



## LSLP Micro-Paper 93: Critical literacy as a teaching practice of self-de/colonialization

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### Defining the Term

**Critical literacy** for self-de/colonialization is a conscious practice of observation and transformation. It involves interrogating the cognitive colonial patterns throughout one's social, educational, economic, and political life. From a critical literacy lens, teachers and students must **continually question** the types of texts, ideologies, and pedagogical perspectives that permeate education. In this sense, teachers should carefully review, question, and analyze the **material**, content, and knowledge they share with their students. They should promote the **development of their skills** so that they can carry out a detailed reading and writing of texts and the world (inside and outside the educational environment), bearing in mind their social, political, economic, and **educational context**.

According to this, teachers and schools have a great responsibility, since their ability to shape a students' attitude, learning, and behavior. Therefore, critical literacy must first be a tool for teachers and schools to question their practices and commit to decolonial, abolitionist, and anti-racist practices in their classrooms and research. The first step begins with their self-de/colonialization, which requires asking a series of deeply reflective questions and considering how their teaching and research choices are complicit in sustaining the status quo and how they further develop their anti-racist and decolonial educational purposes.

### Connecting it to LSLP

LSLP must regularly assess how teaching practices promote decolonization and non-discrimination. This is crucial to some of our studies. Our latest work on **critical literacy**, **Multimodal Critical Consciousness**/Multimodal Conscientização, and **Queer Critical Literacies** contribute to decolonizing our practices.

Additionally, our research is increasingly seeking to include historically marginalized viewpoints. Recent attempts address taboo themes like sexuality, inequity, social orientation, race, colonization, and LGBTQIA2S+ groups. Teachers' **critical praxis**, meaning-making, and spaces for learners' empowerment and agency are recognized as powerful and full of potential, where we

may continue raising questions about our privileges and positionalities.

Our research about **the city** and **gaming** relies on critical literacy as a teaching practice of self-de/colonialization to understand and inquire how our thoughts, beliefs, and lifestyles affect our ability to observe, collect, and analyze data.

### Expanding Second Language Research

Critical literacy boosts language learning and teaching by allowing teachers to **assess** if their knowledge and efforts meet students' needs and situations. Checking if the same material is taught every year and how.

These questions can help language teachers start decolonization: Why choose this book/story/text? Whose voices or information are you favoring or othering in their practice? What is your position and privilege in front of your students? What kind of penalties do you impose and why? How do you discuss violence, poverty, injustice, and racism with students? How do your classes involve the community? Do you force an identity on students? Do you value cultural heritage and place-based knowledge?

Teaching in Colombia highlights the need for debate, investigation, and deeper understanding of schools and education utilized for colonial forced assimilation. Thus, critical literacy allows schools to analyze and adjust curriculum, power dynamics, structure, community involvement, and any activity that affects children.

### References

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