WLU Literacies for All Summer Institute

Authentic Literacy Events and Social Actions: Celebrating Relationships and Partnerships

July 18–20, 2013
Hofstra University, Hempstead, NY

Make Plans to Attend. We Offer:

- Over 60 concurrent sessions to choose from
- In-depth learning and sharing opportunities
- An ideal professional development environment for college and preK–8 educators
- Extended opportunities to meet with keynote speakers

Register today

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Earn Professional Development Credits

20 PD hours for full attendance

Keynote Speakers

- **Gerald Campano**
  Thursday

- **Chris Soentpiet**
  Friday

- **Lester Laminack**
  Saturday

Literacies for All Conference held in conjunction with the

**Hofstra Reading Miscue Analysis Conference (July 15–17, 2013)**
Information: debra.goodman@hofstra.edu

Presented by the *Whole Language Umbrella*

in cooperation with CELT: Center for Expansion of Language and Thinking

For Institute information, visit www.ncte.org/wlu/institute, or call 800-369-6283, ext. 3675.
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Postconvention Workshops, November 25–26, 2013
Boston, Hynes Convention Center

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Ken Lindblom, Stony Brook University

English Leadership Quarterly
Susan Groenke, University of Tennessee-Knoxville

Talking Points
Carol Gilles, University of Missouri-Columbia

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College Composition and Communication
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Thoughts from the Editors

Reading the World to Read the Word

Amy Seely Flint, Teri Holbrook, Laura May, Peggy Albers, and Caitlin McMunn Dooley

In homage to Paulo Freire and Donaldo Macedo (1987) and their emancipatory and critical approach to education, it is important that we “read the world and the word” (p. 43). To read the word requires that we encode/decode words to make meaning as the ideas relate to our experiences, cultures, and knowledge. To read the world means we draw upon our life experiences to understand and critique larger social structures and our place in the world. As Freire and Macedo point out, “[R]ead the world always precedes reading the word, and reading the word implies continually reading the world” (p. 25).

When considered together, reading the word and the world involves a social, cultural, political, and historical context that offers a complexity to match the interconnected and wired world of the 21st century. Communication and interaction become continually closer and faster with digital tools, electronic media, and social networking sites; as a result, the impact of culturally relevant pedagogy and critical literacy play an even larger role as educators and students navigate new virtual and tangible spaces. Literacy and learning from this wider perspective become vehicles to examine how definitions of race, class, ability, and gender are culturally and socially constructed. Moreover, educators and students should have opportunities to “share their cultural ways of knowing and learning, to acknowledge and appreciate the differences, and to reflect on the multiple ways of demonstrating what is known” (Smith, 2010, p. 26).

As we write our thoughts for this issue of “Insights and Inquiries,” it is the weekend of President Barack Obama’s Inauguration as our 45th president; it is also a time when we celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. and his accomplishments for civil rights. Our leaders have full plates as they contemplate and consider a response to Newtown, Connecticut; our withdrawal of troops in one part of the world; our deeply divided political convictions; and our response to immigration reform, healthcare, and education. These events and ideologies make their...
In our pursuit of civil rights for all, we must be dedicated to recognizing the power and possibilities that all students bring into the classrooms.

Way into our classrooms. As we engage and participate in our communities and schools, we wonder how these events will impact our sense of security and our understandings of global issues; how we work with students from many different cultural and linguistic places; and how we make sense of increased focus on common core state standards, accountability, and the like. Martin Luther King Jr. reminds us that in our pursuit of civil rights for all, we must be dedicated to recognizing the power and possibilities that all students bring into the classrooms.

The articles, department columns, and podcast in this issue invite readers to acknowledge the possibilities that young children and their families bring to reading events, how teachers work to make sense of family and community literacy practices, and how online spaces promote critical engagement with literature and foster the development of advanced literacy practices and leadership skills for one adolescent reader. Authors Debbie Rowe and Jeanne Fain share their research about 249 families engaging in family literacy journals as they read dual-language books at home. What they discovered was the role of co-construction of literacy practices as pre-kindergarten children participated in creating responses. The two-way sharing of the journals and books between home and school enabled family members to share their interests and home practices. As they note, “Family journals functioned as a way of bringing family funds of knowledge into the classroom to be used as a resource for learning” (p 415).

Addressing the impact of online spaces to support an adolescent’s literacy life, Jenn Scott Curwood details the experiences of 13-year-old Jack as he navigates the social identities, discourses, and media paratexts within an online affinity space related to The Hunger Games. Curwood reminds us, “Rather than existing as separate (or opposite) from school-based literacies, digital literacies often shape when, how, and why young people learn” (p. 425).

Erin Coccia Hamel, Sally Shaw, and Tammy Taylor present a reflective account of a teacher study group focused on understanding their own biases around home and community literacies and the impact of such work on literacy practices in classrooms. “Toward a New Mindfulness: Explorations of Home and Community Literacies” demonstrates to readers that this work requires time and space to develop new dispositions toward children’s homes and communities.

Alongside the articles highlighting home, community, and out-of-school literacies that enhance a culturally relevant and authentic literacy program are the departments and Conversation Currents. Beth Maloch and Randy Bomer’s Research and Policy department continues the conversation around the Common Core State Standards and informational texts. In the January 2013 issue (Vol. 90, No. 3), they detailed the challenges of terminology around informational texts. In this issue, they discuss what research has to say about instruction and children’s engagement with these texts. This is Beth and Randy’s final issue. We thank them for their generous time and commitment to producing excellent columns for the Research and Policy department. Beginning in September, we welcome the insights of Jessica Pandaya Zacher and Mauren Aukerman, the new Language Arts Research and Policy department editors.

The Professional Book Reviews column takes up the call to read the world and develop critically minded and socially just citizens. The column editors feature publications that embrace critical literacy and democracy. In the Children’s Book Reviews column, the focus is on notable and distinguished poetry. These selections create a dramatic backdrop for a number of topics, including the remarkable lives of African American men working as Pullman Porters for luxury trains.

And finally, Catherine Compton-Lilly and Eve Gregory present a thought-provoking conversation about the impact of their ethnographic studies of families and community spaces as literacy is navigated...
gated and negotiated. Eve shares her experiences researching how siblings and grandparents broker literacy in faith-based locations. Cathy talks about her work in understanding the temporal nature of literacy across family members. Both Cathy and Eve discuss the importance of establishing caring relationships and sensitivity when working with families and communities in diverse spaces.

So as we close this volume of Language Arts, we reflect on the many and diverse contexts in which literacy takes place. We acknowledge how we can be intentional in our interactions with family members and each other in tangible and virtual spaces as we develop a critical consciousness to read the word and the world for a more just and democratic society.

References


Harvey Daniels: 2012 CEL Exemplary Leader Award Recipient

Harvey “Smokey” Daniels is an extraordinary teacher leader whose writing, presentations, and professional development work define a model for teaching and leadership development based on research, best practice, common sense, trust, and respect. An author, editor, and consultant, he is a professor of Education at National Louis University in Chicago, Illinois (currently on leave). Smokey served as Co-director of the Illinois Writing Project for 26 years. A prolific writer, he has authored or coauthored 17 books, beginning with Best Practice: Bringing Standards to Life in America’s Classrooms, now in its fourth edition. In addition to books, he has contributed numerous articles and essays in professional journals. A common thread runs through his writings: literacy is accessible to all, and it should offer joy to all.

In 1989, Smokey founded a summer residential retreat, the Walloon Institute. During Walloon’s two decades, thousands of teachers from across the country were renewed and inspired, helping them to create classrooms that are experiential and active through increased levels of choice and responsibility, which in turn leads to higher student achievement. Smokey’s commitment to exceptional teaching led him to spearhead the creation of Best Practice High School in Chicago in 1966. In addition, his belief in the leadership capacity of committed teachers launched the Center for City Schools, a dozen interrelated projects that supported teachers and parents in restructuring schools around Chicago and the Midwest. In his numerous workshops and presentations, Smokey connects theory and practice in a way that embodies the kind of learning we envision for our students and ourselves. Smokey Daniels has initiated work that is visionary, and his impact on the profession is of lasting significance.