Literacies of Civic Engagement: Negotiating Digital, Political and Linguistic Tensions

CASEY BURKHOLDER
McGill University

DIANE WATT
University of Ottawa

Introducing the Special Issue

Language and literacy practices are instruments of power and are inherently political. What languages we speak (and where we speak them), how we use literacy, and who we speak to, are issues that are intimately entwined with questions of belonging, identity, status, and citizenship. In the light of current events in Canada, and around the world, negotiating the language of belonging and citizenship are as contested as ever. What is more, ongoing changes in the ways that people make and consume texts remind us of the need to engage with such questions frequently and thoughtfully. Of course literacy refers to much more than just reading written texts. In her keynote address on *Literacy and Civic Engagement*, Jacqueline Jones Royster quoted Sojourner Truth who responded to a literacy prerequisite for voting rights with the telling, "You know, children, I don't read such small stuff as letters, I read men and nations" (as quoted in Royster, 2007, p. 4). Language, literacy, power, men, and nations are all being taken up in the contributions in this special issue.

Thinking about these issues in the wake of the 2016 US presidential election, multiple examples of the ways in which language and literacy practices across texts and spheres hold important—and sometimes contradictory—meanings have arisen. Take the example of the multiple meanings given to terms like "fake news". Initially, the term "fake news" was used by mainstream media sources to describe content farms that hosted unsourced, unverifiable and fictitious news stories intended to elicit responses and be shared digitally (Marchi, 2012). Later, the term was used by US President Trump in particular, largely on Twitter, to refer to critical media coverage of his presidency, campaign, and the events leading up to it. Looking at the evolution of the term "fake news" and the power this term has been given reminds us that what we communicate, whom we communicate with, and how we are doing this communicating are inherently political.

The spaces where we communicate from and our link to these places are also political—both in the spaces we inhabit and in the digital realm. For example, we are white settlers interested in issues of language, belonging, and civic engagement. I am writing this editorial from unceded Wolastoqiyik and Mi'kmaq territory—Fredericton, New Brunswick—and Diane writes from traditional unceded Algonquin territory in Ottawa, Ontario. What does it mean to write about issues of language, literacy and civic engagement from unceded lands? How might we think about unsettling these issues? The University of New Brunswick's Elder-in-Residence Imelda Perley, uses digital spaces, such as Twitter to share teachings of the Wolastoq language. On June 5, 2017, for example, Elder Perley tweeted, "Psiw Ntulnapemok-(pss-eow-ndole-nah-beh-mg) all my relations. A term used to honour all of creation, animal, earth, water, winged & tree clans." Using

digital spaces—such as Twitter—to share teachings, ways of knowing, and thinking about language, literacy, power and place reveals the ways in which sharing language and literacy practices on social media are distinct acts of civic engagement.

Building from the 2016 Language and Literacy Researchers of Canada pre-conference in Calgary, Alberta: *Literacies of Civic Engagement: Negotiating Digital, Political, and Linguistic Tensions*, this special issue of *Language & Literacy* includes new and established language and literacy scholars writing about the intersections between literacies, civic engagement, and communicating across differences, both face-to-face as well as in the digital realm. Together, the authors in the special issue have offered multiple reflections on language, literacies, and civic engagement building from the "exquisite conversations" held at the 2016 Language and Literacy Researchers of Canada pre-conference.

Overview of the Contributions

The first article in the special issue is Heather Lotherington's (York University), "Elementary School Language and Literacy Education for Civic Engagement: An Evolving Playbook for Post-modern Times." Lotherington's piece explores her longitudinal project at Joyce Public School in Toronto (2002-2012), and discusses how language and literacies are constituted, performed and taught within elementary classroom spaces. Lotherington ruminates on the place of language within elementary school projects to foster participatory civic engagement within the classroom.

The second contribution, "The Techno-literacy Practices of Young Children from Diverse Backgrounds" comes from Nicola Friedrich (OISE / University of Toronto), Laura Teichert (University of British Columbia) and Zipporah Devadas (British Columbia School District 35). Through two ethnographic case studies, the article describes the home techno-literacy practices of children from diverse economic and cultural backgrounds.

The third piece, "Using a Graphic Novel Project to Engage Indigenous Youth in Critical Literacies" comes from Alexis Brown (University of Victoria) and Deborah Begoray (University of Victoria). The article describes a graphic novel making project with Indigenous youth at two alternative high schools in British Columbia and explores four principles of critical literacy with these youth: "understanding power", "collaboration using multiple perspectives", "authentic and multimodal learning", and "enacting social change and civic engagement".

In the fourth contribution in the issue, ""Before Occupy Central, I Wasn't Concerned": Examining Participatory Visual Research for Social Change with Hong Kong-based Filipina Youth" comes from Casey Burkholder (McGill University). Describing a participatory visual research project using cellphilms (cellphone + filmmaking) and collaborative writing with two of her Filipina-Hong Kong participants, Burkholder describes the way that Hong Kong's Occupy Movement encouraged Filipina young women's sense of belonging and civic engagement in the territory.

Finally, Christine Kampen Robinson's (University of Waterloo), "Speaking Menonnite at School: A Narrative Analysis of the Role of Language in Immigrant Educational Experiences" explores the perspective of identity as it is constructed by language through an ethnographic project with Mennonite mothers who have emigrated from Mexico to Canada. This research looks at the worlds of Low German-speaking Mennonite women and the ways in which they speak.

Acknowledgements

This Special Issue would not have been possible without the assistance of a number of key people who have helped along the way: Diane Watt (University of Ottawa) who co-edited the Special Issue, Maureen Kendrick (University of British Columbia), the *Language and Literacy Researchers of Canada* executive team (with special thanks to Lyndsay Moffatt, University of Prince Edward Island) and Diane Collier (Brock University), and the 2016 Language and Literacy Researchers of Canada pre-Conference participants.

References

Marchi, R. (2012). With Facebook, blogs, and fake news, teens reject journalistic "objectivity". *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, *36*(3), 246-262.

Perley, I. [askomiw150]. (2017, Jun 05). Psiw Ntulnapemok-(pss-eow-ndole-nah-beh-mg) all my relations. A term used to honour all of creation,animal, earth,water, winged & tree clans [Tweet]. Retrieved from https://twitter.com/askomiw150/status/871852687003930625

Royster, J. (2007, September). *Literacy and civic engagement*. Keynote address presented at the Civil rights symposium: An interdepartmental and interdisciplinary conversation on civil rights reform, Albuquerque, NM. Retrieved from https://www.unm.edu/~wac/old_site/CurriculumResources/ROYSTER--Keynote%20Address--2007.pdf.

Elementary School Language and Literacy Education for Civic Engagement: An Evolving Playbook for Postmodern Times

HEATHER LOTHERINGTON
York University

Abstract

This paper argues for the need to postmodernize literacy education for civic engagement in an emerging new world order where humans are globally-connected in an invisible digital dimension, yet physically dispersed in greater degrees of complexity. The paper summarizes a university-school collaborative learning community's evolving playbook on experimental multimodal and plurilingual language and literacy education, and illustrates project-based learning, inclusion of children's linguistic and cultural knowledge in classroom learning, immersive ludic activities, collaborative problem-solving, and agentive participation in an elementary school classroom project.

Keywords

elementary literacy, ludic learning, multimodality, pluralingualism, problem-based learning, superdiversity

The Shifting Literacy Landscape in Superdiverse Classrooms

The literacy ecosphere has branched into dramatically new territory over the past few decades, affecting both arenas for civic engagement and directions for language and literacy learning. Globalization, "marked by the tension between global economic and technological interdependence and social interconnectedness, on the one hand, and cultural fragmentation and political division, on the other" (Martinelli, 2003, p. 293), has remapped the terrain of social belonging in both physical geography and social participation in online communities.

Historic constructions of social belonging have expanded with increasing global population flows, through networked digital participation, and in the establishment of supra-national politico-economic zones, such as the European Union. Education systems, though, "are principally the property of states" (Lo Bianco, 2008, p. 113). Teachers are faced with nationally-focused curricular materials on social and political belonging with classes of superdiverse learners representing the globe who actively participate in social media spheres.

National belonging accruing to history, which informs much educational goal-setting, has been remade in Canada through multiculturalism, which, since it was made official policy in 1971 (revised in 1988), has promoted an increasingly complex migratory population that is aptly described by Vertovec's (2007) term: *superdiversity*. Haque (2012) traces complexities in Canadian national belonging in terms of "how a national formulation of 'multiculturalism within a bilingual framework' emerged to install a racial order of difference and belonging through language in the ongoing project of white settler nation-building" (pp. 4-5). This is an important trajectory: the curricular spaces for language and literacy learning in elementary education in Ontario are limited to English and French, following the Official Languages Act[1], which enshrined the

colonial languages of the nation. The population of children attending school, however, mirrors the Canadian Multiculturalism Act[2]. Nonetheless, the languages spoken by post 1970s non-English and non-French-speaking in-migrating populations are allotted only continuing education spaces in elementary education—external to the regular school day in all but a very few cases. Spaces allotted to Indigenous languages are similarly highly restricted, though contexts and constraints are different.

Public schools in the greater Toronto area (GTA) welcome a remix of children who are globally-connected through family migration histories. Children enter school classrooms, in person and online, and merge as learners with very different life histories. Whether students have come to the nation or to a particular city with parents or family members who are sojourners, immigrants, opportunists, idealists, fugitives, refugees, entrepreneurs or transplants, they need to acquire articulate, literate, and agentive expression. It is largely up to teachers to develop each learner's individual knowledge and expressive capabilities while meeting curricular language and literacy expectations.

Canada's Forked Tongue: Language, Identity and Social Belonging

Two nation-shaping statutes in a period of intense nation-building—the late 1960s and early 1970s—are at the root of the educational conundrum under discussion: teaching bilingual nationhood to a superdiverse population. The *Official Languages Act* (1969/ 1988/ 2005), and the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* (1971/ 1988) were in conflict from the get-go: notions of culture tended to the simplistic, assuming that splitting language from culture was unproblematic, that cultures were uniform and uncomplicated, and that people marry within a single, simple, identifiable culture. Equally specious is the suggestive undercurrent that multilingualism might be nation-threatening. Humans have migrated from one area to another since the species came into existence. In Canada, everyone who is not Indigenous has a migration story, though it may have taken place in past generations.

Spaces for cultural maintenance within the framework of Canadian multiculturalism have been treated superficially, relegated to safe production in the home away from the economic necessities of the workplace and the social mandate of the classroom, performed in costume as historic theatre, and reified in the marketable consumables of the global gastronomic landscape. The English-French mandate of provincial education encourages, and in some cases, enforces, dropping learners' home languages at the door to the school. Since the late 1970s, continuing education has offered what was initially called *heritage language education*—and later, with dwindling funding, changed to *international language education* (Cummins, 1992). These courses are typically run after school and on the weekend. Teachers in continuing education do not require the same qualifications as classroom teachers, though some teachers work both as classroom teachers and in after school programs. Furthermore, continuing education does not provide teachers with the school facilities available to regular classroom teachers, such as use of the photocopier, even if classes are held in a public school. Therefore, after school heritage language teachers lack the technical support available to regular classroom teachers to make a spontaneous photocopy, use the computer lab, library, class set of laptops or books, or get assistance with a faulty projector.

The cultural realities of school children have become manifestly complex. Many children in any given classroom have come to Canada as global travelers. They are then repackaged linguistically for national identity requirements. But in this global era, might not these children who have come to Canada as global citizens, also plan to work or study in the global sphere? This paper argues that the languages children import into the country (and classroom) constitute an asset in our global era, not a problem, and they should be creatively incorporated in classroom multimodal literacy practices.

Multidimensional Citizenship

Birth (normally) confers national citizenship (though there are legal exceptions). Over the past half-century, facilitated by rapidly developing technologies, and spurred by national policies of multiculturalism, attention on the just treatment of refugees and asylum seekers, and increasing global opportunities for work, we have a world that is awash in migrating populations. Canada is an active recipient of both in-migrating populations and refugees. Our national population is socially and culturally complex.

As a nation, Canada is relatively fixed in political structures, which are changeable but slow-moving. However, Canada is in a state of perpetual social and cultural becoming through increasingly rapid population shift, which is particularly apparent in urban areas. Global population flows have remixed the world (Pieterse, 2008), complicating identity construction, and multiplying social belonging. Many Canadians, for example, are also citizens of other nations.

Adding a permeating layer of complexity is the human reality in which we find ourselves enmeshed on a daily basis. Life is not 3D but 4D; the addition of the mobile-accessed Internet in everyday communications changes how we understand and use the dimension of *time*, creating a sense of personal reality that Scott (2015, p. 8) terms *everywhereness*. We are instantly connected across time zones and countries. Increasingly, our cognition and social lives are distributed and shared over a complex web of digital connections, involving us as participants in a new kind of digital citizenship. This 4D digital citizenship activates a global civic arena, enabling the wildfire spread of, support for, and consequential reaction to local political activity. This political activity ranges from the political grand slam, e.g., the Arab Spring of 2010 in which political uprising against entrenched dictators cascaded across four countries in the Arab world, mobilized by the collaborative potential of social media (Howard & Hussain, 2013), to the mean-spirited mob mentality manifested in cyberbullying, for example, at the heart of the tragic suicides of young Canadian women, Rehtaeh Parsons, and Amanda Todd.

People belong on different levels simultaneously as citizens of nations, members of social communities, and participants in a digitally-connected global sphere. Virtual spaces extend and hybridize the individual's linguistic, cultural, and social identities, relegating national identity a component in the individual learner's story.

Postmodern Civic Engagement

What does civic engagement look like in the second decade of the 21st century? National rights and responsibilities are still paramount in Canada. These rights are not universal around the world despite the existence of global political overseers, such as the United Nations, and the economically homogenizing effects of supra-national trading

blocks, e.g., NAFTA, and the Euro Zone. In Canada, adults elect a national leader by democratic vote in the parliamentary system of government, and the footwork must be set to understand this structure in school. However, if civic engagement is to be thought of as social participation and community building (rather than memorizing and participating in the existing political system), it must also include participatory dimensions not considered in 20th century modern education paradigms, notably those mobilized through social media accessed on mobile devices.

In Canada's democratic framework, citizens have obligations and derive rights, though rights are not always equal. In the case being argued, viz., public education, this inequality manifests in educational language rights, tolerance and utility. But what happens online? Is the digital realm not an environment for human rights as well? In an era of participatory culture (Jenkins & Deuze, 2008), what civic responsibilities accrue online?

A number of recent online cyberbullying cases have involved Canadian youth in stories shared internationally: Dalhousie University dentistry students' misogynistic Facebook group—and the public backlash against it; Amanda Todd's suicide over online sexual harassment; Rehtaeh Parsons suicide over a viral gang rape video. These were digital actions of unbelievable incivility that had very real tragic, and in two cases, fatal physical consequences. These, and other such dreadful instances of cyberbullying indicate that the anti-bullying lessons of the classroom are not sufficiently permeating online forums, where access to an anonymous voice has spurred vindictive and destructive actions as well as democratic political activism.

Participatory politics, is described by Kahne, Hodgin and Eidman-Aadahl (2016, p. 2) as "interactive, peer-based acts through which individuals and groups seek to exert both voice and influence on issues of public concern." Public response to the viciously sexist Dalhousie University dental students' Facebook cyberbullying inspired substantive political action, demanding that the students responsible for the group be expelled from their dental program. The students' despicable online behaviour and the ensuing public backlash in real time and space, clearly illustrates how life online and offline are inextricably connected. Participatory politics online demands political action in real time.

Instilling Literacies of Postmodern Civic Engagement

Civic engagement is constituted on numerous levels. But if we do not reconcile the ideas of rights and responsibilities beyond generic national conceptions, we accept what Professor Harold Benjamin aptly described nearly 80 years ago as a *saber-tooth curriculum* (Peddiwell, 1939). In this hilarious spoof of pedagogy focused on the past, the elders dismiss the need to teach skills for hunting and fishing post-ice age animals in favour of learning the classic skill of slaying the long-extinct saber-tooth tiger as a kind of transcendent theoretical truism more important than contemporary survival.

How can we translate the quagmire of multiple social identities, political rights and responsibilities, and digital participation in education while keeping to curricular demands? Heller (2013, pp. 190-191) makes the point that control of legitimate language (following Bourdieu, 1977)—and by extension literate facility is a deciding factor in civic engagement and power:

> The linguistic rules of the game are important for deciding what counts as citizenship and who counts as a citizen in a number of ways, from the display of membership in the category of "legitimate speaker"; to the appropriate deployment of forms recognizable as belonging to the standardized, valued, national "language" (a systematization and institutionalization of variable forms and practices); and to the detailed pragmatics of communication in everyday life.

Social belonging, rights and responsibilities constitute one of the elements of complexity teachers are faced with in classrooms. While superdiversity (Vertovec, 2007) may be a more apt description of the residents of urban spaces, social remixing is increasingly evident in towns and cities dispersed throughout the country. Coverage of the May 2016 evacuation of residents from Fort McMurray, Alberta, which was engulfed in flames in a massive runaway forest fire, notably included recently arrived Syrian refugees. The diffusion of refugee populations in Canada thus includes remote northern communities—not just the large urban centres of the south, i.e., Toronto, Montreal, Calgary, and Vancouver. Understanding how to interact as politically responsible citizens of a superdiverse society on and offline is critical to everyone across this huge and sparsely populated country.

National Policy in Language and Literacy Education

Schools across the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) are highly linguistically heterogeneous, though not every teacher walks into a classroom of high-density cultural fusion. Literacy educators, though, walk a tightrope of policies in the classroom that is fraying badly at the seams: teaching a curricular and literate embodiment of the 1969 Official Languages Act to classrooms reflecting the 1971/1988 Multiculturalism Act. Nor are Indigenous populations recognized in mandated language choices; Indigenous languages have never permeated mainstream education. The teacher is responsible for pulling together students' actual backgrounds and the expectations of curricular study, which do not meet in the middle, linguistically speaking.

According to a recent survey of Toronto District School Board (TDSB) students and their families, children who arrive at school speaking English only at home constitute 44% of school entrants. More than a third (34%) of incoming students speak one or more languages other than English at home, and a further 22% speak English plus another language (TDSB, 2103). This means that a majority of students entering school speak another language at home.

Moreover, those speaking English plus another language at home may include people actually speaking creolized languages where English is the lexifier (such as Jamaican Patwa, and Guyanese Creolese), which may be described for statistical purposes as English. However, Creoles are not varieties of English (French, Dutch, etc.), as Canadian English or Australian English might be characterized. Creolized languages develop from hybridized Pidgin languages that are built from multiple source languages. Thus, Jamaican Patwa uses the vocabulary of the colonial English within a structure influenced by a number of African languages, creating a new language: one that has some recognizable vocabulary but a hybridized grammatical structure. Children speaking Creoles, such as Jamaican Patwa, may also need help with the English of textbooks. In this linguistic landscape, all teachers are language teachers.

Spaces in education are rigidly defined according to language, and these are politically restricted to English and French in Ontario classrooms, though there are continuing education programs for *international* (i.e., *heritage*) languages, and subject spaces for popular Indo-European languages, such as Spanish and German, in high school. *International* languages are spoken in communities in Canadian cities, not just in other countries. Indigenous languages can be studied in limited school contexts, configured, similarly, in terms of *heritage* rather than general interest, which is a lost opportunity for sharing Indigenous knowledges.

English-French bilingual immersion education programs have evolved from early revolutionary work (Lambert, Tucker & D'Anglejan, 1973) into an internationally-recognized model; French immersion is taught across the nation nowadays. But we have continued to work on the learning model oriented to language acquisition as measured on tests, and lost sight of the larger picture of who is using which language for what. Meanwhile, Indigenous languages are fighting for survival, and a plethora of world languages has tipped the balance of languages spoken in urban communities towards a polyglot reality that formal education is not taking adequate notice of or care with.

How and where do teachers begin the task of developing literacies in classrooms characterized by dense linguistic variation? Elementary teachers in the TDSB are required to nurture language and literacy learning towards standards that reflect past norms and benchmarks interwoven with historicized ideals of Canadian national identity. Literacy within this frame is (punitively) measurable by the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO). Alphabetic literacy, and national historical identity are insufficient educational goals in an era where social and economic communication continues to move relentlessly into a digital dimension of time disembodied from space that is, for the most part, unlimited by national borders. This amorphous digital playground, rife with ethical potholes, commercially ransacked spaces, and biased narratives, is, nonetheless, an inescapably fundamental canvas for contemporary communication.

The digital tools we use to communicate are evolving so quickly that no teacher or school can keep on top of the technology, the evolving discursive and textual forums and genres, and how and what to teach. Teachers are squeezed, trying to meet formal expectations that students communicate according to provincial or regional standards and in official national languages, find common ground in their classrooms of learners of mixed backgrounds and abilities, sort out which digital tools are accessible and helpful for contemporary communication, and mollify parents expecting constant and instant English for their children, while trying to experiment towards the repeated refrain that formal education should teach towards creativity and innovation, not fixed subject matter. This is a very tall order.

Teaching Multimodal Literacies at Joyce Public School

The study reported in this paper took place at Joyce Public School (JPS) in northwest Toronto from 2002-2012 (Lotherington, 2011; Lotherington & Paige, 2017). Children entering JPS literally represent the populations of the world. Approximately 2/3 of children attending the school speak a primary language other than English at home. Though some children were born in another country, most are generation 1.5 immigrants (cf: Rumbaut & Ima, 1988): children born in Canada to parents who are recent

immigrants. Though these families may have limited cultural and linguistic capital in their new national home, their children are not eligible for English as a second language (ESL) instruction because they were born in Canada. Generation 1.5 kids who enter junior kindergarten in Ontario at age 4, tend to develop credible oral skills. However, their accurate pronunciation masks wobbly grounding in academic English, putting them at risk of successful academic achievement (Harklau, 2003; Roessingh & Douglas, 2011; Schecter, 2012).

A serious concern, easily swept underneath the rug of generation 1.5 children's native-like oral skills is their fledgling knowledge of home languages, which are too easily stamped out as complexities in the acquisition of *official bilingualism*. A component of my research involvement was in supporting the use of home and community languages as useful and renewable resources, beneficial cognitively, culturally, socially, and potentially, economically, not just to the child, but to the larger community. The question was: How could this be done? Teachers cannot maintain a plurality of languages in every classroom; there are limits in how many languages can be taught in curricular spaces. However, it was my contention that multilingual inclusion could be welcomed into customized spaces meaningful in specified combinations to particular families.

JPS was not adept at working with the many languages spoken by their population when I first started research in the school in 2002. They were, however, well ahead of other schools in their intrepid learning and teaching with digital technology (Granger, Morbey, Lotherington, Owston et al., 2002). Our collaborative action research project grew in sophistication and complexity from an inquiry into how *multiliteracies* could be taught in the elementary classroom (Lotherington, 2011) to a self-governing learning community co-developing cross-curricular project-based learning for creative, collaborative and agentive learning (Lotherington, 2017; Lotherington & Jenson, 2011; Lotherington, Paige, & Holland-Spencer, 2013; Lotherington, Fisher, Jenson, & Lindo, 2016; Lotherington & Paige, 2017).

The SSHRC-funded study: *Developing a ludic approach to linguistic challenges in elementary education,* took place from 2008 to 2012[3]. The questions driving the pedagogical interventions were iterative, being constantly refined in the repetitive processes of learning through action research. Inquiries followed epistemological, pedagogical, and socio-political lines, pursuing:

1. What is literacy in the 21st century? How is literacy constituted, performed, taught?
2. How can we teach and assess literacy as contemporary social practice in a digitally-embedded, superdiverse urban context?
3. How do we change the educational machinery to accommodate rapidly changing literacy practices?

The study was conceptualized as collaborative action research; we worked as a theory-practice interface hand-in-glove as researchers, graduate students, classroom teachers, administrators, school board consultants, and community members that included a core of a dozen or so teachers, researchers and the principal, and welcomed others interested in particular annual projects. Our learning community met monthly, focused on

developing workable multimodal literacies pedagogies for superdiverse classes using digital affordances for agentive and deep learning engagement.

How to Build Your Own Country

How to Build Your Own Country was one of dozens of multimodal projects undertaken in our collaborative teacher-researcher consortium from 2002 – 2012 that ultimately changed the culture of the school. Junior grade teachers Rhea Perreira-Foyle and Andrew Schmitt team-taught the project across the grade 5 classes at JPS in 2009-2010. *How to Build Your Own Country* was designed to teach the grade 5 social studies curriculum unit, *Aspects of Government*, which special education teacher Rhea described in hilariously understated fashion as being a little dry and needing some pepping up. The project was designed as a cross-curricular social justice project incorporating social studies, math, languages, art, and design.

The project, which was launched from a book of the same name (Wyatt, 2009), is highly illustrative of creatively thinking about political structures, civic responsibility, and social justice concerns issuing directly from political infrastructure, including the place of language in civic engagement and power. My research interest in the project was particularly concerned with questions of communication: use of plurilingualism—partial use of different languages in class and in texts, multilingual opportunities in class and in the make-your-own-country projects, textual innovation, and the like. The project included due consideration and innovative inclusion of language as a political structure; it also compellingly illustrated project-based learning, game (creation and) play for learning (sometimes referred to as ludic learning), and using improvisational techniques towards deep learning (See Hang-Coleman, Hang, Perreira-Foyle, & Schmitt, 2017, for a full encapsulation of the social justice project within larger discussion of refugees in education).

How to Build Your Own Country required children to think about language as a civic right and a building block in nation-building structures that children had to tackle in designing their own countries. For example, children considered: What language/s do people speak to each other in your country? What language/s is/are needed to sing the anthem? What language/s is/are on the currency? Which are taught in school? Which do immigrants to your country need to know? In producing materials (plurilingual, multilingual, and bilingual) on their (created) countries, all languages were welcomed: any language that linked with the community was invited, including creoles, which are often treated by their speakers as shameful or deficient, in keeping with colonial biases. The book led children to undertake the following in designing their own countries[4]:

- Stake out your identity
- Run your country
- Meet the neighbours

To accomplish these goals, children needed to come to grips with the geopolitics of nation building; develop, interpret and institute constitutional laws; and develop global diplomacy. No small task for elementary schoolchildren!

The project had numerous stages of nation-creation (e.g. stake out your identity) that required research into world nations, family research on migration histories, and

family knowledge of countries as residents and citizens. Children designed countries (e.g. run your country) that ranged from the silly (Republic of Laughter: the right to have fun in which numerous languages were used but none designated as official) to fusion nations: Gynamdad (merging Guyana, Vietnam, Trinidad: official languages English and Vietnamese). The teachers then moved on to an international resource (e.g. meet the neighbours): the online educational global think tank: *TakingItGlobal (TIG)*[5]: where they played the virtual game: *Ayiti: The Cost of Life*, based on the 2010 Haiti earthquake.

Students' reactions to playing the TIG simulation game based on the unfolding tragedy of the 2010 Haiti earthquake, however, gave the teachers cause for concern. Students manifested an apparent lack of regard for life and death, looking instead at winning the game. Teachers felt that kids were just not appreciating the gravity of life and death, so they instituted their own simulation game in class, based on an activity that teacher Andrew had played in one of his classes as a student.

The Circle Game

The Circle Game, as it came to be called, was played in real time, using four tables to represent different nations. Children were randomly distributed as citizens at one of the four nation tables, which had varied natural resources, different mandated means of choosing a leader, and unequal population bases. At Table A, 5 children shared plentiful resources except for a shortfall in rulers. They elected their leader democratically. At Table B, 5 children shared slightly more of all resources than they needed. They used the rock/paper/scissors game to choose a leader on the basis of luck. At Table C, 8 children negotiated unequal resources that included an overabundance of paper but not enough of anything else, including stickers, of which they had unequal amounts of the different colours (signifying health, food, education, and the environment). They were permitted to function without a leader. At Table D, 16 children vied for 8 chairs around an inadequately resourced table. They had insufficient everything except for rulers of which they had a surfeit. They chose their leader in an arm-wrestling contest.

Citizens of each table were required to labour to produce currency (without an explanation as to why), which were circles of paper, to which were affixed coloured stickers representing aspects of health: red (money), blue (food), yellow (education), and green (healthy environment), as pictured in Figure 1.

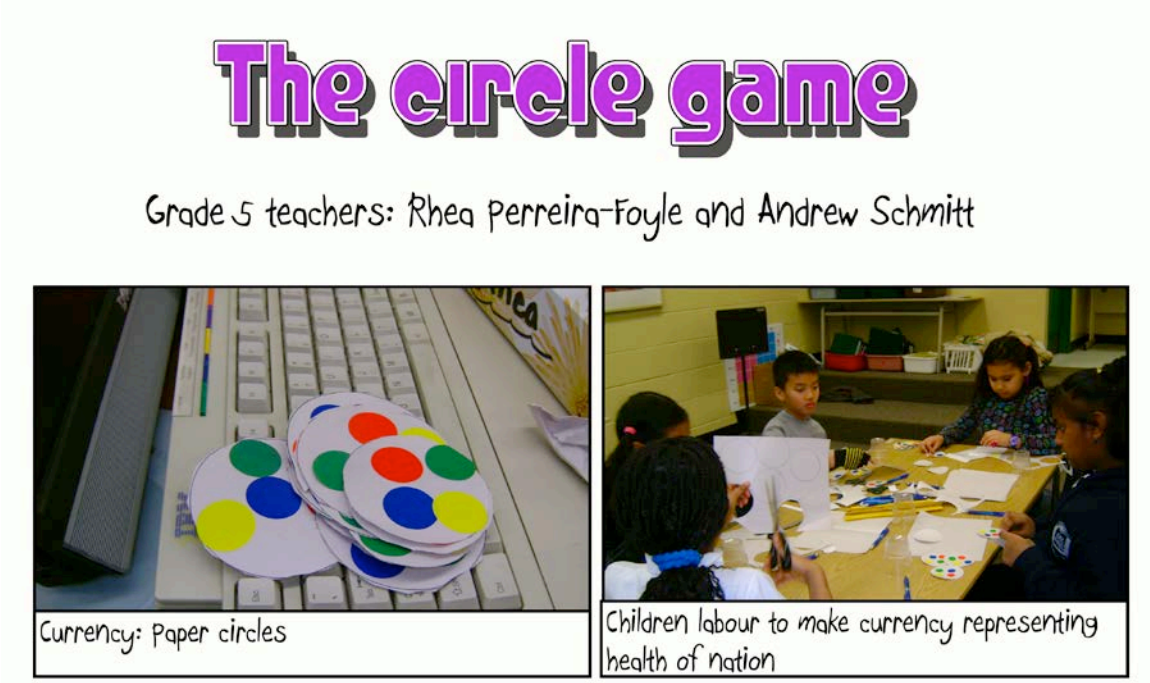

Figure 1. The Circle Game

The game unfolded in four stages: 1) learning to survive; 2) people with power; 3) emergent government; 4) survival of the fittest. As the game progressed through the four stages, Andrew and Rhea slowly ceded authority for learning to the children to conduct their own activities, videotaping the class activity for research and teaching documentation. This approach, reflecting Sawyer's (2006) advocacy of "disciplined improvisation" (p. 45), calls for the teacher to facilitate collaborative improvisation among students and guide them towards the social construction of their knowledge. In this case, Andrew and Rhea slowly withdrew their authority as the children assumed responsibility for their own discovery-based learning.

The simulation was highly effective in facilitating different lived socio-cultural experiences at each table consistent with differential economic resourcing and political infrastructure. Table D, the pseudo-underdeveloped nation, saw the rise of a despot through physical force (i.e., arm-wrestling), and the subsequent marginalization of women, including the creation of a feminized slave labour force as the boys took all the resources for themselves, stripping the girls of equal rights and making them do all the work. Table A, simulating a wealthy nation, did not fare much better, becoming rich, apathetic, and too self-satisfied to bother to vote for their leader (sound familiar?). The life and death quotient was surprising: it was Table A who almost lost a citizen because he was too lazy to work at the set labour to save himself from dying. His migration to a less well-resourced table was negotiated in international (i.e., inter-table) dealings, based on humanitarianism. The game opened up under-the-table transfers of people and currency as those with individual resources managed their accumulating wealth and developed into wheeler-dealers. On the bright side, children also developed thoughtful solutions: an assembly line for currency manufacture at Table B. (Hang-Coleman et al, 2017).

Project-based Learning, Embodied Literacy, and Civic Engagement

What does this grade 5 multimodal literacies project tell us about literacy, learning, and civic engagement? *How to Build Your Own Country* utilized project-based learning—a pedagogy where subjects are taken out of curricular silos and combined as problems to be solved in context—as in real life. Kymlicka (1996, p. 1) adds, "education for citizenship is not an isolated subset of the curriculum, but rather is one of the ordering goals or principles which shapes the entire curriculum." In this project, children learned from doing and making in a multi-stage project, which included the mammoth task of designing an entire nation.

The underlying learning goals: understanding the geopolitics of nation building, the development and institution of constitutional laws, and the importance of global diplomacy, were transformed into an engaging multi-stage project involving a creative research and design task, game play hinging on economic and social choices, and collaborative decision-making in simulated nation-building with unequal resources and statutes. The learners were collectively immersed in designing and gameplay, resulting in collaborative, embodied learning. The unstated activity was civic engagement. Language was a political element in nation building.

There were no right answers in the simulation game played out in class; nor were there in the digital game played on the TIG site. Students laboured to make currency with unequal national resources, seeking solutions for personal and national betterment as the game progressed. In the table nation run by the despot who came to power through physical might (which was approved educationally to simulate a military *coup d'etat*), there were visceral responses to the resulting unfairness. In a clip caught on video by the teachers, a (male) student is documented repetitively screaming: "This is not fair!"

The goals for this combined grade 5 social justice project were multiple, complex, and intertwined: the teachers pinpointed a central curricular goal, *Aspects of Government* in the social studies curriculum. Additionally, the teachers met contractual research goals, including the children's languages appropriate to the learning project, which answered to my research agenda, and approaching learning with a ludic, or game-oriented, perspective, in response to Professor Jenson's research agenda. The teachers also had to attend to perennial modifications for ESL learners, and for children with individual education plans (e.g., modifications for learners with cognitive, social, and/or physical challenges). Children engaged in multiple activities, including:

- Designing their own countries, which required:
    - intergenerational research
    - language planning
    - political organization
    - law
    - art
    - design;
- Calculating the cost of life in Haiti, which activated:
    - applied mathematics for family financial decisions that carried serious, and potentially fatal social consequences (e.g., Were family members left hungry so one child could attend school?);

- Playing an in-class simulation, which required each learner to make personal and national (e.g., pertaining to the table-nation) decisions about:
    - economic and social welfare
    - humanitarian concerns
    - ethics.

In this project, children collaborated on their countries and in their table nations despite falling along a spectrum of ability, and having different linguistic reserves. Together, they created customized solutions through doing and making. Their literacy engagement was multimodal, collaborative, agentive, and purposive towards understanding civic engagement both from the perspective of nation designer and as a random player assigned to a nation in an inequitable world. Students shared their language knowledge as part of the production, and engaged in immersive game play in which learning and civic responsibility and action were embodied. The children's complex, embodied engagement illustrated how:

> citizenship education is not just a matter of learning the basic facts about the institutions and procedures of political life; it also involves acquiring a range of dispositions, virtues, and loyalties which are intimately bound up with the practice of democratic citizenship. (Kymlicka, 1996, p. 1)

Our Evolving Playbook to Re-R/W Language and Literacy Education for Postmodern Civic Engagement

Literacy is neither a singular nor a terminal project, as Luke (2000), quoting Freire reminds us: it is transitive, forging access, and mediating information, communication, and action. Luke (2013, p. 139) asks, "How do language, text, discourse, and information make a difference? For whom? In what material, social and consequential ways? In whose interests? According to what patterns, rules and in what institutional and cultural sites?" These important questions surrounding critical literacies must be contextualized in the reality of the superdiverse classroom. I argue that children's (and teachers') multilingual acumen constitutes a benefit in global times, their languages being appropriate to learning in a society that has changed beyond recognition of the statues defining language spaces in classrooms in Ontario today. Teachers need to ask: What linguistic knowledge do children bring to school? What digital literacies? How and where can I build children's knowledge into achievement of our learning goals?

Conceptions of literacy are rapidly metamorphosing from its canonical majority language print base into multimodal forms that include a broader range of semiotic resources (including other languages and scripts) and challenge what we think of as a text. Fundamental questions in a superdiverse context such as Toronto are: How do we teach language and literacy in school? How are we working with the profusion of both languages and mediating technologies in curricular learning? Are we meeting students halfway in the classroom, working from what they know to what they need to learn? This requires customizing currently restricted media for and prototypes of language and literacy learning.

At Joyce Public School, researchers and teachers—with the visionary guidance of the school administrator—built a learning community to develop pedagogies responsive

to social literacy needs and practices while fulfilling curricular requirements (Lotherington, 2011; Lotherington & Paige, 2017). Our learning community pioneered a university-school action research project to provide a working vehicle for sorting out pedagogical issues by juxtaposing theory and practice and merging academic research and professional teacher development. My research motivation was to develop plurilingual designs for learning, and texts creatively capitalizing on new media to produce multimodal expression that included children's (and teachers') complex cultural and linguistic affiliations. My co-researcher, Jennifer Jenson, was invested in play-based learning designs. One of our many discoveries was that these orientations worked well together towards experimental, creative pedagogies and multimodal textual products (Lotherington & Jenson, 2011).

We educate for the future, not the present, and certainly not for the past, though past learning informs future directions. English literacy is still largely conceptualized as print-based, despite continual changes to communicative practices and literacies with portable digital mediating tools, and exposure to global languages in the local classroom. Heller (2013) underscores how Bourdieusian theory explicates the power of *legitimate* language in civic engagement. What we did at JPS was to teach towards multiple language awareness and sharing, even where language knowledge was partial—as it always is (see Lotherington, 2011; 2013) while teaching the majority languages of power. This is an important lesson for parents, many of whom think the faster they can ditch their heritage language, the better. In fact, not only are minority community languages increasingly important in terms of global diplomacy and trade, supportive of broader cultural and social vistas and knowledge repositories, and facilitating of cultural tolerance and understanding, they facilitate the learning of additional languages (Cummins, 2000), such as English and French, in Canada. Maintaining, supporting, and learning multiple languages creates a multilingual resource for the individual and the society alike. Recognizing and appreciating languages creates a culturally aware and tolerant society.

Our remaking of literacy in the classroom required experimenting with digital mediation in textual creation to make new ways of expression—which were customizable, linguistically malleable, and inclusive. Our re-envisioning of elementary education, classroom literacy, and social belonging might be seen as postmodern in orientation. According to Aylesworth (2015, para 1):

> That postmodernism is indefinable is a truism. However, it can be described as a set of critical, strategic and rhetorical practices employing concepts such as difference, repetition, the trace, the simulacrum, and hyperreality to destabilize other concepts such as presence, identity, historical progress, epistemic certainty, and the univocity of meaning.

Our decade long experiment at JPS led our learning community to postmodernize elementary education towards project-based learning in which children achieve and learn by agentive discovery, doing, and sharing. In this educational orientation, learning is collaborative, dialogic (Bakhtin, 1981), multidimensional, distributed, agentive, and customizable. Teacher-researchers are embedded in a technologically-mediated network (Thumlert, de Castell & Jenson, 2014) where digital technology interactively supports and helps to shape, but does not drive pedagogies. The languages and digital know-how

that children bring into the classroom are seen as elemental in their learning, easily accommodated in customizable multimodal spaces, and instructive to classmates as well as teachers.

Literacy learning in this postmodern vision is embedded in a complex mediated social network involving the local and the global, the physical and the virtual. Literacy teaching is project-oriented, collaboratively planned, integrating curricular goals, and strategic local and digital community knowledge and participation. This means that local languages and cultural knowledge are invited into the discussion, as is creative textual expression.

A postmodern conception of knowledge is not simple, monocultural, linear, or squeezed into 20th century print conceptions written in a fossilized textbook language. This is not to say that textbook language is not of paramount importance in accessing archived resources. However, it is invalid as a culturally homogenizing force in our polyvocal society. Subjects can be released from their siloes, and put to work in service of real world understanding. Learners can learn agentively, interactively and responsibly solving actual problems.

Knowledge external to the classroom is where we are headed, not what we are excluding. Online learning is increasingly permeating the brick-and-mortar walls of schools, increasing learners' opportunities to be connected with and involved in real world problems, not simply the hypothetical problems of the classroom. Life online can no longer be separated from life offline.

The extension of education into a rapidly developing digitally-mediated global society is not easy. In the classroom, the subjugation of right-wrong answers to critical thinking and creative meaning-making requires developing a culture of risk, and of trust that learners can take responsibility for their learning. Teachers, too, must be trusted to prepare learners to do this.

In the context of our research developing multimodal literacy education in an elementary school in northwest Toronto, the conception of citizenship grounded in colonialism that is presented in curricular objectives and resources is at odds with the superdiverse composition of learners in school classes. The mantel of colonialism, evident in prescriptive language learning agendas in Ontario, is outdated. Our project developed an innovative mechanism for bridging the language know-how of the community to the languages of power in the classroom. It is my contention that ensuring social and cultural awareness and responsibility for inclusive globally-focused learning in the classroom is a crucial step in developing civic engagement writ large.

References

Aylesworth, G. (2015). Postmodernism. In E. N. Zalta (Ed.). *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2015 edition). Retrieved from: http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2015/entries/postmodernism

Bakhtin, M. M. (1981). Discourse in the novel. (C. Emerson & M. Holquist, Trans.). In M. Holquist (Ed.), *The dialogic imagination: Four essays by M. M. Bakhtin* (pp. 257-422). Austin, TX: University of Texas Press. (Original work published 1975)

Bourdieu, P. (1977). The economics of linguistic exchanges. *Social Science Information, 16*(6), 645-668.

Cummins, J. (1992). Heritage language teaching in Canadian schools. *Journal of Curriculum Studies, 24*(3), 281–286.
Cummins, J. (2000). *Language, power and pedagogy: Bilingual children in the crossfire.* Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.
Granger, C. A., Morbey, M. L., Lotherington, H., Owston, R. D., & Wideman, H. H. (2002). Factors contributing to teachers' successful implementation of IT. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning, 18*(4), 480-488.
Hang-Coleman, M-L, Hang, B., Perreira-Foyle, R., & Schmitt, A. (2017). Global social justice perspectives in the superdiverse classroom: Focus on the refugee. In H. Lotherington & C. Paige (Eds.), *Teaching young learners in a superdiverse world: Multimodal perspectives and approaches.* New York, N.Y: Routledge.
Harklau, L. (2003). *Generation 1.5 students and college writing.* ERIC Digest ED482491. Retrieved from http://www.ericdigests.org/2004-4/writing.htm
Haque, E. (2012). *Multiculturalism within a bilingual framework: Language, race, and belonging in Canada.* Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.
Heller, M. (2013). Language and dis-citizenship in Canada. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education, 12*(3), 189-192.
Howard, P. N., & Hussain, M. M. (2013). *Democracy's fourth wave? Digital media and the Arab Spring*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press. Retrieved from https://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/bitstream/handle/2027.42/117564/Democracy's+Fourth+Wave.pdf?sequence=1
Jenkins, H., & Deuze, M. (2008). Convergence culture. *Convergence: The International Journal on Research into New Media Technologies*, *14*(1), 5-12.
Kahne, J., Hodgin, E., & Eidman-Aadahl, E. (2016). Redesigning civic education for the digital age: Participatory politics and the pursuit of democratic engagement. *Theory & Research in Social Education, 44*(1), 1-35.
Kymlicka, W. (1996). Education for citizenship. *Reihe Politikwissenschaft 40*. Wien: Institut für Höhere Studien. Retrieved from http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-266162
Lambert, W.E., Tucker, G.R., & D'Anglejean, A. (1973). An innovative approach to second language learning: The St. Lambert experiment. *Études de Linguistique Appliquée, 10*, 90-99.
Lo Bianco, J. (2008). Educational linguistics and education systems. In B. Spolsky, & F.M. Hult (Eds.), *The handbook of educational linguistics*, (pp. 113-126). Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell.
Lotherington, H. (2011). *Pedagogy of multiliteracies: Rewriting Goldilocks.* New York, N.Y: Routledge.
Lotherington, H. (2013). Creating third spaces in the linguistically heterogeneous classroom for the advancement of plurilingualism. *TESOL Quarterly, 47*, 619-625.
Lotherington, H. (in press). Learning to talk (dialogically) at school: Creating the discourse conditions for successful collaborative action research. In K.W. Clausen & G. Black (Eds.), *The future of action research in education: A Canadian perspective.* Montreal, QC: McGill-Queen's University Press.
Lotherington, H., Fisher, S., Jenson, J., & Lindo, L.M. (2016). Professional development from the inside out: Redesigning learning through collaborative action research.

In M. Knobel & J. Kalman (Eds.), *New literacies and teacher learning professional development and the digital turn,* (pp. 65-87). New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Lotherington, H. & Jenson, J. (2011). Teaching multimodal and digital literacy in L2 settings: New literacies, new basics, new pedagogies. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics, 31,* 226-246.

Lotherington, H., & Paige, C. (Eds.) (2017). *Teaching young learners in a superdiverse world: Multimodal perspectives and approaches.* New York, N.Y: Routledge.

Lotherington, H., Paige, C., & Holland-Spencer, M. (2013). Using a professional learning community to support multimodal literacies. *What works? Research into Practice.* Toronto: Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat. Retrieved from http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/WW_Professional_Learning.pdf

Luke, A. (2000). Critical literacy in Australia: A matter of context and standpoint. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, *43*(5), 448-461.

Luke, A. (2013). Regrounding critical literacy: Representation, facts and reality. In M.R. Hawkins (Ed.), *Framing languages and literacies: Socially situated views and perspectives*, (pp. 136-148). New York, NY: Routledge.

Martinelli, A. (2003). Markets, governments, communities and global governance. *International Sociology*, *18*(2), 291-323.

Peddiwell, A. A. (1939). *The saber-tooth curriculum.* New York, NY: McGraw Hill.

Pieterse, J.N. (2008, September). *Global multiculture: Cultures, transnational culture, deep culture.* Invited presentation, Intellectuals and Society Symposium, York University, Toronto.

Roessingh, H. & Douglas, S. (2011). English language learners' transitional needs from high school to university: An exploratory study. *International Migration and Integration, 13,* 285-301.

Rumbaut, R. G., & Ima, K. (1988). *The adaptation of Southeast Asian refugee youth: A comparative study (1987).* Final Report, Washington, D.C., U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement. Retrieved from SSRN: http://ssrn.com/abstract=1881903

Sawyer, R.K. (2006). Educating for innovation. *Thinking Skills and Creativity, 1*, 41–48.

Schecter, S. (2012). The predicament of generation 1.5 English language learners: Three disjunctures and a way forward. *Canadian Journal of Education*, *35*(4), 308-340.

Scott, L. (2015). *The four-dimensional human: Ways of being in the digital world.* London, UK: Heinemann.

Toronto District School Board. (2013). *Facts. 2011-2012 student-parent census*. Retrieved from http://www.tdsb.on.ca/Portals/0/AboutUs/Research/2011-12CensusFactSheet1-Demographics-17June2013.pdf

Thumlert, K., de Castell, S., & Jenson, J. (2015). Short cuts and extended techniques: Rethinking relations between technology and educational theory. *Educational Philosophy and Theory,47*(8), 786-803.

Vertovec, S. (2007). Super-diversity and its implications. *Ethnic and Racial Studies, 30*(6), 1024-1054.

Wyatt, V. (2009). *How to build your own country.* Toronto, ON: Kids Can Press.

Author Biography

Heather Lotherington

Dr. Heather Lotherington is Associate Dean, Research, and in the Faculty of Education at York University. In 2016-2017, she was a York Visiting Scholar at Massey College in the University of Toronto, and Gordon and Jean Southam Fellow at Curtin University, Perth, Australia. Her research interests span multimodal literacies; multilingual and plurilingual education; language, literacy and technology; and pedagogical innovation. For a decade she collaborated with primary and junior grade teachers based at an elementary school in northwest Toronto but also including a school in northeast Toronto, and another in Taiwan to develop multimodal pedagogies for superdiverse urban classrooms. This research has been widely reported and is the subject of two volumes: *Pedagogy of multiliteracies: Rewriting Goldilocks* (Routledge, 2011), and Lotherington and Paige (Eds.) *Teaching young learners in a superdiverse world: Multimodal approaches and perspectives* (Routledge, 2017).

---

[1] Official languages act 1969/ 1988/ 2005: http://www.ocol-clo.gc.ca/en/language_rights/act

[2] Canadian multiculturalism act 1971/1988: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/multiculturalism/citizenship.asp

[3] Gracious thanks to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for awarding Heather Lotherington and Jennifer Jenson a standard research grant for this project.

[4] This YouTube provides an interesting animated book review: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ut7ci-SJKRk

[5] http://www.tigweb.org/

The Techno-literacy Practices of Young Children from Diverse Backgrounds

NICOLA FRIEDRICH
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education/University of Toronto

LAURA TEICHERT
University of British Columbia

ZIPPORAH DEVADAS
British Columbia School District 35

Abstract

To complicate the notion of a digital divide along economic and cultural lines, this paper describes techno-literacy practices within the homes of children from diverse backgrounds. Data were drawn from two ethnographic case studies examining the home literacy practices of pre-school aged children. Participants were three Karen refugee families and two English-speaking, middle-class families. The findings suggest that children initiate interactions with digital tools within the cultural and economic landscapes of the home. In so doing, they develop operational competencies to access digital texts in order to scaffold their current learning and enable their participation in 21st century society.

Keywords

digital literacy practices, early childhood literacy, family literacy, refugee families

Introduction

This paper explores young children's techno-literacy experiences in the home prior to their arrival in formal schooling. The perspective taken is inspired by early descriptive research into the language and literacy experiences of children from culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse backgrounds (e.g., Gregory, 2001; Heath, 1983; Purcell-Gates, 1996; Taylor, 1983; Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines, 1988). Recent large-scale investigations of digital technologies in the home have introduced the notion of a divide along economic and cultural lines regarding families' access to and use of digital tools (e.g., Gutnick, Robb, Takeuchi, & Kotler, 2011; Rideout, 2011). It is this observation that inspired us to draw data from our own ethnographic case studies to demonstrate the nature of young children's early literacy experiences with digital tools prior to their entry into formal schooling and to highlight commonalities in digital practices within the cultural and economic landscapes of their homes. We used the following research questions to guide our analysis of the data: What digital tools/texts do children from diverse backgrounds (i.e., family composition, socioeconomic status, home language use) have access to within the home? What literacy practices do these tools/texts mediate? How are these practices enacted? By adopting a practice approach, the findings of this study add to the literature regarding young children and digital technology and inform educators as to the educational value of all children's digital experiences prior to their arrival in kindergarten. Furthermore, in keeping with the theme of this special issue, the findings of this study

suggest that, by engaging in current digital practices within the home, young children develop operational competencies with digital tools that may support their future civic engagement.

We begin with a description of the conceptual framework guiding the study. Specifically, we describe constructs from the sociocultural theory of literacy and assertions from literacy research on young children's use of digital technologies within the home that shaped our research questions and informed our analysis of the data.

Perspectives

We situate this study in a sociocultural theory of literacy. Working from within this framework, we understand literacy as a social practice, connected to beliefs, values, attitudes, and power structures. Since literacy practices are unobservable, they are inferred from observable literacy events mediated by texts (Barton & Hamilton, 2000). Additionally, we draw from Vygotsky's (Wertsch, 1998; Vygotsky, 1978) notion of mediated social activity and understand that the digital texts with which the children engage serve as cultural tools that mediate their literacy learning. Within individual literacy events, adults in turn mediate these texts by using multiple modes (Kress, 1997) in order to scaffold (Rogoff, 1990) the children's engagement with the tool and text, or by transferring through modeling (Gregory, Ruby, & Kenner, 2010) the knowledge and/or skills related to the child's use of the tool. Learning is visible through the children's changing participation in the event over time (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Although sociocultural researchers have documented children using digital tools in the home for learning and for entertainment purposes (e.g., Davidson, 2009; Marsh, 2004; Marsh, Yamada-Rice, Bishop, et al., 2015; O'Mara & Laidlaw, 2011), much of the literature on pre-school aged children's experiences with digital technologies in the home prior to their entry into kindergarten stems from three studies situated in Scotland[i]. The studies took place between 2003 and 2011. Data were collected primarily during home visits with approximately 54 case-study families. The families were roughly divided along household income. All families spoke English and had at least one pre-school aged child. Primary data collection methods included interviews and observations. Additional data were collected through surveys distributed to multiple families whose children attended pre-schools in four local authorities, from interviews with primary school teachers, and from an expert forum of key policymakers and practitioners.

From our review of the literature emanating from these three studies, we identified the following assertions regarding young children's digital literacy experiences: (a) Young children encounter a range of digital technologies at home (Plowman, McPake, & Stephen, 2010; Plowman, Stevenson, Stephen, & McPake, 2012), (b) the link between parents' own experiences with technology and the opportunities they offer their children in the home is stronger than is the link between a family's economic status and the children's access to digital technology (Plowman et al., 2010), (c) children develop basic levels of competence in multiple areas of learning as they engage with digital technologies (McPake, Stephen, Plowman, Sime, & Downey, 2005; Plowman, McPake, & Stephen, 2008), and (d) the method of transfer of knowledge and skills between children and adults varies (Plowman et al., 2008; Stephen, Stevenson, & Adey, 2013).

Data informing this body of literature were drawn from English-speaking participants who differed in economic status (i.e., disadvantaged, having a household income below £20k pa, or advantaged, having a household income of over £20k pa), and in the level of technology within the home (i.e., low technology, owning fewer digital tools such as a computer with Internet access, mobile phone, etc., or high technology, owning a computer with Internet access, a mobile phone, etc.). Our aim is to build on these assertions by describing the nature of the digital experiences in the homes of young children from diverse backgrounds. Drawing on data from two separate ethnographic case studies, our goals are to present descriptions of digital tool use within the homes and highlight both the differences and similarities between the young children's experiences. In keeping with our research questions, we only included observations of children engaging with tools that allowed them to access texts. Drawing from Purcell-Gates, Perry, and Briseño (2011), we understand texts as having a type or genre (e.g., activity/word puzzle, animated cartoon) and a physical form (e.g., computer, smart phone). Since the focus of our analysis was on texts displayed electronically, we also understand texts as having a digital form (e.g., educational software page, video sharing webpage).

Positioning of Researchers

We, Nicola and Laura, entered into our respective research as doctoral candidates working in the field of family and early literacy. We are both white, English-speaking females of European descent. Nicola worked in the community, first as a researcher, then as a volunteer for the family literacy program. Prior to entering her doctoral program, Nicola was a classroom teacher and a literacy coach. Laura previously worked as a classroom teacher and Early Literacy Specialist. Zipporah is a member of the Karen refugee community. She arrived in Canada in the fall of 2006. Prior to her arrival in Canada, she worked as a principal in a post-10 school in one of the refugee camps. She is currently employed as a multicultural worker with the local school district. She speaks both Karen and English. In this section, we presented the perspectives that informed this paper. Next, we outline the research methodology of the two larger studies from which we drew data and discuss how we analyzed the data in order to answer our research questions.

Methodology

For this paper, we draw on data we collected during two separate ethnographic case studies examining the home literacy practices of pre-school aged children in and around a large urban centre in western Canada. The first study took place over 15 months. The primary participants were three Karen mothers and their 4-year old children. The Karen are an ethnic group living in South East Asia with their own distinct language and culture. For the past 60 years, they have been engaged in a civil war against the Burmese military regime for autonomy and cultural rights. This conflict has resulted in many of the Karen fleeing their villages and seeking refuge in camps along the Thai-Burma border, where some have remained for up to 20 years. In 2005, Canada began to accept applications from Karen families through a United Nations' program. Communities within western Canada welcomed the first families in 2006. The three mothers were part of this group of refugees. Their first language is Karen. The children, two girls and one boy, were all born in Canada. Although their first language was Karen, they choose to communicate primarily in English.

Nicola collected data over a period of 15 months in the homes, community, and in

all ten sessions of a bilingual family literacy program, *Parents as Literacy Supporters (PALS) in Immigrant and Refugee Communities*. Data collection methods included semi-structured and informal interviews[ii] with each of the three focal mothers and participant observation of the three families engaged in literacy events in the three contexts. Nicola transcribed all field notes and interviews in English and uploaded the transcripts to the qualitative software, Atlas Ti. She identified and coded individual literacy events for setting, type of event (e.g., reading, writing), participants, role of participants, and tools (e.g., artifacts, language, actions). She displayed the coded field notes in output tables. Nicola repeatedly read the information in each output table to identify patterns, which she then discussed with Zipporah in order to clarify her interpretations. Additionally, as a form of member check, both Nicola and Zipporah met with the mothers to orally review the findings.

The second study took place in the homes of the participants over a period of 12 months. The participants were two white, middle-class, English-speaking families. The first family consisted of a single mother and her 4-year old daughter. The second was a 2-parent family with twin 5-year old children (male and female). Laura conducted semi-structured interviews with each mother and carried out monthly observations of the children in their homes, with each visit lasting approximately 2 hours. She also collected artifacts including photographs, drawings, and videos. Laura audio-recorded each semi-structured interview and made field notes during each of the visits. She transcribed all interviews and field notes on the computer. Using the comment function of Microsoft Word, she coded individual literacy events for type of event (e.g., reading, writing, play), participants, role of participants, and the tool used (print or digital). She then read through the data and looked for patterns.

For this paper, we drew from the transcribed field notes of observations of the children in both studies engaging in literacy events within the homes and from the English transcriptions of the semi-structured interviews with the focal mothers. Nicola and Laura read through the field note transcripts together and identified all literacy events involving digital tools. Nicola then coded each event for who was participating and for their role in the event, how the event was arranged, the digital tool used in the event, and the digital texts mediating the event. Each coded event was displayed in an excel table. Nicola and Laura read through the tables and looked for patterns as they related to the research questions. We then read through the transcripts of the interviews to confirm patterns. Additionally, Nicola reviewed findings relating to the three Karen children with Zipporah. In the next section, we present findings resulting from this analysis of the data.

Findings

Our analysis of the data revealed the following findings: a) The children all had access to digital tools (e.g., desktop computer, smart phone, etc.) within the home, b) all the children used digital tools to access similar digital texts (e.g., animated cartoons, digital storybooks, word games and puzzles, etc.), and c) the children initiated individual events with parents or other adults providing varying degrees of assistance when needed. In this section, we present a sample of the data that supports these findings.

Access to Digital Tools

We observed digital tools in common areas (e.g., living room, family room) in all

of the homes in which we visited. However, the type of tool to which the children had access varied. In general, the young Karen children had physical access to older forms of technology including computers, either desktop or laptop, and a television. Two of the Karen families had smartphones and one had a tablet. Two of the families had DVD players, while one had a video cassette player. By the end of the data collection period, one family had upgraded to a large flatscreen TV complete with a gaming console. In contrast, the children from the middle-class families had physical access to a larger variety of digital tools including smartphones, tablets, laptop computers, and electronic keyboards. One of the middle-class families had a LeapPad device.

Although most of these digital tools were physically accessible to the children, the children may not have engaged in activities with them. For example, one of the mothers in the first study had a smart phone and tablet. Throughout the data collection period of her study, Nicola did not observe the child engaging in activities on either of these digital devices. Moreover, parents in both studies controlled the children's access to tools by setting limits on the children's use of the digital tool or by password protecting devices. For example, Hser Paw[iii], one of the focal mothers in the first study, shared that her children knew that they were only allowed to watch or listen to one story or three songs in one session at the computer (Field notes, February 26, 2014). Similarly, Sarah, one of the mothers in the second study, indicated that her children usually accessed digital texts in the company of or in proximity to a parent. She said, "It's always with me or my husband. Sometimes, I'll leave them and then just like listen to hear what they've picked up, because they'll sometimes pick their own programming. But they also have some parameters from me" (Sarah, interview, March 31, 2015). Finally, during numerous visits within the home, Nicola observed one focal child's inability to access animated cartoons on the family's laptop since the father regularly changed the password.

Accessing Digital Texts

We observed all the children using certain digital tools (e.g., computer, television, smart phone) to access similar texts (e.g., cartoons, music videos, games) within the home. In some cases, the texts being accessed appeared to entertain the child. For example, the children watched cartoons and movies, sang along with music videos, made videos, and played games. They accessed animated cartoons through video sharing webpages on the computer or through cable cartoon channels, and television shows and music videos through video streaming apps on smartphones and tablets. Two of the children in the second study accessed a game through an app on a smartphone.

In one instance, a male, middle-income participant accessed a website (with his mother) that was associated with a magic kit he had received as a Christmas gift. The website was an extension of the physical magic kit and allowed the child to watch illusions performed by a magician. As well, the website contained information about the company and other magic tricks children could learn to master. Interestingly, one of the young Karen children accessed cartoons in other languages, specifically Chinese[iv]. She also accessed music videos that showcased Burmese and Thai singers performing songs in multiple languages.

We also observed the children access texts specifically designed to mediate their learning, in particular, their learning about literacy in English. Unlike the texts accessed for entertainment purposes, these texts were in English only. For example, the children

accessed activity or word puzzles, digital storybooks, and children's music videos through educational software pages on the computer or on the LeapPad device and through educational software apps on a tablet. These educational webpages and apps provided the children with opportunities to learn about science, build words, colour images, read and listen to stories, and sing nursery rhymes in English.

Children as Initiators

In general, we observed the children initiate these individual digital events. The role of the parent or adult was to provide assistance when needed. The type of assistance provided depended on the digital tool being used. For example, Nicola observed the following event during a visit with one of the focal children in her study:

> Claire initiated a Google search and began to type the words 'skip to my lou' into the search engine. Her mother assisted by spelling the words for her in English. When a website came up, Claire indicated that it was the wrong version of the rhyme. Zipporah went over and called up the correct website on her behalf. (Field notes, April 17, 2013)

In this example, the child, Claire, had been playing a math game on the computer. As was customary in the Karen culture, her mother, Hser Paw was visiting with her guest, (Zipporah), in Karen. At one point, Nicola heard her mention the song, "Skip to my Lou". Claire must have heard it as well since, using the mouse, she promptly exited her game and began a search for the website showing children singing along with this song. Hser Paw assisted Claire by spelling out the words in English as Claire typed them into the search engine. When the search resulted in the wrong webpage being displayed, Zipporah provided assistance by returning to the search results page and selecting another webpage on Claire's behalf.

Laura observed a similar form of engagement between a mother and her son during a home visit. She made the following entry in her field notebook:

> Luke picked up the iPad from the couch and sat on the floor. He asked mom if he could look at a science website. Mom sat down on the floor beside him and they leaned the iPad on the couch as though the couch were a table. Luke touched the Safari icon at the bottom of the iPad screen and allowed the web browser to load. He touched the website search bar and found the appropriate website. A "child-friendly" science website loaded. (Field notes, April 9, 2015)

In this event, the focal child, Luke, asked his mother for permission to access a science website on the tablet. In contrast to Hser Paw, her role in the event was simply to assist Luke in positioning the tablet on the floor. Luke then accessed the website on his own, first by touching the digital icon to launch the web browser and then by selecting the website from the website search bar.

At other times, the children accessed the digital text without asking for assistance. Nicola made the following entry in her field notebook:

> The television in the corner was on. It was a large flat screen TV. Throughout my visit, Sam took the remote control and changed the channel. In the process of changing the channel, he said the name of the individual digit in English as he pressed the button. (Field notes, April 19, 2013)

In this example, Sam was able to operate the remote control in order to change the television channel. Not only did he understand the function of the numbers on the remote control, he also demonstrated his numeracy skills by providing the label for each of the selected digits.

At other times, both Nicola and Laura were called upon to assist a child with aspects of the digital tool the child had yet to master. For example, during one visit, Claire indicated to the first author that she wanted to change websites. Nicola asked Claire for the name of the website she wanted to access. She typed the search term into the search engine page and, using the mouse, selected the site from the search result list. She then asked Claire for the name of the activity she wished to access. Claire indicated that she wanted to listen to a digital story. Using the mouse, the first author selected the digital icon from the website's homepage to select the story.

In contrast, during one visit, rather than asking for assistance to access a text, Luke asked Laura to assist him in creating a digital video. The following description is taken from the Laura's field notebook:

> Luke asked if I could make videos on my phone. I explained I could and showed him how the photograph app allowed users to change the size of the photograph (square, regular, or panorama) or record a video. Luke tells me to take a video of him dancing. He positions himself in front of the iPhone and tells me when to begin recording. He dances briefly on the spot and tells me to stop recording. He runs back to where I am seated on the floor and asks to see the recorded product. (Field notes, May 13, 2015)

This event was initiated when Laura engaged in a common social practice, using her phone to take a picture of Luke. When Luke saw the phone, he thought of making a video. Since the practice of making videos on a smartphone was new to Luke, Laura assisted first by explaining the process to Luke and then by recording Luke's dance. Immediately following this event, Laura assisted Luke in recording his sister, Leia, dancing. Luke proceeded to create seven very short (1-3 seconds in length) recordings on his own of his sister dancing.

In sum, all of the children had physical access to a variety of digital tools within the home. While the types of tools to which the children had access varied (e.g., smartphones, tablets, LeapPads, computers, televisions), the children initiated the use of these tools to access similar genres of digital texts (e.g., animated cartoons, educational games, digital storybooks) and engage in similar events (e.g., watching cartoons and videos, colouring pictures and assembling puzzles, listening to stories, playing games). Although the children were the initiators of the events, in some cases, they had yet to develop the competence or understanding needed to operate aspects of the digital tool. Parents and other adults responded by providing assistance when needed. We now discuss these findings in relation to the literature on young children's digital experiences in the home.

Discussion

In their study investigating the impact of socio-economic disadvantage on pre-school children's development of competencies in information and communications technology, McPake et al. (2005) concluded that, although family income likely affected the amount and quality of equipment within the home, families often found ways to get those digital tools that best supported their cultural practices. For example, some of their case study families bought equipment such as desktop computers from second-hand stores or swapped items with friends and neighbours. Our findings support this conclusion. In contrast to the middle-class children in the second study whose parents had the economic resources to purchase newer forms of technology or who received digital devices as gifts, the Karen families arrived in Canada as permanent residents with limited economic resources. Thus, many of the digital tools within the homes of the Karen children were donated and included older forms of technology such as desktop computers and televisions.

Plowman et al. (2010) reviewed arguments relating to the technologisation of childhood. Drawing on data from one of the larger studies (see above), they found a strong link between the young children's digital opportunities in the home and the parents' own experiences with digital technology. Although the availability of digital tools in the homes of the Karen families in the first study may have been constrained by economic factors, in keeping with the findings of Plowman, et al., we argue that the families' choice of digital tools reflected their social and cultural practices. Many of the Karen adults were born in Karen villages in Burma[v]. In Karen villages, it was common for one resident to own a television. Due to the remoteness of the villages, the television was used to play videos. Younger members of the resettled refugee community were born in the refugee camps. While growing up, many of them had access to desktop computers in the camps. At the time of the first study, Nicola observed that all three of the Karen families had a television and a desktop computer in their home. These digital tools mediated such cultural practices as watching animated cartoons and cultural videos. Other research within resettled Karen populations identified additional digital literacy practices. For example, besides using the computer for entertainment purposes, Quadros and Sarroub (2016) found that, within the home, the Karen women participating in their study used the computer as a resource for learning and for finding a job in their new community. Additionally, Gilhooly and Lee (2014) and Omerbašič (2015) found the Karen teens in their studies used digital tools (e.g., desktop computers) in the home and community to connect with Karen teens around the world in order to help them overcome feelings of isolation in their new community.

In contrast, the middle-class parents in the second study were born and raised in Canada. Although families with similar socio-economic circumstances foster young children's development and learning differently (Stephen, Stevenson, & Adey, 2013), within the homes of the middle-class families participating in the second study, digital tools such as laptop computers, smart phones, and tablets, mediated various social and cultural practices. In both homes, the parents placed an emphasis on using technology and digital tools for learning, whereby they used digital tools to access information and scaffold their children into this practice. For example, the parents used Google to extend information about something read in a book or to search websites on a particular topic. Netflix was a source of family time entertainment. The parents accessed movies and television shows which they then watched with their children. For instance, Sarah discussed how eager she was to watch the Star Wars franchise with her children, as they were movies she and her

husband had enjoyed when they were younger. Sociocultural researchers have documented children using digital tools to mediate similar digital practices within the home (e.g., Davidson, 2009; O'Mara & Laidlaw, 2011; Marsh, Yamada-Rice, Bishop, et. al., 2015).

Furthermore, Plowman et al. (2010) found parents were aware of potential problems associated with digital technology, but they believed the risk to be low if the children engaged with digital tools in moderation and under a parent's supervision. We found that, regardless of economic status, mothers in both studies shared similar concerns regarding their children's screen time and that these concerns prompted them to limit their children's access to digital tools within the home. For example, as a member of the resettled Karen community, Zipporah shared that many of the Karen parents in the first study had concerns regarding their children's social skills. The parents set limits on their children's use of digital tools in order to encourage them to interact with other children in formal and informal settings. Similarly, a mother participating in the second study had concerns about her children's cognitive development. She said, " ... kids really need to be hands-on, like learning through their senses and that they need to move around. So as much as possible, like in those early months and years, try not to have that stuff around ..." (Sarah, interview, March 31, 2015). Finally, one parent was concerned about her child's physical fitness. Laura recorded this concern in her field notes. She wrote, "Lindsay shared with me that she aims on weekends to spend time outside or at local recreation centre so that she and Belle can be physically active, rather than spend the time at home doing sedentary activities (Field notes, March 29, 2015). Thus, even though children had access to different types of digital tools, this access was universally limited due to parental concerns over screen time.

Interestingly, in both our studies, the parents' concerns appear to have been shaped in part by the mothers' involvement in parental discussion groups. For example, the Karen parents all participated in a bilingual family literacy program. One session of the program focused on children and computers. During this session, the English-speaking facilitators shared with the Karen parents common concerns regarding the effects of prolonged screen time on young children. Similarly, Sarah told Laura that she participated in an online forum for parents and regularly received emails regarding a child's healthy development. Thus, although Alper (2011) found that families from middle to higher socioeconomic statuses might not fully support new media use "due to 'moral panics' regarding popular culture and digital technologies" (p. 180), our findings suggest that parental concerns are socially constructed and are not specific to socio-economic status.

Irrespective of the digital tool, in all of the homes, the children engaged in meaning-making activities, such as creating texts, singing along with videos, and watching cartoons. Plowman et al. (2008) identified levels of competencies in four main areas of learning with technology within the home including extending knowledge of the world (e.g., developing early literacy and numeracy) and understanding cultural roles (e.g., the roles technology plays in family life). Drawing from a sociocultural perspective of learning, we recognize young children as experienced meaning-makers, making meaning from what is *at hand* (Kress, 1997). We understand all of the children in this study to be meaning-makers. For example, by using a smartphone to make videos of his sister, Luke created his own digital text, one which he and his sister then enjoyed together. By singing along with Karen music videos on the computer, Emma developed her ability to speak Karen and strengthened her Karen identity (Gilhooly & Lee, 2014; Omerbašič, 2015). By watching an animated

program on her mother's tablet, Belle was inspired to extend the activity to include drawing scenes from the show on paper.

In addition to promoting a child's meaning-making, McPake et al. (2005) and Plowman et al. (2008) identified another area of learning with technology in the home, acquiring operational skills. Specifically, through their engagement with digital technologies, children acquire operational skills including an understanding of the functions of the various attributes of the tool (e.g., the mouse, the touch screen) and the ability to operate them. We found that the children in our two studies were acquiring numerous competencies that allowed them to independently operate the digital tools available to them in their homes. For example, Claire used the mouse in order to select a website from the search result list. Luke tapped a digital icon on a touch screen in order to access a webpage. Sam used a remote control in order to change the television channel.

Finally, Stephen et al. (2013) found that parents support their children's learning directly by scaffolding their interactions verbally (e.g., providing suggestions) or through physical actions (e.g., pointing) and that the type of interaction depends on the digital tool. Our findings also suggest that the type of assistance parents or other adults provide directly depends on the digital tool being used. For example, in the homes where the primary tool was a desktop or laptop computer, the children needed assistance in accessing educational webpages since their engagement with these types of texts was mediated by other forms of activities (e.g., typing in search terms in English, reading search result lists in English). Similarly, in homes where children engaged with newer forms of digital technology including smart phones and tablets, the children needed assistance in accessing app-based activities and games through digital icons displayed on the screen. Furthermore, like Stephen et al. (2013), we also found that family interactions, specifically the demands placed on parents' time, indirectly supported the children's learning. For example, both of the mothers in the second study told Laura that, in order to allow them time to complete their household chores, they encouraged their children to use a device individually.

We believe the finding that the assistance children require depends on the digital tool being used is of particular importance to educators. Teachers need to be aware of the children's developing competencies with different digital tools and understand that all children may need some direct assistance in operating digital devices. For example, children familiar with older forms of technology (e.g., desktop computers) might not be as familiar with accessing activities through digital icon texts as are those children who have access to these types of tools within the home. Similarly, those children who were accustomed to accessing texts through digital icons may not be as familiar with initiating searches and selecting from lists of search results. Thus, regardless of the tool, children are learning operational competencies upon which teachers can build in the classroom. As O'Hara (2011) points out, we should shift our focus in the classroom away from talking about children's unequal access to equipment and towards assisting them in "using ICT [information and communications technology] to live well in contemporary society" (p. 222).

Conclusions

This study contributes to the literature on young children's techno-literacy practices by describing the digital activity of children from culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse homes. Specifically, this study suggests that, through their

interactions with digital tools within the cultural and economic landscapes of their home, young children develop operational competencies that facilitate their accessing digital texts to support their learning. And, although parents provide assistance when needed, because of concerns regarding screen time, parents also limit their children's access to digital tools and digital texts within the home regardless of their socioeconomic status. Thus, rather than focusing on what makes them divided, this study conceptualizes the digital experiences of young children in terms of their similarities.

In keeping with the theme of this special issue, we also suggest that, through their engagement in digital literacy practices within the home, the children are developing operational competencies that may allow them, as they grow older, to use digital tools to become informed about issues in their community, to connect with others from within the community, and to provide them with a platform to share their ideas with other members of the community. In other words, by engaging in digital practices within the home, young children from culturally and economically diverse homes have the opportunity to develop into capable and committed 21st century citizens.

We acknowledge a number of limitations that prevent the generalizability of these findings. First, data were collected from five families representing two cultural groups. Furthermore, two of the participants in the second study were siblings. Future research should include collecting data within the homes of families from multiple cultural and linguistic communities who vary in terms of family composition. Second, due to the Nicola's inability to speak Karen, any conversations that took place between the children and their mothers in Karen needed to be translated into English either by the children or by Zipporah who was acting as Nicola's research assistant. Finally, we acknowledge that our presence in the homes affected the children's usual engagement in activities. However, prolonged engagement and persistent observation should have helped ameliorate or overcome these potential risks.

Acknowledgements

The first author is appreciative of the financial support of The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. All three authors are grateful to the families for their participation in these two studies and for welcoming us into their homes. We confirm that the two studies from which we drew the data observed the Tri-Council Ethical Guidelines or appropriate guidelines related to the ethical conduct of research.

References

Alper, M. (2011). Developmentally appropriate New Media Literacies: Supporting cultural competencies and social skills in early childhood education. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy, 13*(2), 175-196.

Barton, D., & Hamilton, M. (2000). Literacy practices. In D. Barton, M. Hamilton, & R. Ivanic (Eds.), *Situated literacies: Reading and writing in context* (pp. 7-15). London: Routledge.

Davidson, C. (2009). Young children's engagement with digital texts and literacies in the home: Pressing matters for the teaching of English in the early years of schooling. *English Teaching: Practice and Critique, 8* (3), 36-54.

Gilhooly, D., & Lee, E. (2014). The role of digital literacy practices on refugee resettlement. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 57*, 387-396.

Gregory, E. (2001). Sisters and brothers as language and literacy teachers: Synergy between siblings playing and working together. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy, 1*, 301-322.

Gregory, E., Ruby, M., & Kenner, C. (2010). Modelling and close observation: Ways of teaching and learning between third generation Bangladeshi British children and their grandparents in London. *Early Years, 30*, 161-173.

Gutnick, A., Robb, M., Takeuchi, L., & Kotler, J. (2011). *Always connected: The new digital media habits of young children*. Retrieved from http://www.joanganzcooneycenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/jgcc_alwaysconnected.pdf

Heath, S. (1983). *Ways with words*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.

Kress, G. (1997). *Before writing: Rethinking the paths to literacy*. London, UK: Routledge.

Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Marsh. J. (2004). The techno-literacy practices of young children. *Journal of Early Childhood Research, 2*(1), 51-66.

Marsh J., Plowman L., Yamada-Rice D., Bishop J., Lahmar J., Scott F., Davenport A., Davis S., French K., Piras M., Thornhill, S. (2015). *Exploring Play and Creativity in Pre-Schoolers' Use of Apps: Technology and Play*. Economic and Social Research Council. Available at: http://www.techandplay.org/tap-media-pack.pdf

McPake, J., Stephen, C., Plowman, L., Sime, D., & Downey, S. (2005). Already at a disadvantage? ICT in the home and children's preparation for primary school. *ICT Research Bursaries 2004-Final Report*. Retrieved from http://www.york.ac.uk/res/e-society/projects/3/already_disadvantage.pdf

O'Hara, M. (2011). Young children's ICT experiences in the home: Some parental perspectives. *Journal of Early Childhood Research, 9*(3), 220-231.

O'Mara, J., & Laidlaw, L. (2011). Living in the iworld: Two literacy researchers reflect on the changing texts and literacy practices of childhood. *English Teaching: Practice and Critique, 10*(4), 149-159.

Omerbašič, D. (2015). Literacy as a translocal practices: Digital multimodal literacy practices among girls resettled as refugees. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 58*, 472-481.

Plowman, L., McPake, J., & Stephen, C. (2008). Just picking it up? Young children learning with technology at home. *Cambridge Journal of Education, 38*(3), 303-319.

Plowman, L., McPake, J., & Stephen, C. (2010). The technologisation of childhood? Young children and technology in the home. *Children & Society, 24*, 63-74.

Plowman, L., Stevenson, O., McPake, J., Stephen, C., & Adey, C. (2011). Parents, pre-schoolers and learning with technology at home: Some implcations for policy. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning, 27* (4), 361-371.

Plowman, L., Stevenson, O., Stephen, C., & McPake, J. (2012). Preschool children's learning with technology at home. *Computers & Education, 59*, 30-37.

Purcell-Gates, V. (1996). Stories, coupons, and the "TV Guide:" relationship between home literacy experiences and emergent literacy knowledge. *Reading Research Quarterly, 31*, 406-428.

Purcell-Gates, V., Perry, K., & Briseño, A. (2011). Analyzing literacy practice: Grounded theory to model. *Research in the Teaching of English*, *45*(4), 439-458.
Quadros, S., & Sarroub, L. (2016). The case of three Karen refugee women and their children: Literacy practices in a family literacy context. *Diaspora, Indigenous, and Minority Education, 10,* 28-41.
Rideout, V. (2011). *Zero to eight: Children's media use in America*. Retrieved from https://www.commonsensemedia.org/research/zero-to-eight-childrens-media-use-in-america
Rogoff, B. (1990). *Apprenticeship in thinking*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
Stephen, C., Stevenson, O., & Adey, C. (2013). Young children engaging with technologies at home: The influence of family context. *Journal of Early Childhood Research*, *11*(2), 149-164.
Taylor, D. (1983). *Family literacy: Young children learning to read and write*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
Taylor, D., & Dorsey-Gaines, C. (1988). *Growing up literate: Learning from inner-city families*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in society*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
Wertsch, J. (1998). *Mind as action*. New York: NY: Oxford University Press.
Wohlwend, K. (2013). *Literacy playshop: New literacies, popular media, and play in the early childhood classroom*. New York: Teacher's College Press.

Author Biographies

Nicola Friedrich is a Post Doctoral Fellow in the Department of Curriculum, Teaching, and Learning at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. She is currently participating in the NOW Play project to assess and support young children's oral language and writing development through play in classrooms and early childhood programs in northern communities. Contact: n.friedrich@utoronto.ca

Laura Teichert is a PhD candidate in the Department of Language and Literacy Education at the University of British Columbia. Before returning to studies, she worked in elementary education and as an Early Literacy Specialist. Her research interests are in the areas of early literacy and family literacy, particularly young children's digital engagement and families' digital literacy practices in their homes.

Zipporah Devadas is a Multicultural Worker with British Columbia School District #35 where she supports the literacy needs of Karen families and their children in the school and community.

Endnotes

[i] See Plowman, Stevenson, McPake, Stephen, & Adey (2011) for a full description of the three studies.
[ii] During each interview, Nicola asked questions in English. Zipporah translated the interviewer's questions into Karen. Additionally, Zipporah translated the interviewee's response into English.
[iii] All names are pseudonyms.

[iv] The child's mother described this event to Nicola during one of her visits within the home. The mother did not provide the specifics of the event, such as if the language of the cartoon was Cantonese or Mandarin.

[v] In 1989, the ruling military regime changed the name from Burma to Myanmar. Canada does not recognize the name Myanmar and continues to refer to the country as Burma.

Using a Graphic Novel Project to Engage Indigenous Youth in Critical Literacies

ALEXIS BROWN
University of Victoria

DEBORAH BEGORAY
University of Victoria

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to present the experiences of Indigenous youth when a critical literacies/Indigenous knowledges (IK) approach was used in a graphic novel creation project. We conducted research over a six-week period in two alternative high schools in British Columbia. In this paper, we look primarily at research findings from the Indigenous program. We analyzed classroom observations, the graphic novels, and transcripts of semi-structured interviews according to four principles of critical literacy: understanding power, control, and equity of information; collaboration using multiple perspectives; authentic and multimodal learning; and enacting social change and civic engagement.

Keywords

critical literacies, graphic novels, Indigenous adolescents

Introduction

Canadian colonial education practices have failed to support Indigenous ways of living, learning, and knowing, and have resulted in the marginalization of Indigenous students. In British Columbia, provincial statistics continue to demonstrate that Indigenous adolescents have a lower high-school graduation rate (64%) than their non-Indigenous peers (86%) (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2016). Previous research indicates that a lack of culturally appropriate curriculum, explicit teaching, and high expectations of Indigenous students has created disengagement and resistance among Indigenous youth (Battiste, 2013; Hare & Pidgeon, 2011; Pirbhai-Illich, 2010). Despite scholars calling for researchers, educators and curriculum writers to decolonize educational practices, little attention has been given to ways in which classrooms might better address the needs of Indigenous adolescents (Hare & Pidgeon, 2011). In particular, there is minimal research on language and literacy learning with Indigenous adolescents, which is fundamental to high-school success (Banister & Begoray, 2013). In order to decolonize language and literacy learning for Indigenous adolescents there is a need to shift educational pedagogy towards knowledge as embedded in place and experiences, and learning models that represent action and sharing (Battiste, 2013) and being civically engaged (Deer, 2013). Battiste argues that "action brings humanity and creativity to life, and doing and being turn life into knowledge and wisdom" (p.114). Therefore, there is a need to focus on engaging and empowering Indigenous youth in culturally appropriate ways (Battiste, 2013; Deer, 2013; Mills et al., 2016).

Culturally responsive education for Indigenous youth emphasizes the importance of enabling students to use different perspectives, of drawing on student's culture, identity, and communities, and of helping youth to take social action to remedy problems within the school context (see for example, Brayboy & Castagno, 2009; Deer, 2013). Critical literacies, an educational approach to learning that encourages the critique of dominant ideologies, and the empowerment and enactment of social change, is one promising avenue to support Indigenous students (Luke, 2012; New London Group, 1996; Riley, 2015; Shor, 1999). By taking a critical literacies approach to learning students have opportunities to "see and respond to instances of injustice, expand the identities that they might take up, and participate in communities in service of social change" (Riley, 2015, p. 413) through multimodal forms of expression. As such, the use of multimodal projects that appeal to adolescents, such as the creation of graphic novels (Griffith, 2010) to tell stories of their choice through words and pictures, might make it possible to draw all these purposes together.

In this paper, we describe a research project designed to explore the diverse experiences of 11 high school Indigenous youth when a critical literacies approach was used for a unit that invited students to write and illustrate a graphic novel. This research was part of a larger study examining the processes through which Indigenous and non-Indigenous adolescents develop *critical media health literacy* (Wharf Higgins & Begoray, 2012): the ability to work critically with health information within various types of media. The previous studies (Begoray & Fu, 2015; Begoray, Wharf Higgins, & Wilmot, 2014; Wilmot, Begoray, & Banister, 2013) had students writing the storyline, creating storyboards, and developing characters; however, a professional artist was commissioned to illustrate the graphic novels. In this study we instituted a collaborative approach between two different schools, in which the graphic novel would be entirely produced by students. The students in the Indigenous cultural program at one high school were the writers and story developers of the graphic novels, while students from an arts-based high school were tasked with the illustrations.

For the purpose of this article, we focus on the experiences of the Indigenous youth who participated in writing and creating a graphic novel. We hoped that their involvement would serve as a means of empowering them through civic engagement. We further sought to expand on the repertoire of culturally responsive classroom practices. The student-writers selected topics about the impacts of media on their lives, and created storylines to express how youth could make positive social change or seek support for positive change. The graphic novels were designed with a slightly younger audience (11-14 years) in mind and the school district published them in hard copy and electronic form. Thus, they were made publicly available as a learning resource for teachers and students.

Researchers' Position Within the Study

Both researchers are Canadian-born, white, female, academics and educators, and as such acknowledge it is important to explain our relationship to the local territory, Indigenous education, and the process of decolonizing language and literacy learning. The first author (Alexis Brown) lives in the traditional territory of the Secwepemc people, and was previously a high-school teacher within the school district that the project took place. The second author (Deborah Begoray) lives and works on the unceded territory of

Salish and Coast Salish peoples. She has done extensive research in collaboration with Indigenous students, teachers and Elders. Both researchers are working towards allying themselves with those who are engaged in decolonizing education (Battiste, 2013; Regan, 2010) and in taking action as called upon by the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada* (TRC) "developing culturally appropriate curricula" (TRC, 2015, section 10. iii p.149). In working towards being allies and in decolonizing education, it is important that we acknowledge our experiences as non-Indigenous, and one of privilege located within a colonial system. We believe that the importance of personal truth-telling and the making of space for IK, cultures, and experiences are the responsibility of everyone involved in decolonizing education (Battiste, 2013; Regan, 2010).

Theoretical Frameworks

In this study, we have applied a sociocultural framework (Gee, 1992; Vygotsky, 1989), emphasizing both collaborative work and the culture of Indigenous ways of learning and knowing (Battiste, 2013; Brayboy & Maughan, 2009). In particular, Indigenous ways of learning and knowing include knowledge as rooted in location and experience (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005; Battiste, 2013; 2002; Brayboy & Maughan, 2009; Hare, 2012). A sociocultural framework identifies literacy learning and practices as socially constructed through collaboration and experiences, and embedded in cultural, political and historical contexts.

Drawing on sociocultural theory, Gee (1992) used the term *Discourses* with a capital "D" as a way to name literacy practices found in different lifeworlds, and argues that Discourses are a "distinctive and integrated way of thinking, acting, interacting, talking, and valuing connected with a particular social identity or role, with its own unique history, and often with its own distinctive 'props'" (p. 33). IK systems and lifeworlds connect to sociocultural theory in that Indigenous learning and ways of knowing are connected to place, embedded in language, stories, and experiences, and tied to the community (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005; Battiste, 2013; 2002; Brayboy & Maughan, 2009). Scholars working in the field of IK and ways of learning (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005; Brayboy & Maughan, 2009; Battiste, 2002; 2013; Kanu, 2011) have identified distinct features of Indigenous ways of learning: learning as holistic (mental, physical, emotional, spiritual), learning as a lifelong process, and learning as experiential (observing and doing) and authentic.

We also used a critical literacies (Freire, 1970; Luke, 2012; Shor, 1999) framework for this study. Shor says that:

> [C]ritical literacy is language use that questions the social construction of the self. When we are critically literate, we examine our ongoing development, to reveal the subjective positions from which we make sense of the world and act in it. All of us grow up and live in local cultures set in global contexts where multiple discourses shape us. (p. 2)

Shor acknowledges the subjective or personal experiences in which individuals live and make sense of the world. As such, a critical literacies approach to education is "a way to talk and think about students as knowledge-holders and producers, and a way to talk and think about teachers' pedagogical practices" (Avila & Pandya, 2012, p.1). It also

represents a political and historical orientation and attitude (Luke, 2012; Shor, 1999) towards literacy, learning and education.

Shor's (1999) definition is also congruent with concepts of IK. Brayboy and Maughan (2009) explain that:

> Indigenous knowledges are rooted in the lived experiences of people; these experiences highlight the philosophies, beliefs, values, and educational processes of entire communities. Indigenous peoples come to know things by living their lives and adding to a set of cumulative experiences that serve as guideposts for both individual and communities over time. In other words, individuals live and enact their knowledge and, in the process, engage further in the process of coming to be – of forming a way of engaging others and the world. (p. 3)

Brayboy and Maughan's understanding of IK emphasizes the importance of the social construction of the self through lived experiences, in which those experiences guide the individual in how they make sense of who they are and how they interact in the world. Shor's definition of critical literacy also emphasizes the importance of the social construction of the self through examining individual development and revealing the local cultures and discourse, or experiences, which shape who we are.

Critical literacies highlights four major principles that include examining issues relating to power, control, and equity of information; engaging in authentic learning; using collaborative and multiple perspectives to make meaning; and enacting social change through civic engagement (see for example, Alvermann, 2009; Freire, 1970; Janks, 2014; Luke, 2012; New London Group, 1996; Riley, 2015; Shor, 1999; Street, 2003). We chose the four highlighted principles to categorize our findings.

Review of the Literature

Among both Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars in education, there has been a call to decolonize education (Battiste, 2013; Murray-Orr et al., 2013; St. Denis, 2007). *Decolonizing* includes the recognition and acknowledgement of the atrocious past treatment of Indigenous peoples such as the use of residential schools, treaties and government policies meant to force assimilation. Further, decolonization outcomes include "the need for systemic awareness of everyone and the reconciliation and healing in educational systems" (Battiste, 2013, p. 107). Therefore, a shift in educational pedagogies needs to occur from a predominant focus on Western approaches in order to make space for IK, ways of learning, and self-determination. This "two-eyed seeing" encourages an intersection of approaches (Murray-Orr et al., 2013) which helps to create a more culturally responsive curriculum (Brayboy & Castango, 2009). In particular, critical literacies approaches include the significance of action for civic engagement, which aligns with decolonizing education and IK as action for humanity becomes knowledge and wisdom (Battiste, 2013; Deer, 2013).

IK and Literacy Learning

Scholars and researchers in the field of IK and ways of learning (Battiste, 2013; Hare, 2012) remind us that IK are a complex system that is embedded in local places and as such there are differences from one territory and community to another. There are more than 600 First Nations in Canada and each one has its unique customs, language, social structure, and history (Ball, 2004). However, as mentioned above, many scholars (e.g., Battiste, 2013; Brayboy & Maughan, 2009; Hare & Pidgeon, 2011; Murray-Orr et al., 2013) agree that there are some overarching values and beliefs in IK that include the significance of community and community members, collaboration, and dialogue, as well as a belief in importance of the land, wisdom of Elders, and spirituality.

Research with Indigenous youth engaging with IK in the classroom shows that these youth are more engaged and motivated, and feel more positive about themselves and their cultures (Brayboy & Castagno, 2009; Hare, 2012; Kanu, 2011). For example, Kanu's research with self-identified Aboriginal youth in Manitoba sought the voices of the youth in order to investigate the influence of culture on learning and to identify aspects of cultural socialization that students utilized to respond to curriculum and learning in the high school classroom. She found that students showed a great level of familiarity with cultural practices and knowledge structures within the community. As well, students demonstrated comfort, authority and knowledge when asked about cultural practices and learning structures such as the use of stories, observation, the importance of community support, and experiential learning. Further, students were able to identify how they might mediate their in-school learning through cultural practices such as receiving more oral instruction and working in groups to support one another. Students maintained that the 'self' emerges from cultural and communal situations, explaining that they work better in collaborative and cooperative group learning situations. The students also indicated preferences to learning through observing and doing, stories, community, and visual modalities.

Similarly, Hare's (2012) study of five different Aboriginal Head Start On Reserve programmes in western Canada sought to understand how early childhood literacy programs can be enhanced with IK. Although this study was not conducted with adolescents, the findings still reveal the significance of literacy learning in relation to IK through the use of oral traditions, land-based experiences, and ceremonial practices. Many of the children's families recognized the significance of IK and the links to enhancing school literacy skills, particularly through the use of storytelling (Hare, 2012). Other forms of literacy acknowledged were land-based experiences like picking berries, fishing, hunting, making baskets, dancing, singing, and participation in traditional ceremonies. Hare's (2012) study relates to Kanu's (2011) in that IK and ways of learning for Indigenous youth should include the use of collaboration, stories, community, visuals, and authentic learning through participation.

Critical Literacies and Culturally Responsive Education

Many facets of critical literacies, such as authentic and collaborative learning, and the use of multimodalities and multiliteracies, are recognized by scholars as culturally appropriate and culturally responsive education for Indigenous students (Hare, 2011; 2012; Mills et al., 2016; Patrick, Budach, & Muckpaloo, 2013; Stanton & Sutton, 2012). Drawing on concepts of community-based literacy practices, along with multiliteracies

and critical literacies, Stanton and Sutton's participatory action research with Indigenous high-school students in the U.S. examined how students were able to draw on oral and visual literacies to enhance written literacy skills. Stanton and Sutton argued that culturally responsive education includes uses of place-based literacies, and that uses of literacies other than writing can increase motivation and engagement for youth in school. The researchers worked with students to produce a photovoice project as well as conducting interviews with Elders around important local community issues. The researchers found that through this project students could explore and respond to community challenges such as the limited access to transportation and healthy food on reserve; identify themes connected with dignity and sovereignty; act in response to information such as the need to adopt healthy behaviours; connect to cultural and civic forms of literacy such as discussing boycotting the local store, developing a community garden, and reintroducing traditional foods; collaborate and connect to their local community by consulting with parents, Elders, and council; and share their findings with community leaders and Elders. Stanton and Sutton also found that the projects "helped students view literacy development as a holistic, collaborative, and powerful process" (p. 83).

In another study focused on multimodal projects, Mills et al. (2016) explored culturally inclusive approaches to literacy with Indigenous youth. They argued that current approaches to literacy pedagogy must follow IK in a time of increased digital and technological communications. The students in their study were asked to retell an Indigenous Dreamtime story from South East Queensland using multimodal forms and specific digital technologies. Findings from the study included the significance of trans-generational knowledge, multimodal forms of knowledge, placed or territorial knowledge, and collective knowledge. Mills et al. (2016) advocate for more research on culturally responsive education for Indigenous youth, particularly with regards to accessing powerful language and the use of public platforms in situating students in local and global contexts.

Graphic Novels and Adolescent Literacy Practices

A graphic novel is a book-length, fiction or nonfiction story produced in the style of a comic book (Danzak, 2011). Graphic novels are popular with adolescents (Griffith, 2010; Smetana et al., 2009) and have proven worthy as quality literature (Pantaleo, 2015; Seelow, 2010). Some examples are *Maus* (Speigelman, 1980) which deals with the Holocaust; *Fun Home* (Bechdel, 2007) on sexuality; and *Red* (Yahgulanaas, 2009) which concerns the consequences of violence and revenge in a Haida community. *Red* was written and illustrated by an Indigenous author and features a Haida tale told with Japanese-influenced manga style illustrations.

Graphic novels combine print and visuals in ways that engage youth in the reading experience (Begoray & Fu, 2015; Wilmot, Begoray, & Banister, 2013). Schieble (2014) comments on the importance of "fostering a complex and structural understanding of racism and power while simultaneously building students' critical thinking and interpretive skills" (p. 47) through critical reading of graphic novels. Such construction of critical thinking and interpretation is possible by looking closely at both images and print in a graphic novel. For example, Schieble suggests examining the depiction of characters

in *American Born Chinese* (Yang, 2006) to notice stereotypical clothing and animal features to determine the author's message about racism against Chinese immigrants.

Creating graphic novels with youth is a further step that moves students "beyond passive consumers of texts to active producers of knowledge" (Seelow, 2010, p. 57) and offers a variety of literacies to engage and motivate adolescents (Stanton & Sutton, 2012). Such compositions can also engage students in critical literacy; that is, in the consideration of how to represent power issues (Bitz, 2006). The creation of socioculturally shaped, multimodal artifacts (Serafini, 2015) offer students, especially those from non-dominant cultures, a chance to explore their identity and life experiences. Such a classroom opportunity is a culturally responsive literacy experience (Mills et al., 2016). Indigenous students' ability to learn is strongly tied to how harmoniously their cultural identities match that which they are to learn or the pedagogical practices, such as the use of IK, used in the learning environment (Pirbhai-Illich, 2010).

Methodology

Using a qualitative case study approach (Yin, 2014), we conducted a six-week collaborative graphic novel project with Indigenous students (n=11) ranging in Grades 10 to 12 from an Indigenous cultural school program in one high school; and with students (n=16) in Grades 10 to 12 who identified as both Indigenous and non-Indigenous in an arts-based school program at a different high school. The focus of this article is on the students in the Indigenous cultural school program. The student participants in the study all identified as Indigenous and came from different communities within British Columbia, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba.

This research project took place on the unceded land of the Tk'emlups te Secwepemc and the traditional territory of the Secwepemc people. The Indigenous cultural program is located within an urban alternative high school where students who self-identify as Indigenous may choose a school program that includes access to cultural enhancing activities such as Elders' circles, drum group, art, *Lahal* tournaments,[1] outdoor retreats, and canoeing. We were able to gain access to the school because Alexis (first author) had taught at the alternative high school and was therefore a former colleague of the teacher involved. We asked: How might creating graphic novels help to reveal Indigenous youth's critical perceptions of power in the media and its influence on their well-being? How might a critical literacies graphic novel project serve as a culturally responsive classroom practice to empower Indigenous youth?

Students in the Indigenous cultural program wrote the storylines for the graphic novels, and students in the arts-based school illustrated the graphic novels with input from the writers. Although Deborah's (second author) previous research on graphic novel creation had utilized a professional artist, we wanted to provide an opportunity for students from different high schools to collaborate in order to have graphic novels that were entirely done by students. As well, due to time constraints within each program, and the large undertaking of the project, having the students share the development of the novels was more feasible for the classroom teachers and their students. The students in

[1] *Lahal* is a traditional Secwepemc guessing game that includes teams of six people, and the use of 11-13 sticks and 4 bones. Lahal is played on special occasions, celebrations and gatherings.

the Indigenous cultural program were chosen to be the writers as it fit within the classroom teacher's goals of wanting to engage her students in meaningful writing practices. The teacher in the arts-based program wanted to provide her media-arts students with an authentic opportunity to produce a product within a collaborative "client-like" relationship.

Students from both the high schools did not know each other, and due to the different schedules and proximity of the schools from one another, did not meet face to face until the graphic novel launch party to celebrate their publications. As such, Alexis moved between the two schools to facilitate dialogue between the writers and artists. The writers and artists communicated through file folders and post-it notes that contained the storylines, developing images and commentary. The writers were able to make comments and ask for illustration revisions from the artists. Along with the classroom teacher, Alexis also provided instruction on critical literacies, media, and health. The classroom lessons included critical literacies instruction and discussions on power, knowledge, and equity of information, particularly through media. For example, students were asked to view commercials, music videos, and magazine images. Whole class discussions around the media images or videos occurred when students were asked to consider the following: What is the purpose of this media message? Who produced it? Who is the intended audience and how do you know that? Who might benefit from this message and who might be harmed? What strategies were used to grab your attention? What information was given and what was left out? What values are evident in the messages? Do they represent you? Is this information trustworthy? Why do you think so?

The students in the Indigenous cultural program also had instruction on Indigenous identities, stereotypes, and the media from a member of their community, which included further discussions about power, knowledge, and equity of information. Students were asked to brainstorm what their Indigenous cultural values and identities were (Fig. 1) and contrast their values with the values and identities of the mainstream media (Fig. 2).

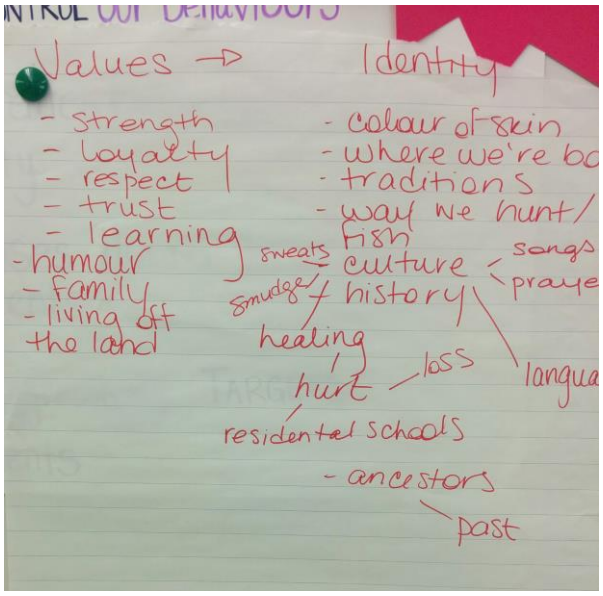

Figure 1. Brainstorm of Indigenous cultural values

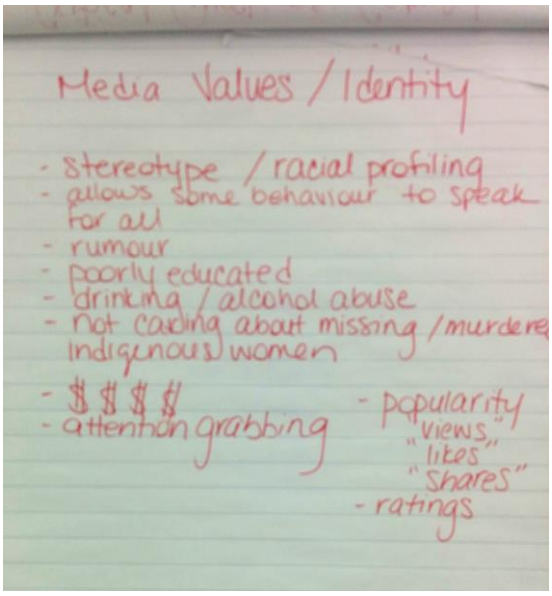

Figure 2. Brainstorm of media values

Other approaches to involving students with critical literacies were achieved through the writing and designing of the novels, choosing topics that were important and relevant to their lives, opportunity to collaborate within their own classroom and between the two schools, and having their novels printed and presented at a graphic novel launch party. Writers and artists met each other and unveiled their work to members of the school district, the press, and the general public including local band members.

Data was collected through classroom observations, examination of youth-produced graphic novels and semi-structured interviews. *Nvivo* software was used to store data and support analysis (Yin, 2014). The data was transcribed and coded using the four principles of critical literacies drawn from the literature: understanding power, control, and equity of information; collaboration using multiple perspectives; authentic and multimodal learning; and enacting social change and civic engagement (Freire, 1970; Janks, 2014; Luke, 2012; New London Group, 1996; Riley, 2015; Shor, 1999). The four principles of critical literacies are used as categories below (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Yin, 2014).

Findings

Under each critical literacy principle, we discuss students' responses regarding the creation of their graphic novels to reveal critical perceptions of power in the media and its influence on their well-being. All names used in the findings are pseudonyms.

Understanding Power, Control, and Equity of Information

During the early stages of the project, the students were engaged in discussions on power, control, and equity of information in the media. Students were asked to look at various types of media and to critically analyze the message and purpose of those sources; and consider the topics of Indigenous identity, media, and stereotypes. As well,

Alexis shared a graphic novel (*No Sale, Skèlèp!)* also written by Indigenous adolescents (Deana Asham, Alexander Corbett, Samantha Douglas, Spencer Rennie, Paige Rivers, and Maria Thomas, 2014) to further discussions on media related messages and provide an example for considering their own graphic novel storylines. By drawing on these lessons, the students were able to express their understanding of power and control of information in the media through examples of cultural identities that were present in their own graphic novels. In Figures 1 and 2 above, for example, students show that they understand the differences between Indigenous and media values, contrasting for instance how Indigenous ways of knowing values family and how dominant media messages values money. When students were asked about why they chose a particular topic to write about, their understanding of media stereotypes is shown once again. One student, Wes, said:

> *Well, no one else in the class was doing this kind of stuff and we thought it would be a great idea to make a novel about it, just sort of like the other one you showed us, but [with] Aboriginal people [...] how the stereotypes are on Aboriginal people and how not everyone is like that.*

Wes recognized that Indigenous peoples are often missing from media, or if present, they are often misrepresented by the media. His group's graphic novel addressed stereotypes and racism that Indigenous teenagers face such as being "drunks" or "violent" (Friedel, 2010). They included Indigenous voices in their graphic novel to address the issue of Indigenous voice and identity being usually absent in the media. During the classes where the students were working on their storylines, Wes and a group of his friends shared previous experiences they had had regarding stereotyping and racism, including being asked to remove their bags when in a convenience store while their non-Indigenous peers were not asked; or being overtly followed around in a department store when shopping for clothes. These types of experiences that include stereotyping or racism are not uncommon for Indigenous teenagers to face (Friedel, 2010; Hare & Pidgeon, 2011), and Wes and his peers wanted to change the narrative to represent the resilience of Indigenous peoples and the importance they place on community and family values.

Another student writer, Hugh, commented on his topic choice:

> *Because I've had a lot of close friends lose their moms and such over the past 15 years, and like I've really got close with many of them […] it just seems like the police department in general doesn't really put that much effort into it [...] because if you go on Facebook or search up First Nations Aboriginal people I guarantee you within the first 200 things you find on it, one of them it's going to say a "drunk native," and not every native goes out and drinks and all that. Then whenever someone goes missing they just probably think it's oh, it's probably reasons of drinking as well.*

Hugh is referring to the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women, the topic of the novel he co-authored. His personal experiences with the topic, along with his belief that media portrays Aboriginal peoples as "drunk natives" demonstrates his understanding of power, control, and equity of information in the media. Hugh's decision

to write on the topic of missing and murdered Indigenous women displays a sense of cultural identity in that he expresses the misrepresentations of his culture and the need to contribute to an important conversation happening between Indigenous communities and the government.

Hugh's co-author, Randy, responded to the same question by saying that:

> *It makes them [the people who will read the novel] more aware that not everybody's caring for everybody and a lot of people are just worried about [themselves], not so worried about the Indigenous women or any other Indigenous people that are going through hard times. Knowing that they don't have much on their side to help them out.*

When asked why he and his partner chose the topic of missing and murdered Indigenous women, Randy poignantly stated that "not everybody's caring for everybody," a core understanding of the importance of community and the need to look out for each other. Randy and Hugh both articulate the opinion that although Indigenous people have been largely left out of mainstream media, they see society as a larger community in which everyone should be involved and cared for. Embedded in these responses is the importance of community, an integral aspect of IK (Brayboy & Maughan, 2009).

Collaborating Using Multiple Perspectives

All the students in the Indigenous program take part in group activities such as Elders' circles, team sports, drum group, and other off-site group activities. However they are expected to learn on their own through individualized and self-paced programming where they work individually in their core subjects such as English language arts. Their teacher, Ms. Wilson, admitted that she was unsure how the students would react to group lessons and collaborative work in the graphic novel project, especially when it came to sharing their work with others. During the interview at the end of the project Ms. Wilson said:

> *[I]t's interesting because initially I thought that they might not like that [working with others on a project]. Many of them are really private and they are quite shy and anxious and it was just interesting, right, to share their work. I mean sometimes I have to really remind them "you know that only I read this right?" because some of them just have such a hard time putting stuff on paper. So it's like that was a big leap for them to take, to not only share but to share it with complete [strangers]; they didn't have any idea where it's going. So it was exciting to hear that they liked it.*

In their interviews, many of the students confirmed Ms. Wilson's comments. They said that collaboration was engaging and motivating, and allowed them to share knowledge. When students were asked what they thought about the project and working with another group of students from a different school, the responses were overwhelmingly positive and shed light on the importance of sharing and building knowledge. For example, one student said:

> *It shows me more, it's getting me interested in knowing that there is somebody else that is helping me and that I don't even know them and they are helping me with a project that I'm doing with my school and it's really interesting too.* (Randy)

Though a few students noted that they liked sharing the workload of the project in terms of not having to do all the writing and drawing, other students mentioned that they enjoyed working with group members because they could support each other and learn from one another:

> *[...] the people I was working with, they helped me through it and then I helped them and we just brought everything that we could basically think of into it [writing the storyline]*. (Neil)

Hugh expressed similar sentiments, stating that:

> *It's great working with my partner on this and going around looking at other people's projects, it seems like they were really interested in their topics.* (Hugh)

Sharing knowledge and collaboration through talking and dialogue is part of Indigenous pedagogies and ways of knowing (Battiste, 2002; 2013; Brayboy & Maughan, 2009). Further, as previous research (Alvermann, 2009; Kanu, 2011) with adolescents demonstrates, collaboration is engaging and motivating for learning. The Indigenous youth in this study straddle multiple worlds that include Indigenous, Western, and adolescent worldviews. As such, adolescents want to build and share information in collaborative ways (Alvermann, 2009; Kanu, 2011), which align with Indigenous ways of learning and knowing.

Authentic and Multi-modal Learning

For authentic learning to occur, learning must be relevant and meaningful, and include multiple voices, experiences, and individual and collective backgrounds (Freire, 1970; Gee, 1991; New London Group, 1996; Shor, 1999). Further, authentic learning includes expression of thoughts and ideas in multi-modal and multiliterate ways (Alvermann, 2009; New London Group, 1996; Street, 2003). Students in this study made strong connections to concepts of authentic and multi-modal learning in that they expressed the importance of the topics they chose, the need to voice and share knowledge of their topics in mainstream media, and the use of a graphic novel as a communication platform. Students drew on issues that they wanted to address with regards to their community such as the need for ongoing investigations into murdered and missing Indigenous women, understanding residential schools, and media-perpetuated stereotypes of "the drunken native." One student, when asked which parts of the novel were most meaningful, said:

> *Meaningful wise it's like residential school has put a toll on my family, my grandmother and so on have been through it and people that I even know throughout my mom's social work career or just meeting them, I've heard many*

> *stories so it just brought my mind to a conclusion that this would be the thing I wanted to work on because it's pretty important.* (Neil)

Students also showed increased investment and interest once they started to see their stories turn into graphic novels. Referring to the abilities of the high-school art students who would be illustrating their work one writer commented:

> *It's pretty cool actually knowing that there are people this talented to do work like this at such a young age.* (Mika)

Another student commented that:

> *I can say that the people [student artists] who actually turned the writing and the characters we had at first into an actual graphic novel as I can look right now, like I wouldn't have this any better than it is already [...] This is a great opportunity to get together with people and just talk about one subject, like most schools, they don't really show this, or do this stuff with the students; they don't interact with the students as much as like this.* (Hugh)

The use of authentic and multimodal learning showed increased engagement and investment in learning, aligning with research findings from Stanton and Sutton (2012), who also found that authentic learning through a community project engaged and motivated Indigenous students. Authentic and multimodal learning is also in alignment with Indigenous ways of learning as learning is meant to be relevant and experiential (D'warte, 2014; Murray-Orr et al., 2013; Patrick, Budach, & Muckpaloo, 2013; Stanton & Sutton, 2012). Through selecting topics that were of relevance and importance to themselves and their community, as well as creating a graphic novel in which they determined the look and layout of their story, students were able to experience, demonstrate, and share their understanding and learning.

Enacting Social Change and Civic Engagement

Through both the production of the graphic novels, which were designed to be used in future classrooms, and the development of the graphic novel characters and storylines, students demonstrated civic engagement and ways to enact social change. Students expressed ideas around empowerment and sharing knowledge in order to make change. As Alfred et al. (2007) remind us about fostering greater engagement: "Indigenous youth require opportunities to engage in activities that privilege Indigenous histories and experiences, and they stress the need for these activities to be accessible to Indigenous communities as well as formal education institutions" (p. 16). When asked about their favourite parts of their graphic novels, many of the students said they liked how their main characters became engaged. Examples include:

Figure 3. The characters organize a rally for loved ones in Randy's graphic novel

[w]hen one of the characters decides to take [actions] in his own hands to do what he feels is right to do and he does a protest and gets people together that are in the same situation or kind of the same situation. (Randy, in reference to Fig. 3)

Figure 4. The characters create a Facebook page and take action in Wes' graphic novel

The part where they made the [Facebook] page to show that not all Aboriginal people are what the media portrays them as. Like there are some out there like that but they have the reasons for them to be who they are, but then there are others [...] that aren't [...] and they want to prove it to people. (Wes, referring to Fig. 4)

When students were asked what they thought about their graphic novels being used in future classrooms as a teaching tool they responded with hope that their messages would help others:

> *I don't know if this is going to be helpful or not, but I hope it is because people need to know that there's actually quite a lot of people in this world today dealing with these problems [...] and that's there's actually places where you can go to seek help [...] and you really shouldn't feel alone about it [...] or ashamed of it because these problems weren't caused by the person themselves.* (Mika)

Another student articulated his desire that others would read his novel in order to open a discussion on the missing parts of his history:

> *I'm hoping that they will keep reading [the graphic novel] and they will figure out what [residential schools] has done to traditions and what it has done to the Bands and Nations and what media portrayed about it, and that [schools and media] didn't bring it to attention as early as they should have.* (Neil)

Neil's words above also convey the importance he places on empathy. Neil hoped that the story would allow others to understand what residential schools have done to Aboriginal cultures, while another student expresses the need for people to truly care and understand that some people need help:

> *We were thinking about what was going on right now and what would be important to get the word out, too, so that people know about it [...] and just to help out [...] There are people out there that don't have as much help as other people [...] and they would just like more help [...] Those people who care a lot wish everybody could understand or care* (Randy)

Students recognized that Indigenous voices have largely been left out of media and mainstream conversations, and articulated the idea that they want other people to know and understand their experiences, to express more empathy for those who are struggling, and to let those who are struggling know they are not alone. Further, students developed their own voices and pathways to change by embedding positive action through civic engagement within their novels.

Discussion and Implications

Students understood the nature of power and the misrepresentations of their cultures in the media. Embedded within their expressions of cultural identity and misrepresentations was the significance of sharing knowledge and recognizing the power of their own voices. Many of the students expressed the importance of and need to share

both personal and community experiences, and to "re-present" (Madden, Higgins, & Korteweg, 2013) their cultural identities. The students valued learning from each other, and being part of a wider public conversation. From these findings, educators might consider ways to involve community members as part of the value of sharing knowledge, and create opportunities for students to share their own knowledge with each other, and within the broader community.

Students also expressed the value they placed on having a wider audience, such as other students, teachers, and district administrators, so their voices could be heard. At the beginning of the project the students were informed that their novels were to be written as a teaching resource for younger adolescents, and would be made publicly available in the school district. When the students were asked how they felt about collaborating with others and producing novels for future students to read and learn, their responses were filled full of expressions of both happiness and gratitude in that "somebody cares" about what they had to say. Students also expressed that they hoped what they had to say would help other people understand more about a particular situation, or let others know that they were not alone in their struggles. Again, educators must be aware of the importance of sharing knowledge, but also in providing authentic opportunities for students to share their learning beyond a classroom or school environment.

Increased student interest and investment in the project was especially linked with how the students felt about the topics they were writing, the collaborative aspect of the project, and use of visuals as a means to translate their stories. This finding is in alignment with other research (Alvermann, 2009; Wilmot, Begoray, & Banister, 2013; Fecho, Coombs, & McAuley, 2012; Hare, 2012; Kanu, 2011) on the importance of collaboration for teenagers, and especially Indigenous youth, who value working and learning with and from others. In order for educators to be more inclusive generally, and culturally responsive specifically, it is important that learning is collaborative, authentic, and multimodal in order for students to express their understandings in meaningful ways.

Conclusion

We demonstrate through this research that a collaborative, critical literacies project on creating graphic novels resulted in these Indigenous students' increased engagement, motivation and investment in classroom work. As well the students in the study made connections to the importance of sharing knowledge, cultural identity and locating cultural misrepresentations. Finally, through the use of the graphic novel format and using Indigenous ways of knowing in a classroom, students were able to find a voice on critical media health literacy topics affecting them and their communities. Battiste (2013) argues that

> [a]s educators and teachers begin to confront new schemes of Indigenous knowledge and learning […] they will need to identify new processes. These include raising the collective voice of Indigenous peoples, exposing the injustices in our colonial history, deconstructing the past by critically examining the social, political, economic, and emotional reasons for silencing Aboriginal voices […] (p. 167)

While the education system still has much work to do in order to appropriately address and include IK and ways of learning, we hope that our research using a critical literacies approach contributes to the ongoing conversation on how educators can help raise the collective voice of Indigenous peoples. This process can start with increasing the civic engagement of Indigenous adolescents. As previously stated, we are "advocating for research with/by Indigenous youth that brings youth together and increases their stock of knowledge, tools and methods as well as gathers strength and resolve" (Korteweg & Bissell, 2015, p. 15) to help resolve Indigenous issues in Canada. We see our work as one way to begin to address issues of reconciliation.

Acknowledgements

We acknowledge the generous cooperation of students, teachers and Elders who participated in this project. We further acknowledge the support of CIHR whose funding made this research possible.

References

Alfred, T., Pitawanakwat, B., & Price, J. (2007). *The meaning of political participation for Indigenous youth: Charting the course for youth civic and political participation*. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Policy Research Network. Retrieved from http://www.cprn.org/documents/48503_EN.pdf

Alvermann, D. (2009). Sociocultural constructions of adolescence and young people's literacies. In L. Christenbury, R. Bomer, & P. Smagorinsky (Eds.), *Handbook of adolescent literacy research* (pp. 14–28). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Asham, D., Corbett, A., Douglas, S., Rennie, S., Rivers, P., & Thomas, M. (Illustrated by C. Ryan). (2014). *No Sale, Skèlèp!* Victoria, BC: Begoray, Wharf Higgins, Banister and Marshall. Retrieved from http://gvpl.ca/assets/PDF/Audiences/Teens/nosalefull-comic.pdf

Avila, J., & Pandya, J. (2012). This issue. *Theory Into Practice, 51*(1), 1–3.

Ball, J. (2004). As if Indigenous knowledge and communities mattered: Transformative education in First Nations communities in Canada. *American Indian Quarterly, 28*(3/4), 454-479.

Banister, E., & Begoray, D. (2013). Using Indigenous research practices to transform Indigenous literacy education: A Canadian study. *Journal of American Indian Education, 51*(1), 65–80.

Barnhardt, R., & Kawagley, A. (2005). Indigenous knowledge systems and Alaska Native ways of knowing. *Anthropology & Education Quaterly, 36*(1), 8–23.

Battiste, M. (2002). *Indigenous knowledge and pedagogy in First Nations education: A literature review with recommendations.* Ottawa, ON: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.

Battiste, M. (2013). *Decolonizing education: Nourishing the learning spirit*. Saskatoon, SK: Purich Publishing Limited.

Bechdel, A (2007). *Fun home: A family tragicomic*. New York, NY: Mariner Books.

Begoray, D., & Fu, H. (2015). Reading *Chasing Adland*: Middle years' students in pursuit of critical media health literacy. In D. Begoray & E. Banister (Eds.) (pp. 25-44). *Adolescent health literacy and learning*. New York, NY: Nova Science Publishers Inc.

Begoray, D., Wharf Higgins, J., & Wilmot, R. (2014). *Chasing Adland*: Teaching critical media health literacy. *English Practice, 56*(1), 55-61

Bitz, M. (2006). The art of democracy/democracy as Art: Creative learning in afterschool Comic book clubs. *Afterschool Matters 7*, 2.

Brayboy, B., & Castagno, A. (2009). Self-determination through self-education: Culturally responsive schooling for Indigenous students in the USA. *Teaching Education, 20*(1), 31–53.

Brayboy, B., & Maughan, E. (2009). Indigenous knowledges and the story of the bean. *Harvard Educational Review*, *79*(1), 1.

British Columbia Ministry of Education (2016). *Aboriginal Report 2011/12 – 2015/16: How Are We Doing?* Retrieved from http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reports/pdfs/ab_hawd/Public.pdf

Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (1990). Grounded theory research: Procedures, canons, and evaluative criteria. *Qualitative Sociology, 13*(1), 3 – 21.

Danzak, R. L. (2011). Defining identities through multiliteracies: ELL teens narrate their immigration experiences as graphic stories. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 55, 187–196.

Deer, F. (2013). Integrating aboriginal perspectives in education: Perceptions of pre-service teachers. *Canadian Journal of Education, 36*(2), 175–211.

D'warte, J. (2014). Exploring linguistic repertoires: Multiple language use and multimodal literacy activity in five classrooms. *The Australian Journal of Language and Literacy, 37*(1), 21–30.

Fecho, B., Coombs, D., & McAuley, S. (2012). Reclaiming literacy classrooms through critical dialogue. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, *55*(6), 476–482.

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed.* New York, NY: Continuum.

Friedel, T. (2010). The more things change, the more they stay the same: The challenge of identity for native students in Canada. *Cultural and Pedagogical Inquiry, 1*(2), 22–45.

Gee, J. (1992). Socio-cultural approaches to literacy (literacies). *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, *12*, 31–48.

Griffith, P. (2010). Graphic novels in the secondary classroom and school libraries. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 54*(3), 181-189.

Hare, J. (2012). 'They tell a story and there's meaning behind that story': Indigenous knowledge and young indigenous children's literacy learning. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, *12*(4), 389–414.

Hare, J., & Pidgeon, M. (2011). The way of the warrior: Indigenous youth navigating the challenges of schooling. *Canadian Journal of Education, 34*(2), 93.

Janks, H. (2014). Critical literacy's ongoing importance for education. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, *57*(5), 349–356.

Kanu, Y. (2011). *Integrating Aboriginal perspectives into the school curriculum: Purposes, possibilities, and challenges*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Korteweg, L., & Bissell, A. (2015).The complexities of researching youth civic engagement in Canada with/by Indigenous youth: Settler-colonial challenges for Tikkun Olam—Pedagogies of repair and reconciliation. *Citizenship Education Research Journal, 5*(1), 14-23.

Luke, A. (2012). Critical literacy: Foundational notes. *Theory Into Practice, 51*(1), 4–11.
Madden, B., Higgins, M., & Korteweg, L. (2013). "Role models can't just be on posters": Re/membering barriers to indigenous community engagement. *Canadian Journal of Education, 36*(2), 212.
Mills, K., Davis-Warra, J., Sewell, M., & Anderson, M. (2016). Indigenous ways with literacies: Transgenerational, multimodal, placed, and collective. *Language and Education, 30*(1), 1–21.
Murray-Orr, A., Meader, J., Munroe, E., Borden, L., & Toney, D. (2013). Decolonizing Aboriginal education in the 21st century. *McGill Journal of Education, 48*(2), 317–337.
New London Group. (1996). A pedagogy of multiliteracies: Designing social futures. *Harvard Educational Review, 66*(1), 60–92.
Pantaleo, S. (2015). Language, literacy and visual texts. *English Education, 49*(2), 113-129.
Patrick, D., Budach, G., & Muckpaloo, I. (2013). Multiliteracies and family language policy in an urban Inuit community. *Language Policy, 12*(1), 47–62.
Pirbhai-Illich, F. (2010). Aboriginal students engaging and struggling with critical multiliteracies. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 54*(4), 257–266.
Regan, P. (2010). *Unsettling the settler within: Indian Residential Schools, truth telling, and reconciliation in Canada.* Vancouver, BC: UBC Press.
Riley, K. (2015). Enacting critical literacy in English classrooms. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 58*(5), 417–425.
Schieble, M. (2014). Reading images in *American Born Chinese* through critical visual literacy. *English Journal, 103*(5), 47–52.
Seelow, D. (2010). The graphic novel as advanced literacy tool. *Journal of Media Literacy Education, 2*(1), 57-64.
Serafini, F. (2015). Multimodal literacies: From theories to practices. *Language Arts, 92*(6), 412-422.
Shor, I. (1999). What is critical literacy? *Journal of Pedagogy, Pluralism & Practice, 1*(4), 27.
Smetana, L., Odelson, D., Burns, H., & Grisham, D. (2009). Using graphic novels in the high school classroom: Engaging deaf students in genre. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy, 53*(3), 228-240.
Spiegelman, A. (1980). *Maus.* New York, NY: Pantheon Books.
St. Denis, V. (2007). Aboriginal education and anti-racist education: Building alliances across cultural and racial identity. *Canadian Journal of Education, 30*(4), 1068–1092.
Stanton, C., & Sutton, K. (2012). "I guess I do know a good story": Re-envisioning writing process with Native American students and communities. *The English Journal, 102*(2), 78–84.
Street, B. (2003). What's "new" in New Literacy Studies? Critical approaches to literacy in theory and practice. *Current Issues in Comparative Education, 5*(2).
Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). *Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Volume One: Summary: Honoring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future*. Toronto, ON: James Lorimer & Company.

Vygotsky, L. (1989). *Thought and language*. Translated and edited by Alex Kozulin. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Wharf Higgins, J., & Begoray, D. (2012). Exploring the borderlands between media and health: Conceptualizing 'critical media health literacy'. *Journal of Media Literacy Education, 4*(2), 136-148.

Wilmot, R., Begoray, D., & Banister, E. (2013). Aboriginal students, critical media health literacy and the creation of a graphic novel health education tool. *In Education, 19*(2), 72-85.

Yahgulanaas, M. (2009). *Red: A Haida manga.* Vancouver, BC: Douglas McIntyre.

Author Biographies

Alexis Brown is a PhD candidate in the department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Victoria, with a focus on Language and Literacies. She is also a high-school Social Studies and English teacher, and has worked in urban, rural, and alternative classroom settings. Her research interests include critical literacies with Indigenous adolescents, dialogic pedagogy, and adolescent literacies.

Deborah Begoray is a Professor of Language and Literacies at the University of Victoria. Her main area of research is health literacies with culturally marginalized adolescent populations. She also works with pre-service and in-service teachers, and with health professionals in community-engaged research. In the Faculty of Education, she teaches courses in ELA methods, multimodal composition, qualitative research, curriculum studies and young adult literature.

"Before Occupy Central, I Wasn't Concerned": Examining Participatory Visual Research for Social Change with Hong Kong-based Filipina Youth

CASEY BURKHOLDER
McGill University

Abstract

This article describes a participatory visual research project with two Hong Kong-based Filipina young women, and explores their understandings of citizenship and civic engagement through cellphilm-making (cellphone + filmmaking), collaborating on the writing of an academic article, and co-presenting research findings at an academic conference in Calgary, Canada. The study finds that Hong Kong's Occupy Movement encouraged the participants to see themselves as engaged citizens, participate politically in the territory, and work toward social change for ethnic minorities by engaging different audiences through multiliteracy practices in a research for social change framework.

Keywords

ethnic minorities, Hong Kong, participatory visual research, social change, youth

Introduction

Writing in 2007, Blackburn and Clark suggest that "the need for literacy research that advocates for social justice, fosters political action, and produces real change in the lives of oppressed and marginalized people has never been more urgent or more real" (p. 1). In 2017, the need for literacy research that engages participants and communities to enact real change remains paramount. As a teacher and researcher, I have been interested in working with students and participants to examine their lived realities and to collaborate on ways to address community challenges and social inequalities through project based learning and a research for social change framework. As Mitchell and Burkholder (2015, pp. 649-650) argue, in a research for social change framework:

> the goal is for researchers to work with communities to advance what might be termed as knowledge 'from the ground up' (Choudry & Kapoor, 2010) …Exploring how communities see the world, what they consider to be critical issues and how policy dialogue can be galvanized through public discussion and critical consciousness are issues that are fundamental to a research for social change framework.

I began my teaching career at a public secondary school in Hong Kong. I approached my first classroom with my privileged white Canadian gendered English-speaking lens, and at the time, I had prescribed ideas about how multiculturalism should look within the context of school—drawing heavily on the 'cultural mosaic' discourses that were the norm in my teacher education preparation. My students were multilingual and multiethnic young people who were taught with English as the Medium of Instruction, and who were described in policy discourses "non-Chinese speaking" but more often than not referred to as "non-Chinese" (Burkholder, 2013). While teaching at the school, I was

horrified by the ways these ethnic and linguistic minority students were segregated from the Chinese-speaking students in courses, in extra-curricular activities and in physical spaces in the school (including, for example, a separate lunch room). Ethnic minorities make up 6% of Hong Kong's population (HKSAR, 2011), and issues relating to how they should be included or integrated into schools continue to play out in the media, government policy discourses, directly affecting the lives of marginalized young people. When I was a teacher, I tried to work within the school to make changes for these marginalized students. I ate with the students every day, bringing vegetarian extras for those who did not have lunch. After school, I played hours of badminton and basketball with the kids who were not anxious to go home at the end of the day. In our 'NC' or 'non-Chinese' student staff meetings, a few colleagues and I would advocate for more inclusion for our learners within the school. However, I left the school after two years, and realized that my efforts were very small scale. Overall, the unequal situation had not changed much for my students. I kept in touch with my class, and later came back to Hong Kong in 2013 to undertake my Master's research with my former students. The study presented a qualitative ethnographic exploration into these learners' lived experiences of school and contrasted these experiences with government discourses of 'inclusion' and 'support' (Burkholder, 2013). I found that these ethnic minority young people felt disconnected from the larger Hong Kong society, and their multilingual and multiethnic realities were presented by the government and their schools through a deficit lens. However, the results of this research were published in my thesis and in an academic article, and did not reach the communities within which I worked, nor did it make any change at a local or policy level. I began to think about the audiences for these academic texts, and wondered how I might convey research findings to my participants, their communities, and the larger Hong Kong society.

Following these findings, and my feeling of continued frustration, in 2015 I came back to Hong Kong work with my former students on my doctoral research project that examines ethnic minority young peoples' sense of self, belonging, and civic engagement in their young adult lives. For my doctoral study, I wanted to subscribe to a research for social change framework, and thus decided to engage in participatory visual research with participants so that the products and results of the research might more easily reach the communities within which we were working. This article takes up a piece of this research by focusing on a collaboration with two Filipina young women in the wake of Hong Kong's 2014 Occupy[1] movement. Taking up issues of civic engagement, identity, and belonging at this particular time in Hong Kong through a research for social change framework has raised some provocative questions. In this study, I ask: How do Filipina young women

[1] From September – December 2014, a large number of Hong Kong citizens protested an increasing Mainland Chinese political presence in the territory by occupying specific commercial and economic districts (including Central, Admiralty, Causeway Bay and Mong Kok). The protesters' peaceful occupations were met by police actions (including the use of tear gas) which protestors tried to block with the use of their umbrellas, resulting in the "umbrella revolution." The Umbrella Revolution was seen as a youth-led act of civic engagement that worked to articulate Hong Kong's distinct political, linguistic, and social identity (Jones & Li, 2016). Although the occupations ended in 2014, the movement continues to have an effect on the territory's social and political landscape.

explore notions of civic engagement in post-Occupy Hong Kong through cellphilm-making, collaborative writing, and co-presenting as multimodal literacy practices? How might Filipina girls' media-making practices be disseminated meaningfully across communities, spaces, and geographies through a framework of research for social change? These are central questions that frame this article.

Locating Research for Social Change as a Literacy Practice

Research for social change, including for example action-based and participatory visual research projects, provide a specific way of looking at individual and community challenges, as well as subscribing to methods and working with people to address these challenges and opportunities. Locating this study in a research as social change framework, I look to the work of Schratz and Walker (1995, p. 1) to remind us that for some researchers and practitioners, research for social change requires examining everyday experiences with participants in order to make change, and "…finding ways to seize the opportunity to become more reflexive in their practice, that is to say creating the means for looking at the situations in which they act as others in the situation see them."

How might research for social change be conceptualized as a literacy practice? In as early as 1994, Julian Sefton-Green and David Buckingham wrote on the importance of acknowledging the situated nature of people's local literacy practices, and examining the ways that citizens might collaborate and inquire together to take action and make a difference in their communities and societies. The New London Group's (1996) suggestion that a reframing and opening up of traditional autonomous understandings 'literacy' work to situate research for social action theoretically as a multiliteracy practice. Multiliteracies have been described by scholars such as Cope & Kalantzis (2000, p. 5) as focusing:

> on modes of representation much broader than language alone. These differ according to culture and context, and have specific cognitive, cultural and social effects…[where] language and other modes of meaning are dynamic representational resources, constantly being remade by their users as they work to achieve their various cultural purposes.

Other scholars working within a multiliteracies framework (see for example, Barton & Hamilton, 1998; 2001; Dyer & Choksi, 2001; Gee, 1996; 2001; Purcell-Gates, 2007; Rowsell & Pahl, 2015) explore the ways in which literacy practices might be employed in research and activist projects with an aim toward social change. Importantly, Goodman (2003, p. 4) contends that:

> historically, the way in which poor and other marginalized groups have managed to become visible, to demand political recognition and economic rights, has been through the acquisition of literacy in the dominant medium. However, the dominant medium is changing. Learning to read and write the printed word is still essential, but is no longer sufficient in a world where television, radio, movies, videos, magazines, and the World Wide Web have all become powerful and pervasive sites for public education and literacy.

Street (2014) agrees and argues that new literacies are also politically, culturally, and socially situated. New literacies include more than just the acquisition of technical skills (such as reading or writing or filmmaking). To this end, by examining the power of new literacies for social change through the case studies of entertainment programming, Singhal and Rogers (2012, p. 9) argue that these programs can affect individuals' behaviour (they provide the example of radio soap operas encouraging people to use condoms) as well as communities' practices.

This article examines the ways in which literacy practices can be taken up within a research for social change framework by looking at three specific literacy practices: cellphilming (cellphone + filmmaking, see MacEntee, Burkholder & Schwab-Cartas, 2016), collaborative writing for publication, and co-presenting research findings with participants at an academic conference. These examples of literacy practices act as opportunities to disseminate research findings with participants, and I argue that each of these practices are specific acts of civic engagement, supported within a research for social change framework.

Exploring Youth Civic Engagement

What might an understanding of civic engagement mean in relation to the civic actions of youth actors in Hong Kong? Ku and Pun (2011) describe the way that citizen productions of civic engagement in Hong Kong is most acceptable if it honours the territory's commitments to global capitalism and 'one country, two systems' China. Ku and Pun caution that this binary creates a "specific ethic of self and citizenry—an apolitical and yet productive economic subject—to live up to the project" (p. 1) of Hong Kong as both a global city and a distinctly Chinese territory. In a discussion of Hong Kong citizenship, Kennedy, Hahn, and Lee (2008) argue that "on the surface, it is tempting to think that Hong Kong citizens reflect thin conceptions of citizenship" (p. 59) as democracy is limited, and civic engagement might be limited to acceptable social practices (rather than dissent) and prescribed economic participation. In light of the Occupy Movement, I suggest that conceptions of citizenship in Hong Kong must be understood as more than just passive. Rebellious forms of civic engagement—those which are exemplified in the Occupy Movements in Hong Kong and elsewhere—are seen as dissenting and disruptive forms of civic engagement as these youth actions interrupt commercial and economic interests, disrupting business as usual. These dissenting forms of civic engagement are most useful in framing this study as research for social change. To this end, the study aligns with Jenkins' (2016, p. 29) conception of "civic imagination," which encourages actors to imagine a better political, economic and social future for themselves and their communities. This civic imagining requires citizens to see themselves (and to act accordingly) as "active political agents."

Buckingham (2000, p. 205) argues that young people are often presented as a homogenous group of political actors, and their political actions and literacy practices (e.g. tagging public spaces, withdrawing, speaking out) are "frequently framed as a problem, whether implicitly or explicitly." These political actions are perceived by adult power structures (e.g. governments and the police) in relation to adults, and young people's specific forms of political expressions are sometimes put forth as problematic (unless these expressions align with adult expectations). In her work on girls' productions of citizenship, Harris (2005) offers a gendered perspective that aligns with Buckingham's work. She

suggests that girls' citizenship practices are often taken up by the dominant society as "the focus for both concerns about social unbindings and the learning of good citizenship, which is based on individual responsibility" (p. 67). Traditionally acceptable productions of civic engagement can include acting as a 'good citizen' such as abiding laws, but Buckingham, Harris and others (see for example, Roholt, Hildreth & Baizerman, 2014) include shifts toward activism in their writing on youth civic engagement.

Much work on citizenship has been taken up through colonial and masculine discourses, which may alienate girls, women, and gender non-conforming individuals' specific citizenship practices (Arnot & Dillabough, 2000). Since nationhood, territoriality, colonialism and liberal democracy all factor greatly into many interpretations of citizenship and citizenship practices (see for example, Marshall, 1977; Packham, 2008; Turner, 1990), I have faced a critical juncture in my engagement with the body of work as it relates to young people's productions of civic engagement. I argue that it is paramount that the ways in which young people in Hong Kong practice citizenship outside of a democratic framework must be explored in detail. In examining a cellphilm making project with girls, as well as a discussion of collaborative writing and co-presenting, Filipina girls' media productions of civic engagement (as critical multiliteracy practices) are taken up in this study.

Methodology

Participatory Visual Research

Participatory visual research projects frequently operate within a research for social change framework, and highlight the economic, social and political contexts where participants live, work, and study. Participatory visual methodologies, including such methods as drawing (Theron, Mitchell, Smith, & Stuart, 2011), photography (Ewald, Hyde & Lord, 2012), photovoice (Wang & Burris, 1997; Wang, 1999), digital storytelling (Gubrium & Harper, 2013), participatory video (Milne, Mitchell & de Lange, 2012), and cellphilms (Dockney & Tomaselli, 2009; MacEntee, Burkholder & Schwab-Cartas, 2016; Mitchell & De Lange, 2013) expose participant and community realities through visual representations. Participatory visual methodologies often promote researching *with* individuals and communities, rather than research *on* or *about* these actors. As Mitchell & Burkholder (2015, p. 657) discuss, participatory visual methods inspire research participants to "document their own notions of community building, literacy, citizenship and critical consciousness and what social justice looks like to them. In turn, this approach is expected to generate policy dialogue about the existing and desired educational, literacy or health rights of participants through their voices and through their viewpoints." In examining photography projects with teachers and young people as opportunities to engage in research for social justice, Ewald et al (2012) suggest that these methods might be used as ways to move from theories of social justice to inspiring others within the community (including policy makers) to understand citizens and communities' concerns and move toward individual, community, and policy change. In the context of HIV/AIDS health education research in South Africa, Michell, Stuart, De Lange, Moletsane et al. (2010) explore the ways in which participatory visual methodologies might be used to shift individual participants' behaviors and encourage important community conversations, specifically about the role of gender-based violence and its implications for HIV/AIDS in the context of South Africa. Importantly, participants' visual productions must be

understood in relation to visual cultures and cannot be divorced from their social, political, economic or spatial contexts (Rose, 2014). To this end, Stuart and Mitchell (2013) argue that using visual methodologies is helpful in working with children and as they are adept of representing their ways of knowing and experiencing and sharing these with adults and decision makers to address their needs and challenges within their homes, schools, and communities.

Working within a participatory visual methodologies as research for social action framework, this study considers cellphilming as its method, and explores the ways in which Filipina girls act as co-researchers, by creating short cellphilms, collaborating on the writing of an academic article, and co-presenting research findings at an academic conference in Canada.

Cellphilming

Jonathan Dockney and Keyan Tomaselli (2009) developed the term 'cellphilm' to address the practice of filmmaking with mobile technologies (cellphone + filming). Claudia Mitchell, Naydene de Lange and Relebohile Moletsane's research—with teachers in KwaZulu Natal, South Africa to address gender-based violence as well as individual and community concerns in the context of HIV/AIDS—have advanced cellphilming as a participatory visual methodology. Cellphilming—as a method—builds from the pervasiveness of cellphones, as well as from citizens' everyday media-making practices. As MacEntee, Burkholder & Schwab-Cartas (2016, p. 8) argue:

> Incorporating cellphones, given their accessibility, in research practice across different contexts could be seen as a way of taking advantage of local technology. This idea can be framed by Dyson's (2015) concept of domestication and the particular ways in which cultural groups not only make a technology their own by adapting it to their needs and agendas, but also adapt their behaviours to the technology. As Baron notes, the practices surrounding mobile phones are determined partly by the devices themselves and partly by the "cultural norms—or pragmatic necessities—of the society in which they are embedded" (2008, p. 131).

In my own practice, as a teacher in Hong Kong, I noticed the everyday ways that my students used their cellphones to film moments from their days: from making up dances to recording moments at lunch time to recording episodes of violence and bullying. I wondered how I might capitalize on these practices within a research space; to reframe what my former students (and now participants) were already doing with their phones and turn these practices toward a particular concern or challenge, in my case, exploring identity, belonging and civic engagement.

Researchers who take up cellphilming as a research method often—but not always—work with participants' and communities' own mobile technologies, potentially contributing to participants' sense of ownership over the knowledge produced (MacEntee, Burkholder & Schwab-Cartas, 2016). This is a departure from many participatory video projects, where the filmmaking technology is often owned by the researcher, and removed at the end of a project, which may further the power differentials between researcher and the communities in which they work (Schwab-Cartas, 2012; Walsh, 2014). Mitchell, De Lange and Moletsane (2014) suggest that participatory video projects with cellphones as

the main tool might be empowering as the participants are often familiar with the methods of filming and this familiarity has the potential to democratize the research space. Working with participant and community-owned mobile technologies might also encourage project sustainability, as when the project ends, the participants may continue to explore, film, and share their ways of knowing beyond the scope of the research project.

The ways in which these cellphilms can be shared points to their potential as tools within research for social action. Cellphilms might be viewed on a phone, uploaded to a computer, screened on a projector, or shared across social media. Each of these spaces holds potential for reaching specific audiences—and many with an eye toward social change. The digital realm—and social media sites in particular—are worth examining more closely in a research for social change framework. Jenkins (2016) argues that digital spaces, such as Twitter and Facebook, provide citizens with tools to work toward social change, similar to the role that telephones played in the 1960s Civil Rights movement in the United States. The civil rights movement could not be "reduce[d]" to the "effects of long-distance phone calls," but they played an important tool for "coordinating activities among other black church leaders, freedom riders, and a range of other dispersed set of supporters" (p. 23). Our cellphilm-making project employed YouTube as a digital archival space to continue to share the cellphilms across geographies and communities in an effort to disseminate information about Hong Kong's ethnic minority young people and their ways of seeing and experiencing life in Hong Kong (Burkholder, 2016b). I turn now to a description of the larger project that this study is drawn from.

Project Summary: We are HK Too

The study outlined in this article encompasses a piece of my SSHRC-funded doctoral study, *Looking back and looking around: Revisiting and exploring civic engagement through cellphilms with ethnic minority youth in Hong* Kong, which took place in Hong Kong from January-June 2015 (Burkholder, 2016a; Burkholder 2016b), and continues through digital collaborations (including the creation of a Facebook page, a Twitter account and the monitoring and archiving of cellphilms on YouTube) across geographical expanses. Working with ten of my former secondary students and one new participant (who I did not teach, but who was friends with another participant and wanted to join the study), my doctoral project explores the ways in which ethnic minority young peoples' memories of their experiences in secondary school affects the ways they see themselves, conceptualize a sense of belonging and engage as young adult citizens in Hong Kong society and politics. The research employs qualitative (semi-structured interviews and focus groups) and participatory visual methods (cellphilming) as the youth participants created and shared cellphilms that explored the following questions: 1) who am I in Hong Kong? 2) How do I belong in Hong Kong? and 3) How do I act as a citizen of Hong Kong? As the project began to wind down in Hong Kong and I prepared to return to Canada the research continued in the digital realm as the we created a participant-managed YouTube-based digital archive of the cellphilms, called *We are HK too* (Burkholder, 2016b).

This study describes a research collaboration with two Filipina participants, Katrina and Ann[2], from the larger research project. I begin by examining Katrina' *Cellphilm Project* 3, which describes her understanding of civic engagement in post-Occupy Hong

[2] Pseudonyms chosen by the participants.

Kong. The study then considers two further collaborations between Ann, Katrina and I: first writing an academic article together about Filipina experiences in Hong Kong, and then presenting our research findings at the 2016 Language and Literacy Pre-Conference at the University of Calgary.

Findings

In his 2010 book, *Why Voice Matters,* Couldry argues that engaging with citizens' voices through their stories and sharing their ways of knowing can encourage other social actors to connect with and act upon these narratives. What is more, these stories are made more powerful when they are situated in their larger political context. This study engages with youth voices, and situates these voices in the larger Hong Kong socio-political context. I begin by looking to with Ann's voice, as she situates the study in her understanding of the role of language and the political reality for Hong Kong's ethnic minorities. She suggests,

> *The Hong Kong government's vision is to help ethnic minorities to integrate into the society by learning Cantonese in order to become a "local." But isn't the fact that many ethnic minorities have been here for years, many being born here, studying here, working here, raising families here and holding permanent residents' status already make them a local? The fact that the term "ethnic minority" or even "non-Chinese speaking" are used to refer to them and are put into the disadvantaged category in government policies furthers this separation.*

Ann provides a personal account of how the terms 'non-Chinese speaking' and 'ethnic minority' are used politically to isolate particular citizens based on their race and language practices. Ann's reflection helps to situate the larger political context that Katrina explores in her cellphilm. Cellphilms—as visual narratives—provide an avenue for participant voices to be disseminated. I now turn to a discussion of Katrina's cellphilm to understand the ways in which she has represented her sense of civic engagement in post-Occupy Hong Kong.

Cellphilming Youth Civic Engagement as a Multiliteracy Practice for Social Change

Katrina's cellphilm about her sense of civic engagement, *Cellphilm Project 3*, can be found on the project's YouTube-based digital archive, *We are HK Too* (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E3HwRPhZAjk). Katrina is a young person who lives, studies and works in Hong Kong. She is also an ethnic minority. In her short cellphone-video (cellphilm), Katrina expresses her sense of civic engagement as a Filipina growing up in Hong Kong. Katrina's cellphilm uses stop motion animation combined with edited video where a corkboard acts as the background and Katrina's hands move animations and pieces of text to communicate her story. Music plays, but there is no narration. Instead, the narrative is communicated through textboxes and images, which are organized to move the story along.

Figure 1. Still from Katrina' *Cellphilm Project 3*

Katrina begins by introducing the question that inspired the cellphilm, 'How do I act as a citizen in Hong Kong' and moves on to describing her sense of civic engagement. At first, Katrina describes the ways in which she engages as a citizen of Hong Kong in ways that reproduce desirable notions of citizenship. She describes the importance of watching the news, of reading newspapers, of going to the public library. As the cellphilm continues, Katrina begins to grapple with the notion of what it means to be an ethnic minority citizen during the Occupy protests in Hong Kong.

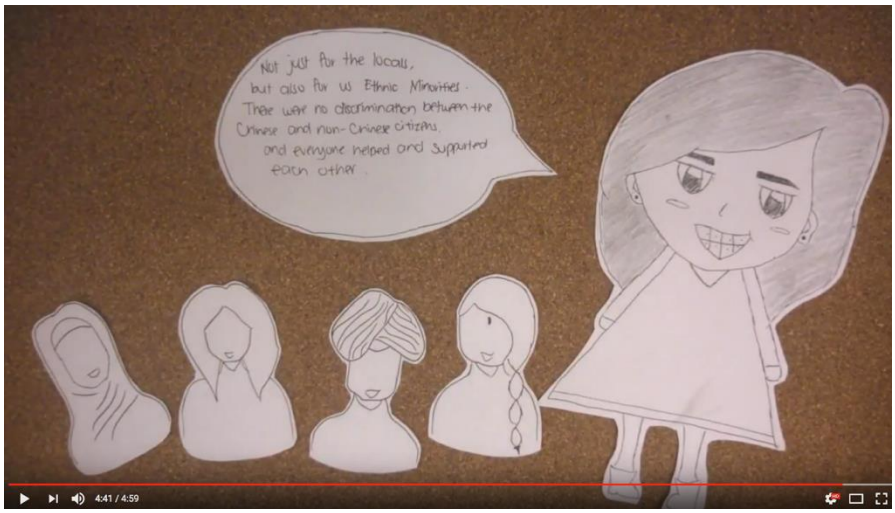

Figure 2. Still from Katrina' *Cellphilm Project 3*

The Occupy Movement is featured prominently in the cellphilm. Katrina describes the ways that the Occupy Movement encouraged her to become more inquisitive about Hong Kong politics. She begins by describing her understanding of the Occupy Movement, which "reminded me of the rights of Hong Kong citizens for democracy as promised by China in the Hong Kong handover." The Occupy Movement received a lot of local and international media attention, and the conversations brought on by this coverage began to

influence the ways in which Katrina thought about living in Hong Kong. In the cellphilm, Katrina writes, "before Occupy Central, I wasn't concerned much about what's going around (and to) Hong Kong. But when the tension between the Hong Kong government and pro-democrats started rising, leading to the "Umbrella Movement", that's when I started getting interested and curious on Hong Kong politics." Moving beyond an interest in thinking about the ideas brought on by the protestors, Katrina began to think about how she might engage in activism. She notes, "while I was watching the news footage of the Umbrella Movement, I felt a sudden urge to join the protesters when I found out that they were fighting for the current and future generations of Hong Kong." It is noticeable that Katrina's discussion of the Occupy Movement describes Hong Kong citizens as monocultural, and downplays the social, political, and cultural divisions present in the city between its Chinese-speaking and non-Chinese speaking residents. Katrina notes, "[The Occupy Protests were] not just for the locals but also for us ethnic minorities. There were no discrimination between the Chinese and non-Chinese citizens and everyone helped and supported each other."

These tensions are taken up in her cellphilms on identity and belonging, but are downplayed in the discussion of civic engagement and the desire for increased democratic measures and Hong Kong Independence. Here, cellphilming is a method for social change as it provides an opportunity for Katrina's experiences to be transmitted to audiences through visual means and across digital spaces. Through screenings in Hong Kong (Burkholder, forthcoming), sharing the cellphilm via YouTube, the cellphilm might inspire conversation and impact others' understanding of ethnic minority young people's sense of civic engagement in post-Occupy Hong Kong. While cellphilm method does not necessarily lead to social change, it provides an opportunity for participant narratives to be transmitted across audiences and spaces through their own voices and for their own purposes. In this way, cellphilming, as exemplified in Katrina's *Cellphilm Project 3,* might be conceptualized as a multiliteracy practice in a research for social change framework.

Collaborative Writing as Multiliteracy Practice for Social Change

Following the cellphilm-making project, Katrina, Ann and I decided that we wanted to keep our collaboration going, despite our geographical differences. Over celebratory sushi before I left Hong Kong, Ann suggested that we might write an article together where we described our collaboration and how the study (and its methods) made us learn more about ethnic minority experiences in Hong Kong in general, and an exploration of Filipina girlhood in particular. When I arrived back in Canada, I created a Google Doc, and over a period of 5 months, we worked on the creation of an article, which we submitted for consideration to an academic journal. The article considers the nature of Filipina girlhood in Hong Kong, and examines productions of self and belonging through cellphilms. We employ an academic tone in our writing, while simultaneously reflecting on each of our experiences as non-Chinese speaking residents in Hong Kong. As a white, English speaking Canadian woman, for example, in my two and a half years living in Hong Kong, my everyday routines and experiences of the city spatially were never disrupted by police officers. Ann and Katrina, however, noted that they were often stopped by police in their daily lives to check on their legal status in the territory. Our racialised experiences of otherness frame the inquiry, and situate our findings. We began with these personal reflections, and began to shape the article.

In the writing of the article, each author took on a different font colour in the production of the document. I used green text, while Ann used red and Katrina wrote in blue. At the end of the writing, we had created a rainbow out of our writing. Each author took on a specific role in the writing. Building on my experience in writing for the genre of the academic article, I built the literature review and methodology sections, while Katrina and Ann worked on the findings and discussion sections. We collaborated on the introduction and conclusion, resulting in a piece of writing that is full of each of our voices. As the primary author, I also took on an editorial role to ensure that the article employed traditional academic grammar, but acknowledge that this practice was likely the least participatory part of the co-writing process. The process of writing collaboratively in academic English across time zones and busy school schedules (Katrina, Ann, and I were all enrolled full time in universities during this time) proved to be sometimes slow, sometimes difficult, but ultimately satisfying. The piece has been accepted at a journal, but we are still working together to address revisions. This collaboration has continued beyond the research space, and has more than doubled the time commitment of the initial research project.

In thinking and writing about our cellphilm project, and the experiences of ethnic minorities in Hong Kong, the practice of collaborating on an academic article is a multiliteracy practice in a research for social change framework. Aside from the audiences that are reached through the cellphilm archive and cellphilm screenings (Burkholder, forthcoming), an academic article in a peer reviewed might impact policy makers within Hong Kong and abroad. By collaborating to reach new audiences and work toward sharing Ann and Katrina's experiences in their own voices, the practice of collaborative writing acts as an important continuation of the participatory ethos of the research project. Working together also inspired us to continue our collaborations in a number of ways, including the presentation of our findings at a research conference and the development of a new cellphilm project, this time led by Ann and Katrina, with Casey providing technical and organizational support.

Co-Presenting as a Multiliteracy Practice for Social Change

As our paper began to take shape, I had the idea that we might present our findings at an academic conference: to encourage the participatory nature of the project from its beginning to the dissemination of the findings. Over a Skype meeting, I proposed the idea to bring Katrina and Ann to Canada to present our findings at the Language and Literacy Researchers of Canada Pre-Conference. Ann and Katrina were excited by the prospect of coming to Canada (it would be their first trip to North America), and we began the long bureaucratic process to attain visas. In our Google Doc, we began to collaborate on an abstract for our presentation, which we titled "This is where I grew up": Reflections on language, civic engagement, and social change for ethnic minorities in Hong Kong. As with the paper, I took on an editorial role while Katrina and Ann articulated the findings sections and I filled in the theoretical framework and methodology. In reflecting on the process, and the idea to come to Canada to co-present, Ann remembers,

> *When we came up with the idea of going to Canada to present our research paper, it thought it was a crazy idea. But it was that very crazy idea that made this trip happen. My first initial reaction when I finally got my visa is the fact that I'm finally*

going to go out of Asia and present a research on a topic that I am so passionate about and dedicated to.

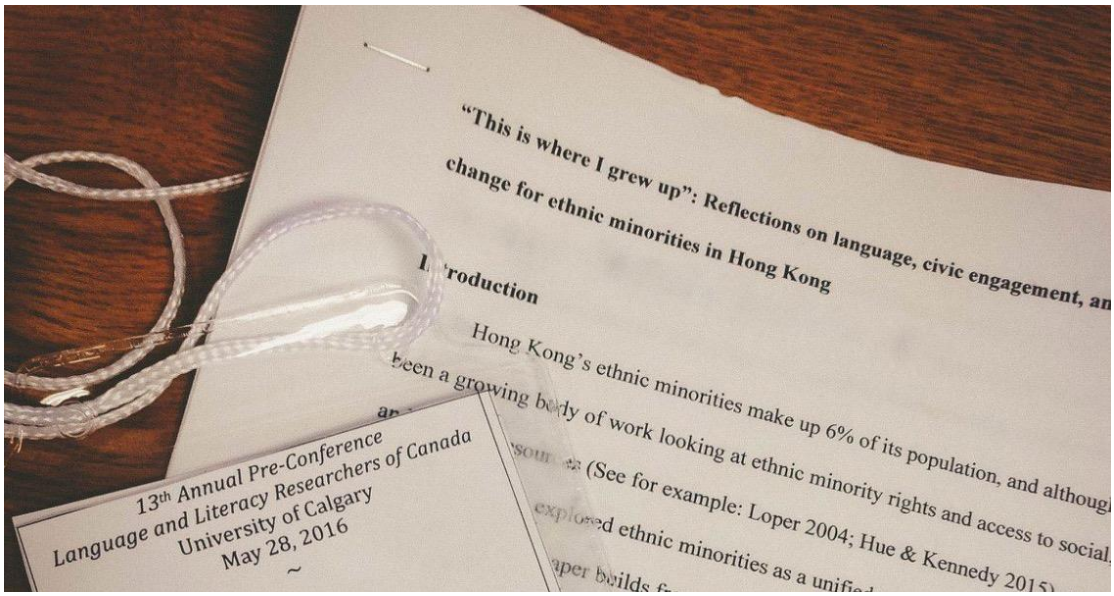

Figure 3. Language and Literacy Researchers of Canada Paper and Credentials

Our paper was accepted, the visas were mailed, and Ann and Katrina prepared to take the trip to Calgary. We began planning our presentation and collaborating again through Google Slides. I took on the introduction, and Ann and Katrina would detail our findings and share some of our cellphilms with the conference-goers. The Language and Literacy Researchers of Canada (LLRC) pre-conference offers an intimate environment for working through papers and collaborating on ideas. It is unlike many other conferences because a number of authors (4-5) are put into groups with similar papers, and these papers are circulated before the conference begins. In this way, much of the audience is familiar with the paper, and can provide really thoughtful and in-depth feedback. Rather than a cold and scary environment, this provides authors the opportunity to think through issues in the papers that may have not been previously considered. This presentation setting was unfamiliar to Ann and Katrina, who had never experienced a conference of this kind before. Ann reflected,

> *I would have expected the conference to be more formal, at least comparatively to the ones that I have attended in the past. I was just so used to being the "small potato" and being surrounded by older and more professional/experienced people in the field during the conference that I wasn't expecting that our presence would be such a big deal or make such a huge impact on others. In fact, all I did was share my experiences as an ethnic minority living in Hong Kong (which is ultimately the results of the research) and it was probably the first time that more experienced people (or should I say "adults") were so keen so listen to what I have to say.*
>
> *This time, I didn't have to say anything technical, just stood there, speaking [about] what I experienced and what my life is like and others...appreciated and understood*

> *these struggles. I felt more belong[ing] than I did whenever I speak about my issues in Hong Kong. It felt wonderful to find others, on the other side of the world, who could understand and value what you have to say and what you went through.*
>
> *Even if 8 hours of [a] conference is nothing compared to the longer hours I spent in my past experiences…I learned a lot and realized that I'm not alone in my struggles. That essentially, ethnic minorities aren't alone. I got to know things that I wasn't aware of before, like the realities of Indigenous peoples [in Alexis Brown & Deborah Begoray's study, see this issue] and Mennonites [in Christine Kampen Robinson's study, see this issue]. That's the thing about conferences and travelling: it opens your worldview and expands your knowledge out of the box.*

The audience reaction to our co-presentation was extremely warm, engaged, and provided thoughtful critiques. One audience member asked if we would consider going back and asking ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong about how they might imagine a better reality for others in the city. This line of questioning has inspired us to continue our collaboration, but this time, with Katrina and Ann as the main researchers, and Casey providing support. In the next year, we plan to work with school-aged ethnic minority young women in Hong Kong to create short cellphilms that articulate their community strengths and imagine an inclusive future for themselves in Hong Kong. We want the girls to create visual responses to the following questions: What might an inclusive Hong Kong look like? What would it take to get there?

The audience reflections from the LLRC pre-conference have inspired us to continue our project working with youth in an effort to imagine and then act on change within Hong Kong. In terms of project sustainability, the practice of co-presenting, and sharing our research with new audiences has led to the development of a girl-led from-the-ground-up cellphilm project where Katrina and Ann will take on the roles of researchers, organizers, and support other girls to become co-researchers.

The environment at the LLRC conference encouraged Ann and Katrina to speak confidently about their experiences as research participants, but also as co-researchers, and knowledge holders. They were experts, and disseminated the research findings to an academic audience with my support. In so doing, the participatory nature of the research was able to be continued from the initial inquiry to the sharing of the knowledge across a number of spaces and to different audiences: Hong Kong community members in our work in the city, global audiences through our YouTube-based participant managed digital archive, and North American academic audiences through our paper collaboration and the presentation of our findings at the LLRC pre-conference. I argue that this in-person collaboration is another multiliteracy practice within the research for social change framework, as again, we worked to share the research findings with new audiences, learn more about what these audiences value in the research and where they suggest that the project might develop in the future. Most importantly, the conversations with the audience that came out of the conference has led us to continue to collaborate on a new project, tentatively called #OwnVoices.

Concluding Thoughts: It's Our HK Too

This study describes a participatory visual collaboration with two Filipina co-researchers through cellphilming, collaborative writing for an academic journal, and co-presenting our findings at the 2016 LLRC pre-conference as multiliteracy practices in a research for social change framework. Ann and Katrina—as Filipina young women—describe their sense of civic engagement through disruptive productions of citizenship, including participating in the Occupy Movement, and describing their dissenting actions and feelings. They also take up traditional notions of citizenship, including the desire to participate in voting, but argue that they must take real action (including activism) in order to participate. The creation of a digital archive on YouTube provides an opportunity for cellphilms to be meaningfully disseminated to a number of communities, and gives the girls an opportunity to reach new audiences. In an effort to engage multiple audiences and work toward impacting academics and policy makers, collaborating on a peer-reviewed academic article and co-presenting at an academic conference provide opportunities for these Filipina young women to describe their sense of self and civic engagement while reaching populations that may not reach through the dissemination of their visual productions shared on YouTube. In a research for social change framework, this study finds that participatory visual research projects with participants as co-inquirers must contend with the notions of audience motivation to work with participants to impact the audiences that might best be equipped to make social change. Sharing cellphilms through community screenings (Burkholder, forthcoming) as well as through a digital archive might best impact community members to demand social action. Collaborating on academic writing and presenting might best impact policy makers and academics who might have the opportunity to also make real change for ethnic minorities in Hong Kong. The study also argues that the Occupy Movement acted as a catalyst for Filipina youth activism, where the physical occupation of key spaces in Hong Kong encouraged young people to think critically about their sense of belonging and what it means to act as a citizen in Hong Kong. If, as Katrina suggests, "before Occupy Central, I wasn't concerned," I wonder: Would these young women have been so interested in sharing their sense of civic engagement? Would they have wanted to continue to collaborate, to share their protest experiences, and to work to impact different audiences in an effort to work toward social change? What is certain is that the Occupy Movement encouraged the young women to view themselves as active participants in Hong Kong's political present and future, and inspired them to continue to collaborate in a participatory visual research project in an effort to make Hong Kong a more inclusive and democratic place for its ethnic minority citizens.

References

Arnot, M., & Dillabough, J. A. (2000). *Challenging democracy: International perspectives on gender, education and citizenship*. London: Psychology Press.

Barton, D. & Hamilton, M. (1998). Understanding literacy as a social practice. In D. Barton & M. Hamilton (Eds.) *Local literacies: Reading and writing in one community,* (pp. 3-22). London and New York: Routledge.

Barton, D. & Hamilton, M. (2001). Literacy practices. In D. Barton, M. Hamilton & R. Ivanic (Eds.). *Situated literacies: Reading and writing in context,* (pp. 7-15). London and New York: Routledge.

Blackburn, M. V., & Clark, C. T. (Eds.) (2007). *Literacy research for political action and social change* (Vol. 310). New York: Peter Lang.
Buckingham, D. (2000). *The making of citizens: Young people, news and politics*. London, UK and New York: Routledge.
Buckingham, D. & Sefton-Green, J. (1994). *Cultural studies goes to school.* London: Taylor & Francis.
Burkholder, C. (2013). 'Just the school makes us non-Chinese': Contrasting the discourses of Hong Kong's Education Bureau with the lived experiences of its Non-Chinese Speaking secondary school population. *Journal of Educational Research for Social Change, 2*(2), 43-58.
Burkholder, C. (2016a). On keeping public visual fieldnotes as reflexive ethnographic practice. *McGill Journal of Education, 51*(2), 907-916.
Burkholder, C. (2016b). We are HK too!: Disseminating cellphilms in a participatory archive. In K. MacEntee, C. Burkholder, and J. Schwab-Cartas (Eds.). *What's a cellphilm?: Integrating mobile phone technology into participatory visual research and activism.* Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.
Burkholder, C. (2017). Who's Hong Kong? Cellphilming and civic engagement with ethnic minority youth. In S. Malik, C. Chapain & R. Comunian (Eds.). *Community filmmaking: Diversity, innovation, policy and practice.* New York, NY and London, UK: Routledge.
Cope, B., & Kalantzis, M. (2000). *Multiliteracies: Literacy learning and the design of social futures*. London and New York: Routledge.
Choudry, A. & Kapoor, D. (2010). *Learning from the ground up: Global perspectives on social movements and knowledge production.* New York: Palgrave MacMillan.
Couldry, N. (2010). *Why voice matters: Culture and politics after neoliberalism*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
Dockney, J. & Tomaselli, K. G. (2009). Fit for the small(er) screen: Films, mobile TV and the new individual television experience. *Journal of African Cinema, 1*(1), 126–132.
Dyer, C. & Choksi, A. (2001). Literacy, schooling and development. In B. Street (Ed.), *Literacy and development: Ethnographic perspectives* (pp. 27-39). London and New York: Routledge.
Ewald, W., Hyde, K. & Lord, L. (2012). *Literacy and justice through photography: A classroom guide.* New York: Teacher College Press.
Gee, J.P. (1996). *Social linguistics and literacies: Ideology in discourses.* London: RoutledgeFalmer.
Gee, J.P. (2001). Literacy, discourse and linguistics: Introduction and what is literacy? In E. Cushman, E. Kingten, B.M. Kroll & M. Rose (Eds.), *Literacy: A critical sourcebook*, (pp. 525-544). Boston: Belford/St. Martin's.
Goodman, S. (2003). *Teaching youth media: A critical guide to literacy, video production & social change* (Vol. 36). New York: Teachers College Press.
Gubrium, A. & Harper, K. (2013). *Participatory visual and digital methods.* Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press.
Harris, A. (2005). *Future girl: Young women in the twenty-first century.* New York: Routledge.

HKSAR (Hong Kong Special Administrative Region). (2011). Hong Kong 2011 population census thematic report: Ethnic minorities. [Report]. Retrieved from: http://www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp170.jsp?productCode=B1120062

Jenkins, H. (2016). Youth voice, media and political engagement. In H. Jenkins, S. Shresthova, L. Gamber-Thompson, N. Kligler-Vilenchik, & A. Zimmerman (Eds.), *By any media necessary: The new youth activism*, (pp. 1-60). New York: NYU Press.

Jones, R. H., & Li, N.C.H. (2016). Evidentiary video and "professional vision" in the Hong Kong umbrella movement. *Journal of Language and Politics*, *15*(5), 569-591.

Ku, A. S., & Pun, N. (Eds.). (2011). *Remaking citizenship in Hong Kong: Community, nation and the global city* (Vol. 6). New York: Routledge.

MacEntee, K., Burkholder, C., & Schwab-Cartas, J. (Eds.). (2016). *What's a cellphilm?: Integrating mobile phone technology into participatory visual research and activism.* Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

Marshall, T. H. (1977). *Class, citizenship and social development: Essays by TH Marshall.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Milne, E.-J., Mitchell, C., & De Lange, N. (2012). *Handbook of participatory video*. Plymouth: AltaMira.

Mitchell, C. (2011). *Doing visual research*. Los Angeles: Sage.

Mitchell, C. & Burkholder, C. (2015). Chapter 43: Literacies and research as social change. In J. Rowsell and K. Pahl (Eds.). *Routledge Handbook of Literacy Studies,* (pp. 649-662). London and New York: Routledge.

Mitchell, C., De Lange, N., & Moletsane, R. (2016). Poetry in a pocket: The cellphilms of South African rural women teachers and the poetics of the everyday. In K. MacEntee, C. Burkholder, & J. Schwab-Cartas (Eds.), *What's a cellphilm? Integrating mobile technology into visual research and activism* (pp. 19-34). Rotterdam: Sense.

Mitchell, C., De Lange, N., & Moletsane, R. (2011). Before the cameras roll: Drawing storyboards to address gendered poverty. In L. Theron, C. Mitchell, A. Smith, & J. Stuart (Eds.), *Picturing research: Drawing as visual methodology* (pp. 119-231). Rotterdam: Sense.

Mitchell, C., & De Lange, N. (2013). What can a teacher do with a cellphone? Using participatory visual research to speak back in addressing HIV&AIDS. *South African Journal of Education*, *33*(4), 1-13.

Mitchell, C., De Lange, N., & Moletsane, R. (2016). Poetry in a pocket: The cellphilms of South African rural women teachers and the poetics of the everyday. In K. MacEntee, C. Burkholder, & J. Schwab-Cartas (Eds.), *What's a cellphilm? Integrating mobile* (pp. 19-34). Rotterdam: Sense

Mitchell, C., De Lange, N., & Moletsane, R. (2014). Me and my cellphone: Constructing change from the inside through cellphilms and participatory video in a rural community. *Area*, 1-7. doi:10.1111/area.12142

Mitchell, C., Stuart, J., De Lange, N., Moletsane, R., Buthelezi, T., Larkin, J. & Flicker, S. (2010). What difference does this make? Studying Southern African youth as knowledge producers with a new literacy of HIV and AIDS. In C. Higgins and B.

Norton (Eds.), *Language and HIV/AIDS*, (pp. 214-232). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
The New London Group. (1996). A pedagogy of multiliteracies: Designing social futures. *Harvard educational review*, *66*(1), 60-93.
Packham, C. (2008). *Active citizenship and community learning*. Los Angeles: Learning Matters.
Rogers, T., Winters, K.-L., Perry, M. & A.-M. LaMonde. (2015). *Youth, critical literacies, and civic engagement: Arts, media, and literacy in the lives of adolescents*. New York: Routledge.
Roholt, R. V., Baizerman, M., & Hildreth, R. W. (2014). *Becoming citizens: Deepening the craft of youth civic engagement*. New York: Routledge.
Rose, G. (2014). On the relation between 'visual research methods' and contemporary visual culture. *The Sociological Review, 62*(1), 24-46. doi:10.1111/1467-954X.12109
Rowsell, J. & Pahl, K. (Eds.). *Routledge handbook of literacy studies*. London and New York: Routledge.
Schratz, M. & Walker, R. (1995). *Research as social change: New possibilities for qualitative research.* London and New York: Routledge.
Schwab-Cartas, J. (2012). Learning from communities: Personal reflections from inside. In E.J. Milne, C. Mitchell and N. De Lange (Eds.), *Handbook of Participatory Video*, (pp. 383-396). Lanham: AltaMira Press.
Singhal, A., & Rogers, E. (2012). *Entertainment-education: A communication strategy for social change*. London and New York: Routledge.
Street, B. V. (2014). *Social literacies: Critical approaches to literacy in development, ethnography and education*. London and New York: Routledge.
Stuart, J. & Mitchell, C. (2013). Media, participation, and social change: Working within a 'youth as knowledge producers' framework. In D. Lemish (Ed.), *The Routledge international handbook of children, adolescents and media*, (pp. 359-365). New York: Routledge.
Theron, L., Mitchell, C., Smith, A., and Stuart, J. (Eds.). (2011). *Picturing research: Drawing(s) as visual methodology.* Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.
Turner, B. S. (1990). Outline of a theory of citizenship. *Sociology, 24*(2), 189-217.
Wang, C. (1999). Photovoice: Participatory action research strategy applied to women's health. *Journal of Women's Health, 8*(2), 185-192.
Wang, C. & Burris, M. (1997). Photovoice: Concept, methodology and use for participatory needs assessment. *Health Education and Behavior, 24*(3), 369-387.
Walsh, S. (2014). Critiquing the politics of participatory video and the dangerous romance of liberalism. *Area*, n/a-n/a. doi:10.1111/area.12104

Author Biography

Casey Burkholder is a PhD Candidate at McGill University, a teacher-educator, and participatory visual researcher. She first became invested in the relationships between space, belonging, and civic engagement from a young age, growing up in Canada's North. In choosing a research path at the intersection of citizenship, gender, inclusion, DIY media-making, and Social Studies education, Casey believes her work may contribute to 'research as intervention' (Mitchell, 2011) through participatory approaches to equity and social change.

Speaking Mennonite at School: A Narrative Analysis of the Role of Language in Immigrant Educational Experiences

CHRISTINE KAMPEN ROBINSON
University of Waterloo

Abstract

This paper examines the ways in which 1.5-generation immigrant mothers from a marginalized minority group (Low German-speaking Mennonites from Mexico) construct school experiences in relation to language. Starting from the perspective of identity as being constructed in language, analysis of audio-recorded interviews and focus group discussions collected during 18 months of ethnographic fieldwork demonstrates a connection and an inherent tension between the ways in which participants construct their own experiences and how they construct their children's experiences. Results illustrate the impact of language and literacy on their identity constructions, the use of language as an act of civic engagement, and how the agentive capacity demonstrated through these constructions both engages with and contests broader social processes.

Keywords

Identity, Low German, migration, multilingualism, positioning theory, public school

Introduction

Civic engagement can be seen as citizens working together to make a change or a difference in their community (Delli, 2016), and includes communities working together in both political and non-political actions (Bennett, Cordner, Taylor Klein, Savell, et al., 2013). In this paper, I investigate how a 1.5 generation woman (Rumbaut, 2002) from a specific linguistic community (Low German-speaking Mennonites (LGMs) returning to Canada from Mexico) works to address issues of public concern in and through her talk about her experiences as a student and as a mother or children enrolled in a public school in Canada. In doing so, I draw attention to the centrality of language in the shifting in agentive capacity for migrants. I also raise the question of how children use their home language in a public school space may be considered an act of civic engagement. I conclude with specific recommendations for agencies and institutions engaged with this specific community and with other similarly marginalized communities.

Research Context

Low-German speaking Mennonites (LGMs) are a unique cultural group in Canada. Of European origin, this group migrated from Russia to Canada in the 1870s, establishing villages and colonies in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. These families came to Canada following extensive religious persecution, first in Reformation-era Europe and then in Russia. The primary points of theological contention at the time of immigration were adult rather than infant baptism, as well as a staunch belief in pacifism. Both of these central tenets were extremely counter-cultural at the time, resulting in widespread persecution of Anabaptists on charges of heresy (Smith, 1981).

As argued by Loewen (2013) and Good Gingrich (2016), much of LGM experience is characterized by a desire to remain "in the world, but not of the world" (John 17:16), and the imperative not to "conform any longer to the pattern of this world" (Romans 12:2). In practice, this has meant dressing in a way that sets them apart from mainstream—full-length dresses and head coverings for women, and dark colours and clean shaves for men (cf. Bombardier, 2016). It has also meant using a language different from the majority (Low German, or *Dietsch*, specifically), and educating their children in their own schools, where they have traditionally had control over language and curriculum content.

After the School Attendance Act was enacted in Manitoba and Saskatchewan in the early 1920s, affecting LGMs' control over their parochial schools, a group of approximately 5000 LGMs immigrated to Mexico to establish colonies and villages there (Krahn & Sawatzky, 1990). LGMs saw the encroachment of the provincial government on their schools as curtailing their religious freedoms. The school system they had developed was seen as an extension of the Old Colony Church. Although they explored a number of different options for immigration, they settled on Mexico because they were promised the same religious freedoms they had initially experienced in Canada (Loewen, 2013).

By the 1950s, however, economic hardship in Mexico, combined with the Canadian citizenship that a majority of the LGMs held, brought many LGMs back to Canada. While at first, they returned as seasonal workers, eventually many LGMs elected to stay in Canada, to settle and raise families, integrating themselves (some to greater, some to lesser extents) into wider Canadian culture (Steiner, 2015). LGMs' complicated migration history is manifested most clearly in their language (*Dietsch*), which contains elements of Dutch, Prussian, Mennonite High German[1], Russian, English, and Spanish, embedded in a Germanic structure, as these are the languages with which the LGMs have come into contact throughout their migration history (Cox, 2013).

According to Mennonite Central Committee Ontario, south-western Ontario is home to approximately 40,000 LGMs (the exact number is unknown because so many families still migrate back and forth yearly) (Steiner, 2015). Service providers working with LGMs[2] often talk about how difficult it is for LGM families to acculturate to life in Canada, especially when they first arrive from Mexico. In part, this is due to the fact that the segregated lives they lived in Mexico cannot be replicated in the Canadian context—there is too much space between community members and too much interaction with the wider Canadian. It is also due, in a large part, to the differences in approaches to and purposes for education in the Old Colony context as compared with the Canadian context. Although parochial schools exist, many parents elect to send their children to public

[1] I use the term "High German" rather than "Standard German" to refer to the "prestige"-variety that LGMs come into contact with because it is their term, and has developed substantially differently from the standard variety spoken in Germany today (cf. Cox, 2013; Hedges, 1996).

[2] Low German-speaking Mennonites are often referred to in relation to the governing religious body they are associated with—the Old Colony Church. I have not done so here, because defining the group by their association with the church creates an unhelpful in-group/out-group categorization. Instead, I have elected to use the term "Low German-speaking Mennonite" or LGM, as this is in keeping with how the members of the group refer to themselves—as "*Dietsch*" (Low German for "German").

school with secular Canadian peers (Sneath & Fehr Kehler, 2016). In this way, LGMs' experiences of school and of life in Canada are significantly different than that of the generation born and raised in Mexico.

Adding to these differences and difficulties in terms of acculturation in Canada, LGMs are not the only kind of conservative Mennonite group in rural Ontario. Rural Canadian public schools must also contend with the challenges of multiple Mennonite factions in addition to the LGMs, including Conservative and David Martin Mennonites, for example. These different Mennonite groups speak different languages—Low German and Pennsylvania German, specifically, and in public schools, children actively use their languages to create in-group/out-group categorizations. The different languages are also often used to bully and ostracize other groups, sometimes leading to physical altercations, which have resulted in some schools banning languages other than English to be used in the classroom and on the playground. To this end, the language practices of LGM young people within schools must be seen as distinct acts of civic engagement.

LGMs present a particularly interesting and complicated portrait of a marginalized and yet agentive linguistic community. Elsewhere (Kampen Robinson, 2017), I have examined a variety of ways in which LGM women linguistically contest what constitutes the centre of *Dietsch* space in terms of what is seen as valued and legitimate). In this paper, I use an interactional sociolinguistic lens borrowing tools from Conversation Analysis (Gumperz, 1983; Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977) and narrative analysis (Baynham, 2003; Georgakopoulou, 2007) to examinee one woman's (Neta's[3]) narratives about her own and her children's school experiences. In doing so, I highlight the differences in the ways that Neta "positions" herself and her children (Harre and van Langenhove, 1991) in relation to the Canadian public school system and as language users. In recognizing the work that Neta does to assert herself and her children as capable language users, and to describe the difficulty of a school system that does not necessarily recognize children's linguistic competence, I illuminate how she raises issues of public concern and effectively addresses these issues, producing a new civic identity for herself and her children.

Methodology

This paper is based on eighteen months of ethnographic field work with a group of LGM mothers taking part in a Canadian Action Plan for Children (CAPC) program in the Waterloo Region[4]. These women were between the ages of 21-45, with children ranging in age from infants to seventeen years old. The majority immigrated to Canada from Mexico as children, and would be considered 1.5 generation (Rumbaut, 2002). The participants ranged from continuing to be very involved in the Old Colony Church to completely unaffiliated with it. All of the women in my study sent their children to the local public schools.

The data for this paper emerge from two semi-structured focus group discussions, which were conducted approximately one year apart. The first focus group discussion was held when I did not yet know the women in the group very well. The second focus

[3] To protect the privacy of my study participants, and in keeping with Ethics Clearance of the University of Waterloo, names and identifying details about my participants have been changed.
[4] This project has received full ethical clearance from the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Waterloo.

group discussion was held just over a year later, when I had built relationships of trust with the majority of the women, and we had had the opportunity to have many informal conversations while cooking and laughing together. While the data for this paper come from the focus group discussions I hosted with the women, and focus on the stories of one woman in particular, they are supplemented by all of these conversations, as well as a series of four in-depth semi-structured individual interviews, and two recorded conversations of group meetings.

Analysis: Neta

The focus group discussions I conducted with the women were large. At first, participants were hesitant to participate because I was asking them about their language learning experiences and feelings about English and Low German, and these were not topics they talked about on a regular basis. Some women mentioned that they had never voiced the stories they were telling before, and had had no idea that others had experienced the same feelings of fear and frustration. Most of the women who came to Canada and were made to go to public school shared the feeling of being alone, carrying the weight of how sinful and wrong to be going to school in the first place. Since education that is different from the community norm is seen as inherently sinful, LGMs who elect to send their children to public school are caught in what Good Gingrich (2016) calls "a double bind." In other words, LGMs are caught between the pull of the expectations of their church community and the expectations of mainstream Canadian culture, a tension they must constantly negotiate.

When asked, the women told me that they had never talked about their feelings about their own school experiences because they had always supposed they were the only ones with these feelings. Neta and her sister were both part of the first focus group discussion. They have a close relationship, but even they had never talked about how the experiences they had had in school had *felt*.

The following excerpt—presented in Jeffersonian transcription, where a capital letter denotes louder speech—occurred midway through the second focus group discussion. The story Neta tells clearly impacted her as she repeated it in both focus group discussions, as well as her individual interview. Going to public school in Canada was complicated for her because in Mexico, she had already finished school.[5] Being made to go back to school as a 14-year old felt like the worst kind of infantilizing to her. Her experience was further complicated by the fact that she spoke no English and there were no other LGMs her age at the school. At first, she reported that her teachers didn't know what to do with her and gave her paper and coloured pens to keep her busy. Being tasked with colouring during class time frustrated her as she was already considered a grown up in the Old Colony community.

Today, Neta is an active member of the Old Colony Church, and has worked tirelessly for change in the Sunday School curriculum to keep her children engaged. She values both the Old Colony Church, and her children's Canadian (English-language) education. Other speakers in this excerpt include Greta, who is no longer a member of the Old Colony Church, and who has taken a leadership role in the Community Action Plan

[5] It is common for LGM children attending the colony schools in Mexico to attend school until age 11 or 12. After that, they are considered "grown up" and expected to contribute to life in the colony through farm and housework.

for Children (CAPC) group programming. The other speaker is Julie, who leads the CAPC group, and has no Old Colony Church affiliation. Additional speakers are sisters Nellie and Bettie, one of whom remains active in the Old Colony Church while the other does not.

Excerpt 1*: Christmas pageant*[6]

001	Int:	[…] what about the rest of you you said it was awful when
002		you started learning english
003	Neta:	oh i was so scared it was clo close to christmas when we
004		came to canada
005	Int:	mhm
006	Neta:	and we had to go to school right away we didn't speak
007		english we didn't understand anything
008		and then uh we just learned (.) that in mexico too that
009		it's a very big sin to go to canada (.) now my parents went
010		to canada and it's a very big sin↑
011		and we have to go to school and we can't speak their
012		languages and it was uh to uh close before christmas °we
013		had a christmas program at school° where all the angels
014		came [and
015	All:	[hehehe
016	Nellie:	and [that was for you=
017	Bettie:	=too far
018	Neta:	yeah and i thought that was the end of the world=
019	Int:	oh NO↑
020	Julie:	and you thought it was happening
021	Greta:	we were taught that the angels come when it's the end of
022		the world
023	Neta:	i had to make a bi:g sew a bi:g ah (.) thing
024		[i didn't know who it was for
025	Neta:	and [then all of a sudden somebody is standing on a stage
026		and wearing that big thing
027	Neta:	((smile voice)) that i [made hehehe
028	All:	[ha ha ha ha

Neta relays some of the anxiety and confusion she experienced during her first few months in Canada. For Neta, learning English felt as though it was directly associated with the end of the world. The Christmas pageant was something she was made to participate in, though she did not understand what she was doing or why. In listening to this story, we can hear how Neta positions herself as voiceless participant in this narrative. For example, although she takes one action in the narrative ("sewing the big thing"), she otherwise positions herself as powerless to act against her fear (line 003:

[6] Transcripts follow Jeffersonian (2004) transcription conventions.

"I was so scared") about the end of the world because she couldn't understand "their languages" (lines 011-012).

Neta never specifically defines who she means when referring to "they," but because she continued to use her comfortable language at home, it seems that this "they" refers to the public Canadian spaces she was made to inhabit. The use of this pronoun differentiation (we versus they), as well as other components of this excerpt (line 018; 021), also illustrate the religious tension Neta and her family experienced. They were already primed for worrying about the end of the world because the very fact they were in Canada at all was "a very big sin"—a fact which Neta repeats for emphasis (lines 009-010), and which colours the whole narrative. She experienced distress when she realized that she had actively contributed to hastening the end of the world.

Another consideration is the centrality of the value of truthfulness in the LGM community. My participants explained to me off tape that dressing up to pretend to be something you aren't is considered lying, and therefore sinful and non-desirable. Pretending is discouraged in play, and also discouraged in the types of texts or stories children encounter. There should be only one version of the world—the one that is real and true. With this in mind, one of the primary reasons for Neta's terror is the fact that she has never been exposed to people actively pretending to be something they couldn't possibly be (angels). Since she had no frame of reference for understanding people playing pretend, she concludes that they must really be angels, and therefore she has contributed to bringing the end of the word.

During the first focus group discussion, Neta told a second story in relation to learning English. This story was about a field trip she took with her class to Niagara Falls, the spring after she came to Canada. There are two important co-constructors in this story who were present during the first focus group discussion who were not present for the second. The first co-constructor for Neta's narrative is her sister, Eva, who, like Neta, remains a part of the Old Colony Church, and was also connected to the CAPC group before she and her family moved away. She happened to be visiting around the time I wanted to conduct the first focus group discussion, so Neta invited her to come. Her presence is important because she experienced similar, and sometimes even the same events, which they then co-construct, correct and reshape in their retelling. Although Eva doesn't speak much during the following excerpt, her presence alone is important because of her involvement in Neta's experiences.

The second person who is a significant co-constructor in Neta's story is Gina, who was present for the first focus group discussion, but not for the second. Gina was the only non-LGM member of the group who attended regularly. While she was connected to Mennonites through part of her family's Swiss Mennonite background, she knew very little about the cultural or religious context that LGM women live with, and to my knowledge had never really asked very many questions about the context, despite knowing many of the women for a number of years. I include this second excerpt because it demonstrates the different way Neta positions herself in relation to other LGM women, and especially in relation to non-LGM individuals, like Gina. Both Neta and Greta engage with this lack of understanding of context by adding different levels of evaluation in the co-construction of the narrative, because they feel they have to explain more details.

At the time of the first focus group discussion, the group was unclear about how much I knew about the LGM context, and it appeared that the participants hadn't decided what to make of me yet, so it is likely that the explanations and evaluations are just as much for my benefit as for Gina's. These evaluations are less directed at Julie and Rita (the non-LGM group facilitators), because all of the regular attenders had already developed relationships of trust with those two women that they hadn't developed yet with me or Gina at the time of the first focus group discussion.

The following story, told in the first focus group discussion, followed the initial telling of the Christmas pageant story, which Neta retold in the second focus group interview, as portrayed in Excerpt 1. The primary speakers are Neta herself, Greta, Irma, and Gina. Both Greta and Irma are no longer a part of the Old Colony Church. This story is significant because of the layers of agentive capacity it demonstrates. On the one hand, Neta constructs herself as having very little agentive capacity in the story, on the other, in the telling of the story itself, Neta constructs herself as having agentive capacity—rejecting other positioning that disempowers her.

Excerpt 2: *Fun house*

```
001   Neta:       and then (0.2) in the summer time ah yeah it was more
                  at
002               the summer time we went for a vacation we went to
                  niagara
003               falls and i didn't speak english but the girls they
                  led me
004               through the (0.2)
005   Gina:       °falls?°
006   Neta:       the dark rooms↑ what is that is it
007   Gina:       oh:: those fun houses?
008   Neta:       YEAH
009   Gina:       oh[::
010   Eva:            [hehe
011   Neta:       i didn't know what was going on so they just held
                  onto my
012               hand and i [couldn't even see
013   Gina:                    [yeah niagara falls
014   Neta:       i couldn't see the girl that was holding on to my
                  hand
015   Gina:       and then you thought it was the end of the world [too
016   Neta:
[((smile 017                    voice)) yeahhhh hehe and i was screaming
like CRAZY and i
018               didn't know what was going on
019   Gina:       how horrible
020   Neta:       it was very scary [that's how i
021   ?:                            [hehe
022   Gina:                         [all these new [experiences in
023               canada
024   Neta:                                        [yeah hehe
025   Eva:        heh
026   Gina:       that's horrible
027   Int:        were you were you the only low german family in the
                  school
```

The "small story" (Georgakopoulou, 2007) about the funhouse is metaphorically significant to Neta's construction of her English language learning experiences in a number of ways. This story echoes the voicelessness and fear of the Christmas pageant story. Although Neta vocalizes the fear in this story (line 17: I was screaming like CRAZY), she doesn't have any words, only the screaming to express her fear. Similar to the Christmas pageant story, there were no explanations for what happened to her, because Neta's Canadian peers do not speak Low German and could not tell her what is going on. In this story, however, the terror is compounded by the fact that Neta "[can't] even see" (line 012). There are similar complications as the Christmas pageant story, since funhouses are filled with illusions and things that are not "real," in the way that Neta would have been used to.

A significant difference in the funhouse story as compared to the Christmas pageant story, is the presence of other people. In the Christmas pageant story, Neta describes herself as alone with her terror—there are people on the stage wearing the clothes that she made, but she does not talk about those she would have been watching the pageant with. In the story, she was alone in the audience, alone witnessing the end of the world, separated from any other people. In the funhouse story, however, Neta was not alone. Although there was no explanation for what was happening to her, and she was similarly terrified, there was a girl, "holding on to [her] hand," something Neta repeats twice (line 011-012, 014).

Another distinction between the two stories is the different reactions of the group. In Excerpt 1, where the majority of the listeners are also LGMs who have had similar experiences where they were lost because they couldn't speak English, the co-construction of that story is a significant amount of group laughter, especially when Neta expresses how terrified she was during the event. In this excerpt, laughter functions as a group constituting mechanism, reinforcing the shared experience Neta describes. Specifically, laughter functions as an expression of solidarity—while the other women may not have experienced the same exact story, they have their own stories about attending school in Canada that were scary and made them feel foolish. The laughter is a comment on similarity of experience, and a way of subverting the feelings of powerlessness associated with this and similar stories. They are choosing to co-construct this narrative and connect their own experiences to this one. In Excerpt 2, on the other hand, the group does not have the same opportunity to co-construct and position themselves in an empowering way, because Gina continuously comments on "how horrible" things must have been for Neta. Although Neta and the others laugh in this excerpt as well (lines 010, 016, 024), Gina repeats her assessment of the story (lines 019, 026), and never joins in the laughter herself.

Neta's school experiences were not positive, in part because of her lack of agency. The fact that her English language proficiency was not adequate for her to grasp what was happening around her was complicated by the fact that she was experiencing culture shock and a significant amount of guilt from her socialization in Mexico. This in turn was coupled with the fact that she was being made to attend school after she had already finished school in Mexico, and the embarrassment of being made to feel like a small child again. Taken together, these factors underscore her position of powerlessness in both stories.

Analysis: Neta's Children

Neta frequently talked about learning English, and even making sense of broader Canadian culture with which she came into contact in public spaces like the schools she attended being a struggle for her. The way she presents her own children's experiences in the Canadian school system is quite different however. The following excerpt is a return to an earlier discussion about languages the children speak, but this time in relation to official school policy, which complicates things considerably. Justina, who is still an active member of the Old Colony church, and who has one child in school speaks in this excerpt. The other speakers include Neta, who has 5 children in school, Greta, who is no longer a part of the Old Colony Church, and Rita and Julie, who are the non-Old Colony leaders of the CAPC group.

Just before this excerpt, Justina, who has previously talked about how important it is for her to speak Low German with her children, points to the policy at the elementary school her children attend that forbids speaking languages other than English at school. She, like the other parents, had recently received a letter from the administration to tell children to refrain from speaking languages other than English at school.[7] As a language and education researcher, when I first heard about the English-only rules that were being enforced at the two schools, I was horrified, as research has repeatedly shown that forbidding home languages in the school setting is detrimental to children's linguistic development (e.g., Blommaert & van Avermaet, 2008; Cummins, 2013). It was especially alarming to me because the women and I had often spoken about how difficult it was to motivate their children to use Low German, and how complicated their feelings about this dilemma was.

It is worth noting the irony of the language policing in this context, since language use and community regulation of language use was one of the most significant factors in the decision to leave Canada in the first place. In their own parochial schools, the official language is Mennonite High German because the texts are in Mennonite High German, and colony school is so closely associated with the religious ("sindeosche", literally: "Sunday-like") realm. Officially, Low German is not intended to be a part of the school setting, although in practice, there is a tendency for both children and teacher to use Low German for a variety of reasons (Hedges, 1996; Sneath & Fehr Kehler, 2016). The LGMs originally left Canada because they felt their right to educate their children was being encroached upon by Canadian lawmakers, and because of the close connection of schooling to church for this community, it was acutely felt as religious persecution, as has been previously discussed. This collective migration can be considered an act of civic engagement, a rejection of an entire political system, since the Old Colony Church leaders were concerned with maintaining a particular way of life free of government encroachment. It is the most extreme form of what Good Gingrich (2016) calls "self-imposed social exclusion." At the same time, individual actions of migrants returning to Canada can also be seen as acts of civic engagement, specifically civic disobedience, a way of contesting the English-dominant political system that LGMs sought to extract themselves from when they initially migrated. In the following excerpt, the speakers contest language norms of the broader Canadian context.

[7] The women in my study had their children at three different area schools, and two of the schools made similar rules about language use for similar reasons.

Just preceding the following excerpt, Justina explicitly references Pennsylvania German (which is "like low german", line 001), the language spoken by the "other" Mennonites at her child's school, and about how "serious" they are about the children speaking Pennsylvania German at home, which has led to the conflict at the school.

Excerpt 3: *Speaking German better*

```
001   Justina:    […] there are two different languages like low ah
                  german
002               and they make fun of each other
003   Int:        oh so they use the language [to
004   Justina:                                  [mhm:
005   Int:        umm
006   Rita:       secret talks
007   Int:        bull bully the other children
008   Justina:    mhm
009   Int:        oh
010   Neta:       that's why my kids speak german better now
011   Int:        heh [heh heh so it was an incentive ((laughing
012               voice))
013   Rita:           [heh heh
014   Neta:       they were not supposed to speak german at [name of
015               school] they they they were not speaking very good
016               until they went to [name of school] and there they
017               were not supposed to speak german↑
018   Int:        okay
019   Neta:       but now they speak german much bett[er
020   Julie:                                         [huh huh huh huh
021               huh
022   Int:        ((smile voice))ok[(h)ay
023   Neta:                        [heh heh heh heh
024   Greta:                       [but once they made it a RULE then
025               it was like OOOhkay we're not supposed to let's=
026   Neta:       =yeah
027   All:        haha [ha ha)
```

In the small story in this excerpt, Neta positions her children very differently than how she positioned herself in Excerpts 1 and 2. While she did not have much agency in her own school experience, and language was a mechanism that excluded her and rendered her voice- and powerless, she positions her children as actively employing language as a mechanism, delineating group membership and belonging in a subversive way, because she specifically mentions that the children's Low German proficiency improved once the school had expressly forbidden them to use it (lines 010; 014-016).

There is quite a bit of laughter in Excerpt 3, but it is worth noting that it is not group laughter. The people laughing in Excerpt 3 include the interviewer, Julie and Rita, the three people who are not connected to the LGM community through heritage. Neta presents the fact that her children now speak Low German better than they did before without a hint of laughter. She does not join in with the laughter until the very end of the excerpt, when Greta has reframed the story as typical "kid" behaviour in response to a rule (lines 024-025). For her and for Justina, the two mothers whose children attended schools where Low German was expressly forbidden, the edict seems to have initially elicited complicated emotions, since they were supposed to instruct their children to use

English only in school. However, at home they were always working so hard to try to get them to stop using English and use Low German instead. The effect of these contrary home/school policies seems to have been that the children speak Low German both in and outside of school now, and with a higher proficiency level, at least according to their mothers.

Both Low German and Pennsylvania German are low status languages in Canada. While there are more print resources in Pennsylvania German than Low German, as well as a fair amount of academic research about it (cf: Schlegel, 2012), these resources are still fairly limited, and both Pennsylvania German and Low German can best be categorized as primarily oral languages. As a result, both languages are often characterized as dialects (although the speakers themselves refer to them as languages), a categorization which inherently devalues and reduces the languages. Research on the oral nature of many Indigenous languages in Canada has shown that Canada privileges print over oral culture in general, and the English language over other languages more specifically (cf. Hulan and Eigenbrod, 2008; Ricento, 2013). In other words, Pennsylvania German and Low German are not languages of power, until they bump up against one another in rural Ontarian schools, and then they are used to position speakers at the centre and periphery of Mennonite spaces (Giampapa, 2004). Then the languages become powerful tools of membership categorization and group delineation for the children who speak them, especially since most of the teachers and the administration of the schools do not speak the languages at all. The way the children use their languages also enables them to construct new civic identities for themselves, identities that include their home language as a valued and integral part.

Neta positions her children as linguistically flexible, being able to move fluidly between the languages in their linguascape. Her children do not experience the same voiceless- and powerlessness that she did when she was going to school. Neta positions her children as subverting the precise power dynamic that rendered her voiceless. English dominates the Canadian public school space—when Neta went to school, it was because she and her siblings were the only Low German speakers, and they couldn't speak or understand the space until they were able to do so in English. In the public school Neta's children attend, English is the dominant language because of official policy that intentionally marginalizes home languages. In fact, from the description of the school and the existence of the policy, there are more speakers of other language represented in the school than English monolinguals. Actively using Low German (or Pennsylvania German, for that matter), then, is a voicing act, a declaration of identity and self, and a way of constructing a new civic identity, establishing a place for their home language in an English-dominant Canadian space.

Conclusions

In her own stories, Neta positions herself as having little "agentive capacity" (Miller, 2010; 2012) in what happened to her in the Canadian school system as a result of her perceived lack of English language skills. On the other hand, she positions her children as having significant agentive capacity, highlighting how they intentionally use the languages at their disposal (especially Dietsch, their home language) to assert their own identity as LGMs in the public Canadian (school) space, thus contesting broader social processes and categories. Neta's stories about her own school experiences describe

fear, confusion, and guilt. She positions herself as voiceless and powerless, with no effective intermediary who could help her make sense of her new reality in Canada. Her children, however, are positioned as reflective and adaptable managers of their linguistic and cultural repertoires. The stories she tells about her children are stories of confidence and assertion, of certainty in their own place in the world. What we are missing here, and points to additional research directions, are the voices of the children themselves—how they move within and through the spaces, how they experience being positioned, and how they position themselves, as children, as LGMs, as Canadians, as multilingual speakers. The children's use of Low German in the public school environment establishes school as a multilingual space, and Low German as a language of power. Using their home languages to contest English-dominant norms can be seen as an act of civic engagement, and this is the way Neta positions her children's linguistic behaviour, as well.

From an outsider's perspective, the various conservative Mennonite factions may appear the same, but the lived experience of these groups shows very little overlap in family or community life, except for the shared practice of enrolling their children in the public school environment. An important implication of the findings from this paper is that service providers and teachers must recognize the historical and sociocultural influences that have shaped these groups differently, and acknowledge the resources and linguistic and cultural flexibility children bring into their public school classrooms. In keeping with research by Cummins (2013) among others, there are ways of validating home languages in the classroom that are ultimately more productive for the development of student agentive capacity than banning the languages from the school space. Children are already constructing public school as a multilingual space—it is important for practitioners to recognize and validate home languages through a collaborative approach with children and families, rather than a punitive language ban.

The LGM children, as well as their conservative Mennonite counterparts, use language in the public school space as a way to assert their identities, contesting not only the dominant Canadian discourses about the value of oral vs. written language, but also contesting structures and value systems in their own cultures. This identity work plays out in the public school space in ways not intended and not anticipated by teachers and administrators at their schools. The civic identities constructed through these actions, and through the re-telling of these actions, enable LGM children and their parents to advocate for the validation of their home language, thus strengthening community ties. What results for these families who speak a primarily oral language in their homes is that their children seem to connect with the language and take ownership over the language and their use of their language in ways they had previously not done[8]. LGM children contest dominant discourses about themselves and their home languages in the public school space—paying attention to their efforts at civic engagement by more intentionally integrating and validating their home languages will not only benefit them, but also teachers and administrators working with them, as they learn more about the cultures of the students they teach, and the civic identities these children construct for themselves.

[8] The author gratefully acknowledges the support of the *German-Canadian Studies Foundation* that made this study possible.

References

Bennett, E., Cordner, A., Taylor Klein, P., Savell, S., & Baiocchi, G. (2013). Disavowing politics: Civic engagement in an era of political skepticism. *Journal of American Sociology, 119 (2)*: 518-548.

Blommaert, J., & P. Van Avermaet. (2008*). Taal, Onderwijs en de samenleving. De kloof tussen beleid en realiteit*. Berchem: EPO.

Bombardier, A.-L. (2016). The significance, meaning, and origins of distinctive Low German dress. *Low German Networking Conference*, Aylmer, Ontario, May.

Cox, C. (2013). The resilient word: Linguistic preservation and innovation among the Old Colony Mennonites in Latin America. *Journal of Mennonite Studies, 31*. pp. 50-74.

Cummins, J. (2013). "Language and Identity in Multilingual Schools: Constructing Evidence-based Instructional Policies." In *Managing Diversity in Education. Languages, Policies, Pedagogies*, edited by D. Little, C. Leung, and P. Van Avermaet, 3– 26. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Delli, M. (2016). Civic engagement. APA.Org. American Psychological Association.

Georgakoupoulou, A. (2007). *Small stories, interaction and identity*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Giampapa, F. (2004). The politics of identity, representation, and the discourses of self-identification: Negotiating the periphery and the centre. In A. Pavlenko, & A. Blackledge (Eds.), *Negotiation of identities in multilingual contexts*. (pp. 192-218). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Good Gingrich, Luann (2016). *Out of place: Social exclusion and Mennonite migrants in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Harré, R. & van Langenhove, L. (1991). Varieties of positioning. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 21, 393-407.

Hedges, K. L. (1996). *"Plautdietsch" and "Huuchdietsch" in Chihuahua: Language literacy and identity among the Old Colony Mennonites in Northern Mexico.* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation.) Yale University.

Hulan, R. & Eigenbrod, R. (2008). *Aboriginal oral traditions: Theory, practice, ethics*. Halifax: Fernweh Publishing.

Jefferson, G. (2004). Glossary of transcript symbols with an introduction. In G. H. Lerner (Ed). *Conversation Analysis: Studies from the First Generation*. (pp: 13-31). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Kampen Robinson, C. (2017). *Contesting the centre: Low German-speaking Mennonite language, literacy, and identity constructions*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation.) University of Waterloo.

Krahn, C. & Sawatzky, H. L. (1990). Old Colony Mennonites. *Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online*. Retrieved 2 August 2016, from http://gameo.org/index.php?title=Old_Colony_Mennonites&oldid=113570.

Loewen, R. (2013). *Village among nations: "Canadian" Mennonites in a transnational world, 1916-2006*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Ricento, T. (2013). The consequences of official bilingualism on the status and perception of non-official languages in Canada. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 34(5), 475-489.

Rumbaut, R. G. (2002). Severed or sustained attachments? Language, identity and imagined communities in post-immigrant generations. In P. Levitt & M.C. Waters (Eds.), *The changing face of home: The transnational lives of the second generation* (p. 43-95). New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Schegloff, E. A., Jefferson, G., & Sacks, H. (1977). The preference for self-correction in the organization of repair in conversation. *Language 53*(2), 361-382.

Schlegel, J. (2012). Orthography in practice: A Pennsylvania German case study. In A. Jaffe, J. Androutsopoulos, M. Sebba, & S. Johnson (Eds.) *Orthography as social action: Scripts, spelling, identity and power*. (p. 177-202). Boston: De Gruyter.

Smith, C. H. (1981). *Smith's Story of the Mennonites* (5th ed.). Newton, Kansas: Faith and Life Press.

Sneath, R. & Fehr Kehler, T. (2016). An alternative type of citizen: Schooling for Low German Mennonite girls. *Still/Moving: Stories of Dietsche women*. London, Ontario.

Steiner, S. (2015). *In search of promised lands: A religious history of Mennonites in Ontario.* Kitchener-Waterloo: Herald Press.

Author Biography

Christine Kampen Robinson completed her PhD in Applied Linguistics and German at the University of Waterloo. Her research interests centre on the role language plays in how we think about and talk about ourselves, especially in contexts of multilingualism and migration. An interactional sociolinguist, she is especially interested in how different languages and different literacies give people access to different spaces and ways of being, and how individuals contest and reinvent both these spaces and available positions.