Editorial

Editors' Introduction -Volume 17, Issue 4

In our final issue of 2018, we are pleased to share nine articles that offer innovative perspectives on research on critical and multimodal literacies. The first four articles focus on critical literacy practices, asking (and answering) important questions about how we teach and define critical literacy and how we support students' meaning-making in culturally sustaining ways. The last five articles of this issue engage with issues of multimodal instruction: how we define, research and teach multimodality in ways that draw upon learners' goals, identities and conceptions of multimodality equitably.

In "Bats and grammar: developing critical language awareness in the context of school reform," Meg Gebhard and Holly Graham analyze how a heterogeneous class of middle-school students in the USA developed a critical awareness of language while participating in a curricular unit on endangered bats informed by systemic functional linguistics (SFL). Drawing on methods of ethnography and teacher action research, the authors demonstrate how SFL approaches and meta-language supported students' understanding of how language constructs ideas, enacts power dynamics and manages the flow of information in academic texts. Through their analysis of classroom transcripts and student writing samples, the authors demonstrate how an SFL approach to literacy helped students read scientific explanations and write letters to government officials. The authors argue that SFL approaches can help teachers and students navigate the demands of teaching and learning in the context of high-stakes school reforms while also developing critical ways of reading and writing.

In their essay, "The limits of resistant reading in critical literacy practices," Cori McKenzie and Scott Jarvie offer a discussion of the limits of critical literacy approaches to reading, focusing specifically of the affective and relational demands of "resistant reading." Through an analysis of two recent articles focused on critical literacy approaches to literature instruction, the authors consider what is gained and lost through privileging resistant reading practices over other possible approaches to secondary literature instruction. Ultimately, McKenzie and Jarvie do not call for a rejection of resistant reading practices, but instead recommend new pedagogical possibilities that provide alternative orientations toward literary texts.

Mary Neville's article, "Sites of control and resistance: outlaw emotions in an out-of-school book club," focuses on the role of emotion in book club discussions about literature. Drawing on data from interviews and discussions, she studied the "outlaw emotions" that three young women of color in a book club in the USA expressed in response to a multicultural young adult novel. Importantly, this study provides evidence for the value of outlaw emotions in the classroom as a means of advancing culturally sustaining pedagogy.

Maneka Deanna Brooks and Katherine Frankel's study, "Oral reading: practices and purposes in secondary classrooms," examines how and why teachers in two US high school reading intervention classrooms used whole-group oral reading practices. The authors conducted a qualitative cross-case analysis and found that although both teachers routinely led students in whole-group oral reading activities, their practices varied considerably given different curricular constraints and pedagogical philosophies. In common, neither teacher's use of oral reading practices allowed for

students to engage in independent meaning-making. This study highlights the importance of exploring the intended and actual outcomes of oral reading practices in secondary reading classrooms.

Brady Nash's literature review, "Exploring multimodal writing in secondary English classrooms", provides an analysis of recent scholarship on multimodal writing in secondary English classrooms and provides a frame for the following four articles in this issue, all of which focus on multimodal literacy. Emphasizing the forms that multimodal composition has taken and the ways in which it has impacted student learning, Nash pinpoints the diversity of approaches teachers have taken to multimodality (e.g., mixing print and non-print composition, using print and non-print composition to support each other), and the benefits for students in engaging in multimodal composition (e.g. increasing engagement, increasing collaboration and composition for audiences). Notably, the author also highlights the celebratory tone of the majority of research on multimodal writing, and emphasizes the need for scholarship that tempers that tone by considering some of the challenges of multimodal writing in the classroom.

In "Building spaces for literacy in school: Mapping the emergence of a literacy makerspace," Amy Stornaiuolo, T. Nichols and Veena Vasudevan describe the design and use of a literacy-oriented makerspace in an urban public high school in the USA. As part of a longitudinal design–research partnership with the school, the authors drew upon interviews and maps of the makerspace created by teachers, students and researchers to demonstrate how competing conceptions of literacy came to be negotiated by students and teachers and how the layered uses of the space, in turn, reworked understandings of literacy in the larger school community. Ultimately, the authors argue that mapping can be a powerful tool for empirical research and for negotiations over educational spaces and practices.

Katina Zammit's article, "'We're all real serious filmmakers': Learning about and creating multimodal mini-documentaries," describes how explicit teaching of SFL enhanced 8- to 9-year-old children's deeper understanding and production of multimodal texts through critiques of mini-documentaries about animals including information, language of narration, composition of scenes and other resources used to engage the viewer. The Australian students' mini-documentaries demonstrated how the students created meaning through applying this knowledge to multimodal composing through selecting resources from the written, visual, sound and gestural modes. The author argues that knowledge of metalinguistic and multimodal "grammars" contributes to students' achieving both content knowledge and understanding of various semiotic modes.

In "Digital literacies through an intersectional lens: the case of Javier", Jessica Pandya, Nat Hansuvadha and Kathleah Pagdilao present a case study of the digital video composing practices of Javier, a fourth-grade Latinx English language learner in the USA who had been identified as having several learning disabilities. In their examination of the multiple modalities and identities that Javier drew upon to make meaning in his digital videos, the authors note that Javier's enthusiasm and skill at multimedia composing was largely ignored in the school-based discourses and documents surrounding his educational plan, learning goals and abilities. The authors argue for a redistribution of powerful literacy practices, such as multimodal digital composing, to students like Javier who are traditionally denied access to them. This redistribution, the authors argue, has the potential to improve learning outcomes and provide opportunities for the self-expression of students with differing abilities.

Finally, Theresa Ann McGinnis's article, "'La vida de los emigrantes': digital testimonios of unaccompanied Central American high school youth", highlights the youths' stories of migration to the USA as told through bilingual (Spanish/English) digital testimonies. McGinnis argues that the testimonies offer a way for the youth to respond to the political, economic, cultural and emotional struggles they bring with them into the classroom and to enact agentive political identities. Ultimately, McGinnis urges readers to view the expressive and discursive power of digital testimonies as a way for the youths' stories to become part of national and global political dialogues.

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