Editorial

Nafsika Alexiadou & Linda Rönnberg, Editors

Every issue of Education Inquiry publishes peer-reviewed articles in one, two or three different sections. In the Open section, articles are sent in by authors as part of regular journal submissions and published after a blind review process. In the Thematic section, articles may reflect the theme of a conference or workshop and are published after a blind review process. The Invited section feature articles by researchers invited by Education Inquiry to shed light on a specific theme or for a specific purpose and they are also published after a review process. This issue of Education Inquiry contains a Thematic section and an Open section.

Thematic section

In the Thematic section, Berit Lundgren starts off by introducing the theme in the article Exploring Critical Literacy in Swedish Education – Introductory Notes.

In the following article, Hilary Janks presents a framework for understanding and researching critical literacy education, where questions of power, language use, and access to knowledge and culture and identity are interconnected. Janks illustrates her model of connecting literacy and power through three research-based cases.

Researching national tests of reading and writing in year 3, Ulla Ekvall uses a critical literacy approach to examine multicultural and multilingual classrooms. The findings of the study suggest that, even though the school assignments designed to prepare students for the tests are in line with the formal goals of the curriculum, they often fail to enthuse students, especially bilingual ones. A lot of potential for inspiring students to engage in cultural literacy is thus lost.

Gudrun Svensson then examines the power relations between teachers and students in the context of multilingual classrooms, where students develop competence in the Swedish language. Despite the good intentions and strong engagement of the teachers in the research, the unbalanced power relations between them and the students limits the possibilities for diversity in classrooms, and results in students having limited access to the acquisition of knowledge.

In the next article, Eva Hultin and Maria Westman explore literacy practices in schools from the point of view of texts as ‘genres’ and the way these constitute particular subject positions with different power and agency possibilities for young children. The article highlights the significance of familiarising young readers with a variety of literacy genres in schools in order to facilitate active agency and the possibility of children positioning themselves as political subjects and democratic citizens.

Catarina Schmidt follows with her article on ‘access and design’ in literacy education, and presents an ethnographic study around two children’s experiences of texts.
and socialisation in literacy work. Using a “four resources model” approach, Schmidt argues that the limited distribution of text resources in school highlight the significance of personal experience in meaning and identity making processes.

In the final article of the Thematic section, Berit Lundgren concludes with an exploration of writing discourses in classrooms through the development of argumentation skills in the subject of Swedish for years 5–7 of compulsory school. Focusing on one particular writing exercise (“writing a letter to a newspaper editor”), Lundgren suggests there is a need for teaching to provide a bridge between students’ accessing the language of the particular genre and their possibility to reconstruct texts from a critical perspective.

**Open section**

In the first article of the Open section, Are Turmo, Eyvind Elstad & Knut-Andreas Christophersen present their research on the factors affecting teachers’ individual time available for professional development. Drawing on a cross-sectional survey of teachers from 11 schools of a Norwegian municipality, the authors end up providing a series of recommendations for more effective use of professional development time for teachers that hold clear implications for schools beyond Norway.

In an article on the use of digital media in the subject of Art in the Swedish classroom, Anders Marner presents his ethnographic research on the embedding of digital media in Art education. Using socio-cultural theory, media ecology and semiotics to interpret the observation and interview data, Marner shows how in the study school digital media have been organically integrated into the teaching of Art, and have thus transformed its pedagogy.

In the next article, Lill Langlelotz presents research on the dynamics of “peer group mentoring” in a Swedish secondary school. Drawing on a three-year ethnographic study in a case study school, and on Foucauldian ideas of power, Langlelotz illustrates both the benefits and difficulties of group mentoring, and the practices of collaboration and building of trust needed for the successful engagement of all participants in the practice of mentoring.

Ingrid Helleve concludes this issue with her article on the “The networked classroom”. Her research examines Norwegian student-teachers’ expectations and experiences concerning the use of computers in classrooms. Taking a qualitative approach, Helleve argues that the top-down policy context initiating such policies placed an emphasis on technical skills and equipment infrastructure, instead of connecting these to the school curriculum. As a result, classrooms continue to be organised in traditional patterns, and the use of computers is peripheral to the organic elements of teaching and learning.