Intergenerational Arts Practices as Opportunities for (Re)Conceptualizing Literacy Curricula Across the Lifespan

Biodata:

Rachel Heydon, PhD, is a Professor at the Faculty of Education, Western University, Canada, Co-Director of the Provincial Centre of Excellence for Early Years and Child Care, and Co-Director of the Provincial Secretariat for Early Years and Child Care. Her current funded research includes inquiries into the use of digital resources in intergenerational literacy programs and the literacy practices of thriving elders. Her books include, *Why Multimodal Literacy Matters* (with Susan O’Neill), *Negotiating Spaces for literacy learning* (with Mary Hamilton, Kathryn Hibbert, and Roz Stooke), and *Constructing Meaning* (with Joyce Bainbridge).

**NOTE:** The lecture is also streamed via zoom, thus accessible remotely ([https://zoom.us/j/888271023](https://zoom.us/j/888271023)) Meeting ID: 888 271 023
Summary of the Talk

This presentation is designed to promote new theoretical tools and lenses for reconceptualizing early childhood literacies and the place of literacies across the lifespan. Moving toward this goal, Rachel Heydon draws on her research from over 10 years of inquiries into opportunities for expanded literacy and identity options offered to young children and elders in intergenerational art classes.

This presentation shares talking-points crafted from the studies’ theorizing and analyses drawn variously from multimodal literacy, early childhood literacy, multimodal pedagogy, intergenerational curriculum, and actor-network theory. Each talking-point is explored through a description of its conceptualization; identification of its theoretical and disciplinary lineage(s); and documentation of its affordances, including how it may counter a constraint produced by developmentalism. These descriptions are all illustrated through study data and findings.

Talking-points include recognizing

- art as a literacy practice;
- children as capable communicators and children’s literacies as valid in their own right rather than lesser versions of adult practices;
- children’s potentialities as artistic text-makers in ways that are not limited by a developmental stage;
- how intergenerational curriculum can position children as experts, capable of supporting adult literacy practices; and
- the socio-materiality of multimodal literacies and pedagogy, which mobilizes the previous talking-points.

All talking points are interrelated and together promote a complex, plastic, and dynamic view of children and their literacies. This view defies what developmentalism has said is possible in early childhood literacies, and the implications will be of interest to people working in early childhood, art, education, reconceptualist theorizing, and/or literacy studies.

Suggested articles:


Heydon, R., & Du, X. (January, 2019). This is the stuff that identities are made of: Children learning with grandparents and other elders. In N. Kucirkova, J. Rowsell, & G. Falloon (Eds.), The Routledge international handbook of learning with technology in early childhood. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.