

Special Issue Introduction

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Special Issue: Reckoning with our past, interrogating our present,
and reimagining our future

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Special Issue Introduction

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Welcome to the 2023 Language and Literacy Researchers of Canada (LLRC) pre-conference special issue of *Language & Literacy: A Canadian e-journal*.

The special issue comprises submissions from the 2023 LLRC pre-conference on *Reckoning with our past, interrogating our present, and reimagining our future*. We invited colleagues to acknowledge our past shortcomings and failures to address injustices, our current efforts to confront inequities and power imbalances in our field, and our capacity, as researchers and educators, to build a more just future.

The papers in this volume encourage readers to consider the following pertinent questions about language and literacy: How do we reckon with past and present exclusions in our field? How can we reimagine pedagogy, scholarship, and research, to be more equitable in an inequitable and turbulent world? How do we reckon with the homogenizing impact of colonialism in language and literacy? How can we legitimize and valorize plurilingualism and translanguaging in our research practices, our classrooms, and society at large? How can language and literacy be reimagined in an increasingly digital age?

In *Translanguaging and teacher authority*, Katie Brubacher and Sarah Harper examine the connection between teacher authority and children’s language use in several multilingual classrooms. The authors draw on qualitative evidence from two studies to conclude that children translanguage in liminal spaces beyond the authority of the classroom teacher. They suggest that “letting go” of authority over language is not a straightforward process nor one with which all teachers are comfortable. Care must be given to centre student’s translanguaging practices to ensure that students become facilitators, rather than “buddies or crutches”, of learning.

Authors Lori McKee, Lisa Lunney, Blaire Gould, Jarrett Laughlin, and Ramona Morris share successes, challenges, and recommendations for using an oral language learning resource in *Antle discovers his voice: Examining uses of oral language resources for Mi’kmaw learners*. *Antle* is a culturally responsive, digital resource for Mi’kmaw oral language learning that supports language and identity development within and beyond the classroom. The authors demonstrate the exciting ways that authentic digital resources were used in Indigenous language revitalization in Nova Scotia, while highlighting the limitations imposed by factors such as time constraints.

Marcea Ingersoll’s conceptual article, *Supporting literacy through social justice literature: A conceptual argument for reading time in preservice teaching*, reimagines the potential of literacy for social justice within the field of teacher education. Ingersoll advocates for the use of *currere* (Pinar, 2020) and the additive trio as an analytic tool (Simpson & Cremin,

2022) in teacher education to explore personal practical knowledge. Ingersoll argues that teacher education programs must give dedicated time toward supporting future teachers' reading habits, knowledge of literature, and understanding of social justice to bring about meaningful change in literacy teaching and education.

In *Canada's official languages act, border imperialism, and the surface tension of water*, Sonia Martin draws on critical race theory, raciolinguistics and border imperialism to examine language policy in Canada. Relating the fluidity of language to water, she questions the legitimacy of linguistic and related political barriers in Canada. Specifically, she questions who linguistic borders serve, how linguistic borders function, and what the effects of linguistic borders are. The paper highlights how linguistic border governance creates the conditions for language-based discrimination to thrive. Martin reconceptualizes borders through the lens of water and calls for us to pause (Patel, 2016) and reconsider the impact of (colonial) language policies in Canada and beyond.

Collectively, these articles address the questions listed above and bring a critical and social justice lens to their responses. Each one highlights a practice or policy that has marginalized or excluded groups and suggest means for addressing them in current contexts. McKee et al., Brubacher and Harper, and Ingersoll all reflect on the important role of the teacher in addressing classroom inequities with respect to access to language and literacies, while Martin addresses the oppressive language policy framework in which educational practices are embedded. Themes of fluidity are woven through all the articles using water imagery and references to translanguaging, plurilingualism and multiliteracies, thus gesturing toward a common reimagining of language and literacy practices.

In closing, we would like to thank all the scholars who contributed articles, conference presentations, and thoughtful reviews. In addition, we gratefully acknowledge the executive teams of the Language and Literacy Researchers of Canada and *Language and Literacy: A Canadian e-journal*, for their support in realizing the conference and this special issue.

Happy reading!

Marika Kunnas & Nancy Bell

Co-Editors

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