Recensions / Book Reviews

Nell K. Duke and Marla H. Mallette.(Eds.). (2004). *Literacy Research Methodologies*. London, UK & New York: Guilford Publications. 364 pages. ISBN: 1-59385-060-3 (hardback); 1-59385-059-X (paperback)

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Plans for writing *Literacy Research Methodologies* originated out of Duke and Mallette's concern for the preparation of graduate students as both producers and consumers of a variety of different kinds of research and the limited number of hours devoted to research methodologies in doctoral studies contrasted with the many research methodologies that exist.

In recent decades, the literacy field has experienced a diversification of research methodologies. Duke and Mallette claim that this diversification has resulted in fragmentation and "increasingly particular literacy conferences are aligned with some methodologies and not others" (p. xvi). They argue that "literacy researchers need to work actively to reverse this trend and this work starts with the preparation of new literacy researchers" (p. xvi). The authors suggest that it is important for graduate students and educational researchers to understand the contributions and limitations of particular forms of research and how they can work together toward greater insights and understandings. *Literacy Research Methodologies* describes a number of research methodologies (e.g., case studies, discourse analysis, formative, experimental and quasi-experimental designs) that are currently used, and summarizes their contributions to knowledge in the field of literacy. Programmatic research and multiple experiments are necessary for validating causal inferences in literacy research. *Literacy Research Methodologies* offers a good introduction to a number of research methodologies for students at the master's and doctoral levels.

Perspectives on literacy have evolved over recent decades, contextualized and driven by sociological, political, global, technological, cultural, and philosophical changes. Against this backdrop, the stage is set, in *Literacy Research Methodologies*, for academics and graduate researchers to influence literacy directions through a resounding emphasis on a variety of research methodologies to investigate literacy policies, perspectives, and programs. For example, in Chapter 9, authors Stahl and Hartman advocate historical research as a methodology that can assist researchers "in understanding the relationship between politics and literacy education, school and society, local and central governments, and teachers and students" (p. 176) and in delving into "the roots of current literacy practices, techniques, or strategies" (p. 175). "The opportunities for individuals to raise and then answer questions through the historical method are numerous…and needed at the cross-national, national, and nearby levels" (p. 190).

The contributing authors for *Literacy Research Methodologies* (i.e., from the U.S.A., Canada, Netherlands, and Greece) built their articles around the following framework: a definition of the methodology, characteristics of the methodology, research questions and claims for which the methodology is appropriate, standards for quality in this methodology, exemplars of this methodology and what makes it good. This framework provides an effective organization for presenting the various literacy research methodologies. It works very well for the chapters which focus on the more prominent research methodologies such as case studies, discourse analysis, ethnography, experimental and quasi-experimental designs, formative and design experiments, and historical research on literacy.

The authors make it clear that all methodologies have something to contribute. For example, in Chapter 8, Reinking and Bradley state that an "advantage of formative experiments, when compared to dominant research methodologies, is that they draw on and acknowledge the importance of intuitive professional knowledge, incorporating that knowledge within a systematic framework for practice-oriented research" (p.154). One reason for the gap between research and practice is that the work of educational researchers and that of teachers is often not connected. Formative experiments fill a research gap in guiding

instruction by addressing "more directly the questions and issues that practitioners face and that are not addressed by other research methodologies" (p. 152).

The exemplars provided for each methodology clearly situate the methodology within the literacy field. For example, one of the exemplars chosen by Barone for case studies in Chapter 2 is Catherine Compton-Lilly's study, which focuses on parents and students, the importance of reading, and how families enact reading in their homes. Barone describes Compton-Lilly's goal to learn from her students and their families and to challenge the prevailing deficit views of urban families.

Duke and Mallette, in Chapter 16, look across methodologies. The authors conclude that important messages about methodology in literacy research should be inherent and understood as researchers make decisions about research questions and their particular methodologies. Although each research methodology has contributions to make to the study of literacy, Duke and Mallette conclude that there should be a match of research methodology to the research questions and resulting claims.

Duke and Mallette also stress the need for standards of quality for every type of research. For example, ethnographic research allows researchers to view literacy development, instruction, learning, and practice as it occurs naturally in sociocultural contexts. According to author, Purcell-Gates, high quality ethnography requires a deep understanding of, and an ability to shape theory; sharp, insightful observational skills; the ability to decentre to identify and come to understand the perspectives of others; strict adherence to rules for valid and rigorous data collection, data management, and data analysis; the ability to think generatively and analytically; and, the ability to write engagingly and vividly so that readers can understand what the ethnography has discovered (p. 111). Barone, in referring to standards for quality in case-study methodology, concurs with Yin (1994) in suggesting the use of multiple sources of evidence, creating a chain of evidence, and having key informant(s) review the case study before it appears in print. In addition, Barone cites length of time in the field as a credibility factor and consideration of ethical issues and reporting of biases as standards for case studies (Merriam, 1988).

According to Barrell (2000), the inclusion of new literacies within current Canadian English language arts curricula extends the parameters of the discipline. The complexities and challenges, for the classroom, of a "discipline in metamorphosis" (p. 42) and I would contend "literacy in metamorphosis" are expanding in a very dynamic manner and create the need for research that is focused, intentional, and triangulated. Duke and Mallette have taken up this challenge. In looking across the various literacy research methodologies, they conclude that synergy across research methodologies is possible, powerful, and advisable (p. 350). They claim that there is a need to work within and across methods where different methodologies inform one another to gain larger insights. They urge researchers to actively pursue synergy across research methodologies, for without it the field of literacy is in danger of increasing fragmentation (p. 352).

Overall, the authors have met their challenge of emphasizing, through this volume, that there are many legitimate ways of doing literacy research. That is, there are many different research methodologies to conduct literacy research. The authors maintained a consistency of purpose throughout by establishing a framework with key questions that not only guided the writing of descriptions for the various research methodologies but also served as advance organizers for readers.

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Barbara Moss. (2003). *Exploring the literature of fact: Children's Nonfiction Trade Books in the Elementary Classroom.* Series: Solving Problems in the Teaching of Literacy (Cathy Collins Block, series editor). New York: The Guilford Press. 195 pages. ISBN: 1-57230-546-0 (paperback).

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As a teacher educator whose favourite genre of children's literature is fantasy and whose speciality is educational drama, I picked up this book and immediately found myself shrinking away from the words "literature" and "fact" being used in the same phrase — especially in a book title! As I read the opening sentence in the Introduction, "Today's children are different from those in the past," (p. 1) my scepticism increased. Dr. Moss had succeeded in raising my hackles before I had even begun to read. But I love to be supportive and positive, thus I sincerely hoped that she would be able to use her six-chapter textbook to convince me that "fact" and "literature" did belong together.

Moss states that the purpose of her book is "to offer teachers information about how nonfiction trade books can enhance classroom literacy instruction" (p. 2). She approaches this purpose in a conventionally organized structure that develops her argument clearly and sequentially. Chapter 1 provides her rationale for giving nonfiction titles more prominence in classroom literacy experiences. This chapter also introduces the reader to a wide range of nonfiction books for children: 96 titles are listed in the references list for Chapter 1 along with publication dates spanning 1978 through to 2001. Moss refers to these books in generally recognized categories within biography and information classifications. Moss also defines a separate classification designated as "multicultural nonfiction" that includes both biography and information titles that specifically address the needs and interests of children from "parallel cultures" (her term). Her list of cultures includes African and African American, Asian and Asian American, Native American, and Latin and Latino American.

In Chapter 2, she provides elementary teachers with guidelines to select appropriate nonfiction books for their classroom literacy programs. Such qualities as authority, accuracy, appropriateness, literary

artistry, and attractiveness (the "five A's") are examined in reference to selected exemplars from children's nonfiction. The author also includes a practical and comprehensive interest inventory that might assist teachers in matching titles to students' interests. Children's booklists in this chapter and throughout the book are identified according to appropriate age and reading levels. In chapter 3, she discusses classic literacy strategies such as read-alouds, USSR, book displays, book talks, and author studies in direct relation to nonfiction titles. Varieties of classroom reading group structures are reviewed as these might be employed with specific nonfiction books. The author makes brief reference to the internet in this chapter.

In chapter 4, Moss explores expository text structures, information that will be very familiar to elementary teachers who have completed education degrees in the past 20 or 30 years. Moss suggests some specific teaching strategies and handouts to assist teachers in exploring with their students such structures as cause/effect, description, or problem/solution. In chapter 5, she "investigates the many ways teachers can prompt student response to nonfiction" (p. 118). I was excited about this chapter because the author promised to explain how drama activities could enhance student response to nonfiction. Unfortunately, she had not done her "drama homework" beyond the most cursory of literature reviews (one title). The wealth of possibilities for exploring nonfiction literature provided by the work by Heathcote and Bolton (1995) or Somers (1994) were not even mentioned. My excitement dissipated immediately. The book concludes with a chapter that explores teaching the content subjects through engagement with nonfiction titles. Not everyone will agree with this author's definition of what does or does not comprise a content subject.

One strength of this book is that every chapter ends with an extensive and annotated bibliography of nonfiction books for elementary students that spans decades of children's publishing (1939–2001). Also, the author writes in a clear, teacher-friendly style and includes a wealth of practical and specific teaching ideas. She has done an excellent job of pulling together from a variety of children's literature texts time-tested teaching strategies that focus specifically on narrative forms and she has applied these strategies effectively to expository titles.

A weakness in this textbook is that the author sometimes evaluates educational writing and states opinions as if she were dealing in facts even when she is emphasizing to teachers that they must avoid nonfiction children's authors who confuse fact with conjecture (p. 37). Unfortunately, for the Canadian teacher educator, this text also virtually ignores Canadian, British, or Australian scholarly writing and nonfiction children's literature. It is most assuredly a text written specifically for teacher educators in the United States of America. This text might well serve the needs of the American elementary teacher who wants a more equitable balance between fiction and nonfiction in the classroom literacy program. It may also be an appropriate choice for an introductory English language arts methodology or children's literature course in an American university. Canadian teacher educators may want to balance it with Bainbridge and Pantaleo (1999) to ensure that nonfiction Canadian children's literature receives equal time.

And Dr. Moss I am still not convinced that "literature" and "fact" should be married in this book title — but maybe they can try dating for awhile.

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Gerald Coles. (2003). *Reading the Naked Truth: Literacy, Legislation, and Lies*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. 184 pages. ISBN 0-325-00337-8

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Any historical survey of research of the psychological processes that underlie the act of reading will most certainly unearth the fractious

nature of the field of literacy education. The so-called "reading wars," pitting holistic approaches (e.g., whole language) against skills-based approaches (e.g., phonics), have had their roots in the field of reading pedagogy since the early 1960s. This acrimonious debate continues to surface in journals, conferences, media, and even cyberspace (Stanovich, 1998).

Although Gerald Coles' (1998, 2000) previous accounts of the history of the reading wars have been unrepentantly prejudiced towards a progressive focus on the centrality of meaning in reading, here he pragmatically acknowledges that phonemic awareness, phonics, and other word skills do contribute to learning to read. These elements, he contends, should be included on a needs basis, and not as the sole component of reading instruction. Yet as the politically dominated push towards mandating reading instruction from a "scientifically based" approach rises to a renewed frenzy, Coles takes his bias a step further in his newest book, *Reading the Naked Truth: Literacy, Legislation and Lies*.

Coles offers a detailed and biting critique of the findings of the federally appointed and funded National Reading Panel (NRP) in the United States. He begins by offering the reader a comprehensive look at scientifically based reading instruction and then quickly moves into a discussion of the impetus behind the Bush administration's mandating of this type of instruction. Through subsequent chapters, the reader is caught up in the partisan linkages and politics underlying every aspect of the NRP and its report (2000). Coles argues that this third party, the NRP, mandated to reach a political consensus on the effectiveness of various approaches to teaching children to read, sought to enact its own ideological agenda. The NRP stressed that beginning readers should attain an early mastery of sound-symbol connections and similar skills through explicit, systematic, direct instruction without concern for the importance of making meaning from texts.

Coles argues that the lack of diversity among the panel members and their selective screening of 100,000 possible studies contributed to this outcome. As he takes his readers through the process of the panel's inclusion of only "scientifically" based studies, we begin to find out why the panel, in selecting only slightly more than 300 studies, adhered to only five areas of reading (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency,

comprehension, and computer technology). Under Coles' careful scrutiny, he found these studies to demonstrate the panel's predilection to make facts fit conclusions. Citing examples of research design flaws, inconsistencies in the simple distinction between correlation and causation, and misrepresentations in evidence and conclusions, Coles presents a convincing argument that the panel veered from anything that did not support the direct instruction model, an observation evidenced in an example taken from the report's section on "Encouraging Students to Read More." Although the studies the panel reviewed for this section favoured sustained silent reading (SSR) as a practice that encourages students to read more and contributes to higher reading achievement, the panel rejected it. Because SSR practices support a belief that teacher control is reduced as students construct meaning on their own, the panel refused to consider this approach.

Missing from the report, Coles contends, is literature that supports the finding that many children acquire reading skills prior to entering school. Once in school, children can further develop these skills through immersion in a rich language environment, or through alternative instructional approaches. In their empirical study of children's acquisition of phonemic awareness, Regush, Anderson, and Lee (2002), for example, found that play can be a developmentally appropriate and meaningful approach in helping children learn early reading skills. Similarly, Ehri and Nunes (2002) found that children differ in their need for phonemic awareness instruction and that many effective ways exist to teach it. Coles fears that mandating the inclusion of systematic skills instruction in federal education legislation goes far beyond what teachers of beginning reading already know and do in their classrooms. He worries that this directive could be taken to the point that it may actually harm some children.

Reading the Naked Truth is a startling commentary that engages the reader from its opening lines. Clearly, Coles' book is polemic and some readers will find that his case is overstated, as seen by his open antagonism towards certain "scientific" researchers (for example, Jeanne Chall and Barbara Foorman); President Bush; most members of the NRP; and any skill-based, prepackaged reading programs (such as Open Court).

At the same time, Coles' book is provocative and challenging. His detailed analysis of the studies in light of the criteria used by the NRP bring forth discrepancy in findings, and his meticulous identification of inconsistencies in studies' methodologies coupled with constant questionings promote a thoughtful read.

Coles' book is not only critical to the edification of the public but also provides crucial information to practising teachers, particularly those charged with teaching the very young to read. Within the complexity and diversity of the classroom, these teachers approach literacy instruction in rich, meaningful contexts to meet the needs of all their students. If scientific reading instruction is allowed to dominate their classrooms, the accountability for the results of these programs will ultimately rest on the teachers, not on the politicians who devised and mandated such programs. But more devastatingly, the real victims will be the children and their families, the very individuals the government seeks to help. Coles' book may fuel the required thrust for what needs to be explicitly opposed; it may provide the trajectory for teachers to become informed, to ask questions, and to challenge what governments are doing to young children supposedly under the auspices of science. As Routman (2000) states, "until we are fully informed and professional . . . we will continue to be swept up in program mania, with business and 'scientific research' sectors dictating what and how we should teach" (p. 9).

Reading the Naked Truth may not be considered the quintessential piece to end the reading wars; however, it can claim its place as a critical piece in understanding the politics behind it.

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Mark Sadoski. (2004). *Conceptual Foundations of Teaching Reading* . New York & London, UK: The Guilford Press. 156 pages. ISBN: 1-59385-037-9 (hardcover); 1-59385-036-0 (paperback).

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Sadoski names his audience for *Conceptual Foundations of Teaching Reading* as preservice and in-service teachers, educational administration students, and "even the involved parent or policy maker." Some readers may find this book a useful resource. The main strength of Sadoski's book lies in his ability to synthesize and digest a range of reading research in a thoughtful and accessible manner. In particular, his discussion of the role of comprehension in reading and the philosophical roots of various reading pedagogies is both highly readable and informative. Sadoski argues articulately for the central importance of comprehension to reading competency and does a fine job of outlining some of the philosophical differences between reading pedagogies that emphasize "instruction" versus those that emphasize "education."

Sadoski is also very skilful at presenting some of the historical antecedents of current reading pedagogies. However, ultimately Sadoski's brief focus on history serves to highlight the most serious

limitations of this book. *Conceptual Foundations of Teaching Reading* suffers from a lack of attention to how larger historical forces have influenced reading pedagogies. Sadoski's version of history reads like a lineage. He traces the evolution of particular pedagogical practices without ever giving the reader a sense of why certain practices or theories may have fallen in or out of vogue. For example, in noting a marked interest in comprehension in the late 1800s and early 1900s, Sadoski remarks that this interest happened to coincide with a more widespread interest in "quality" literature (p. 27). Sadoski then returns to his description of changing reading pedagogies and practices, leaving the reader to wonder what was meant by "quality" literature, why it was seen to be important to develop students' taste in reading, and whether, as has been suggested by Doyle (1989) amongst others, there were any connections between this burgeoning interest in literature and the nation building/colonial projects of the time. Similarly, in reflecting on why the teaching of reading might currently be a contested area of education, Sadoski offers that perhaps it is because "we value our children so much" and because "ensuring children the opportunities that the ability to read affords is a value deeply engrained in our society"(p.1-2). At no point does Sadoski connect the idea that moving from an industrial, resource-based economy to a post-industrial, knowledge-based economy might have a significant impact on how a society thinks about reading and the teaching of reading.

To his credit, at times Sadoski does appear to acknowledge the role that larger social and political forces might have on reading pedagogy. For example, he notes that basal readers will likely continue to be popular with teachers because there is "state funding" for these materials (p. 120). Similarly, he notes that time for extensive reading may not be valued in some shools as the result of pressures around high stakes testing (p. 130). In these examples, Sadoski recognizes that reading pedagogies and practices are embedded in larger political contexts. However, he also appears to depict these larger political forces as if they were outside of human control. That there is state funding for some materials but not for others, that some schools may not be able to afford children's literature, or may not allocate any time to reading "for interest" or to reading aloud because they are so concerned with high

stakes tests appear as if they were natural rather than social phenomena. In depicting the current world of reading pedagogy in this way, Sadoski is making a remarkably political statement, although he would likely deny this accusation. By presenting the world of reading education without attention to why it has developed the way it has, Sadoski in effect naturalizes this state of affairs. In doing so, he obscures how reading pedagogy came to be this way or how we might change it. It also bears mentioning that although this book is rooted in the American context, Sadoski makes no mention whatsoever of the current, highly controversial *No Child Left Behind* policy. Although Sadoski is clear that this book began in 1982 as part of his lecture notes, current readers will likely wonder why he seems so quiet about developments in pedagogy, practices, or research in the last five to ten years.

Perhaps most disturbing is Sadoski's depiction of literacy itself. Although Sadoski never provides a definition of literacy or illiteracy, he does make some fairly dramatic statements about what literacy offers. As a teacher and as a researcher concerned with children's literacy, I would generally agree that reading does open particular opportunities for my students. As a reader, I believe that learning to read has had positive effects on my life. However, Sadoski's claim for reading is far wider in its reach and has some troubling implications. At various points, Sadoski suggests that reading is somehow an essential part of being human. For example, he suggests that people who are aliterate, who do not engage with reading although they can read, may somehow be hindered in their personal development. Similarly, Sadoski suggests that reading "is critical to experiencing the life of the mind and the life of the heart in all their richness; to grow in understanding, feeling and wisdom; to truly become all that we have a right to become. Reading teachers are truly important people" (p. 55). Although I would love to think that my work as a reading teacher has been important, the idea that those who read are somehow more human, feel more deeply, or are wiser than those who do not seems to be an arbitrary, elitist and ethnocentric assumption. These kinds of statements mar the engaging aspects of *Conceptual Foundations of Teaching Reading* and will likely prevent many readers from recommending this text as a resource.

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Mary J. Schleppegrell. (2004). *The Language of Schooling: A Functional Linguistics Perspective.* Mahwah: New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum. 190 pages. ISBN: 0-8058-4676-X (hardcover).

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If asked to comment on the structure of the expository essay, most high school English teachers would point out its macrostructure, its basic narrative parts, and thesis-evidence structure, but not its microstructure, its particular set of linguistic moves that distinguish it from other forms of writing. In her book, Mary J. Schleppegrell shows how the expository essay and other forms of advanced school writing realize themselves through particular sets of language choices. She argues that an "active pedagogy" that makes visible the grammatical choices that construe advanced school texts will enhance students' command of those texts. Her argument, engaging but too narrowly based on textual evidence, fails to address the specific challenges of using systemic functional linguistics as both an instructional discourse and pedagogical tool.

The contexts of home and school, Schleppegrell writes, make different demands on language users. Home language, typically verbal, informal, and interactive, has "features that help create a context of everyday meanings, familiarity, and negotiation" (p. 74). In contrast, school language use is more formal and specialized, its value determined by the effectiveness of its display of ideas and knowledge, particularly through writing. School literacies become increasingly specialized as students pass through secondary school where students encounter what Schleppegrell calls advanced literacies (English, scientific, and historical

text) that display knowledge authoritatively in highly structured contexts.

Schleppegrell uses systemic functional linguistics as a conceptual framework to demonstrate how language choices produce advanced school literacies. The expository essay has grammatical features that allow it to display subject-specific knowledge authoritatively in an argument-based structure. Among its features are verb-linked nominal structures that perform generalizations, clause-combining strategies that condense information, and modality that is highly controlled. Schleppegrell's independent analysis of 140 essays submitted as part of a university writing placement program showed that adjudicators ranked essays according to students' realization of grammatical features.

In its grammatical construction, the successful expository essay performs not only the local function of arguing a particular thesis but also the global function of producing the epistemology of its discipline, literary criticism. Science and history writing likewise perform their disciplinary epistemologies using specific grammatical resources. Science writing displays knowledge through a classification structure, realizing its *register* (its message, authoritativeness, and textual structure) through expanded nominal groups with multiple modifiers (e.g., The three temperatures [of acetone] [that were investigated] . . .), and objective modality (e.g., It is obvious that these results . . .), all while building theory clause by clause sequentially. History writing, on the other hand, realizes its register through action and thinking verbs that construct description and point of view, evaluative lexis (e.g., slaughtered versus killed), and temporal conjunctive links (i.e., first, second, third). Schleppegrell's detailed analysis leads her to conclude that students' mastery of disciplinary discourse depends on their mastery of grammatical features.

Schleppegrell's aim in *The Language of Schooling* is to persuade readers of the power and value of systemic functional linguistics as an educational metalanguage. As an educational research tool, systemic functional linguistics can enrich teachers' and students' understanding of key language-based educational issues, elucidating, for example, "the linguistic demands that new educational standards and examinations present at different levels and in different subject areas" (p. 164). As a

pedagogical tool, it offers teachers a means of focusing explicitly on language and how language construes knowledge, thus empowering them to "change the success patterns of students who currently do not succeed" (p. 4). Pedagogical applications of this new educational metalanguage, Schleppegrell argues, can democratize schools, because "in the absence of an explicit focus on language, students from certain social class backgrounds continue to be . . . disadvantaged in learning, assessment, and promotion, perpetuating the obvious inequalities that exist today" (p. 3).

This packaging of systemic functional linguistics as a democratic discourse, a strategy Schleppegrell uses straight off to engage readers, ironically undermines itself. Systemic functional linguistics is fundamentally a linguistic discourse, a language "grammar" (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) with specialized "grammatical" categories that frame language in particular epistemological ways. Schleppegrell skirts this understanding, which has the unfortunate effect of setting up a false expectation of what her "functional perspective" as an educational project is, thus alienating those same readers she strives to engage. Teacher educators and classroom teachers, her identified readers, will not have the linguistic wherewithal to manage the load of "functional" concepts in Chapters 3 to 5; readers need to be prepared, to be taught the language of the metalanguage, to follow and appreciate Schleppegrell's analyses and in the end buy her thesis.

Nor will these same readers buy an instructional approach that is inadequately supported by educational research. Schleppegrell argues for a language-based pedagogy almost exclusively on the basis of textual data. She provides no review of writing pedagogy research and cites only one educational study (Rothery, 1996) to support her stance

Selling systemic functional linguistics to a North American mainstream educational market will be challenging. Not intimidated by the challenge, Mary J. Schleppegrell goes straight to classroom practitioners with a functional perspective that she believes can make students more capable language users and schools more equitable places to learn. But an effective marketing plan for systemic functional linguistics will have to be more than an appeal for social justice. It will have to speak directly to the metalanguage itself and its accessibility to

teachers and teacher educators as an instructional language and raise its argument for a language-based pedagogy using this metalanguage from a body of specifically related educational research.

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Bonnie Norton & Kelleen Toohey (Eds). (2004). *Critical Pedagogies and Language Learning*. New York & London, UK: Cambridge University Press. 262 pages. ISBN: 0521-8202-3 (hardback); 0-521-53522-0 (paperback)

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Part of the Cambridge Applied Linguistic Series, this book is a compilation of articles from a number of internationally known, second language teaching and learning researchers. Norton and Toohey carefully delineate the purpose of the book in their introduction and suggest that all of those whose work appears "…are interested in investigating the ways that social relationships are lived out in language and how issues of power ... are centrally important in developing critical language pedagogies."

Section one, reconceptualizing second language education, begins with Allan Luke discussing what constitutes critical in language learning and teaching, then goes on to Kubota's invitation to re-think multiculturalism, and Pavlenko's outline of how certain discursive practices could lead to a re-inscription of systemic inequality. Finally

Shaohamy looks at assessment practices and highlights ways in which democratic practices might infuse such practices in classrooms.

In the challenging identities section, Stein argues for multimodal pedagogies while Canagarajah takes up the issue of maintaining one's vernacular community while at the same time learning to cope in a second language. In particular his notion of "linguistic safe houses" is an interesting one for language educators. Many who have taught second language classes will likely recognize that such safe houses have existed within the classroom context. Starfield's focus on the academy as a second language context may seem unusual but her construction of the discourse surrounding the doctoral dissertation writing process will likely resonate with many students going through the process of socialization into the academy. Starfield's selection contrasts well with that of Morgan who discusses language teaching in a community-based program for Chinese second language learners in Toronto. The articles in this section range from those concerned with elementary school through to the university and the community.

The critical practices and teacher education sections are complementary. The first considers how critical language practices can be implemented with students, and ranges from notions of comic book culture in the classroom to a consideration of qualitative research and task-based learning. What constitutes effective critical language pedagogy is perhaps taken up more successfully in the final section where the authors generally write about research practices that can and do inform teacher education. These sections range from feminist approaches (Lin) to action research (Toohey and Waterstone) to performed ethnography (Goldstein) and finally the notion of a TESOL praxicum (Pennycook). Pennycook's clear sense of narrative construction means that the theory carefully woven into the selection is both accessible and memorable and provides a delightful image of teaching and learning in a second language context.

Like most compilations this one suffers from the uneven nature of the articles. Some articles seem to be retreads of previously published work that, only if not encountered before, offer something of substance. However, for the most part the editors have juxtaposed stronger and weaker selections so that the field is well covered. It is important to read

the introduction to the text to decide what sections and selections are worth a second or third glance. Norton and Toohey provide a solid framework and rationale for the sections of the text, then highlight the themes that cross a number of selections.

Reviewing Three Specific Chapters

In this next section of the review I take up issues raised by three specific selections, two of which are particularly strong and a third which seems a replay of some notions that are more traditional yet presented as new insights.

The first section is the strongest one in the book, in part because the authors reflect a range of perspectives on critical language pedagogy. In particular Kubota's discussion of critical multiculturalism provides some excellent points of reference to someone new to the field. By highlighting how multiculturalism is complex and at times paradoxical, Kubota enables the reader to examine and reflect upon previously held positions. Arguing that essentialism should be avoided, she takes the position that identity formation, like the construction of self and other, is discursively constructed and needs to be interrogated through a critical lens. This piece, rather than that by Allan Luke, perhaps better frames the first section of the text and provides some key issues to reflect upon while reading the remaining articles.

In the final section, Toohey and Waterstone's depiction of an action research group raises similar issues of complexity and paradox. They conclude that, although teachers and researchers in second language contexts try to maintain practices that are democratic, there is inevitably a power imbalance. Certain forms of knowledge are privileged over others and the researcher who controls the final product has more power than the practitioner. What is hinted at in the article is the notion of vigilant subjectivity, a concept that can perhaps cause the self-reflective researcher and classroom teacher to think about the ways in which language, actions, and relationships can have an impact on the Other.

Stein's article presents six assumptions that inform the multimodal pedagogies. These assumptions include pedagogy as a semiotic activity; meaning making as bodily, multimodal, interested action, and transformative; and finally the notion that language is limited.

Although Stein makes a good case for including non-linguistic activities as a way to assist learners make meaning, her assumptions and the examples used to illustrate the assumptions leave me wondering why practices and notions that are so much a part of any good language program seem so novel to the author. It is unfortunate that multimodal pedagogies and assessment practices received only limited attention because discussion of how such pedagogy can be evaluated in an increasingly political assessment climate is needed.

In short this text is a worthwhile addition to the library of anyone interested in second language teaching and learning. There are several gems in the mix, especially for those interested in critical literacy practices.

Fenice B. Boyd, Cynthia H. Brock, and Mary S. Rozendal. (2004). (Eds). *Multicultural and Multilingual Literacy and Language: Contexts and Practices*. New York and London, UK: Guilford Press. 338 pages. ISBN: 1-57230-962-8 (hardcover) 1-57230-961-X (paperback).

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As the title of this volume suggests, it is an ambitious book. Creating classrooms and schools that are inclusive of learners from diverse backgrounds and language contexts could very well be the greatest educational challenge we face in this century. This volume brings together voices of teachers, teacher-educators, and community members, mostly from the U.S.A., who have struggled in various ways to meet the needs of learners from a variety of language and cultural backgrounds. As Lisa Delpit remarks in the preface, we cannot meet this challenge by teaching them all in the same way. What is clear from reading the many chapters is that we will not meet the broad range of student needs without developing rich, informed, and flexible understandings of the many ways of learning and knowing among the children in our schools. And we will need to do this while making sense of and talking back to

the many discursive forces that strive to limit rather than expand the repertoire of teaching practices related to language and literacy.

In the introduction, the editors get right to the point when they deem the lack of acknowledgment of diversity in our classrooms as a form of injustice; and they place much of the responsibility squarely on teachers to re-conceptualize schools to address issue of linguistic and cultural diversity. Socio-cultural theory is the key perspective suggested by many of the authors, particularly the work of Lev Vygotsky that emphasizes the social nature of learning and the role of language in mediating that learning. As the editors suggest,"these tenets of socio-cultural theory have profound implications for facilitating students' literacy learning in multilingual and multicultural classrooms" (p. 5)

The book is divided into four major sections: Language, Texts and Contexts; Teacher Ideologies and Motivation for Change; Student Voices on Issues of Literacy Learning and Diversity; and Out-of-Classroom Influences on Literacy Learning. In section one, Cynthia Brock, Laura Park, and Dorothy Moore explore the ideological underpinnings of language variation and the assumptions teachers make about their students. They illustrate their point with a "thought experiment" in which they invite readers to make judgments about the speakers in the novel *Beloved* by Toni Morrison and describe what those might be. This is perhaps the most overtly political chapter in the book, teasing out the implications of unexamined assumptions and a lack of understanding of our own cultural positions. Only a few other contributors invoke the work of Foucault, Macedo, Gee, or other critical theorists. The other two chapters in this section focus more on particular kinds of materials and approaches that might support English Language Learners (ELLs).

Section two points to the role of teachers in reducing alienation and failure in their classrooms. In chapters by Debbie Diller, Elavie Ndura, and Mary McVee, their own or other teachers' journeys are chronicled as they develop curricula that include social justice and global perspectives, whether this means employing culturally relevant teaching approaches, using rich language practices that do not assume difference to be deficits, or encouraging students to question their own cultural biases. I lingered after reading this section. In my own work I have struggled to prepare teachers for diversity, and I know how precious few take this journey

toward cultural awareness, much less re-conceptualize their language practices. Yet, in these times, there is a call for teachers who embody knowledge and skills that "span cultures, geographies and sites of learning" (Luke, 2004).

In section three, we are introduced to the ways students take up classroom practices, respond to culturally relevant materials, and cope with language differences. A chapter by Laura Klenk convincingly argues for rich experimentation with language use with second language learners. Recounting her work with one young Puerto Rican kindergartener, she describes how “little Carmen” re-enacting stories in her own words allowed her to begin to take control over her language. This chapter echoes earlier chapters that emphasize the importance of rich language practices in classrooms, including discussion, play, drama, and other multi-modal forms of expression. We are reminded of the tradition of work in language and literacy that focuses on play (e.g. Anne Dyson), drama (e.g. Cecily O'Neill and Dorothy Heathcote), semiotics (Jerome Harste), and the newer work in multi-modal literacies (Gunther Kress and others) that is so promising in terms of re-thinking language and literacy practices to support the diversity of language, culture, and learning styles in our classrooms.

The last section focuses on out-of-classroom influences on literacy, including the familiar story of the pressures of accountability, particularly in the U.S.A., but not unheard of here in Canada, the importance of creating strong learning communities in school districts to support strong and balanced literacy practices, and the powerful influences and approaches found in families and community institutions in re-thinking practices in schools. Included here is an insightful study by Guofang Li of one young Chinese-Canadian boy's home instruction in literacy that drew on traditional Chinese approaches to teaching, and a call to become more aware of home literacy practices so that educators might lessen the tensions between home and school for young immigrant children.

In the concluding chapter, Cynthia Brock calls for cross talk among various educational stakeholders. I found my own words cited in this conclusion in regard to the myriad, often competing, discourses that swirl around teachers, children, and schooling (Rogers, 2000). In that

same article I also cited Lisa Delpit, and so I return to her argument that we must begin by attempting to understand other people's realities (Delpit, 1995) if we are to begin to imagine more inclusive and critical teaching pedagogies. This volume certainly contributes to that goal. Although perhaps overly ambitious with chapters that are sometimes more disparate than complementary, there is much to think about and learn from individual experiences and stories contained here.

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Lesley M. Morrow. (2003). *Organizing and Managing the Language Arts Block: A Professional Development Guide.* New York & London, UK: The Guilford Press. 348 pages. ISBN: 1-57230-794-3

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Morrow's book is aptly titled. Written with both preservice and in-service teachers in mind, *Organizing and Managing the Language Arts Block* provides a professional manual to guide either student teachers in a methods course or practising teachers in a study group. The author states her purpose clearly: "to describe the organization of the language arts block (LAB) through various aspects of the classroom environment and through careful selection of structures and strategies for learning" (p. 2). The author makes the point that, although the content of strategies for instruction is frequently emphasized, the process is often overlooked. Yet, for early literacy instruction to be effective, teachers need to pay attention to the environmental and other organizational factors. Morrow provides information about strategies for teaching language arts as well as recommendations for scheduling, making transitions, and organizing

language arts instruction in classrooms in general. All components of organizing the language arts block have been covered: the physical environment, organizing instruction to meet individual needs, skill development, types of reading/writing experiences, assessment for group placement, the set up and operation of learning centers, linking language arts to content areas.

Morrow begins chapter one with a brief summary of the research into exemplary practices in early literacy, identifying common characteristics: multiple teaching strategies are used to meet individual needs, skills are taught through modeling strategies, opportunities are provided for children to practise new skills, varied organizational structures are utilized, and so forth. She continues with a general overview as to classroom organization and the process of literacy instruction. This discussion addresses these issues for kindergarten through fourth grade, focusing on the physical environment and the structure of the LAB, with an emphasis on independent work in centres, and on small-group instruction to meet individual needs. The remainder of the book provides case studies of exemplary practice by teachers in kindergarten through grade four, each followed by a chapter highlighting a series of activities and lesson plans to assist the reader in carrying out a LAB. These accompanying chapters follow a similar format: getting started, things to do when the students arrive, morning meeting, independent work at centers, guided reading, and writing workshop.

The main strength of the book is that it has been carefully written to be a useful tool for practising and prospective teachers. The book serves this purpose well. Designed to be used for preservice and in-service staff development, Morrow provides an overview for six meetings that could be used either in a teacher-education course or a teacher study group. She suggests that student teachers should use the book concurrent with observing/teaching in an elementary classroom, while practising teachers should meet regularly to discuss goals and progress. She has included ways to continue staff development, with the reminder that, to ensure successful reading instruction, ongoing professional development is necessary.

As an instructor of language and literacy methods courses for preservice elementary teachers, I see the value in this book. I agree with the author that teachers seem to learn strategies easily, but find organizing the strategies into a well-choreographed school day more challenging. Organizing and managing the language arts block is exactly what preservice and beginning teachers often struggle with as they begin their long practicum or tackle their first teaching position. Morrow's book would provide prospective (and practising) teachers considerable guidance as to how to apply in the classroom what they have learned about children's language and literacy learning. Daily schedules are provided as models. That the case studies and plans have been written in collaboration with practising teachers lends the book credibility for the practitioner.

Morrow's writing style is clear and reader-friendly. She has explained in detail topics she mentions, providing enough information so that the suggestions can be put into practice promptly. Readers can pick and choose as to their need. I particularly appreciated how the case studies utilize children's literature in reading and writing activities across the curriculum. The book is complete with a variety of resources for photocopying (charts, activity sheets/cards, evaluation forms, correspondence to parents). In addition, the appendices offer supplementary materials ready to use: icons for a centre/activity chart (for example, literacy, math, rhyming or computer centre), word study games (for example, alphabet puzzle or word wheels), assessment forms (for example, emergent reading behaviours, phoneme segmentation, or guided story retelling).

Very strong on the 'how to,' I found Morrow's book lacking as to the 'why.' Perhaps, having recently completed my doctoral studies, I have come to expect readings of a more theoretical nature. I realize the book was written as a professional manual; however, I would have preferred a stronger theoretical basis. Although Morrow has made some reference to appropriate scholarly literature, the bibliography for professional literature is less than two pages in length. Although she has provided research findings for the philosophical basis of classroom design, I suggest, the book would have been strengthened with the inclusion of further research findings to provide the reader with more of the rationale

as to why she has recommended certain literacy practices, and not others.

Would I use *Organizing and Managing the Language Arts Block* in my courses? Although I would refer to it as a supplementary resource and recommend it to student teachers as well as practising teachers, I would not choose it as a course text for at least two reasons. First, it is not Canadian (there would have to be an extremely compelling reason for me to choose a non-Canadian text). Second, Morrow's book does not provoke critical thought, nor does it problematize teaching practice. She has not incorporated issues of cultural and linguistic diversity, certainly a shortcoming in a current language and literacy text. She does not adequately recognize the complexity of teaching. Rather, she presents the complex process of teaching in a recipe format. I find that this is exactly what many of my student teachers want. Given the immense challenges of teaching, this is understandable. And although the practical aspects of teaching are important, my job is to see that they get more than the 'how-to's.' Although there is much to recommend Morrow's book, it would not serve me well in this particular task.