Hosting and healing: A framework for critical media literacy pedagogy

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, through an exploration into our experiences as educators concerned with marginalized populations of learners in secondary and post-secondary settings, we argue for a pedagogy that brings together the realities of 21st century literacy practices with critical media literacy. We present a framework for teaching critical media literacy that addresses the complex facets of equity in 21st century literacy practices.

Keywords: *critical media literacy, 21st century literacies, equity*.

If it were possible to define generally the mission of education, one could say that its fundamental purpose is to ensure that all students benefit from learning in ways that allow them to participate fully in public, community, and economic life.
(Cazden, Cope, Fairclough, and Gee, 1996, p. 60)

New and emerging technologies are becoming more and more accessible, shaping the way we communicate, learn, work, spend leisure time, and interact with each other. As such, new technologies fundamentally affect the ways knowledge is constructed and disseminated. This new means of producing knowledge can be viewed in two fundamental ways. On one hand the popularization of technologies gives access to all. We have witnessed these phenomena in both Brazil and in the United States, whose educational reality we know because they are our home countries. Even in poor urban communities almost everyone owns a cell phone, which opens numerous opportunities for sharing information and affords a range of possibilities for teaching in schools. However, on the other hand, the participatory nature of these new and emerging technologies necessitates a critical turn toward advocacy of individuals who are victimized through such media. This shadow of new technologies is rarely addressed as a component of media literacy education. Consequently, spaces for healing where students can give voice to their experiences within the shared productivity of new media are crucial. Thus, in this paper, we aim to propose a pedagogical framework for critical media literacy that speaks to the intellectual opportunities of new media as well as arms students against the oppression that new media can perpetuate.

21st Century Literacies

Lankshear and Knobel (2003) presented a world of new literacies as one grounded in fractured social practices that occur primarily on the margins of school. In the early writing around theories of new literacies, much of the focus was on illuminating the practices of students as a way to both legitimize and invite new forms of literacy into classroom instruction. In recent years, the portability of technology has lessened concerns about access and heightened attention to the refractive and connected nature of new media. Discussions about the digital epistemology of 21st century literacies have tended to focus on new media

tools, such as apps, that expand digital literacy practices (Beach & Castek, 2016). For instance, in their research over the ways apps could be utilized to enhance classroom instruction, O'Brien and Van Deventer (2016) referred to the explosion of apps as an "applification" of literacy practices. Even so, the integration of digital literacy into classroom instruction tends to be dominated by the teacher and is superficial in application (Yagelski, 2012).

Literacy instruction is not simply about basic skills of functional literacy. To read and write effectively in contemporary society requires (new) literacies that include practices such as browsing, navigating, analysing, researching, evaluating, searching, comparing, accessing information, separating, communicating, reviewing, collaborating, creating, engaging, interacting, remixing, and many others that are needed to participate actively in this changing world (Guzzetti & Lesley, 2016). Further, the way we teach literacy today must be relevant today and adapt for tomorrow. Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, Castek and Henry (2017) notes that teaching literacy tomorrow "will be defined by even newer technologies that have yet to appear and even newer discourses and social practices that will be created to meet future needs" (p. 1150). In many respects, 21st century literacy skills have been defined by new media. Numerous studies have been conducted extolling the possibilities of using new media to teach 21st century skills (e.g., Kist, 2010), and yet new media has not fully been embraced as a facet of literacy education in school settings.

The report of the World Economic Forum (2015) distilled necessary skills of the 21st-century into the following three broad categories: (1) foundational literacies (e.g., literacy and numeracy, scientific literacy, information and communication technologies (ICT) literacy, financial literacy and cultural and civic literacy), (2) competencies (e.g., critical thinking, creativity, communication and collaboration), and (3) character qualities (e.g., persistence, adaptability, curiosity and initiative, leadership, and social and cultural awareness).

New media, however, is not specifically identified in this list.

It is clear that education offered in schools needs to meet the contemporary demands of new technologies. However, technology itself does not necessarily improve teaching and learning and will not be the solution to the acute socio-economic divisions that separate those who have access from those who do not have access to mainstream social and cultural goods

(Kellner & Share, 2007a). As Kellner (2002) stated, "without proper resources, pedagogy and educational practices, technology might be an obstacle or burden to genuine learning and will probably increase rather than overcome existing divisions of power, cultural capital, and wealth" (p. 156). Kellner warns of the need for a critical consciousness to accompany instruction about new media.

As we have worked with different populations of learners in Brazil and the United States, we have come to believe that 21st century literacy skills should be predicated upon a framework of critical media literacy. Further, this framework must attend to the deeper philosophical issues often ignored in discussions about the design of new technologies and the skills needed to navigate them.

Media literacy standards tend to focus on the goal of students learning to communicate and act using a variety of modalities. For example, The National Association for Media Literacy Education's core principles offer a framework for applying media literacy that include the following:

Media Literacy Education:

(1) requires active inquiry and critical thinking about the messages we receive and create;

(2) expands the concept of literacy (i.e., reading and writing) to include all forms of media;

(3) builds and reinforces skills for learners of all ages – like print literacy, those skills; necessitate integrated, interactive, and repeated practice;

(4) develops informed, reflective and engaged participants essential for a democratic society;

(5) recognizes that media are a part of culture and function as agents of socialization;

(6) affirms that people use their individual skills, beliefs and experiences to construct their own meanings from media messages. (NAMLE, 2016)

These principles capture expanding definitions of literacy, the socializing effect of media, the importance of critical thinking, and using all forms of media to foster a deliberative democracy. However, the principles fall short of teaching the depth of "beyond the screen" (Aguilera, 2017) agendas of new media users, developing awareness of the potential of new media to reinforce deleterious stereotypes and perpetuate abuses of power as part of "socialization," or examining the need for teaching advocacy. Buried beneath the NAMLE Core Principles, the "Implications for Practice" do reference issues of representation and the potential of fostering negative stereotypes (NAMLE, 2016). However, these recommendations do not address

the risk of violence to youth perpetuated through social media and the need for a pedagogy of empowerment. The principles and implications do not discuss addressing ethical, legal, or safety issues. In summary, the principles soft pedal the potential victimization of new media users.

Critical Media Literacy

We live in a connected world in which lives and futures are increasingly created online (Alvermann & Hagood, 2000). Now more than ever schooling, education and literacies must address "reading and writing the world" (Freire, 1987) as new communities are merely a click away. A key component to becoming a "good" citizen is the extent to which individuals use media to advocate for themselves and others. Yet, navigating a media-rich world is challenging for youth and requires a complex understanding of literacy (e.g., Livingstone, 2004). Thus, teaching about critical media literacy is vitally important.

Baker-Bell, Stanbrough and Everett (2017) define critical media literacy as "the educational process that makes young people aware of the role that media play, both positively and problematically, in shaping social thought" (p. 139). Similarly, Kellner and Share (2007b) opine:

> [Critical media literacy] involves a multiperspectival critical inquiry, of popular culture and the cultural industries, that addresses issues of class, race, gender, sexuality, and power and also promotes the production of alternative counterhegemonic media. Media and information communication technology can be tools for empowerment when people who are most often marginalized or misrepresented in the mainstream media receive the opportunity to use these tools to tell their stories and express their concerns (p. 62).

Kellner and Share (2007a) also argue that schools should teach students "to learn from media, to resist media manipulation, and to use media materials in constructive ways" (p. 16). Watulak and Kinzer (2013) propose a framework for "critical digital literacies," that encompasses four elements: "understanding cultural, social, and historical contexts of technology use; critical thinking and analysis; reflective practice and facility with the functional skills and tools of digital technology production" (p. 128). Essentially, all of these theories of critical media literacy examine technology as a site for struggle where offline and online power structures created by individuals, institutions, and organizations collide.

The framework for critical media literacy pedagogy we are proposing builds on these theories to include an ethical examination of new media in which students are encouraged to analyze on screen, off screen, and "beyond the screen" dynamics of power (Aguilera, 2017, p. 13). The framework has six interconnected components that include: (1) multiliteracies and new technologies, (2) equity and access to technology, (3) examining multiple viewpoints and representation from the perspective of nondominant groups, (4) student-centered inquiry, (5) testimony and healing (telling one's story as part of the pedagogy), and (6) production/shared productivity and transformation. We believe each component of the framework is key to teaching critical media literacy. Moreover, we believe each component serves to "critically analyse relationships between media and audiences, information and power" (Kellner & Share, 2007a, p. 4). Taken together, these components interrogate the social stratification of knowledge, compartmentalization of resources and personal trauma that is often lived through new media.

Why a Pedagogy of Critical Media Literacy?

Over the last two decades, the field of literacy research has upended notions of what it means to compose and read text (Cazden, Cope, Fairclough, & Gee, 1996). With the advent of the Internet and Web 2.0 technologies, including the social intricacies of participatory media, literacy has moved far beyond traditional notions of language-based text (Lankshear & Knobel, 2007; Leu, 2000). Beginning with Cazden, et al.'s (1996) investigation into "Multiliteracies" as the negotiation of multiple linguistic and cultural positionalities, understanding what constitutes literacy pedagogy has become increasingly complex.

Cazden, Cope, Fairclough, and Gee were interested in "what was happening to meaning making and representation in the worlds of work, citizenship and personal life, which might prompt a reconsideration of our approaches to literacy teaching and learning" (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009, p. 166). Their concern was about the "growing significance of two 'multi' dimensions of 'literacies' in the plural—the multilingual and the multimodal" (p. 2). Early into the exploration of new literacies brought about research concerned with student access to cultural goods as well as their ability to critically interrogate a world of evolving information (e.g., Leu, Coiro, Castek, Hartman, Henry & Reinking, 2008). As part of this research, the classroom environment came under scrutiny as a site where students learn to dissect the veracity of information on the Internet and analyze the way media represents culture from teachers who are not prepared to deal with these complex concepts in the classroom (Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, Castek & Henry, 2017).

The digital landscape has continued to change rapidly. The normalization of social media, the nature of texts, and literacy practices of everyday life are evolving at an almost disorienting rate. In this landscape, critical media literacy is "an imperative for participatory democracy because new information communication technologies and a market-based media culture have fragmented, connected, converged, diversified, homogenized, flattened, broadened, and reshaped the world" (Kellner & Share, 2007b, p. 59). As educators we have to make clear to students that they are being conditioned by media culture and that there are layers to this culture that involve tailored advertising platforms, predatory websites and search engines. This requires a multiliteracy pedagogy that promotes equity and access, that hosts and heals. When talking about equity and social justice issues related to science education, Dawson (2017) emphasized the importance of what students learn outside of school and stated "If we believe that out-of-school science learning provides valuable educational, cultural, social and political opportunities, then we must take questions of equity seriously" (p. 539). The same can be said about literacy practices. Rethinking our literacy pedagogy requires looking in several directions at once. We are aware that media education needs to be established in schools and the following stories of hosting and healing around new media reinforce our need for a critical media literacy framework so schools can become an intellectually generative place. In the following vignettes, we draw from our work to illustrate the necessity of critical media literacy education in K-12 and post-secondary settings.

Vignette 1. *Carlos' Story of Hosting*

Carlos is a good example of the changes Brazil has been going through in the last few decades (even if the ordinary Brazilians would exclude him): the generation of poor people that have accessed school in the 80s and more recently the university. He is 33 years old and a preservice teacher. His father died when he was eleven months old. His mother, a woman who couldn't read and write, raised the children under difficult circumstances, for example hand washing the large family's laundry. The youngest of eleven children, Carlos is the only one who entered a university, studying to become a teacher. During the semester that he was my student, he was unable to work full-time but he managed to survive thanks to temporary jobs. Carlos was able

to attend the university because of a program called "Programa Universidade para Todos- PROUNI" meaning "University for all Program," which was created in 2004 by the federal government to expand access to higher education in the country. The course I taught in the first half of 2017 dealt with digital multimodal textual genres. Carlos did not have a computer at home. He owned a tablet, which did not allow him to perform all the task required as part of the course. For many of them, he needed the help of his colleagues and the University's computer labs. Despite his limitations, Carlos ended up being my "success story" in the course. To get an idea, we worked with google sites, and due to its limitations, he had to do his site three times. But it was very well done. When faced activities that presented barriers I realized that he might give up, so I started to contact him by email and through Facebook messenger, encouraging him to continue, guiding him through how to do the activities. Carlos wrote in his review of the course:

"[...] I have never thought that at this point of my live I could return to my childhood and learn and relearn how to start walking in this new world, the digital one. [...] This course changed my life, my way of thinking. Today, I know that a former cleaner, a son of an illiterate mother can be a teacher... Your care showed me that I could win, that in a private college there are wonderful professors that worry about the situation many students face every single day. You helped me a lot. I will recommend this course to all people I know, mainly the ones like me who are not so technological."

What does Carlos' story reveal about the need for critical media literacy? The belief that being born in the '80s and '90s automatically equates to being a digital native is not true. Similarly, access to the Internet should be taken into consideration when planning curriculum. Students born in the 1980's and 1990's can be very familiar with online entertainment and social networking, but most of them are not aware of all they could do using new technologies nor even how they are tracked by advertisers and exposed to conjecture presented as fact.

This is, therefore, our task as teachers: to introduce students critically to new media that are emerging and changing our way of practicing literacies. As Carlos stated: "I have never thought that at this point in my life I could return to my childhood and learn and relearn how to start walking in this new world, the digital one".

Even if Carlos didn't have the best tools to participate in the events the university was providing him, it was important for him to see that technology also serves to produce knowledge as well as to navigate social networks. At the university, Carlos completed tasks late and contemplated quitting because he experienced daily frustrations over lack of access to technology, which is a common reality for Brazilians. When he wrote about his experience in the course, he described having learned, "things I could use in my academic life, and in my personal life, in the future as a

teacher, tools that I know today, right, that I can use, that I had access to". This learning was like an awakening for Carlos.

Carlos' story also gives us the opportunity to rethink the way we are preparing new teachers. With the increasing devaluation of teachers in Brazil, profiles like Carlos' will become more and more common. It is from this reality that we must work; it is in this context that we must think about transforming pedagogy. Giving Carlos the opportunity to tell his own story helped us to understand his background and his beliefs and perspectives as a member of a nondominant group. In this sense, "Teaching for critical inquiry is a necessity" (Alvermann, 2017, p. 335). Curricula that gives account to critical media literacy based on critical inquiry should be on the agenda of policymakers. In the case of Brazil, there is a long journey to be traveled toward the enactment of critical media literacy.

Vignette 2. *Cameron James' Story of Healing*

During his senior year of high school Cameron James, a high school student in the United States, self-published a book of poetry (2017). In his poetry, he captured the social and intellectual undulations of his life as an African-American adolescent seeking a path for his future. His poetry dealt with themes of love, heartbreak, betrayal, childhood, racism, family, friendship, and poverty from his lived experiences of them. Cameron described his poetry as "raw," nonacademic writing, but extremely important for his development as a writer.

In the midst of this collection was one poem he titled "Exposed," which was about his experience having a nude picture of himself circulated around the school. He wrote:

> *Exposed I was*
> *Pics all up on the internet.*
> *I was just a dumb young kid*
> *I didn't think*
> *She'd do me like that.*
> *Embarrassed I was.*
> *And even til this day*
> *Got teased everyday about these nudes.*
> *It was just a mistake!!*
> *I hate hearing about that shit,*
> *But it doesn't hurt as much.*
> *Her head and apologies still*
> *Couldn't heal the hurt. (p. 83)*

The poem is filled with anger and regret in the midst of a deep humiliation. Cameron had no one to confide in about the experience. A few years later, he used writing to capture his pain and make sense of the events.

As I pondered this poem tucked in the middle of his book, I wondered if he understood the legal and long-term implications of "spreadable" media (Jenkins, Ford & Green, 2013). Did he know this act was not just humiliating but also illegal? When his book was published and distributed around the same school where the nude picture of him had been circulated via text

messages, was he able to reclaim some of his dignity? There are countless stories of adolescents being victimized through social media in school, yet this victimization is rarely discussed in the classroom. Cameron's poem could be a powerful text for students to examine and reflect over their own experiences with new media.

Cameron's story happens every day in middle schools and high schools across the United States. The stories of adolescents "sexting" nude photos to one another are not new. Yet, somewhere in this unbridled digital freedom is the aftermath of living with a lifetime of participating in pornography and the culpability of an educational system that is laser-focused on verbocentric literacy tasks in spite of the multimodal media swirling around adolescents. Like Carlos' story, Cameron's story highlights the need for concrete examples of oppression and instruction in digital media use.

Reading and Writing as Tools for Fostering a Motivated and Competent Citizenship

Universal access to education is a right in Brazil since the Federal Constitution of 1988, which establishes: I – equal conditions of access and permanence in school; and, VII – a guarantee of standards of quality (Constitution of Brazil, Art. 206, I and VII, 1988). Since then, many policies and programs have been developed by distinct spheres of the government to overcome the barriers that obstruct the digital education of Brazilian children and adolescents. While Carlos' testimony is evidence of these efforts, it also highlights that the country is still facing inequality and a poverty level that affects its society as a whole. Brazilian students have experienced a model of schooling that uses privileged groups as a reference, which means that the wealth of different social groups is disregarded and not taken into consideration when developing curriculum. The same occurs with access to education and educational mobility that are not equally distributed. Indeed, if we talk about media literacy, access to media must also be considered. As we stated above, even most people in poor urban communities own cell phones. This means that digital and media literacy are related to the role of media and information in our lives. As stated by UNESCO (2019) in Brazil, access to media literacy:

[…] lies at the core of freedom of expression and information – since it empowers citizens to understand the functions of media and other information providers, to critically evaluate their content, and to make informed decisions as users and producers of information and media content.

If equity and social justice lie at the core of freedom, to develop empowered critical citizens, we need well-prepared and adequately paid teachers. Further, we believe teachers have to be empowered to develop meaningful curriculum.

As we see, poverty, or the unequal distribution of resources including education, is not a *privilege* of developing countries. Even wealthy countries like the United States are struggling with such problems. In the United States, access to technology is a convenience, a privilege. It is not considered a necessity or a right.

Similarly, technology education in K-12 settings varies widely from school district to school district. There is no standardized curriculum for media literacy (Stokes-Beverley & Simoy, 2016).

Through the lenses of critical literacy, we can suggest policies that consider the complexities of cultural and linguistic diversity in contemporary society. Equity and access, therefore, are our starting points. As educators we need very strong critical literacy frameworks whereby we provide students with opportunities to develop significant projects that creatively apply their out-of-school literacies and allow them to build on their social and cultural capital.

Furthermore, the teachers should be infused "with a solid ethical dimension that helps them choose practices that promote equitable learning where no student feels marginalized or neglected" (Mora, 2014, p. 18). Teaching through a critical media literacy lens means bringing to the class themes from our society that are relevant to students' lives, discussing them, giving them the opportunity to listen to other perspectives, and helping them to change the reality of oppression presented in texts. As noted by Wolk (2003) "Teachers need to help their students to think creatively, to be innovative, and to think for themselves, for the purposes of opening up new possibilities and social healing" (p. 102).

Although there are existing models for a critical (media) literacy pedagogy (e.g., Cazden, Cope, Fairclough, & Gee, 1996; Janks, 2000; Luke, 2017), our experience as teacher educators shows us that there is no framework that accounts for the philosophical dimension argued here as needed in contemporary teacher education. We seek to contemplate the new and multiple literacies needed to read the contemporary world, which need to be at the basis of all what we do in and out of classroom.

A FRAMEWORK FOR CRITICAL MEDIA LITERACY

The framework we are proposing is not an instructional program, but rather a concept that underlies curriculum and instruction. We illustrate the framework in Figure 1 below.
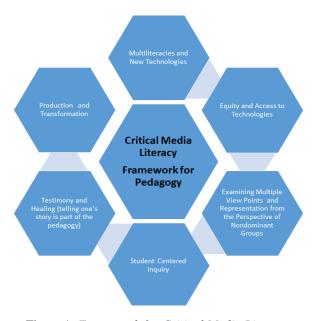

Figure 1. *Framework for Critical Media Literacy Pedagogy*

The six principles that comprise our framework for critical media literacy are not a programmatic outline that ought to be didactically implemented in teachers' practices. Rather, such pedagogy depends on teachers' analysis of the community in which the students and school are located. That is what will define students' needs and interests and affect the educational goals and schools' curriculum. The six principles are crucially interdependent and one without the other produces an imbalance. In this sense, it is necessary to prepare teachers who are able to help students to analyze contemporary media culture as an outcome of social production, to be critical of media representations and discourses, and after all use media as modes of self-expression, capable of promoting equity and social justice.

Multiliteracies and New Technologies

In today's connected, changing and multimedia world it is no longer enough to teach literacy only through verbocentric literacies, ignoring the other major ways we receive, process, and create information and

images (Kellner & Share, 2007b). Therefore, today's pedagogy needs to be grounded in the theory of Multiliteracies.

As we argued above, many new literacy practices are necessary in contemporary society and most of them "remain "untapped" by standardized literacy tests: self-monitoring online reading, collaborative online writing, digital media production, critical media literacy, and hybridization of textual practices" (Mills, 2010, p. 262) and by the school, where canonical genres and print texts are still privileged.

Multiliteracies is a term coined by Cazden, Cope, Fairclough, and Gee due to two aspects of changes arising from the new global order: "the multiplicity of communications channels and media, and the increasing salience of cultural and linguistic diversity" (New London Group, 1996, p. 63). In this sense, a pedagogy aligned with critical media literacy must also align to a multiliteracies approach that gives space to contemporary forms of communication that include the analysis of popular cultural texts such advertising, news, broadcast media, and the Internet. Besides the traditional genres that have always been taught in schools, we have to work with multimodal texts, which combine visual, audio, gestural, spatial, or linguistic modes to make, enrich and modify meaning (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000).

The second reason for Cazden, et al.'s proposed multiliteracies approach was that another literacy pedagogy was necessary given the increasingly cultural and linguistic diversity due to migration and a globally connected society (New London Group, 1996). In this sense, literacy practices need to be more inclusive of cultural difference, taking into account everyday literacy practices in use by different communities.

If we are attempting to enact a critical media literacy pedagogy, all new and emerging forms of communication and leisure need space in the classroom. The students have to have "an understanding of how texts and discourses can be manipulated to represent and, indeed, alter the world" (Luke, 2012, p. 214). Despite the popularization of technological tools and media, access is uneven as well as the quality of this access.

Equity and Access to Technology and New Media

The fact that Brazil and the United States are both democratic societies does not mean we have reached the goal of all citizens in our countries having access to a quality education or even an equal access to media. The inequality of education and access to media reinforces

the digital divide, characterized "as social stratification due to unequal ability to access, adapt, and create knowledge via use of information and communication technologies" (Warschauer, 2011, p. 1). There are layers of the population who have limited access to dominant literacies and knowledge, dominant genres and modes of representation, and a range of practices related to contemporary social interaction (Janks, 2000, p. 177). Most minority groups and working-class members ignored by public policies may not be aware of inequities and injustices of society. The constitutional right that all are equal and have the same rights is not yet reality for all in our countries. As researchers and teachers this has to be a part of our educational agenda.

Equity and social justice can be built with (re)distribution of "resources, knowledge, credentials and access to educational pathways" (Woods, Dooley, Luke, & Exley, 2014, p. 509). Besides that, we develop social justice in our classrooms and move forward toward the goal of a high equity education system if "lifeworlds, experiences, values and beliefs of all children and their communities" are considered and respected (Woods, Dooley, Luke, & Exley, 2014, p. 511).

If we want to offer inclusive literacy practices to help build a better world and "create good citizens," our concern needs to be with those who stay out, the legion of traditionally marginalized students who haven't experienced whole participation in society. They may have a cell phone with Internet access, but no access to an education in navigating online spaces to their advantage. The training of critical citizens, however, is not only aimed at members of the poorest sections of the population. It is the duty and right of every citizen to know "how texts and discourses work, where, with what consequences, and in whose interests" (Luke, 2012, p. 5).

In this sense, we should work "toward an equitable allocation of resources and provision of opportunities, as well as providing educational contexts where diversity is recognised in positive and ethical ways" (Woods, Dooley, Luke, & Exley, 2014, p. 511). That includes, when analysing texts, considering multiple perspectives including the viewpoints of nondominant groups.

Examining Multiple Viewpoints and Representation from the Perspective of Nondominant Groups

Education is an important factor in developing a just society (Janks, 2000). As teachers, we have to lead our students to understand and manage the relationship between language and power, to be conscious about how media can manipulate them. Students even have to have the opportunity to engage in literacy practices to critique and comprehend society and the world. It will make them conscious of their experience as historically constructed within specific power relations (Anderson & Irvine, 1993, cited by Bishop, 2014, p. 51). That means as teachers we have to construct education and literacy as practices of social justice and freedom.

Once messages and representations of the dominant culture are presented as *natural*, those *truths* have to be questioned. The questions of critical literacy identified by Luke (2012) are very useful: What is "truth"? How is it presented and represented, by whom, and in whose interests? Who should have access to which images and words, texts, and discourses? For what purposes? And more: Who has voice in our culture? Who defines the literacies that are teachable? Whose knowledge is included in the creation and definition of curricula in learning communities? Or those presented by Bishop (2014): what is the purpose of the text? How does the text try to position the reader? How does the text construct reality? Whose interests are or are not served by the ideas in the text? What worldviews are or are not represented?

The critical media literacy lens can help us to reveal the social functions of texts and the way in which individuals and groups of people are positioned in them. Low quality of education and low quality of access to media limit students to mere consumption, which harkens back to the banking model identified by Paulo Freire (1987) when critiquing the traditional model of education. If we are committed to critical media literacy, our students are consumers, but also producers and distributors "of print and new media texts by, with, and on behalf of marginalized populations in the interests of naming, exposing, and destabilizing power relations while promoting individual freedom and expression" (Bishop, 2014, p. 59). Reading and writing in this century, "reading the world" as stated by Freire (1987), through understanding the social and historical factors influencing social justices and injustices (Bishop, 2014) in printed and digital texts and media implies the perception of the relations between text and context, experience, and comprehension of the world and its inequalities. It is important to let real life enter into the classroom, exploring with the students how and why particular social and cultural groups of persons occupy unequal positions in the society. We are not advocating that traditional literacies that have constituted the education of previous generations will be abandoned.

We agree with Luke (2012) that "traditional print and image, canonical genres, and new modalities of information sit side by side – where new and old media build discourse communities and enable political and cultural action" (Luke, 2012, p. 4). This change of perspective, however, will not happen without students' participation in the examination of multiple viewpoints.

Student Centered Inquiry

In the pedagogy we have been advocating so far, the classroom is a space where everyone teaches and everyone learns, or, as stated by Luke (2012): "learners become teachers of their understandings and experiences, and teachers become learners of these same contexts" (Luke 2012, p. 7). In this teaching/learning process, more than training students to give the right answer, we are developing actors, designers of social futures (Cazden, Cope, Fairclough, & Gee, 1996) who not only consume texts and other media "products," but produce, critique and transform them.

In a critical media literacy pedagogy, the questions that motivate literacy practice must emerge from students' reality or interests. In this sense, reading and writing are about substantive lives and material realities, and they are goal and problem-directed (Luke, 2012, p. 5). A student-centered inquiry approach allows knowledge to emerge from issues of identity, power, and relationships. Through an inquiry-based discussion of culture and society, students will be able to consider what is present, how they are involved in this world, which voices are missing, and what is possible to do. With this approach, not only are foundational literacies developed, but also competencies and character qualities, such as collaboration, negotiation, critical thinking, communication, among many others necessary to act fully today in contemporary society.

Testimony and Healing (telling one's story is part of the Pedagogy)

How many times do we give students the opportunity to tell their story and share with us how they are feeling? Our experience has shown us that besides multiliteracies pedagogies, pedagogies of hosting and healing are also important in enacting critical literacy. As such, Critical Media Literacy should be predicated upon a radical democracy in the creation of curriculum where students have a say in what they study and teachers share power. The anecdotes of Carlos and Cameron illustrate the importance of schools making room for students to tell their stories.

> The weight of hard life experiences, particularly in the lives of students, is hard to bear. Yet, those stories are part and parcel of classroom life – whether or not those experiences are invited in or acknowledged, met with caring or disinterest, they are always present. Even in their ever-presence, the emotionally fraught experiences, the ongoing struggles, do not comfortably reside within traditional notions of schooling (Dutro, 2011, p. 195).

Linked to an inquiry stance, hosting student stories are critical for advancing healing. Through a critical media literacy lens, we can give students the opportunity to investigate, dismantle and rewrite damaging social narratives (Baker-Bell, Stanbrough, & Everett, 2017). Therefore, inquiry should start from the perspective of marginalized and excluded populations to problematize bias and common-sense beliefs that mainstream media texts show and reinforce (e.g., discourses of race, gender, class, poverty, politics, ethnicity and so many others that serve to separate and marginalize). Through a critical media literacy perspective, we can give underrepresented populations the opportunity to produce counternarratives, give their opinions, express their concerns, and reconstruct their identities in a more positive way. As teacher educators, it is our responsibility to equip teachers with transformative tools that work toward healing marginalized youth and supporting them in speaking back to and against all kinds of violence.

The healing component of our framework is based on the pedagogy of healing suggested by Baker-Bell, Stanbrough, and Everett (2017) who suggested two tools to heal:

> (1) acknowledging that the wound exists and identifying its culprit, and (2) tools to transform: responding to the wound using a tool that works to transform the conditions that led to the wound (e.g., critical media pedagogy, urban debate, critical language pedagogy, hip-hop based pedagogy, critical race pedagogy) (p. 139).

The first tool we explained above; the second tool to transform is the last component of our framework.

Production and Transformation

In our framework, the circle closes with production for social action. In "real life" we write and read to act in the world. It follows that school activities based on a critical media literacy pedagogy should be significant and result in social action. Literacy is fundamentally social practice, or "a myriad of discursive forms and

cultural competencies that construct and make available the various relations and experiences that exist between learners and the world" (Giroux, 1987, p. 7). Thus, literacy is an action in the world.

Our students are not just consumers of texts and media, but also producers and distributors of texts, worldviews, life stories, knowledge, and information. If the students are conscious that media messages are constructed, semiotic, laden with values, bias, beliefs, reflect power relations, and enable different readings based on the positionalities of the audience, they will be able to engage in social action. The classroom is a space to read "canonical" texts, but it should also be a space where students encounter digital media texts. Further, students should have opportunities to examine and identify bias, inequality, and injustice to give them "a critical consciousness to participate in and transform their social worlds" (Bishop, 2014, p. 59).

A critical media literacy pedagogy can empower the students "in using new media genres to produce and distribute their own counter media texts. Production and distribution components of critical media pedagogy go hand in hand and involve preparing youth to be agents of change by producing [media]" (Baker-Bell, Stanbrough & Everett, 2017, p. 140). Our task as educators, thus, is to discuss relevant texts that lead students to recognize themselves as agents/designers of social futures. Telling their story or giving their testimony can be a "powerful act of social activism and is essential for social transformation" (Baker-Bell, Stanbrough & Everett, 2017, p. 140).

CONCLUSION

In this article, we tried to bring together teaching and learning lessons from two countries whose realities are so distant and, at the same time, so close. If, as stated by Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, Castek and Henry (2017, p. 1151), "social contexts have always shaped both the function and form of literate practices and been shaped by them in return", then the schools of our countries need another kind curriculum. In times when social media is used to disseminate lies, anger, injustice, discrimination, and perpetuate sexual assault more than ever we need a critical media pedagogy, a pedagogy that hosts and heals.

Classrooms are spaces where students should feel accepted and hosted: to feel confident to begin to tell their stories, to ask important questions and to search for answers, to critique the realities represented in texts, to select the appropriate tools or media to act on. In Sealey-

Ruiz (2016) words, "instruction must be urgent and purposeful in responding to and anticipating the social context of our times" (p. 295).

The two realities we know, in some measure, show us the need for a philosophy that underlies all that occurs in the classroom. The six principles of the model we presented in this article are necessarily interdependent and one without the other would produce an imbalance. We are convinced this conception needs to be present in teacher education so that each teacher can reach schools with a critical and, above all, inclusive mindset to transform the classroom and students' lives, promoting social justice. As the recent American presidential race made abundantly clear, news might not be as true as it appears. At the same time, mass media play an increasingly significant role in today's society. Even when one is not searching for information, mass media permeate everyone's environment, influencing individual world views and decision-making. Therefore, people need to consciously and critically analyze and evaluate mass media messages and, only then, decide how to respond. Otherwise, they will not make reasoned decisions, and they will suffer the consequences of their assumptions or ignorance. They must be news literate.

While news literacy is a lifelong skill, the logical time to start teaching such literacy is in K-12 educational settings, so that all people have the opportunity to learn and practice news literacy. The age to begin such instruction varies with some asserting that students as young as kindergarteners can analyze news (Moore, 2013; Share, 2015).

This study investigated the needs for K-12 students to be news literate and their current level of skills as perceived by in-service teachers and school librarians. The findings inform the development of news media literacy curriculum that can be implemented by K-12 teachers and school librarians.

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