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ADVANCES IN RESEARCH ON TEACHING VOLUME 36

**LUMINOUS LITERACIES:
LOCALIZED TEACHING
AND TEACHER EDUCATION**

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Emerald Publishing Limited
Howard House, Wagon Lane, Bingley BD16 1WA, UK

First edition 2021

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-80043-453-0 (Print)

ISBN: 978-1-80043-452-3 (Online)

ISBN: 978-1-80043-454-7 (Epub)

ISSN: 1479-3687 (Series)



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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank the authors for their contributions and their hard work on this project, which took almost 18 months to complete.

We also acknowledge our students, past and present, who inspire us with their literacies and lives every day.

Our families and friends have also been a source of light.

Ashley would also like to acknowledge her writing and research mentors, past and present, her writing group, and especially Jonas and Joe.

We would also like to thank the following volume editorial board members:

Caroline Clark, The Ohio State University, Ohio

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INTRODUCTION: HONORING LOCAL LITERACIES AND LOCAL LITERACY PRACTICES

Mary F. Rice and Ashley Kaye Dallacqua

Like many in the United States and abroad, students and teachers in New Mexico inherit a legacy of colonization – where school policies imposed by dominant groups have been working to strip away their language and culture. By many accounts, these efforts have been more than successful (Spring, 2016). As a consequence, teachers in New Mexico do their work in the face of a national narrative that they and the children they serve are simply not good enough – especially in reading and other aspects of literacy (Nott, 2015). Folded into this narrative is a larger story that teachers all over the country are dispensable, despite the fact that many areas report dire shortages (Einkel, 2019). Under such conditions, it is no wonder that literacy teachers experience great anxiety as they strive to grow and develop as professionals (Mahmoodi-Shahrehabaki, 2017). Teacher education practices that focus on the local curriculum for teachers as well as students are increasingly important (Rice & Dallacqua, 2018). In our context of New Mexico in the Southwestern United States, localizing meant embracing visual and multimodal frames, challenging the colonial narratives operating in the state, honoring the multiple languages, and indeed reconsidering all the ways in which dominant views of race, class, sex, gender, religion, and more could be updated.

The chapters in this book share examples of teachers and teacher educators using local knowledges to illustrate the practical of curriculum making (Schwab, 1969). Instead of painting a dark picture, the authors seek to illuminate spaces that “...promote practices which both expand and legitimize students’ literacy toolkits” (Lizárraga & Gutiérrez, 2018, p. 41). As editors, we present layers of literacy stories from a set of dedicated educators from diverse races, cultures, languages, gender and sexual identities, educational positions, and life experiences. These teachers and teacher-educators share narratives about experiences in teacher preparation courses, classrooms, and community spaces in New Mexico. More than an “ah ha” moment, educators share moments when they made striking connections, understood new ideas about their students, came to understand the context of their teaching in ways that truly altered their practice, and interrogated their assumptions about what must be (Rice, 2020). In these pages are deeply personal experiences that impact how teachers across the state read, teach, and engage with literacy. Their work highlights thoughtful, critical choices in literacy practices that reflect a diversity of identities in New Mexico. In

so doing, these educators present counternarratives to literacy knowing and learning in places with extensive colonial histories (Milner & Howard, 2013). These narratives provide vivid demonstrations of what literacy is, how literacies are positioned in communities and contexts, and how literacies come alive as they are taught.

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