



Teaching Literacy in the Twenty-First Century Classroom

Teacher Knowledge, Self-Efficacy,
and Minding the Gap

Edited by
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CHAPTER 8

Transforming Literacy Instruction in Second-Language Contexts: The Impact of Graduate Education in Colombia

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Teacher professional development in Colombia has been in a state of flux since the 1990s when the first bilingual education initiatives were developed (see: Mora, Chiquito, & Zapata, 2019); in particular, the merger of in-service and higher education is a more recent affair. In the past decade, Colombia has witnessed an expansion from the traditional workshops and seminars to a growing interest for teachers to pursue a Masters of Arts (MA) and more recently, doctoral degrees. English and second-language education have equally followed that trend, with an expanded offering of MA-level programs in English Language Teaching (ELT), applied linguistics, and second-language studies. There are a few doctoral programs as well devoted to issues such as bilingualism, teacher education in ELT, and intercultural education, to name a few, with more contemplating the addition of research lines in second-language studies.

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T. L. Gallagher and K. Ciampa (eds.), *Teaching
Literacy in the Twenty-First Century Classroom*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-47821-6_8

In the case of MA programs, there have been efforts to begin to gauge their impact in the field of teacher professional learning (López Pinzón & Ramírez Contreras, 2018; Viáfara & Largo, 2018), mostly through cross-case analysis of curricula and survey data. One thing that we know, as Mora (2010) explained, is that education (and graduate education in particular) is a very influential factor that propels teachers' evolution of their literacy self-efficacy beliefs and practices (Bandura, 1982; Clark, this volume; Guo, Connor, Yang, Roehrig, & Morrison, 2012; Pajares, 1996).

Despite the growing interest, there are three areas related to self-efficacy where we are missing information. First, we need to look more closely at the potential impact and transformative (Kumaravadivelu, 2003) practices of MA programs by way of teacher first-hand accounts (Jacobs, this volume) and counter-narratives (Mora, 2014c, 2017b). Although we do have evidence of self-efficacy in teacher education (e.g., Clark, this volume; Clark & Newberry, 2018), we need more information about graduate education. We also need to better understand how programs are incorporating contemporary ideas about literacy in their curricula (DiCesare & Rowsell, this volume) and their impact on their overall curriculum and instruction (Poulton, Tambyah, & Woods, this volume). Finally, we need to provide a counter-balance between experimental studies on self-efficacy and qualitative work, especially in international contexts. Although our review found case studies in places like Japan (Nishino, 2012) and Eastern Europe (Rubacha & Sirotova, 2019; Rubacha, Sirotova, & Chomczyńska-Rubacha, 2016), we believe that going beyond statistical findings and looking at teacher narratives may shed more light on self-efficacy processes based on life experiences.

This chapter intends to address these issues through the reflexivity process (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Mora, 2011) of a group of four teachers, all members of a research team (Clift, Brady, Mora, Stegemoller, & Choi, 2006) in Colombia (Mora, 2015). Relying on autoethnographic accounts (Chang, 2008; Denzin, 2014; Jacobs, this volume; Mora, 2017b; Spry, 2016) and collective reflections (Semingson, O'Byrne, Mora, & Kist, 2017), our team will explore how the different iterations of a graduate seminar that Raúl taught in an MA program in Colombia (Mora & Golovátina-Mora, 2017) between 2013 and 2017 helped Claudia, Ana Karina, and Natalia shape and transform the way they conceived literacy and how that, in turn, transformed their teaching practices and their own worldview and self-efficacy as emerging

scholars. This chapter will briefly describe the situation of graduate programs in Colombia and the specific MA program where the literacies seminar took place (for a more extended account of the MA program at large, see: Mora & Golovátina-Mora, 2017). Then, we will introduce the four authors and their different layers of collaboration as part of the research team (Clift et al., 2006). Each author will share the impact of the seminar from four very different vantage points: covering issues of mentoring (Raúl), transitions to higher education (Claudia), pre-school education (Ana Karina), and rural education (Natalia). The final version will bring all four authors again to engage in a collaborative reflexivity about the impact of this graduate seminar on self-efficacy and some recommendations for other teachers and teacher educators who intend to infuse their curricula with elements of literacies theory (Ciampa & Gallagher, this volume).

CONTEXT OF GRADUATE EDUCATION IN COLOMBIA AND THE MA LITERACIES SEMINAR

Graduate education in Colombia is still a work in progress. Although the first MA program in the field appeared in 1991 in Bogotá, most of the MA programs in the country have surfaced since 2000, typically in the major capital cities of the country (Bogotá, Cali, Medellín) with a few scattered across other regions of Colombia. Most programs seem to focus on English Language Teaching, Foreign Language Education, or Applied Linguistics as main topics. In the case of literacy in general, most MA programs in Colombia have focused primarily on the traditional views of literacy-as-reading (Lankshear & Knobel, 2011), with a few venturing into issues of critical literacy (Gutiérrez, 2015) and multimodal literacies (Álvarez Valencia, 2016).

However, the most systematic effort to infuse literacies research into an MA program is that of the MA in Learning and Teaching Processes in Second Languages (ML2; Mora & Golovátina-Mora, 2017) at our university. This program features a graduate seminar unprecedented in Colombia. ML2 seminar, “English Language II: Literacies in Second Languages” (Cañas, 2018; Mora, 2013) features a counter-proposal to the traditional ideas of literacy-as-reading and the focus on learning to help students read and write in a second language. Therefore, and building from Raúl’s own doctoral work (Mora, 2010, 2011), this

seminar talks about, *Literacies in Second Languages* (Mora, 2015, 2017a), which, as Mora (2017a) explained, takes a dual approach toward literacies:

On the one hand, literacies in second languages explore the new language ecologies and literacy practices that emerge in different physical and virtual spaces where second-language users dwell and operate. On the other hand, this notion studies how to incorporate and adapt contemporary concepts and frameworks in literacies research, such as critical literacy, multiliteracies, multimodality, or gaming literacies, to name a few, to today's learning and teaching of languages. (Mora, 2017a; Defining the Term, paragraph 1)

The graduate seminar has grown this understanding from its outset, introducing MA students to those issues surrounding new literacies (Lankshear, Knobel, & Curran, 2013; Street, 2013), multiliteracies and multimodality (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009; DiCesare & Rowsell, this volume; Trigos-Carrillo & Rogers, 2017), critical literacies (Bacon, 2017; Gómez Jiménez & Gutiérrez, 2019; Mora, 2014a), and twenty-first-century literacies (Mora, 2014b; Morrell, 2012), covering these issues across the entire P-20 spectrum (Cañas, Ocampo, López-Ladino, Rodríguez, & Mora, 2018; Mora, 2016). Since its first version in 2013, the course has sought to develop a sense of critical consciousness (Willis et al., 2008) regarding literacy, as Cañas (2018) herself explained in the most recent version of the syllabus:

When you know what is beyond literacy, you may have some ideas about those taboo topics which have been silently developed and seldom analyzed. Some scholars around the world (and more recently, in the Global South) have devoted their research to unveil and highlight the importance of them in the daily life because they are just for a minority group; the processes affect all the community. (p. 2)

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

To describe the four authors of this chapter means to talk about a shifting relationship among all of them. Their relationships have evolved from merely professor-student during the literacies seminar to a constantly shifting mentorship relationship. Raúl (the lead author) first met Claudia, Ana Karina, and Natalia (the other co-authors) in his dual role of ML2 program coordinator and instructor for the literacies

seminar. After the seminar, the junior co-authors became Raúl's advisees during their thesis work while also joining the Literacies in Second Languages Project (LSLP; Mora, 2015) research lab. From the moment, they started writing their theses until the present, the mentorship relationship has shifted from being Raúl's graduate students to becoming Raúl's colleagues (although it is safe to say the co-authors still see Raúl as a colleague-mentor hybrid). Through this collaborative reflexivity, there has been an impact on identity and self-efficacy. At present, as part of LSLP, they have worked together on research projects and co-authored conference papers and other publications.

THE NARRATIVES: METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This section will offer narratives from each author. Each narrative is autoethnographic (Chang, 2008; Denzin, 2014; Mora, 2017b; Spry, 2016) in nature, as it documents the personal vantage points and journeys each author has undertaken in their development as self-efficacious literacy scholars. However, the authors have chosen to ground their narratives within literacies research literature and the context of the course, providing four differing perspectives and realities surrounding the literacies course. The first narrative will introduce Raúl's account (from the perspective of creating the course and teaching the first iterations), his impetus behind creating the course, and how designing and teaching the course has impacted all his work as a teacher educator. The second narrative will share Claudia's own transformation as she navigates being an elementary school teacher, a teacher educator, and the new instructor for the literacies graduate seminar. In the third narrative, Ana Karina will share the transformation of her own practice as she integrated critical literacies into her work with preschoolers. In the last narrative, Natalia will discuss her own transformation as she works with prospective teachers in a rural school and integrates multimodal literacies into her everyday practice.

RAÚL: AN ONGOING JOURNEY INTO LITERACIES TEACHING, RESEARCH... AND MENTORING

My journey into literacy spans 17 years, counting from the day I began my graduate studies at the University of Illinois. In many ways, my narrative has a convergence point with that of my co-authors, as I will also make references to my own graduate education and how that impacted

me. It will differ because I will also talk about my own shifting roles from being a graduate student and research assistant to now having my own students and how I now am forced to answer a question I wrote 12 years ago in a chapter:

When does the transition from “grad students” to “colleagues” happen in a professor’s mind, if that ever happens? Is it easier for some to look at their students as colleagues-to-be? When does that transition happen in a student’s mind? Does the academia really prepare both professors and students to realize that one day they might be at the same level? (Clift et al., 2006, p. 94)

I arrived at literacy as part of my initial inquiries surrounding teacher education in my MA program and then I delved deeper into this as I continued in my doctoral program. I do owe acknowledgment to my first adviser, Professor Renée Clift, for having the wisdom to guide me toward that path and my last adviser, Professor Arlette Willis, for helping me finish that first part of my path as a literacy scholar. After graduate work, in 2010, it was time to return home to Columbia after finishing my Ph.D. That first year (2010–2011) was a period of adjustment as I taught English and started outlining some ideas to develop my research and teaching agendas. In August 2011, I started at my current university and I was able to weave my literacy background in the development of an MA program related to second-language studies, which later became the MA in Learning and Teaching Processes in Second Languages (Mora & Golovátina-Mora, 2017). I had the firm conviction that infusing ideas from critical literacy (Janks, 2014; Luke, 2012; Willis et al., 2008), New Literacy Studies (Kist, 2000; Pahl & Rowsell, 2006; Street, 2013), and multiliteracies (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000, 2009) into second-language studies was necessary, especially in our local context. Therefore, I decided to build from the conceptual framework I had created for my dissertation (Mora, 2010) to design a course around literacies theory, as no other program in Colombia had such a course and that would also provide a competitive edge to this program.

I taught the first iteration of the course in 2013. Teaching this course for the first time was quite a challenge. I was sure that I had done the homework of reading the literature; the bulk of it was articulated when I defended my dissertation. Now, the question was, would I be able to instill in these new master’s students an interest in a topic that was both

my research agenda and my life passion? One challenge is plotting a syllabus, executing it is a whole different challenge. I think the litmus test for me every time I taught the course was whether any of these students at the end of the second semester in the program asked me to be their thesis director. In that sense, I can say, quoting Lou Gehrig, that “I am one of the luckiest men on the face of the Earth,” as I have had students in every cohort of our program but one asks to work with me on their thesis. My first student was Claudia (along with Angela, another LSLP researcher), then came Natalia, and Ana Karina shortly after. As well there have been two others who finished a few years ago, and six more students that I have now including a doctoral student.

This triggered the next challenge for me: What kind of *mentor* would I be? To me, directing a thesis goes beyond the drafts and the feedback; there is a sense of continuity involved. Looking back at my work, I can say that I have been one of the trailblazers in my country. However, residing myself as the only one doing this kind of research would constitute a failure, as I was not able to inspire other young scholars so we could build a field together. I admit that I was worried about this and how well I would do the job (Mora, 2014c). I was blessed with incredible mentors where I did my graduate studies, so I wanted in a way to pay it forward. Mentoring was a learning process for me, one that I have had to embark upon with every student. I had to learn to find the middle ground between influencing my students’ work without silencing their creativity. My students are talented enough to push me out of my own comfort zone. Claudia and Ana Karina, for example, have forced me to look more carefully at issues in elementary education (my background mostly comes from secondary education) and learn from them about the P-5 structure in our local schools, issues that they explored in their own research (Cañas & Ocampo, 2015; Rodríguez, 2017). Natalia’s work encouraged me to look more closely at literacy practices in rural areas (Azano, 2015) and what it means to infuse, for example, multimodal literacies in rural schools (Salazar, 2016). And these are just two examples. My other mentees have triggered more questions about the elementary school system and how to engage students in reading (López-Ladino, 2017), how to mesh aesthetics and literacy (Gutiérrez-Arismendy, 2016), multimodal design (Isaza, 2016), or as in the case of Esteban, my current doctoral student, to learn more about merging assessment and literacies (Jacobs, 2013). I look forward to the paths that my current graduate students will invite me to navigate with them

in the future. That, I believe, is the biggest impact that teaching the literacies course has had in my own self-efficacy as a scholar: Learning how effective it is to place my experiences at the service of these younger researchers and scholars. Mentoring is about working *with* your students while you work *for* them, helping them find their own voices that will enrich, in this case, the field of literacies research. In some ways, this is an extension of the notion of the collective efficacy (see Park, Fisher, & Frey, this volume; Poulton, Tambyah, & Woods, this volume).

CLAUDIA: BECOMING A SCHOLAR WHILE NAVIGATING BETWEEN SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY INSTRUCTOR

As part of the staff of a private school that belongs to one of the most well-known universities in Medellín, I had the opportunity to apply for a scholarship and start the ML2 program. I started the program eager to open my teaching spectrum to new education trends. During the first semester, we discussed the proposals for conducting our research study as it was the requirement to write the thesis for this master's degree. I started reading the literacy literature and related it to what I was wondering about: why some third graders struggle particularly with the processes of reading and writing. When I started the program, I just knew about literacy conceived as the development of basic reading and writing skills. About three months into the program, in the course English Language II: Literacies in Second Languages, the first suggested readings for the class were to read Freire and Macedo (1987) and Street (1984). This is when I realized that literacy was more than the development of two language skills, that this was "a social practice" (Street, 1995). In particular, at school most of the teachers were limiting the students to decode and encode letters, but not allowing them to exploit their personal literacy practices inside the classes. I admit that every reading and session of this course was like a "Pandora's box" because there were a lot of concepts that were new for me. It was amazing to experience how the professor (Raúl) delighted us with his explanations and his passion for the topic.

After some time in the program, my thesis partner and I received the good news that Raúl was now our advisor. Before our first meeting with him, we thought that we had an idea for clear topic for our study. Once we started describing our first insights about our proposal, however, Raúl told us that we were not yet ready to begin research and

that we should read more. He guided us toward the most appropriate authors to continue our reading about early literacies, literacy practices and events, multimodality and Multiliteracies and we decided to center on the exploration of children's personal literacies (Cañas & Ocampo, 2015). Conducting our research and writing our master's thesis was time-consuming and demanding. Raul invited me to join LSLP and later become his Teaching Assistant for the literacies seminar between 2015 and 2017. During this time, we worked together updating and discussing the design and teaching of this course. I attended the classes while helping students with their doubts and interacting with the whole group while Raúl was the professor.

In the last stage of writing my thesis, I received a call to work with one of the undergraduate programs at the Faculty of Education. I started teaching *Communicative Competence II*, which helps to reinforce teacher candidates' language learning process. We updated the syllabus with topics closely related to the teaching process to strengthen some of the instructional skills that they would need once they started teaching. I devoted time to share with them what literacy and other related terms meant. Most of them were surprised to learn that some of their language practices were part of literacy and that some of them were also multimodal. As a result of this process, students created some short stories about a teaching topic that they chose at the beginning of the course, searching information about it that would foreground the final product as multimodal. Through teaching teacher candidates as well as having the experience of teaching in elementary and high school has given me the opportunity to share with them various experiences about the learning and teaching language processes.

In 2016, the coordinator of the Graduate Specialization in English Teaching invited me to join this program as faculty member. Here I found an opportunity not only to share my teaching and research experience, but also to talk deeply about literacy. At this time, my former students were in-service teachers in private and public schools and universities, eager to transform their teaching practices and give their students opportunities in their classrooms a place where they can have a voice. Concurrently, I met with Raúl and other LSLP researchers to discuss the projects, course design, lectures, and articles we had in progress. The purpose was to nurture the proposals from the group to enhance our collective efficacy. These gatherings were enriching since Raúl, with all his experience and knowledge about research and literacy, led us

through discussion in which we felt comfortable enough to share our own experiences in the different settings.

Then in 2018 the news came that I was going to take on teaching the Literacies in Second Languages Seminar. With this news came many ideas as well as emotions such as happiness and shock. I was now facing a big responsibility on my shoulders but one for which I had been preparing myself for about two years. Raúl, as a real 24/7 mentor, has always been there, not only to encourage me to face challenges but also to help me when it was difficult to make decisions. I had to design my own version of the course so I began to look for all the notes I had taken during my time as TA to then outline the possible main topic and the authors. I went to the Dropbox files that Raúl shared every semester with the students and downloaded the different versions of the syllabus. I started classifying topics and authors to track how the topics have evolved and what I wanted to retain, highlight, or bring new to the course. I had many drafts until I then got a decent one to show to Raúl for his feedback—I was eager to know his thoughts, as he was my mentor. After Raúl's comments, I polished the syllabus and I shared it with some scholars such as Jessica Pandya, who was on my thesis committee. September 2018 arrived, and I had to welcome not one but two groups at the same time. At the beginning, this was very stressful. Although I had planned a variety of topics for the sessions, sometimes time would run out of time because of the discussions we had or the students' questions around the different topics, or the opportunities that they took to reflect on their own practices. Taken together my experiences as a graduate student and university instructor have propelled my view of myself as a self-efficacious beginning scholar.

ANA KARINA: CRITICAL LITERACY AS REFLEXIVITY OF MY OWN PRACTICE

It took roughly six weeks, 12 classes, and 36 hours of listening, reading, and discussion to work through an experience, which I can only describe as analogous to the “seven stages of grief” when one experiences a loss. As I sat in on the graduate level literacies seminar, I underwent a series of emotions and changes that I had to face, not only as a teacher but as a person. The beginning of this process was the toughest to deal with but, fortunately for me, it lasted only a short period of time.

I mark the onset of my grief and transformation during our second meeting when we started to engage with and explore the topic of critical literacy. The assigned readings, lecture, and discussions sent me into an initial stage of shock and denial. I had always considered myself a passionate and dedicated teacher; one who stayed up to date on educational trends and best practices. How could I have never heard of the concept of critical literacy and its perspective toward literacy? How could no one have ever told me? Is critical literacy even a thing worldwide, or maybe it's just something here in Colombia? I suppose that asking these questions was a way of protecting my self-efficacy as an in-service teacher, but this self-protection did not change the fact that I began to feel overwhelmed.

Soon thereafter, feelings of doubt began to consume my heart and mind. The more I read and listened, the more I reflected on my practices as an early childhood English teacher through the eyes of a graduate student drawn into critical literacy. A video reel of clips of my teaching played on and on in my mind, mostly focusing on my teaching practice of picture book read-alouds. I had always enjoyed these moments in my classroom, I was convinced that my young English learners had always appreciated these moments too. Now I questioned my self-efficacy as I saw harm and oppression to my students based on these practices (Rodríguez, 2017). I had been limiting my students' in-school reading experiences as our read-alouds revolved around books, questions, discussions, and activities based on phonics, sight words, vocabulary themes, and basic comprehension. The reading experiences that I was exposing my students to had not given them the chance to draw significant and meaningful connections between the texts that we read aloud and their lives, experiences, or interests. Furthermore, our in-class reading experiences were producing a narrow understanding of what literacy was for and what it had the potential to do in the world (Leland, Harste, & Huber, 2005). I started to question myself as a teacher and as a person and I felt like a fraud (Luke, 2017), like I had been oppressing my students rather than helping and empowering them. As a result, I became angry with myself.

Had I reflected on my teaching practices with a perspective other than critical literacy, this stage of anger might have lasted longer. However, as an important piece of critical literacy lies within hopefulness (Smith, 2001), I swiftly took an upward turn with respect to reforming my identity and self-efficacy as a literacy teacher. By the second seminar,

I was drawing inspiration from alternate notions of literacy (Freebody & Luke, 1990; Freire, 1970; Freire & Macedo, 1987; Luke & Freebody, 1999) and practices of critical literacy with young learners (Harste, 2003; Harste & Vasquez, 2011; Leland et al., 2005; Meller, Richardson, & Hatch, 2009; Vasquez, 2010, 2014) with the goal of working through the problems that I had started to see within my teaching practice. It was around this time in the course that Raúl explained how taking on a critical literacy perspective did not mean that we had to throw away everything that we were doing in our classrooms. Rather, he encouraged us to look for opportunities to tweak certain things that were already happening in our classrooms in order to infuse these moments with critical literacy, and so I did just that. I selected one part of my teaching practice that could be used as a springboard into critical literacy: picture book read-alouds. As I brainstormed ways to reconstruct my read-aloud sessions, I conceptualized them as moments that could help expand and enrich my students' in-class reading experiences by offering them a space to explore critical literacy.

When I came to the other end of the literacies course, I had somehow lost myself, lost the teacher and person that I had been prior to walking into that class. I left behind the feelings of guilt and anger that I had faced throughout the course and looked on into the future with self-efficacy and great hope understanding that the road toward critical literacy would be long but empowering, for both my students and myself. I regard our journey along this road as one that will encourage us all to reimagine, reconsider, reconstruct, and transform our world through literacy.

NATALIA: WEAVING LITERACY INTO MY WORK IN RURAL SCHOOLS

Since I started working at Normal Superior School located in Marinilla (Antioquia), I have been interested in issues related to second-language education, specifically teacher development, literacy, digital technologies, and multimodality. I had already developed a few projects in my English classes in elementary school and my teacher training program around topics such as social networks, virtual learning, and videogames. After these initial experiences, I decided to apply for a scholarship program for public school in-service teachers from Antioquia. Then, I had

the chance to apply for my master's degree at UPB in Medellín. During the interview, I met Raúl, who was coordinating the program at that time. Despite my lack of experience, he decided to give me the chance to enhance my skills as a master's student.

As a graduate student with no experience conducting research in the field of second-language education, I found the first year of my master's degree quite challenging. In particular, the first year of my graduate degree in L2 education was the most difficult year of my academic journey. Taking into account that I had successfully finished my bachelor's degree in a field completely different than English language, however, it was a challenge for me.

In the second semester of the master's program, I took Raúl's literacies course. The first time he mentioned "literacy," it was a completely unknown expression to me so quite a few ideas appeared in my head. My first misconception about literacy was associated with the simple concept of teaching reading and writing in any language to anybody, particularly to an adult. I realized that there were many things that I needed to learn and that my learning curve would be steep. Then, it started to happen that I began to make sense of relevant theories and concepts that belong to the literacy field.

For instance, to understand the notion of literacy beyond the way we decode words (Lankshear & Knobel, 2011), it is necessary to know the reality in which we are. To know the world, both context and language must always be together to support societal development and evolution. Also, I began to reflect about Freire and Macedo's (1987), definition of literacy as "Reading the world and word" while I read other literacy scholars who helped shape my initial ideas (e.g., Cope & Kalantzis, 2000, 2007; Kist, 2000; Lankshear & Knobel, 2011; Luke, 2004; Street, 1984, 1995). These authors have explained that literacy and teaching literacy need to adapt and change according to future expectations. That was one idea, among several others, that I started to be reshaped during my time as a master's student.

My experience at the University, especially the literacy course, transformed my research interests. With that in mind, I asked Raúl to supervise my thesis. Being in the MA program and moving my research interests to literacy opened up new opportunities in my professional journey. I was awarded two scholarships, one to study English in India and another for an ICT training course in South Korea. The Colombian Ministry of Education recognized my research proposal

about multimodal text creation for English communicative competence development with prospective teachers (Salazar, 2016) as one of the best educational proposals for English teaching. All this provided a new challenge for me as a teacher as well as a researcher and novice scholar.

The literacy course and my own thesis research transformed my everyday practice while I worked with teacher candidates and integrated multimodal literacies. I started to introduce the broad concept of literacy at the rural school where I worked in Marinilla. Although I agree with Kaestle (1988) that the concept of literacy has continually developed and changed in recent times, as an active language student and elementary school teacher, I would also argue that the idea of literacy is rather novel for English teachers in the rural context and that public English teachers in Marinilla have only learned about this in more recent years.

During my English classes with teacher candidates, I used different digital resources to create multimodal texts for English teaching. In addition to strengthening these teacher candidates' literacy competences, I noticed how multimodal compositions impacted their literacy competences in their second language through different digital media in this teacher training institution in Marinilla, Colombia. As Tyger (2011) had explained, there is currently no requirement that teacher candidates demonstrate that they are digitally literate and capable of applying their skills utilizing twenty-first-century technologies.

I am now a tutor for the Colombian Ministry of Education, training elementary in-service teachers from remote rural areas from Antioquia to help them improve the quality of teaching and learning processes in their settings. My continuing research experience and further work in literacy (as well as my participation in LSLP) have helped transform my educational activity in this place. This region (Mutatá, a village in the northern area of Urabá in Antioquia) possesses a wealth of biological resources in fauna and flora, which different armed groups in the region find important. This context presents painful social and political realities, none of which are peripheral to literacy research (Ajayi, 2015; Omerbašić, 2015).

In my work as a literacy tutor, I support diverse strategies with in-service teachers from some rural schools in Mutatá to describe the literacy instruction and learning processes with Embera-Katío (one of several indigenous groups in Colombia), as well as Afro-Colombian children who attend school there. I sought to answer some questions during my educational practice such as: How should teachers include the indigenous students with children of color in the literacy learning

processes? How should we train in-service teachers from rural schools to address rural literacies with indigenous people and people of color? Teachers have gradually transformed their practices about literacy instruction (Salazar, 2018). In addition, it has been encouraging to see how indigenous children have learned to read and write in Spanish (their second language) using different modes other than written word, a situation traditionally problematic in this context.

In conclusion, as I look back at my experiences since I enrolled in the MA program and took the literacies seminar, I can see the change in my self-efficacy beliefs and my professional development as my own practice has evolved with both teacher candidates and in-service teachers in different rural contexts of the country.

A LOOK ACROSS THE NARRATIVES: WHY WE NEED LITERACY COURSES (AND A LITTLE MORE)

We present four different narratives related to the impact of one graduate literacy seminar that, just as the four chapter authors, has not stopped evolving and is in flux. The four narratives that we shared are journeys along a path of change in identity and self-efficacy beliefs for the literacy instructors (Guo et al., 2012). Even though Raúl's story, as the mentor and professor, has some key differences with the stories of Claudia, Ana Karina, and Natalia, it is not difficult to see that many overlaps remain. We will now delve into these overlapping narrative commonalities.

The first evident overlap is that none of the chapter authors had a deep understanding of literacy before they all embarked on their graduate school journeys. They share a common departure point: seeing literacy as a synonym of "reading and writing" (or as Raúl discussed in his dissertation, mostly reading), usually with a narrow view that equated literacy practices to formal instructional processes. The latter is what Street (1995, p. 107), described as "pedagogization of literacy." This departure point is important, as literacy to all the authors, has been a path they have had to walk, discover, and relate it to their own lives. Exploring literacy as a deep subject transcends the introduction of theories, authors, and concepts. All of the chapter authors realized that exploring literacy means interrogating their own practices in their daily lives and their teaching practice. Claudia had to interrogate her practices as she navigates a similar path to Raúl's in that transition from looking at literacy instruction from the vantage point of in-service teachers to that

of teacher educators. Ana Karina went through her “grief” as she interrogated what she was doing and whether she was serving her students to the best of her ability. Natalia saw herself as a trailblazer of sorts, as she was introducing ideas about literacy in a rural context, an issue that Azano (2015; Biddle & Azano, 2016) has called for in her own work as a pressing need in the field of literacies research.

All four chapter authors also embarked on another similar path: that of merging teaching and scholarship. In Raúl’s case, he had prior experience writing and presenting at conferences before he entered graduate school (Mora, 1999; Mora & Lopera, 2001), but he was formally introduced to scholarship as a graduate student. Claudia, Ana Karina, and Natalia are now following that road, on their own terms, but they share with Raúl the idea that scholarship without a sense of advocacy is incomplete. Claudia is exploring this advocacy in her own courses, as she sees the need to introduce teacher candidates and in-service teachers in these conversations that are germane to how different literacy scholars envision the field going forward (e.g., Angay-Crowder et al., 2014; Dunkerly-Bean, 2013; Haddix & Sealey-Ruiz, 2012; Kinloch, Larson, Orellana, & Lewis, 2016; Luke, 2017; Mora, 2016; Morrell, 2017; Willis, 2009; Willis & Harris, 2000). Ana Karina is beginning to merge scholarship and advocacy both in her current teaching and her most recent educational project around language teaching through art with children (Minicozzi & Dardzinski, this volume). Natalia has taken on the advocacy mantle through her experiences with indigenous and Afro-Colombian students and how she learns from them as she helps them improve their literacy practices (Salazar, 2018).

The literacies seminar proved to be a context that exemplifies the importance of mentorship for emerging literacy teachers and scholars. Claudia, Ana Karina, and Natalia recognize Raúl’s influence in their development, just as Raúl acknowledges the influence of his mentors in his own past and current growth. Learning about literacy in the context of a graduate program goes beyond the classes or the thesis. Those are specific moments in what must be a learning continuum that cannot limit itself to the moment when graduate students are enrolled in the program (Pajares, 1996). Literacy teachers and scholars need mentoring and counsel at different stages of their careers (Fisher, this volume). Raúl, for example, still seeks counsel from his dissertation director (Professor Arlette Willis) as he navigates his own mentorship growth. Claudia, Ana Karina, and Natalia believe that they will still benefit from

extended post-graduation mentorship from Raúl. However, we must also acknowledge that mentorship relationships do evolve over time and this needs to be a key component of professional development in literacy teaching and research, in particular into the study of teacher self-efficacy and collective efficacy.

There is one final commonality that the chapter authors regard as integral: the importance of belonging to a research community as teachers become literacy scholars and advocates (Park, Fisher, & Frey, this volume). This is essential to build on the collective efficacy of the whole. Raúl was mentored as a researcher in the field as a doctoral student; Claudia, Ana Karina, and Natalia have had the same opportunity through their involvement in the Literacies in Second Languages Project. Any efforts to engage teachers (both teacher candidates and in-service) in literacy instruction, we would argue, must involve a joint venture between curricular design and the emergence of research labs and initiatives that explore different literacy topics. This is akin to the work of Poulton, Tambyah and Woods (see this volume). Learning to be a literacy teacher, scholar, and advocate involves thinking in terms of a true *praxis*: Literacy theories only become embodied when teachers translate (Mora, 2016) them in their classrooms and literacy practices only become stronger when teachers are able to conceptualize them on their own.

BRINGING LITERACY TO THE (SECOND) LANGUAGE CURRICULUM?

This final section of this chapter will propose some issues to consider for teacher education programs aiming to formally introduce literacies research into their graduate-level course curricula that are connected to and applied in work with teacher candidates and in-service teachers. We will discuss these issues in light of some of the self-efficacy literature.

Ground it in reality. The literacies seminar has worked in part because of its novelty. However, what has made the course successful is how the instructors have grounded it in the reality of our social settings (Pelton, 2014; Siwatu, 2011; Tschannen-Moran & McMaster, 2009). Any efforts to introduce literacies research must first recognize that one of the goals for such courses is to help teachers place theories at the service of their contexts, where they can become more aware of how to link such theories to the cultural settings surrounding them (Siwatu, 2011).

Discussions around literacy that disregard these realities are bound to fail. We cannot ignore that schools of thought and their proponents are bound by personal, historical, and even professional circumstances (Noffke, 1997). Any discussions about literacy need to take into consideration the historical moments that triggered the conversations in the first place (Luke, 2017; Siwatu, 2011) in order to make the implementation of these ideas into classroom life more accessible (Pelton, 2014). This applies in any and all literacy classrooms.

Give novice scholars a chance to engage in praxis. Introducing literacies in the curriculum goes beyond the theory. What will novice scholars do with the theory? In the case of this seminar, a degree of success was attained because graduate education students were able to relate these theories to their own contexts (Siwatu, 2011) and see how they helped them better understand (Pelton, 2014). In the case of those who go deeper in their explorations, it is key that they find opportunities to transform their contexts (Tschannen-Moran & McMaster, 2009).

Terminal works are not outcomes, but blueprints. Any work that comes out of a literacy course cannot be an end in and of itself. Instead, it should be a blueprint, a road map that signals where the novice scholars will go next (Colvin & Schlosser, 1997). Raúl used his dissertation as a blueprint to open a new road for literacy at his university and, to an extent, in Colombia. Claudia, Ana Karina, and Natalia all used their MA theses as blueprints that are informing their scholarship, entrepreneurship, and tutoring efforts in their current scenarios. Not envisioning the work stemming from literacy curricula in such a way would deny teachers the chance to truly apply and transform their practices, especially as they intend to engage their own students in academic endeavors (Adams, 2014).

Extended research efforts are necessary. The literacies seminar has been successful because there is a research community that supports it. The Literacies in Second Languages Project (Mora, 2015), as a student research lab, has had a great deal of institutional support, which in turn has helped inform the graduate seminar and even the undergraduate courses that Raúl and Claudia serve at the university. Literacies curricula need to feature that research pipeline to become sustainable and to be able to contribute to curricular transformations at the teacher education (Binks-Cantrell, Washburn, & Joshi, this volume; DiCesare & Rowsell, this volume; Washburn & Mulcahy, this volume) and in-service (Clark, this volume; Clark & Newberry, 2018; Guo et al., 2012) levels.

CODA

Finally, the coda or section brings this chapter to an end. We reflect on the fact that this chapter introduced a series of woven journeys. At this moment, the literacy paths of all four chapter authors remain inextricably linked. What began as teacher-student relationships became mentoring relationships and are now extended collaborative learning experiences. There is an extended sense of collegiality, which made this very chapter possible. These woven journeys are also stories of evolution, each at their own pace and their specific successes and setbacks. In the midst of the evolution and the different moments that all authors have shared while talking, writing, presenting, and learning about literacy, our individual and shared paths have strengthened. This has contributed to individuals' and the collective's self-efficacy.

We only hope this chapter, written from a strong sense of advocacy for the voices that are emerging from the South, will help others develop their own paths. Just as in literacies research there is no one-size-fits-all approach to engaging with literacy (or even defining it), this is one illustration of how language teachers may become literacy teachers, scholars, activists, advocates, and even co-conspirators (Love, 2019) for a better world, one where the word is a transformative tool toward veritable equity.

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