Sheffield Hallam University

Editorial

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Editorial

As is usual with a collection of articles from *Literacy*, this edition reflects richly the literacy lives of young children, adolescents and adults alike. Our authors take us to different settings, reminding us that literacy is very much part of our everyday experiences and that the ways that these play out in different places can have a profound and enduring effect on us, both in education and less formal spaces. On that note, many of our authors examine how oracy, reading and writing can happen in contexts that can be empowering, where the lives of literacy users are celebrated and interwoven in what takes place.

Varga-Dobai, in the first article in this issue, *Writing for Wellness: story telling, care and reflection in teacher education* writes about the need to consider teacher burnout and stress through a pedagogy of care centred on writing and storytelling. With a focus on the preparation of pre-service teachers from a diverse student population, she describes the way that a writing class became an opportunity for participants to engage in self-study and share meaningful experiences. The practices used provide insights into writing approaches that can promote self-awareness and wellness and are aligned with culturally relevant education. Gardner and Kuzich also focus on the preparation of pre-service teachers to be teachers of writing in the second article *Student teachers as writers: using an immersive approach in ITE to build positive writers.* The immersive approach used in the research combines both writing and reflecting on the writing; participants learn about writing through writing. Using writing journals to regularly respond to a series of prompts, the student teachers developed confidence and increased enjoyment in writing. The article demonstrates the positive impact of the approach, leading student teachers to rethink their approach to teaching writing. An aspect of teaching writing which can be overlooked is the physical act of handwriting. In their article *Doing the write thing: handwriting and typing support in secondary schools in England* Sumner, Nightingale, Gurney, Prunty and Barnett explore the lack of consistent guidance for teachers to support children with handwriting difficulties. They identify ambiguity around what is considered to be best practice and inequities across schools in different parts of the UK, and call for clear guidelines to be developed to this effect.

The second set of articles in this issue concern spoken language and critical thinking. In the article *Oracy and cultural capital: the transformative power of spoken language,* Knight provides an insightful discussion of recent policy moves and explores how these have influenced oracy teaching in schools. Raising critical points, such as why some cultural traits are given precedence over others, Knight argues that the focus on 'cultural capital' and the pursuit of 'social mobility' in recent debates has overlooked a focus on oracy as dialogue for empowerment through student voice. Holdstock turns our attention to the critical and creative affordances of interactive fiction. In *Using interactive fiction to stimulate metalinguistic talk in the English classroom* Holdstock draws in depth on one lesson with 16- and 17-year-olds in to illustrate how metalinguistic talk can act as a powerful pedagogical tool to engage students in critical and creative discussion. Continuing the theme of creative and critical thinking in this issue, Pantaleo's article *Elementary students' engagement in transduction and creative and critical thinking* describes how a purposefully designed pedagogy, and the use of comics and graphic novels can lead pupils to raise critical questions. Drawing on a social semiotic lens to multimodal communication, representation and interpretation, Pantaleo shares how students drew on semiotic resources to produce posters, prompting them to reflect on the ways in which interactions between first peoples and Europeans lead to change. Holm, Laursen and Ahrenkiel examine the cultural resources children bring

to their classroom experiences in their article '*I'm re-writing the law' when children bring literacy into the nursery school*'. Considering early literacy as social, bodily and affective, the authors call for a flexible and responsive approach to early literacy that challenges more narrowly defined notions of early literacy in current policy mandates.

Another Fever Year? Making sense of pandemics with a historical graphic novel by Griffin and Smith, and *Credible, but not really reliable: teachers' responses to children's literature on energy production and the environment* by Lammert, both address how children's literature can be used to support learners to make sense of, learn about and engage with serious issues like global pandemics and sustainability. Although different in terms of purpose, both articles draw our attention to the powerful role children's literature plays in providing spaces for readers to explore sensitive issues and how multimodal texts, in particular, support longer more sustained engagement with the text to support meaning-making. Griffith and Smith explore how graphic novels can be used to support readers to explore emotions and make connections to self and to the world. Both articles highlight the pivotal role of the teacher in making sensitive decisions about texts that may be 'too close to the bone' (Griffith & Smith, 2023). Lammert develops this theme further to consider how literacy teacher decisions making around children's literature needs to consider text enjoyment and author credibility. Taken together both articles highlight the important role of children's literature in exploring world issues and, consequently, the crucial role of the literacy teacher in choosing and negotiating meaning making with readers.

Steel's *Reading to Dogs as a Form of Animal Assisted Education* and Soler Pardo's *Booktuber: promoting reading and literacy in the classroom among Spanish pre-service teachers through a video review* share an important goal: the harnessing of everyday literacy practices (reading to animals and the creation of Booktuber videos respectively) for more explicit educational purposes. Steel notes that Reading to Dogs (RtD) is growing in popularity in schools, for both well-being and reading development reasons, and examines current research, noting methodological issues as well as the benefits and challenges reported. Steel concludes that a great deal of further, high-quality research is needed. Soler Pardo's article examines the use of 'booktubing' or 'video reviews' on an undergraduate pre-service teacher education programme in Spain, where students were required to produce a Booktuber review of a book as part of their university assessment. Soler Pardo examines the marking of these students projects and students' views of what they gained from their Booktuber experiences, including developing language and technological skills, and developing and demonstrating literary engagement.

These articles share a sense of having examined something new or presented new ways of thinking about the familiar. With a range of methodological and pedagogical approaches they challenge us to rethink our understanding of common practices, to try something new and to appreciate the many and varied ways in which literacies can be experienced and understood.