As recent transnational literacy scholarship has shown, acculturation theories homogenize migrant experiences with literacy, often placing young writers on a developmental continuum that implies distancing from homeland practices and communities. Absent more complex theories, the relation between homeland practices, transnational experiences, and local literacies remains difficult to determine. This conundrum prompts this study’s guiding question: How does the transnational inhere in and motivate local literacies? Drawing from lifespan interviews and collected texts of one adult transnational writer (“Clara”), I examine how situated practice coordinates the “here” and “there” within transnational social fields. I find that orientations to and purposes for literacy inherited and made in Clara’s childhood, particularly her and her family’s experience of transnational migration, persisted as sets of patterned social actions that she self-assigned to diverse types of local writing; findings show her building up genre from an emic perspective over time. While Clara’s genre infrastructure persisted at the level of social action, linguistic achievement of those genres was more precarious. I call this set of self-generated, patterned social actions Clara’s genre repertoire from below, and argue that it guided and governed her movement across texts encountered and produced in home, school, and work contexts to ultimately become a bridge across difference in her work as a bilingual educator. This grounded study contributes the construct of genre repertoires from below and its method of genre mapping to make visible how extracurricular and in-school literacy grow together in response to and in support of transnational writers’ everyday experiences.

Clara Flores’s family, like many who have made cross-border moves, is geographically dispersed. Clara’s parents’ 1980s move from Argentina via Brazil to the United States was impelled by economic, political, and personal unrest. Despite advanced training in several professions, her father remained unemployed in Argentina. While Clara’s mother did work, the Falklands War (1982), coming after years of government and military turmoil within Argentina, was “the last straw” for her. Clara and her twin sister were born in Florida, but their parents’ migration made them all a part of the Argentine diaspora. Before long, financial imperatives spurred
the Flores’s next move to a shipyard post in the Pacific Northwest. That was 26 years ago. Today, Clara is a bilingual literacy educator in the Pacific Northwest.

Within this lifespan context—mediated by family, language, literacy, and migration—I explore how Clara built and mobilized a writing life to coordinate cross-border links and support movement across texts written and encountered at home, school, and work. Narratives about transnational student literacy informed by acculturation theories homogenize core context variables such as time and space, often placing young students on a developmental continuum that implies distancing from homeland practices and communities as they age (Lam, 2009; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). In this storyline, children’s literacy trajectories to adulthood are premised on predictable enculturation models. The past fades, intergenerational links pale, and other geographies diminish.

Yet, some research studies and Clara’s story have revealed a more complicated dynamic. Some studies have revealed how ordinary, routine communicative practices have facilitated connection between communities and families in a diaspora (Bruna, 2007; Orellana, Thorne, Chee, & Lam, 2001; Sánchez, 2007). Yet, disconnection also occurs, often driven by language decline, lack of resources for frequent (if any) travel, intermittent contact due to issues related to the digital divide (between those with and those without access to the Internet), the expense of long-distance phone calls, and the challenges of sustaining personal motivation over time (Waldinger, 2015). Despite constraints, interconnection persists, although these linkages may be “more fragile, more fragmented, and more infrequently occurring” (Waldinger, 2015, p. 69) than has been documented. For educators and researchers, these tensions between incorporation and transnationalism (Itzigshon & Giorguli-Saucido, 2002) raise questions about the role of literacy for transnational youth and adults and prompt this study’s guiding question: How does the transnational inhere in and motivate local literacies?

Following calls for more research into literacy in global contexts (Lam & Warriner, 2012; Roozen & Lunsford, 2011), I examine how situated practice coordinates the “here” and “there” within transnational social fields (Suarez-Orozco, 2001). Drawing from lifespan interviews and collected texts of one adult transnational writer (Clara), I report on Clara’s extracurricular and school-based writing to argue that what might appear to be discrete instances of self-sponsored and school-sponsored writing are better understood as an interlinked repertoire that pulls Clara’s literacy history into the present. Specifically, I report on the transnational and generational effects on Clara’s writing as she assigns similar meanings and actions to seemingly unrelated instances of local practice. This analysis reveals how Clara built a repertoire of social actions for writing over time and across contexts that were governed by three intersecting goals: (a) to gain proximity to her Argentine history, culture, language, and family; (b) to present those cross-generational and cross-border ties to others; and (c) to explore, experiment with, and reconcile identity conflicts. From these findings, I argue that over time, Clara accrued, moved, and gifted sets of self-generated and patterned social actions, which she assigned to diverse types of writing; findings indicate that she built up
genre from an emic perspective. While this genre infrastructure persisted at the level of social action, linguistic achievement of those genres was more precarious.

Through grounded investigation, I develop a theoretical model for making participant-defined genre repertoires traceable, with special salience for migrant and transnational writers. Specifically, I introduce the construct of genre repertoires from below and its method of genre mapping to make visible how extracurricular and in-school literacy grow together in response to and in support of transnational writers’ everyday experiences. This model renders visible the hidden influences, pressures, and purposes of writing across the lifespan as they link back to countries of emigration and trajectories of movement across national borders that otherwise might be cut from view. Inverting conventional descriptions of genre repertoires as institutionally sourced reveals how writers draw transnational ties into the present and helps to conceptualize how literacy becomes patterned and persists for individuals as they respond to transnational exigencies.

Coordinating the “Here” and “There” in Transnational Literacy

I am interested in literacy and everyday transnationalism, with the latter described as “the emergence of transnational social practices and institutions that create a field of sociability and identification among immigrants and people in the country of origin” (Itzigshon & Giorguli-Saucido, 2002, p. 788). Interanimating processes constitute everyday transnationalism; information, people, and materials move faster and more frequently around the world with localized consequences: increased particularity, solidarity, and orientation to local life (Appadurai, 1996). Literacy scholars have observed this paradox, calling for research to examine literacy in motion as well as literacy in place (Brandt & Clinton, 2002). In this section, I present how the “here” and “there,” the local and the global, have been coordinated in studies of transnational literacy.

“Here” and “there” analytics have been adapted from economics, globalization, and migration studies to capture how nonlocal influences, hegemonic or mundane, mediate situated practice (Hawkins, 2014; Lam, 2009; Sarroub, 2008). For instance, the “glocal” lens (Robertson, 1995) shows how the global structures, but does not determine, local literacy (Sarroub, 2008). “Simultaneity” (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004) claims that migrants “incorporate daily routines, activities, and institutions” (p. 1003) from elsewhere, with literacy being a main contributor (Lam, 2009). Additionally, Hawkins (2014) explored the mediating role of place to resolve local/global binaries. These frameworks show local practice imbricated with global influence, with mutuality being pronounced for transnational writers. Others have followed practices, texts, objects, and ideologies across national contexts (Lorimer Leonard, 2013; Rounsaville, 2014; Vieira, 2011). Collective insights from trajectory research have revealed the uneven, shifting, and yet powerful influence that movement across national contexts has on literacy.

Scholars continue to investigate literacy as spread across transnational social fields, yet acted out in local contexts. As outlined above, a glocal or simultaneity approach examines nonlocal factors such as language or culture from within a
singular setting, while trajectory research interlinks locations of emigration and immigration to follow that moving thread. My use of rhetorical genre studies contributes to this effort and foregrounds writers’ vernacular production of the “here” and “there” as iterated across writing-based social actions at the level of individual genre enactment.

Social Action, Genre Enactment, and Transnational Literacies in Everyday Life

*Rhetorical genre studies* (RGS) examines the patterned social actions that an utterance performs (Miller, 1994), and understands those genres as “constellations of regulated, improvisational strategies” (Schryer, 2000, p. 450) that operate at the “nexus between an individual’s actions and a socially defined context” (Devitt, 2004, p. 31). While genres are often recognized by their materiality, textuality, and consequence, they are “an abstraction or generality once removed from the concrete or particular” (Devitt, 1993, p. 580) and should not be conflated with text-types. Rather, genres are social agreements materialized in discourse (Miller & Bazerman, 2011) to support sociohistorically determined “best ways” to respond to situations.

For this study of a single writer’s use of genre in contexts of global migration, I am interested in how genres are inherited, made, and moved by writers. Devitt (2015) suggested that “with a focus on the patterned and the typical, genre studies may underestimate the importance of those particular linguistic and rhetorical circumstances for . . . language-users” (p. 46). She stressed that “encountered and lived, genre is simultaneously unique and shared” (Devitt, 2015, p. 46), noting the importance of “situating genres in individual performances” (p. 48) to understand how “genres relate to such concepts as identity, affect, and cognition, and can support or complicate the treatment of genres as typical” (p. 48). Naming conventional uses of genre alone obscures how writers might take up and talk back to transnational movement through literacy. Rather, transnational linkages—the “here” and “there” that reference places of emigration and immigration—are made visible through evoking situated uniqueness in genre enactments.

**Genres as Socially Shared, Patterned, and Typical**

In Miller’s (1994) original formulation, genre’s social character is based on “large scale typification of rhetorical action” (p. 37) wherein writers “adopt social motives as ways of satisfying private intentions through rhetorical action” (p. 36). Genres facilitate writers in performing socially shared actions made typical across a group based on a “mutual construing of objects, events, interests and purposes” (Miller, 1994, p. 30). Subsequent scholarship has strengthened this view, further emphasizing the link between the social nature of genres and shared activities of communities, cultures, or institutions (Dias, Freedman, Medway, & Paré, 1999).

As socially shared and typified actions, genres are not synonymous with text-types. A critical variation on looking to textual regularities to identify genre was introduced by Devitt (2008), who urged, “look then not to patterns of form to describe genre but to patterns of action” (p. 12). Medway’s (2002) work with
“fuzzy genres” illustrated this point by arguing that “textual regularities . . . have to be abandoned at the most general level of theory” (p. 142). Rather, to establish genre, a “socially recognized and typified situation” (Medway, 2002, p. 142) and “engagement in a semiotic activity that is socially recognized as a response to that situation” (p. 142) are needed. Thus, while institutionally codified genres are recognized by their textual regularity and their patterned actions, fusing these units might obscure repetitions in genre enactment.

**Genres as Enacted and Lived in Transnational Lives**

The role of the individual in genre has been tenuous, as this theory works to understand socially derived and socially recognizable responses to writing situations. Yet, as Devitt (2015) reminded us, “Every time a writer writes . . . that writer performs a unique action in a unique moment in a unique rhetorical situation, to carry out a unique communicative purpose through a unique process” (p. 45). Because genres are “not in the text or in the artifact . . . but in the perception of the creator and the perception of the receiver” (Miller & Bazerman, 2011, p. 18), individuals whose experiences exceed normative genre exposure, like transnational and migrant writers, bring alternative perceptions to texts or artifacts. This contention, made urgent due to increasing international diversity in classrooms, is why now is the time to “restore some construct of ‘the individual’ to genre” (Devitt, Bawarshi, Reiff, & Dryer, 2013).

As individuals, we move through structured spaces and social positions where we “acquire our practical logic, our problem-solving strategies, and our linguistic capacities” (Schryer, 2000, p. 456). For transnational writers, the impacts of cross-border shuttling (as structured spaces and social positions) are profound. Writers confront the ever-present bureaucracy of national borders (Vieira, 2011); deepen their translingual orientations (Canagarajah, 2013); maintain familial, cultural, and linguistic ties to their homeland (Orellana et al., 2001); and navigate a global knowledge economy where English is the prime currency (Prendergast, 2008). People travel diverse paths as they acquire sets of logic, strategies, and capacities. Individuals act through these conditions and dispositions when assigning social significance to writing, building up and moving with self-assembled, intersubjectively derived genre-identifications. Certainly, unofficial genre use is constituted along with conventional genres, as genres-in-use develop dialectically at the nexus of the individual and the social (Devitt, 2004). My argument is not that genres of biographical trajectory replace sanctioned genres. My point is that if literacy teachers and researchers are to understand how the products that appear as official genres are made relevant for writers, we must consider the writers’ worlds of actions and interactions, of social histories and perceived relations, of improvisation and intent.

An understandable challenge to my theory is Miller’s (1994) notion of social motive as “not the same as the rhetor’s intention, for that can be ill-informed, dissembling, or at odds with what the situation conventionally supports” (p. 31). Yet, a rhetor’s motivation for writing already operates within the dialectical interplay of institutions and the individual, even if that enactment does not correlate with the conventional standpoint. The approach I take foregrounds the individual’s
social history rather than the institution’s to offer an alternative way of accessing the “social” in genre enactment. An emic account of genre yields the dialectical nexus of personal, social, historical, institutional, literacy, and linguistic histories, which constitute genre for the individual.

To capture emically defined genres across the lifespan, I draw on and amend the construct of genre repertoires (Orlinkowski & Yates, 1994), “for [they connote] not only a set of interacting genres but also a set from which participants choose, a definer of the possibilities available” (Devitt, 2004, p. 57). Devitt’s proposition emphasizes how repertoires (1) are built by practitioners and (2) might be drawn across a range of local instances of practice in response to meaning-making needs. This construct highlights how texts become rhetorical actions to be recruited into and coordinated across writers’ social worlds; it has the potential to reveal how writers’ hidden transnational attachments are drawn into the present.

The Present Study
Study Context: Introducing Clara
This critical case (Patton, 1990, p. 174) draws from a larger, IRB-approved, qualitative, and discourse analysis-based study on the literacy practices of third culture kids (TCKs). TCKs are young people who have grown up outside of their parents’ passport country due to their parents’ employment in the military, the government, multinational corporations, or missionary expeditions (Pollack & Van Reken, 1999). For the qualitative dimension of this study, I recruited self-identified TCKs through snowball sampling. Recruitment was purposefully small-scale (Miles & Huberman, 1984), as I sought to elicit information-rich cases (Patton, 1990, p. 169). Unlike my original study, this article’s case study is not an exploration of TCKs, per se. Rather, Clara’s case is an examination of one transnational youth’s genre practice and codified frameworks that obscure those actions.

At this study’s onset (spring 2009), Clara was a 20-year-old Latin American Studies major. By the study’s close (spring 2015), she had graduated with a master’s in elementary education and was a bilingual educator. Clara’s language history includes speaking Spanish at home, writing in Spanish and English at home and in correspondence with relatives, and speaking and writing in English at school. Clara uses Spanish and English in her current position as a bilingual educator. Study interviews were conducted in English; during these interviews, I revealed my self-identification as a TCK.2

Further Procedures for Data Collection and Analysis
Data Collection
Qualitative data collection included literacy interviews (Barton & Hamilton, 1998), collection of in-school and out-of-school writing, discourse-based interviews on selected writings, and modified stimulated recall interviews (DiPardo, 1994). Interviews explored participants’ writing across the international contexts they or family members had lived in, and what purposes they attributed to writing. Text collection included all writing that participants were willing and able to share. I
added a modified stimulated recall interview later in data collection to understand participants’ relationships with writing from an enactment of social action perspective (Figure 1). For this last instrument, I asked participants to illustrate their perceived relationship between their literacy history and their personal concept of self. I gave participants 20 minutes to complete this drawing and then asked about their representation. My timeline for data collection was as follows: spring 2009, two literacy history interviews focusing on elementary, middle, and high school, and college; summer 2009, two interviews focusing on writing mentioned in prior interviews, concept mapping, and text collection; winter 2010, one literacy history interview focusing again on college-level writing; spring 2015, one literacy history interview focusing again on childhood through young adult writing, with additional interview questions about workplace writing; summer 2015, one interview (over email) focusing on writing discussed in the previous literacy history interview, and text collection.

Data Analysis
Constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006) guided data analysis, which began with the application of process codes but developed into my considering genre as an explanatory concept for the actions across the data. Data reduction

![Figure 1. Example of the concept mapping tool used to solicit perceived links between social actions and text-types](image)
and analysis took place in three stages. First, I applied process codes to data segmented by conversational turn—seven 1.5-hour interviews. This first pass through interview data yielded a series of repeating values and purposes assigned to writing (connecting with grandparents, remembering Argentina, countering teachers’ assumptions, etc.), as well as types of writing (personal diary, recipe book, poetry, historical analysis, etc.). Coding and memoing revealed how writing experiences facilitated Clara’s achievement of personal rather than institutionally inflected aims. Initial process codes were interpreted as creative improvisations of conventional genres at the level of social action. Emerging codes prompted me to request writing samples that Clara attributed to her experiences as a second-generation Argentine-American. I recursively coded writing samples with interview comments. For writing not described in interviews, I conducted follow-up interviews. Stimulated recall interview comments helped further refine my codes. Repeated passes through data indicated that Clara’s assignments of significance could be abstracted into three interrelated, capacious categories: (a) building proximity to Argentina; (b) presenting those cross-generational, cross-border ties to others; and (c) experimenting with social identities (Table 1).

Overall, genre mapping, the name I give to the method just discussed, involved concurrent and recursive data analysis across interviews, writing samples, and concept maps. This method linked participant-assigned social purpose/action with text-type to yield an expansive network of socially derived writing-related goals while also triangulating data (Table 1). Genre mapping was a critical development for me because a genre’s social action is not an observable unit like a text-type would be. Tracking social actions assigned by writers shifts the unit of analysis from the position of the institution to the position of the user, with the caveat that individually named genres are dialectically derived. Pulling text-types from interviews without participant-defined social actions is not a reliable way to understand how genres work in writers’ worlds. Observing patterned social actions requires distinguishing between genre and text-type. Additionally, genre mapping complements methods suggested by Purcell-Gates, Perry, and Briseño (2011), who discovered that applying codes to text-type, communicative function, and social purpose/social action helped illuminate the levels of social activity within literacy events and highlight what appeared to be “agentive” (p. 454) for writers. Genre mapping differs from these methods in terms of scale, scope, and purpose. While Purcell-Gates et al. examined how groups practice literacy across diverse cultural contexts, genre mapping focuses on the individual’s social history across the lifespan to puzzle out writers’ orientations to genre over time.

### Building and Moving a Genre Repertoire across Generations, Home, School, and Work

To explicate Clara’s genre repertoire across home, school, work, and generations, I report on social actions assigned to writing that span from Clara’s childhood to her work as a bilingual literacy educator, from 1997 to 2015. Patterned social action categories clustered around (a) building proximity to Argentina, (b) presenting...
TABLE 1. Categories of Social Actions with Illustrative Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dialectically Derived Social Action Categories</th>
<th>Illustrative Data Samples from Genre Mapping</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Building proximity to Argentina               | Clara described her mother’s writing and how she coveted correspondence received from her grandfather: “Writing for us was a way of connecting. Our e-mails, faxes and letters helped us connect with family far away when we couldn’t be together.”
|                                               | Clara described personal and school-based writing as connecting her with Argentina; this included diary entries, high school- and college-level research papers, and recipe books.
|                                               | Diary entries counted down time away from Argentina and time until travel to Argentina: “3/11/03: Dear Journal, well only 133 days until my trip to Argentina again . . . that is such a long time away.”
|                                               | Clara linked nationality, identity, and exploration in her concept map: “Mine reflects how, a kind of confusion. . . . So I branched from TCK identity to put down Argentine/North American . . . and then I went into different ideas about nationality and how, for me, language, food, smells, values, all these things play a big part into how I associate my nationality. Then came the idea of exploration.” |
| Presenting cross-generational and cross-border ties to others | Clara described how she used writing to tell teachers and classmates about Argentine connections: “I wrote a poem, it’s called ‘Tango.’ I was a freshman in high school when I won this, and I had to go up in front of everyone. I struggled with how I was going to pronounce the word . . . . I ended up saying ‘Tango’ because I wasn’t going to betray, you know, the Spanish language.”
|                                               | Across high school and college papers, Clara inserted her family’s connection to the Argentinean Dirty War into the content.
|                                               | Clara stated a commitment to helping her students use writing for identity building: “The things you learn about people’s experience, how it affects their lives that you wouldn’t otherwise know, so that was the preface into writing important, powerful autobiographies of their own lives so that people can understand their experience.”
|                                               | Clara’s concept mapping indicated the importance of creating and sharing her sense of self with others. |
| Experimenting with social identities           | The content of Clara’s poems included issues about identity: “Tango,” “A Cross of Cultures,” “I Am From.”
|                                               | Clara made statements about the general significance of writing and identity: “It was an expression of my identity. Poetry, journaling, the research papers I would do. All of it was trying to get to understand where I came from.”
|                                               | “Third culture kid identity” was central in Clara’s concept map: “When you’re a TCK you have to explore . . . . I talked about literature we’ve read, essays we’ve written, self-exploration, and then expression: I wrote poetry and think about it a lot. And then confusion comes from that.” |
herself to others, and (c) experimenting with social identity categories. Findings show that these patterned social action categories were inherited through an intergenerational legacy of writers, were gleaned dialectically through ongoing socialization, were practiced across formal and informal settings, and persisted over time. I support these findings through a two-part narration. First, I recount the intergenerational legacies that affected Clara’s repertoire. Second, I describe her full genre repertoire across three life phases: childhood (home/school), adolescence and young adulthood (home/school), and adulthood (work).

**Clara’s Intergenerational Legacy**

In interviews, Clara declared writing a family legacy, handed down through her grandfather and mother. Intergenerational textual talk and exchange made writing a solution to fading cross-national ties and positioned Spanish as the family-supported means of establishing proximity to Argentina.

Clara envisioned her grandfather as a writer: an academic, civic, technical, and creative writer. Her vision grew from her grandfather’s sending her his technical work, copies of letters to the editor that had been published in Argentina, and poems written throughout Clara’s childhood and adolescence. Writing linked family, minimized geographical distance, and surrounded Clara with Spanish literacy, invigorating her ties to the Spanish language. Correspondence detailing her grandfather’s environmental efforts or his work with local naval authorities simulated physical proximity as Clara grew up surrounded by her grandfather’s words.

Clara’s grandfather often shared creative pieces, also written in Spanish. She recalled, “He would write [my sister] and I poems. He would change the lyrics to songs, making them about my sister and I and sing them to us; he would also write them down and send them to us.” He also sent poems to his daughter, Clara’s mother, although Clara did not have much access to the poems exchanged between grandfather and mother. Absence of exposure to these texts had not altered Clara’s view that her grandfather sent poetry to “help us stay connected given that we were living so far from each other.” In fact, she credited her experiences of receiving her grandfather’s writing for “inspir[ing] my mom and myself to write.” Clara designated her grandfather’s writing as a prime progenitor of her own, and viewed her mother’s as sustaining the Argentina-US link. Clara’s mother was a vocal advocate for writing as a way to unite family, country, and culture. Spanish was the exclusive language of their home and family, which further solidified literacy’s transnational nature. The social significances of writing, inherited from her grandfather and mother, helped Clara to cultivate an identity as a family-oriented young woman, a writer from a family of writers, and a proud Argentine.

Lasting values, assigned in childhood but lingering to adulthood, emphasized writing’s role in sustaining Argentine ties. Talk of Jorge Luis Borges and stories of a family legacy of writers made writing a cherished Argentine affair. Clara stated, “My mom always reinforced that . . . our family are writers, our family are poets. My grandfather was a poet. My mom is a poet. Poetry became a big thing in my childhood and through my adolescence.” For Clara, “it was a legacy in the family to be [a] writer.” A memorable refrain of literacy values, then, was: “You should
be so proud, and express how important [Argentina] is in your life.” She recalled her mother’s poetry as “expressing feelings and emotions, of telling stories, self expression.”

Growing up among her grandfather’s letters, her mother’s poems, and a family calling to write defined Clara’s early relationship to literacy. Yet positive legacies found friction in Clara’s larger realities of English at school. Clara traveled along an uneven writing trajectory. Family, Argentina, the values attributed to writing, and the Spanish language all mediated how and why Clara would infuse the genres she did into her encounters with writing.

Clara’s Genre Repertoire across Home, School, and Work
In our final interview, Clara stated, “All of it was trying to understand where I’m from because I suppose you don’t feel authentic if you don’t know the history of your culture or your country.” Writing mattered because, as Clara emphasized, it created “familial connection” and procured “part of the Argentine experience or identity,” even across texts as diverse as poems, private journals, research papers, autobiographies, and recipes. This section elaborates these findings to show an accumulating repertoire spanning Clara’s elementary, middle, and high school years; her university schooling; and her work as a bilingual literacy educator. I also report on the ever-present, yet often privately kept, significance of Clara’s bilingualism in building and moving her genre repertoire.

Assigning Social Actions to Childhood Writing In and Out of School
Clara considered herself, just as she considered her grandfather and mother before her, a writer. In childhood, her writing texts of choice were private journals and poetry, even though she was a prolific writer in school as well (Table 2). Through these practices, Clara used writing to feel Argentine and to explore her complex identifications. Clara’s position along the family’s migration path meant she was to exceed, yet also fold into, what she assigned as writing’s intergenerational legacy.

Clara described the school contexts for her childhood writing as “predominantly white schools, predominantly middle class white culture.” Here, Clara felt

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dialectically Derived Social Action Categories</th>
<th>Text-Type Referenced</th>
<th>Languages Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building proximity to Argentina</td>
<td>Journaling (1997–2008; home)</td>
<td>English and Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presenting cross-generational and cross-border ties to others</td>
<td>Recipe book (school) Autobiography assignment (school) Story-telling assignments (school) Book of poetry (school)</td>
<td>English English English English and Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploring social identities</td>
<td>Poetry (home) Autobiography assignment (school)</td>
<td>English and Spanish English</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
invisible and yearned for teachers and classmates to ask about her cross-border
ties; moreover, she wanted to speak Spanish. These hopes were not fulfilled. Mean-
while, at home, correspondence from her grandfather surrounded her, and she
heard statements of value and pride in Argentina from her mother daily. Within
this fractured context, Clara said she “began to journal at about age eight [and] wrote a lot of poetry.”

Dated May 29, 1997, this journal entry (Figure 2) shows a common set of
actions assigned and enacted in Clara’s private writing: expressing how much she
missed family in Argentina, dreaming about upcoming trips, and comparing and
contrasting her thoughts of Argentina with her impressions of the United States.
Clara shared journal entries with me that dated from 1997 to 2008, and while many
entries were written about adolescent or young adult difficulties, memories and

![Clara's private journal entry, 1997](image)
visions of Argentina were also threaded through these entries. While Clara wrote most of her entries at home—treating the journal as an out-of-school writing refuge—she often took personal journals to school. She recalled, “In elementary school, I would carry my journal with me out to recess. I would sit by myself sometimes. I would keep it hidden or secret somewhere where I could pull it out and write whatever I needed to write.” The journal’s material presence in the schoolyard underscores the importance of the journal, and indicates how social actions for writing were not merely mental constructs; they served to bridge Argentina, US home life, and US school life through their material presence as well.

Memories of school writing revealed how these texts were assigned social actions similar to those assigned to home writing. Clara’s commitment to using writing to make Argentina present in her life blurred the boundaries between domains. Unless an assignment was too predetermined, she took every opportunity to weave the intimacies she created with Argentina through journaling and poetry writing into school assignments. This happened in elementary school through autobiographies and storytelling assignments and in middle school through writing a recipe book and composing books of poetry. In a third-grade homework assignment, Clara rewrote her autobiography, imagining that she had been born in Argentina rather than Florida. This autobiography assignment encouraged a narrative of creation, in which Clara rebuilt ties to Argentina and rearranged family histories based on imagination and desire.

During elementary and middle school, Clara used in-school writing to mediate self-invention with a receptive audience. Four years after her autobiography, in a seventh-grade poetry unit, Clara wrote Argentine culture into the classroom through references to the tango, her grandmother’s empanadas, and walking the streets of Buenos Aires. Food was always an important topic for connection and found its way into a book of recipes written in middle school. Clara recalled listing ingredients for empanadas when her peers were bringing in recipes for Jell-O and the like: “I had to put it there because I felt like I wasn’t recognized for who I was and I had to get it in there. I had to be understood. It had to be this recipe. This recipe is me.”

Clara’s childhood genre repertoire presented some complications, which were pronounced around Clara’s bilingualism. Even though Clara spoke Spanish at home, and she received and sent correspondence to her Argentine relatives in Spanish, she lamented slipping into English when writing for home and school:

I was always writing in English, until I realized I was writing in English. It was the first thing that came to me, was to write in English. . . . Then I made the conscious effort to sometimes write in Spanish too, to sometimes try to write Spanish poetry and to try to write Spanish journaling, but mostly, it was always in English.

Moving language across texts was not the same as moving social actions. Given the profound union among language, literacy, and identity that Clara had inherited, the ways Spanish writing passed in and out of her control were frustrating and confusing. Spanish was a means of accessing Argentina in some instances, through
correspondence with her grandfather and conversations with her mother, but it competed with English in others, especially in school settings. Thus, the childhood repertoire was paradoxical, as Spanish was tied to home, English to school, and yet English seeped into home, while Clara pushed back against its advance. These struggles foreshadowed Clara's young adult literacy; as she cultivated her repertoire across domains and texts, she experienced the fluctuating possibilities of Spanish to access Argentina. The literacy regulations of school and work impinged heavily on the linguistic contours of her self-generated genre repertoire.

Assigning Social Actions to Young Adult Writing In and Out of School
During high school and college, Clara continued to journal; her poetry writing increased for a bit (during high school), but then took a backseat to more academic activities. The legacies of her grandfather's writing and her mother's valuing of literacy found meaning across the text-types just mentioned, as Clara continued to build proximity, present cross-border relations, proclaim identities, and experiment with their complexities (Table 3). TCK entered Clara's lexicon—through research done in first-year writing—and the concept served as an anchoring identity that added content to social actions brought to poems and papers, while also functioning as a retrospective lens for transnational struggles.

Poetry showed Clara exploring identities as varied as being “Argentine and American,” “Latina,” “Hispanic,” and a “third culture kid.” Attempts at making writing public increased, and Clara found real audiences for her poetry. “Tango” (Figure 3) resonates with these literacies of proximity, presentation, and identification, and held special importance to Clara because her poem was a winner in the 2003 “Poetry on the Buses” contest. This citywide contest invited poems from youth, with winners’ submissions published in an anthology and displayed on a city bus. Clara also read this poem to her classmates upon winning. In recalling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dialectically Derived Social Action Categories</th>
<th>Text-Type Referenced, Languages Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Building proximity to Argentina               | Journaling (home)  
9 research papers (school)  
Poetry (home and school)  
English and Spanish  
English |
| Presenting cross-generation and cross-border ties to others | “Tango” poem (school)  
9 research papers (school)  
“Third culture kid” paper for first-year writing (school)  
English  
English  
English |
| Exploring social identities                   | “Tango” poem (school)  
“Cross of Cultures” poem (home)  
“I Am From” poem (home)  
“Third culture kid” paper for first-year writing (school)  
English  
English and Spanish  
English |

Table 3. Assigning Social Actions to Young Adult Writing In and Out of School
that experience, she described how she vacillated on how to pronounce the poem’s title: Should she inflect it with Spanish or English for her white, English-speaking student audience? She chose Spanish, noting, “I wasn’t going betray the Spanish language.” Like Clara’s struggle to push back against English when writing her childhood journals and poems, her presentation of “Tango” again shows bilingualism as a crucial, if not always accessed, pathway for fully realizing social actions through rhetorical means.

Like other poems from this time—“I Am From” and “Cross of Cultures”— “Tango” enacted a sociality similar to journaling as it compared and contrasted Argentina and the United States, again, serving as a pathway to intimacy with a distant location. Across journaling and poetry, Clara constructed and presented her identity while also acting through the ongoing decision process of how and when she could make public her bilingualism. Lines from “I Am From” encapsulate these contradictions: “I am from Spanish only at home, English only at school.”

As formal purposes for school-based writing shifted between elementary, middle, high school, and college settings, Clara adapted strategies for making Argentina visible. Eight of nine academic papers written during this time were explorations of Argentine history and included research into the Argentine Dirty War, people of African descent in Argentina, and her great-great-grandparents’ ancestral ties to Italy. Despite differences in the formal purposes of high school and college writing and the creative pieces of elementary and middle school, Clara managed to use academic writing to bring Argentina into the present. As she described, “In university, I wrote a lot. I used it as an opportunity to write more about my heritage and to discover more about Argentinean heritage.” Approaches to college writing mirrored actions assigned to high school writing. Both were “about the Argentine history or Argentine pieces that I didn’t really know that I wanted to know more about,” said Clara. “I would always use it as an opportunity.”
Essays about the Argentine Dirty War (five total) revealed how writing interlinked family matters, discovery of Argentina, and public presentation. Because Clara’s parents migrated during the Argentine Dirty War, she “wrote about that so much,” and sought to educate herself while also navigating her family’s relationship to this historical touchstone. The first line of an essay written for a “Social Movements of the Americas” course declared: “The Argentine Dirty War has always resonated with me given that I am the daughter of Argentines who lived through this horrible period in Argentine history.” Clara embedded this revelation halfway through an essay: “Both my mother and father lived in fear of the military, and the extremists. Now, 23 years later the issue still continues to haunt my family.” School essays reveal affecting exigencies pulled from transnational attachments, as Clara worked to reconcile her place in the Argentine diaspora. Although Clara complied with school assignments, she infused them with outside intentions, values, and actions. While this work was educational and fulfilling, Clara spoke of a burden of historical validity: “How can you really be Argentinean if you don’t understand what’s happened in the history?” This urgency expressed her inherited repertoire as linked to her mothers’ imperative to use writing to proclaim Argentine pride and affiliation and operated within the social, affective, and material consequences of diaspora—experiences inflected by Clara’s perception that school domains neutralized non-normative identities. In this mix, writing was, at times, a hard-won solution for proclaiming and sustaining cross-border ties.

**Passing on Social Actions for Writing as a Bilingual Education Teacher**
Clara no longer writes research papers, personal journals, autobiographies, or poetry. Today, she is a bilingual teacher to young Latinx students living in an urban center in the Pacific Northwest. Even though Clara writes infrequently, she has not abandoned the repertoire she built up over a lifetime. Rather, Clara sees teaching as an opportunity to pass writing’s values and purposes to others (Table 4). She stated:

I don’t really journal anymore. I haven’t really written poetry in a long time. I still really connect with it, so I bring poetry into the classroom, and I talk to my students about poetry. The family connection to writing that inspired me to write also showed me how important this was to share with my students.

Clara’s prior genre enactments remain linked to her intergenerational legacy, as well as social actions of proximity-building, public presentation of cross-border ties, and identity exploration. Even as she hands writing down to others, she continues to build up and move with her genre repertoire.

Clara felt kinship with her students as children of immigrants from South and Central America, living far from family, and perhaps struggling to reconcile home life and homeland practice with the dominant culture. These situational similarities compelled genre transferal between Clara and her students. In recalling literacy lessons, Clara described how she tells her students about her own childhood penchant for writing, emphasizing writing’s power to actualize transnational identities. Yet, she does not assume her students’ experiences are her own, nor does she cover
over their wide range of socioeconomic, family, and educational backgrounds. By pulling her history with writing into the present, Clara creates a bridge across difference, acknowledging students’ transnational childhoods and turning texts into exploratory spaces. In fact, Clara brings an abundance of Latinx experiences into her classroom. As she explained, her philosophy guides these decisions: “The things you learn about people’s experience, how it affects their lives that you wouldn’t otherwise know, was the preface into why [they are] writing important, powerful autobiographies of their own lives. [It’s] so that people can understand their experience.” Thus, Clara moves between her history, her students’ history, and the larger Latinx immigrant experience to foster “social, emotional learning” about “our heritage,” with “a lot of that . . . done through writing.”

Twenty years have passed since Clara ran to the mailbox to retrieve letters from her grandfather or sat with her mother, learning how writing helps “express how important [Argentina] is in your life.” Thirteen years have passed since Clara recited “Tango” to her English-speaking classmates, vowing not to betray the Spanish language. It has been nine years since Clara declared her family’s painful experiences with the Argentine Dirty War in research papers. Yet the social actions assigned to writing, as inherited and accrued through biographical trajectory, persist in a reimagined form. Students write autobiographies, keep writing notebooks, meet poets-in-residence, write poetry, and record these poems on CDs. As Clara’s students access and imagine their transnational childhoods through writing, she guides and models. Poignantly, in building this bridge across difference as a bilingual literacy educator, she has redrawn the delimiting boundaries of Spanish at home and English at school.

**Discussion**

This study asked: How does the transnational inhere in and motivate local literacies? Looking into the kinds of social actions that Clara assigned across text-types
and contexts revealed how the transnational was always present. I found that Clara built her repertoire over time, generations, and contexts. Stated attachments and assigned significances indexed her transnational aims and concerns, which accrued as patterned social actions—as defined by Clara—guiding and governing how she moved genre across time, space, generation, and text-type. When viewing her entire genre repertoire, a network of value and action is revealed that draws on “actual and imagined experiences that are shared across borders regardless of where someone was born or now lives” (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004, p. 1017). As Clara’s case has shown, tracing the actions assigned to texts from an emic perspective—through the method of genre mapping—enabled an expansive look at how “here” and “there” were coordinated. Specifically, findings revealed how orientations to literacy inherited and made in one childhood persisted over time and across contexts and were handed down to the children of other migrant families. Social actions assigned to writing, accrued through childhood and young adult writing, became a consequential bridge across difference for Clara’s work as a bilingual literacy educator.

Writing was a refuge and a solution, but one that often forced Clara to cor- don off her bilingual identity. In Clara’s early life, it was “Spanish at home, and English at school.” Perhaps these were the moments when the institutional power of genre was strongest and most exclusionary, and agency to improvise was most delimited. While Clara’s case showed the productive potential of her genre repertoire, interview comments also revealed moments of disorientation, when the power of an accumulated repertoire or burdensome genre-context conventions obscured other writing possibilities. Vieira (2013) suggested that “as a navigational technology,” transnational literacy works paradoxically by “open[ing] up some paths and clos[ing] off others” (p. 27). Similarly, genre repertoires offer and deny opportunity. While Clara showed agency in genre enactment, her writing also yielded to institutional pressures, which were most pronounced in the policing of linguistic borders.

Findings emphasized the transnational character of how genres-in-use develop dialectically at the nexus of the individual and the social. For Clara, this nexus included legacies of writing from her grandfather and mother, the drive and urgency to make texts produce transnational attachments, as well as more conventionally sanctioned affordances and limitations. This configuration shifted across the life-span and was influenced by where Clara was positioned on her family’s migration trajectory, where she was positioned in life (as a child, an adolescent, an adult), the contexts she wrote in, and where she was positioned in relation to the accumulating repertoire itself. Following this chain, I found that Clara’s repertoire persisted at the level of social action, but fluctuated in her linguistic achievement of those aims.

In light of these findings, I argue that Clara’s repertoire was a moving, local/global construct that she built, selected from, and mobilized. Repertoires aid writers as they navigate their social worlds. In this formulation, they are made by design, inherited through practice, yet still subject to institutional constraints. Even though Clara was born in the United States and only traveled yearly to Argentina, she still
assembled a distinctly transnational genre repertoire: an improvised repertoire developed along with and in response to transnationally inflected urgencies and the biliteracy and bilingualism that characterized her transnational life.

As a moving, local/global construct, Clara’s genre repertoire confounded distinctions typically made between local and global practice. First, pulling the transnational into everyday literacy coordinated the “here” and “there” at the intersection of local/global practice, as every textual encounter merged local practice with global influence. Second, as Clara built her genre repertoire across contexts, she moved strands of social action in ways that accrued over time to yield a dominant repertoire that structured her everyday life. Rather than “disjointing and displacing local life” (Brandt & Clinton, 2002, p. 343), the movement of genre into situated encounters with text-types made local life bearable. In the case of social action categories, the ongoing use and building up of her repertoire, wherein she pulled nonpresent influences into situated practice, had a globalizing effect as it came to structure her responses to new writing situations.

Movement of language across texts was less restorative, although Clara’s story revealed an ultimate achievement in taking Spanish public and talking back to institutionalized monolingualism through her work as a bilingual educator. As she passed her relationship with writing on to her students, the dual language curriculum provided Clara the opportunity to bring Spanish into school and work. Across this lifespan study, Clara had uneven opportunities to yoke family, Argentina, values attributed to writing, and the Spanish language within a single genre enactment. This configuration represents Clara’s intergenerational legacy; her passing this legacy on to her students shows Clara pushing against the institutional forces that had cordoned off her bilingual identity to unite genre with language. In lamenting her treatment in school, describing how she never felt understood, and how her Spanish was viewed as an unremarkable asset, Clara professed, “I never want my students to feel like that.” Thus, while this study reveals how she managed the boundaries of new writing situations, it also reveals how those boundaries managed her, particularly her access to Spanish. Ultimately, as Clara assigned meaning to new situations, she unified writing’s established purpose with her own, connecting that occasion to a landscape of her prior improvised genres, all while navigating the language regimes of home, school, and work.

Implications and Conclusion

I have offered a theoretical model for making a writer’s self-defined genre repertoire traceable, with special salience for migrant and transnational writers. The genre repertoire construct provides researchers, teachers, and students with a means to look across the lifespan for values, purposes, and actions assigned to writing both encountered and produced. I argue that privileging a writer’s sense of genre puts transnational literacies “from below” (uses of writing considered unofficial or unsanctioned by dominant groups or institutions) in parity with literacies “from above” (those forms of writing promoted by the school, the workplace, the government, or other entrenched literacy sponsors) (Guarnizo & Smith, 1998).
construct of genre repertoires from below considers genres as “opportunity space” (Bazerman, 1999) where writers “take actions, make decisions, develop subjectivities and identities embedded in networks of relationships that connect them simultaneously to two or more nation-states” (Basch, Glick Schiller, & Szanton Blanc, 1994, p. 7). How transnational writers build repertoires is a necessary corollary to how those repertoires may be determined by sponsors (Brandt, 2001).

For literacy scholars, genre repertoires from below contributes an understanding of how extracurricular and in-school literacies grow together in response to and in support of transnational writers’ everyday experiences (Bruna, 2007; Purcell-Gates, 2013; Skerrett & Bomer, 2013). Revealing the vernacular production of transnational social fields from within the writer’s logic, this model indicates how transnational legacies and exigencies may inhere in genres inherited, practiced, and gifted. Methodologically, genre mapping traces how memories, practices, geographies, kinship ties, and languages mediate local practice across the lifespan to show literacy in the swirl of transnational mobility. Disrupting assumptions about transnational literacy that homogenize time and space, this model attends to the multidimensional present (Compton-Lilly & Halverson, 2014) of genre enactment through its emphasis on entanglements from other temporal-spatial dimensions.

For empirical genre researchers, this model and method restore a concept of the individual to genre while maintaining the dialectical tensions in genre enactment. Emphasis is placed on processes rather than products of genre production to reveal the hidden capacities of, and pressures felt by, transnational writers. Genre mapping tracks the patterned social actions that a writer assigns to texts to render visible the self-assembled, vernacular genre enactments that exceed those sanctioned from above. While this method’s retrospective nature might affect participants’ claims to genre, it is precisely this retrospective vision of literate life that orients writers to genres in the present and the future. This study also contributes to biliteracy genre research, which examines genre use across rather than within languages (Gentil, 2011; Tardy, 2006). In keeping with Gentil’s (2011) claim that “the same genre can be realized in quasi-identical ways in two languages if sociocultural norms allow it” (p. 18), Clara built and moved genres across text-types in English and Spanish while navigating norms. In contrast with Gentil’s theorization, Clara’s experiences were distinguished in their focus on the affective, identity, and intergenerationally sourced impacts and consequences of cross-language genre enactment, features uncovered through this study’s emic focus. Bilingual genre research can benefit from looking at genre repertoires from below to explore the full implications of shuttling across genres and languages.

For educators, this work contributes to discussions about transnationalism and literacy curricula (Skerrett, 2015), with emphasis on transnational genre repertoires. For secondary and postsecondary writers, class projects might include inviting students to be everyday curators of their literate activity (Rohan, 2010) as they reflect on writing from other geographies, writing done in and out of school, and writing done across languages. Importantly, school, home, work, and intergenerational documents should be treated as a single repertoire. Encourag-
ing students to link patterned actions with their biographical trajectories prompts inquiry into (a) what repertoires are made of and (b) how they can be a future resource. Interrogating linguistic boundaries drawn around genres foregrounds the shifting entailments of language valuation, which fosters students’ critical reflection on their growing repertoire.

Providing elementary or middle school writers with opportunities to imbue texts with social actions yields an empowered and dialogic relationship with official artifacts, which complements co-constructed pedagogies that view literacy as emergent, dialogic, and performed rather than as an a priori given (Gutiérrez, 2008). Like Gutiérrez’s (2008) syncretic testimonio assignment, Clara’s writing notebook promotes such co-constructed pedagogy by inviting students to construct their experiences relationally, in tandem with their “social history as migrants” (Gutiérrez, 2008, p. 154). Reminiscent of Medway’s (2002) “fuzzy genre” architectural notebook, Clara’s assignment is a flexible, safe space for students to write themselves into genre, without the restrictions of official form or purpose. Building capacities for genre negotiation encourages a lifetime of viewing “genre difference not as a deviation from a patterned or recurrent norm, but rather as the norm of all genre performance” (Bawarshi, 2016, p. 244).

While these approaches can be useful for diverse students, this model was developed through Clara’s case of print-based, alphabetic literacy in the context of a family able to connect across borders. Two limitations arise. First, Clara is positioned at an empowered end of a privileged literacy spectrum. Other migrant student writers might lack the confidence, literacy resources, or generational access to draw their history into writing in similar ways. Second, my focus has been on alphabetic, text-based writing, which may not be suitable for all transnational writers (Bruna, 2007). Importantly, transnational genre repertoires can also be gleaned from spoken and multimodal texts (Gonzales, 2015). Genre mapping is not solely a method for text-based literacy.

Transnational students often possess repositioning capacities, which schools commonly neglect (Guerra, 2009). Thus, as Canagarajah (2013) admonished that translilingual practice is not new—we just “require a new orientation to the teaching of writing” (p. 62) to recognize it—I say that transnational genre repertoires are not new. Rather, repertoires are made invisible when a genre’s social action is only accessed through institutional channels or when boundaries of community, geography, time, or intergenerational influence delimit local literacy. The construct of genre repertoires from below presumes that the residue of transnational life persists in, inheres in, and motivates local literacies, even after physical movement across borders has occurred. Ultimately, genre repertoires are resources to support and provide dignity to students as they build a writing life across generations, borders, and communities.

NOTES
1. All names are pseudonyms.
Due to my parents’ employment, I lived in Iran, the United Arab Emirates, Norway, and the United Kingdom from the ages of 2 months to 17 years. This occasioned certain insights about transnational literacy, but my experience was highly privileged.

I focused on the transnational dimension of Clara’s experience over other identities attached to writing, which may have obscured other literacy experiences.

REFERENCES


Rounsaville, A. (2014). Situating transna-


**Angela Rounsaville** is an assistant professor at the University of Central Florida, where she teaches graduate and undergraduate courses in literacy studies, research methods for rhetoric and composition, and writing in global contexts.

*Initial submission: September 30, 2015*

*Final revision submitted: August 3, 2016*

*Accepted: September 2, 2016*