

## Supporting Students in Writing for Critical Social Change in K-12 Schools

© Nadia Behizadeh

© Brooks J. Salter

© Cheryll M. Thompson-Smith

*Georgia State University*

### Abstract

Drawing on critical literacy theory, critical composition pedagogy includes as a key component writing to effect social change. In this article, we explore research on writing instruction with elementary and secondary school aged children (K-12) to examine how educators structure writing for impact, including if students are writing for social change, and the effects on students of including this element. Two primary purposes of writing for impact in the literature were raising awareness and persuading others to take action. The first purpose was subdivided into sharing experience and communicating ideas, while the second purpose was subdivided into practical social change and critical social change. Writing for critical social change was less observed, even though this purpose is embedded in the National Council of Teachers of English's (NCTE) vision statement and resolution on critical literacy, critical approaches to writing, and critical theory more generally. Three major effects on students due to writing for impact were identified in the literature: 1) increased criticality and positive identity development; 2) increased student engagement; and 3) increased writing quality, with different purposes for writing aligning with different outcomes. Social transformation was the major effect for one study in this review.

*Keywords:* Critical literacy; Critical composition pedagogy; Social justice education; Writing instruction

*Ubiquity: The Journal of Literature, Literacy, and the Arts, Research Strand*, Vol. 8 No. 1,

Spring/Summer 2021