, p. 19). Aside from diaspora shifts to new states, the new Latina/o diaspora has also shown rapid Latina/o growth in suburban and rural areas, different from urban centers where traditional diaspora used to settle (Ginocchio, 2014; Stepler & Brown, 2014).

       Distinguishing between the new and traditional Latina/o diaspora is complicated and perhaps futile. Arizona, for instance, is a state with a traditional

Latina/o diaspora, yet an incredible growth in the immigrant population has also been observed in this state within recent decades. According to Hamann and Harklau (2010) "referencing a new Latino diaspora in some ways measures the semiotic taxonomies of the host society as much as the self-identity of the diaspora's ostensible members" (p. 158). It may well be that the new Latina/o diaspora can occur *within* the traditional Latina/o diaspora, which may make more sense than artificially attempting to divide the two according to state boundaries. For instance, Arizona's Latina/o population can be considered a combination of traditional and new Latina/o diaspora. This framing highlights an understanding that being Latina/o in a U.S. state such as Arizona means there is still vast within-group diversity that needs to be accounted for when studying Latina/o populations (Artiles, Waitoller, & Neal, 2010).

Related to the new Latina/o diaspora is the effect on the nation's linguistic landscape, which places new demands on the educational system (Allard, 2013; Ginocchio, 2014; Wortham, Clonan-Roy, Link, & Martínez, 2013). Latinas/os play a critical role in the diversity narrative of U.S. schools. In the decade leading up to 2012, White student public school enrollment dropped from 59% to 51% while Latinas/os enrollment climbed from 18% to 24% with these demographic trends for Whites and Latinas/os expected to continue (Kena et al., 2015). This increase in Latina/o public school enrollment happened in all geographic regions (i.e., Northeast, Midwest, South, West; Kena et al., 2015). Likewise, in the decade leading up to the 2012-13 school year, ELL enrollment raised from 8.7% to 9.1% of U.S. public school enrollment. The percentage distribution of both Latina/os and ELLs alike are concentrated in the West followed by the South (Kena et al., 2015). The year 2014 marked a historical milestone for public education with U.S. public schools becoming majority-minority for the first time, largely due to the rapid increase in Latina/o and Asian student enrollment (Krogstad & Fry, 2014).

While a wide range of ethnicities represents ELLs, Latinas/os make up a significant portion of student enrollment, and more so in some states (i.e., Arizona, Kansas, New Mexico, Texas; Gil & Ceja, 2015). ELL public school enrollment has steadily increased from 8.7% to 9.2% in the decade leading up to 2012-2013. The majority (77%) of Latina/o ELLs are U.S. born, with only 16% being first-generation immigrants (Gil & Ceja, 2015).

Kim (2011) studied three cohorts of students in one US state and found differences between LMs and non-LMs. The percentage for Latina/no LMs was 66% compared to 3% non-LMs; 74% qualified for free and/or reduced lunch compared to 38%; a 46% retention rate compared to 37%; and a 25% dropout rate compared to 15%. Although being labeled LM is considered a temporary marker, there was variability in the length of time students held the LM label (Kim, 2011). Some were assessed out of LM status within one year, while others retained the label throughout their entire experience in the education system, with students' reclassified earlier showing the least amount of achievement disparities (Kim, 2011).

The Latina/o diaspora has shifted with increased Latina/o demographics in the US, and while this group is often treated homogenously, the diaspora highlights the complexity of the Latina/o population. One result of this population complexity has

been tension on the education system. As classroom demographics become more diverse through population shifts, schools are faced with the task of responding to these population shifts in ways that produce adequate literacy outcomes for subgroups of students (i.e., Latina/os, LMs, LD). In the midst of the tensions related to determining how to best educate Latina/o LMs, attention has turned to the disproportionate over- and under-representation of Latina/o LMs in special education—a problem for ethnic/racial minorities since the 1970s (Donovan & Cross, 2002; Samson & Lesaux, 2009; Sullivan, 2011). Disproportionality is an important issue to foreground as we examine the literacy instruction of Latina/o LMs given that reading-related LDs are the most prevalent type of LD (Cortiella & Horowitz, 2014). Confusion around Latina/o LMs and literacy are evident in complex patterns of LD over- and under-identification (Samson & Lesaux, 2009). In this article we address this convergence problem of a complex population and low literacy outcomes.

The Disability-language Nexus: A Puzzling Intersection

The National Research Council (NRC) commissioned two seminal studies in a 20-year period focusing on identification practices for minorities in special education resulting in placement disproportionality, the second of which identified racial/ethnic disproportionality in high incidence categories as an issue (Donovan & Cross, 2002). "Disproportionality may be defined as the representation of a group in a category that exceeds our expectations for that group, or differs substantially from the representation of others in that category" (Skiba, et al. , 2008, p. 266). Over- as well as under-representation in special education signifies a problem (Samson & Lesaux, 2009). The former pattern suggests potential misidentification practices, which may influence such placement trends, while the latter raises the question of neglect of educational needs. Either one constitute hampered educational opportunities.

LD was considered one of the largest and fastest growing disability (Cortiella & Horowitz, 2014; Donovan & Cross, 2002) until recently when it was surpassed by autism as the largest and fastest growing , up 200% since 1975 (Artiles, 2011). There is a lack of consensus on the role of poverty as a predictor of special education (Artiles et al., 2010; Shifrer, Muller, & Callahan, 2011; Skiba et al., 2005; Sullivan & Bal, 2013). Disproportionate representation in special education has been considered a major problem for African American and American Indian and less of a problem for Latina/o students dating back to the 1970s (Artiles, 2013; Donovan & Cross, 2002; Skiba et al., 2005). However, the Latina/o LM population growth is complicating this longstanding pattern. The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) national data paint a less drastic portrait of minority representation in the LD category; however, state data analyses result in different configurations of minority representation in the LD category (Artiles et al., 2005; Donovan & Cross, 2002; Sullivan, 2011). Mixed findings on Latina/o overrepresentation in special education demonstrate the complexity of this problem as well as the complexity in the measures used to monitor it (i.e., risk index and relative risk ratio; Artiles, Kozleski, Waitoller, & Lukinbeal, 2012; Sullivan &Bal, 2013). Shifting Latina/o demographic trends further complicates this matter, because, as we explained above, the Latina/o population distribution and growth no longer follows traditional demographic trends (i.e., geography, nation of origin). For many

regions in the United States, attempting to meet the needs of Latina/o LMs is relatively new resulting in different services and outcomes (including identification of LDs).

The bulk of the literature discussed here has focused on ethnic groups; however, LMs pose a more complex situation, which requires alternative ways of collecting and examining data (Artiles, 2015; Artiles et al., 2005). For example, LMs are not overrepresented in special education nationwide; however emerging studies are beginning to show that when data are disaggregated by state, Latinas/os can be at higher risk for being identified with LD (Donovan & Cross, 2002; Sullivan, 2011). Figueroa (2005) related these regional patterns of disproportionality to regional population differences, illustrating that while in California "Latino children make up 46% of the general education population, they make up approximately 50% of the LD population" (p. 165). Interestingly, Sullivan studied LMs placement patterns in Arizona, a state that is experiencing new diaspora. She found that LMs were overrepresented in various high-incidence categories of special education (i.e., LD, speech-language impairments [SLI]; Sullivan, 2011). In addition to overrepresentation in some special education categories, Sullivan also found patterns demonstrating LMs were more likely than White students to be placed in more restrictive learning environments. Although disproportionality has been studied for over forty years, significant gaps remain in research germane to contextual contingencies along with the intersections of various sociocultural characteristics of student populations such as language, race, social class, generational differences, gender, and so forth (Artiles et al., 2011). Recent studies focusing on Response-to-Intervention (RTI) and disproportionality have begun to also turn their focus to LMs and Latina/o LMs (Sullivan, Artiles, & Hernández-Saca, in press).

The tensions embedded in over- and under-identification of culturally and linguistically diverse students with LD also highlight a need for attention on literacy. Reading-related disabilities (i.e., dyslexia) are one of the most prevalent disabilities that students are identified with in schools (Cortiella & Horowitz, 2014), yet population complexities are seldom addressed in tandem with LD and literacy. Although Latina/o LMs literacy performance leaves them vulnerable to both delayed and/or inappropriate LD identification, little empirical attention has addressed this convergence of the Latina/o population (with understandings of the within-group complexity), literacy, and LD. We address this lack of attention in the research literature in the next section.

Literacy Learning: Troubles at Identity Intersections

A key difficulty in understanding the triple bind of living at the intersection of language, ethnic, and learning differences is that there is not a clear picture of the literacy strengths and needs associated with this intersection, because traditional literacy research tends to examine subpopulation categories (ethnicity, language, ability) *separately*. On the other hand, it could be argued that progress was made as reflected in No Child Left Behind's (NCLB, 2002) emphasis on student subgroups, which required LMs to participate in state assessments. This, in turn, has made reading data for student subgroups more accessible at the national level (Lauen & Gaddis, 2012; Means, Padilla, & Gallagher, 2010). For instance, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) data are one means of measuring literacy outcomes and outcome discrepancies. However, one difficulty in using available datasets is that

subgroup datasets force students into categorical boxes, often impeding analyses of intersections (e.g., Latina/o low-income LM students with LDs). Instead education practitioners and researchers must largely rely on data that fragments Latina/o LMs with LD into being Latina/o *or* LM *or* LD rather than being able to examine how these categories intersect.

The most recent 2015 NAEP data describes fourth and eighth grade reading outcomes across a variety of student subgroups. We present national reading outcomes for both grades for Latina/o LMs, non-LM Latina/os, LMs with disabilities (including 504 plans, which cover disabilities beyond the 13 categories covered by IDEA), as well as White students (see Table 2 below) for 2013 and 2015. While NAEP reading outcomes are static snapshots, they do offer insight into how well literacy instruction is for subgroups of students. Reading outcomes are presented in the following four categories: below basic, at or above basic, at or above proficient, and at advanced. The 2013 and 2015 reading outcomes were close to identical across the selected student subgroups, however outcomes across the student subgroups demonstrated large outcome discrepancies. White students benefit the most from reading instruction in the U.S. school system with 46% of White fourth and 44% of White eighth graders achieving at or above proficient levels, while only 21% of White fourth graders and 15% of White eighth graders were below the basic level in 2015. Non-LM Latinas/os had much lower 2015 reading outcomes with 29% of non-LM Latinas/os in fourth grade and 25% of non-LM Latinas/os in eighth grader achieving at or above proficient levels, and the percentage rising to 33% for non-LM Latina/o fourth graders and 25% for non-LM Latinas/o eighth graders below the basic level.

Table 2

National Reading Performance for LM, Disability, Latina/o, and White Students (in percentages) (adapted from NCES, 2013, 2015)

	Grade 4		Grade 8	
	2013	**2015**	**2013**	**2015**
Latina/o LM				
At Advanced	--	--	--	--
At or above Proficient	6	6	3	3
At or above Basic	29	29	28	26
Below Basic	71	71	72	74
Non-LM Latina/o				
At Advanced	4	5	1	1
At or above Proficient	27	29	25	25
Non-LM Latina/o				
At Advanced	4	5	1	1
At or above Proficient	27	29	25	25
At or above Basic	65	67	75	75
Below Basic	35	33	25	25
LM with Disability				
At Advanced	--	--	--	--
At or above Proficient	2	2	--	1
At or above Basic	10	9	10	11
Below Basic	90	91	90	89
Non-LM with Disability				
At Advanced	2	2	1	--
At or above Proficient	12	13	10	9
At or above Basic	34	36	42	40
Below Basic	66	64	58	60
White Students				
At Advanced	12	12	6	5
At or above Proficient	46	46	46	44
At or above Basic	79	79	86	85
Below Basic	21	21	14	15

Note. Disability category includes 504 plans

The reading outcomes become even more dismal when looking at Latina/o LMs as shown in Table 2 (at least 70% below basic in both grades/years) and non-LMs with disabilities (64% of fourth graders and 60% of eighth graders scoring below the basic levels in 2015). LMs with disabilities fared the most critical reading outcomes with about 90% scoring below basic across grades and years. These reading outcomes combined with the rapid Latina/o (and consequently LM) population growth undergirded by disproportionate over- and underrepresentation in special education paint a vivid landscape in need of new approaches to literacy instruction for Latina/o LMs with LD.

Although these NAEP trends illustrate discrepancies that point to access and outcome issues in the area of literacy, they also reveal significant gaps in what we know about students that fall into more than one sociocultural category (i.e., Latina/o LMs with LD). The NAEP reading achievement scores are another reminder about the challenges that arise from the growing LM population in an educational system that obscures differences in access and opportunities in the assessment systems while fragmenting student outcomes for students falling into multiple categories (i.e., ethnic, linguistic, and ability).

LM students, whom had the lowest reading achievement outcomes, face the added demands of developing language proficiency as they are learning to read, which could play a role in the fact that "by fourth grade, these students, on average, are four years behind their peers in reading" (Solari & Gerber, 2008, p. 157). This parallel development of language and reading proficiencies has been further constrained by a shift toward English-only legislation, despite findings that literacy instruction in students' first language (L1) has positive literacy outcomes (Burchinal, Field, López, Howes, & Pianta, 2012; Umansky & Reardon, 2014). Umansky and Reardon's study, conducted a study in a large urban California district, found that while dual language instruction resulted in slower reclassification rates, overall academic outcomes (including graduation) were greater. Language of literacy instruction matters, yet it is more complicated than single year data connected to the language of instruction. Studies focusing on primary grades have found that students instructed in their L1 sometimes have initially lower outcomes than students instructed in English, however studies conducted in later grades—intermediate, middle and high school— demonstrated opposite trends with students instructed in their native language performing equivalently or higher than students instructed in English (Cheung & Slavin, 2012; Lindholm-Leary, & Hernández, 2011; Valentino & Reardon, 2015).

Being a student categorized as LD, LM, *or* Latina/o is not the same as a student that is a Latina/o LM *with* LD. Understanding the intersections of ethnicity, language, and learning differences is imperative to creating nuanced understandings of students in these multiple categories as they become proficient in the use of critical twenty-first century literacies (e.g., using language and literacy to learn content, engage in a global economy, and engage in critical thought and practices; National Council of Teachers of English [NCTE], 2013). Unfortunately, labels that are meant to afford students resources often result in fragmenting students' educational experiences. This becomes evident when attempting to locate research on students who have ethnic, linguistic, *and* ability differences. The literature on these intersectionalities is virtually non-existent,

yet providing connected and prompt services to LM students with disabilities is riddled with unresolved issues for schools and districts (Parker, 2012; Raj, 2014; Zehler et al., 2003; Zetlin, Beltrán, Salcido, González, & Reyes, 2011). Not only are many schools and districts unequipped to handle reports for LMs with LD, many do not have adequate systems for identifying and monitoring students that were both LM and in special education as a subgroup much less proving services to accommodate their disability and language acquisition needs (Parker 2012; Raj, 2014; Zehler et al., 2003). Instruction for students with a dual classification of LM and LD usually results in LD instructional services superseding language support services that students classified as LM-only would receive, and both of these labels result in instruction that is not well-aligned to state standards and assessments (Raj, 2014; Zehler et al., 2003; Zetlin et al., 2011). Districts and schools have treated LM and LD as two categories that cannot or should not coexist, which has resulted in de facto "no dual services" policies to which the Departments of Education and Justice jointly addressed this issue as both a legal and Civil Rights issue with the following:

The Departments are aware that some school districts have a formal or informal policy of "no dual services," i.e., a policy of allowing students to receive either EL services or special education services, but not both. Other districts have a policy of delaying disability evaluations of EL students for special education and related services for a specified period of time based on their EL status. These policies are impermissible under the IDEA and Federal civil rights laws… (U.S. Department of Justice & U.S. Department of Education, 2015, p. 25)

Cultural and linguistic differences create academic considerations for LMs that often go unattended to when students are considered from the single dimension of LD. In addition to academic content, LMs also need language support (Klingner, Boelé, Linan-Thompson, & Rodríguez, 2014; Orosco & O'Connor, 2013; Zetlin et al., 2011), but in many cases they end up receiving diminished instruction (Gándara & Rumberger, 2009). The reauthorization of NCLB made schools accountable for achievement within student subgroups, yet there are conflicting policies that do not account for students living at the intersections of multiple differences. For example, LM students are required to participate in state assessments, yet LM instruction is less likely to be aligned with the state standards they are assessed on (Zehler et al., 2003), and they are more likely to be placed in more restrictive learning environments which further restricts their access to the general curriculum (Sullivan, 2011). States are required to keep data on students that have disabilities or language proficiency status, but the guidance most states provide districts with to navigate process and support for students classified as both LM and LD varies widely (Scott, Hauerwas, & Brown, 2014). The education system is not structured to account for students living in intersections, which results in fragmented understandings of students such as Latina/o LMs with LD.

To conclude, the demographic shifts across the U.S. have important implications for the educational system. NAEP reading outcome data and special education disproportionality trends point to areas in need of critical attention. Currently, there are signals that the education system across states is falling far short from meeting the academic needs of Latinas/os with language and ability differences. As previously discussed, existing approaches to literacy fail to consider that many students do not (or

will not in the near future) fit into neat and disconnected categorizations (e.g., LM or LD). Prevalent literacy practices that ignore language, ethnic, and ability differences are not producing positive outcomes for Latina/o LMs with LDs as evident in literacy outcome measures. Literacy instruction is an important entry point into reframing instruction with attention to the within-group diversity of the Latina/o population.

Institutional Responses to Individual Problems: Equity Concerns

Schools have been structured for one teacher to be able to meet the academic needs of classrooms with increasingly diverse student populations. As classrooms became more diverse in not only ability, but also language and ethnicity, one institutional response has been the reliance on "categorical alignment" (Artiles, 2015; Epstein, 2007). This phenomenon refers to the processes by which the multiple meanings of a particular category "come to be overlaid as if they had the same meaning" (Artiles, 2011, p. 436). Disability, for instance, is a scientific category that purportedly informs IDEA policies. But the idea of disability has other meanings, indeed. We argue, for example, that disability means a social construction as used by activists in social movements, or as used in narratives associating disability with certain races that have circulated in public discourse throughout history. Disability also has administrative meanings across states that define and operationalize this category.

The concept of "categorical alignment" explains how all these meanings are seemingly intertwined and contributes to the creation of "niche standardization". Specifically, Epstein (2007) explains this niche as "a general way of transforming human populations into standardized objects available for scientific, political administration, marketing, or other purposes that eschews both universalism and individualism and instead standardizes at the level of the social group" (e.g., students with disabilities, boys or girls, language minorities; p. 135).

Thus, categorical alignment and niche standardization enable educational systems to address the learning needs of student populations by providing much needed services. However, problems arise when students fall into more than one category (i.e., disability *and* LM), and often results in students' multiple needs being reduced to one category—for instance, LD usually supersedes the language needs of LM students with LD (Raj, 2014; Zehler et al., 2003). Students live complex socio-historical realities, yet most schools have not been equipped to understand and embrace them, and instead rely on categorical alignment and niche standardization, among other processes, that compel educators to artificially simplify the ways students' identities and lives are interpreted.

Of significance is that in addition to the scientific, demographic, and sociological meanings that the categories Latina/o, LD, and LM have, they embody ideological assumptions that shape expectations and carry assumptions about the abilities of people that receive these labels. Moreover, the stigmas of certain categories can mediate the experiences of students that create differential consequences—e.g., affording some students increased opportunities, while for others resulting in fragmented services and experiences such as more segregated placements and programs (Artiles, 2011) and outcomes (Donovan & Cross, 2002; Ford, 2012; Harry & Klingner, 2014). For White students with high socioeconomic status, being identified

with LD affords certain instructional supports, resource advantages, and outcomes (Ong-Dean, 2009; Ong-Dean, Daly, & Park, 2011) such as access to the general curriculum and nondisabled peers, more qualified teachers, more highly funded programs and out of school services, and higher education (Artiles, 2011; Ong-Dean, Daly, & Park, 2011). Historically, being labeled with a disability has resulted in very different outcomes for students of color (e.g., higher dropout rates, decreased access to inclusive settings, contact with the juvenile justice system; Artiles, 2011; Bal & Trainor, 2015). Wilgus, Valle, and Ware (2013, p. 90) found "complex interactions among these multiple factors disrupt the assumption of an objective context (where race/ ethnicity, culture, gender, language, social class, and beliefs about disability are irrelevant) and create 'algorithms of access' that influence negotiations between parents and school professionals." In addition to the systemic barriers parents must negotiate, being labeled with LD often results in inequities such as more restrictive learning environments for minority students (Harry & Klingner, 2014), less overall financial allocations in their schools (Ong-Dean, 2009), and less access to highly qualified teachers (Donovan & Cross, 2002; Klingner, Boardman, Eppolito, & Schonewise, 2012). Students of color could benefit from special education if they received high quality, research-based instruction (Klingner, Boardman, Eppolito, & Schonewise, 2012), yet research on LMs students and their heterogeneity is limited (Artiles, 2015; Gutiérrez, Zepeda, & Castro, 2010).

Assumptions about what it means to have multiple forms of difference have resulted in tensions about the best way to provide literacy instruction to Latina/o LM with LDs. In the next section we describe some of the literacy practices and the tensions and consequences embedded in them.

Blurry Visions and Their Consequences: Assumptions About Literacy and Learning

Literacy has been traditionally defined in ways that constrain how Latina/o LMs with LD demonstrate what they know. This is due, in part, to the way in which literacy instruction has been conceptualized. Indeed, traditional literacy instruction underestimates or misses a number of potential resources these students possess by virtue of its narrow view of competence. There are two broad conceptualizations of literacy that can be categorized as skills-based and sociocultural. Both have strengths and weaknesses.

Skills-based understandings of literacy are often accompanied by a direct-instruction approach to teaching and learning. Street (2014) refers to this approach as the autonomous model of literacy; an approach that treats literacy as a set of skills autonomous from social contexts. Many autonomous models of literacy learning cite the National Reading Panel's (NRP; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000) report that outline a set of research-based early reading practices including alphabetics, fluency, and comprehension. The review of research was limited to (quasi)experimental research designs. The NRP report has been critiqued for its narrow definition of literacy as a psycholinguistic process disconnected from social, institutional, emotional and political processes (Gee, 2015; NCTE, 2013). Another critique is that its conceptualization of literacy ignored issues of power (such as

systemic racism; Gee, 2015), context, and the role of culture in learning (Artiles, 2002; Street, 2014).

The second conceptualization takes a sociocultural approach to literacy, what Street (2014) has called the ideological model of literacy. This ideological model conceptualizes literacy as social practices dependent on social contexts (Street, 2014). This practice-based approach to literacy further emphasizes the role of context in literacy:

> Links between social functions of literacy and personal practices of literacy in our society are extraordinarily complex, but wherever there is a reader, there is an individual involved in the use of social technology and socially created knowledge for the purposes which have social origin (Scribner as quoted in Tobach, Falmagne, Parlee, Martin, & Kapelman, 1984, p. 17)

The sociocultural approach to literacy, therefore, entails socially created practices that are socially situated, and focus on literacy as a function (NCTE, 2013; Scribner, 1984). On the other hand, this literacy approach has largely neglected the development of interventions for struggling learners. The majority of school literacy practices use an autonomous model of literacy that focuses on decontextualized literacy practices within the realm of the school day. The available research on literacy practices for students with LD often cites the National Reading Panel's (NRP) supposition that English proficient and LMs' early reading development (e.g., phonological processing, word recognition, vocabulary) occur similarly (Gyovai, Cartledge, Kourea, Yurick, & Gibson, 2009; Kamps et al., 2007), and studies on literacy instruction for students with LD rarely acknowledge language or cultural differences beyond skill-based differentiations that stress phonetic principles and vocabulary development (see Swanson, Orosco, & Lussier, 2012, for a more in-depth discussion). Given its analytic focus on skill development, the autonomous model of literacy tends to neglect what Artiles (2002, p. 694) calls "the person-using-reading-competencies-in-a-sociocultural-context-for-specific-purposes," thus producing partial profiles of Latina/os as struggling learners that foreground deficits in early literacy skills. A sociocultural approach to literacy focuses on language, literacy, and learning.

How schools frame literacy has specific consequences for students that have cultural, linguistic, and ability differences. When schools attend to differences, they tend to use very static notions of culture that are often equated with ethnic/racial differences (Artiles, 2015). For example, federal funding mechanisms, state, and school level policies are often hinged on categorical markers such as LD, ELL, Hispanic, and such. Such "categorical alignment erases historical nuance and baggage, complexity, and the longstanding interweavings of contested categories such as race and disability" (Artiles, 2015, p. 3). Further, "these views of culture are problematic because they are overly deterministic, ignore culture's dynamic and instrumental nature, and stress a unidimensional view, disregard within-group diversity, and imply only minority groups posses culture" (Artiles, 2002, p. 696). We have not paid enough attention to the complexity of this population, so that when students in this group have special needs, they face very specific institutional consequences—they are given specific labels such

as LM or LD, which carry, as we explained above, particular institutional consequences that can further disadvantage these learners.

In the final section of this manuscript, we put forth a comprehensive literacy reconceptualization of literacy that integrates various standpoints. Together these standpoints address many of the blind spots that have constrained literacy research for Latina/o LMs with LD.

Reframing Venerable Standpoints: Struggling with Literacy Learning at the Intersections

Reframing literacy is a key shift needed in the next generation of research with these emerging student populations. In this section we present a framework for literacy instruction for Latina/o LMs with LD that transcends venerable standpoints about learning and literacy. One important conversation that has recently appeared in relation to LMs with LD is what counts as evidence-based instruction? Moore and Klingner (2014) recently conducted a systematic review examining empirical work on literacy dating back to 2001 to explore this important issue of population validity for ELLs. They found that many studies that were treated as evidence-based literacy instruction were overgeneralized to ELLs when in fact the findings were specific to struggling or at-risk readers rather than ELLs. Their review pushes the field to reconsider what counts as evidence-based for this specific population. In this article, we posit that comprehensive evidence-based instruction for Latina/o LMs with LD will combine and expand upon the venerable standpoints that we present here. Cognitive processes standpoint literacy instruction supports and provides services specific to the learning disability and the sociocultural standpoint builds in English development supports, yet there has been little to no attention on the role of culture in learning for Latina/o LMs with LD. Resource pedagogies can perhaps fill this literacy gap in conjunction with cognitive and sociocultural literacy standpoints. Although the venerable standpoints we present may appear to be opposing and perhaps even in contrast, the cognitive, and sociocultural, and resource pedagogies standpoints of literacy instruction are critical components of a comprehensive literacy framework for LM students with LD.

The cognitive standpoint acknowledges the crucial role of individual factors, and thus, draws from research on the cognitive processes of literacy; this perspective focuses on pedagogies and interventions that teach students skills (code-breaking and meaning-making) as an avenue to improve their literacy outcomes (Lesaux & Harris, 2013). The second standpoint, a sociocultural approach, is based on the social nature of learning, connecting classroom discourse to strategies efficient readers use in meaning making process (Englert, 2009). The final standpoint comes from resource pedagogies that leverage the cultural dimension of learning; this perspective aims to:

> [r]eposition the linguistic, cultural, and literate practices of poor communities—particularly poor communities of color—as resources to honor, explore, and extend in accessing Dominant American English (DAE) language and literacy skills and other White, middle-class dominant cultural norms of acting and being that are demanded in schools (Paris, 2012, p. 94).

Sociocultural and resource pedagogies standpoints center language and learning in literacy—a particularly important framing for LM students. These three standpoints provide a comprehensive literacy framework that addresses longstanding blind spots in literacy research for Latina/o LMs with LD.

The cognitive processes standpoint of literacy focuses on code-breaking and meaning-making skills students need to master in order to efficiently and successfully engage in school-based literacies. LMs with LD are under-represented at the lower grades and over-representation in middle grades (Artiles et al., 2005; Samson & Lesaux, 2009; Sullivan, 2011). This may be connected to findings in Lesaux and Harris' (2013) review of research that points to LMs performing at par with or better than non-LMs in code-based skills such as phonological awareness, rapid naming, working memory, and word reading when provided with appropriate instruction. Differences in outcomes appeared in reading fluency (of connected text) and meaning-making skills. Lesaux and Harris attribute this to differences in the natures of decoding and comprehension—code-breaking skills tend to be a discrete set of skills, while meaning-making skills (e.g., comprehension) vary according to text and are more highly connected to English proficiency. For example, comprehension is closely connected to vocabulary (including academic language). This suggests that although many code-breaking skills develop similarly between LMs and English proficient students, the difficulties LM experience constructing meaning in reading may hinge on a need for simultaneous language supports. The lack of attention to English development alongside reading instruction further supports a need to bring together various views on literacy.

Literacy studies based on a cognitive model for LM learners struggling with literacy either focus on interventions based on code-breaking skills (e.g., Begeny, Ross, Greene, Mitchell, & Whitehouse, 2012; Haager & Windmueller, 2001; O'Connor, Bocian, Beebe-Frankenberger, & Linklater, 2010; O'Shaughnessy & Swanson, 2000), meaning-based skills (e.g., Helman, Calhoon, & Kern, 2015; Lesaux, Kieffer, Kelley, & Harris, 2014; Vadasy, Nelson, & Sanders, 2013), or a combination of code-based and meaning-based skills (e.g., Denton, Wexler, Vaughn, & Bryan, 2008; Lara-Alecio et al., 2012; Tam, Heward, & Heng, 2006; Wanzek & Cavanaugh, 2012). Lesaux and Harris (2013) describe these supplemental interventions as important, however they stress that comprehensive literacy instruction for LM students be embedded in classroom instructional supports as well. Some scholars using cognitive and behavioral models have embedded interventions into classwide instruction and attempt to leverage the strength of peer groups working together using instructional strategies including Peer Assisted Learning (PAL; Sáenz, Fuchs, & Fuchs, 2005), Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR; Annamma et al., 2011; Kim et al., 2006; Vaughn et al., 2011; Vaughn et al., 2013), and peer tutoring (Bowman-Perrot, Davis, Vannest, Williams, Greenwood, & Parker, 2013; Decker & Buggey, 2014). These studies focus on the cognitive processes of reading (i.e., phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, and comprehension), though they also attend to and structure learning activities in collaborative arrangements using PAL or CSR. PALs and CSR are classwide reading interventions that draw insights from cognitive and social aspects of literacy, although they are grounded in different views of literacy and theorize differently the role of social processes in the design of literacy interventions. Aside from their differences, these collaboratively structured reading

interventions prove a promising way to incorporate English supports into reading instruction for LM students.

The second literacy standpoint, sociocultural approaches, frames literacy as a sociocultural process and pays particular attention to the social origins of learning. With the standardization of literacy curriculums in response to NCLB, this literacy standpoint has becomes less frequent. Yet, scholars from this standpoint attend closely to classroom talk since the same instructional practices can result in very different outcomes (e.g., Mariage, 1995). These researchers tend to focus more broadly on language, literacy, andd language rather than reading only while using an apprenticeship approach to learning (Englert, 2009). In line with sociocultural approaches to literacy, they blur the artificial boundaries between oral language, reading, and writing. Sociocultural standpoints rely on collaborative writing which draws various language domains together for a social purpose. This apprenticeship model of literacy (a) engages all learners (e.g., students with disabilities) in complex literacy processes with supports in place, (b) structures "transfer of control of the discourse and social practices" (Englert, Berry, & Dunsforth, 2001, p. 153) that students can learn and appropriate as their own, (c) graduates assistance in the form of social (teachers and peer models) and material (books, word banks) mediational tools, and (d) makes "traces" (or artifacts) of sociocultural development evident and visibile in the classroom community (discourse, written text, think alouds; Englert, 2009; Englert, Berry, & Dunsmore, 2001;). Literacy through a sociocultural standpoint offers powerful social and cultural tools for learning.

Resource pedagogies encompass scholarly works going back to the 1970s that counter educational models that frame cultural and language minority students through deficit framings. These pedagogies build on the work of pioneers (e.g., Heath, 1983; Labov, 1972) that illuminated cultural and linguistic differences through more contemporary scholarship such as cultural modeling (Lee, 2007), Funds of Knowledge (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005; Vélez-Ibáñez & Greenberg, 2005), Third space (Gutiérrez, 2008), hybridity and identities (Moje, 2013; 2015; Paris & Alim, 2014), and Culturally Responsive Pedagogies (Ladson-Billings, 1995). These perspectives conceptualize culture to be dynamic, thus transcending the traditional emphasis on culture as a static entity that essentializes members of groups. Gutiérrez, Bien, Selland, and Pierce (2011) implemented literacy practices in this tradition that highlighted the hybridity of language and literacy, acknowledging:

> [T]he everyday language of the young Mexican-descent children with whom we work is often textured with Spanish, English, and African-American dialect, as well as hip-hop vernacular; and multimodal signs ranging from familiar cultural artifacts to popular cultural and school-related icons adorn their notebooks, backpacks, and drawings. (p. 235)

One strength of these pedagogies is the deliberate attention to cultural assets and the use of strategies that nurture and sustain students' cultural practices, while providing resources, skills, and practices that enable these learners to be productive participants in mainstream society. Some scholars have described this perspective as culturally sustainable (Paris, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2014).

The literacy framework we present for Latina/o LMs with LD brings together two venerable literacy standpoints and introduces a third standpoint that can leverage and sustain the cultural hybridity of the Latina/o population in order to improve literacy for students with culture, language, and learning differences while sustaining their culture. Together this framework attends to the cognitive and sociocultural dimensions of literacy that most researchers have examined, albeit in isolated fashion, while adding resource pedagogies as a way to respond to heterogeneous Latina/o cultures. The cognitive standpoint attends to the thinking skills that are valued in the dominant society and that Delpit (1988, p. 282) argued gives minority students access to "the culture of power." The sociocultural standpoint on literacy distributes power and access so that students learn through and from each other as they engage in the identity work of *becoming* within literacy communities. Bringing culturally sustaining processes into special education standpoints provides a powerful turn in how we attend to the cultural aspect of literacy research—treating culture as a fluid and vital mediator in the learning process.

We conclude this manuscript reflecting on the critical reframing of the "achievement gap" Ladson-Billings (2006) made almost a decade ago. Though we both use and are troubled by the use of static markers such as LM, LD, and NAEP reading scores to illustrate literacy outcomes, what they do provide us with are startling gaps between Latina/o LMs with LD and their White, English speaking, and non-disabled peers. However, we recognize that these gaps do not indicate *deficits* but rather *debts*—historical, economic, and moral educational debts that are long past due (Ladson-Billings). The Latina/o population is a huge segment of the school-age population, and their educational outcomes are integral to the nation. The framework we presented in this manuscript contributes to the education debt with a more comprehensive view of literacy and population complexity by reframing venerable standpoints to attend to intersecting identities.

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Endnotes

[1] We define literacy in line with Gee (1999, p. 356) as "social, cultural, institutional, and political practices…[that]…always fully integrate language, both oral and written, with nonlanguage 'stuff,' that is, with ways of acting, interacting, feeling, valuing, thinking, and believing, as well as with various sorts of nonverbal symbols, sites, tools, objects, and technologies." Yet we acknowledge that literacy is often

conceptualized in line with the National Reading Panel's key components of reading (i.e., phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension; NICHD, 2000).

[2] In this manuscript the term language minority (LM) refers to students "from homes where a language other than [English] is actively used, who therefore have had an opportunity to develop some level of proficiency in a language other than [English]" (August & Shanahan, 2008, p. 2). We use LM and ELL interchangeably.

Authors' Note