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Most teachers of English language learners are not fluently bilingual, and many don’t receive formal professional development in teaching emergent bilingual students. Thus, they aren’t always adequately prepared to meet the challenges of working with this growing demographic of K–12 students. Alvarez argues that teachers’ greatest resources are the students themselves, with both a facility in their home language and ties to their home communities.

After-school programs focused on English learners offer a way for parents, teachers, and volunteers to collectively navigate school systems and the English language, share stories, and develop facility in reading and writing across languages. Alvarez offers ideas for approaching, engaging, and partnering with students’ communities to design culturally sustaining pedagogies that productively use the literacy abilities students bring to schools. Drawing on the NCTE Position Paper on the Role of English Teachers in Educating English Language Learners (ELLs), Alvarez highlights the importance of building mutual trust, or confianza, between students, schools, and communities, both inside and outside of the classroom.
Calls for Manuscripts

Editors’ Note: All incoming manuscripts must be submitted through Editorial Manager at www.editorialmanager.com/langarts/default.asp. Identify the issue for which you are submitting in the Editorial Manager “Comments” section. For additional calls, please see http://www.ncte.org/journals/la/call.

March 2019

Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity

In this issue, we invite Feature Articles and Perspectives on Practice submissions related to language learning and linguistic diversity. We want to know about instructional practices (e.g., play, storytelling, drama, debate, literature discussions, book clubs, collaborative tasks, conferencing) that support and enrich children’s language learning across PreK–Grade 8 settings in and out of school. Are there certain types of techniques or approaches such as dialogic talk or Socratic questioning that enhance classroom discourse? In this digital age in which we live, what types of technological tools (e.g., audioblogging, podcasts) can support language learning for youth? In what ways can classroom discourse (teacher-student and student-student) facilitate children’s literacy development? How are teachers building on oral language to support vocabulary growth or disciplinary knowledge? How are teachers drawing on children’s linguistic capital to challenge deficit notions about the language practices of English learners as well as children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds? In what ways might teachers honor and sustain children’s home languages while teaching them to code-switch, for example, and learn “standard” English? How are educators preparing students to participate fully within an increasingly multilingual and multicultural world, a world that demands linguistic flexibility and response to rapid changes? Please join us in crafting a vital collection of articles that speak to the complexities, challenges, and promise of critical literacies within the language arts.

Submission deadline: May 15, 2018

July 2019

Viewpoints and Visions

For this unthemed issue, we invite Feature Article and Perspectives on Practice submissions that offer a variety of viewpoints and visions related to language arts across multiple settings and modalities. What topics, concerns, or issues do you think are important to today’s readers of Language Arts? What kinds of theoretical lenses have you applied to your inquiry work to increase our collective understandings of language arts instruction? How does your research illustrate the range of ways in which young people are engaged with the language arts? What trends do you see in the field of language arts? What innovative literacy practices do you see in the diverse spaces of classrooms and community settings? Within a digital age, how are our understandings of children’s literature, writing instruction, and literacy learning shifting? These are just a few of the many questions that can be explored in this issue. Join us in crafting an assortment of articles that helps to expand our viewpoints and visions about language arts.

Submission deadline: July 15, 2018

May 2019

Critical Literacies

In this issue, we seek Feature Articles and Perspectives on Practice submissions that grapple with the meaning and enactment of critical literacy education in these times. Within this particular social, historical, and political moment, what does it mean to you to be a critical literacy educator and/or researcher? Across rural and urban spaces, across economic and racial divides, what role do you see the language arts playing in supporting students in valuing multiple perspectives, taking an inquiry stance, and pursuing social action? How are the young people you are working with (re)defining what we mean by “critical” and “literacy”? What materials (e.g., children’s books, social media, “fake news” stories) and pedagogies have informed and/or supported your efforts to build students’ critical capacities? How are new theoretical frameworks addressing the intersectionality of identities, embodiment, inequities, and/or emotion (re)shaping our understandings of the purposes and practices of critical literacy? Please join us in crafting a vital collection of articles that speak to the complexities, challenges, and promise of critical literacies within the language arts.

Submission deadline: May 15, 2018
September 2019

Engaging Families in Language Arts Learning

For this issue, we seek Feature Article and Perspectives on Practice submissions that explore the participation of families in language and literacy learning. How are definitions of families changing, and in what ways does this impact our understandings of family engagement in literacy learning? What is “family literacy” and how might it be viewed differently by parents, guardians, teachers, schools, and librarians? How can teachers, schools, and librarians reach out to all families in new and different ways while drawing on their “funds of knowledge” to support and enhance their children’s language arts learning? What roles can families play in supporting their children’s literacy learning? For instance, seminal studies of early readers demonstrated the significance of families and the home environment in helping young children learn to read before entering school without having had any formal instruction. What recent studies build upon this scholarship? How are family literacy practices evolving in the digital era in which we live? Should family literacy programs support language arts learning for family members and children simultaneously? What theoretical frameworks attuned to racial and linguistic diversity, asset-based pedagogies, and social class can help us envision more culturally responsive family literacy engagements and programs? Are there particular literacy practices teachers have implemented (e.g., writing suitcases, collecting family stories) that lead to increased engagement with the language arts for children and their families? Join us in putting together an issue that will give us much to consider in regard to engaging families in language arts learning. Submission deadline: September 15, 2018

November 2019

Viewpoints and Visions

For this unthemed issue, we invite Feature Article and Perspectives on Practice submissions that offer a variety of viewpoints and visions related to language arts across multiple settings and modalities. What topics, concerns, or issues do you think are important to today’s readers of Language Arts? What kinds of theoretical lenses have you applied to your inquiry work to increase our collective understandings of language arts instruction? How does your research illustrate the range of ways in which young people are engaged with the language arts? What trends do you see in the field of language arts? What innovative literacy practices do you see in the diverse spaces of classrooms and community settings? Within a digital age, how are our understandings of children’s literature, writing instruction, and literacy learning shifting? These are just a few of the many questions that can be explored in this issue. Join us in crafting an assortment of articles that helps to expand our viewpoints and visions about language arts.

Submission deadline: November 15, 2018

Multimodal Literacies

January 2020

In 2005, NCTE framed its “Position Statement on Multimodal Literacies” with a question from William Kist: “Has there ever been a time when we have not been awash in a remarkable torrent of symbols and opportunities for reading and writing them?” More than a decade later, teachers, researchers, librarians, and policymakers are continuing to grapple with expanding definitions and practices of multimodal literacies. Across PreK–8 classrooms and in community-based programs, we see incorporation of the visual arts, music, and drama into literacy education as well as expanding definitions of texts to include the written, digital, visual, and the embodied. As children navigate multiple modes (visual, aural, gestural, etc.) across an increasingly diverse set of digital and social-media platforms, many teachers have created educational contexts responsive to the range and variation of children’s multimodal literacies. In this issue, we invite Feature Articles and Perspectives on Practice submissions that explore multimodal literacies. Some questions you might consider include: How are you incorporating multimodalities into your teaching? What are you noticing about how young people read multimodal texts (e.g., picturebooks, graphic novels, ebooks) and create multimodal texts (e.g., podcasts, comics, digital stories)? In what ways are you assessing students’ multimodal compositions? How are you striving to capture and represent the complexities of multimodal literacies within your research? What are promising theoretical frameworks that we can draw on to understand and illuminate children’s multimodal composing processes? In what ways can multimodal literacies help advance equity-oriented and social justice pedagogies? Join us as we craft an issue responsive to and reflective of the multimodal nature of literacy.

Submission deadline: January 15, 2019