

SECTION 1.

PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES

Around the world, students' first hand experiences in learning to write and the pedagogical practices of teachers in classrooms are deeply influenced by educational policy. These policies are situated within rich and layered contexts that include a wide variety of stakeholders including many not directly involved in working with students, such as policy makers, employers, institutional administrators, and various public audiences. What students experience in classrooms and how teachers teach can thus be seen in relation to legal mandates, institutional arrangements (regarding personnel, curriculum, and assessments), as well as conflicting and competing theoretical positions on the nature of learning and appropriate methods for teaching.

To understand and speak to the complexities of actualities of educational practice associated with writing, researchers must investigate a variety of activity systems. This section includes a sampling of work that point towards the pedagogical complexities of instruction in writing at a variety of levels and in specific contexts. We begin with Chanock's overview of education policy and practice related to tertiary writing in Australia, in which the author examines why rich perspectives on writing development drawn from researchers, theorists, and practitioners failed to become the dominant influence on writing instruction. Her work underscores the challenges researchers and teachers face in guiding literacy instruction and curriculum design.

In a contemporary examination of the teaching of English in China today, Fu and Moutash provide a snapshot of educational policy in action across much of China where English language instruction is a required component of education beginning in the third grade. Their work shows, however, that instructional practices in English suffer from a narrow, mechanical approach that ignores both the long history of Chinese writing instruction and the advances in the understanding of the effective learning and teaching of writing across the rest of the world.

As national contexts for schooling, discursive practices, and educational policy continue to change and exert influence on teachers and students in classrooms, the need for teachers to take part in professional development to continuously adapt and respond to the needs of their students is essential. In their study of professional development for teachers in K-12 in the US, McCarthy, Woodard, and Kang show that professional development is also a highly situated activity. Those responsible for designing and delivering professional development must take a number of factors into consideration, and in particular the

geographical setting in which the teachers teach, as well as the quality and type of relationships embedded in the professional development experience.

In addition to informing our understanding of the global and policy context for writing instruction, writing research helps inform our understanding of how advances in technology enable and constrain literate practices and new methods of literacy learning. Santiago Araújo's chapter presents an update of work in progress focused on how multimodal transcription methods are being applied in tackling the constraints of the the subtitling process for films, and how best to enable learners to make choices in learning these processes.

—PR