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Literacy Entanglements and Relationality, Time, Place, Space and Identity

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Tawaw, or welcome, to this special digital edition of the *Language and Literacy* journal. This issue is a direct result of the scholarship shared by participants and the development and management of the 18th annual, but first digital, Language and Literacy Researchers of Canada (LLRC/ACCLL) pre-conference by the co-chairs¹ (Jing Jin, Lara Polak, Velvalee Georges, and Yina Liu). The theme, ***Literacy Entanglements & Relationality: Time, Space, Place, and Identity***, aspires to engage researchers in moving beyond entanglement toward evolving relationality through and in the various dimensions of time, space, place, and identity. This theme was intended to create opportunities for researchers to attend to the complexities inherent in broadening and strengthening our understandings of language and literacy entanglement. We anticipated thoughtful conversation about how humans engage with literacy and language at various stages of relations, from superficial acknowledgment to exploring how our messages are transformed by identity, time, space, and place. We wondered how the course of literacy and language research might become more robust by attending to all dimensions, particularly as we move from face-to-face to virtual contexts and digital means.

¹ Names are in alphabetical order of the first name.

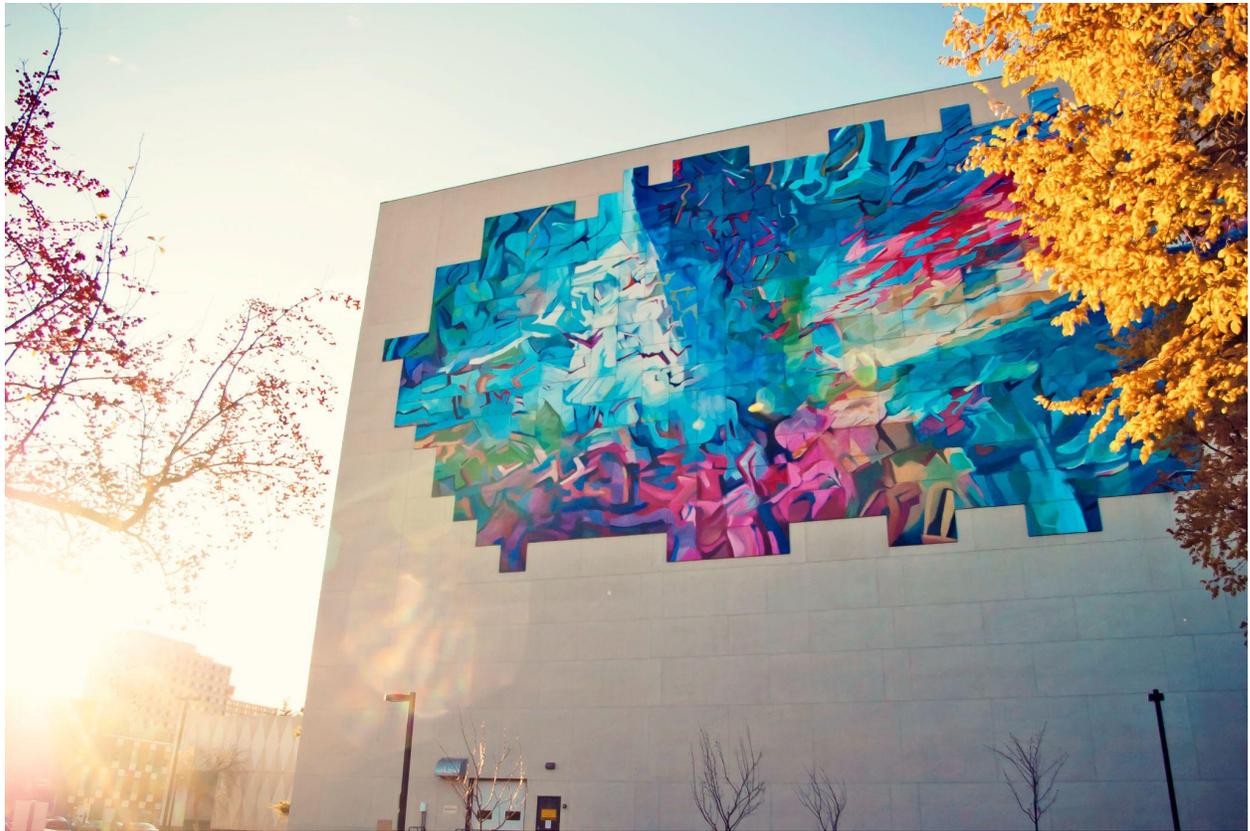


Figure 1. University of Alberta North Education Building Mural²

We aimed to provide pre-conference participants with a sense of the physical place from which the team originates by using a focal image, a mural, that dresses the wall of the University of Alberta’s Education Building. Over time, this place has become an integral part of our evolving graduate student identities. We also use the Cree word ‘tawaw’, which loosely translates to ‘welcome’, to attend to the people whose lands we occupy, Treaty 6 Territory and the Metis homeland. The actual mural, which is an image of many smaller colored tiles, not only conveys the physical location but it simultaneously expresses the affordances and limitations of virtual space. Although we gathered on a virtual platform, we recognized the importance of the land on which participants were located by acknowledging the ancestral and unceded territory of all Inuit, First Nations, and Métis peoples from coast to coast to coast.

This special edition attends to the meanings of time, as temporal and successive, and identity as shifting and negotiated. It also considers place as geophysical and multidimensional, and space as generative, where social actors engage in literacy practices anew (Bucholz et al, 2018). This issue was also an opportunity to build upon the canceled LLRC 2020 pre-conference theme where researchers were encouraged to “think across disciplines, across communities, across venues, and across traditional barriers and

² Copyright permission for this photo has been granted from University of Alberta.

boundaries” (LLRC, 2019, p. 1). The 2021 virtual pre-conference looked a bit different from previous editions but the intent of involving one another in rich, deep conversations about literacy and language research and of advancing scholarship in this area remains front and centre.

We welcomed Dr. Sumara as our keynote speaker who engaged us in reflecting on our own experiences in storying and restorying ourselves, individually and collectively. Dr. Sumara led us through a personal narrative of time, place, and space, in exploring and reflecting on the entanglements and relationality we each have with stories and life experiences, to rethink and retell who we are, who we are becoming, and where and how we find ourselves in this world. He spoke of differing levels of awareness within and between us, of being conscious and unconscious, as well as our access to our subconscious, including associative thinking and the validity of dreams. In his keynote, Dr. Sumara encourages us to reflect and develop awareness of ourselves and our stories in time, place, and space as well as to extend ourselves by sharing our stories with others in ways that may bridge divides among us. He reminds us of how we are deeply and relationally entangled with one another, imprinting upon each other in small and large moments everyday.

In this issue, we bring articles together to look at the possibilities for online learning, to explore more deeply the relationships among time, place, space, and identity. Many of the articles take a look at the remote and online learning environment from different perspectives. We also see language as a medium to bring about cohesion among the “multis”-- multiliteracies, multimodal ways of meaning making, and multicultural literacy. The theme of this issue also sheds light on the relationships between teaching pedagogies and research in practice as well as the shifting of pedagogies to meet the needs of learners in this uncertain time. This year, we have four articles published in this special issue and below is a brief snapshot of each of them.

Due to the changes that the pandemic brought, shifting from in-person to emergency remote teaching, Eugenia Vasilopoulos and Francis Bangou explored the disruption of space, place and material conditions in language teaching. Specifically, drawing on the Deleuzian concept of assemblage and post-qualitative inquiry, the researchers engaged with English for Academic Purposes (EAP) classrooms and looked at the perceptions of student engagement and student academic integrity in the emergency online classes in a higher education context. This article shared insights about the relationality between technology affordability and the absence of embodied connection.

Using a duo-ethnographic approach, Tanya Manning-Lewis and Kathy Sanford focused on the entanglement of teacher candidates’ learning of multiliteracies pedagogy and their literacy identities. These two researchers reimaged multiliteracies practices in their online teaching and looked at how the shift to online learning impacted the teacher candidates’ attitudes. The researchers aim to further the engagement of teacher candidates from the disciplines of science and mathematics education in the field of multiliteracies.

Dany Dias investigated the relationalities among time, space, place and identity in adolescent learners' literacy practices while using multicultural literature in classrooms. In her article, Dany Dias explores the potential for multicultural literature to expand the worldviews of adolescent students from the lens of her visually represented "metamorphic" theoretical framework. Her work also seeks to foster and enhance student perceptions of global citizenship, through the lens of time, space, place and identity.

Terry Loerts explored the ways that Bachelor of Education undergraduate students use multimodal meaning making to re-conceptualize their learning of literacy practices. A deeper understanding about multiliteracies and assessment techniques were enhanced by life experiences, transmediation processes, peer group sharing and facility with modes and media. Learning opportunities also enriched identity formation through transcendence of disciplines, spaces, and time.

Our team enjoyed the process over the past two years and found the LLRC to be instrumental in our growth as scholars, researchers, and educators – it has been through this publication and conference that we have been able to connect with such a helpful and thoughtful community. It is both a privilege and honor to have this opportunity to serve the LLRC/ACCLL.

Notes

The authors' order is based on the alphabetical order of the first name. Each author has equal contribution to this editorial and the whole editorial process.

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Author's Biography

Jing Jin is a PhD candidate in Elementary Education at University of Alberta, Canada. She received her MA degree specializing in children's literature in Ocean University of China, and M. Ed degree in University of Saskatchewan. Her research interests include children's literature, bilingual and biliteracy education, and heritage language acquisition.

Lara Polak is PhD student at the University of Alberta in Language and Literacy. Her doctoral research looks at the experiences of teachers and changes in teacher pedagogy

before, during, and after the pandemic. Prior to entering the PhD program at the University of Alberta, Lara was an elementary educator of fifteen years.

Velvalee Georges is a PhD candidate in Language and Literacy at the University of Alberta. She is a Metis scholar interested in Assessment, Indigenous language teacher education, Indigenous languages and literacies. She teaches Assessing Indigenous languages in classrooms for the Canadian Indigenous language and literacy Institute (Cildi) and she is a researcher with the Supporting Indigenous Languages Revitalization (SILR) Project at the University of Alberta. Velvalee has extensive administrative and teaching experience.

Yina Liu is a PhD candidate in Language and Literacy, at University of Alberta. She is interested in culturally and linguistically diverse children's digital literacy at home in her doctoral research. She completed her MEd program in 2017, exploring how Canadian children's literature could help newcomer children to transit better into Canada.