Welcome to the 2011 issue of the Journal of Classroom Research in Literacy!

The JCRL, now in our fourth year of publication, continues the tradition of presenting pedagogy and practice from the perspectives of classroom teachers. Throughout this issue’s articles, ways of making meaning through multimodal methods of learning are prevalent. In an interview with Gunther Kress, Eva Bearne posed the question of pedagogy to which Kress replied, “I regard pedagogy as social relations in the classroom, so that forms of pedagogy are inducting you into social relations which you then carry with you into the world” (Bearne, 2005, p.291). Our authors certainly present ways for their students to engage in social relations that connect them to the world through literacy.

This year’s research studies took place in elementary through high school classrooms. Wing-Yee Hui begins by exploring drawing and writing modes with her kindergarten students searching to express themselves to each other. As Wing-Yee surmised from her artist-writer workshops, “[m]uch can be gained – by students, educators, and parents alike – from simply enabling, supporting and observing the alternative ways that children are able to communicate meaning” (p.13). While searching for ways to improve her grade five students’ writing performance, Melissa Francis studied the use of written, verbal and peer feedback. Through the use of formative assessments Melissa found all three types of feedback were useful for different types of writing but, perhaps most importantly, “the process allows [students] to think critically about what strategies help their learning” (p.22). While wanting to balance technology and traditional writing activities in her grade 6 classroom, Zélia Capitão-Tavares turned to the use of wikis combined with a current social justice issue. Creating and learning through a collaborative writing project with a wiki, Zélia found “[w]ikis facilitate productive discussion in an inclusive collaborative environment where students have a platform to contribute to, revise and proofread each others’ ideas to ensure that their written work are readable” (p.35). Moving into high school classrooms, Marian O’Connor utilized classroom blogging to teach writing, with a focus on a grade 9 struggling writer. Interestingly, Marian found that not only did “the social nature of the class blog contribute to the amount and type of writing [the student] did” but the production of a class blog “demonstrates that having an authentic audience is motivating” in relation to writing (p.45). Finally, Celeste Faye Kirsh connected the impact of spoken word poetry as a motivating factor for literacy learning and creating classroom community. Using the metaphor of a tricycle for spoken word poetry, Celeste discovered one more mode of literacy learning for our classrooms.

Students’ voices and the need for students to express themselves is a key theme throughout these articles. By allowing the space for students to explore literacy and authorship in a community of learners, our authors for the 2011 issue of JCRL are not only developing their own practices, but are also exploring new practices of making meaning. As Celeste notes,
“[w]ith every piece of writing that comes out about a topic in literacy education, we are changing the world” (p.58). The five expressive teacher-researchers in this issue of JCRL are positively changing the world of education and literacy one student and one class at a time.

References


The JCRL Editorial Team!

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