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Reading and Writing as Social Action: A Case Study of Literacy and Critical Social Thinking in the Migrant Student Leadership Institute

A dissertation in partial satisfaction of the

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in Education

by

Octavio Estrella

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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Doctor of Philosophy in Education

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Professor Daniel G. Solórzano, Chair

This dissertation investigates the apprenticeship of students in the Migrant Student Leadership Institute (MSLI) into the practice of *critical social thinking*. From 1993 to 2006, the MSLI was a summer residential college outreach program for high school aged youth from migrant farmworker families in California. In California and across the United States, the children of migrant farmworkers face significant social, economic, and educational barriers to accessing post-secondary pathways (Nuñez & Gildersleeve, 2016; Nuñez & Jaramillo, 2009). Every year, the MSLI brought over 100 students to engage in a month-long program oriented toward developing their academic and college-going literacies, while also engaging them in a critical social analysis of the historical and political dimensions of their lives.

This dissertation contributes to a body of work documenting the learning and literacy practices of students and teachers in the MSLI (Espinoza, 2008, 2009, 2020; Gutiérrez, 2008, 2019; Nuñez & Gildersleeve, 2016; Pacheco & Nao, 2009; Vossoughi, 2011, 2014). This study utilized classroom audio-video recordings, student writing portfolios, and interview data to provide new perspectives on the routine teaching practices, classroom talk, and social interaction in the MSLI. In particular, it investigated how students were apprenticed into the social practice of critical social thinking through the everyday engagement of social theoretical texts and academic writing. To this end, I asked: (a) How were students in the MSLI apprenticed into the practice of critical social thinking in the context of reading social theoretical texts? (b) If and how did students apply critical social thinking in the writing of academic essays?

Through the analysis of student and teacher interactions in the context of reading circles, this study found that the routine practices of close-text analysis created opportunities for students to build conceptual understanding and engage in critical social thinking. The analysis of student writing portfolios and interviews found that students utilized social theoretical concepts to write texts aimed at contesting dominant narratives and reframing their lived experiences. These findings contest current literacy approaches that seek to restrict access to robust academic literacies to historically underserved students. Additionally, this dissertation study argues against common perceptions that radical or critical educational approaches and practices are distinct from or "soft" on academic skills.

The dissertation of Octavio Estrella is approved.

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DEDICATION

Para mis dos *ositos*, Elias y Camila, que son mi canto y inspiración para soñar cada día. Los amo hasta la luna y mas allá.

Para mi querida mama, Eleuteria “Lucy” Méndez-Estrella, que fue mi primera maestra. Te extraño mucho y espero que estes orgullosa de mi. Te amo, mama. Q.E.P.D.

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Estrella, O., & Vossoughi, S. (2006, April). Play and imagination: The creative engagement of social life. Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association. San Francisco, California.

Estrella, O., Vossoughi, S., & Hunter, J. (2005, November). Building social critical literacies in times of persistent inequality." Paper presentation at the National Reading Conference. Miami, Florida.

Estrella, O. (2005, April). Context, identity, and transformation: The autobiographical narratives of California migrant high school students. Paper Presentation at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association. Montreal, Canada.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

From 1993 to 2006, the Migrant Student Leadership Institute (MSLI) operated on the campus of the University of California, Los Angeles. Under the direction of Dr. Kris Gutiérrez, MSLI brought together high school-aged youth from migrant farmworker communities to engage in a month-long residential college outreach program (Espinoza et al., 2019). In California and across the United States, the children of migrant farmworkers face significant social, economic, and educational barriers to accessing post-secondary opportunities (Nuñez & Gildersleeve, 2016; Nuñez & Jaramillo, 2009).[1] MSLI also emerged in the context of increasing xenophobic and anti-immigrant discourse and legislation impacting the economic and political lives of California migrant farmworker communities. Given this broader educational and political context, the curricular and instructional framework of the MSLI was organized toward equipping students with a set of academic tools needed to access the university and engage in a critical social analysis of the historical and political dimensions of their lives (Espinoza, 2009, 2020; Gutiérrez, 2008, 2019; Pacheco & Nao, 2009).

This dissertation study contributes to a body of work investigating the everyday literacy and learning experiences of students and teachers in the MSLI (Espinoza, 2008, 2009, 2020;

[1] For purposes of determining eligibility for services, the California Department of Migrant Education states:

> A child is considered "migrant" if the parent or guardian is a migratory worker in the agricultural, dairy, lumber, or fishing industries and whose family has moved during the past three years. A "qualifying" move can range from moving across school district boundaries or from one state to another for the purpose of finding temporary or seasonal employment. A young adult may also qualify if he or she has moved on his or her own for the same reasons. The eligibility period is three years from the date of the last move. Eligibility is established through an interview conducted by a Migrant Education recruiter who visits both home and employment locations where migrant workers are employed. The law states that migrant education services are a priority for those students whose education has been interrupted during the current school year and who are failing, or are most at risk of failing to meet state and content standards. (Migrant Education Program, 2006)

Gutiérrez, 2008, 2019; Nuñez & Gildersleeve, 2016; Pacheco & Nao, 2009; Vossoughi, 2011, 2014). This dissertation study contributes new perspectives on the understanding of students' experiences as they participated in an academic context that reconceptualized university-level reading and writing as tools for critical social thinking and future social action. I examine students' participation across two interconnected and interdependent contexts:

> ***Reading Circles***—sites organized for the mediation of close-text reading and interpretation of social theoretical texts.
>
> ***Writing***—organized toward the teaching of academic writing as a tool to engage in critical social thinking and future social action.

Reading circles and writing represent only two elements of the social ecology of teaching and learning that took place over a four-week span in the 2006 MSLI. My analysis of classroom video documents the routine practices and interactions of students and teachers as they engaged in daily textual encounters that took place within the setting of reading circles. This analysis sheds light on the moment-to-moment apprenticeship of students toward the social practice of critical social thinking. In addition, this study also drew upon student writing and interview data to better understand how students utilized their agency as writers to compose academic texts, while also identifying, naming, and resisting dominant narratives.

In this dissertation, I bring together cultural historical and critical pedagogical traditions in educational research and theory in order to contribute to our understanding of apprenticeship in an educational context that sought to equip students with the academic and analytical tools to access the university and examine the historical and political dimensions of their lives (Freire, 1970; Vygotsky, 1978). Through the use of interpretative case study methods, I identify the

pedagogical and intellectual resources student and teachers drew upon in the apprenticeship process. As such, the following research questions guided this study:

1) How were students in the MSLI apprenticed into the practice of critical social thinking in the context of reading social theoretical texts?

   a) What kinds of pedagogical talk and practices supported students in the reading and analysis of social theoretical texts?

   b) What were the affordances and constraints of close-text analysis in regard to the apprenticeship of students?

2) If and how did students apply the practice of critical social thinking in the writing of academic essays?

   a) In what ways did students incorporate concepts and critical habits of mind in the process of defining and reframing social problems?

Overview of the Dissertation

Through a qualitative investigation of the routine teaching and learning practices that constitute the apprenticeship of students in critical social thinking, this dissertation brings the curricular and pedagogical elements of the MSLI alive for educators and researchers alike. First, Chapter 2 provides the reader with a discussion of the interdisciplinary theoretical framework that informed this dissertation study. In particular, it provides a discussion of the body of work about the MSLI, and the social organization of learning and literacy (Espinoza, 2008, 2009; Gutiérrez, 2008; Pacheco & Nao, 2009; Vossoughi, 2011, 2014). This is followed by a discussion of my conceptualization of *critical social thinking* rooted in Freirean and Vygotskian traditions in learning and development. Chapter 3 provides an explanation and rationale of the

qualitative methodological approach I took to study apprenticeship in the context of the literacy practices of students and teachers in MSLI.

In Chapter 4, I present an examination of the routine teaching and literacy practices that constituted the everyday apprenticeship of students into the social practice of critical social thinking. I document these practices with the context of textual encounters that took place daily throughout the four-week program. Through the analysis of video-recorded reading circles, I identify the specific kinds of pedagogical talk, modes of textual analysis, and student-teacher dialogue that mediated the collective engagement of social theoretical texts. I locate my investigation of apprenticeship within this specific context as a way to think about how these shared experiences may have contributed to the formation of safe intellectual spaces for meaning making. Data from students' post-program interviews also point to how the shared process of reading and analyzing social problems in reading circles contributed to their expanding understanding of the historical and political dimensions of their lives.

In Chapter 5, I provide an examination of students' writing as artifacts of their participation and engagement with social theoretical texts (Wynhoff Olsen & VanDerHeide, 2020). In order to contextualize student writing, I offer a descriptive analysis of the instructional framework and teaching approach that shaped academic writing in the MSLI. I begin with a presentation of the conception of *writing as social action* that established a social context of writing as a tool for critical reflection, analyzing social problems, and *historicizing their lived experiences* (Pacheco & Nao, 2009). The analysis of student writing illuminates the specific choices students made in their writing, particularly as it relates to their incorporation of social theoretical concepts in the development and reshaping of academic texts. I provide two case

studies of student writing along with post-program interview data in which students provide reflections on the experience of writing in the MSLI.

In the rest of this introductory chapter, I provide a discussion of the social organization of learning to provide a better understanding of the design elements that made up the instructional framework of the MSLI.

The Social Organization of Learning in the MSLI

The curriculum and program design of the MSLI is informed by a set of theoretical and political imperatives that serve as organizing principles. As members of an economically exploited and educationally underserved community, the migrant students that attend the MSLI have encountered significant barriers over the course of their schooling, all while in search of opportunities to access rich academic literacies essential for achievement at the collegiate level. In anticipation of these needs, instruction and assistance in the MSLI is organized according to principles of learning and development which emphasizes that any instructional approach should outpace and provoke development, or what Vygotsky refers to as the creation of "zones of proximal development" (Vygotsky, 1978).

The engagement with academic literacies that occurred in the MSLI, however, are by-products of an overarchingly radical humanist pedagogical framework that informs its curricular approach (Espinoza, 2008; Freire, 1970; McLaren, 1998; Tejeda et al., 2003; Vossoughi, 2011). This approach makes central the economic and political marginalization of poor, immigrant, and Indigenous communities (or non-dominant populations) in the United States. Such a pedagogical framework seeks to prepare high school students from non-dominant communities "to dynamically critique" and actively work against historically rooted systems of oppression and marginalization, while preparing and making themselves eligible for admission to universities

and colleges in the United States (Tejeda et al., 2003). In the MSLI, this involves using academic texts as tools to explore the relationship between biography and history. Students are positioned as "historical actors" (Espinoza, 2008; Gutiérrez, 2019) who bring "cultural repertoires of practice" (Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003) to bear on the interpretation and analysis of social theoretical texts such as C. Wright Mill's (1959) *The Sociological Imagination*, Paolo Freire's (1970) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, and Gloria Anzaldúa's (1987) *Borderlands*, and Eduardo Galeano's (1998) *Open Veins of Latin America*. In turn, I approach these texts from the standpoint that they serve as artifacts to reflect, interpret, and redefine lived experiences.

A Structural View of the MSLI Program

The integration of reading, writing, and *Teatro* are indicative of an interdisciplinary and multi-modal approach that is geared toward introducing a set of analytical tools meant to assist students in dealing with the historical and political realities of their social existence as young people of color and members of the California migrant worker community. Table 1 provides an organizational view of the MSLI. It is based on three interrelated and interdependent components of the curriculum: Reading Social Theory, Writing Pedagogy, and *Teatro* or Theatre of the Oppressed. In addition to the description of each component, it provides a snapshot how each of these key components are comprised of multiple tools, strategies, and forms of assistance.

Table 1

Key Features of the Social Organization of Learning in the MSLI

Components	Description	Mediation	Object
Reading Social Theory (Social Science)	• This component is part of a highly integrated college-level curriculum. • Teachers develop and enact various interactive lectures rooted in critical theory, sociology, history, ethnic studies, and gender studies. • Students read various texts organized in a course reader; they are also provided guiding questions crafted by teachers for each text that students must answer in essay format.	• Reading and social analysis is framed as a shared practice. • Multiple forms of assistance and facilitation • Small reading circles • Concept/cognitive maps of the text. • Guiding Questions • Hybrid language practices	• Develop students' socio-critical academic skills. • Establish new kinds of relationships with text. • Extend students' cultural and linguistic repertoires.
Writing Pedagogy	• Students compose four essays: Extended Definition, Analytical Precis, Argumentation, and Autobiography/Testimonio. • Students do daily writing assignments such as journal entries, respond to reflection questions and guiding questions to the reading,	• Writing is framed as social action. • Language of history and biography • Identifying models of successful writing • Writing models together • Engage students' hybrid language as tools for learning and development.	• Develop students' socio-critical academic skills. • Teach conventions and genres of academic writing. • Reframe lived experience.
Theater of the Oppressed/ *Teatro*	• Created and developed in Latin America by A. Boal • A system of theatrical techniques and games • Considered to be critical response to traditional theater • *Teatro* is a form of dialogue between the audience and the actors on stage; *the spect-actor* is a central figure.	• *Creativity*, *imagination*, *reflection*, and *action* are part of the lexicon. • Written and spoken guidelines and rules that guide action. • Dynamic warm-up games. • Adult facilitation and guidance. • Three interconnected forms of theater: Image Theater and Forum Theater. • Time and space for daily rehearsal. • Large and small group dialogue.	• A method for humanizing the world and its participants. • Collectively identify, define, and analyze social problems. • Actively develops leadership skills of collaboration, attentive listening, and perspective-taking. • Promote creative nonviolent action and behavior.

The social organization of learning in the MSLI therefore represents a practical synthesis of educational and political imperatives not as mutually exclusive, but as necessary dimensions of any educational intervention designed to address the pragmatic and historical problem of educational equity.

Defining the Social Practice of Critical Social Thinking

In this dissertation, I advance a working definition of *critical social thinking* grounded in the seminal work of sociologist C. Wright Mills, who referred to the *sociological imagination* as the "quality of mind" that enables individuals or groups of individuals to ". . . understand the larger historical scene in terms of its meaning for the inner life and external career of a variety of individuals"; the sociological imagination ". . . enables us to grasp history and biography and the relations between the two within society" (Mills, 1959, pp. 5–6). It is also informed by the writings of educational philosopher and educator Paulo Freire (1970) and his articulation of a pedagogy of the oppressed, which he organized toward the development of a *critical social consciousness*. For Freire, a "problem-posing" educational approach develops people's power to ". . . perceive critically the way they exist in the world with which and in which they find themselves. They come to see the world not as static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation" (p. 73).

Finally, this working definition is also grounded in Vygotskian views of development and *higher psychological processes*, such as thought and cognition, which have their origins in social processes and must be understood in relation to the *cultural artifacts and tools* that mediate them (Vygotsky, 1979; Wertsch, 1985). Given these theoretical underpinnings, *critical social thinking* is a social practice that is shaped and refined through the collective engagement of analytical tools organized toward the examination of the historical and political dimensions of our lives in order to redefine and reframe our past, present, and future selves.

Contributions of the Study

This dissertation seeks to advance the argument that there is theoretical and pedagogical value in conducting a close description of the everyday social practices in both in-school and

out-of-school contexts. By documenting qualitatively how students and teachers jointly participated in reading and analyzing social theoretical texts, this dissertation illuminates our understanding of what it means to design, implement, study, and sustain environments that afford students the opportunity to develop new academic and social scientific tools to redefine and reimagine their past, present, and future selves.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, I discuss the theoretical and methodological underpinnings that informed my approach to the study of *critical social thinking* in the 2006 MSLI. This research study draws on a multidisciplinary conceptual framework in defining and operationalizing *critical social thinking*, as well as the apprenticeship approach that gave rise to its formation through the everyday activities and social practices of the MSLI. From its conception, the design of the curricular approach for the MSLI has been rooted in traditions advanced by the work of Paulo Freire (1970) and Lev Vygotsky (1978).

The goal of this chapter is to provide a conceptual framework informing the study of critical social thinking shaped through participation culturally organized activities (Rogoff, 1995). This conceptual framework is based on the empirical and theoretical contributions of Freirean and Vygotskian traditions in education, literacy, and learning. To start, I provide an overview of each theoretical framework and their contributions to research in educational settings. I then pay special attention to those particular aspects relevant to this dissertation study on critical social thinking.

What is *"critical"* about critical social thinking? As I elaborate below, my conceptualization of critical social thinking builds upon several sources of research and theory. In addition, this definition is also informed by experience as a member of the instructional team of the MSLI for three years. I bring together various strands of theory and research in sociocultural and cultural historical traditions in learning, development, pedagogy and literacy to provide a working definition of "critical social thinking."

Paulo Freire and Critical Social Thinking

At its foundation, my arrival at and conceptualization of critical social thinking is greatly influenced by the life and work of educator and philosopher Paulo Freire and his expression of a pedagogy of the oppressed that emphasized the development of a critical social consciousness of human existence (Freire, 1970). Freire's call for a pedagogy of the oppressed in which oppression and its causes become objects of reflection by the oppressed, (specifically referred to as "problem-posing education") is based on his life's work in challenging the social injustice found in the cities and countryside of Brazil and other parts of Latin America, the Caribbean, and Africa. These experiences moved him to assert that the struggle against oppression and dehumanization must begin from a "historical view of reality susceptible to transformation" (Freire, 1970, p. 73). That is, the material and ideological manifestations of an oppressive social reality is the product of historical human action and therefore requires, what he referred to as praxis: "the action, and reflection of [women and] men in the world in order to transform it" (p. 52).

An end to social oppression was a fundamental objective in Freire's (1970) writings, especially in his articulation of a liberating pedagogical praxis. He argues that the actions of people in social life are largely determined by the way they see themselves within it, and that a transformative perspective necessitates ongoing reflection on their social worlds. In her book, *Reinventing Paulo Freire*, Antonia Darder (2002) comments on Freire's understanding of "humanity" as a key to fully appreciating his notion of a liberatory or humanizing education. She cites the following passage from one of Freire's text translated from Portuguese:

> A humanizing education is the path through which men and women can become conscious about their presence in the world. The way they act and think when they develop all of their capacities, taking into consideration their needs, but also the needs and aspirations of others. (Freire & Betto, 1985, p. 15)

According to Darder, Freire conceived of a humanizing education from a deeply reflective interpretation of the dialectical relationship between our cultural existence as individuals and our political and economic existence as social beings. Consequently, in relation to building a theoretical and methodological approach to critical social thought from a Freirean worldview, it is not only necessary that in the expression of critical social thought one is able to recognize the historical, economic, and political forces that shape our social existence. Rather, one must also be able to comprehend how such forces simultaneously dehumanize us and distort our capacity to develop new ways of living and relating to one another.

In my own engagement with work in the field of critical pedagogy, I have found that this aspect of Freire's (1970) views on "humanity" is often underestimated as key in conceptualizing an educational approach for critical social consciousness toward social action. Even in historical struggles against social injustices in which the oppressed come face-to-face with their oppressors, Freire states that ". . . the oppressed must not, in seeking to regain their humanity, become in turn oppressors of the oppressors, but rather restorers of the humanity in both" (p. 33). For Freire the struggle against oppression is fundamentally about humanization, about how we might affirm ourselves as full subjects of our own lives and of history. Most importantly, as Freire points, this struggle for our "full humanity could not be carried out in isolation or individualism, but only in fellowship and solidarity" (p. 73).

The Sociological Imagination, Historicity, and Critical Social Consciousness

> Seldom aware of the intricate connection between the patterns of their own lives and the course of world history, ordinary men [and women] do not usually know what this connection means for the kinds of men [and women] they are becoming and for the kinds of history-making in which they might take part. (Mills, 1959, p. 4)

Here, C. Wright Mills calls our attention to the "history making" potential of people when their capacity to fully understand and interpret their personal experiences in "intricate" connection to the trajectory of "world history" is developed and fostered. Mills furthered qualified this capacity as a certain "quality of mind," or what he eloquently referred to as the "sociological imagination" which affords the "possessor" to ". . . understand the larger historical scene in terms of *its meaning for the inner life* and external career of a variety of individuals"; the sociological imagination ". . . enables us to grasp history and biography and the relations between the two within society" (Mills, 1959, pp. 5–6). For one entire month, students in the MSLI served as future social scientists as they collectively (with the assistance and guidance of their instructors) utilized various analytical tools to uncover and shed light on the issues and problems that face their communities as (im)migrant youth. The *Sociological Imagination* (1959) served as a cornerstone text and as one of the conceptual reference points of the MSLI curriculum. For students, the sociological imagination functioned as a pivotal text in their apprenticeship in the social practice of critical social thinking.

For the purposes of this theoretical framework and addressing the question of what is "critical" about critical social thinking, the *sociological imagination* introduces the element of *historicity* and its implications for how students conceive and re-conceive of their past, present, and future selves. "Thinking historically" to uncover the root causes of social problems impacting non-dominant communities was a central mode of collective inquiry, dialogue, and analysis during the MSLI. This historical mode of analysis was intended to provoke an

intellectual praxis across various learning contexts from which students could be empowered to challenge deficit theories and discourses pertaining to (im)migrant communities in the United States.

An end to social oppression was a fundamental objective in Paulo Freire's writings, especially in his articulation of a liberating pedagogical praxis. He argued that the actions of people in social life are largely determined by the way they see themselves within it, and that a transformative perspective necessitates ongoing reflection on their social worlds. Similar to Mills, the element of *historicity* plays a fundamental role in the capability of individuals or students—in the context of the MSLI—to comprehend social problems situated "outside their sphere of biological necessity" and "on a more historical plane" (Freire, 1973, p. 17). Preceded by a "semi-intransitive" state in which the "sphere" of perception and understanding is limited to vital biological needs, a transitive state of social consciousness fundamentally alters one's understanding of self in relation to the world and their oppressive realities. This transitive state takes on the quality of being "critical," becoming what Freire refers to as *critical transitive consciousness,* when the interpretation and interrogation of concrete reality is oriented toward individual and social transformation. Moreover, critical transitive consciousness is also characterized by a depth and quality of analysis and interpretation of problems, such that there exists an openness to revision and testing of our interpretations. This transformative mode of social analysis and inquiry grows out of an explicitly humanizing educational project.

The distinction between "semi-intransitive" and critical "transitive" consciousness is in one respect problematic to the conceptualization of critical social thinking. This distinction asserts a dichotomy between everyday forms of knowledge and more systematic forms emerging from deliberate educational efforts. In later works on the social process of literacy, Freire (1998)

overcomes this dichotomy by asserting the process of learning to read "the word," and that of comprehension relies on "bringing together" concepts emerging from "school experience" and those resulting from the "day-to-day world" (p. 19). Freire further elaborates:

> One critical exercise always required in reading, and necessarily also in writing, is that of easily moving from sensory experience, which characterizes the day-to-day, to generalization, which operates through school language and then on to the tangible and concrete.

Critical social thought in the context of this study seeks a synthesis between everyday knowledge and social scientific knowledge; it emphasizes their interconnection and interdependence.

Critical Social Thinking, Mediation, and the Development of Scientific Concepts

Similarly, L. S. Vygotsky and other researchers in the cultural historical tradition have explored the interdependent relationship between "school language" and day-to-day knowledge, which they termed as *everyday concepts and scientific concepts*. In order to fully grasp this relationship, it is important to begin by discussing the important concept of *mediation* within cultural-historical approaches to learning and development. Within this approach, mediation or cultural mediation stresses the ways in which human beings come to know and interact with the social world through cultural artifacts (Cole, 1996; Vygotsky, 1978). The material and symbolic properties of cultural artifacts illustrate their complex dual nature. Luis Moll (1998) points out that the concept of cultural mediation demonstrates how we are "so embedded in our built environments that we consider them somehow natural, underestimating the significance of the artificial for our thinking" (p. 60).

In this respect, the concept of cultural mediation further complicates our understanding and investigation of thinking and cognition in schools or in school-like settings like the MSLI. Whereas learning and cognition are often looked upon as processes or attributes of the individual or the individual mind, an emphasis on cultural mediation makes the claim that human

psychological functioning in people derives from participation with others in cultural activities. Consequently, in cultural historical research, the unit of analysis is culturally mediated activity versus the individual in isolation of her sociocultural environment.

This concept of cultural mediation is relevant to my investigation of critical social thinking in the MSLI on multiple fronts. Critical social thinking in the area of critical pedagogy is considered a desired outcome in transformation of schools toward social change. However, there is little understanding or attention placed on the *mediational means* that shaped its emergence through assisted participation with peers and teachers. The concept of cultural mediation enables the analyst to conduct a close description that attends to the role of mediating artifacts like social theoretical texts and reading circles in the course of everyday social practices.

Research on mediation in educational contexts with emergent bilingual learners (de los Rios, 2018) has been especially influential in the design and re-organization of literacy instruction and assistance in the MSLI (Cole & Griffin, 1983; Gutiérrez et al., 2003). Prevailing "remedial" approaches to literacy learning emphasize "lower-level operations" like phonemic awareness, decoding, and word analysis as the goal or object of instruction, and do not "fully account for the complex and think nature of learning in the classroom" (Gutiérrez et al., 2003, p. 2). Cultural historical—or "sociohistorical"—researchers view the development of these skills as part of the social event of engaging in the whole activity of reading toward the object of interpreting the world. Cole and Griffin (1983) state:

> As we have said, the theory of reading that we subscribe to is that reading is about interpreting the world. Therefore, when you're reading you're looking at the world and trying to figure out what's going on there. You're using text to help you. Maybe it's the world of your own future; it is certain that you are not reading for its own sake. There is no such thing as reading for its own sake. Reading always is, eventually, about something to do with other people. Reading, as Freire said, is a way of theorizing about the world. (p. 72)

In this passage, we see some striking similarities between the cultural historical approach and Freirean social critical approach to literacy.

At the same time, however, cultural mediation complements the development of a more expansive notion of reading and writing with a deep consideration of the social system underlying these social and cognitive processes. A cultural historical approach to "re-mediation"—as opposed to the concept of "remedial" still prevalent in school curriculums today—considers what an expansive notion of reading would mean in terms of re-organizing reading, and literacy in general, into a social system of shared activity among participants in an educational setting. In the MSLI, for example, the activity of reading was mediated both at the group and individual level. That is, during the 2006 MSLI students read, interpreted, and discussed about text collectively, as well as in small reading circles facilitated by instructors. Then, based on this process, students respond to these readings individually in writing; even at the stage of writing their responses, students share their understandings of the text with each other.

This is a good place to return to the social system of teaching and learning and its relationship to the development of scientific concepts (Vygotsky, 1987). Scientific concepts, in a similar vein to Freire's articulation of "school language," are parts of systematic bodies of knowledge as compared to everyday concepts and arise from the organization of formal instruction, such as the difference between everyday concepts and scientific concepts (i.e., flowers and gardens vs. photosynthesis and ecology; or in the social sciences, the difference between the everyday concepts like school and family and the social scientific concepts of *praxis* and *socialization)*. The value of scientific concepts in relation to teaching and learning has to do with developing the capacity of students to use and manipulate scientific concepts voluntarily as

explanatory and interpretive tools. From a curricular standpoint, the MSLI did not only seek to develop such a capacity, it also deliberately sought to develop a particular kind of *emancipatory analytical toolkit* that empowers students to imagine their own sociopolitical futures in fundamentally new ways.

Vygotsky's (1987) theory that the development of scientific concepts grows out of organized instructional environments, also recognized the strength of everyday concepts as the "living knowledge" mediating learning and development (Moll, 1990). For Vygotsky, while "scientific and everyday concepts move in opposite directions in development, these processes are internally and profoundly connected with one another" (p. 219). This interconnection is predicated on the idea that students make sense of the definitions and explanations of scientific concepts through their use of everyday concepts (Moll, 1990). Conversely, everyday concepts also become dependent on scientific concepts in that they are also mediated and transformed by scientific concepts. According to Moll (1990), scientific concepts ". . . become the 'gate' through which conscious awareness and control enter into the domain of everyday concepts" (p. 10). Vygotsky elaborates:

> Having already traveled the long path of development from below to above, everyday concepts have blazed the trail for the continued downward growth of scientific concepts . . . . In the same way, having covered a certain portion of the path from above to below, scientific concepts have blazed the trail for the development of everyday concepts. They have prepared the structural formation necessary for the mastery of the higher characteristics of the everyday concept (p. 10).

In a Freirean sense, the acquisition of scientific concepts—and consequently, the transformation of everyday concepts—facilitates the development of critical social thought.

Critical Social Thinking and the Zone of Proximal Development

For Vygotsky and those that have followed his lead, an understanding of the *zone of proximal development* (ZOPD) is crucial for the design and creation of instructional strategies

that seek to set in motion those "hidden processes" of learning and development yet to be realized (Moll, 1990). In *Mind in Society* (1978), he defines the ZOPD as the "distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p. 86). According to Griffin and Cole (1984), Vygotsky argues that "instruction is good only when it proceeds ahead of development, when it awakens and rouses to life those functions which are in the process of maturing or in the ZOPD. It is in this way that instruction plays an extremely important role in development" (Vygotsky, 1956, p. 278, as quoted in Griffin & Cole, 1984). He further asserts that this conceptualization of human psychological functioning should be applied as a "general developmental law" to children's learning processes:

> We propose that an essential feature of learning is that it creates the zone of proximal development; that is learning awakens a variety of internal developmental processes that are able to operate only when the child is interacting with people in his environment and in cooperation with his peers. (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 90)

A significant contribution in Vygotsky's formulation of the ZOPD is that it makes clear that learning and development are not exclusively individual attributes or processes, but rather are mediated or shaped *in* and *through* participation and social interaction with others (Cole, 1996; Rogoff, 1998, 2003; Wertsch, 1998). Barbara Rogoff (1998) adds that efforts to understand individual cognitive development must consider the social roots of both the tools (i.e., play, language, literacy) for thinking that students are learning (i.e., interpreting text) and the social interactions (co-participatory activities) that guide students in their use.

Research on the MSLI

This dissertation contributes to a body of work documenting the learning and literacy practices of students and teachers in the Migrant Student Leadership Institute (Espinoza, 2008,

2009, 2020; Gutiérrez, 2008, 2019; Nuñez & Gildersleeve, 2016; Pacheco & Nao, 2009; Vossoughi, 2011, 2014). Specifically, it builds on the work of Manuel Espinoza and his anthropological and sociolinguistic study of the everyday formation and sustainability of "intellectual space" organized toward the apprenticeship of students in "social scientific and philosophic reasoning" (Espinoza, 2008, 2009, 2020). In his work, Espinoza also documents the formation of *educational sanctuary* as a social space produced *in* and *through* classroom dialogue and social interaction (Espinoza, 2009).Its conceptualization is akin to notions of *counterspaces* or *radical spaces* created by and for marginalized communities for the purpose of contesting dominant structures of power and dehumanization. Espinoza's conceptualization of *educational sanctuary* is rooted in the possibilities of a pedagogical approach that creates dialogical openings and positions students as co-creators of meaning (2009).

The investigation of talk and social interaction related to the reading and analysis of social theoretical texts builds on the work of Shirin Vossoughi (2011, 2014). In her work, Vossoughi, through an analysis of student and teacher discourse, documented the "teaching and learning practices and social relations" in the MSLI. In particular, Vossoughi (2011) traces the formation of "intellectual kinships" among students and teachers built around the notion ". . . that we are responsible for our fellow human beings" (p. 6). In particular, she found that these kinships were prominent in the collective process of reading constituted by the routine movements between reading and social analysis. These movements supported the sense of togetherness underlying intellectual kinships.

My research on student writing and the pedagogical context of the MSLI builds on the work of Mariana Pacheco and Kimberly Nao (2009) who examined the writing of student participants during the 2002 MSLI. In their investigation of the social organization of writing

and student produced text, Pacheco and Nao identified a "historicized writing" that "encourages students to reinterpret their personal experiences" within a broader sociohistorical context (p. 25). Historicized writing positioned students as "makers of history" as they consider their agency toward self-determination. They found that they utilize social theory as a tool for "rethinking, re-examining, and reinterpreting" their personal experiences supported students in rewriting their "life narratives" and transforming how they defined themselves, families, and communities (p. 40).

CHAPTER 3: STUDY DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I will discuss the study design and methodological approach that I took in conducting this case study of the apprenticeship of students into the practice of literacy and *critical social thinking* within the context of 2006 Migrant Student Leadership Institute. In the context of this study, I conceptualized critical social thinking as a phenomenon that emerged and was shaped *in* and *through* students' interaction with peers, teachers, and social theoretical texts. As such, the analysis in this study relied on an integrated methodological approach utilizing classroom video ethnography, textual analysis of student produced texts, post-program interviews, and curriculum artifacts. Together these data sources construct an analytically grounded narrative of the everyday teaching, learning, and literacy practices of teachers and students as co-creators of educational experience.

Research Questions

In the case of the 2006 UCLA MSLI, the collective process of examining the historical and political dimensions of students' lives was one of the primary objectives of the program. To this end, the curricular and pedagogical approach was oriented toward establishing a reciprocal relationship between social science, reading social theory, writing, and the artistic-performative representation of social life through Theater of the Oppressed (or *Teatro* as we called it). In this study, I focus on the twin components of reading and writing in order to better understand the apprenticeship experience of students, and how they applied aspects of critical social thinking in their writing. By employing qualitative research methods, I provide an in-depth description of the design and pedagogical dimensions of these two components. As such, the following research questions shaped this dissertation study:

1) How were students in the MSLI apprenticed into the practice of critical social thinking in the context of reading social theoretical texts?
2) How, if at all, did students apply the practice of critical social thinking into their writing of academic essays?

Site Description

This dissertation contributes to a body of work documenting the learning and literacy practices of students and teachers in the MSLI (Espinoza, 2008, 2009, 2020; Gutiérrez, 2008, 2019; Nuñez & Gildersleeve, 2016; Pacheco & Nao, 2009; Vossoughi, 2011, 2014). This study utilized classroom audio-video recordings, student writing portfolios, and interview data to provides new perspectives on the routine teaching practices, classroom talk, and social interaction in the MSLI.The MSLI was an intensive, four-week academic and residential institute designed to provide high school students from migrant farm worker communities in California with a college level curriculum in the areas of social theory, college writing, science, and artistic-performative production. The curricular *telos* was one geared toward the development of *critical academic skills* in preparation for admission into institutions of higher education in California, and across the United States. I served as a resident assistant, social science, writing teacher and *Teatro* teacher, and classroom video recorder for three summers (2004, 2005, & 2006).

The educational context was organized around cultural historical principles of learning and development (Cole 1996), toward assisting students in acquiring the *sociocritical* literacies (Gutiérrez, 2008) needed to investigate the historical and political dimensions of their lives and develop the academic literacy skills needed for college admission. Kris Gutiérrez, through a long-term study of the MSLI, conceptualized sociocritical literacy as a "*historicizing literacy* that privileges and is contingent upon students' sociohistorical lives" (2008, p.149). In this study, I

also based my approach on a definition of "critical social literacy" as the capacity to use written text as a means to assess, redefine, and influence one's economic and political destiny (Luke 1994). This includes engaging the texts we encounter in our everyday lives in ways that challenge normative assumptions about the social world, unearth asymmetrical power relations and reveal the social nature of what are often assumed to be individual problems (Vossoughi, 2011, 2014). In the MSLI, this involved using academic texts as tools to explore the relationship between *biography and history*. Students are seen as *historical actors* (Gutiérrez et al., 2019) who bring resources to bear on the interpretation and analysis of the social theoretical readings we analyzed and interpreted together.

The Participants

Serving the Migrant Community

The migrant workers and their families, who harvest food in the state of California and in the United States as a whole, are found to be the most politically and economically marginalized population today (Jaramillo & Nuñez, 2009). This is particularly evident in terms of their health and well-being, employment, and educational opportunities (Baca, 2004; Salinas & Franquiz 2004). Moreover, the experiences and challenges that migrant youth and their families face, must be understood against the backdrop of global capitalism and its relationship to patterns of transnational labor migration (Jaramillo & Nuñez, 2009). That is, the participation of migrant youth in the MSLI must be seen against the backdrop of an increasingly stratified global economy that has displaced poor and Indigenous people in Latin America and other developing countries. Many of the young people that come to the MSLI hold vivid memories of their own migration experiences, as well as close ties to their homelands.

Many of the students that attended the MSLI were also classified as "English Learners," and they face additional challenges given, the educational and public policies, such as English Only laws in California, that compound the effects of transnational migration, systemic racism xenophobia, environmental health issues, and inequitable schooling conditions (Jaramillo & Nuñez, 2009). The youth that attended this program represented the complexity and plurality of migrant communities across the state and region.

Migrant Students in the MSLI

The students that attended the 2006 MSLI were selected based on a cross-section of academic backgrounds. One category of students was entering their twelfth-grade year in high school, and on track to complete their A-G subject requirements for admission into the University of California (UC) and/or the California State University system (CSU). These students represented roughly 40% of the student participants for 2006. The second category of students were students entering their tenth-, eleventh-, and twelfth-grade year, but who were not necessarily on course to meet A–G subject requirements; these students represented roughly 60% of student participants (Jaramillo & Nuñez, 2009). This study focuses on a classroom of 18 students that I refer to as "Familia 4."

"Familia 4"

For many of the students that attend the institute it was their first time away from home, their families and communities. As a teacher-participant in the program, I can recall meeting with students individually to process through their initial feelings of homesickness and a desire to return home after the first couple of days. In most cases, by the end of the first couple of days these feelings subsided and a sense *"familia"* or kinship began to form as students lived, ate, read, wrote, and created together and alongside their teachers, residential assistants, instructors

and administrative staff. In 2006, the metaphor of *"familia"* occupied a prominent role in the everyday discourse of the institute as the 100 students were assigned to five groups with approximately 18 to 20 students per group.

This dissertation study will focused on the experiences of students of in "Familia 4"or Family 4. Shirin Vossoughi, Zitlali Morales, and I made up the instructional team for this group of 10 students who named themselves, "Las Panteras Rosas" or "The Pink Panthers." The students in this family came from different regions in California: Santa Ana, Delano, Redwood City, Hayward, Los Angeles, La Puente, Bakersfield, Fresno, Vista, Indio, Huron, and Yuba City.

Study Design and Methods

In the process of conducting this study, I drew on "interpretative" approaches to qualitative inquiry in education (Erickson, 1986). Frederick Erickson refers to qualitative research as part of a "family of interpretative approaches" which includes ethnography, participant observation, and case study. A central concern of validity in interpretative qualitative inquiry is the "immediate and local meanings of actors as defined from the actors' point of view" (p. 119).

An interpretative approach was particularly relevant to this study because of its view of classrooms as culturally and socially organized learning environments (Erickson, 1982). In order to better understand the phenomenon of apprenticeship and critical social thinking in the context of the MSLI I documented, through classroom video and took observational notes; the resulting pedagogical practices and social interaction constituted the daily occurrence of reading circles. I also collected and analyzed interviews conducted with students after the end of the program in their homes or community spaces. As I explain next, students' first-person accounts of their

experiences in the program were informative in shifting my conceptual focus from *critical social thinking* as a static or endpoint, but rather critical social thinking as a iterative social practice that is continually being shaped and revised in moment-to-moment interactions. This process was important to identifying "the meanings those events [had] for those who [participated] in them and for those who [witnessed] them" (Erickson, 1998, p. 1155). In addition, a key aspect of this of this approach was to focus on the role language and interaction played in the daily real-time mediation of learning classroom settings. I build upon the work of David Bloome and his colleagues (2005), who developed a method to study how people use language and other forms of communication (including written communication) in constructing language and literacy events (Heath, 1983) in classrooms with particular emphasis on social, and cultural processes.

> Microethnographic approaches foreground the daily life of classrooms. We take a strong view that the daily life of teachers and students in classrooms is not to be taken for granted, homogenized under broad generalizations, or collapsed into deterministic processes of social and cultural reproduction. For us, classrooms are complex places where teachers create and recreate, adopt and adapt, and engage in a full range of human interactions. Teachers and students are viewed as active agents. (xvi)

This approach was congruent with the theoretical framework provided above in that it recognizes that any use of language involves the development of multiple meaning perspectives in a given educational setting.

I employed a "a qualitative case study" approach, because of the potential to learn about a particular phenomenon, such as critical social thinking, as a social process, by studying a single case in depth. I did not seek to generalize beyond this case study, but to optimize our understanding of the lived ecology of the MSLI and in particular, the classroom of "Familia 4" as an educational experiment (Moll, 2000). Toward this end, I triangulated classroom video data, student writing, and post-program interviews.

Data Collection and Analysis

The following section provides a discussion of the research approach and analysis upon which the examination of apprenticeship in critical social thinking in MSLI was grounded. Within this discussion, I provide a description of the data sources and my approach in the analysis phase of this study. I first provide a discussion of the data collection process that took place during and after the conclusion of the program. Following a discussion of the data sources, I discuss, in detail, my approach in the data construction and analysis of post hoc interviews, classroom and reading circle video recordings, and student writing. My approach to the analysis was guided by the following research questions:

1) How were students in the MSLI apprenticed into the practice of critical social thinking in the context of reading social theoretical texts?

   a) What kinds of pedagogical talk and practices supported students in reading and analyzing social theoretical texts?

   b) What were the affordances and constraints of close-text analysis in regard to the apprenticeship of students?

2) How, if at all, did students apply the practice of critical social thinking into their writing of academic essays?

   a) In what ways did students incorporate concepts and critical habits of mind in the process of defining and reframing social problems?

Classroom Video Recordings

This dissertation study is based on classroom video recordings collected during the 2006 MSLI. In particular, it examines a subset of video recordings focused on the reading component of MSLI which took place within daily reading circles. The footage collected was "raw" given

that action was shot continuously with little movement of the camera from side to side, and few changes in the angle of the camera. The main advantage of this kind of footage, according to Erickson (2004a, 2004b), is that it provides a continuous and relatively comprehensive record of social interaction.

During the 2006 MSLI, I approached the use of the camera with the utmost sensitivity to the students in the classroom. Before placing the camera in the classroom, I explained to students my intention and ultimate goal in using a video camera to record our daily activities in order to better understand the learning and teaching learning that was taken place in our classroom, particularly as it related to the reading, and writing we did together. I informed students of their rights as participants, and that they had the liberty to ask that the camera be turned off or that they not be included in the camera frame. As some of the early footage shows, some students were curious and waved and spoke into the camera, while others tried to avoid the camera altogether. Before placing the camera to record small group activity, like reading circles, and asked if I could record them, and most times, students gave their permission. Before long, the camera became another artifact of the classroom, and at various moments in the course of the month students took over operation of the camera. As students were building relationships as a group, they demonstrated a desire to record and document their time together, reminding me to ensure the camera was recording.

Student Writing Portfolios

In addition to classroom video, my data set or information sources consist of 18 student writing portfolios collected during the 2006 MSLI. These portfolios contained several pieces of writing, including journal entries, class notes, responses to guiding questions to the readings, brainstorming, peer and instructor feedback, and rough and final drafts of major writing

assignments (i.e., extended definition, summary, analytical précis, argumentation, and autobiography). I focused my analysis on the writing portfolios of the five students I interviewed for this study. This decision was intentional in that analyzing student interviews and their writing portfolios together provided key insights into how students how students incorporated social theoretical concepts into their written analysis of social problems and how they made sense of these concepts with regard to their lived experiences.

Post-hoc Interviews

The data set also consisted of post-hoc research interviews conducted with five students after the conclusion of the 2006 MSLI. In order to conduct these interviews, I traveled to their homes which were located in various cities and townships in the state of California. In preparation for these interviews, I asked students to re-read their extended definition and argumentation assignments. The interviews were guided by the following questions:

1) What kinds of things come to mind as you read over the work you did in the program?
2) As you read through this work again, what do you remember about writing these different essays?
3) Which texts/readings did you integrate in your essay? Why these readings?
4) What helped you in writing this essay (i.e., lectures, conversations with students or instructors, readings, or discussions in *Teatro*)?
5) What do you think was the purpose behind asking you to write an extended definition/argumentation?
6) Why did you choose to write about the 'social problem' you address in your argumentation?

These questions enabled me to gain insights into the experience of writing in the program as well the specific decisions they made as authors.

Data Construction and Analysis

The development of my approach to the study of apprenticeship in critical social thinking was greatly influenced by the established body of research on the MSLI (Espinoza, 2008, 2009, 2020; Gutiérrez, 2008, 2019; Nuñez & Gildersleeve, 2016; Pacheco & Nao, 2009; Vossoughi, 2011, 2014). In particular, this body of research has documented in great deal the individual and collective dimensions of a curriculum, teaching philosophy, and teachings practices of a program oriented toward the development of academic literacies and critical social analysis (Espinoza, 2008, 2009, 2020; Gutiérrez, 2008, 2019; Pacheco & Nao, 2009; Vossoughi, 2011, 2014). My study contributes to the body of work through a focus on close textual analysis, it's relationships with writing, and how students described/narrated their experiences as writers.

The process described here is intended to provide the reader an understanding of my approach in data construction and analyzing my data sources. Even though they are presented in sequential order, I do want to point that this process was iterative especially I worked to check my assumptions regarding my observations.

Analysis of Post-hoc Interviews

In her dissertation study, Shirin Vossoughi (2011) examined the teaching and learning practices that constituted the MSLI. Her study shaped my understanding of the role the shared reading of social theoretical texts played in the learning students did in the program. My understanding was also shaped by participation as a co-teacher in this classroom. In light of this research and my experience, reviewed and transcribed audio-taped recordings of post-hoc interviews I conducted with five students in 2007. I did this in order to attain a first-person

account of their experience in the program, especially as it related to the literacy practices, they engaged over the four-week program.

As I described above, these interviews focused on documenting students' experiences with the program as whole, as well as their experiences as readers and writers in the program. In particular, students were asked to discuss how they incorporated social theoretical concepts into the writing of the extended definition and argumentation essays.

As I listened to the recorded interviews, I took the inequivalent of observation notes and noting moments in the interview when they discussed reflections on their writing, the process of writing them, and the choices they made in the composition process. I transcribed, in detail, moments in the interviews when we discussed what factors led them use a particular concept or quote, or how did they arrive at the particular social problem they wrote about in their argumentation essay.

As I discuss in greater detail, in Chapter 5, I found that students recalled moments in the program that led them to make intellectual and personal connections to specific readings, authors, or concepts. In addition, my transcription and analysis of these interviews led me gain a greater understanding of their writing in terms of how these "social analytical artifacts" (Vossoughi, 2014) as served as tools for expression and meaning-making in the context of their academic essays. These interviews were formative in narrowing my analytical focus as I turned to the analysis of classroom video.

Analysis of Classroom and Reading Circle Video

The analysis of classroom and reading circle video enabled me to answer the following research questions:

1). How were students in the MSLI apprenticed into the practice of critical social thinking in the context of reading social theoretical texts?

a) What kinds of pedagogical talk and practices supported students in reading and analyzing social theoretical texts?

b) What were the affordances and constraints of close-text analysis in regard to the apprenticeship of students?

Based on my review of classroom research previously conducted in the MSLI (Espinoza, 2008; Vossoughi, 2011) and my analysis of student interview data, I began the initial phase of data construction and analysis (Erickson, 1998) by viewing tapes in their entirety without stopping the recorded action. As I viewed entire recorded events, I began the data construction process by writing the equivalent of field notes or, what I refer to here as content logs. My interest in observing and documenting apprenticeship led me to focus my investigation on reading circles, because of the smaller settings and the kinds of mediation and dialogue I was observing between teachers and students.

I reviewed reading circle video multiple times in order to identify the particular strategies and tools teachers were utilizing to engage students in the analysis of social theoretical texts. In my content logs, I noted particular routines and practices in reading circles, such as the dialogue at the beginning of the session as the group prepared to "enter" the reading and the movements between the reading of a passage and the teacher mediated dialogue that followed. In documenting these routines, the "questioning practices" of teachers began to emerge as a key practice in mediating close-text analysis and conceptual understanding. I categorized these questioning practice as "generative questioning," which seemed to be oriented toward building conceptual development among students.

In addition, I also observed instances in which the dialogue seem oriented engaging in a close-text analysis of the author's language practices as a writer. I categorized these instances as "reading with a writer's eye," which seemed oriented toward making visible the kind of writing moves authors developed in their analysis in the text. These instances were important to comprehend how teachers attempted to build students' understanding of the reciprocal relationship between reading and writing, as well as preparing students for their own writing in the program.

Finally, I examined the ways students responded to teachers' questioning, particularly in terms of their sense-making of the text. I categorized these moments as "sense-making" and how their responses contributed to the shared process of social analysis taking shape in reading circles. As I examined these moments, I noted how teachers created openings in the dialogue though verbal and non-verbal cues such as asking to expand or clarify, "affirming" their responses through non-verbal gestures like nodding their head or recording their responses on the large note paper, as well as the through the use of "affirming" or "complementing" language. I categorized teacher-mediated openings as "attunement," in which teachers' attentive listening and sense of students' meaning making created a safe space for students to experiment with these complex and difficult readings.

Analysis of the Extended Definition and Argumentation Assignments

I approached the analysis of student writing in ways that helped me the following research question:

2) How, if at all, did students apply the practice of critical social thinking into their writing of academic essays?

2a) In what ways did students incorporate concepts and critical habits of mind in the process of defining and reframing social problems?

In exploring this question, I approached the analysis of student writing by identifying how students incorporated social theoretical concepts and ideas into their writing. In particular, I looked at the instances of "quoting" and "referencing" the ideas or words of other authors and how they weaved them into their narrative. As I discuss in Chapter 5, I also noted moments in their writing when they used first-person narrative to weave in life experiences. I noted each student's choice in voice, sense of audience, reframing, and integrating the voice of other authors. I provide further discussion of the analysis relevant to the findings in Chapter 5.

Discussion

Taken together, this dissertation study on the apprenticeship of students into the social practice of critical social thinking drew upon on three major sources of data: (a) video footage of the classroom and reading circle interaction; (b) student writing portfolios; and (c) post-hoc interviews with five students. I coordinated these data sources in order to produce an interpretative case study of students' participation in the MSLI as it pertains to their apprenticeship in the social practice of critical social thinking. My approach also utilized curriculum artifacts in order to reconstruct the social organization of reading and writing in the MSLI. Given the scope of the data I analyzed, I do not attempt to make assertions or generalizations related to other contexts in MSLI. Consequently, issues of validity and generalizability are limited to the reading circles, students, and writing portfolios I analyzed in this study.

While the video, writing and interviews provide rich sources of information about the apprenticeship of students into the social practice of critical social thinking, observing this

phenomenon across other classrooms in the MSLI would be ideal in developing further insights into the kinds of learning that took place in this program. We know for example that feedback and writing conferences are vital to the development of academic writing and reading. We can certainly apply this principle to the ways we, as instructors, engage student writing, and structure feedback and writing conferences into the instructional design of the program. In my three years of experience as a teacher in the MSLI, I have observed the ways students make meaning of these kinds of teaching and learning interactions in terms of their influence on the development of their writing and reading.

CHAPTER 4: APPRENTICESHIP IN CRITICAL SOCIAL THINKING: READING CIRCLES, AND THE COLLECTIVE ENGAGEMENT OF SOCIAL PROBLEMS

The UCLA Migrant Student Leadership Institute (MSLI) was a university summer residential program for high school aged youth from migrant farmworker communities across the state of California. The program was rooted in a multidisciplinary set of political and pedagogical frameworks that were focused on addressing the historical and contemporary forms colonization and systemic marginalization shaping the social realities of youth from nondominant communities. Tejeda et al. (2003) argue that the struggle for social justice *from* and *within* the educational arena requires a *decolonizing pedagogical praxis* that seeks to transform classrooms and schools into sites for humanization and the development of a critical social consciousness. With the tenets of a decolonizing pedagogy in mind, the MSLI was designed to prepare high school aged youth from migrant worker communities to be able to critique and work against systems of dehumanization and oppression, while also developing the academic literacies necessary to access the university (Tejeda et al.,2003).

This chapter focuses on the apprenticeship of students in the MSLI into the *social practice of critical social thinking*. Specifically, it examines the mediation of social theoretical texts within the context of small reading groups or, what I call, reading circles.Reading circles were small interactional spaces in which students (4 to 5 per circle) and teachers (1 to 2 per circle) worked alongside each other to read and interpret dense and difficult social theoretical texts. Pedagogically, reading circles provide a window into how the reading was organized and distributed among students with assistance and support from their teachers. Simultaneously, reading circles served as productive spaces for apprenticing students into the social practice of critical social thinking. I focus on the routine teaching practices and dialogue to gain new

perspectives on how the mode of reading and social analysis might inform the development of instructional models that seek to bring together academic and critical approaches to literacy (de los Rios et al., 2015). As such, the following research questions guided the analysis in this chapter:

1). How were students in the MSLI apprenticed into the practice of critical social thinking in the context of reading social theoretical texts?

a) What kinds of pedagogical talk and practices supported students in the reading and analysis of social theoretical texts?

b) What were the affordances and constraints of close-text analysis in regards to the apprenticeship of students?

I focus on the process of *apprenticeship* as a lens to better understand the role that teachers played in assisting and guiding students in their efforts to grapple with difficult academic and social theoretical texts, and the social science ideas and language they encountered (Rogoff, 1990; Vossoughi, 2014). As illustrated by the descriptive vignettes I present, the texts presented students with complex historical, sociological, and political theories. I utilize a particular conceptualization of apprenticeship and guided participation that puts emphasize on the role of the teacher, as an experienced participant with a history, knowledge and skills as experienced readers to assist students in social analysis (Kirshner, 2008; Rogoff, 1990, 2003). In the next section, I will define what I mean by apprenticeship and how it applies to the distributed nature of reading circles.

I begin this chapter with an extended definition of *apprenticeship* and *guided participation* based the foundational research of cultural historical researchers in the area of learning and human development in-school and out-of-school contexts. I follow this definition

with an in-depth description of *reading circles* and the routines, procedures and practices that sustained the activity over the course of the four-week program. This discussion sets the stage for the presentation of the central findings of this chapter. In the findings section, I present descriptive analysis of the micro-exchanges that took place within reading circles, and how these exchanges were critical to students' conceptual development and apprenticeship into the social practice of critical social thinking.

Apprenticeship and Guided Participation in Reading Circles

Apprenticeship is a term commonly associated with the craft or trade professions, like carpentry, tailoring, or pipefitting. The apprentice, as the newcomer to a *community of practice*, participates in the trade activity alongside experienced mentors or teachers as they develop their knowledge and skill (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Rogoff, 1990). As their skills and understanding develop, they assume greater responsibility and a sense of autonomy in the trade or craft. Building on this tradition, researchers in the field of education, learning and human development, and literacy have extended this metaphor to other cultural or institutional contexts, such as schools, after-school programs, science centers, theater and art programs, and political organizing (Kirshner, 2008; Lee, 1995; Rogoff, 1990). I build upon these applications of apprenticeship by examining how the share process unfolded and functioned within the setting of the MSLI.

Apprenticeship is a community-level process, according Barbara Rogoff (1995, 2003), in which newcomers to a *community of practice* (e.g., carpenters, teachers, writers, researchers, etc.) advance their knowledge and skills by participating alongside more experienced members in culturally organized and meaningful activities. If we apply apprenticeship to academic contexts, then students are positioned as active participants in the community of practice. As

active participants in the learning community, students bring with them background knowledge, life histories, memories, and understandings of the social world that serve as resources as they work to appropriate new knowledge and skills.

As I will discuss in greater detail, reading circles provided students the space and time to work side-by-side and in close proximity to their teachers who brought to bear their own reading histories to this setting. I want to note that members of the instructional staff were comprised of undergraduate and graduate-level students. Some came to teach in MSLI having been former public-school teachers, after-school program coordinators, community organizers, and graduate teaching assistants. In most cases, teachers in the MSLI came to the experience of reading circles with their own nuanced histories and understanding of engaging with academic and critical social texts. By the same token, students also brought with them a range of experiences of participation, or *cultural repertoires of practice*, to the context of reading in the MSLI (Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003).

The emphasis on the learning community includes the role the adult or teacher as the expert or more experienced co-participant with the responsibility of providing assistance, guidance, and support for students" (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Rogoff, 1990). This idea complicates the notion, among some critical educators, that teachers should serve as facilitators of a process in which students come to their own understanding or reading of the social world. This perspective undermines the important role teachers play in the cognitive, affective, and personal development of students as they navigate unfamiliar intellectual terrain. In the apprenticeship framework, rooted in cultural-historical perspectives, the teacher is responsible for not only creating the conditions for a shared or distributive learning process, but also responsible for supporting and cultivating moments in which students stretch their perceived

capabilities (Diaz & Flores, 2001). Within this framework of apprenticeship, I approached the study of apprenticeship in the social practices of critical social thinking situating the teacher as a full member of the learning community and co-creator of meaning.

For example, Ben Kirshner (2008) investigated two models of adult participation in youth political organizations. The study compared distinct forms of adult participation through a "facilitation" model and participation organized around, what he characterized as an "apprenticeship" model. Under the "facilitator model," adult participation was focused on maintaining politically neutral stances and creating space for youth to initiate and generate solutions to problems they cared about. In this model, adults positioned themselves on the periphery of the organizing work and political education. Yet, even under this model of participation, adults played a formative role in helping to organize and facilitate discussion where students arrived at a group decision.

In the "apprenticeship model" to adult participation, on the other hand, Kirshner (2008) found that adults viewed themselves and their participation as responsible for the political education and apprenticeship of youth into the social practice of community organizing. They considered themselves as full members of the organization and its political activity. As such, adults participated in the same endeavors as *novice youth* and worked side-by-side with them in political projects (Kirshner, 2008). The apprenticeship environment included elements of facilitation, however there was emphasis on "structuring opportunities" for skill practice and development. In contrast to the pure facilitation approach, building on the work of Lave and Wenger's (1991) seminal work in situated learning, the apprenticeship model was geared toward providing youth full access to the community of practice or *sociohistorical* activity of organizing for social justice by sharing their experiences and histories as community organizers. In this

sense, adult participants viewed their participation as full members of the political movement or campaign, and with that came expressing their full commitment to social action.

These case studies of apprenticeship in action within youth political movements help to refocus and highlight the critical role of coordination and communication in the reading circles in the MSLI. These processes were central to how I examined the distributive nature of reading and critical social analysis in the MSLI. Rogoff (1995, 2003) identified the interpersonal dimension of apprenticeship as *guided participation*. The concept of guided participation serves as a methodological framework for how one examines at the varied ways children and youth engage as active participants alongside their adult companions in shared cultural endeavors. Researchers can apply this framework to learning contexts that occur within and outside formal schooling settings.

Guided participation, as an analytical framework, takes into account the multiple levels of arrangements and interactions that shape participation. As it relates to the shared activity of reading in the MSLI, I take into account the conceptual and material tools, and forms of knowledge that were brought to bear within the setting of the reading circles. In addition, a framework of guided participation helps focus the analysis on the ways the overarching educational and political objectives of the MSLI shaped the everyday engagement in *sociocritical* literacy practices (Gutiérrez, 2008). In particular, how these objectives informed social relations among teachers and students in terms of their shifting roles over the month-long program.

My approach to the study of apprenticeship in critical social thinking does not intend to generalize to all student participation or their experience of engaging academic and critical social texts. Rather, my investigation seeks to provide a rich description of one teacher's mediation and

apprenticeship practices as a guide to further investigate the kinds of talk and social interaction that shaped student experiences across other contexts in the MSLI (Erickson, 1982). This approach is key to understanding critical social analysis as an interactional process, rather than an intellectual destination, that students and teachers co-created as they navigated complex social phenomena together in the hopes of creating a more liberatory image of future social relations (Espinoza, 2009). Thus, I document the ways MSLI students made use of the resources available in order to participate as co-creators of knowledge. By incorporating the framework of *guided participation*, I am able to account for the range of pedagogical tools teachers utilized to conduct reading circles, as well as how they created opportunities for students to grapple with social theory and stretch their social imaginations (Vossoughi, 2014).

The Social Organization of Reading in the MSLI

"What does it mean to read and write? What is the purpose of reading and writing? How can reading and writing help us reflect on our experiences?" These were open-ended questions posed to students during first day of the 2006 MSLI at UCLA. These questions functioned as a challenge for students to reflect on their previous understandings about function and purpose of reading and writing. For some students, perhaps it was a matter of reflecting how they were socialized through schools and other institutions or apprenticed into reading and writing up to that point. For others, perhaps it was matter of reflecting on what the purpose of reading and writing could be at an individual and collective level. Yet the third question— "How can reading and writing helps us reflect on our experiences?"—was perhaps intended to be half-rhetorical and half-intended to ignite students' imagination about the kind of reading and writing they were about to do with their teachers.

The built curriculum and design of the program had taken shape weeks before students arrived on campus (e.g., curriculum themes, curating of readings, guiding questions, handouts, writing assignments, and lecture presentations). The social organization of reading was also built built through the everyday moment-to-moment talk and social interaction that took place over the four weeks of the program. Before moving to a description of the social organization of reading, I would like to describe how literacy, particularly reading and writing, was defined and framed in the early moments of the program and invitational stance of teacher talk. Through the presentation and discussion of pedagogical talk, I argue that teacher discourse helped to set the stage for more ethical and humanizing social interactions in the service of apprenticing students into the practice of critical social thinking.

I would like to revisit the first day of the MSLI to give the reader a feel for the affective texture of the pedagogical discourse in this setting. From a historical standpoint, the first day of the program took on a special significance in the curricular planning process over the three years I participated as a member of the instructional staff. In the 2006 MSLI, the instructional staff led students through a series of theatrical games, inspired by the work of Brazilian theatre practitioner and political educator, Augusto Boal. The games were designed to warm up students' bodies and minds for the heavy work of intellectual inquiry and social analysis (Boal, 2014). On a warm summer day in late June in 2006, as all 100 student participants sat in anticipation in Moore Hall 100, one of the lead instructors, Shirin, invited students to consider the following proposition:

Excerpt 4.1

01	Shirin:	(*loudly*) La escuela como pudiera ser [school as it could be]!…we are
02		going to create this idea of school as it could be together. Reading and
03		writing here is also an opportunity to encounter new ideas…we call
04		them social theories…and even though this word theory seems like

it belongs here in UCLA and nowhere else…we all already think with theory…everything that I do I do it with a theory or understanding…even what I am doing right now…I am doing it with a theory about how I think students learn, and how I think the best way to teach is…I have ideas about that…but we have to learn to examine these ideas or theories because we might find out that these ideas or theories are not really helping me. This month is an opportunity…to examine the theories that guide us through our days. (MSLI, 06/26/06)

"School as it could be" is a phrase that is rooted in the art and practice of Theater of the Oppressed or *Teatro Del Oprimido*. "The world as it could be," according to Augosto Boal (2014), represents a collective vision of the future, in which humanization and justice is restored through social action. In this excerpt, Shirin draws on the phrase of *"school as it could be"* as a kind of open invitation to students begin to construct a transformative framework for academic literacy. As we see with her articulation of social theories (lines 4–15), this framework creates openings for students to access university-level readings and grapple with their complexity in ways that help them reflect and rethink their social lives. She invites students to consider how these texts may challenge our ways of thinking about the world and the contradictions that emerge from this process. Yet, Shirin's talk also seems like an open invitation to students to engage in the process, as budding social theorists, of identifying and analyzing contradictions in our understandings of the social world. The analytical vignettes I present in the chapter illuminate how one teacher's practices cultivated a safe and productive space to explore these contradictions and stretch their social imaginations (Espinoza, 2009; Gutiérrez, 2008; Vossoughi, 2014).

The process of engaging students in reading social theory was a distributive process that took place across multiple settings and times. Reading and thinking with social theory texts was not regulated to a singular setting and time. Students read and discussed texts during whole-class instruction and writing workshops. Texts took center stage during structured reading circles

facilitated by instructional staff. *Teatro del Oprimido* (Boal, 2014) also served as a fruitful site to think and create scenes informed by the concepts students studied. The distributive quality of reading social theory in the MSLI was observed through the everyday interactions and dialogue that took place within and across these settings.

Reading Circles

While the apprenticeship process took place across multiple pedagogical spaces, one of the most important spaces were organized *reading circles,* in which students and teachers worked together to read and interpret complex academic and critical social texts. Reading circles represented one space in which the reading and analysis of these texts took place. They were intended to be smaller, more intimate settings comprised of 5 to 7 students and a teacher. In the classroom where I served as a teacher, there were usually three reading circles occurring simultaneously. The objective of reading circles was to engage students in the close-text reading as a generative process to build their conceptual understanding, analyze authors' writing practices, and analyze social problems affecting migrant communities.

From a curricular standpoint, the implementation of reading groups or *reading circles* (as I refer to them in this dissertation) as an organizing activity evolved from previous years of the MSLI. The reading circles I am describing in this study occurred in one particular classroom, in which I served as a teacher and video recorder in 2006. Instructionally, one of the affordances of reading circles was the flexibility for the teacher to transition between reading along with students *to* apprenticing students in decoding and interpreting texts. As the analytical vignettes will illustrate, the apprenticing process was achieved by situating the teacher as the experienced reader with the experience, knowledge, and skills to model and scaffold social analysis in the moment. Speaking for myself, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire, 2000) and *The Sociological*

Imagination (Mills, 1959) were formative texts in my intellectual and political development. These texts were also connected to my own apprenticeship as a critical social reader, thinker, and writer.

The implementation of reading circles did not follow a pre-determined protocol or formulaic script as it pertained to reading and analyzing texts together. As such, teachers served in the dual roles as partners in collective intellectual inquiry and building a shared conceptual understanding. They provided students direction and modeled and supported them in the apprenticing process by making visible the reasoning processes, strategies, and discursive practices that constitute critical social thinking. These manifested in the form of generative ideas or concepts, metaphors, or figurative language utilized by the authors in constructing the central framework of a text. The emphasis was on identifying generative concepts and themes and create opportunities for students to develop deeper understandings of these concepts.

Close text-reading created pedagogical openings to model the habits of mind essential to analyzing complex social theory. One such habit of mind was the emphasis on reading with a *writer's eye*. The text-based discussions that emerged in the reading circles served as opportunities to build bridges to thinking about the tools they will need to employ as they think about writing their own essays. The kind of analytical work that took place in the reading circles were not only occasions for students to grapple with new concepts, but also chances to learn about the broader practice of writing for social analysis. By facilitating meta-analytical discussions, in the moment, of the language and rhetorical mechanisms used by the authors, teachers repositioned these texts as models of writing and social analysis.

An outside observer of reading circles in the MSLI may notice the use of various materials students and teachers utilized as tools in the process of close-text reading. Each student

read from and navigated a binder of photocopied book chapters and articles carefully selected and compiled by the teaching staff. Many of these readings had been foundational texts for several years in the MSLI. When available, teachers also provided Spanish versions of the readings, like *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, *Open Veins of Latin America*, and *Enrique's Journey*. Among the other objects were dictionaries in both English and Spanish frequently utilized to define key terms. Students utilized large sheets of white charting paper and colored markers to construct visual conceptual maps.

Together, these objects served as important artifacts to mediate interpretation and joint meaning-making. By artifacts, I refer to the co-production of visual representations of reading and thinking in the form of *conceptual maps* that were key to building understanding and making intertextual connections. Concept maps were created using charting paper and markers and were developed as reading circle participants dialogued and interpreted sociological concepts. The concept maps document the genesis and evolution of thinking that stemmed from generative questions teachers posed to students, such as defining the term "rhetoric" as it relates to dominant narratives or "contradiction" as it relates to social policies.

One important and understated aspect of reading circles in the MSLI was that the reading of texts was shared among students and teachers through the *reading of passages aloud*. As one participant read a passage aloud, the other participants listened, followed along in their texts, took notes, and highlighted keywords or phrases. Students were neither expected nor obligated to read aloud, so most of the time students volunteered to read. Teachers would often begin the reading circle by reading a passage aloud and then open the group dialogue with generative questions. As I stated previously, there was no predetermined order or scripted process informing

reading circles, however, over time, students began taking on a greater role in reading aloud as they gained confidence with navigating texts.

I want to emphasize that the practice of reading passages aloud played an important role in shaping talk and meaning making around the engagement of complex social theory, as well as in other classroom settings in which texts was collectively interpreted. As the vignettes of reading circles demonstrate, the reading process often initiated with the teacher posing a generative question to students as a step toward entering the texts and establishing a shared knowledge base to build on. This would then be followed by a teacher or student volunteering to read a passage aloud with the other participants following along in their readers. Once the reader finished a passage or two, it was common practice for the teacher to lead students in a dialogue with the objective of unpacking the author's central concepts, language use, and structure. These moments of text-based dialogue were frequently captured on large sheets of charting paper or on a white board, such as the one illustrated in Figure 1.

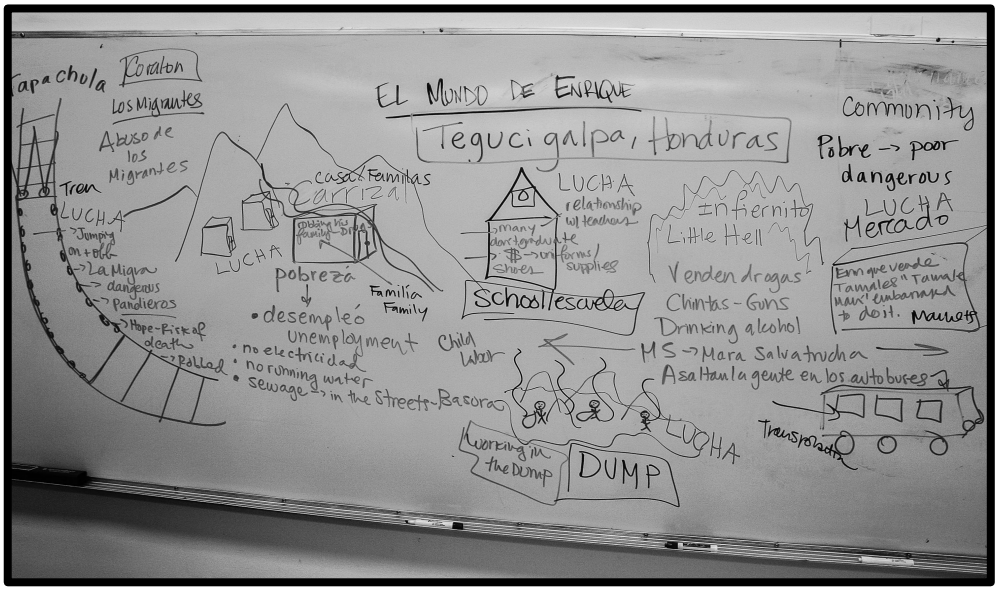

Figure 1. This photograph is an example of how the collective thinking around text was captured and visually represented. UCLA MSLI, 2006. Photographed by the author, July 3, 2006.

In an ethnographic study of teaching and learning in the Migrant Student Leadership Program, Vossoughi (2011) describes this process as "lifting off" the text as a means ". . . to engage in the work of assisted meaning making" (p. 163). Lifting off the text "were temporary departures from the text" in which both teachers and students worked together to unpack the meaning of the passage or passages (p. 164). A critical dimension of the lifting-off process is coming back down to the text and the shifting meaning perspectives and understanding that occur through this process.

Reading aloud in the MSLI helped to define the experience of reading and thinking together, and the kinds of relational bonds students cultivated with texts and each other during their month-long residence at UCLA. By reading chunks of text aloud in a small group setting, students who may have felt less confident about their reading ability could participate in legitimate ways by being an active listener, taking notes, and contributing to the process of social analysis and knowledge production. As a participant and observer of the apprenticeship process, I can attest to the presence of a shared responsibility among students and teachers for reading, interpreting, and constructing a shared knowledge base for all to access. This shared responsibility cultivated a sense of community among participants, as well as the development of profound intellectual and personal connections with the concepts they encountered through their participation in reading circles.

Moreover, reading aloud expanded opportunities for students to gain full access to the seemingly invisible cognitive and linguistic process involved in both composing and analyzing social analytical texts. There was a certain aesthetic dimension to the practice of speaking aloud the words of authors like Paulo Freire, Eduardo Galeano, and Gloria Anzaldúa through the voices of migrant students. Perhaps this aspect of reading circles contributed to the accessibility

of these dense texts by putting their language on display to dissect and deconstruct through the guidance of teachers. Through the metacognitive process, students discuss authors' perspectives and develop their own understanding by listening to the interpretation and opinions of their peers.

Findings and Analysis

As I present my findings, I want to remind the reader of the research questions that guided this study:

1). How were students in the MSLI apprenticed into the practice of critical social thinking in the context of reading social theoretical texts?

   a) What kinds of pedagogical talk and practices supported students in the reading and analysis of social theoretical texts?

   b) What were the affordances and constraints of close-text analysis in regard to the apprenticeship of students?

Close-Text Analysis and Generative Questioning as Guided Practice

Apprenticing students in the MSLI into the practices of critical social thinking meant creating opportunities—through talk and social interaction—for students to build a conceptual understanding as well as opportunities for sense-making as it pertained to life histories. Reading circles, as opposed to whole-class lectures and discussions, were productive sites for concept-building and providing students access to robust language practices. Understanding concepts like "praxis," "problem-posing education," or "biopower" required teachers to employ pedagogical moves that both (a) mediated close-text analysis and (b) developed more expanded definitions of analytical vocabulary. In my examination of one teacher's pedagogical talk and teaching practices, I found that the process of concept development was proceeded and sustained through

generative questioning.

To illustrate this further, I present a reading circle episode in which the participants are preparing to enter Chapter 2 of Paulo Freire's (1970) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Entering texts were moments before the actual reading of the text took place. In one sense, entering the text was about trying to get a bird's eye view of text and identify the major themes or ideas. Yet these moments were important in terms of establishing a shared knowledge base by engaging in a meta-reflective process that involved all participants in the reading circle. Finally, it was also an opportunity to situate the author in their particular historical and social context in which they wrote their text.

Before the vignette, I provide a few notes on the specific text that is at the center of this episode. For several years, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* by Paulo Freire (1970) served as one of the foundational texts of the MSLI and was traditionally introduced during the first week of the program. Students were assigned to read Chapter 1 ("Fear of Freedom") and Chapter 2 ("The Banking Concept of Education") over the course of several days. As a class, we made the decision to spend most of our time reading Chapter 2, partially because of its significance in demonstrating a critical analysis of schooling and education as a hegemonic apparatus, and the reconceptualization of education as a humanizing liberatory process. At times, we took the approach of conducting a rhetorical analysis of the text as a whole class by copying excerpts of the text onto a PowerPoint slide and projecting the excerpt onto a large wall in the rear of the classroom. Doing so allowed us to magnify the excerpt many times over and unpack Freire's argument collectively. We intentionally took the time to point out the moves Freire made as a writer and made sure not to skim or gloss over difficult theoretical language. Other such texts warranted a similar approach.

As the video recording begins talking and laughter can be heard as students and teachers maneuver around the room arranging chairs and tables into place. The humming sound of fans can also be overheard. Large, rectangular white sheets of paper taped to the wall are gently flapping from the wind generated from the fans. The afternoon sunlight pierces through the tree branches just outside the frame of the large windows. While the camera frame is on a group of 5 students talking and opening their readers, another group of students in the background can be seen doing the same thing.

Shirin, who faces the camera, is sitting, book opened in front of her with her arms folded and resting atop the book. She turned to help a couple of students find their readings. Then she looked over at the student to her right and asked, "Do you have it?" This was a frequent and necessary question during the first week of the 2006 MSLI, because all the photocopiers in Moore Hall seemed to have broken down. Shirin asked students to turn to page 73 in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970). Once students found their places, Shirin started the circle with an opening question that seemed oriented toward summarizing the main themes of the reading up to that point. The question seemed intent on conjuring an image of Freire as a member of the teaching staff in the MSLI:

Excerpt 4.2

01	Shirin**:**	Ok…so what has he [Freire] taught us so far?…
02		In this chapter?…What has he tried to teach us so far?…
03	Rosie:	He said that teachers should talk about your experiences…and um…that
04		teachers should talk about your experiences and not just teach you stuff
05		so that you can repeat it back to them…
06	Shirin:	So teachers should talk about your experiences…
07		((*With a marker in hand Shirin writes Rosie's response in on the large*
08		*white poster paper.*))
09	Elena:	That they teach… uh like ((*thumbing through her reader*))…What did he

call it?… ((*voice lowers, seems unsure*)) banking education?

Shirin: ((*nods in affirmation as she writes on the poster paper*))
What's banking education?… (*3*)

Rosie: Like for example when they just make you memorize stuff…

Shirin: What is wrong with "Banking Education" for Freire?…
Why is he criticizing it?… ¿Porque esta criticando la educación
bancaria?…Why is he criticizing it?…(5)

Edward: There is not much change in ideas throughout the generations…because
students don't get to think about them…They don't think about the ideas,
they just accept them.

Shirin: Ok…so students don't really think about them…((*she writes the comment
on the poster paper*)). (UCLA MSLI, 06/26/06)

I want to call attention to the generative questions Shirin posed in this stretch of talk as students prepare to enter the text. She directed her initial question (lines 01–02) at the group and its phrasing ("What has Freire taught us so far? What has he tried to teach us so far?"), seemed oriented toward recapping and reviewing key concepts. However, when we consider the instances of generative questioning and close-text reading across time, her question is about assisting students in developing a grounded understanding of "banking education," as a foundational concept. She is guiding students in developing a shared knowledge base and a framework for all students to access as they proceed with the reading. Moreover, her phrasing of the question, is also about creating an imaginary context, in which Freire is in the room with them as a teacher, not this distal author that is thinking and writing about education in another time and place. Shirin question is about communicating to students that Freire is providing us a framework for examining and reflecting on schooling and education in the students' current context. In this sense, generative questioning help to bring these historical and sociological alive in the moment for students grappling with their significance in relation to their own

experiences.Further, by capturing student responses on the charting paper, she seemed intent on guiding students in the creation of a visual artifact that will continue to evolve and take shape as the group moves through the text.

I found these meta-reflective moments to be formative in the early stages of concept development. Her generative questions demonstrate emphasizes a *guided practice* in an approach to reading that is about engaging in deep thinking about the ideas and perspectives and their connection to students' social realities. However, there was also an emphasis on nudging students to utilize (or trust rather) their preliminary interpretations of the text and trying on the author's lens as they articulated their own complex and nuanced interpretations, as we see with the interpretation offered by Edward (lines 17–19).

This move to capture student responses may seem inconsequential and could be easily overlooked. However, over time, and evidenced by students' gazes, it will become apparent how important these pieces of charting paper have become to the collective thinking and meaning-making process. Shirin's participation is geared toward building upon the previous idea and creating pathways for students to engage in deep textual analysis. It also serves as a map to trace the evolution of ideas and thinking over the brief life of the small-group session.

This next episode further demonstrates how generative questioning shaped apprenticeship process as students engage in the social practice of critical social analysis. Shirin prompted students to expand on their understanding of Freire's (1970) concept of "banking education." She asked students to identify a passage they believe defines the concept of "banking education." Rosie, one of the students, pointed to a passage on the first page of Chapter 2 of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and proceeded to read it aloud:

> The outstanding characteristic of this narrative education, then is the sonority of words, not their transforming power. "Four times four is sixteen; the capital of Para is Belem."

> The student records, memorizes, and repeats these phrases without perceiving what four times four really means, or realizing the true significance of "capital" in the affirmation "the capital of Para is Belem," that is, what Belem means for Para and what Para means for Brazil. (p. 71)

This is a passage that seems to consistently speak to students in the years I have been involved in the program. Perhaps it resonates with their own experiences in schools and the disconnected nature of learning they experience. This particular event points to one of the affordances of the small reading circles, which is the time allocated to moving beyond superficial understandings and identifying the relationships between ideas.

Next, Shirin engaged students' understanding by posing questions intended to provoke deeper thinking about Freire's conceptualization of the banking model:

Excerpt 4.3

19	Shirin:	What if you learned all the names of all
20		the cities around the state…would he be satisfied?… (2)
21	Rosie:	Not just the names of the places…but like for example…
22		California has a lot of agriculture. . .like a lot of it . . .
23		a lot of fields and how other states depends on us.
24	Shirin:	*((nodding her head in affirmation))*
25		Why does he care so much about the relationships
26		between people and the relationships between
27		the capital and the countryside? Why is he concerned
28		with this? Why?…What is his goal in other words?…
29	Beatriz:	To make kids learn…to actually learn…
30	Shirin:	Ok, to make kids actually learn…
31		((*she writes comment on poster paper*))
32		What would it mean to make kids "actually learn"?…(3)
33	Cesar:	((*in a low voice*)) It's like what you showed us yesterday…like the
34		subject and object.
35	Shirin:	((*nodding in affirmation*)) Subject and object… how? ¿como?…
36	Cesar:	Like the teacher try to teach the students and the students can

37 teach the teacher.

38 Shirin: Ahhh, would that actually be learning for Freire?…
39 ¿Para Freire eso seria aprender?…
40 ((*draws connecting lines on the poster paper*))
41 If we wanted to define learning how would Freire define learning?

42 Rosie: Not just having the teachers be the teachers…but they can also
43 be students and the students can also be the teachers…

44 Shirin: That's nice *((nodding her head in affirmation))*… so one of the
45 characteristics might be that students are also teachers and that teachers
46 are also students. Eso una manera de pensar en esto …
47 that is one way to we can think about this. So we are just reviewing a little
48 bit…pensando otravez en lo que hemos leido[we are thinking
49 about what we have read] before we continue. (UCLA MSLI, 06/29/06)

This episode also illustrates how the work of navigating the complexity of theories is distributed through generative questioning that creates spaces for students to articulate their own interpretations. In lines 19–20, Shirin posed the following hypothetical question: "What if you learned all the names of all the cities around the state, would he be satisfied? Rosie responded by applying Freire's framework in offering an insightful analogy of California in terms of its agriculture economy and its relationship to other states. Shirin built upon Rosie's response (lines 21–23) and nudged students to connect this idea to Freire's broader critique of education. Once again, Shirin's generative questioning is rooted and oriented toward developing students' deep understanding of the text.By asking students to consider this question in reference to Freire—not in terms of his status as a social theorist, but as a writer responding to the social and political consequences of a dehumanizing educational system—it served to reinforce the pedagogical framework of reading and writing for social action.

In addition, this excerpt sheds light on a routine and rhythm that was characteristic of the process of close-text reading performed in reading circles during the MSLI. In her dissertation study, Vossoughi (2011) identified "lifting off the texts" as movements initiated by the teacher to

"…engage in the work of assisted meaning" (p. 163). Similarly, my examination of reading circles found that these movements were often initiated by a pause in the reading followed by a generative question oriented toward cultivating conceptual understanding, or as in the case of Excerpt 4.3 to theorize about the authors intent. Moreover, I agree that these lifting-off movements created valuable "developmental openings" for students to engage in deeper forms of critical social thinking and take risks with their emerging understandings (Vossoughi, 2011).

In the following excerpt from an interview conducted after the program ended, Emiliano responded to a question I asked about the difference between the kind of learning that was taking place in the program and the kind of learning he had experienced in school. Emiliano responded by commenting on the level of difficulty and the experience of reading for quality over quantity:

Excerpt 4.4

01 02 03 04	Octavio:	¿Notastes la diferencia en la manera que estabamos aprendiendo en el programa a como aprendes en la escuela normal? [Did you notice the – difference between how we were learning in the program [MSLI] to learning in school?]
05 06 07 08 09 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19	Emiliano:	Pues sí, la diferencia era que allá en UCLA era un nivel más alto. Porque allá lo que leíamos, lo estudiábamos y comprendíamos aunque era poquito, era bien comprendido. Otra diferencia es que allá en programa lo que leíamos era más concreto a lo que es la vida diaria de las personas donde vivimos allá [UCLA] se trataba de leer temas de las vida real. Me interesaba aunque fuera difícil, me interesaba porque estudiamos problemas públicos, algo en que yo no pasaba mucho. [Well yes, the difference was that at UCLA it was a higher level. Because over there what we read, we studied it and we would try to understand it even though it was a little, it was well understood. Another difference was that over there in the program what read was more concrete to what daily life is of people, where we live, over there [UCLA] it was about reading issues of real life. It really interested me even though it was difficult, it interested me because we studied public problems – something I didn't really think about.] (Emiliano, Interview, 02/10/07)

My intention here is not to essentialize close-text reading over other approaches, but Emiliano pointed to the affordances of providing students access to university-level reading along with multiple forms of assistance and mediation. One affordance Emiliano identified was his privilege in understanding, despite the quantity of reading. Emiliano also emphasized the opportunity to use social theoretical texts as tools to analyze social problems.

"Reading with a Writer's Eye" – Analyzing Authors' Language Practices

The lifting-off moments constituted by generative questions and conceptual nudging were also developmentally important to apprenticing students into the language practices of critical social thinking. These moments served as opportunities to dig into the language of authors as an object of inquiry and make transparent the kinds of communicative moves authors like Freire made in constructing their arguments. As Emiliano addressed in the previous section, unpacking the language of authors was difficult work. In particular, underlying this process was establishing a literacy framework that emphasized the dialogical relationship between reading and writing, and the role other texts have in our own writing.

Here, I am conceptualizing authors' language practices as the communicative and rhetorical mechanisms authors employ in order to construct their arguments or narrative. These include the use of figurative language, metaphors, first-person narratives, and elements of style. The following instance is from the larger reading circle event, discussed previously, in which the group read and discussed Chapter 2 of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. As Freire (1970) offers his critique of the banking concept of education, he addresses the relationship between the "paternalistic social structures" and hegemonic discourse that dehumanize and further marginalize the oppressed. In bold are the terms that Shirin, the teacher in this reading circle, aims to unpack with students in an effort to concretize Freire's analysis:

> To achieve this end, the oppressors use the banking concept of education in conjunction with a paternalistic social action apparatus, within which the oppressed receive the euphemistic title of "welfare recipients." They are treated as individual cases, as *marginal persons* who deviate from the general configuration of a "good, organized, and just" society. The oppressed are regarded as the *pathology of the healthy society*, which must therefore adjust these "incompetent and lazy" folk to its own patterns by changing their mentality. These *marginals* need to be "integrated," "incorporated" into the healthy society that they have "forsaken." (p. 74)

Shirin calls attention to two key terms in this passage: "marginal" and "pathology." In the transcript below, she initiates the process by posing a generative question that is intended to dig into Freire's use of these terms and their relationship to his overarching argument. The following transcript shows how Shirin employs generative questions as a tool to create a shared focal point and build a conceptual understanding of Freire's language use:

Excerpt 4.5

50	Shirin:	¿Marginados que significa? "Marginalized." What does marginalized
52		mean? (*(She goes to the poster paper in the center of table and writes the*
53		*word "marginalized".))*
54	Edward:	Put on the edge.
55	Shirin:	((*Nodding her head in affirmation.))* Put on the edge…Thank you…
56		That's really nice. Margin, right?…
57		(*(She draws a margin on the charting paper. Students gazes are fixated on*
58		*the charting paper*))
59		Like Edward said put on the edge. If we think about a sheet of paper.
60		Where is the margin? So like if this was society. . .
61		((*points to the image on the charting paper*))
62		It's like the people that are on the edge are treated as outsiders or as
63		others, and that is why he is talking or using the metaphor of a body.
64		((*Points at the margin she drew on the poster))*
65		Está usando la metáfora de el cuerpo. . .
66		he is using the metaphor of the body. Como si la sociedad fuera un cuerpo,
67		right? So as if society was a body...
68		((*Draws an image of a body. A couple of students are nodding in*
69		*agreement*)) Esta es la sociedad…right?
70		((*The three students in the camera's frame are nodding their heads in*
71		*agreement*)) (MSLI, 06/29/06)

By pausing to define key terms as a group, Shirin created an opening for students to decode the text and build understanding together. This brief moment displays the apprenticeship process in action and generative dimension of reading and social analysis that unfolded in the reading circles. Shirin prompted students to define "marginalized" and signaled its importance by writing the term on the charting paper. In this particular encounter, she can be observed drawing a border around the word "marginalized" and drawing the outline of a human body. This process seems to bring alive Freire's analysis and orient students to concrete representations of the concept. However, Shirin moved from concrete to the conceptual meaning of "marginalized" when she stated, "*So like if this was society."* She guided students to understand how Freire, as a writer, is using metaphorical language to underscore how the banking model of education serves to further dehumanize the oppressed. She is asking the group to commit to the words of Freire and to try to think, collectively, with the author's language.

Pedagogical Attunement and Students' Meaning Making

In what ways did reading circles, as mode of mediated textual and social analysis, support students' meaning-making process? This question speaks to the dimension of apprenticeship in which students, having the opportunity to fully participate in culturally meaningful activities, increase their participation and responsibility in creating new artifacts for thinking and knowledge production (Rogoff, 1995). So far, I have described how the rhythms of lifting off the text, generative questioning, and conceptual nudging cultivated opportunities for students to access robust historical and sociological text and supported their apprenticeship into the social practice of critical social analysis. As I examined numerous video recordings of reading circles, I also encountered moments in which space was dialogically and interactionally formed in ways that students could step into the role of "seasoned social scientist" (Espinoza, 2009). Espinoza

characterized moments like these as the intellectual and linguistic formation of social spaces replete with resources. In these moments, students utilized their ways of knowing and meaning making contributed to the production of new artifacts for critical social thinking.

In the post-program interviews I conducted with a few students after the 2006 MSLI, I heard accounts of the strong bonds they formed with their peers, in some cases from the "intellectual kinships" that were formed through the reading circles (Vossoughi, 2011). One student, Itza, described herself as being quiet and reserved when she started the program and hesitant to use her voice. She explained how the experience of learning, reading, and sharing experiences and perspectives with her peers in the program affirmed and validated her own experiences. She discovered "*la confianza"* or the "confidence" or "courage" to use her voice and share her experience as a tool for "reading the word and the world" (Freire & Macedo, 1987). She identified a pivotal moment in a reading circle when her peers relied on her interpretation of a text, *Massacre of the Dreamers* by author Ana Castillo (1994). Itza had made a personal connection this text in that provided with a language to critically reflect her life and experiences as a young woman in Mexico and as a newcomer to the United States experiencing the intersectionality of patriarchy and system racism.

Excerpt 4.6

Itza: Para mi fue muy importante porque cuando lo estaba leyendo lo estaba leyendo con Sara, con Karina, y con Miguel. Lo estaba leyendo con ellos y al principio no le entendía nada y me daba vergüenza decir que no le entendía y preguntarles que si lo podíamos leer otra vez. Yo me puse a leer esa lectura y leí ese quote y no más me dije,"este quote se me hace interesante y les dije a mis compañeros, pero ellos no lo querían explicar y pues yo tampoco porque no me gustaba hablar. Entonces Sara lo leyo y luego es cuando Shirin pregunto qué significa para nosotros ese quote y cuando pregunto eso lo leí así otra vez y es cuando se me vino todo a la mente y dije que ese quote era importante porque… allá en mi pueblo las mujeres no estudian y los hombre no mas dicen no ya no vas a estudiar y es mujer se tiene que conformar con unas mismas o hablar con otras de

> otras razas o no más se conforma con eso y entonces no temenos comunicación o porque nos sentimos inferior a ellos o a las mujeres anglosajonas y al los hombres de nuestra propia raza.
>
> [For me it was really important because when I was reading, I was reading it with Sara, with Karina, and with Miguel. I was reading it with them and I first I did not understand any of it and I was embarrassed to say that I did not understand it and I asked if we could read it again. I read that text and I saw that quote and I told myself, "this quote is very interesting to me and I told my partners, but they did not want to explain it and well, I didn't either because I did not like to talk. Then Sara read it and Shirin asked what does it mean to us and when she asked I read it again and when she asked again, and everything came to my mind and I said this quote is important, because in my town the women don't study, the men just say "no, you are not going to study anymore" and it's the woman that has to conform with that we don't have a voice because we feel inferior to them or to Anglo women and to the men from our own race.] (Itza, Interview, 01/04/07**)**

Itza first person account of her experience of reading circle illuminates the role social interaction plays in the meaning-making process related to the engagement social theoretical text. It provides it glimpse into how she grappled with the difficulty of the text and relied on the assistance of her peers to use her experience as tool for interpreting and re-reading her experience at the intersection of patriarchy and racism. Further, it brings into the light the internal tension she was feeling as she simultaneously grappling with understanding the text and applying it to her experiences as a young woman. As we consider Itza's experience, I would like to shift to present an episode that illustrates the formation of intellectual space through text-mediated dialogue in which one particular student contributes to the development of a set of artifacts for thinking about and analyzing social problems (Vossoughi, 2011).

It is derived from the second week of the MSLI and from a day in which students and teachers were engaging in the reading of George Lakoff and Sam Ferguson's (2006) piece the "Framing of Immigration." Briefly, Lakoff and Ferguson examine the use of *frames* in the definition and political representation of immigration and underlying policy issues. The so-called

"immigration problem," according to Lakoff and Ferguson, could be analyzed in terms of the frames utilized in public political discourse. For example, the social categories of "illegal alien" or "illegal immigrants" have not only narrowed the public debate about immigration, but have perpetuated the dehumanization of immigrant workers, their families and whole communities. Lakoff and Ferguson's critique of the various "frames" utilized in public debates bring into focus the material consequences for immigrant communities and connect in direct ways to the lives of the youth in MSLI engaging this text.

In this stretch of text-mediated talk, students read and discuss a passage from a section of the essay entitled "Frames Not Taken," in which Lakoff and Ferguson (2006) offers alternative frames that highlight important economic and political concerns overlooked in public debates and policy decisions. In this particular passage, read by Martha, Lakoff and Ferguson discusses a two-tiered labor system, in which immigrant labor comprises the lower tier:

> Most of the framing initiatives have been taken by conservatives. Progressives have so far abstained. Progressives could well frame the situation as the Cheap Labor Issue or the Cheap Lifestyle Issue. Most corporations use the common economic metaphor of labor as a resource. There are two kinds of employees—the Assets (creative people and managers) and Resources (who are relatively unskilled, fungible, interchangeable). The American economy is structured to drive down the cost of resources—that is, the wages of low-skilled, replaceable workers. (p. 9)

Lakoff and Ferguson draws a contrast between the *metaphors* of "assets" and "resources" and how these metaphors function to establish a hierarchical social structure that perpetuate the dehumanization of migrant workers.

In the following transcript of talk, Shirin led students in examining the language of Lakoff and Ferguson (2006) as they work to concretize his analysis. This particular stretch of talk is representative of the communicative formation of space for meaning-making and knowledge production and illustrates the potential text-mediated dialogue in the supporting the

apprenticeship process in the social practice of critical social analysis. To open this process, Shirin began with paraphrasing Lakoff and Ferguson. Jesus, one of the students in the reading circle, offered his own metaphor:

Excerpt 4.7

01	Shirin:	OK, so eso quiere decir que hay dos trabajos en los estados unidos…
02		hay dos tipos de trabajadores o trabajos, no…Uno que es más
03		valorizado o valued y otro que es mas como…bajo, que lo ven como
04		algo que es dispensable, right…
05		So there's two different kinds of jobs you can say.
06		There is the kind that are more valued which is the higher jobs…
07		the managers, the creative ones, the people that you kind of
08		need…right.
09	Jesus:	Chess, kings, queens, bishops and…then you have pawns…
10		(*(Shirin pauses as if waiting for Angel to continue. Angel hesitates))*
11	Shirin:	Beautiful…It's a really good metaphor…Does everyone understand
12		that metaphor? That's a beautiful metaphor…Can you explain why you
13		thought of that?
14	Angel:	Well, the pieces are like the world. Bishops, king, queen…
15		and the ones you sacrifice…that you don't really care about you just
16		move around are the pawns.
17	Shirin:	OK. So I'm going to take notes on that…OK.…
18		((*grabs a color marker and begins to draw an image on charting paper.*))
19		Two types of work and chess…ajedrez…
20		Can you share that with the class when we come back together?
21		I think it is really good…it's really helpful…
22		Does everyone understand? (MSLI, 07/05/06)

As we unpack this brief interaction, I call attention to lines 01–08 in the transcript. Here, Shirin is working to summarize and concretize the metaphors of "assets" and "resources" as it relates the hierarchy of workers perpetuated by the dehumanizing discourse of the "illegal frame."

Furthermore, I remind the reader that these movements of "lifting off the text" were not pre-planned or scripted, but often occurred in the moment as teachers and students encountered passages. The decision to stop and unpack a particular passage was made by the teacher as they

were experiencing texts. The transcript flattens this moment and obscures Shirin's attempt to clarify this dichotomy in the text, and equally, Jesus steps into the conversation turn on beat: "Chess (.) Kings, Queens, Bishops, and then you have pawns." For Jesus, Lakoff and Ferguson's (2006) metaphors of Assets and Resources prompted him to think of his own metaphor drawn from his experience and knowledge of the game of chess. Initially, Jesus seems unsure of his statement and momentarily, hesitates.

Attentive to student talk and sense-making, Shirin responded to Jesus's offering with affirmation: "*Beautiful*. It's a really *good metaphor*." Following her affirmation, Shirin turned to the rest of the group and asks: "Does everyone understand that *metaphor*?" The tone of the question seems much more directed at Jesus, inviting him to lead the group in the meaning-making process. Jesus followed up on his initial contribution by linking the game of chess to the social world and taken on the responsibility of grounding the metaphor in the text and in the analysis of Lakoff and Ferguson ("Well, the pieces are like the world . . ."). In lines 14–16, the metaphor takes on a more poignant tone related to Shirin's initial attempt to illustrate the word "dispensable" (lines 03–05). Shirin provides additional affirmation to Jesus by recognizing it as an important tool for critical social analysis: ". . . I'm going to take notes on that . . . . Can you share that with the class when we come back together?"

In examining how students were apprenticed into the social practice of critical social thinking, we need to consider what role the affirming and invitational stances exhibited in the process, such as what Shirin is providing, plays in the process of appropriating new knowledge and habits of mind. This gesture of affirmation creates an opening for Jesus to utilize his voice and knowledge in advancing the understanding of the rest of his peers in the reading circle.

Conclusion

The analysis of this chapter focuses on the talk and interaction of students and teachers within the context of reading circles in the UCLA MSLI. By examining how teachers and students engaged and navigated social theoretical text as a mode for analyzing social problems, I asked the following research questions:

1). How were students in the MSLI apprenticed into the practice of critical social thinking in the context of reading social theoretical texts?

   a. What kinds of pedagogical talk and practices supported students in the reading and analysis of social theoretical texts?

   b. What were the affordances and constraints of close-text analysis in regards to the apprenticeship of students?

In addressing these research questions, I incorporated cultural historical theories of apprenticeship and guided participation as a framework for examining the pedagogical and communicative dimensions of reading circles. Through the lens of apprenticeship and guided participation, I documented the kinds of pedagogical talk and practices teachers utilized in engaging students in difficult and deep forms of reading. The following are among the teaching practices I documented and analyzed:

- Close-text analysis
- Generative questioning to build conceptual understanding
- Reading with a writer's eye
- Sensing and affirming students' meaning making

The analysis in this chapter builds on an established body of research on learning and literacy in UCLA MSLI (Espinoza, 2008, 2009; Gutiérrez, 2008; Vossoughi, 2011, 2014). In

particular, it is inspired and shaped by the work and research of Shirin Vossoughi (2011, 2014) and her analysis of the "social analytical artifacts" students and teachers co-created in the process of reading social theoretical texts and analyzing social problems. It also draws heavily on the work of Manuel Espinoza (2008, 2009) that investigated the linguistic and intellectual formation of educational sanctuary as humanizing and liberatory spaces.

The findings in this chapter contribute to a body of knowledge and research concerned with the development of academic and critical social consciousness among students from historically marginalized communities in school and out-of-school contexts (Vossoughi, 2018; Zavala, 2018). The resurgence of historical movements to institute a high school Ethnic Studies curriculum in several states offer an opportunity to consider how a curriculum oriented toward the development of critical social consciousness and self-determination is enacted in the design of a robust learning environment. The analysis provided in this chapter provides a window into how an attunement to talk and social interaction might play in the formation of learning spaces oriented toward rehumanization (Zavala, 2018).

The vignettes of apprenticeship in critical social thinking presented in this chapter also document the use and seamless movement between languages, or translanguaging practices, by students and teachers as they navigate social theoretical text and analyze social problems (de los Ríos, 2018). These language practices, however, were not a focus of the study and represent a limitation of this study. This limitation serves as roadmap for further research and the role these hybrid or translanguaging practices played in the apprenticeship of students into academic and sociocritical literacies (de los Ríos, 2018; Gutiérrez, 2008; Gutiérrez et al., 1999; Gutiérrez et al., 2009).

CHAPTER 5: WRITING AS SOCIAL ACTION: AFFIRMATION, NAMING, AND THE RECLAIMING OF SELF

In this chapter, I examine the social mediation of writing pedagogy and the writing practices of students during the 2006 MSLI. In Chapter 4, I described how reading circles functioned as fertile ground to apprentice students into the social practice of critical social thinking. Through the study of one teacher's efforts in apprenticing students in the reading of complex social theoretical texts, I identified how the shared approach to reading constituted by close-text analysis, generative questioning, analyzing authors' language practices, and creating space for students' meaning-making created an intellectual learning space conducive to the appropriation of critical habits of mind. In this chapter, I examine the social context of writing conceptualized as a tool for critical reflection and social action. In particular, I examine students' writing practices as artifacts of their participation in a program and curriculum that was rooted in the sociopolitical goals of naming, critiquing, and resisting hegemonic social structures and dominant narratives. To this end, I conduct a textual analysis of student writing identifying the choices they made as writers as they grappled to understand and make sense of new ways to think and read the world (Freire & Macedo, 1987).

To this end, I asked the following questions:

2) How, if at all, did students apply the practice of critical social thinking into their writing of academic essays?

2a) In what ways did students incorporate concepts and critical habits of mind in the process of defining and reframing social problems?

Chapter Overview

I first build on the conceptual and theoretical foundation I provided in Chapter 2 by providing a discussion of the multidisciplinary framework that informed my approach to the investigation of student writing in the MSLI. It is an approach that seeks to situate students' literacy practices within an overarching sociohistorical context. Specifically, the approach in this chapter draws heavily on previous research and writing by Kris Gutiérrez (2008) and others that conceptualized the teachers and students in the MSLI enacting a *sociocritical* literacy that integrated reading and writing for the purpose of examining and understanding the "individual and collective realities" of historically marginalized and racialized communities (Gutiérrez, 2008; Vossoughi, 2011). After this discussion, I present biographical sketches of two student writers for the 2006 MSLI. The biographical sketches help contextualize their experience as writers in the program, as well as provide a window into their participation in the program and the choices they made as authors.

Conceptual Framework

My approach to the analysis of student writing is informed by a multidisciplinary framework that brings together the tenets of a decolonizing pedagogy, cultural-historical theories of learning, and *sociocritical* literacy (Gutiérrez, 2008; Tejada et al., 2003; Zavala, 2018). Together, they provide a framework to understand the content, process, and objectives of engaging high school youth from migrant farmworker communities in the academic and critical work of social analysis.

First, a decolonizing pedagogy begins from the standpoint that the contemporary realities of economic exploitation, systemic racism, and dehumanization that Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) experiences are rooted in a historical legacy of colonization and occupation

(Tejada et al., 2003; Zavala, 2018). Colonization and its contemporary consequences on the lives of non-dominant communities are largely denied or erased from the traditional school curriculum. As Tejeda et al. (2003) articulate, a decolonizing pedagogy advances a political theory of learning that challenges neutral perspectives on teaching and learning:

> We contend that developing a critical consciousness of our internal neocolonial condition and its possible transformation is fundamental to what teachers and students do in decolonizing pedagogical spaces. This requires explicit attention to the history and contemporary manifestations of internal neocolonialism in a manner that clearly explicates their social origin and rejects their historical consequence. It also introduces students to robust theories and conceptual frameworks that provide them the analytical tools to excavate history and examine the present. It is a pedagogical content that must be guided by a conceptually dynamic worldview and a set of values that are anticapitalist, antiracist, antisexist, and antihomophobic. (p. 30)

A decolonizing pedagogical framework grows out of a tradition of scholarship of critical pedagogy in its view that learning is not a politically neutral process. Tejada et al. (2003) highlight the critical role the content and curriculum of decolonizing pedagogy play in providing students access to complex and robust "theories and conceptual frameworks."

Furthermore, I would add that such content should also provide students access to a language and vocabulary that serve as tools (e.g., historical and sociological texts) to name and reject historical narratives of dehumanization and marginalization. Yet, this articulation also refers to the mediating role these tools play in mediating the development of a critical social consciousness in students.[2] The emergence of decolonizing pedagogical frameworks is, in part, the result of a recognition that such critical learning spaces are rare and often developed in spaces outside traditional school settings, beyond the constraints of state and federal educational mandates. In this regard, a decolonizing pedagogical framework helps to situate a program like

[2] As I've stated elsewhere, Tejada, Espinoza, and Gutiérrez's (2003) articulation of a decolonizing pedagogy is based on their experiences as designers and developers of the UCLA MSLI. As a member of the teaching and research team for three years, my own pedagogical praxis benefitted from participating in a research collaborative that simultaneously developed methods to study and organize learning spaces.

the MSLI that grew out of a political climate in California which constantly threatened the human and educational rights of youth from historically marginalized communities.

A decolonizing pedagogical framework positions students and teachers as historical actors challenging dominant narratives and hegemonic structures by centering an inquiry process that weaves together social analysis and experiential knowledge. In this manner, this framework builds on Freirean and cultural historical perspectives on learning in that it points to the generative dimensions purposeful design of learning spaces, in which students—along with their teachers—engage in critical reflection mediated by a range of meaningful co-created artifacts (Zavala, 2018).

Although the MSLI did not explicitly adopt a decolonizing pedagogy, the curricular and programmatic design was informed by the sociopolitical and educational objectives congruent with a decolonizing pedagogical framework. In Chapter 4, I identified some of these core texts and how these texts served as tools to mediate an expansive intellectual process in which both students and teachers examined the relationships between history, hegemonic social structures, and social life. Close text analysis and dialogue, in reading circles and whole-class discussions, were oriented toward cultivating a dialogue with the authors of these texts in ways that demystified the language of social analysis and encouraged students to appropriate it in ways that were meaningful to their past, present, and future selves. As such, my analysis of student writing situates the texts students composed as artifacts of their participation in this dialectical and relational process.

My approach to the analysis of student writing and the pedagogical context of the MSLI is informed by work of Mariana Pacheco and Kimberly Nao (2009) who examined the writing of student participants during the 2002 MSLI. In their investigation of the social organization of

writing and student produced text, Pacheco and Nao identified a "historicized writing" that "encourages students to reinterpret their personal experiences" within a broader sociohistorical context (p. 25). Historicized writing positioned students as "makers of history" as they consider their agency toward self-determination. They found that they utilize social theory as a tool for "rethinking, re-examining, and reinterpreting" their personal experiences supported students in rewriting their "life narratives" and transforming how they defined themselves, families, and communities (p. 40).

I also situate the texts students composed in terms of students' own life histories. To this end, I provide biographical sketches of two students whose writing I present. The biographical sketches are composed from formal interviews conducted after the program, as well as the autobiographies they wrote in the last week of the program. In taking this approach, I am attempting to advance an understanding of student writing as having a "history and logic" in the context of their experience reading social theoretical text, in particular, and their experiences as youth from migrant farmworker communities (Hull & Rose, 1989). I noted choices students made as authors, trying out new language in ways that advanced their written narratives. They tended to choose quotes or metaphors, not necessarily because they were important to the original text, but because they were important to them in terms of the kinds of narratives they were constructing.

A Note on Method

In this chapter, I blend my analysis of the curricular and pedagogical context with analysis of individual student writing. In doing so, I attempt to illustrate a connection between engagement at the classroom and collective level and the individual experience of writing in the MSLI. The blending of student writing is an attempt to reach deeper understanding at the

individual level about the kinds of choices and thinking students were doing in relation to their understanding of the historical and political dimensions of their lives. I present essays of two students, Citlali and Emiliano, who were part of the writing group I worked with as a teacher in this classroom. I developed a relationship not only with them as my students, but with their writing as well. I got to know a little about their style as writers and their lives in and out of school. This led to my decision to focus on my analysis on the writing of these two students.

The essays I choose to focus on for this study were the extended definition and the argumentation assignments. As I illustrate later in the chapter, the assignments were organized to build on each other analytically over the course of four weeks. The extended definition laid the foundation for subsequent assignments like the critical summary and argumentation essay. As we transitioned from the extended definition to the argumentation essay, the assignments grew not only in page length, but in terms of the inquiry work that occurred in the developmental stages of writing the argumentation. Students arrived at writing the argumentation having had read several social theoretical texts, as well as identifying and investigating social problems affecting their communities. This should help explain the imbalance in the analysis of Citlali's writing in relation to Emiliano's argumentation.

Student Biographies

In this section, I present the biographical sketches of two students whose writing is the focus of this chapter. I developed these sketches using interview data and the autobiographical writing they did at the end of the program. I provide these sketches as a backdrop to their writing, and to give the reader a sense of the relationship between their life experiences and their writing in the MSLI.

Emiliano

On the day of our first of two interviews that took place a few months after the 2006 MSLI, Emiliano and I had agreed to meet outside the office of an environmental justice organization in Fresno, California known among local activists as "Chicano Headquarters." The office was essentially an old house converted into a political organizing office. I had arranged for Emiliano to meet an old college friend of mine that was leading efforts to address pesticide drift and air pollution in the farmworker communities surrounding Fresno. Emiliano and my old college friend hit it off from the start, largely due to Emiliano's jubilant personality. Two minutes into their introduction, Emilano had anointed my friend with a nickname, "El Rey Leon" or "The Lion King," a play on my friend's name.

Being accepted to attend the MSLI was an experience Emiliano described as unimaginable: "*Nunca me lo imaginé* [I never would have imagined it]." Emiliano is referring to the surreal experience of arriving on the UCLA campus for the first time, after he and his peers had been on a 4-hour bus trip from California's Central Valley.

Shortly after finishing middle school in Mexico, Emiliano's mother announced to the family that she was going to leave and migrate to work in the United States. Emiliano was about 15 years old, and as the oldest of his siblings, he recalled feeling like he had no choice but to join his mother. At that time, he understood that the primary purpose of coming to the United States was to work and send money home to support his younger siblings—attending school was simply not part of the plan, according to Emiliano.

In fact, Emiliano had given up on the idea of continuing his education. He recalled arriving in Fresno at midnight and working in the agricultural fields the very next morning, right alongside his mother. Emiliano continued working in the fields with his mother for over a year

until a neighbor encouraged him to enroll in school. By the time he enrolled in school, Emiliano was about to turn 18 years old and he figured he would age out of school. His plan was to attend school for one year to learn English, and then return to work full-time in the fields. Even after he started attending school, he continued working in the fields on the weekends and during holiday breaks.

Even though he had been excited about the opportunity to attend UCLA, Emiliano later remembered feeling anxious and nervous about attending the program, especially after he heard that he would be taking "college courses." His trepidation was rooted in a feeling that his reading and writing skills in English would serve as an obstacle to his learning. As Emiliano saw it, reading and writing in English remained a significant barrier to being able to fully participate in the program, and even considered turning down the opportunity. "*Para mi, el inglés era como una carga muy pesada* [For me, English was like a heavy load]." With some encouragement from his mentor, peers, and mother, Emiliano put aside his fears and decided to leave his family and spend one month at UCLA.

Citlali

When I arrived at her family's apartment in the small town of Huron, California, I discovered that Citlali and her aunt had started a business in their home preparing and selling homemade food to neighbors and members of their church. Citlali admitted that she did most of the work, while her aunt and mother worked six days a week. During the school year, and depending the harvesting season, Citlali worked every other Saturday in the lettuce or cotton fields that surrounded Huron. On the off Saturdays, she participated in a college preparatory program called AVID, which organized SAT and college prep workshops. During summer vacations she worked most days in the field or packing plant with her mother. Attending the

MSLI almost didn't happen for Citlali, either. She was invited to submit an application by her English teacher, who also wrote her a letter of recommendation.

Like Emiliano, Citlali had migrated to the United States from Mexico with her mother, initially leaving her younger siblings behind. When they arrived in Huron, they lived with her family members until they were able to get a place of their own and bring her younger siblings from Mexico. Citlali was in middle school when she arrived in Huron and enrolled in school within a few days of arriving. In our interview after the program, Citlali explained that she was initially excited about the opportunity to participate in a university program, especially at a school like UCLA. Despite the excitement, though, she explained that her insecurities began to set in and she almost didn't apply to the program. Soon after she applied, Citlali received the news that she was accepted, and as she stated, the news affirmed her educational pathway up to that point: "*Porque como soy la primera en mi familia que sigue estudiando más que toda la familia de mi mamá y pues me quede sorprendida,¿ por qué yo? ¿por qué yo?* [Because I am the first female in my family that has continued to study from my mother's family, so I was surprised because why me, why me?]" Being the first female in her family to pursue education would become a central theme in Citlali's thinking and writing in the MSLI.

Like Emiliano, Citlali was a rising senior in high school when she participated in the 2006 MSLI. She discussed at length the awareness and insights she gained as a result of participating in the program, but she also shared the effect the MSLI had on her personal development. She discussed the impact her peers had on developing her *confidence* and *voice* as a young person "reading the world":

Excerpt 5.1

01	Citlali:	Me ayudó en tener más confianza en mí misma. En UCLA aunque no nos
02		conocíamos todos, como en los primeros días, no conocíamos a nadie y lo

que ellos—los demás de mis compañeros—me enseñaron es de que ellos te hablan, no importa que tu fueras muy callada como yo. Hablamos y reflexionamos de todo de nuestra vida y entonces aprendí como hacer una mejor líder.

[It helped me have more confidence in myself. At UCLA, even though we did not know each other, in the first days nobody knew each other, and what they – the rest of my peers – showed me was that they would talk to you, no matter if you were very quiet like me. We talked and reflected on everything from our lives and I learned how to be a better leader.] (Citlali, Interview, 02/11/07)

Here, Citlali reflects on the relationships she formed with other students in the MSLI and they impact these relationships had on her intellectual and personal development. She highlights the importance of cultivating a community of learners built around shared experiences and mutual understanding played in creating a safe intellectual space where she could venture outside her comfort zone and take risks in telling her story.

Findings and Analysis

Writing as Social Action

In this section, I will discuss how the particular pedagogical approach and discourse around writing instruction in the MSLI positioned writing as a sociopolitical act and students as historical actors (Gutiérrez et al., 2019). In her analysis of learning and development in the MSLI, Kris Gutiérrez (2008) identifies the MSLI as a *collective third space* in which students and teachers engage in a robust social environment replete with creative, intellectual and linguistic resources organized toward development (p. 148) In this chapter, I argue that this overarching pedagogical approach influenced the writing practices of students in ways that were meaningful to their emergent understanding of their past, present and future selves. For example, Figure 5.1 illustrates how reading, writing, and *Teatro* (or Theater of the Oppressed) were reframed as tools for both social analysis and social action.

Figure 5.1 served as visual representation of the reciprocal relationship between reading, writing, and the creative practice of *Teatro* (Boal, 2014). The arrows on the graphic indicate the relationship between social analysis and social action mediated by reading and writing. This relationship is rooted in Freire's articulation of praxis as the transformative process of 'emerging and turning upon the world' through conscious reflection and action (Freire, 1970). Writing in the MSLI was constituted by that conscious reflection in the reading of social theoretical text and action through the composition of *historicized* narratives (Pacheco & Nao, 2009).

Figure 2. MSLI Institute Praxis.

Social analysis is positioned at the top of the graphic and is representative of the movement between 'reading the world and reading the word' (Freire & Macedo, 1987). As I examined in Chapter 4, the process of reading social theoretical text was closely tied to the process of critically reflecting on the historical and political dimensions of their lives. The close and reciprocal relationship between reading and writing was part of the everyday pedagogical arrangement and discourse.

On the first day of the 2006 MSLI, Shirin, one of the instructors, explained that reading and writing helps us develop a social imagination that enables us to "fly above" society in order

examine how society and its social structures have shaped our lives and our communities: "How can I understand what is happening in society and how its related to what is happening in my life?" Underlying this question, is the view of reading and writing as having individual and collective potential for transformation. Moreover, students were positioned as historical actors by engaging in the everyday practice of thinking and writing about their lives through the lens of social theory (Gutiérrez et al., 2019). Excerpt 5.1 demonstrates how this reframing of literacy, in particular writing, as social action was communicated to students:

Excerpt 5.2

01 Shirin: ((loudly)) Social action is something that happens every day!…You all…when
02 you read and write in this program…you are doing social action…because we
03 believe in doing these things together…we believe that we learn best when we do
04 these things together…ok…so juntos and with each other and also with us…
05 instructors and staff. Por eso tenemos esa cosa que se llama "tutoring"…
06 that might have other meanings in other places…for us it has to do with
07 social action. What you are going to be doing every day from 2 to 4 is
08 social action. We also expect that the analysis you do here leads to some
09 sort of action when you leave the program. (UCLA MSLI, 06/26/06)

This excerpt demonstrates the work of teachers to embed an etic about the transformative potential language and writing, and the agency of students as historical actors in rewriting their lives. This belief system was evident in the pedagogical talk by teachers, as well in the kinds of writing assignments, assistance, feedback, modeling, and collaborative work that constituted the social practice of writing in the MSLI.

Organization and Progression of Writing Assignments

One of the affordances of framing writing as a collective meaning-making activity is that it created a set of conditions, in which students could be successful in *trying on* new and unfamiliar set of academic skills. Some of these academic skills were directly tied to the various

kinds of essays students composed in the program. Table 5.1 identifies the organization and progression of the four major writing assignments and the writing task:

Table 2

2006 MSLI Writing Assignments

Program Timeline	Writing Assignment	Writing Task
Week 1	Extended Definition of "Migrant Student"	Use the *sociological imagination* to write an extended definition of what it means to be a migrant student
Week 2	Critical Summary	Write a critical summary of two different *frames* used to interpret and represent a social problem in your community
Week 3	Argumentation	Based on your research of a social problem, present an argument for the ways you think your social problem has been framed.
Week 4	Autobiography/Testimonio	Based on readings and your experiences, to tell the story of your life.

Although each assignment was distinct in terms of its objectives, they were organized along a continuum where each assignment built upon dimensions of the previous essay. For example, the argumentation essay, which was assigned during the third week of the program, relied heavily on the analytical tasks of defining and summarizing.

Introduction of Writing Assignments

The introduction of writing assignments were important moments in the mediation of writing in the MSLI. Often these took on the form of working through the purpose and goals of a writing assignment, as well leading students through a collective prewriting process of brainstorming and outlining. At another level, this mediational process was also constituted by individual or small group sessions in which teachers worked to scaffold the writing process by engaging students in the meta-reflective process of mapping out the ideas and concepts they were working to incorporate in their essays. From an apprenticeship standpoint, these moments were

generative in terms of the explicit and implicit ways teaching the mechanics of writing was linked to the social practice of critical social analysis.

As I pointed out above, introducing new writing assignments took on the form of a guided dialogue, with the teacher walking students through the components of the assignment. This process involved a series of pedagogical moves, which included working through the assignment guidelines as a group, and simultaneously, creating a tangible model to compose their essays. In this section, I present an example to illustrate how this was accomplished with regard to the pedagogical discourse utilized to guide students in writing the extended definition assignment. First, I want to give a little background on the extended definition assignment itself.

Introducing the Extended Definition

The extended definition was the first writing assignment introduced to students during the four-week program. From a curricular standpoint, many of the writing assignments were influenced by the work of Mike Rose and Malcolm Kiniry (1998) in *Critical Strategies for Academic Thinking and Writing*. They explain that defining in academic writing should not be thought of as a "passive or mechanical act—copying words you've looked up in a dictionary or giving memorized answers from textbooks. Defining is a continuous process, crucial to receptive reading and persuasive writing and it is a fundamental to the critical thinking encouraged in all college courses" (p. 12). In addition, the act of defining is reframed as a tool for ". . . seeing and understanding relationships" (p. 12). In the MSLI, the object of definition, from a pedagogical perspective, was three-fold:

1). To complicate and extend the official definition of "migrant student";

2). To create an intellectual space for students to "see and understand" relationships between the idea or the social construct of "migrant student"; and

3) To provide students the opportunity to participate in the act of defining for themselves what it meant to be a "migrant student."

Below I present a series of vignettes that illustrates how the extended definition was mediated and how teachers guided students in the creation of a shared model of the definition. These vignettes are derived from a 90-minute tutoring activity focused on introducing the extended definition assignment. Here, I describe the arrangement of space and the initial moments of the activity.

Excerpt 5.3

The classroom is arranged with four small tables with 4 to 5 students sitting at each table. There are an assortment of items at each table center of each table arranged in a circle around the classroom, dictionaries placed at the center of every table, and large sheets of butcher paper taped to the back wall. Shirin had just finished a mini-lecture on Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Holding several colored markers in her left hand and a white piece of paper on the right, she begins to talk and move around the classroom. She asks students to take out their extended definition writing assignment handouts. The sounds of bag zippers, binder rings opening and closing, paper shuffling and students talking fill the classroom. Shirin scans the room to as she prepares to lead the class in a discussion of the assignment:

01 Shirin: "Queremos empezar con este ensayo…We want to start with what we are
02 asking you to do in this essay"…
03 ((*She walks around the classroom as she reads the assignment sheet*))
04 Usa la imaginación sociológica de C.Wright Mills para escribir una
05 definición extensa de lo que significa ser un estudiante migrante. Use the
06 sociological imagination to write an extended definition of what it means to
07 be a migrant student…Ok…so what we want to do is work through this
08 sheet together." (UCLA MSLI, 06/28/06)

The large sheets of charting paper taped to the walls of the classroom were one of the artifacts used to record student-teacher thinking. The charting paper remained taped to the empty wall of this

classroom throughout the summer and over time, represented an evolving shared text. Guiding and "walking alongside" students as they develop an understanding of the writing assignment was a critical piece of the writing pedagogy in the MSLI.

In one sense, this involved turning the assignment itself into an object of collective inquiry. In the excerpt above, Shirin illustrates this at two points: first, when she poses the question," So we want to start with what are we asking you to do in this essay," and then, at the point when she indicates that she wants the group to ". . . work through this sheet together." The first phrase indicates that navigating the unfamiliar, such as the unfamiliarity of writing extended definition, will not rest solely on the individual student, but will be the collective endeavor of the class.

Shirin continues to guide students through the assignment sheet, pausing at key points to pose questions, promote dialogue, record thinking, and expand on an evolving model of an extended definition. At one particular point, she gets students to focus in on an "official" definition of a migrant students from the California Department of Education (2020). She read it:

> The law states that migrant education services are a priority for those students whose education has been interrupted during the current school year and who are failing, or are most at risk of failing to meet state content and performance standards.

This official definition becomes the focal point of the class dialogue. Shirin leads students through a process of critiquing and extending this definition to reflect on the social and educational struggles of youth from migrant backgrounds. She prompts students to interrogate this definition with the following questions like:

- "What stands out to you in this definition?"
- "Why do you think this definition exists? What's the purpose?"
- "What does it say about the kinds of students that count as migrant students in the state of California?"

- "Does the official definition help us understand why students might be failing in school?"

As students respond to these questions, their insights are being recorded on the charting paper. Their responses also influence the kinds of questions Shirin poses to the class and indicates that students and teachers are engaged in a process of co-authorship. These questions seem oriented toward simultaneously apprenticing students in writing an extended definition and critical social analysis not as distinct tasks but rather, privileging the act of definition as step toward critical social analysis.

As the process of co-authorship evolves, the dialogue focuses on elements of the "official definition" that speak to the issue of academic achievement and labor migration. Shirin explains that the official definition speaks to the provision of educational services to students affected by the process of migration. Then, she poses the following question to students: "Does it explain how moving from place to place affects students educationally?" She poses this question in effort to elicit students' critical reflections on the conceptualization of migrant student portrayed in this definition:

Excerpt 5.4

01	Jaime:	Starting over in different schools.
02	Shirin:	Ok…beautiful ((*charting*))…"Starting over"…((*charting*))
03		Why is starting over, why did you mention starting over?…
04		((*shrugs her shoulders and holds out hands*))
05	Jaime:	They have to adapt to different to places…
06	Shirin:	Ok…so they have to adapt to different places…((*charting*))…
07		Is starting over easy?… ¿Es facil empesar de nuevo en una escuela?…
08	Ana:	No…
09	Shirin	((*motions to Ana*)) Say it louder…

10 Ana: You don't know anybody…

11 Shirin: You don't know anybody…right…
12 ((*Charting. Martha jumps in with another comment*))

13 Martha: And then another thing…they probably like…are learning the same thing
14 that they learned in the previous school so they're not getting ahead.
(MSLI, 06/28/06)

The above excerpt highlights one of the important aspects of the social organization of writing and the process of apprenticing students into both academic and critical habits of mind. Shirin's question-posing expresses a pedagogical focus on engaging students' social analytical thinking as a primary goal of writing. Here, she is prompting students to identify the social, political and historical dimensions of the official definition of a migrant student.

Frequently, throughout this particular session on the extended definition, Shirin uses affirmation words like "beautiful," "good," and "that's really nice." This kind of affirming and attuning language is not limited to the process of mediating writing assignment, but also occurred in other spaces in which teachers are guiding students to construct their own understandings and meaning perspectives. I argue that this type of affirming and attuning language is not only key to building students' confidence with unfamiliar academic tools, but also fundamental to apprenticing students into the social practice of critical social thinking.

"We Make History": Defining as Affirmation of Self and Experience

By examining student writing it provides us a window into the meaning-making perspectives of students as they participated in a robust intellectual environment organized toward the collective engagement of social problems. To this end, I pose the questions:

2) How, if at all, did students apply the practice of critical social thinking into their writing of academic essays?

a) In what ways did students incorporate concepts and critical habits of mind in the process of defining and reframing social problems?

To address these questions, I turn to the first example of student writing. This example illustrates how students navigated academic genres and the process of reframing lived experiences to construct affirming and validating narratives. This particular example is an extended definition essay composed by Citlali.

To review, the extended definition tasked MSLI students with critiquing and complicating the definition of "migrant student" as articulated by the California Department of Education as an eligibility criterion for educational services. Specifically, the extended definition assignment instructed students to: "Use C. Wright Mills's sociological imagination to write an extended definition of what it means to be a migrant student" (MSLI Curriculum, 2006). The assignment positioned students to use their emergent understandings of social theory and their lived experiences to essentially rewrite the definition of migrant student. One of the underlying objectives of this assignment, from a curricular and conceptual standpoint, was to engage in the practice of contesting dominant narratives about California's migrant farmworker communities. As is the case with many bureaucratic categories or social labels, like "English Language Learner" or "Special Education Student," "Migrant Student" does not capture the full humanity and nuances of their sociohistorical lives. In fact, some MSLI students did not fully embrace the identifier of "migrant student," because it presented a static portrayal of the nature of labor and migration in the United States.

Writing an extended definition on what being a migrant student meant was by no means a straightforward activity. In fact, some students found the process of writing the essay challenging in the sense that they were being asked to reconsider their experiences in ways many of them had

not done so before in other educational context. However, in my analysis of student writing portfolios, I found that this tension created openings for agency and experimentation. Students utilized the extended definition as a space to affirm and validate their lived experiences. In this sense, students reshaped the genre into a form of counter narrative responding to dehumanizing portrayals of themselves and their communities.

As I noted earlier in the student biographies, Citlali was very proud of her cultural roots as the daughter of Mexican migrant farmworkers. During the post-program interview, Citlali stated that writing the extended definition essay was a very personal experience for her, because, as she said, "*eso viene de nosotros, de nuestro corazón, de lo que sentimos y como vemos a nuestros padres trabajar y sacrificar tanto*. [That comes from us, from our heart, what we feel and how we see our parents work and sacrifice a lot for us.]" In the following excerpt from her essay, Citlali refers to being part of a *tradición*, or tradition, connected to a larger historical narrative:

Excerpt 5.5

> La definición de un estudiante migrante se puede explicar con entender la vida del trabajador migrante. Para mi ser un estudiante migrante significa muchas cosas. Primeramente porque mis padres son iguales a como yo, he seguido sus tradiciones. Ser un migrante significa que ellos trabajan en trabajos muy difíciles y muy mal pagados. Cuando un migrante se enfrenta a la vida para todos nosotros es muy complicado. Tener una vida de migrantes es difícil, pero es un orgullo porque los migrantes luchan mucho por una vida que es mejor para sus hijos. Cómo Mills dijo en su escritura que uno puede imaginarse muchas cosas que pasan en la vida y la razón social por la cual pasan. "The history that now affects every man is world history." Esta cita de C. Wright Mills explica que nosotros hacemos historia y que la historia de nosotros, nosotros mismos la creamos.
>
> [The definition of a migrant student can be explained by understanding the life of the migrant worker. For me being a migrant student means many things. First of all, because my parents are the same as me, I have followed their traditions. Being a migrant worker means that they work jobs that are very difficult and poorly paid. When a migrant confronts life, it is very complicated for all of us. Having a life of a migrant is difficult, but it is also a source of pride because migrants struggle a lot for a life that is better for their children. Like Mills said in his essay, one can imagine many things that happen in life and their social causes. "The history that now affects every man is world history."

> This quote from C. Wright Mills explains that we make history, and that our history, we create.] (Citlali, Extended Definition, 07/03/2006)

In this passage, Citlali is constructing a narrative of struggle and resilience that is rooted in the experience of working in the fields. She opens with asserting that in order to define what a migrant student *is*, we have to understand "*la vida del trabajador migrante*" or "the life of the migrant worker." She speaks to the difficult working conditions and low wages of agricultural labor—an experience she was familiar with having worked in the fields herself on weekends and summer breaks. Yet the life of a migrant student is much more complex, as she points out, and not solely defined by the subjugation many experience in society. The definition of a migrant student is also rooted in a strong sense of pride, or *orgullo*, and a sense of resilience oriented toward building a better future.

Toward the end of the paragraph, Citlali ties the narrative she is constructing to the history-making dimension of C. Wright Mills's (1959) conceptualization of the sociological imagination. I want to call attention to this connection, because it demonstrates how the extended definition assignment in terms of how it was reshaped by students in act of writing it, facilitated students' agency in experimenting with academic genres. For Citlali, connecting what it means to be a migrant student to the theoretical constructs of *history-making* and the *sociological imagination* demonstrates an agency in experimenting with language and ideas in ways that advance her goal as the author. There is a sense that for Citlali, the collective aspirations and resilience of the migrant community give rise to the level of history-making.

During her post-program interview, I had the opportunity to ask Citlali about her decision to cite C. Wright Mills's theory in her definition. As I noted earlier in the methods section, I asked students to read parts of their essays aloud during the interviews. The process of revisiting and rereading their essays developed into a kind of meta-reflective dialogue about their writing

and experience in the MSLI. As such, I asked Citlali to talk about her thought process in citing C. Wright Mills. As the following excerpt illustrates, Citlali's response highlights how students experimented with complex social theory in reframing their personal narratives. Here, Citlali talks about how the aspect of *history-making* in the sociological imagination captures how the collective "*sacrificios"* or sacrifices made by her parents and migrant families, individually and collectively, contribute to creating history:

Excerpt 5.6

01	Octavio:	¿Cuentame porque decidistes usar Mills en esta parte de tu ensayo?
02		[Tell me about why you decided to use Mills in this part of the essay?]
03	Citlali:	Porque Mills hablo de la imaginación social y como las personas no
04		piensan en las causas sociales y porque estamos creando nuestro futuro,
06		nuestros padres, nuestra comunidad están creando nuestra historia. Para
07		que un estudiante migrante vaya a la universidad es algo grande o
08		importante, porque tiene uno que pensar en todo lo que tuvo que pasar
09		para que eso pasara y por todo el sacrificio que tuvo que hacer su familia
10		para que eso pasara.
11		[Because Mills talked about the social imagination and how individuals
12		don't think about the social causes and because we are creating our future,
13		our parents, our community are creating our history. For a migrant student
14		to go to a university, it's a big deal and very important, because we have
15		to think about everything that needed to take place in order for that to
16		happen and all the sacrifices that their family had to make for that to
17		happen.] (Citlali, Interview, 02/11/07)

Citlali's reflection sheds light on the *aspirational capital* (Yosso, 2005) of migrant families and how their dreams and hopes are manifested in the future-oriented practices related to *sacrificios* or sacrifices. As she insightfully explains, there is a historical significance to the sacrificios families make in regard to the important role they play in shaping the educational trajectories of college students from migrant farmworker communities. I contend that the invitation to use theoretical concepts as tools to redefine what it means to be a migrant student

created space in which students could utilize their voices as authors to affirm and validate their experiences within a larger historical narrative.

The curriculum and pedagogical approach of the MSLI was organized toward apprenticing students in the social practices of critical social thinking, while also fostering the development of university level academic literacy. To this end, teachers encouraged students to reflect and write about their lives in dialogue or alongside authors like C. Wright Mills, Paulo Freire, Gloria Anzaldúa, Sonia Nazario, and Eduardo Galeano. This is one way in which students were apprenticed into the practice of critical social thinking and university-level writing.

"A War Without Names": Argumentation and Naming

As I read and interpreted student writing composed during the 2006 MSLI, I was interested in understanding how students grappled with social theoretical concepts, and in what ways these concepts shaped how they reflected on and wrote about their lived experiences. I noted instances in which students wove autobiographical threads into their essays. In addition, I noted instances in which students utilized social theoretical concepts as resources to critically reframe social issues. My reading of the argumentation writing assignment was especially informative in identifying the moves students made as authors to address social problems, such as poverty, xenophobia, patriarchy, or racial discrimination.

Naming

The concept of *naming* emerged as a theme in my analysis of student produced texts as artifacts of apprenticeship in critical social thinking. We can trace naming to the continuum of developing a critical social consciousness discussed by Paulo Freire, as well to the political and pedagogical goals of Ethnic Studies as an academic discipline (Freire, 1970). According to Miguel Zavala (2018) in his work on decolonizing pedagogies and Ethnic Studies, *naming* is a

complex process that involves the *appropriation* and *application* of social analytical knowledge and language toward reflecting and re-writing lived experiences. Zavala is specifically referring to knowledge and language that emerges in the reading of social theoretical texts. Further, in *Raza Struggle and the Movement for Ethnic Studies (2018)*, Zavala identifies *naming* as a key pedagogical dimension of a decolonizing literacy in which youth utilize historical and sociological texts as resources to critically reflect and transform their ". . . understanding of colonialism and other forms of oppression" (p. 135).

As I have stated earlier in this chapter, appropriating new social analytical tools was not a straightforward process. A four-week summer intensive program presented certain challenges in providing sufficient time to mediate and scaffold social theory and academic writing. For many students, making sense of the readings—especially in such a way that they are able to articulate it in written form—was challenging. As students navigated the complexity of this task, I speculate that it served to give rise to the nuanced practice of naming related to the use of other words and voices in their writing. Hence, I was particularly interested in the ways students expressed their agency and voices to bridge the gap between their nascent understandings of concepts like "dehumanization" and "neoliberalism" and writing about social problems they were concerned about.

The critical summary assignment culminated into the *argumentation assignment* in which students were tasked with linking their readings, online research, and personal experience toward composing an argument about a social problem they were concerned about. Specifically, students were to write an essay in which they developed and articulated their own framing of an identified social problem in their community using research, texts, and their experiences as evidence. The argumentation assignment was the culmination of a generative process that began with the

extended definition assignment. As I describe next, the curricular approach provided students a foundation to access rooted forms of knowledge and ways of knowing.

Framing the Social Problem of Poverty

In a formal interview after the conclusion of the program, Emiliano explained that he decided to focus on the social problem of poverty because, as he put it, it was something he had experienced in his life:

Excerpt 5.7

Emiliano: Yo lo escogí porque es algo que yo he vivido, pero más en el tiempo de antes. Ese fue un problema que afecta a mi, a mi pueblo, allá en Oaxaca, a mi país México, de segunda clase por eso fui que lo escogí yo. Como se puede decir es el factor que nos a traído esto, verdad. Lo que el rico tiene más riqueza y el que es pobre va mas pa bajo todavía.

[I choose it because it is something that I've lived, but more so in the past. It was a problem that affected my town, in Oaxaca, my country Mexico, from the [lower]class, that is why I choose to write about it. You could say that that is the factor that brings all of this, right. The wealthy has more wealth and the poor go down even more.] (Emiliano, Interview, 02/10/07)

Writing about the social problem of poverty was an experience that was very personal for Emiliano. In this quote, we see Emiliano drawing a connection between the experience of poverty in Mexico and the factors that lead to people migrating to the United States. As we examine his argumentation, it will be clear that Emiliano was writing to redefine poverty in terms of economic inequality, as well as redefine what it means to have experienced poverty.

Emiliano frequently moved between languages in his writing. He often experimented with writing in English for the shorter writing pieces like quick writes and guiding questions. It was the larger pieces of writing that Emiliano wrote entirely in Spanish. Students were not required to write academic essays in English. As I have discussed throughout this dissertation, students were encouraged to utilize their full linguistic repertoires as it related to the reading and

writing in the MSLI (Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003). In fact, students' hybrid language practices were cultivated as artifacts for learning and development, particularly as it related to the apprenticeship of students in university-level writing (Gutiérrez, 2008). This is in contrast to what we sometimes observe in many K12 school settings in which students' limited language proficiency in English serves as a rationale for denying them access to college preparatory literacy instruction.

In the introduction to his argumentation essay, Emiliano introduces us to the social problem of poverty and situates himself, as the author, and his community within an overarching sociohistorical context. We get a clear sense of how his lived experiences will play an important role in the narrative constructs.

Excerpt 5.8

La Pobreza/ Poverty

> Mi argumento va dirigido a la pobreza, que afecta a mi comunidad y a mi gente. Hay muchos tipos de pobreza. No solamente existe pobreza económica, pero también pobreza de ética, educación, valores, etc. En este argumento presentaremos la pobreza económica. Ya que ésta representaría una persona que vive en pobreza tiene todos tipos de pobreza. El concepto o el problema de la pobreza afecta a mucha gente que vive en este mundo. No solamente hablo de quiere significa pobreza. En mi comunidad en Estados Unidos como en América Latina y en el mundo entero hemos tenido este problema. Lo he vivido, he visto como viven las personas con este problema y nos daremos cuenta de que no solamente nos afecta como persona individual, pero como sociedad. No solo le pasa a unos, pero a todos por igual.
>
> [My argumentation is directed at the [problem of] poverty that affects my community and my people. There are many types of poverty. There is not only economic poverty, but there is also poverty of ethics, education, values, etc. In this argument, we will present economic poverty. It represents a person that lives in poverty represents all types of poverty. The concept or the problem of poverty affects many people that live in this world. I am not just talking about what poverty means. In my community in the United States as in Latin America and in the entire world, we've had this problem. I have lived it, I have seen how people live with this problem and we will find out that it does not just affect the individual person, but society as well. It does not just happen to one person, but everyone equally.] (Emiliano, Argumentation Essay, 07/07/06)

One of the key points that comes across in this excerpt of his argumentation essay is Emiliano's framing on poverty as a social problem. He does this by pointing out that it is not only individuals that suffer the adverse effects of living in poverty, but that individual suffering connects directly to social structural problems that span the United States, Latin America, and the world. Recognizing this interplay between individual experiences and social structures and history was one of the critical habits of mind that was emphasized across various learning spaces in the MSLI (e.g., class lectures, whole group discussions, reading circles, and Theater of the Oppressed). Core texts like *The Sociological Imagination* by C. Wright Mills (1959), and *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* by Paulo Freire (1970) mediated what we often referred to as the social imagination or *la imaginación social*, a play on the sociological imagination.

As I present Emiliano's argumentation essay as a case study, I want to extend our understanding of the social practice of naming by highlighting the choices students make in appropriating the language of others as they define themselves in new ways (Hull & Rose, 1989). As discussed earlier, naming is a process in which youth utilize historical and sociological texts as resources to critically reflect and transform their ". . . understanding of colonialism and other forms of oppression" (p. 135). In stating, "This argument is directed at poverty, which affects my community and my people," Emiliano situates himself as a voice for his community and people and his first-hand experience: "*Lo he vivido, he visto como viven* . . ." [I have lived it, I have seen how people live with this problem.]") as evidence toward disrupting deficit or dominant narratives. In this analysis, I extend this definition of naming by examining (a) instances of students' revoicing of texts, and (b) affordances and possibilities this practice has for students' development as writers and critical social thinkers.

This excerpt also helps draw attention to the weaving of autobiography into the practice of naming. By stating his lived experience in relation to the social problem of poverty, Emiliano situates himself within a larger sociohistorical context. We saw an aspect of this in Citlali's extended definition essay in which she situated herself within a larger historical legacy of struggle with the migrant farmworker community. This kind of writing serves to historicize the personal experiences of the student and disrupt dominant deficit narratives of individualism (Pacheco & Nao, 2009). Similar to the extended definition assignment, Emiliano's opening paragraph points to a common thread of grounding the textual narrative in a practice of affirmation and reclamation of experience. This practice seems to establish a foundation for students as they move into a practice of naming and critical social analysis.

Naming

In the second paragraph, Emiliano elaborates on the relationship between the individual and social structural dimensions of poverty. Emiliano creates space to once again weave in his lived experiences and remind the reader of his standpoint as the author. He begins by acknowledging the dimension of individual suffering that may at times become overshadowed by a structural analysis:

Excerpt 5.8

> Al definir pobreza podemos decir que es un individuo el que lo sufre es quien no puede satisfacer sus necesidades básicas que todo ser humano merece [1]. La falta de bienes materiales para el desarrollo de la vida humana [2]. El nivel de ingreso para acceder a un nivel decente [3]. La pobreza es la circunstancia económica en la que la persona carece de los ingresos suficientes para acceder a los niveles mínimos de atención médica, alimentación, vivienda, y educación [4]. Podría yo decir que estas son las causas principales que escogí este tema de pobreza en mi comunidad [5]. A mi me ha afectado en mi vida, pero no solo a mi, también a mi familia [6]. En un sistema capitalista en el que el neoliberalismo económico trajo extrema desigualdad en la distribución de la riqueza [7].

> [In order to define poverty, we can say that it is the individual that suffers because they cannot meet or satisfy their basic needs that all human beings deserve [1]. The lack of material goods needed for human development [2]. An income level needed to access a decent level [3]. Poverty is the economic circumstances in which the person lacks the income sufficient to access basic medical attention, food, housing, and education [4]. I can say that these are the primary reasons I choose this topic of poverty in my community [5]. It has affected me in my life and my family [6]. It is a capitalistic system in which economic neoliberalism has brought extreme inequity in the distribution of wealth [7].] (Emiliano, Argumentation, 07/07/06)

This passage brings to light how other writing genres, like the extended definition, continued to live on as students navigated subsequent writing assignments in the MSLI. In constructing an extended definition of the social problem of poverty, it seems Emiliano was able to utilize a newly appropriated academic practice as an entry point to produce more complex texts. Here, Emiliano sets the stage as he weaves in his lived experiences as the author and then pivots toward *naming* capitalism and neoliberalism as social forces that have "brought extreme inequity in the distribution of wealth." It is precisely in this dialogical space that students experimented with using their life experiences as evidence in constructing counternarratives.

Capitalism and neoliberalism were among the systems of oppression and dehumanization teachers and students worked together to deconstruct. Neoliberalism, in particular, was introduced and examined during the second and third week of the 2006 MSLI as part of our inquiry into the larger curricular themes of labor, migration, and gender. These systems were deconstructed through the readings of *Open Veins of Latin America* by Eduardo Galeano, *The Framing of Immigration* by George Lakoff, *Enrique's Journey* by Sonia Nazario, and *BioPower* by Xavier Javier Inda. These texts were centerpieces in the small reading circles and whole-class discussions.

As discussed in Chapter 4, close text analysis mediated a shared intellectual inquiry into the historical and sociological roots of social problems. Pedagogically, close text readings

mediated teacher-led analysis of the author's discourse and language use in constructing an argument or particular conceptual framework. This kind of analysis encompassed identifying specific language, metaphors, analogies and their placement in the text, such as the poetic mechanisms by Galeano, the journalistic narrative of Nazario, and analytical mechanisms of Lakoff. The pedagogical goal here was to close the gap between reader and author-theorist and in exchange, establish a context in which students could cultivate an intellectual relationship with not just the concepts and theories but the language of critical social analysis.

As with other excerpts of writing presented in this chapter, I am particularly interested in identifying how students use writing as an opportunity to construct meaning with, what I call, critical social thought and language in ways that reframe their experiences or redefine their sense of self. In this example, Emiliano situates himself and his family as having had the experience of living in poverty and struggling to acquire basic needs. In his autobiography, which was the last of the major writing assignments, Emiliano recounted the experience of living in "*pobreza extrema*" or "extreme poverty" in Mexico and his mother struggling to provide basic needs for him and his siblings.

This autobiographical stance may seem evident given the background and experiences Emiliano and other students bring to writing-namely, writing about the social problems that have impacted them and their communities. But it is precisely this sort of writing and meaning making we were organizing for in the curriculum and instruction of writing. As I discussed in an earlier section, writing was often referred to as a tool for social action through classroom discourse. The pedagogical orientation of writing in the MSLI cultivated a context that encouraged students to write about their experiences while simultaneously grappling with new ideas and perspectives for seeing the social world. I want to restate a rhetorical question one of the instructors posed to

students on the first day of the program when she was discussion the educational and political goals of the MSLI: “How can I understand what is happening in society and how it relates to what is happening in my life?”

However, getting to a place where students were able to make such connections in their essays was more nuanced and not a foregone conclusion. For Emiliano, while he participated in the reading of all the core texts, he gravitated toward particular authors and texts. In our post-program interview, Emiliano identified three texts that were pivotal to his emerging understanding and writing on social problems. Two texts were *Open Veins of Latin America* (1997) and *Enrique’s Journey* (2004). The third text was a guided discussion on North American Free Trade Agreement, and its impact on agriculture, labor, and migration.

In the following excerpt, Emiliano explains how these texts impacted him and shifted his understanding of poverty:

Excerpt 5.9

01	Octavio:	¿Me puedes explicar porqué fue que escogiste ese problema de
02		neoliberalismo?
03		[Can you explain why you decided to write about the problem of
04		neoliberalism?]
05	Emiliano:	La vez que me enfoque más fue cuando Shirin hizo su presentación
06		cuando trato sobre la vida del comercio. Como me afectó a mi. Que como
07		un país por ayudar unos hunde a los demás como en México. Tambien
08		aprendí mucho de la lectura de Eduardo Galeano. Que hay unos países que
09		siempre ganan y unos que se dedican a perder. De allí fue donde aprendí
10		del neoliberalismo.
11		[I focused more on this topic when Shirin did a presentation on free trade.
12		It affected me. Like how a country can oppress one country by helping
13		others. I also learned a lot from the reading of Eduardo Galeano. Like how
14		there are certain countries that always win and some that are dedicated to
15		losing. That is where I began to learn about neoliberalism.]
		(Emiliano, Interview, 02/10/07)

Here is a glimpse into what became a pivotal intellectual experience for Emiliano (and perhaps his peers) and his emergent "social imagination." He briefly mentions the class discussion and the formation of perspective on the relationship between the individual, history, and transnational economic policy. This may also represent a shift in how he reflects about the circumstances that led to his migration story to the United States. I find the last sentence in this excerpt interesting in terms of how Emiliano paraphrases Galeano's metaphoric framing of the history of winning and losing countries. This logic echoes throughout his argumentation essay. It is evident that Emiliano came to make a connection to this way of explaining the sociohistorical roots of poverty.

In light of this shift, Emiliano does not go on to define nor elaborate on neoliberalism as a system that causes economic inequality as the premise of his argumentation. As both his reader and teacher in the MSLI, I would have liked to see a summary of neoliberalism referencing Eduardo Galeano or other sources. Due to the short four-week curriculum, though, the drafting process was abbreviated. Additional time, I believe would have created opportunities for further feedback and revising. This shortcoming in his essay, however, does not necessarily indicate that Emiliano had a superficial understanding of neoliberalism or structures of economic inequality. As he indicates in his interview, these texts were pivotal to his emerging understanding of poverty and the global system of economic exploitation and inequality which is at the heart of *Open Veins of Latin America*.

In the third paragraph of his argumentation essay, we begin to see Emiliano try on the language of authors in ways that advance a politically ethical stance in representing the experience of individual and communities impacted by poverty. It seems that Emiliano is much more interested in how people and communities affected by economic poverty have been

positioned as invisible. He seems much more interested in using text and the language of critical social analysis to construct a counternarrative that is consistent with what he has experienced and witnessed. By the third paragraph of the essay, we see this rhetorical turn in which he appropriates a metaphoric phrase from Sonia Nazario's (2004) text *Enrique's Journey* and draws an image for the reader that conveys the hopeful struggle and resilience of communities affected by poverty:

Excerpt 5.10

> Las personas pobres son personas que luchan contra todo tipo de opreción hacia ellos [1]. Ellos hacen los trabajos mas pesados sucios y descuidados [2]. Las personas de la sociedad mas alta no trabajaria nunca y que ni si quiera pensaría pasar por ahi por evitar que se les paren las moscas encima [3]. La personas que tienen que hacer ese tipo de trabajo dia a dia con tal de sobrevivir a una guerra [4]. Una persona que vive en la pobreza es una persona que lucha por salir de la pobreza y busca de mil maneras escaparse de la guerra en que vive dia a dia [5]. De acuerdo a Sonia Nazario es la "guerra sin nombre" la que ellos pelean y se esperan por ganar, con el sudor de su frente y hasta con la última gota de sangre del último gramo de fuerza que le quedan en su humilde cuerpo[6]. Según los países ricos o la sociedad no pueden ser ayudados porque no hay personas que mueran en esta guerra [7]. Pero te puedo decir que en lo que llevas leyendo esto, diez personas pobres han muerto [8].
>
> [Poor people are people who struggle [or fight, resist] against all types of oppression against them [1]. They perform the most difficult, dirty and unsafe jobs [2]. People from higher society would never work and much less pass by there to avoid the flies [3]. The people that have to perform that type of work day after day do so in order to survive a war [4]. A person living in poverty is a person that struggles to get out of poverty and looks for a thousand ways to escape the war they live every day [5]. According to Sonia Nazario, it is a "war without names" that they fight and strive to win, with their own sweat, until the last drop of blood, until the last ounce of strength that remains in their humble bodies [6]. According to wealthy countries or society, they cannot be helped because there are no people that die in this war [7]. But I can tell you that in the time you have been reading this essay, ten people have died [8].] (Emiliano, Argumentation, 07/07/06)

In the first sentence, Emiliano sets the tone in framing the experiences of poor people with specific word choices like *luchan* or "struggle." The word *luchan* or *luchar* can be translated in a couple different ways, but Emiliano seems to be rhetorically reaching for an image

of fighting against or resisting various form of oppression. There is certainly the sense that he is constructing an analytical frame that oriented toward rejecting dehumanizing narratives and the elevation of hopeful resilience. In this rhetorical space, there also the theme of sacrifice or *sacrificio* that we noticed in Citlali's extended definition of what it means to be a migrant student. The first five sentences are in way building up in gradual increase in tone and volume toward the crescendo of the sixth sentence. Here, Emiliano builds on the poetics of Nazario's metaphor of *la guerra sin nombre* or "the war without names" to make a powerful statement about the sacrifices poor people make to triumph over the social problem of poverty.

As Emiliano cites in his essay, the metaphor originated from *Enrique's Journey* (2004) a core text of the MSLI in which Nazario chronicles the dangerous journey of children and youth from Central America who travel alone hoping to reach the United States. This text was among the favorite for MSLI students because of its journalistic narrative style. The metaphor Emiliano quotes speaks to the daily "war-like" battles children and youth face as they ride cargo trains and try to evade capture by corrupt police, immigration agents, and violent gangs. As Nazario describes in her book, many children die during this journey, but it is difficult to know how many because of the difficulty in identifying them due to the lack of identification or the inability to identify next of kin. Emiliano's placement of this metaphor in his own narrative could be understood as in attempt by Emiliano to be in dialogue with Nazario and her writing. Emiliano views the risks these migrant children take to escape poverty and violence in their homelands and the struggles of poor people in his essay as connected.

In similar tone, Emiliano draws our attention to the social segregation, invisibility, and anonymity of those that struggle in "la guerra sin nombre." He explains how poor communities are segregated or "segregados por la sociedad," which creates a context in which society is not

able to observe or "…observerar lo que es una persona pobre en realidad (*what a poor person is in reality*)." He then proceeds to explain how people living in poverty struggle against oppressive working conditions and social segregation. In reading this passage, I get the sense that Emiliano is not only appropriating and experimenting with transformative language, but he also experimenting with rhetorical and stylistic mechanisms. In that sixth sentence, Emiliano recontextualizes the metaphor, "*la guerra sin nombre*," to state: ". . . la que ellos pelean y se esperan por ganar, con el sudor de su frente y hasta con la ultima gota sangre del ultimo gramo de fuerza que le quedan en su humilde cuerpo [. . . *with their own sweat, until the last drop of blood, until the last ounce of strength that remains in their humble bodies*]." This recontextualization echoes the original text, while also providing Emiliano the literary space to weave his own poetic and ethical representation of poor people.

This paragraph brings into focus the important role played by the words and writing of others in the formation of critical social thinking in the MSLI. Moreover, examining the choices students make in the appropriation of authors and others' words as they compose their own texts adds a layer of complexity to understanding what it means to become critical social thinkers and writers. How students use their agency to incorporate words of others is a dimension that is often overlooked when working with young writers in academic contexts (Hull & Rose, 1989). In the context of the MSLI, the work of quoting was not simply a neutral act but seems to have been the result of the ways students made meaning and connected with certain authors and their writing.

I would like to return to my earlier discussion on the acting of quoting in terms of how it was enacted in student writing in the MSLI. In some cases, this gave the work that students produced a heterogenous quality that could be conceptualized as multivoiced (Bakhtin, 1981; Ivanič, 1998). In the context of writing and the process of constructing texts, Fairclough's

concept of *intextuality* serves as one dimension of the conceptual framework provided in this chapter. In particular, I am interested in how revoicing the words of other authors contributes to their development as critical social thinkers and writers.

In the second half of his essay, we see Emiliano continue to draw on the language of other authors to construct his own poetic narrative. This narrative weaves together the aesthetics of language and critical social analysis. In this fashion, Emiliano remains true to the ethical portrayal of individuals and communities affected by poverty as struggling against larger historical and social structures. He brings us back to the framework of neoliberalism that he introduced earlier in his essay without explicitly naming it as such. However, a critique of neoliberalism echoes in the way he leverages statistics and other sources. I also want to direct the reader's attention to his choice and placement of quotes with respect to the particular framework he is presenting:

Excerpt 5.11

> En un cuadro creado por lo que yo pienso es que personas no deciden ser pero como dice Eduardo Galeano, " los pobres no prefieren ser pobres [1]. Pero no se puede querer el fin sin querer los medio: quienes niegan nuestro renacimiento posible" (pg.10) [2]. Esto nos da en conclusión a un solo culpable, el gobierno, personas que trabajan para ellos en vez de trabajar para el pueblo y dar los suficientes recursos para que los pobres salgan de esa trampa de pobreza [3]. Galeano dice " la pobreza no está escrita en los Astros" (pg. 10) [4]. Esto nos indica que no es natural el ser pobre [5]. Que no nacimos con la suerte de que vamos hacer pobres y que no lo podemos cambiar, pero yo creo que si la persona quiere y tiene los recursos me refiero a estudios, comida, atención médica y otras cosas que son necesarias[6]. Lamentablemente come dice Galeano " la división internacional del trabajo consiste en que unos países se especializan en ganar y otros en perder" (pg.1) [7]. O en otras palabras será que unos se especializan en ser ricos y otros en ser pobres [8]. Ball dice que la impunidad es toda vía posible, porque los pobres no pueden desencadenar la guerra mundial, por la cual no se podrían desatar y escapar de la guerra sin nombre [9]. Yo pienso que el gobierno nos debería de dar la arma de la educación para poder desencadenar la guerra contra la pobreza [10]. Pero segun las estadísticas "only 9.6 percent of high school graduates are poor compared to 22.2% of those without a diploma [11]." Porque los políticos en vez de combatir la pobreza pelean contra los pobres, atacando a lo equivocado [12].

Deshumanizando a los pobres y explotándolos y oprecionandolos hasta que no quede nada de ellos [13].

Estos son los cuadros formados por la sociedad y por mi [16]. Quiero dejar en claro que cuando hablamos de pobreza no solamente es económicamente, pero también hay pobreza en la educación, de ética, moral, y valores los cuales la misma sociedad no ha hecho quedar con la opresión y discriminación hacia nosotros por ser pobres [17]. Quiero que recuerden que nuestro destino estará escrito pero nuestro futuro no y una persona es lo que ella decida y el esfuerzo que le ponga para llegar a su meta [18]. Tengamos el valor de quitar un grano de arena a el mar de la sociedad y la opresión hacia los pobres [19]. Cualquier rico quisiera tener la felicidad que yo tengo, me felicidad que con el dinero no se compra y que no tiene valor económico [20]. My suerte de ser el hijo del pueblo, porque yo no escogí ser pobre, sino que tuve la suerte y ahora el privilegio de salir de ella [21]. (Emiliano, Argumentation Essay, 07/07/06)

[In a frame created by what I think, is that people do not choose to be poor. Like Eduardo Galeano said, “the poor do not prefer to be poor, but you cannot like the ends without the means, whoever negates our possible rebirth” (pg.10) [1]. But you cannot deny our possible rebirth. [2] This brings us to the conclusion of one possible cause, the government, people working for them instead of working for the community and providing sufficient resources so that the poor can come out of the trap of poverty.[3] Galeano says, “poverty is not written in the stars” (pg. 10) [4]. This tells us that it is not natural to be poor [5]. We are not born with the fortune that we are going to be poor and that we cannot change it, but I believe that if the person wants to and has the resources, I am referring to education, food, medical attention, and other necessary things [6]. Unfortunately, as Galeano states, “the international division of labor consists in that some countries specialize in wining and others in loosing” [7]. In other words, could it be that some specialize in being rich and others in being poor [8]. Ball says that impunity is still possible, because the poor cannot remove the chains of the global war, which they cannot get rid of or escape the war without a name [9]. I think that the government should provide us with the weapons of education so that we can remove the chains of the war against poverty [10]. But according to statistics, “only 9.6 percent of high school graduates are poor compared to 22.2% of those without a diploma” [11]. Because rather than combat poverty, they fight against the poor, attacking the wrong one [12]. Dehumanizing the poor and exploit them and oppress them until there is nothing left of them [13].

These are the frames formed by society and by me [14]. I want to be clear that when we are talking about poverty we are not just talking about economic poverty, but also ethical, moral, and values which society itself has left us with oppression and discrimination [15]. I want you to remember that our destiny will be written by our future and it’s about what that person decides and the effort they give to reach their goals [16]. We shall have the courage of remove a grain of sand from the ocean of society and the oppression toward the poor [17]. Any wealthy person would like to have the happiness I have, my happiness cannot be bought with money, and you cannot put an economic value on it [18]. I am fortunate to be a son

> of a community, because I did not choose to be poor, rather I am fortune and now have the privilege of overcoming poverty [19].](Emiliano, Argumentation, 07/07/06)

In this excerpt, Eduardo Galeano's (1994) text *Open Veins of Latin America* takes center stage in Emiliano's argument. Here, Emiliano aligns with the premise that poverty is the result of historical and systemic oppression and marginalization. As I have discussed earlier, *Open Veins of Latin America* was an important text with respect to the pedagogical approach to writing because of the way Galeano weaves figurative language and the historical analysis of colonization in the Americas. In sentence 3, Emiliano quotes a powerful line in Galeano's text: "La pobreza no esta escrita en los astros [Poverty is not written in the stars]" (p. 10). Emiliano follows this up with the assertion that poverty is not a natural occurrence of life. This serves as a kind of call to action to people impacted by poverty and governments who he sees as responsible for providing the resources people need to overcome poverty. In sentence 9, Emiliano reaches back to Nazario and attempts to weave the metaphor, "*la guerra sin nombre*," into a quote of another text emphasizing the "*impunidad*" or impunity by which a global system of development and underdevelopment persists at the peril of poor people. To win the war over poverty, Emiliano advocates for empowering poor people with "*las armas de la educacíon*," or the weapon of education in order to "*desencadenar*" or remove the chains of poverty. We can only imagine the thought process of Emiliano as he worked to weave together these various snippets of quotes and written utterances from various sources to create a text that rehumanizes and honors the struggle of people in his family and community.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I braided together the documentation and examination of pedagogical talk, student writing, and student interviews to construct a descriptive analysis of the experience

of writing in the 2006 MSLI. The following research questions guided the analysis in this chapter:

2) How, if at all, did students apply the practice of critical social thinking into their writing of academic essays?

    a) In what ways did students incorporate concepts and critical habits of mind in the process of defining and reframing social problems?

First, my examination of the social organization of writing drew on classroom videotape recordings that documented the pedagogical approach to writing and the attempt by teachers to reframe the purpose of writing as a tool for social action. In this context, writing as a tool for social action was defined in terms of the iterative process of identifying the historical and political dimensions of students' lives and reflecting on ways to address social problems through future action. I also documented the ways students were guided and supported in the process of incorporating social theoretical concepts into their academic essays. In this regard, the findings in this chapter (a) contribute to research and teaching discourses in the field of literacy that foreground the importance of building a community of writers, and (b) situate writing as a sociopolitical act (Bomer et al., 2019; Ivanič, 2004).

As such, my examination of student writing situates the text they composed as artifacts of their participation in an apprenticeship process oriented toward critical social thinking. In particular, the textual analysis of student essays illuminated how students utilized and made sense of social theoretical concepts to compose academic essays. In Citlali's case, the extended definition essay afforded her the opportunity to connect what it means to be a migrant student to the theoretical constructs of *history-making* and the *sociological imagination*. This demonstrated

an agency in experimenting with language and ideas in ways that historicized her experiences and the experiences of her family and community.

The blending of student writing and first-person accounts of their writing provided an in-depth perspective of the choices students made in incorporating the words of other authors to construct their own counternarratives. Emiliano illustrated this both in the multi-voiced dimension and presentation of his argumentation essay.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

For the last 15 years, I have worked as an educator, coordinator of youth programs, and administrator of alternative education programs in public schools. A great deal of my work has been focused on developing equity-minded transformative alternative education programs for historically marginalized and underserved youth. The MSLI and my experiences as an instructor and researcher have been foundational to the work I do alongside teachers and community members in designing and organizing educational environments that center students' agency, capabilities, intelligence, and resilience. As such, this qualitative case study examined the teaching and learning practices that constituted the apprenticeship of students into the social practice of critical social thinking within the context of the MSLI. From 1993 to 2006, MSLI was an intensive, month-long academic preparation and college outreach program for high school-aged youth from migrant farmworker communities across California. Under the direction of Dr. Kris Gutiérrez, the MSLI developed an instructional framework organized toward the development of academic literacy and critical social consciousness. In this dissertation, I examine classroom video of reading groups (or reading circles, as I refer to them in this study), student writing, and post-program interviews in order to better understand how students were apprenticed into the social practice of critical social thinking. The dissertation sought to address the following research questions:

1) How were students in the MSLI apprenticed into the practice of critical social thinking in the context of reading social theoretical texts?

    a) What kinds of pedagogical talk and practices supported students in reading and analyzing social theoretical texts?

2) If and how did students apply the practice of critical social thinking in the writing of academic essays?

a) In what ways did students incorporate concepts and critical habits of mind in the process of defining and reframing social problems?

This dissertation builds on a body of work—over the last 14 years and counting—that had examined the everyday learning and literacies practices of students and teachers in this unique learning space (Espinoza, 2008; Gutiérrez, 2008; Vossoughi, 2011, 2014).

I first summarize the central findings of this dissertation, followed by a discussion of the study's contributions to research in the areas of literacy, college pathway programs, and the development of transformative learning spaces. Third, I briefly identify and explain the study's limitations and areas for further research.

Summary of Findings

Routine Teaching Practices and Dialogue in the Context of Reading Circles

In Chapter 4, my conceptualization of apprenticeship builds on the work of Barbara Rogoff (1990). Apprenticeship is a community-level process, according to Rogoff (1995, 2003), in which newcomers to a *community of practice* (e.g., carpenters, teachers, writers, researchers, etc.) advance their knowledge and skills by participating alongside more experienced members in culturally mediated and organized activities. Through the analysis of videotaped recordings of reading circles, I found that reading circles served as productive learning spaces to apprentice students into the social practice of critical social thinking. In my analysis, I identified the following teaching practices that mediated students' apprenticeship in critical social thinking:

- Close-text analysis;
- Generative questioning to build conceptual understanding;
- Reading with a writer's eye; and
- Sensing and affirming students' meaning making.

My documentation of these teaching practices shed light on the important role teachers play in bringing to bear their experiences and histories in reading social theoretical texts toward the apprenticeship of students. The emphasis on close-text analysis in reading circles privileged the quality of reading over the quantity of reading. Emiliano's first-person account confirms how this approach mediates deeper forms of reading and conceptual understanding. Together, these routine teaching practices mediate more thorough forms of reading and cultivate students' agency in interpreting and thinking with difficult texts.

Close-text analysis was also constituted by the routine movements of reading passages aloud and stopping to engage in dialogue. These movements were mediated by generative questions posed by the teacher to prompt students in defining and unpacking the language of the social scientist they were reading. In her study of reading in the MSLI, Shirin Vossoughi (2011) found that these movements of "lifting off the text" created opportunities for the " . . . work of (assisted) meaning making" (p. 162). The examples presented in Chapter 4 illustrate how these movements provided students and teachers the opportunity to concretize complex ideas and record student thinking as resources to refer back to in future activity. In turn, students and teachers returned to the text with new perspectives or understandings about the text.

Students' participation in the collective interpretation of social theoretical texts was also supported through teachers' attentive listening, sensing, and affirmation of students' meaning-making practices. These teaching practices contributed to the formation of safe learning spaces in which students could express tentative interpretations. This resulted in students' participation as co-creators of knowledge in the collective engagement and investigation of social problems.

Social Theoretical Concepts to Affirm and Reframe Students' Lived Experiences

In Chapter 5, my analysis was two-fold: (a) to locate the conceptualization and mediation of writing with the instruction framework of the MSLI; and (b) to present an examination of student writing and identify the choices students made in applying elements of critical social thinking in the composition and production of hybrid academic texts. I present vignettes of pedagogical talk and instructional practices that established a particular conception of reading and writing as reciprocal *and* as tools for social action. This conception of writing in relation to reading provided a backdrop for the examination of students' writing.

My analysis of student writing in conjunction with interview data illustrates how students navigated writing assignments and incorporated social theoretical concepts to compose essays that affirm and historicize their experiences. In the case of Citlali, she approached the writing of the extended definition and incorporation of the "sociological imagination" (Mills, 1959) as a space to affirm and validate her lived experiences as the daughter of migrant farmworkers. Citlali's essay is representative of how students used their agency as writers to reshape the assignment in ways that were meaningful to them.

In the case of the argumentation assignment, Emiliano's writing illustrates how students utilized social theoretical concepts to identify and name the historical and political systems shaping students' lived realities. In Emiliano's case, the process of naming influenced the choices he made in reshaping the words of authors to construct counternarratives that center the resilience of individuals and communities impacted by poverty.

Contributions of the Study

The insights provided in this study contribute to collective efforts by teachers and those that support teachers to re-imagine, design, and implement equity-minded transformative

learning spaces organized toward engaging students from historically marginalized communities in humanizing and liberatory forms of teaching and learning. I want to set the stage by reminding the reader that the Migrant Student Leadership Institute (MSLI) emerged during a historical period in which historically marginalized communities, and migrant communities in particular, were facing significant racialized and xenophobic threats to their civil and educational rights. This was coupled by the institutionalization of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 that, despite its stated intention to address the achievement gap, served to further narrow and restrict what counts as learning and academic literacy through a system of high-stakes accountability. The MSLI sought to disrupt traditional conceptualizations of school-based literacy that are ahistorical and disregard students' sociocultural repertoires of practice (Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003). As such, the MSLI was informed by a set of political and pedagogical imperatives that sought to equip students with the academic and social scientific tools requisite to interpret, critique, and resist the effects of these sociopolitical forces, while also being able to access the university.

As a university outreach program, the MSLI operated outside the reach of a public schooling context bound by the demands of standardized curriculum standards, narrowed definitions of academic literacy, and high-stakes accountability systems. Operating in such a space provided the creative and pedagogical freedom to develop teaching strategies that were theoretically grounded in humanizing and cultural-historical theories of literacy and learning (Gutiérrez, 2008 & 2009; Espinoza, 2008 & 2009). Moreover, throughout its history in the school of education, the MSLI cultivated a community of "scholar-educators" that came together to create, teach, and learn through reflecting and studying our practice (Espinoza, 2009). We had the advantage of learning as a teaching team about what strategies had worked and what needed

to be adjusted. As Manuel Espinoza (2009) has articulated, the MSLI was akin to historical counterpaces or, what he calls *educational sanctuaries*, co-created and produced *by* and *for* historically marginalized communities in which participants "…may experience the intellectual, artistic freedom, social equity, and access to educational resources typically not enjoyed in institutionalized settings" (p. 45).

In this vein, the everyday teaching practices documented in this study took place within an educational context that operated outside the structural and political constraints and demands of official schools and classrooms. As such, this afforded teachers the ability to design and organize learning in ways that were both theoretically grounded and oriented toward addressing the historical injustices experienced by California's migrant farmworker communities. In both design and teaching practices, instructors in the MSLI worked to reorganize literacy instruction toward apprenticing students into university level literacy while also developing the social scientific tools needed to reflect, examine, and reframe their past, present, and future selves (Gutiérrez & Jurow, 2016).

Pedagogical Implications

The analysis of reading circles and the routine teaching practices that supported the apprenticeship of students into critical social thinking provides important insights into the possible affordances of a distributed approach to engaging students in the reading rigorous critical social texts. As the excerpts of talk and social interaction illustrate, engaging students in close-text reading involved strategic forms of support that embedded comprehension strategies within an overarching approach that emphasized reading as a collective process of knowledge production. Some of the strategies or pedagogical moves that were documented included: generative questioning, moving in and out of the text, grounding dialogue in the text, assisting

students in making connections, analyzing the authors language, and affirming and encouraging students' sense-making. Together these routine practices constituted an approach to reading that was oriented toward a collective process knowledge production and students as co-creators of knowledge and full members of a community of practice.

Being attentive to the everyday talk and social interaction that takes place in schools and other school-like settings is critical to our understanding, as teachers and researchers, to know how deficit conceptions of academic ability and cognitive potential are constructed. These conceptions, however well-intentioned or rationalized they are, can serve to limit students' access to powerful and socially critical academic literacies (Gutiérrez et al., 2009). In their foundational work, Glynda Hull and Mike Rose (1990) challenged remedial approaches to the teaching of literacy and advanced a model of reading that centralized students' agency as knowledge makers. Such an approach is rooted in the idea that students need to have access to educational experiences in which they are immersed in an authentic academic community where they are involved "…in generating and questioning knowledge" and receive "…encouragement to involve themselves in such activity." (p. 297). The approach to reading in the MSLI was informed by this work and by the understanding that our students were capable of engaging in university-level reading and writing through multiple forms of assistance and support.

The study of student writing in this dissertation provides insights into the student experience of writing within a context that centered students' experiences, agency, creativity, and intellect as emerging critical social scientists. As the excerpts of teacher discourse illustrate, teachers worked to construct a conception of reading and writing as tools for social action. Embedded within this broader instructional framework was the teaching of university level academic writing conventions and genres. This integrated approach has important pedagogical

implications for teachers of English Language Arts and writing that are seeking to develop models that braid together the social, political, and academic dimensions of academic literacy.

In the same way that teachers in the MSLI did not dichotomize between the political and academic purpose of writing, there was a strong emphasis on relational dimensions of reading and writing. As the analysis of everyday teaching practices illustrates, there was a strong emphasis on the reciprocal relationship between reading and writing as twin processes in the practice of critical social thinking. Reading circles often focused on thinking together about why an author used a particular word, phrase, sentence, metaphor, or rhetorical device. Teachers also spent a considerable amount of time leading guided dialogue with students about the historical context in which authors were writing. As the writing of Citlali and Emiliano demonstrate, students were able to develop deep connections to the authors, language, and ideas in the process of composing text that wove together social analysis and autobiography. These insights are important to the development of a dialogical and relational approach to academic literacy in schools where reading and writing are often treated as distinct and singular processes, rather than as opportunities to engage students in a dynamic process of knowledge production.

The documentation of the pedagogical discourse and mediation of writing in the MSLI contribute to the field of English education in terms of the how the conception and organization of writing may further the development of academic literacy. In this study, I provided insights into how the re-conceptualization of *writing as social action*—as a tool for critical reflection and the analysis of social problems—shaped the kinds of texts students produced. This reframing and approach to writing in the MSLI contributes to ongoing efforts to shift the paradigm of English education to thinking about writing as a social practice and the importance of building a *community of writers* (Bomer et al., 2019). In addition, a conception of writing as social practice

may further efforts to cultivate students' writing identities as social agents, or historical actors, with respect to using writing to explore the broader power relations and identify ways to transform them. In a similar vein, Maisha Winn's (2018) work draws upon the tenets of restorative justice to consider the possibilities of a re-conceptualization of writing. Winn highlights the strides we can make in designing curriculum and instructional frameworks that seek to develop students—especially students who have been underserved educationally—into becoming "agentive and self-disciplined writers."

This relational aspect of writing in the MSLI was evident in the crafting of writing assignments, and how teachers sought to cultivate students' critical reflection on the experiences of their families and communities within a broader socio-historical context. From a curriculum perspective, teachers in the MSLI organized writing prompts and assignments as opportunities for students to think alongside authors and social theory texts. The extended definition assignment, for example, empowered students to critique and contest dominant narratives about them, their families, and communities. In the process, students reshaped the academic genres they were learning by composing counternarratives about their experiences with race, patriarchy, poverty, and labor. Yet, as we observed in Citlali's essay, her reading and reframing of C. Wright Mills' (1959) concept of the "sociological imagination" created an epistemological opening for her to identify the community and cultural wealth of farmworker families and articulate how the cultural practice of "*sacrificio*" as critical to the college-going trajectories of migrant youth (Yosso, 2005). In process, Citlali demonstrates a critical awareness of the dominant narratives that serve to erase and negate the dignity and resilience of farmworker communities.

The writing students produced in the MSLI further reinforced their right to tell a different story about their community. Students demonstrated an awareness about the narratives and

stories that were being told about them and their communities by those in power. It reminds us, as teachers and researchers, that we have a responsibility to reflect on our practices and develop culturally sustaining pedagogies that emphasize the intelligence, resilience, and academic capacities of youth from historically marginalized communities. In our discussions about her writing, Citlali talked about how the writing she did in the MSLI was both personal and empowering with regard to the opportunity to reflect on her lived experience in relation to understanding the economic, social, and political structures that have shaped their lives. In fact, all the students I interviewed talked about how reflecting and writing about their experiences was a deeply empowering process and reinforced their connections to their families and communities. For Emiliano, writing about the social problem of poverty in Oaxaca motivated him to craft an argument that identified the dehumanizing narratives or "frames" about communities dealing with poverty.

The vignettes of student writing presented in this study demonstrate the deep and rich writing and critical social thinking students were able produce within an educational environment that not only centered their experiences, but their cultural and linguistic repertoires as well. As demonstrated in the vignettes of reading and writing in the MSLI, students and teachers moved seamlessly between Spanish and English. Through these practices, students' hybrid language practices were reframed as essential resources for learning, intellectual engagement, and knowledge production. As in the case of Emiliano and other students I interviewed, students arrived at the MSLI having internalized negative experiences in schools in which their bi/multilingual practices were not valued as worthy or legitimate for engaging in college-preparatory academic literacies. In contrast, in the MSLI, students had the experience of using their hybrid or translingual language practices to engage in high levels of academic and

critical work. In addition, students also had access to bilingual teachers who could provide students with multiple forms of assistance, guidance, and feedback in both English and Spanish. The MSLI and the reorganization of academic literacy instruction serves as a model for critical educators, teachers, teacher educators, and researchers seeking to challenge existing monolingual pedagogical norms and advance culturally sustaining pedagogies that center students' diverse language practices (Paris & Alim, 2017).

This dissertation is also timely with respect to the work of educators and researchers engaged in designing transformative instructional frameworks toward the development of high school Ethnic Studies programs in California and other states in the Southwest (de los Rios et al., 2016; Zavala, 2018). As Ethnic Studies programs are being institutionalized within the K-12 curriculum, Zavala and others challenge normative assumptions that the curriculum and instructional approach of Ethnic Studies is not academically rigorous. While the MSLI did not explicitly draw on the discipline of Ethnic Studies, there are similarities in the interdisciplinary approach and in the pedagogical strategies designed to equip students with the academic and analytical tools to investigate, critique, and transform structures of racial oppression (Tintiango-Cubales et al., 2019). This study contributes to the work of K-12 Ethnic Studies educators striving to develop effective pedagogical models and teaching practices and strategies that inform the development of transformative spaces in public schools (de los Rios et al., 2016; Zavala, 2018).

Areas for Future Research

The examples of textual encounters, student writing, and interview data presented in this dissertation illustrates the movement between languages as students and teachers engaged the collective investigation of the historical and political dimensions of their lives. Although it was

not a line of inquiry in this dissertation, students and teachers' hybrid language practices were prominent in their dialogue and interactions. An investigation focusing on the hybrid language practices of students and teachers would provide a fuller understanding of apprenticeship in critical social thinking in MSLI.

This investigation of apprenticeship in critical social thinking documented the routine teaching and learning practices of students and teachers in one classroom in the MSLI. This investigation was limited to reading circles in the classroom in which I served as a member of the teaching staff. Data collection for this dissertation did not include video recordings from other classrooms during the 2006 MSLI. Consequently, the central findings of this study cannot be generalized to other classrooms during this year of the program.

Closing Remarks

On a personal level, this dissertation was an attempt at time travel. Returning to this dissertation many years after the end of the 2006 MSLI allowed me to the opportunity to revisit my own apprenticeship as a teacher and researcher. It returned me to a space and time within the walls of Moore Hall where I had studied, created, taught, and written alongside my mentors and teachers: Manuel Espinoza, Carlos Tejeda, Kris Gutiérrez, Mike Rose, Shirin Vossoughi, Jackie Blanco, Miguel Zavala, and Jolynn Asato. As a learner in this space, I learned about being an attentive and careful observer of teaching and learning, and how to use these observations to design transformative spaces for learning and development. I returned to times in the Urban Literacies Lab, watching and learning from classroom video and having the opportunity to reflect on each other's practices. I can recall watching and re-watching Manuel Espinoza sharing his autobiography as part of a lesson on the writing of autobiography. I was able to trace snippets of our pedagogical talk and the influence of Carlos and Manuel in our delivery of certain lessons. I

am grateful for having had the opportunity to be part of this unique and special space as a teacher and researcher in development.

But this is only half the story. My apprenticeship and development as a teacher and researcher was shaped by my students in the MSLI. My development as a teacher was shaped by our everyday encounters with texts, feedback sessions, counseling sessions, playful creativity, and laughter. It was also shaped by my visits to their homes and developing relationships with their loved ones, as well as in coordinating student reunions that seemed more like family reunions. These experiences with students in the MSLI inform my work today in designing and developing alternative education programs built around transformative models of education like the MSLI.

I wrote this dissertation in the context of the global COVD-19 pandemic. The pandemic exposed and exacerbated long-standing structural economic, political and racial inequities and injustice. As schools shut-down and shifted to remote learning, deficit-minded rhetoric surfaced on "learning loss" that seemed to place blame on Indigenous, Black, and immigrant communities of color. The pandemic abruptly forced unprecedented challenges upon school districts in their ability to provide an education to all their students. Yet in response, some school districts doubled down on standards-based, assessment-driven teaching mandates. These responses, however, seemed veiled by a call to build stronger student-teacher relationships.

This confluence of factors prompted me to reflect further on this dissertation study and consider how a study of the MSLI might contribute to the discourse around revisioning schools. So, I turned to the first-person accounts of students' experiences in the MSLI. In students' reflections about their connections with social theory and the collective analysis of social problems, they spoke about how this process also created space for students to share their

experiences and stories of struggle and hope with each other. Itza, for example, described that she gained a sense of confidence in learning that she shared common experiences with her peers. Overall, I believe students developed a sense of solidarity as they experienced and imagined their future selves.

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