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Editor's Introduction

Multiliteracies as Pedagogy: Connecting, Advocating, Resisting

Cris Delatado Barabas

In fall 2022, as an assignment for my graduate course called Meanings of Literacy, I conducted a mini-case study that inquired into the literate life of a biracial and multilingual adolescent. The focus of the paper was to explore how the student made sense of his transnational identity as he actively participated in multiple spaces where his organic literacies (e.g., languaging, creative writing) were both celebrated and regulated. The student, who was in high school at that time, was linguistically competent in four named languages (Dutch, Mandarin Chinese, Cantonese, English) and actively participated and organized live action role playing (LARPing) events. One of the key takeaways of that paper, unfortunately, was not surprising. The student, who was working on his high school diploma in an international school, was aware of how social institutions regulate and propagate linguistic imperialism by imposing certain named languages as the sole medium of instruction and interaction. This is despite the reality that most students in his cohort and their teachers spoke the same mother tongues.

Fortunately, he was able to organize a three-day in-school live action role playing course which was executed using their mother tongue during the academic year. It was an avenue for him to showcase and make use of his other(ed) literacies. As we talked about his LARPing experiences, it was clear that this literacy event was a fertile ground for his and his peers' enactment of mother tongue literacies. More importantly and critically, the literacy event allowed the students to playfully and creatively critique social issues plaguing their country and local communities. They did this by deploying multiliteracies through the use of written and oral language, along with visual representations that they thought complement the texts that they themselves have produced. The textual production, the choosing of costumes, the choice of social issues that they creatively embedded in the script, and the ways in which they turned a simple classroom into a LARPing venue were entangled with certain human desires. Such desires were later vocalized by the student in our conversation, strengthening the importance of turning our attention to the affective dimensions of literacies and how they are

embodied by humans. Indeed, this discourse offers opportunities to extend our understanding of literacies enactment vis-à-vis human desirings, becoming, and transformations.

We cannot, however, talk about centering human desirings, becoming, and transformations without explicitly identifying the reasons and the ways in which we can foreground the means for humans to connect, advocate, and resist individually and collectively. A pre-requisite of these enactments, of course, is being critical of how much power is ascribed to an individual's identity markers (Lazar et al., 2024) and recognizing the ways in which (in)visible sociomaterial forces have helped shaped these power structures. This paradigmatic shift calls for troubling the notion of agency by repositioning the place of humans, treating us instead as equal in stature to material things while living alongside other species.

It is for this reason of resisting and advocating that we are called to be conscious of how our organic literacies, often by-products and visible manifestations of cultural and linguistic identities, are suppressed by hegemonic institutional forces that assert control and homogeneity while prioritizing and benefiting individuals who do not have (known) disabilities. Unfortunately, we see such control predominating our educational spaces, as we can observe for instance in English writing instruction. For example, anything that deviates from Anglo-American ways of structuring writing and presenting ideas is considered bad writing. Assessment measures are punitive of “other” ways of writing, labeling students coming from the non-dominant culture as linguistically deficit. Foregrounding these ideologies, Suresh Canagarajah's (2024) keynote address for JoLLE's winter conference revolved around questioning how good writing is perceived, with him arguing that it “is not a one-shot deal” and that “the whole material environment is important” in the process of textual construction. In his narrative, Canagarajah similarly echoed the beauty of consciously making sense of the affective experience, the messiness, and the slowing down, because these are important components as we “make and move towards meaning”. This call similarly reiterates other scholars who are doing important work in literacy studies, particularly with and for population who are experiencing significant disadvantage, for instance, due to disabilities (e.g., Bhattacharya, 2024; Bhattacharya & Pradana, 2022). Certainly, moving forward current conversations in multiliteracies need to center intersectionality, especially at times when definitions of literacy are alarmingly being narrowed down by politicized legislations.

Moreover, Canagarajah (2024), along with thinkers who want to widen literacy's definition by centering embodiment, entanglements, and assemblages (e.g., Leander & Ehret, 2019; Lemieux & Rowsell, 2020; Lenters & McDermott, 2021; Trinh, 2024), argues for troubling linearity and decentering the humans from these processes. Expanding conceptualization of multiliteracies with this view, we may return to our relationship with the land and the invaluable pedagogical insights we can take from this entanglement with non-humans. In her phenomenal book *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants*, the Potawatomi author and scientist Robin Wall Kimmerer (2013) similarly problematized Western tradition of hierarchy, with the humans at the top

and the flora and fauna world at the bottom. She contrasted this with the Native ways of knowledging, one that positions humans as learners who glean insights from other species on how to live and relate with the world. Growing up, Kimmerer recalled how the bees taught her how to move between flowers, drink nectar and gather pollen- a literacy event that will later influence her views as an Indigenous scientist. For her, the imagery metaphorically captured the “dance of cross pollination that can produce a new species of knowledge, a new way of being in the world” (p. 47). Indeed, multiliteracies can be manifested in various forms and venues, and quoting another Indigenous scholar Greg Cajete, Kimmerer highlights how “we understand a thing only when we understand it with all four aspects of our being: mind, body, emotion, and spirit” (p. 47).

In this issue, thus, we seek to address the myriad ways in which multiliteracies, both as theory and praxis, is understood and implemented in various settings. We hope to contribute to expanding the meanings of literacy by centering the bold acts of connecting, advocating, and resisting.

Research Articles

Dominique McDaniel examines a Black youth’s social media engagement to partake in civic discourses. In this work, McDaniel emphasizes the youth’s multiliteracy practices and explores the intersection of justice-oriented activism, social media literacies, and identity formation. McDaniel’s paper adds to the conversations on how educators might center out-of-school literacies engagements of youth when developing their in-school pedagogical practices. On the other hand, **Kelli A. Rushek, Katherine Batchelor, Julia Beaumont, Ava Shaffer, and Delaney Barrett** turn to VSCO stickers to further the discourse on how elements of multimodal literacies can strengthen the application of critical literacy in teacher education programmes. In their work, they focus on how preservice teachers analyze consumerism and girlhood in relation to the stickers. The piece offers pedagogical implications in regard to critical literacies, communities, and gender identities. The third research article is **Hongye Zeng**’s integrative literature review of multimodal writing as enacted by multilingual adolescents. The work further synthesizes how writing growth is conceptualized and viewed in writing education and puts forward ideas on how educators may deal with multilingual and multimodal writing.

Theoretical/Conceptual Article

In their conceptualization of “sociotextuality”, **Amir Kalan** and **Renee Davy** contribute to the discourse on how academia might decolonize itself in terms of knowledge production and representation. Responding to this issue’s theme, they specifically tackle how further theorization of “multiliteracies” has gradually erased the Iranian context from scholarship, highlighting instead voices from Western academia. Their work also offers an analysis of how “textual materiality” became a medium “to the transfiguration of the multiliteracies discourse”.

Voices from the Field

Storytelling is a multiliteracies rich activity and this is what **Jennifer Lacroix, Leslie Bohon, Barbara Lapornik, Andrea Enikő Lypka, and Josephine Prado** are showing in their work. Drawing on their practitioner experiences, they report on how five storytelling techniques help elevate identity work in the context of multilingual learners' intercultural competence. On the other hand, **Christina P. DeNicolo, Kathryn L. Roberts, Renee Brooks, Anthony Puente, and Andrea Stanczyk** share their experiences on how a collaborative project designed to support multilingual learners' language development and content learning could help address educational inequity. In their piece, they specifically highlight how to support students and families to feel a sense of belonging in schools.

Scholars Speak Out

Two scholars grace our Scholars Speak Out section this issue. **Christian W. Chun's** piece is a powerful reflection of his racial and linguistic identities. He calls on readers to resist stereotypes that do not only reinforce harmful ideologies but also actively relegate "minority" on the margins. On other hand, **Patriann Smith's** piece delve into languaging, semiotization, and history to understand how immigrant identities in the US, in particular Caribbean nationals, are perceived. She draws on raciolinguistic ideologies to unpack how racism is perpetuated across borders.

Academic Book Reviews

Two academic book reviews are included in this issue. **Karen Andrews** reviewed Lucy Spence and Ayan Mitra's *Educational Neuroscience for Literacy Teachers* while **Alexander Tang** provided a review for Patriann Smith's *Black Immigrant Literacies: Intersections of Race, Language, and Culture in the Classroom*.

Children & Young Adult Literature (CYAL) Book Reviews

We continue to have adult, adolescent, and children reviewers for this section, wherein we have included seven reviews in this issue. **Bataul Alkhateeb** and **Ghanim Khalfani** reviewed *Abdul's Story*, **Shuai Xu, Lexani Hernandez, Juana E. Briones Juarez** and **Rosa A. Briones Juerez** have a review piece for *Alma and How She Got Her Name*. **Megan Beatty** and **Haydee Vilchiz-Alvear** also offered a review for *Merci Suarez Plays It Cool* while **Mary E. Leon** and **Zavier R. Leon** reviewed *Only for a Little While*. Moreover, **Ashlan Bishop** and **Baker Bishop** submitted a review for *This is a Story* and **Mikaela LaFave**, and **Emily Tran** reviewed *Throwback*. Finally, **Ngan Bich Vu, Lexani Hernandez,** and **Ari I. Velasquez** reviewed *With Lots of Love*.

Poetry, Fiction, & Visual Arts

We continue to publish poetry and other creative works. In this issue, **Christopher Turner's** satirical piece is a creative attempt to resist cultural stereotypes. Taking inspiration from Horace Miner's work, Turner's themes revolve around language, literacies, and cultural practices.

Gratitude & Recognition

As with any student run publication, the release of this issue is only made possible due to the collaborative effort of the authors, the reviewers, and the editorial board members. The board extends its gratitude to the authors for choosing JoLLE as the home for their work and of course, to our external reviewers for their generous comments, suggestions, and constructive feedback for the manuscripts. No words can express how grateful I am to the editorial board members for everything that they have done to successfully release this issue. With our Monday night meeting being the weekly highlight of my academic year 2023-2024, the "separation" can be alienating. However, with separation comes moving on. I wish you best of luck as you continue with your graduate studies or take on new career opportunities. You have selfishly devoted your time and effort this past year and for that, thank you, Faith Thompson, managing editor; Seon Ja Chang, production editor; Ngoc-My Tran and Taylor Blankstein-Miller, conference co-chairs; Michael Gray, treasurer; Yuxiang Liao, poetry, fiction, and visual arts editor; Maki Shinzato, children's literature and young adult book review editor, and Zihan Lin, scholars speak out editor. In Spring 2024, we were joined by new members. Gratitude also goes to Chi-Chun Chiu (PFVA), Dan Kong (Production), Shuzhen Zhuang (CYAL), Michel Soares Do Carmo (Communications Editor), and Jiaze Li (Digital Content Editor).

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