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Classroom Interaction, Meaning Construction and Curriculum Change: International Directions across Curriculum

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Abstract: In this issue, we revisit the issue of the relationships between classroom interaction, meaning construction and curriculum change that has been of concern to readers since the beginnings of the *Journal of Classroom Interaction* in 1965. The four articles in this special issue address these issues as the authors make visible how teachers and students construct curriculum in particular disciplines in their classrooms: Mathematics (Brown & Hirst, and Warren & Cooper), Multi-literacies through technology (Kitson, Fletcher & Kearney) and British Literature (Carter).

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Repeating Patterns and Multiplicative Thinking: Analysis of Classroom Interactions with 9-Year-Old Students that Support the Transition from the Known to the Novel

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Abstract: In early years' (primary grade) classrooms in Australia repeated patterns are commonly explored as an early introductory activity to mathematics. Most young students have an extensive knowledge of and exhibit success in copying, continuing, creating and transferring patterns into other media. By contrast, research indicates one of the most difficult concepts with which students grapple in their later years of elementary school is the notion of ratio. This paper reports on a design (teaching) experiment conducted over a four lesson period in two classrooms comprising 51 students whose average age was 9 years and 6 months. The focus of these lessons was using students' knowledge of repeating patterns, an understanding that traditionally remains in the precinct of early years, to scaffold the introduction of ratio. The theoretical frameworks that underpinned the classroom interactions and learning were the socio-constructivist theory of learning, inquiry-based discourse and the simultaneous use of multi-representations to build new knowledge. The results show that after a short intervention period, repeating patterns can act as effective bridges for introducing the ratio concept. They also show that particular representations and teacher actions assisted students to identify ratio, recognize equivalence between particular ratios, and begin to represent these ideas in abstract notation systems.

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Developing an Understanding of the Mediating Role of Talk in the Elementary Mathematics Classroom

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Abstract: Classroom talk is regarded as essential in engaging and developing student understandings in the domain of mathematics. The processes of classroom talk may occur in quite different ways, ways that shape particular opportunities for learning mathematics. Little is known about how the talk produced in innovative approaches to education mediates the teaching/learning process and promotes student engagement in the practices of mathematics. Situated within a larger study that employed multiple forms of data collection to determine whether a sociocultural approach to teaching and learning could be employed by a sample of teachers to enrich the teaching and learning of mathematics, this paper examines how two teachers used talk to scaffold student learning and how this talk provided students with different opportunities for learning. In the analyses of talk produced in Year 7 classrooms we use Renshaw and Brown's (in press) discourse characterizations to make visible how different forms of talk were being used in the classrooms as thinking devices and as means to explain and generate understanding. We also employ Bakhtin's notion of 'voice' to consider whether the formats of talk used in each classroom facilitate learning in the domain of mathematics. We conclude that the intentional and reflective use of classroom talk affords students a range of opportunities to develop their mathematical thinking and to facilitate engagement with the practices of mathematics.

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Continuity and Change in Literacy Practices: A Move towards Multiliteracies

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Abstract: In this paper we present findings from an empirical study-in-progress that investigates how a teacher integrates technology, specifically an Interactive Whiteboard (IWB), to teach multiliterate practices when reading multi-modal texts. This research was a collaboration between a teacher and a team of university-based researchers as they used ethnographic action research to make visible the teacher's espoused and enacted beliefs as to what counts as multiliteracies in her classroom during the exploratory first phase of the inquiry. Social constructionism framed our theoretical orientation and our epistemological view of knowledge. Data based on observations, field notes, reflective journal entries, videotapes and cultural artifacts were analyzed from contrastive and holistic perspectives using micro-analytic techniques to interpret ways that meanings were negotiated when reading a multi-modal text on an IWB. Results reported indicate lack of congruence between the teacher's espoused and enacted beliefs, given that her practices focused mainly on traditional print-based modes of communication. These findings will inform the teacher's action in the next phase of the study where ethnographic action research methods will guide the teacher's planning in ways that will align her espoused and enacted beliefs about multiliteracies, multimodal texts and the use of the IWB in her classroom.

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“Reading All that White Crazy Stuff:” Black Young Women Unpacking Whiteness in a High School British Literature Classroom

Stephanie Power Carter

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Abstract: The article uses sociolinguistic and ethnographic methods and Black feminist theory to explore the classroom interactions of Pam and Natonya, two Black young females, during one event in a required high school British literature classroom. The event is presented as a telling case to explore gendered and racial complexities facing young Black female students in a British literature class, dominated by literature written from a Eurocentric perspective, primarily by White males. The telling case was analyzed to explore how Whiteness functioned within the British literature curriculum and classroom interactions and how the two Black young women were negatively positioned as a result of classroom interactions around the curriculum. The analysis made visible how Pam and Natonya were constantly negotiating whiteness within the British Literature curriculum. Their experiences are important as they afford educators and educational researchers the opportunity to see some of the challenges faced by historically underrepresented students who may have been marginalized by Whiteness within the curriculum.

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Efficacy and Pedagogical Interaction in Cooperating and Student Teacher Dyads

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Abstract: Cooperating teachers are believed to have a tremendous influence on new teachers' beliefs and practices, but few researchers have systematically studied the mechanism through which cooperating teachers exercise their influence. This study is concerned with pedagogical interaction that occurs between intact pairs of cooperating and student teachers. Specifically, we examined predictors of cooperating teachers' self-reported pedagogical interaction with their student teachers. Results indicate that the efficacy beliefs of cooperating teachers, and the extent to which they believed student teachers imitated their instruction, predicted how much guidance cooperating teachers reported providing. Implications for further research and for student teaching are discussed.

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