

Editors' introduction – Volume 17, Issue 3

The articles in this issue of *English Teaching: Practice and Critique* represent research from an array of contexts in Australia, South Africa and the USA. Together, these articles open critical conversations about the pedagogical perspectives of preservice English language arts (ELA) teachers, ELA teaching in the face of standardization and instructional practices that meet the needs of contemporary students.

Three of the article in this issue focus on preservice and prospective ELA teachers, offering insights into preservice teachers' pedagogical perspectives, values and fears, illuminating generative practices for growth and development.

In Sherry, Jones and Morales's "Positioning in prospective secondary ELA teachers' annotations of teaching videos," the authors examine prospective ELA teachers' annotations on videos of their own teaching and their classmates' that were collected in teacher education courses and in K-12 classrooms in the USA. The authors demonstrate how these annotations revealed the kinds of teaching practices the prospective teachers valued and how these values varied depending on with whom they identified (student or teacher) as they made their annotations. The prospective teachers' preferences and perspectives as students were often superseded by visions of what teachers "must" do in the secondary ELA classroom, such as provide a "closer" to an activity, even when it shortened a strong class discussion.

In "Students' viewpoints on using tableaux to analyse short stories," Athimoolam presents a study of South African preservice teachers' viewpoints on the use of tableaux in teaching short stories after learning about process drama pedagogy and actively participating in tableaux creation in response to a story with prominent themes of prejudice and privilege. Through her analysis of teachers' written narratives, Athimoolam demonstrates how the teachers gained insights into these themes and the characters' emotional, personal and psychological states of being. Ultimately, the preservice teachers gained a greater appreciation of how tableaux can foster perspective-taking and literary analysis.

In "Slowly shifting out of neutral: using young adult literature to discuss PSTs' beliefs about racial injustice and police brutality," Falter and Kerkhoff examine the potential of young adult literature as a critical pedagogy tool in both secondary ELA classrooms and in teacher education courses for exploring topics like racism and police brutality. Using critical literacy and critical race theories as their theoretical lenses, the authors investigate preservice teachers' responses to Reynolds and Kiely's young adult literature novel *All American Boys* (2015). The authors find that preservice teachers initially worried that because the novel seemed political, they would need to take a neutral stance in teaching the novel. However, a critical reading of the novel prompted shifts in some preservice teachers' thinking about neutrality, exhibiting promise for the use of young adult literature as a critical pedagogy tool.

Two articles in this issue examine issues related to standardization, exploring both teachers' advocacy in the face of standardization and the persistence of tracking and labeling practices despite standardization efforts.

Johnson's "Advocacy cheating: teacher noncompliance in standardised literacy testing" draws on in-depth interviews with four teachers and their principal in Australia to better understand why teachers may not comply with standardized literacy testing procedures. The participants justified their noncompliance through student advocacy rather than a desire to inflate test results, challenging simplistic labels of teacher "cheating." Johnson



offers an alternative to the widespread discourse of blame regarding teachers' test noncompliance to a recognition of the complex underpinnings of these behaviors, which she calls "advocacy cheating."

Learned and Morgan's "Constructing reading proficiency and struggle through tracked contexts," examines how reading labels – both struggling and proficient – were constructed and maintained through tracked ELA classes. Drawing on interview data with 15 students and three teachers across three tracks of an ELA class, as well as observational data and artifacts, the authors find that tracking/labeling effects persist amid efforts – such as the Common Core State Standards movement in the USA – to standardized instruction; what counted as reading proficiency and difficulty, rather than being raised to a common "high bar," continued to vary across tracks. This study affirms and builds upon previous research that finds that disrupting deficit discourses is necessary to facilitate not only youths' literacy learning but also the creation of inclusive, just classrooms.

Finally, three articles in this issue examine instructional practices that center students' voices, value students' lived experiences and provide spaces for dialogue around current, critical issues that matter to students.

Cridland-Hughes, Malloy and Rogers's self-study, "Fostering critical participatory literacy through policy debate," explores how the authors worked to create spaces for students to learn to question current issues in society, using policy debate pedagogy as the access point. Using dialogism as a frame for a discussion-based course, the study explores the iterative process of shaping a policy debate curriculum across three separate cohorts. The authors share reflections and insights that emphasize the importance of providing opportunities for students to engage collaboratively with the ideas of others through critical dialogue. They also find that the practice of continual teacher reflection is essential in centering student voices and ideas.

Rosario-Ramos's article, "Why aren't there enough of our stories to read?" Teaching autoethnographies for radical healing," describes how a white high school ELA teacher in the USA created a space for her students of color to reflect on their lives and to experience radical healing through an instructional unit on writing autoethnographies. By encouraging the students to contextualize their experiences within socio-historical processes and social, economic and political structures that were designed to create and sustain inequity, this approach to autoethnography encouraged the students to evaluate their own histories, come to terms with the past and imagine hopeful futures.

Vetter and Meacham's article, "Significance of reflection conversations for adolescent writers," explores the role that small and whole group reflective conversations have in fostering students' understandings about writing. The authors examine data from several conversations from a young writers' camp to examine how three high school students engaged in four different kinds of reflective talk during the writing process. Findings suggest that adolescent writers used prospective, reflective-in action, introspective and retrospective talk during conversations to tell their stories of learning about writing, a topic less studied in the field. The authors offer recommendations for helping students engage in reflective conversations that are productive and supportive during writing practices.

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