

***“Repair Narratives Matter” “On Translanguaging”  
& “Incarceration Nation”***

By Joy Valentine

**Repair Narratives Matter**

Repair narratives matter.

Indeed, an intriguing thought for some language ideology scholars.

It’s an idea they’ve bought, though the currency was not dollars.

This concept is fraught with dimensions of tellership, embeddedness, and moral stance,  
interviews and analyses, and that’s just at first glance.

Repair narratives matter.

Everyone in society has a narrative repair.

It’s just that most have to be coached and coddled before they can recall or readily share.

It requires some thinking, some reflecting, and some, hmmm, let- me -think -about- it time.

These stories are personal, complicated with linguistic violence,  
some even border on crime.

Repair narratives matter.

There is culture, grammar, and literacy.

Each is found in all narratives to some degree.

Cultural Historical Activity is the Theory that social scientists connect to community.

Language and culture reveal this connection

As languages are essential to identity projection.

Repair narratives matter.

Organic and emergent as repairing narratives can be

There are many that are painful, autobiographical, and key

To understanding linguistic anthropology, history, and more.

Key to appreciating sociocultural positions on learning and what the speaker has in store.

Note to the reader: According to Razfar (2010) a narrative repair is a relevant and controversial practice in English instruction, namely corrective feedback or repair.

Martinez (2017) discusses “*the relationship between the racialized physical violence against Black and Latinx communities and the linguistic violence many Black and Latinx youth face in English classrooms*” (p. 182).

## References

Razfar, Aria (2010): Repair with confianza: Rethinking the context of corrective feedback for English learners (ELs). University of Illinois at Chicago. Journal contribution.  
<https://hdl.handle.net/10027/7766>

Martinez, D. C. (2017). Imagining a language of solidarity for black and latinx youth in english language arts classrooms. *English Education*, 49(2)

## On Translanguaging

Let's open up language boundaries in writing.

Let's do it in ways that are open and inviting.

<<¿Quién habla español y quién lo escribe?>>

Who talk like this and do y'all hear me?

Why can't writing be fun and without intimidation?

Why can't students move between languages if it fits the situation?

<<Pero > like, a mi no me gusta mi clase de reading.>>

But yaw needs ta be way woke for this class meetin'!

English gives students power and access?

Do schools have spaces that empower and not oppress?

Language is without doubt social, cultural, emotional, and interactive.

Literacies must be playful, creative, translingual, not subtractive.

So how do we integrate student identity and representation?

Use decodable books with stories that raise imagination.

Make students “agentive users of literacy and language” (Machado & Harman, 2018, p. 2)

.Encourage code meshing and use phonological heritage.

Create classroom environments that value home discourse.  
Home language like home cookin' has literacy as its source.  
Cross-langaging in writing is needed in ELA.  
It affords learning, transliteracy, and a shared DNA.

*"...when teachers open up classroom spaces, children bring a wealth of resources to their writing, including expanded vocabularies..."* (Machado & Hartman, 2019, p.6).

## **Incarceration Nation**

To what do we owe this dubious distinction?

Prison beds.

Prison structures.

Prison spaces.

As the world's most avid incarcerator America keeps adolescent bodies like chicks in incubators.

Confining, controlling, coercing, conflating.

Reminiscent of slave ships and masters' quarters.

Warm, yet cold

Young, growing old

The smothering mother hen?

A heartless warden.

What is this gendered-raced inclusive place?

Prison cells.

Prison crimes.

Prison abuse.

Within the world's most avid detention America makes adolescent teen youths and Black girls society's menace.

Laboring.

Languishing.

Lingering.

Lusting.

In a climate where they are deemed enemies to the public.

Frightened, yet fearless

Crying tearless.

Each moment's choking breath  
A case of civic death.

What are the strong predictors of incarceration?

School expulsion.

School as punitive.

School as puritanical.

As the country that spends more money per student America lays prison prep tracks for Black and Brown youth.

Bolstering.

Blasting.

Booming.

Boosting students to detention.

Away from critical literacies.

Reading texts, yet not critiquing.

Socially networking, yet not speaking.

The gendering of these rates?

Twelve times the number of women since 1970 incarcerated in the United States.

What is the critical perspective on unpacking youth interaction?

Urban literacies.

Urban education.

Urban language.

Public policy and

Private perceptions dictate who gets counted as a criminal and who is considered a citizen.

Reject,

Rewrite,

Repeal.

Recall

This notion.

Extend the focus on literacy to articulate dominant and non-dominant ways of knowing

Put the new research, new insight into urban schools and into motion.



**Joy Valentine, Doctoral Candidate** [bio]. She/Her/Hers can be contacted at [joyv@uic.edu](mailto:joyv@uic.edu). Joy Valentine is a doctoral student in the department of Language, Literacy, and Culture at University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC). She is a former Chicago Public Schools educator and currently the Director of the Urban Health Early Outreach/Precollege Program at UIC. Joy earned her Master of Arts in Language, Literacy, and Learning from the University of Illinois at Chicago, a Master of Arts in Educational Leadership from Concordia University, and a Bachelor of Arts in French from Shaw University. Her research interests include eliciting narratives of adolescents' racialized experiences, translanguaging, anti-racist ELA curriculum, racial literacies, and adolescent literature.