

Cross-Cultural Perceptions of Literacies in Literacy Narratives

Thir B. Budhathoki University of Arizona

KEYWORDS

literacy narratives; translanguaging literacies; borderlands; border crossings;
contact zones; cross-cultural conversations; little narratives

INTRODUCTION: LITERACY, LITERACY NARRATIVES, AND COLLEGE WRITING

This article reports the findings of a qualitative case study that analyzes both the process and product of literacy narratives in a first-year writing class. With a rich description of cross-cultural conversations that shape the students' perception of literacy, it uses students' writing samples with a reflective letter, personal interview, one-on-one conference, and the instructor's insider perspective to show how the student writers develop a complex understanding of literacy through a literacy narrative assignment. This article picks up on Nora McCook's 2016 article "Literacy Contact Zones: A Framework for Research," in which she claims that "[f]or composition pedagogy, contact zones have been a productive locus upon which to resituate and rethink multiple student competencies and language differences in the classroom" (59). In fact, compositionists have both built and expanded on Mary Louise Pratt's concept of contact zones to address the growing cultural and linguistic diversity in college writing classrooms. McCook believes that literacy studies can learn from the way compositionists have used a contact zone framework that foregrounds the context, history, orality, and power dynamics of literacy and the way it "focuses on the interaction of elements that have historically been separated by scholarship, including orality/literacy and local/global/translocal components related to literacy" (54). In other words, the contact zone framework resists the binary approach to literacy in favor of a nuanced understanding that embraces the many ways literacy is acquired and represented. Among history, orality, power dynamics, context, and interaction, this article expands on interaction and context as two major components of a contact zone framework that allows both monolingual and bi- and multilingual students to develop a complex understanding of literacy. In fact, the role of context and interaction in students' writing and understanding of literacy is one of the least explored areas in the study of literacy narratives.

As a genre that asks students to write about their own literacy experiences, the literacy narrative has been considered by many American college writing instructors to be motivating, accessible, and authentic for their students. My first encounter with this genre and with first-year writing itself as an

international graduate student placed me in a position simultaneously to reflect on my experiences of learning English as a foreign language in a rural public school in Nepal and to encourage my US college students to probe into their literacy experiences. I recall how the literacy narrative as the first assignment in my first ever college writing course as an instructor gave me a sense of comfort and confidence to begin the semester, a feeling many scholars claim is shared by the students as well. Mary Soliday discusses how literacy narratives provide students with “a way to view their experience with language as unusual or strange” and expand their “sense of personal agency” (511, 512). Similarly, a group of advanced undergraduate students in William Carpenter and Bianca Falbo’s study reported that the reflective nature of literacy narratives “improved awareness of themselves as individuals who think, read, write, and speak in the world” (107). Likewise, Christian Aguiar’s adaptation of the literacy narrative to a work narrative for his low-income students in a two-year college helped reduce the fear of academic writing and write longer prose than usual which, Aguiar believes, is because of the “opportunity to bring authentic experience into an academic setting” (150). This positive change in the students’ motivation to write more shows how broadening the concept of literacy allows students to draw on their diverse and authentic experiences and encourages them to write. One great example of pushing the boundaries of literacy on all sides is Seth E. Davis’s study of shade—wit or verbal acumen—“as a critical literacy in the Black queer community”; Davis uses personal “experiences with family and friends and the video interviews with Black Queer people” to present literacy as “the complicated, rhetorical, and embodied ways people make meaning” (56).

However, despite the literacy narrative’s promise, there are scholars who question the inherent usefulness of the literacy narrative in college writing courses. Anne-Marie Hall and Christopher Minnix find the portrayal of the literacy narrative “as a bridge to academic writing” problematic because it creates a hierarchy between the genres by touting the academic writing as superior to personal narratives (58). Similarly, Caleb Corkery acknowledges the empowering nature of literacy narrative but questions the way it “presumes the hegemony of written literacy” at the cost of oral literacies (64). These concerns point to the sedimented practices that treat academic writing as sacrosanct and perpetuate the hegemony of alpha-numeric literacy over other literate practices. What Corkery suggests as an alternative way to “steer students into narratives of lessons learned, moments of communicative mastery—oral and written” is undoubtedly a right move (64), but we should go one step further to reframe the concept of literacy itself for a broader and more nuanced understanding: a shift from literacy as “autonomous and situated to negotiated” that a translingual orientation to literacy requires (Canagarajah, “Negotiating” 40). From a translingual perspective, “reading and writing are understood as actively producing texts—worlds and the very languages employed—and asymmetrical relations of power are understood as both mediated by as well as mediating—transformed by and transforming—individual instances of languaging” (Lu and Horner 28).

Suresh Canagarajah’s latest book, *Transnational Literacy Autobiographies as Translingual Writing*, is the most substantial treatment of literacy narratives in the translingual and transnational context. Canagarajah focuses on the literacy autobiographies written by both US domestic and international students in his first-year ESL composition and second language writing classes alongside his own

teacher literacy autobiography as a multilingual scholar from South Asia working in the US. He treats these classrooms as contact zones that provide “diverse material ecologies and social networks, beyond semiotic resources, to facilitate literacy development” (101). Given the drastic expansion of discourses and pedagogies around multilingual and transnational issues in our field, the literacy narrative deserves further exploration in the classroom as well as in our scholarship. What is yet to be done is to situate notions like “contact zone” and “border crossing” in the spaces of the college writing classroom, studying how we can practically support students to explore literacy learning through the lenses of linguistic, cultural, and national identities particularly in a “regular” first-year writing classroom.

Based on the findings of a qualitative case study, I argue for a translingual orientation to literacy to frame the literacy narrative in first-year writing and emphasize the role of cross-cultural conversations and little narratives in resisting the grand narrative of literacy. A translingual orientation treats literacy as practices rather than a skill set that ensures an individual’s success and upward

“Based on the findings of a qualitative case study, I argue for a translingual orientation to literacy to frame the literacy narrative in first-year writing and emphasize the role of cross-cultural conversations and little narratives in resisting the grand narrative of literacy.”

mobility. That means literacy practices are “emergent . . . diverse, fluid, and changing” and therefore “cannot guarantee meaning by [themselves]” (Canagarajah, “Introduction” 4). Instead, “Such meaning has to be constructed and negotiated through strategic practices, as intelligibility and success depend a lot on collaboration” (4). In other words, from a translingual

perspective, literacy is “intrinsically rhetorical” and should be understood “in larger contexts of history, culture, and social relations” rather than “the narrow bounds of language norms or textual structures” (5, 6). With cross-cultural conversations through class discussions, group activities, peer review, and readings, the writing classroom becomes borderlands where both English monolingual and bi- and multilingual students encounter different literacy experiences that mutually enrich their understandings of literacy.

Additionally, little narratives of literacy that are local, more specific, and rich in contextual details effectively resist the utilitarian notion of literacy as a toolkit to achieve upward mobility, a notion rooted in the monolingual and monocultural view of literacy that feed into the grand narrative of ‘Literacy’ as singular and transcendental (Alexander, “Successes”; Daniell). Kara Poe Alexander uses Jean-François Lyotard’s concept of meta narratives and small narratives to examine the cultural narratives students perform in their literacy narratives. As Alexander’s findings show, despite the prevalence of the master narrative of literacy as success, students used little narratives to “contextualize their literacy experiences with specific, personal accounts” (“Successes” 625; See Lyotard). Instead of making sweeping generalizations about literacy, such contextualized accounts offer “a more nuanced understanding of the ways students frame and perceive their literacy experiences” (Alexander “Success” 627). With the attention to local context and personalized experiences, little narratives

align with the translanguaging orientation to literacy that views learners' experiences as resources. Thus, by foregrounding the role of cross-cultural interactions, this article simultaneously builds and expands on concepts like contact zone pedagogy (Canagarajah, *Transnational*) and little narratives (Alexander, "Successes") in the context of a literacy narrative assignment in a first-year writing (English 101) class.

While my take on literacy narrative resembles Canagarajah's contact zone pedagogy and his emphasis on "close attention to the procedures behind the writing and analysis of literacy narratives" (*Transnational* 37), the site of my study is different: Canagarajah's study focuses on a second language learning context whereas my study explores a regular first-year composition class with all US domestic students. Likewise, this study not only acknowledges the potential of little narratives to resist the literacy grand narratives; it also situates them in the contact zones of cross-cultural conversations that turn the writing classroom into borderlands. When both English monolingual and bi- and multilingual students actively participate in cross-cultural exchanges through various collaborative activities such as class discussions, group work, peer review, and readings from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds, the classroom becomes borderlands—a space of contest, creativity, and transition—where different literacy practices and literate selves interact and mutually enrich each other's perceptions of literacy. By actively participating in such cross-cultural exchanges, both the students and the instructor become border crossers.

METHODS

This study falls in the intersection of a qualitative case study and teacher research. As a case study researcher, I was "the primary instrument of data collection and analysis" (Merriam and Tisdell 37). That I designed the assignment, collected data, and analyzed them using mostly an inductive approach informed by grounded theory puts this study in the ambit of teacher research, which ranges between "instructor-generated surveys of students' experiences with a particular assignment" and "ethnographically informed study" (Nickoson 106). With its focus on the interrelationship between theory and practice, scholarship and pedagogy, teacher research in composition studies helps us develop "a deeper understanding of student writers" with an exploration of "how [students] write and why, how they learn, and what their educational and literate goals are" (Nickoson 111). In this study, I was able to learn the many different ways students define their literacy experiences and literate selves, and how their perceptions change when they cross linguistic, cultural, and experiential borders in the classroom.

I conducted this study in a first-year writing class that I taught in Fall 2018 in an American Indian/Alaska Native Serving public research university in the Southwest. The student demographics of the university at the time of this study show 9.3 percent of international students out of 44,097 total. In the same year, the university was named a Hispanic Serving Institution, a status that requires a minimum of 25 percent Hispanic student population. In the class of 19 students, 15 consented to participate. Among them there were eight English monolingual, six bilingual, and one multilingual students. Two bilingual students identified English as their second language. This class composition

reflects the demographic shifts in US college writing classrooms, where “the myth of linguistic homogeneity” no longer holds water (Matsuda 82). Therefore, despite a small data pool that warrants only a limited generalization, this study prompts composition instructors toward questioning the tendency to associate cross-cultural approaches with dedicated writing courses for English as a second or additional language speakers or for immigrant or refugee students. Even in a supposedly homogeneous writing class with all US domestic students, cross-cultural exchanges, border crossings, and use of little narratives play an important role in mutually enriching and complexifying the students’ perception of literacies.

The students wrote literacy narratives as their first major assignment (See Appendix I for the assignment prompt). As per the university’s IRB protocol, the students signed a voluntary informed consent form in the first week of the class with my faculty adviser to maintain anonymity of the participants. I collected the writing samples of the consenting students only after the final grades had been submitted. I then contacted them by email for a voluntary Zoom interview in the following spring semester. Nine students volunteered for the interview, which I recorded with their consent and later transcribed them. Besides, I had recorded the one-on-one conferences I had with the students in various stages of the literacy narrative assignment and recorded those conversations with their consent. I was able to retrieve and transcribe twelve conversations out of fifteen participants.

My approach to coding the data was a combination of inductive and deductive methods. I first carefully read all fifteen literacy narratives with a reflective letter and the transcripts of nine personal interviews and twelve one-on-one conferences to identify major themes and patterns across the board while maintaining “an inductive stance . . . to drive meaning from the data” (Merriam and Tisdell 31). Yet my search for the themes and patterns was not totally open-ended. With the insights from the interview and one-one conference transcripts, I was able to anchor them to the expressions that indicated some form of change in students’ perception of literacies and the factors that made those changes possible: cross-cultural conversations. I also focused on how a translingual notion of literacy and emphasis on little narratives, in the form of personalized and situated anecdotes with descriptive details, contributed to a nuanced understanding of literacy. Additionally, my coding technique was informed by “literal” or “verbatim coding” where I located a section of the text that reflects the key issues of the study. It is basically useful in the “studies that prioritize and honor participant’s voice” because the codes contain the writers’ words verbatim (Saldana 106).

Throughout this study, I capitalized on my different literacy experience of learning English as a foreign language at a rural public school to encourage students to recall and share their literacy experiences. The fact that I was an international graduate student who had arrived in the US only a year before and was trying hard to navigate the dual role of student and writing instructor at the university put me in a liminal space between an expert and a novice. As a person with the experience of teaching college English, albeit in a different context, I had a sense of confidence and control, but as a person to whom both first-year writing and the literacy narrative genre were new, I was also learning and crossing borders on different levels along with the students. As Henry A. Giroux writes, teachers “become border crossers through their ability to not only make different narratives available to themselves and students but also by legitimating difference as a basic condition for understanding

the limits of one's own knowledge" ("Border Pedagogy" 63). I actively engaged in conversation with the students, sharing my experiences and perspectives in the classroom, during office hours and one-on-one conferences, through email responses, and in feedback on their assignments. My emphasis on conversation came from a belief that "to engage in dialogue is one of the simplest ways we can begin as teachers, scholars, and critical thinkers to cross boundaries" (hooks 130). In a sense, my interactions with the students were also a part of cross-cultural conversations, and they contributed to students' perception of literacy to some extent. Although the possibility that students might have been motivated to appease me as their instructor cannot be ruled out, the fact that all 15 participants found their one-on-one conferences with me helpful gives credence to this assumption.

The literacy narrative assignment treated literacy in a broad and plural sense and as embedded in social, cultural, and economic structures. It encouraged students to draw on diverse "resources such as family histories, stories, rituals and cultural practices, festivals and celebrations, native language, dialects, colloquialisms" and resist the temptation to "generalize [their] experiences to create a common 'success story'" in favor of "anecdotes situated in the specific contexts" with "lively and compelling details followed by reflection and critical questionings" (See Appendix I). I encouraged interactions in groups and peers during the class activities like brainstorming, discussing readings, and responding to reading responses on the D2L discussion board. Besides, I tried to diversify the student's interactions with the readings by adding two literacy narratives by South Asian writers and some student samples from the previous semester. Peer review and one-on-one conferences with me were also a part of the conversation that continued throughout the assignment.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section offers a discussion of major findings that covers three main areas: changes in the students' perception of literacy; how cross-cultural conversations through collaborative work along with a translingual approach to literacy and use of little narratives contribute to the change; and how in this process the writing classroom becomes borderlands and the students and the instructor become border crossers.

Change in the Perception of Literacy

A major focus of this study was if, how, and to what extent students' perceptions of literacy change after the literacy narrative assignment. Attempts to broaden and diversify the traditional, unitary notion of literacy as a set of alpha-numeric skills that would ensure upward mobility of an individual and society started since the 1980s. Brian Street questioned the dominant view of "Literacy" "with a big L and a single Y" as "a single thing" and advocated for a socially and culturally embedded notion of literacy practices that are "always contested and 'ideological'" (81, 82). James Paul Gee also critiqued the monolithic and utilitarian notion of literacy as a commodity and proposed "different 'literacies'" because "reading and writing are differently and distinctively shaped and transformed inside different sociocultural practices" (356). In short, the concept of literacy as an autonomous, acontextual, and neutral set of skills has long been rejected but they are still "dangerously pervasive" in

our field because “they afford the powerful a pretext for affirming dominant cultural understandings of literate practices while subordinating others” (Byrd, Hayes, and Turnipseed V). Therefore, it is imperative that we as educators enable our students to critically examine the dominant notion of literacy, develop a complex understanding of it, and appreciate the localized, alternative literacy practices in a world where cultural and linguistic boundaries are becoming more porous every day. In this spirit, the assignment prompt encouraged students to use “the term literacy in a broad sense,” allowing them “to draw on other significant moments and experiences of learning, which may not be limited to reading and writing.”

The findings of the study indicate a change in students’ perception of literacy. Twelve out of 15 participants admitted that their perception of literacy changed in some way after the assignment. Among them, nine students participated in a personal interview where they were asked if their understanding of literacy changed after the assignment. Eight of them admitted the change whereas one of them said it remained the same. However, in response to another question—if his understanding of literacy would have been different without the collaborative work he did in the class—he responded positively. Thus, all nine interviewees admitted that there was a change in their perception of literacy after the assignment. It is notable that both English monolingual and bi- and multilingual students admitted that their perception of literacy changed after the assignment. Olivia, an English monolingual student, said in her interview:

Um, I’d say my definition of literacy changed, um, just seeing how everybody took the project in different directions and seeing the different ways people understood literacy. Like for some people it was second language learning; for others like myself, it was learning how to read and write and how to become a stronger writer. For others it was creating, you know, story book, that type of thing. That was something that stood out to me in this project. So I’d say that literacy, I still understood literacy, but it was a different outlook on it and seeing how other people had different outlooks for sure.

Olivia wrote about the experience of learning to read and write, a typical literacy narrative content where she reflects on her struggles and achievements as a reader and writer. Her narrative reflects common literacy experiences of a middle-class U. S. English monolingual child, but she finds her classmates’ different literacy experiences such as second language learning and other literacy practices insightful. This is an indication that cross-cultural conversations in the classroom contribute to the students’ understanding of literacies.

Likewise, Veronica, a bilingual student who learned English as a second language, admits that her understanding of literacy changed after the assignment. She began to view literacy in a broad sense and not necessarily limited to learning a language. In her own words in our interview,

I think it made me realize that, like, a lot more people have different experiences with language, and it doesn’t necessarily have to be about language. It could be about personal struggles with language, even with your first language, or because I remember there were people in the class who . . . who had English as their first language, and they wrote about experiences of writing different type of English or using it in a different manner. And I thought that was just interesting.

Veronica wrote in her literacy narrative about experiencing language barriers and discriminations as an immigrant child at an elementary school in the US and how she not just overcame those challenges but excelled from her classmates who had once looked down at her because of her accented English. A comparison of Veronica's and Olivia's narratives offers some insights into the connection between literacy and its socio-economic contexts. The literacy experiences they bring to the classroom is informed by the differences in their socio-economic and linguistic backgrounds, but both of them find different literacy experiences and practices shared in the classroom useful in broadening their understanding of literacy. When I asked Veronica to confirm if she believes her understanding of literacy did change, she replied: "Yeah, I think it made me more open and educated about language . . . that it comes from all different parts, not necessarily just one part. Everybody has a story and I feel like that's important to realize."

Although the students are unequivocal in their responses, skeptical readers may take them as the goodwill of the students who participated in personal interviews. However, similar responses and opinions have been traced in the writing samples as well as the reflective letters written by most student participants. Moreover, the assignment prompt offers clear guidelines to approach literacy in a broad and contextual sense (see Appendix I). Recent scholarships on literacy narrative such as Mary Helen O'Connor's "Teaching Refugee Students with the DALN" uses multimodal literacy narratives that go "beyond the bounds of the historically print modes of writing instruction" as "a way to acknowledge literacy practices and knowledge historically overlooked by a teaching tradition rooted in western rhetorical concepts of literacy" and show how multimodality can be a powerful intervention to promote student agency by enabling them to share their authentic literacy experiences. Although the intervention in my study was limited to the content and pedagogical approach, the traditional print-based literacy narratives written by the US domestic students strongly indicate that they mutually enriched their perceptions of literacy and developed a complex understanding of it.

Another bilingual student, Francisco, wrote about musical literacy he developed from early childhood and how his literacy experience connects to the discovery of his identity and purpose of life. During the interview, he admitted that his perception of literacy changed after the literacy narrative assignment:

Um, yeah. I think it kind of changed because for my experience, I was talking about basically how music also something that kind of helped me during the time of school and how it improves kind of my literacy of not just writing but of music in that fact. And I guess it kind of changed the way that I think about it as something that makes me who I am basically . . .

Yeah, basically gave me a better sense of what I was doing.

Although Francisco slightly qualifies his claim about how his perception of literacy changed, the way he extends literacy beyond reading and writing and connects it to his sense of being is noteworthy. It reflects the broad concept of literacy that is not limited to alpha-numeric skills and what Caleb Corkery suggests as an alternative way to "steer students into narratives of lessons learned" that encourages them to share authentic literacy experiences and broadens their understanding of literacy (64). It also shows how the literacy narrative is more about giving meanings to one's literacy experiences and identifying the literate selves rather than just recalling and narrating them.

Among nine interviewees, Benjamin, an English monolingual student, writes about the influence of his grandparents who had homeschooled him before he went to kindergarten. He fondly recalls the moments spent with his grandma and realizes how that experience shaped his literate self: “The countless memories that I made during that time in my life helped me get to the point I am at today. The time and commitment my grandma put into me when she was trying to teach me the basics on how to read and write helped me tremendously in my educational career and is something I could not thank her enough for.” However, to the first question about the change in his perception of literacy, Benjamin said that it hadn’t changed: “Um, I don’t think it really changed after, really after the project, uh in my personal opinion.” But when asked if his understanding of literacy would have been different without the collaborative activities in the classroom, he says: “Ah. . . yes because if I were to go by myself, I’d just be having to go off of my . . . my own prior knowledge and the limited research I could do.” Furthermore, he admits that the collaborative activities were helpful in more than one way: “I was able to rely on my fellow classmates as well as the professor to help me in my writing and my understanding.” As a whole, all nine interviewees admitted some kind of change in their perception of literacy after completing the literacy narrative assignment.

As for the six students who did not participate in personal interviews, I had to rely on their reflective letters that accompanied the literacy narratives to trace if and how their perception of literacy changed. The analysis showed that at least three of them experienced some form of change in the understanding of literate selves and activities. Coincidentally, all three students are English monolinguals who reflect on different but interrelated facets of their literacy experiences. For example, William admits: “Overall this assignment has opened my eyes to writing and helped me think about myself as a writer as I have never done before.” While for Sophia the brainstorming process was helpful to find a topic that was relatable to her personal experience as she paired her “home life with [her] interest in psychology.” Isabella finds “writing something so personal to [herself] was good for closure and a great beginning to [the] academic year.” These statements indicate some level of change in their understanding of literacy and their literate selves.

“It is worth noting that there are significant differences in these students’ cultural and linguistic backgrounds, but they all feel that their understanding of literacy changed, and the majority of them attribute these changes to the collaborative nature of the assignment. The fact that all English monolingual, bi- and multilingual students admit a change in their perception of literacy speaks to the important role of cross-cultural conversations and border-crossings as an integral part of the assignment design and its execution in the classroom.”

Overall, the findings indicate that a majority of students in this study experienced a change in their perception of literacy after writing the literacy narrative. It is worth noting that there are significant differences in these students’ cultural and linguistic backgrounds, but they all feel that

their understanding of literacy changed, and the majority of them attribute these changes to the collaborative nature of the assignment. The fact that all English monolingual, bi- and multilingual students admit a change in their perception of literacy speaks to the important role of cross-cultural conversations and border-crossings as an integral part of the assignment design and its execution in the classroom. These findings also attest to Ghanashyam Sharma's view that writing literacy narratives "can greatly promote students' development of critical sensibilities, capacity of intellectual judgment, independence as writers and makers of knowledge" (109).

Border Crossings: Cross-cultural Conversations through Collaboration

The concept of the classroom as a heterogeneous space where different language and literacy practices intersect is not new. Pratt's concept of contact zones as "social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power" has been widely used to talk about classrooms as a space of contact and contestation (34). Pratt's analogy captures the changing demographic dynamics of US college writing classrooms even though her approach to "understanding cultures through texts alone" is likened to "the methodology of armchair anthropologists" (Cushman and Emmons 204), and the contact zone that doesn't offer any concrete way to deal with the differences as "a multicultural bazaar" (Harris 33). Similarly, Henry A. Giroux uses a border analogy to introduce "transformative and emancipatory" border pedagogy that "points to the need for conditions that allow students to write, speak, and listen in a language in which meaning becomes multiaccultural, dispersed, and resists permanent closure" ("Border Pedagogy" 52). In border pedagogy, students become border crossers by encountering diverse cultural and historical narratives and voices. Despite the limitations of Pratt's contact zone that is premised on the additive notion multiculturalism and Giroux's border pedagogy that is grounded in postmodernism, I find their analogies helpful to discuss different literacy experiences and practices that students bring to first-year writing classrooms. While every classroom is a contact zone in the sense that some level of diversity is inevitable, what is at stake is to utilize those differences as a resource for learning. Canagarajah adopts "pedagogical practices and policies that accentuate the resources in the classroom to facilitate contact, negotiation practices, and language socialization" (*Transnational* 101). His contact zone pedagogy, which is informed by the ethos of translingual literacy that values differences as the norm and resource, is relevant to the context of this study as well even though there were no international students.

What I discuss below as cross-cultural conversations through collaboration and interpret as border crossings envisions first-year writing classrooms as borderlands. It embraces Canagarajah's contact zone pedagogy and the border analogies used by Giroux and Gloria Anzaldúa. Borders are "not only geographic but also political, subjective (e.g., cultural) and epistemic and, contrary to frontiers, the very concept of 'border' implies the existence of people, languages, religions and knowledge on both sides" (Mignolo and Tlostanova 208). In the context of classroom and pedagogy, border is more an intangible concept that "provides a continuing and crucial referent for understanding the comingling—sometimes clash—of multiple cultures, languages, literacies, histories, sexualities, and identities" (Giroux, *Border Crossings* 2). When these differences meet in a classroom space, they not

only coexist but give way to something new. Anzaldúa defines borderlands as a space of “culture in the making” and “a very creative space to be in, one where innovative art and theory on the cutting edge is being constructed” (Hernández 10). A classroom as borderlands is a creative space, a contact zone where multiple viewpoints, experiences, and identities intersect and multiply. Even “though it is a source of intense pain, its energy comes from continual creative motion that keeps breaking down the unitary aspect of each new paradigm” (Anzaldúa 102). Borderland is therefore rife with tensions and creative potential, and it is imperative that writing instructors tap those potentials to enhance a complex understanding of literacy among students.

The discussion in the previous section shows that 12 out of 15 students experienced a change in their perception of literacy. To understand how those changes became possible, this section focuses on the cross-cultural conversations that undergirded the assignment. Based on the participants’ opinions about class discussions, group work, peer review, and readings, this section discusses how the assignment was scaffolded with numerous collaborative activities that promote cross-cultural conversations and highlight translanguaging approaches to literacy. All nine interviewees admitted that their understanding of literacy would have been different without their participation in the collaborative activities.

Class Discussion: Listening to Different Perspectives

Class discussion was a major component of the collaboration which all 15 participants found useful. Discussions were basically about the readings most of which I had assigned as homework with a response to be posted on the D2L Discussion Board. We also did a few in-class readings and discussed all the readings in the class focusing on major takeaways and their relevance to the project. I facilitated the discussion with guiding questions and occasional clarifications. When asked if class discussion helped him understand the concept of literacy and the assignment better, Lucas says:

Yeah, it did because umm in having other . . . other voices and opinions, I mean, that just helps you understand pretty much anything better; you know. When . . . whenever you talk to somebody about umm if you see different people, like I said, different people have different experiences so . . . so everyone just kind of pulls on their experiences when they . . . when they formulate an opinion on something. So, if you can talk to more people about one thing, you can get different perspectives like that so.

Although Lucas seems to be talking about interactions in general, he acknowledges how the class discussion helped him understand the concept of literacy and the assignment better.

Like Lucas, Rosa, another bilingual student, also speaks approvingly about the class discussions: “I think that was helpful too just to see, like, what everybody took from the book and what was important to them and then being able to apply that to the writing. It was important.” Rosa’s experience shows that class discussions helped them connect the readings with their experiences and the narrative they wanted to write. Moreover, William, an English monolingual student, also finds class discussions productive and enjoyable: “I have enjoyed and benefited from the class discussions as it is a fantastic way to hear different perspectives from various students. Being able to hear various

thoughts and feelings toward a reading is particularly helpful.” These opinions about class discussion, which was an integral part of cross-cultural conversation, show that students were able to learn from each other’s experiences.

Group Work: Working and Learning Together

Another important way to foster cross-cultural conversation was group work where students worked in small groups of three and four to brainstorm topics and outline the draft. The purpose of group activities was to provide a less intimidating space for students to interact and learn from different literacy experiences they bring to the classroom. Both linguistic and gender diversity was maintained in each group. Twelve out of 15 students found this activity fruitful whereas three of them did not. Martin, a bilingual student who identifies English as a second language, speaks approvingly of the group work: “I got to see what my other classmates were writing. So, I got an idea. I got an understanding about how to write. Yeah [it] definitely helped.” Although his response seems to focus more on the writing process, it does acknowledge the usefulness of group activities. Likewise, Olivia talks about why she found conversations in groups beneficial: “When I am able to work in a group and talk amongst other students, it’s definitely helpful for me at least just because I can elaborate on what I am thinking and make sure I am headed in the right direction.” She talks about Aisha who, according to her, was using a timeline to develop her narrative as she was planning to “take a story from her past and compare it to her present.” Olivia found it useful for her narrative. Whereas Aisha, a bilingual student, focuses on the exchange of ideas and experiences during the group activities: “I really enjoyed the group work because it helped me, like, to get other people’s perspective on when I am writing.” Yet another English monolingual student Noah finds group activities helpful: “Speaking of my groupmates, working with them has been truly fascinating as I had never worked in groups like this before and while group work was less common than individual work, group is still a major reason I have a halfway decent essay to turn in today.” These representative voices show that students found group activities useful in different ways. For some it helped in the writing process while for others it offered a different perspective on literacy.

However, three students did not find it as helpful. Yen, a multilingual student who wrote about growing up in a bilingual family and developing multilingual skills at high school, did not find the small group activity encouraging. He says, it was “at the class discussions [where] I’d do a lot more than just four people discussing in a group.” He explains why his group didn’t work well: “I feel like with four people, sometimes the others may want to not talk much, and it’s left with dead silence.” This is an indication that all collaborative activities may not always go well. Overall, the findings indicate that a vast majority of students found group work useful.

Peer Review: Complementing Each Other

Peer review was conducted in the fourth week when the students came with a hard copy of their literacy narrative draft. I had assigned readings that explained the rationale and purpose of peer review with some practical suggestions on giving and receiving feedback. At the beginning of the class, I explained the process and expectations of peer review and why it is more than editing.

I collected the reviewed drafts and offered my feedback which I discussed during the one-on-one conference that followed.

All 15 students found peer review useful and productive. Two English monolingual students Isabella and Emma have similar views on how their writing process benefitted from peer review. Isabella “gained a lot more confidence in the essay” as one of her peers “gave [her] a lot of constructive criticism that [she] needed to hear” and gave her “some advice and also helped [her] understand what needed to be added to the essay in order to get [her] entire story out there.” Although Isabella does not elaborate on what kind of constructive criticism she received and she seems to have conflated “review” and “editing,” it is evident that she found the peer review helpful. As for Emma, who always thought peer reviews as an essential part of writing, not “having another person’s perspective on something” is to be “completely blind to some mistakes.”

While Isabella and Emma mostly focus on how peer review helped them in the writing process, Veronica finds others’ perspectives more important. When asked if peer review helped her understand the assignment and the concept of literacy better, she says: “Um, I think so because that’s where I got other perspectives from reading others’ essays and writing and I think it does help because that just makes you see how other people write, um, how other people put ideas together.” These are a few representative voices of the students who found peer review helpful in different ways.

Readings: Widening the Horizon

Readings played a crucial role in promoting cross-cultural understanding and border-crossings in the classroom. Besides the topics on rhetorical situations and the writing process, I had assigned literacy narratives from diverse backgrounds from the textbook and outside such as Suresh Canagarajah’s “Fortunate Traveller,” Ghanashyam Sharma’s “Cultural Schemas and Pedagogical Uses of Literacy Narratives,” and student writing samples from the previous semester. The purpose of these readings was to encourage students to be familiar with culturally, linguistically, and geographically different literacy experiences. They wrote responses to some of the readings whereas others were discussed in the class. I made sure that each reading was followed by a class discussion where students shared main takeaways and connected them to their literacy narratives.

Twelve out of 15 students found the readings helpful in making sense of their literacy experiences and transitioning to writing their own narratives, and several of them recalled the specific titles that stood out to them. While one student did not find it useful, two of them did not mention anything about it. Rosa reflects on the usefulness of readings as follows: “The various literacy narratives we read helped because they were about a variety of experiences involving reading and writing. Not one was the same, and that helped give me direction as to what I could write about.” Rosa’s experience shows how readings from diverse backgrounds help students to figure out what they want to write about and broaden their understanding of literacy as well. Likewise, Veronica had a similar experience with the readings: “The readings we did in the class of other literacy narratives were the most helpful. It exposed me to this new genre in a fun and entertaining way. I also liked seeing examples of this writing to shape my own similar to theirs.”

Noah, who wrote about learning the language of computer programming and coding, finds many of the readings “particularly important to [his] ability to write said narrative” and “to better understand what was being asked.” Noah’s take on readings is more concerned about how to write a personal narrative than the actual content that would change his perception of literacy. But still the fact that he finds the readings useful and that his narrative goes beyond the narrow concept of literacy gives credence to his opinion.

Francisco, who wrote about musical literacy, specifies the topics that he found most useful:

Specifically, the one that stood out to me the most had to be “Draw Within the Lines” that helped me see how he turned his problem around and decided to go back to school after dropping out of high school at first. Readings and all assignments that were given helped us all see the big picture for me personally. I really liked reading many of the assignments like “Rebel Music,” due to the fact that I relate so much to it . . . how he would listen to different music than everyone his age.

Yet there was one student who did not find the readings useful. James, an English monolingual student who wrote about his passion for music and learning to write lyrics, describes himself as an independent writer. He says: “I do not think that the readings or the responses helped me that much because I am less of a reading type of learner and more of an interactive learner.” The remaining two participants didn’t say anything explicitly about the role of readings in their writing. All in all, 12 out of 15 participants found readings useful in different ways to write their literacy narratives. Given the variety of readings assigned and the discussions that followed, the participants were involved in a cross-cultural conversation with the texts, the classmates, and the instructor.

Overall, all 15 students found collaborative activities that promote cross-cultural conversations useful to develop a nuanced understanding of literacy and translating that understanding to their narratives on some levels. However, English-only speakers sometimes find it difficult to relate to the readings and cross-cultural experiences. In some cases, readings and activities that focus on cultural and linguistic differences might give a false impression that differences are more valuable and desirable than authentic literacy experiences. While this is something that all writing instructors should be mindful of, the findings of this study do not refute the claim that cross-cultural conversations and translanguaging approach to literacy enhance a more complex understanding of literacy among English monolingual and bi- and multilingual students. Yet we should be careful not to overemphasize the differences to the extent that make English monolingual students feel alienated from the learning process and reproduce another version of orthodoxy.

LITTLE NARRATIVES

Another major factor that contributed to the change in students’ perception of literacy was the use of little narratives that would counter the totalizing master narrative of literacy as an autonomous set of skills that leads to success. With a focus on local, individual, and contextualized literacy experiences narrated as situated anecdotes with rich descriptive details, these little narratives defy the abstract and generalized literacy myth: “the belief, articulated in educational, civic, religious, and

other settings, contemporary and historical, that the acquisition of literacy is a necessary precursor to and invariably results in economic development, democratic practice, cognitive enhancement, and upward social mobility” (Graff and Duffy 32).

In doing so, what Alexander calls “little cultural narratives” align with translingual literacy that values local and individual literacy practices as an important resource that students bring to the classroom (“Successes”). A translingual approach to literacy “aims to contribute to a necessary shift in literacy studies by treating heterogeneity in contact zones as the norm rather than the exception” (Alvarez 19). The literacy narrative assignment in this study encouraged students to draw on their authentic literacy experiences regardless of their cultural and linguistic backgrounds and it is reflected in the diversity of themes and titles covered in the students’ narratives. Thus, both little cultural narratives and translingual approaches to literacy go hand in hand questioning the totalizing ideologies of literacy and monolingualism.

This assignment draws from the work of Kara Poe Alexander, who uses Lyotard’s concept of “grand” and “little” narratives to interpret literacy myth as a master narrative of “literacy-equals-success” which is “orthodox and legitimate” and proposes little cultural narratives that are “unsanctioned, artistic, and imaginative” and “less generalizable and more individualized and situated” as the alternative (“Successes” 611; see Daniell as well). The assignment encouraged students to focus on situated anecdotes, offer rich details and reflect on their meanings rather than produce “common ‘success stories”” (Assignment Prompt). It is important because students’ individualized experiences in the narratives “allow us to glimpse additional ways students frame their literacy experiences and contribute to a more comprehensive view of students’ literacy histories” (Alexander, “Successes” 625). Such alternative ways of representing literacy experiences and defining literate selves have a decolonial potential as well. Alexander reads Malala Yousafzai’s autobiography as an alternative narrative of literacy that “attempts to decolonize the claims the West has on literacy, language, culture, and identity by generating pluriversal understandings of values of these issues” (“Forwarding Literacy” 204).

However, little narratives may not always dismantle the master narrative because “students have varied literate identities” that are intricately “connected to [the master narrative of] success” and the little narratives “both reinforce and challenge it” (Alexander, “Successes” 625; see Daniell 404). The findings of this study also attest to that. 13 out of 15 students used little narratives in the form of anecdotes with descriptive details, while all 15 narratives tell some form of success story. Many of the anecdotes fit into Alexander’s taxonomy of little narratives like hero, victim, child prodigy, warrior, and ambassador (“Successes”; “Forwarding Literacy”). However, my focus here is on how students share the moments of individualized experiences with rich details that weaken the grand narrative of literacy and align with the ethos of translingual literacy as well. Although the following snippets of little narratives used by Francisco, William, and Veronica in their literacy narratives have different contexts and they come from different positionalities, they have one thing in common—they offer a rare insight into their literacy experience and literate selves, which a narrative that perpetuates the master narrative of literacy cannot do.

Francisco talks in his literacy narrative about his school music teacher, who immensely

influenced his attitude toward music:

Years after 5th grade I had 3 teachers one really stood out to me, Mr. Frank. He was different although he was a good math, reading, and writing teacher, he was one of the best music teachers. He was not the school's music teacher, but every Friday he would bring many of his different instruments to class. One that I remember playing was an African tongue drum, a wooden box that made the most beautiful sounds when hitting specific spots. On one of those days, I had a mini performance during recess, while all the kids went to the playground I would stay and play. Mr. Frank heard me playing and immediately he grabbed his piccolo and we began to jam out just for fun, no sheet music just playing what you felt. That feeling I had I will never forget. I felt joy, and immediately a group formed around us in the classroom and I could feel this sense of bliss throughout the room. Music had become a part of my life.

Francisco describes how he was motivated by the music teacher during his formative years and how those experiences contributed to his initiation into music. Although it was an informal activity, an impromptu performance during the recess, the anecdote has a clear context and details of what happened when, where, and who did what. The last two sentences show how important this experience was for the development of his literate self.

Unlike Francisco's childhood experience at school, William's cross-cultural experience of visiting France during a summer holiday offers a different example of acquiring literacy in a foreign language. In his literacy narrative, William describes a dinner in a restaurant in France as follows:

At dinner as we were looking over the menu and when the waiter came over to ask what we wanted to drink I said "je voudrais L'eau" which translates to I would like water please. I didn't even think about using French, it just flowed out of my mouth naturally. Jason and I were both able to order our entire meals in French. Jason's parents looked at us like we were crazy when the meal was over. They were enthusiastic that I would be able to take my learning of the language back home with me.

William's experience of being in a different country and learning a new language is central to the narrative where he discusses how his visit to France changed his attitude to language and culture and his outlook to the world. Instead of using abstract generalizations, William shares a situated event that shows how he learned French as a part of the cross-cultural experience and how proud he was of his newly acquired bilingual skills.

Moreover, Veronica's challenging yet rewarding experience of learning English as a second language in Mexico before she came to the US with her family comes from a different vantage point of a non-native speaker of English learning in a relatively resource constrained place. Veronica vividly recalls her childhood experience in her literacy narratives:

As my journey in English learning continued, I remember vividly the first time the teacher took us to the school library. At the elementary school I attended in Mexico there were no libraries except for the local city library. I had never been in a room full of books, and I thought that I would never be able to choose just one, because there were infinite options. I chose the book titled *Dizzy* by author Cathy Cassidy. It had a red Volkswagen van on the

cover which was decorated with colorful flowers and a bright pink background. I struggled to read the word filled pages but I promised myself I had to finish even if I didn't understand much of it. I understood maybe half of what the book was about. It was about a girl whose parents would travel often in their van. I believe my stride to finish this book inspired my love for reading.

Veronica's early initiation to the world of letters at an elementary school in Mexico looks like a typical story of a child's visit to a library. But this anecdote stands out for at least two reasons. First, unlike a run-of-the-mill success story, it gives a clear sense of time, place, and people with vivid descriptive details. Second, even though Veronica seemed to have a normal initiation to literacy, later she found her English literacy inadequate and her early years at school socially, academically, and emotionally challenging in the US. Her literacy narrative aligns with a success story where she talks about how she was looked down on by her classmates because of her accented English at first and how she worked hard to be able to help them with their assignments after a few years. In this sense, her narrative reproduces the master narrative of literacy to an extent but the presence of the anecdotes where she appears as a victim, an outsider, a warrior, and a hero weakens the master narrative and provides space for her authentic literacy experience.

“In fact, translingual literacy that informs the literacy narrative assignment in this study encouraged students to draw on their experiences without having to conform to the narrow concept of literacy. Their experiences and ideas were treated as resources and not as aberrations, and they were encouraged to listen to each other’s literacy experiences that mutually enriched their understanding. It was due to the cross-cultural conversations and translingual orientation to literacy along with an emphasis on little narratives of literacy that the students’ perception of literacy changed, and they developed a nuanced understanding of it.”

In sum, such little narratives based on the individualized experiences and situated anecdotes with concrete details can resist the grand narratives of literacy as success that are “most often told abstractly, without reference to a specific time, place, or instance in the student’s life” (Alexander, “Successes” 616). As the findings show, 13 out of 15 students have used some form of little narratives where they rely on specific events and personalized experiences associated with literacy and their literate selves. In doing so, they also reinforce the translingual notion of literacy that embraces differences in individual literacy experience and defies the literacy grand narrative. In fact, translingual literacy that informs the literacy narrative assignment in this study encouraged students to draw on their experiences without having to conform to the narrow concept of literacy. Their experiences and ideas were treated as resources and not as aberrations, and they were encouraged to listen to each other’s literacy experiences that mutually enriched their understanding. It was due to the cross-cultural conversations and translingual orientation to literacy along with an emphasis on little narratives of literacy that the students’ perception of literacy changed, and they developed a

nuanced understanding of it.

CONCLUSION

This qualitative case study explored how cross-cultural conversations, little narratives, and a translingual approach to literacy in the literacy narrative assignment in a regular first-year writing (English 101) classroom work together to resist the grand narrative of literacy that is grounded in monolingual and monocultural ideologies and to promote a complex understanding of literacy among students. The findings show that both English monolingual and bi- and multilingual students actively participated in cross-cultural exchanges through collaborative activities such as class discussion, group work, peer review, and readings from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds that turned the classroom into borderlands where different literacy practices and literate selves interacted and informed students' understanding of literacy. The instructor, as an international graduate student from a South Asian cultural background who learned English as a foreign language, both facilitated and participated in these interactions with the students and became a border crosser like them. Although some English monolingual students sometimes found it difficult to relate to the readings and cross-cultural references, the overall response of all eight monolingual students was positive. The usefulness of cross-cultural interaction is best reflected in the response of two students.

Olivia shares her positive experience of interacting with the classmates who had different literacy experiences than hers: "Being able to hear other people's stories also made me appreciate what I did have. So many people were second language learners and others were people who struggled with many different things involving reading and writing." Unlike Veronica, Olivia did not speak other languages, nor did she have any experience of living in a different culture, but she found others' experiences of struggle inspiring. It encouraged her to introspect and identify her strengths. Likewise, Veronica explains how her understanding of literacy changed after the interactions with her classmates. She realized that "everyone struggles or may struggle with learning, and it doesn't necessarily have to be you learning in a second language. It can be your native languages as well, and you're trying to understand it."

Along with the cross-cultural interactions and use of little narratives, the translingual orientation to literacy that values all literacy experiences and practices as a resource for writing played an equally important role. The instructor's commitment to "make those resources for learning salient, avoid suppressing diversity, and encourage students' collaborative work in turning these resources into affordances" encouraged students to draw on their authentic literacy experiences and transcend the narrow definition of literacy (Canagarajah, *Transnational* 101). Future research can and should further explore the decolonial potential of translingual literacy, as foreseen by Ellen Cushman, "to hasten the process of revealing and potentially transforming colonial matrices of power that maintain hierarchies of knowledge and languages" (235). Writing studies as a field should continue to call out the false binaries that project Western culture as rational, superior, and trans-historical whereas "the other cultures are different [only] in the sense that they are unequal, in fact inferior, by nature"

(Quijano 174). This is where the root of subalternization of “other” language and literacy practices lies, and translingual literacy can be a way forward to the liberatory options where “difference does not necessarily imply the unequal nature of the ‘other’... nor the hierarchical inequality nor the social inferiority of the other” (Quijano177). Treating differences as resources paves the way for border thinking “that can help us moving to sustain a vision—a pluri-versal and not a uni-versal vision” (Mignolo 499). This should be the future direction of language and literacy practices in college writing classrooms.

NOTES

¹ Protocol Number 1808828865.

² All participants' names are pseudonyms.

³ Quotations from all participants' written artifacts are presented in their original, unedited form. Transcriptions of interviews and one-on-one conferences privilege individuals' original speech over correctness; wording and structure has not been changed, but punctuation has been added for reader clarity.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank the student participants for sharing their work and experience with me. I am thankful to Aimee Mapes for her support throughout this project. My thanks are due to Shyam Sharma, Shelley Rodrigo, and the editorial team and two anonymous reviewers at *LiCS* for their feedback in different stages of this work.

APPENDIX I

Literacy Narrative Assignment Prompt

Project-I: Literacy Narrative

[100 points/ 25% of Final Course Grade]

A literacy narrative is primarily a personal story about one's experience of learning to read and write. However, the concept of literacy goes beyond reading and writing to encompass other learning experiences that are considered as different types of literacies such as music, dance, painting, sports, technology, etc. Since literacy experience means different things to different people, you are not expected to come up with identical narratives. The primary focus of this assignment is on your reading and writing experiences that have had a profound impact on your 'self' and 'worldview'. However, using the term literacy in a broad sense, this assignment allows you to draw on other significant moments and experiences of learning, which may not be limited to reading and writing. Like any narrative, literacy narrative also revolves around people, places, objects, events, and self. To begin with, you should try to get to the specific context and tease out as much detail as possible using journalistic questions: what, when, where, who, how and why.

Since literacy is embedded in social, cultural, and economic structures, it is not enough to just recall and narrate the experiences. As an effective story, your narrative will more than entertain the readers by revealing insights, beliefs, values you or your family, community hold about various aspects of literacy such as reading, writing, language, class, culture, identity, and so on. You are encouraged to engage in conversations in groups to exchange your literacy experiences with each other and be familiar with the different modes of literacy in diverse social, economic, and cultural contexts. Such conversations allow you to understand the broad and complex nature of literacy which is often reduced to an act of reading and writing.

In exploring the many dimensions of literacy, you are free to use all types of resources such as family histories, stories, ritual/cultural practices, festivals, and celebrations, native language, dialect, colloquialism, and so on. The uniqueness of your experiences is an asset that you should take pride in. While you will use the techniques of both 'showing' and 'telling' throughout the narrative, you will prioritize showing over telling. You will describe scenes, people, places, and actions by using concrete nouns, action words (vivid verbs), sensory details (taste, touch, sound, smell, and sight) to go beyond the use of adjectives and adverbs only. You will use a combination of narration and dialogue along with a meaningful reflection to find what these experiences mean to you. In addition, you will critically analyze, question, and comment on your literacy experiences. You can also quote from other relevant texts you have read as long as they help you make a point or support your claims. Finally, you should resist the temptation to create a common 'success story' where acquiring literacy is projected as a key to a successful life. Instead, focus on the anecdotes situated in specific contexts, offer lively and compelling details followed by reflection and critical questionings.

Format Requirements

- An original and engaging title
- Times New Roman 12-point font with 1-inch margins
- Between 4-6 double-spaced pages
- MLA format
- First draft: A hard copy for peer review
- Final draft: An electronic copy in the assignment folder on D2L

Course Objectives

After completing this project, and its associated course module, you will have made progress towards the following student learning objectives:

- 1D. Read in ways that contribute to their rhetorical knowledge as writers.
- 3B. Produce multiple revisions on global and local levels.
- 3C. Suggest useful global and local revisions to other writers.
- 3E. Evaluate and act on peer and instructor feedback to revise their texts.
- 4A. Follow appropriate conventions for grammar, punctuation, and spelling, through practice in composing and revising.

WORKS CITED

- Alexander, Kara Poe. "Forwarding Literacy in *I Am Malala*: Resisting Commodification through Cooperation, Context, and Kinship." *College English*, vol. 81, no. 3, 2019, pp. 183–213.
- . "Successes, Victims, and Prodigies: 'Master' and 'Little' Cultural Narratives in the Literacy Narrative Genre." *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 62, no. 4, 2011, pp. 608–33.
- Alvarez, Steven. "Literacy." *Decolonizing Rhetoric and Composition Studies: New Latinx Keywords for Theory and Pedagogy*, edited by Iris D. Ruiz and Raúl Sánchez, Palgrave Macmillan, 2016, pp. 17–29, <https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-52724-0>.
- Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. 4th ed., Aunt Lute Books, 2012.
- Aguiar, Christian. "'What Work Is': Writing about Work in First-Year Composition." *Teaching English in the Two-Year College*, vol. 46, no. 2, 2018, pp. 147–52.
- Byrd, Antonio, Jordan Hayes, and Nicole Turnipseed. "Against Autonomous Literacies: Extending the Work of Brian V. Street: Introduction to the Special Issue." *Literacy in Composition Studies*, vol. 8, no. 2, pp. I–XXI, <https://doi.org/10.21623/1.8.2.1>.
- Canagarajah, A. Suresh. "Introduction." *Literacy as Translingual Practice: Between Communities and Classrooms*, edited by A. Suresh Canagarajah, Routledge, 2013, pp. 1–10.
- . "Negotiating Translingual Literacy: An Enactment." *Research in the Teaching of English*, vol. 48, no. 1, 2013, pp. 40–67.
- . *Transnational Literacy Autobiographies as Translingual Writing*. Routledge, 2020.
- Carpenter, William, and Bianca Falbo. "Literacy, Identity, and the 'Successful' Student Writer." *Identity Papers: Literacy and Power in Higher Education*, edited by Bronwyn T. Williams, UP of Colorado / Utah State UP, 2006, pp. 92–108.
- Corkery, Caleb. "Literacy Narratives and Confidence Building in the Writing Classroom." *Journal of Basic Writing*, vol. 24, no. 1, 2005, pp. 48–67.
- Cushman, Ellen. "Translingual and Decolonial Approaches to Meaning Making." *College English*, vol. 78, no. 3, 2016, pp. 234–42.
- Cushman, Ellen, and Chalon Emmons. "Contact Zones Made Real." *School's Out! Bridging Out-of-School Literacies with Classroom Practice*, edited by Glynda A. Hull and Katherine Schultz, Teachers College Press, 2001, pp. 203–40.
- Daniell, Beth. "Narratives of Literacy: Connecting Composition to Culture." *A Usable Past: CCC at 50: Part 1*, special issue of *College Composition and Communication*, edited by Joseph Harris, vol. 50, no. 3, 1999, pp. 393–410.
- Davis, Seth E. "Shade: Literacy Narratives at Black Gay Pride." *Literacy in Composition Studies*, vol. 7, no. 2, 2019, pp. 56–89, <https://doi.org/10.21623/1.7.2.4>.
- Gee, James Paul. "Critical Issues: Reading and New Literacy Studies: Reframing the National Academy of Sciences Report on Reading." *Journal of Literacy Research*, vol. 31, no. 3, 1999, pp. 355–74.
- Giroux, Henry A. *Border Crossings: Cultural Workers and the Politics of Education*. 2nd ed., Routledge, 2005.
- . "Border Pedagogy and the Politics of Postmodernism." *Social Text*, vol. 28, 1991, pp. 51–67.

- Graff, Harvey J., and John Duffy. "Literacy Myths." *Literacies and Language Education*, 3rd ed., edited by Brian V. Street and Stephen May, Springer, 2017, pp. 32–42.
- Hall, Anne-Marie, and Christopher Minnix. "Beyond the Bridge Metaphor: Rethinking the Place of the Literacy Narrative in the Basic Writing Curriculum." *Journal of Basic Writing*, vol. 31, no. 2, 2012, pp. 57–82.
- Harris, Joseph. "Negotiating the Contact Zone." *Journal of Basic Writing*, vol. 14, no. 1, 1995, pp. 27–42.
- Hernández, Ellie, and Gloria Anzaldúa. "Re-thinking Margins and Borders: An Interview with Gloria Anzaldúa." *Discourse*, vol. 18, no. 1-2, 1995-96, pp. 7–15.
- hooks, bell. *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*. Routledge, 1994.
- Lu, Min-Zhan, and Bruce Horner. "Translingual Literacy and Matters of Agency." *Literacy as Translingual Practice: Between Communities and Classrooms*, edited by A. Suresh Canagarajah, Routledge, 2013, pp. 26–38.
- Liotard, Jean-François. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. Trans. by Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1984.
- Matsuda, Paul Kei. "The Myth of Linguistic Homogeneity in U. S. College Composition." *Cross-Language Relations in Composition*, edited by Bruce Horner, Min-Zhan Lu, and Paul Kei Matsuda, Southern Illinois UP, 2010, pp. 81–96.
- McCook, Nora. "Literacy Contact Zones: A Framework for Research." *Literacy in Composition Studies*, vol. 4, no. 1, 2016, pp. 50–72, <https://doi.org/10.21623/1.4.1.4>.
- Merriam, Sharan B., and Elizabeth J. Tisdell. *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*. 4th ed., Jossey-Bass, 2016.
- Mignolo, Walter D. "Delinking: The Rhetoric of Modernity, the Logic of Coloniality and the Grammar of Decoloniality." *Cultural Studies*, vol. 21, no. 2–3, 2007, pp. 449–514.
- Mignolo, Walter D., and Madina V. Tlostanova. "Theorizing from the Borders: Shifting to Geo- and Body-Politics of Knowledge." *European Journal of Social Theory*, vol. 9, no. 2, 2006, pp. 205–21.
- Nickoson, Lee. "Revisiting Teacher Research." *Writing Studies Research in Practice: Methods and Methodologies*, edited by Lee Nickoson and Mary P. Sheridan, Southern Illinois UP, 2012, pp. 101–12.
- O'Connor, Mary Helen. "Teaching Refugee Students with the DALN." *The Archive as Classroom: Pedagogical Approaches to Digital Archive of Literacy Narratives*, edited by Kathryn Comer, Michael Harker, and Ben McCorkle, Computers and Composition Digital P / Utah State UP, 2019, www.ccdigitalpress.org/book/archive-as-classroom/.
- Pratt, Mary Louise. "Arts of the Contact Zone." *Profession*, 1991, pp. 33–40.
- Quijano, Aníbal. "Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality." *Cultural Studies*, vol. 21, no. 2-3, 2007, pp. 168–78.
- Saldana, Johnny. *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. 3rd ed., Sage, 2016.
- Sharma, Ghanashyam. "Cultural Schemas and Pedagogical Uses of Literacy Narratives: A Reflection on My Journey with Reading and Writing." *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 67, no. 1, 2015, pp. 104–10.

- Soliday, Mary. "Translating Self and Difference through Literacy Narratives." *College English*, vol. 56, no. 5, 1994, pp. 511–26.
- Street, Brian V. "The New Literacy Studies: Guest Editorial." *Journal of Research in Reading*, vol.16, no. 2, 1993, pp. 81–97.