In this third, fully revised edition, the 10 volume Encyclopedia of Language and Education offers the newest developments, including an entirely new volume of research and scholarly content, essential to the field of language teaching and learning in the age of globalization. In the selection of topics and contributors, the Encyclopedia reflects the depth of disciplinary knowledge, breadth of interdisciplinary perspective, and diversity of sociogeographic experience in the language and education field.

Throughout, there is an inclusion of contributions from non-English speaking and non-western parts of the world, providing truly global coverage. Furthermore, the authors have sought to integrate these voices fully into the whole, rather than as special cases or international perspectives in separate sections.

The Encyclopedia is a necessary reference set for every university and college library in the world that serves a faculty or school of education, as well as being highly relevant to the fields of applied and socio-linguistics. The publication of this work charts the further deepening and broadening of the field of language and education since the publication of the first edition of the Encyclopedia in 1997 and the second edition in 2008.

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Brian V. Street • Stephen May
Editors

Literacies and Language Education

Third Edition

With 10 Figures
Editor in Chief’s Introduction to the “Encyclopedia of Language and Education”

This is one of ten volumes of the *Encyclopedia of Language and Education* published by Springer. The *Encyclopedia* – now in this, its 3rd edition – is undoubtedly the benchmark reference text in its field. It was first published in 1997 under the general editorship of the late David Corson and comprised eight volumes, each focused on a single, substantive topic in language and education. These included: language policy and political issues in education, literacy, oral discourse and education, second language education, bilingual education, knowledge about language, language testing and assessment, and research methods in language and education.

In his introductory remarks, David made the case for the timeliness of an overarching, state-of-the-art review of the language and education field. He argued that the publication of the *Encyclopedia* reflected both the internationalism and interdisciplinarity of those engaged in the academic analysis of language and education, confirmed the maturity and cohesion of the field, and highlighted the significance of the questions addressed within its remit. Contributors across the 1st edition’s eight volumes came from every continent and from over 40 countries. This perhaps explains the subsequent impact and reach of that 1st edition – although no one (except, perhaps, the publisher!) quite predicted its extent. The *Encyclopedia* was awarded a Choice Outstanding Academic Title award by the American Library Association and was read widely by scholars and students alike around the globe.

In 2008, the 2nd edition of the *Encyclopedia* was published under the general editorship of Nancy Hornberger. It grew to ten volumes as Nancy continued to build upon the reach and influence of the *Encyclopedia*. A particular priority in the 2nd edition was the continued expansion of contributing scholars from contexts outside of English-speaking and/or developed contexts, as well as the more effective thematic integration of their regional concerns across the *Encyclopedia* as a whole. The 2nd edition also foregrounded key developments in the language and education field over the previous decade, introducing two new volumes on language socialization and language ecology.

This 3rd edition continues both the legacy and significance of the previous editions of the *Encyclopedia*. A further decade on, it consolidates, reflects, and expands (upon) the key issues in the field of language education. As with its predecessors, it overviews in substantive contributions of approximately 5000 words each, the historical development, current developments and challenges, and
future directions, of a wide range of topics in language and education. The geographical focus and location of its authors, all chosen as experts in their respective topic areas, also continues to expand, as the Encyclopedia aims to provide the most representative international overview of the field to date.

To this end, some additional changes have been made. The emergence over the last decade of “superdiversity” as a topic of major concern in sociolinguistics, applied linguistics, and language education is now a major thread across all volumes – exploring the implications for language and education of rapidly changing processes of migration and transmigration in this late capitalist, globalized world. This interest in superdiversity foregrounds the burgeoning and rapidly complexifying uses of language(s), along with their concomitant deconstruction and (re)modification, across the globe, particularly (but not exclusively) in large urban environments. The allied emergence of multilingualism as an essential area of study – challenging the long-held normative ascendancy of monolingualism in relation to language acquisition, use, teaching, and learning – is similarly highlighted throughout all ten volumes, as are their pedagogical consequences (most notably, perhaps, in relation to translanguaging). This “multilingual turn” is reflected, in particular, in changes in title to two existing volumes: Bilingual and Multilingual Education and Language Awareness, Bilingualism and Multilingualism (previously, Bilingual Education and Language Awareness, respectively).

As for the composition of the volumes, while ten volumes remain overall, the Language Ecology volume in the 2nd edition was not included in the current edition, although many of its chapter contributions have been reincorporated across other volumes, particularly in light of the more recent developments in superdiversity and multilingualism, as just outlined. (And, of course, the important contribution of the Language Ecology volume, with Angela Creese and the late Peter Martin as principal editors, remains available as part of the 2nd edition.) Instead, this current edition has included a new volume on Language, Education and Technology, with Steven Thorne as principal editor. While widely discussed across the various volumes in the 2nd edition, the prominence and rapidity of developments over the last decade in academic discussions that address technology, new media, virtual environments, and multimodality, along with their wider social and educational implications, simply demanded a dedicated volume.

And speaking of multimodality, a new, essential feature of the current edition of the Encyclopedia is its multiplatform format. You can access individual chapters from any volume electronically, you can read individual volumes electronically and/or in print, and, of course, for libraries, the ten volumes of the Encyclopedia still constitute anindispensable overarching electronic and/or print resource.

As you might expect, bringing together ten volumes and over 325 individual chapter contributions has been a monumental task, which began for me at least in 2013 when, at Nancy Hornberger’s invitation, Springer first approached me about the editor-in-chief role. All that has been accomplished since would simply not have occurred, however, without support from a range of key sources. First, to Nancy Hornberger, who, having somehow convinced me to take on the role, graciously agreed to be consulting editor for the 3rd edition of the Encyclopedia, providing advice, guidance, and review support throughout.
The international and interdisciplinary strengths of the *Encyclopedia* continue to be foregrounded in the wider topic and review expertise of its editorial advisory board, with several members having had direct associations with previous editions of the *Encyclopedia* in various capacities. My thanks to Suresh Canagarajah, William Cope, Viv Edwards, Rainer Enrique Hamel, Eli Hinkel, Francis Hult, Nkonko Kamwangamalu, Gregory Kamwendo, Claire Kramsch, Constant Leung, Li Wei, Luis Enrique Lopez, Marilyn Martin-Jones, Bonny Norton, Tope Omoniyi, Alastair Pennycook, Bernard Spolsky, Lionel Wee, and Jane Zuengler for their academic and collegial support here.

The role of volume editor is, of course, a central one in shaping, updating, revising and, in some cases, resituating specific topic areas. The 3rd edition of the *Encyclopedia* is a mix of existing volume editors from the previous edition (Cenoz, Duff, King, Shohamy, Street, and Van Deussen-Scholl), new principal volume editors (García, Kim, Lin, McCarty, and Thorne, Wortham), and new coeditors (Lai and Or). As principal editor of *Language Policy and Political Issues in Education*, Teresa McCarty brings to the volume her longstanding interests in language policy, language education, and linguistic anthropology, arising from her work in Native American language education and Indigenous education internationally. For *Literacies and Language Education*, Brian Street brings a background in social and cultural anthropology, and critical literacy, drawing on his work in Britain, Iran, and around the globe. As principal editors of *Discourse and Education*, Stanton Wortham has research expertise in discourse analysis, linguistic anthropology, identity and learning, narrative self-construction, and the new Latino diaspora, while Deoksoon Kim’s research has focused on language learning and literacy education, and instructional technology in second language learning and teacher education. For *Second and Foreign Language Education*, Nelleke Van Deussen-Scholl has academic interests in linguistics and sociolinguistics and has worked primarily in the Netherlands and the United States. As principal editors of *Bilingual and Multilingual Education*, Ofelia García and Angel Lin bring to the volume their internationally recognized expertise in bilingual and multilingual education, including their pioneering contributions to translanguage, along with their own work in North America and Southeast Asia. Jasone Cenoz and Durk Gorter, principal editors of *Language Awareness, Bilingualism and Multilingualism*, bring to their volume their international expertise in language awareness, bilingual and multilingual education, linguistic landscape, and translanguage, along with their work in the Basque Country and the Netherlands. The principal editor of *Language Testing and Assessment*, Elana Shohamy, is an applied linguist with interests in critical language policy, language testing and measurement, and linguistic landscape research, with her own work focused primarily on Israel and the United States. For *Language Socialization*, Patricia Duff has interests in applied linguistics and sociolinguistics and has worked primarily in North America, East Asia, and Central Europe. For *Language, Education and Technology*, Steven Thorne’s research interests include second language acquisition, new media and online gaming environments, and theoretical and empirical investigations of language, interactivity, and development, with his work focused primarily in the United States and Europe. And
for Research Methods in Language and Education, principal editor, Kendall King, has research interests in sociolinguistics and educational linguistics, particularly with respect to Indigenous language education, with work in Ecuador, Sweden, and the United States. Finally, as editor-in-chief, I bring my interdisciplinary background in the sociology of language, sociolinguistics, applied linguistics, and educational linguistics, with particular interests in language policy, Indigenous language education, and bilingual education, along with my own work in New Zealand, North America, and the UK/Europe.

In addition to the above, my thanks go to Yi-Ju Lai, coeditor with Kendall King, and Iair Or, coeditor with Elana Shohamy. Also, to Lincoln Dam, who as editorial assistant was an essential support to me as editor-in-chief and who worked closely with volume editors and Springer staff throughout the process to ensure both its timeliness and its smooth functioning (at least, to the degree possible, given the complexities involved in this multiyear project). And, of course, my thanks too to the approximately 400 chapter contributors, who have provided the substantive content across the ten volumes of the Encyclopedia and who hail from every continent in the world and from over 50 countries.

What this all indicates is that the Encyclopedia is, without doubt, not only a major academic endeavor, dependent on the academic expertise and good will of all its contributors, but also still demonstrably at the cutting edge of developments in the field of language and education. It is an essential reference for every university and college library around the world that serves a faculty or school of education and is an important allied reference for those working in applied linguistics and sociolinguistics. The Encyclopedia also continues to aim to speak to a prospective readership that is avowedly multinational and to do so as unambiguously as possible. Its ten volumes highlight its comprehensiveness, while the individual volumes provide the discrete, in-depth analysis necessary for exploring specific topic areas. These state-of-the art volumes also thus offer highly authoritative course textbooks in the areas suggested by their titles.

This 3rd edition of the Encyclopedia of Language and Education continues to showcase the central role of language as both vehicle and mediator of educational processes, along with the pedagogical implications therein. This is all the more important, given the rapid demographic and technological changes we face in this increasingly globalized world and, inevitably, by extension, in education. But the cutting edge contributions within this Encyclopedia also, crucially, always situate these developments within their historical context, providing a necessary diachronic analytical framework with which to examine critically the language and education field. Maintaining this sense of historicity and critical reflexivity, while embracing the latest developments in our field, is indeed precisely what sets this Encyclopedia apart.

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In this introduction to *Literacies and Language Education*, we attempt to survey briefly some of the new directions evident in literacy studies. We begin with an outline of the current theoretical frameworks, in particular work in New Literacy Studies, in multimodality, and in theories of technology and artifact, before considering some of the educational responses evident in different countries as they come to terms with the challenges posed by new literacies. We also make some suggestions as to why it is that policy in some countries—notably the USA and UK—seems to be facing in the opposite direction to that which this research base tells us is needed.

Many of the chapters in this volume also work from this perspective. The volume is divided into three parts: The first part of 11 chapters, entitled *Literacies and Social Theory*, puts work in the field into theoretical perspective; the second part, entitled *Literacies and Social Institutions*, includes a further 12 chapters that consider the issues raised with attention specifically to the issues of “language,” classroom literacy, and family literacy in relation to a number of social and cultural contexts, such as in Nepal, Brazil, Australia, and the USA. In the third part, *Living Literacies—Social and Cultural Experience*, a further 8 chapters cover many of these issues across a number of different countries, Africa, USA, Latin America, and the UK.

The first part comprises chapters which cover topics such as technology, globalization, reading, critical literacy, gender, etc. Many of these issues are referred to in the subsequent parts, where authors go into more detail on social institutions and social and cultural experiences. Part 1, following the introductory piece on “New Literacies, New Times: Developments in Literacy Studies” written by the first editor, moves into specific accounts, beginning with “Critical Race Theory” by Arlene Willis. She locates this perspective in historical debates under the heading of “Early Developments,” noting how the notion of “Critical Race Theory” (CRT) emerged among legal scholars in the United States in the late 1960s and early 1970s “in response to the slow and deliberate enforcement of civil rights legislation and antidiscrimination law in the USA.” The theoretical orientation and movement emerged later when legal scholars sought to “re-examine the terms by which race and racism have been negotiated in American consciousness, and to recover and revitalize the radical tradition of race-consciousness among African-Americans and other peoples of color.” This involved “oppositional scholarship,” emphasizing that CRT “challenges the universality of white experience and judgment as the
authoritative standard that binds people of color, and normatively measures, directs, controls, and regulates the terms of proper thought, expression, presentment, and behavior.” A key field here is that of education, where scholars who embrace CRT “call for race, racism, and power to be squarely addressed, beyond the emphatic fallacy that abounds in education.” This involved theorizing, methodologies, and “analyses to comprehend and explain the realities of the lives and experiences of people of color living in racialized societies,” an appropriate location for readers beginning to engage with a volume on Literacies and Social Theory in the Encyclopedia of Language and Education.

Appropriately enough, the next chapter is entitled “Literacy Myths” in which Harvey Graff and John Duffy refer to the “belief, articulated in educational, civic, religious, and other settings, contemporary and historical, that the acquisition of literacy is a necessary precursor to and invariably results in economic development, democratic practice, cognitive enhancement, and upward social mobility.” Literacy, so defined, Graff and Harvey point out, in a view that is central to the whole volume “has been invested with immeasurable and indeed almost ineffable qualities, purportedly conferring on practitioners a predilection toward social order, an elevated moral sense, and a metaphorical “state of grace,” assumptions that have run through the public and scholarly debates in the field. Indeed, they argue, such presumptions “have a venerable historical lineage and have been expressed, in different forms, from antiquity through the Renaissance and the Reformation, and again throughout the era of the Enlightenment, during which literacy was linked to progress, order, transformation, and control.” The summary of these presumptions provided by Graff and Duffy offers the reader a background on which to make their own contemporary judgments about the role and importance of literacy in contemporary society: “Associated with these beliefs is the conviction that the benefits ascribed to literacy cannot be attained in other ways, nor can they be attributed to other factors, whether economic, political, cultural, or individual. Rather, literacy stands alone as the independent and critical variable.” Taken together, these attitudes constitute what Graff first termed “the Literacy Myth.” Many researchers and commentators have since adopted this usage, a theme that Street signaled in the opening chapter of the volume and that many authors address as they attempt to locate their account of literacy in fields such as education, in continents such as Africa and Asia, and in debates about globalization and new technology. In a statement that underpins many of the accounts to follow, Graff and Duffy argue that “Such attitudes about literacy represent a ‘myth’ because they exist apart from and beyond empirical evidence that might clarify the actual functions, meanings, and effects of reading and writing. Like all myths, the Literacy Myth is not so much a falsehood but an expression of the ideology of those who sanction it and are invested in its outcomes.”

Working from these underpinning theoretical and methodological perspectives, we can then consider the rest of the chapters in this part, covering technology, reading and learning, gender, and critical literacy. The next chapter indeed addresses “Literacy and Internet Technologies.” Kevin Leander and Cynthia Lewis link the debates so far with the contemporary concern with how literacy is related to new technologies. They explain that “Increasing access to and usage of
Internet-networked tools around the world continue to shape and change literacy practices within social and educational contexts.” It is these evolving literacies, rather than the tools themselves, that ground and motivate their discussion in this chapter as they “highlight historical innovations in Internet technologies and outline major contributions foundational to understanding the changing nature of literacy: multimodality, sociality, and critical digital literacies.” They link these “technologies” to such social issues as “transnational identities, literacy ecologies, and gaming as fields-in-progress within the increasingly mobile and interconnected world,” themes that again underpin many of the chapters in this volume (see also Thorne and May’s volume in the Encyclopedia). This debate, then, includes “critical social issues, including the digital divide and the ways in which the Internet continues to drive and problematize the definitions and boundaries of education, communication, and literacy.” Helpfully for readers at this stage of the Encyclopedia, they “consider future directions for the field, including emerging implications for research, definitions of literacy, conceptions of teaching in its relation to learning, new applications/practices, statistical images of Internet access, and celebrated projects and research studies.” These themes, they suggest, can help to “illustrate the contemporary wired literacy landscapes of the world.”

An issue that will run through all of the debates and that we have already signaled is how all of these issues can be related to contemporary approaches to education. In a chapter entitled “BICS and CALP: Empirical and Theoretical Status of the Distinction,” Jim Cummins offers an attempt to clarify the complex concepts involved in many accounts of learning. The distinction between basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) was, in fact, introduced by Cummins “in order to draw educators’ attention to the timelines and challenges that second language learners encounter as they attempt to catch up to their peers in academic aspects of the school language” (see also Cummins in Garcia, Lin, and May’s volume in the Encyclopedia). He goes on to explain the terms more fully: “BICS refers to conversational fluency in a language while CALP refers to students’ ability to understand and express, in both oral and written modes, concepts and ideas that are relevant to success in school.” In this chapter, Cummins describes “the origins, rationale, and evolution of the distinction together with its empirical foundations” and he then discusses “its relationship to similar theoretical constructs that have been proposed in different contexts and for different purposes,” a perspective that helps link this chapter with the wider debates about literacy that scholars are addressing in this volume. For instance, Cummins helpfully discusses the relationship of the distinction between BICS and CALP to the emerging field of New Literacy Studies (NLS) that a number of authors address in this volume.

A further piece on “reading” is provided by John Edwards under the title “Reading Attitudes, Interests, Practices.” While most of the chapters in this volume might be seen as rooted in social practice theories of literacy, Edwards reminds us of the important role that the social psychology of reading offers. This perspective, he suggests, “remains a relatively small part of a vast literature largely concerned with skills acquisition and development.” As he argues, this is “curious for two reasons.
First, it is obvious that both teachers and researchers do not want merely to facilitate reading ability – they hope to form and maintain reading habits. Second, there are regular laments – such as grumblings over the inadequacies of the younger generation – about low levels of reading, poor attitudes, lack of enthusiasm and so on. Indeed, surveys often suggest a gulf between reading ability and reading practices; in many contemporary societies, the essential problem seems to be *aliteracy* rather than *illiteracy.* On both counts, then, Edwards argues, “questions of what people read, how much they read, and the purposes and effects of their reading surely assume central importance.” Edwards, then, provides an alternative view of what is involved in reading and literacy that can help put the chapters in the volume into broader perspective. He links this account to some of the broader international debates that a number of authors, such as Graff and Duffy, refer to; for instance, as Edwards puts it “Although the proportion of illiterate people has been in steady decline for some time, an increase in absolute numbers means that one-third of the world’s population can still neither read nor write.” Edwards refines the statistical account by adding in the notion of “functional literacy,” used to refer to the problems faced by many in “developed” societies, where “socially meaningful ability goes beyond elementary skills.” For instance, “several surveys have suggested that, in Europe and North America, as much as a quarter of the population may have difficulty with mundane but important tasks like understanding road signs or product-warning labels” or, another way of putting this and that we might watch out for in subsequent chapters, is that “in many modern societies, aliteracy is as much an issue as functional literacy. It is certainly more compelling in a social-psychological sense, because the question here is why some of those who can read don’t read. The term may be new but the phenomenon is old.” As a social psychologist, Edwards recognizes the social variability in analytic concepts associated with literacy and does not just reduce it to formal skills, as many organizations and especially those associated with schooling still tend to do.

This leaves four further chapters in the first part, which elaborate a number of the key social issues associated with literacy that these earlier chapters have signaled, and that chapters in later parts also pick up, such as gender, globalization, and critical literacy. Gemma Moss, for instance, tackles head on the issues associated with “Gender and Literacy.” Her chapter reviews the ways in which gender and literacy have been linked in educational contexts and the different patterns of intervention this has led to. In particular, she highlights “the switch in the literature from a focus on the formation of (girls’) gendered identities to a focus on (boys’) gendered patterns of attainment within the literacy curriculum.” And she links “the emergence of boys in literacy as a policy problem . . . to the current dominance of performance-management cultures within governments, and the accompanying processes of large-scale education reform which they have led to around the globe.” As she states, “often such interventions are designed with the aim of securing maximum homogeneity in outcomes from education.” This she suggests “provides a new context in which to consider the range of social explanations for inequalities in educational performance, their currency, and the challenges this new more managerial landscape in education poses for a feminist politics.” To address these issues, she provides a
number of complex headings that we can bear in mind as we read other chapters, such as “Feminism, Gender, and Literacy,” cross referring to a number of other chapters in this volume, such as Robinson-Pant’s. The elaborate and complex headings indicated here bring out the complexity and refinement of the field that are central to the volume as a whole.

Indeed, in this spirit, Peter Freebody from Australia, in his chapter entitled “Critical Literacy Education: The Supremely Educational Event,” outlines “how historians, linguists, anthropologists, sociologists, and educators have contributed in various ways to the study and practice of ‘critical literacy education’ (CLE).” CLE, he explains, “is a project aimed at integrating knowledge about literacy into an analysis of power-in-action, and knowledge about power into an analysis of texts-in-action.” He summarizes “CLE efforts [as having] individuals and communities understand more fully their current contexts, their histories, and how they, particularly those traditionally not well served by current ways of teaching literacy in school, may take more productive part in enhancing their societies.” Freebody concludes that “these goals are best pursued through deeper understandings of texts, the social practices they help to shape, and the social relations those practices build and sustain,” an approach that is also central to this volume.

A further chapter along these lines, by Yvonne Foley, similarly argues that “Historically, the term ‘literacy’ was defined as the ability to read and write. However, this limited definition of literacy has been challenged through the emergence of social theories, where it was recognised that literacy is more complex than traditional perspectives allow.” Again she cites New Literacy Studies (NLS) as a view of “literacy as a set of socially and culturally situated practices, rather than simply as a range of technical academic skills that operate at an individual level.” This shift in perspective, she explains, “has embraced the plural and discursive nature of literacy and integrates ways of being and doing in the world.” For instance, “Critical approaches to literacy recognise the link between meaning making, power and identity.” While there are a number of orientations associated with critical literacy, all share the perspective that “human action is mediated by language and other symbol systems within particular cultural contexts. Language therefore plays a key role in how we make sense of the world in which we live.”

This theme of the importance of underlying theory and method related to key ideological and social issues runs through the volume and is also prominent in the next chapter, by Kwesi Prah, entitled “Language, Literacy, and Knowledge Production in Africa.” The contribution assesses the state of language and literacy studies in Africa as Prah “traces the extent and record of African scripts and debates issues of literacy development in African societies.” He poses questions that are relevant to many of the chapters that follow, such as those “regarding the challenges ahead in literacy enhancement on the continent.”

Finally, in this part, Viniti Vaish makes the link between the theoretical accounts we have been reviewing and the broad social issue of “Biliteracy and Globalization.” Vaish sees the “confluence of biliteracy and globalization as somewhat uncharted water,” although many of the themes she addresses we will now be more familiar with from the previous chapters. For instance, she asks the question “What text types
and practices does one find at the lifeworlds of this confluence and what implications do they have for the bilingual classroom? Who are the main players at this meeting place of texts (as in biliteracy) and processes (as in globalization): markets, policymakers, teacher practitioners or finally the consumers and producers of languages? What does a biliterate text in our globalizing world look like both inside and outside the classroom?” Vaish’s chapter explores some of the answers to these questions and also lays the ground for subsequent parts. As with other authors, she locates her account in the historical development of ideas, citing key authors such as Hornberger. Vaish’s particular contribution is to draw upon data from two countries where she conducted research – India and Singapore. Such data can help us to follow through the complex theoretical concepts that we have been exposed to in Part 1 and also prepares us nicely for the elaborations to be found in the next parts.

In Part 2, Literacies and Social Institutions, we will find another 12 chapters with particular reference to how literacy in general and reading in particular are constructed in classroom contexts with attention also to the issues of “language” that were particularly signaled in the final chapters of Part 1. The second part of this part also draws on a number of social and cultural contexts, such as in Nepal, Brazil, Australia, and the USA. The first chapter in this part is by Mary Lea and addresses the concept of academic literacies. She locates the concept in its historical context in debates about writing at university, notably in the UK and the USA. The term “academic literacies,” she explains, “provides a way of understanding student writing, which highlights the relationship between language and learning in higher education. It draws upon applied linguistics and social anthropology for its theoretical framing and its orientation towards the social, cultural and contextualized nature of writing in the university. The work on academic literacies sits broadly within a body of research called New Literacy Studies, which takes a social and cultural approach to writing, in contrast to more cognitive perspectives.” Lea explains, as with other chapters in this volume, that “the use of the plural form, “literacies,” signals a concern with social and cultural practices around reading and writing in particular contexts, rather than individual cognitive activity.” Research findings suggest that in order to understand more about student writing it is necessary to start from the position that literacy is not a unitary skill that can be transferred with ease from context to context. The research points instead to the “requirement for students to switch between many different types of written text, as they encounter new modules or courses and the writing demands of different disciplinary genres, departments and academic staff.” Lea also draws attention to the methodological issues involved in this field, where “ethnographic-type qualitative case study” has provided a way of looking at students’ and faculty experiences of writing for assessment, and the gaps between their expectations of the requirements of writing. In foregrounding the relationship between writing and learning (a concept addressed explicitly in the subsequent chapter by Alan Rogers), writing is conceptualized in terms of epistemology – rather than cognitive skill – and what counts as knowledge in the different contexts of the academy.

Lea then provides a brief history and context for how the notion of “academic literacies” has developed, including “freshman composition” courses in the USA and
the College Composition movement there. These became established in the USA from the 1960s, while, in the United Kingdom (UK) and other countries with similar educational traditions, there was little systematic attention paid to student writing in higher education before the mid-1980s. However, toward the end of the 1980s, Lea and Street introduced new theoretical frames concerning literacies as social practices to a field that was, at the time in the UK, still predominantly influenced by psychological accounts of student learning. One particularly significant aspect of this approach is related to the ongoing attention being paid in tertiary education to the use of reflective writing, particularly in professional and vocational courses. A number of researchers are examining the nature of the writing that is required in these contexts, both foregrounding and problematizing the supposedly self-evident relationship between “reflective practice and reflective writing.”

Next and also as part of the broader conceptual issue, Alan Rogers addresses the issue of how to understand “learning.” In the chapter entitled “Learning: Embedded, Situated, and Unconscious,” he suggests that “the current interest in ‘lifelong learning’ has directed attention to ‘informal learning’ – that learning that takes place throughout life outside of formal and non-formal educational and training programmes.” However, he suggests that this terrain is “contested and uncertain, and there is confusion around descriptors, with cross-over terms being used by different fields of study.” He uses this chapter to examine three contemporary debates in discussions of learning – embedded learning, situated learning, and unconscious learning – to see what light they throw on formal and informal learning. Since all learning, he concludes, “is firmly embedded in the social and emotional context in which the learning takes place, embedded learning also occurs unobserved in formal learning contexts, the so-called ‘hidden curriculum’ in which some things are learnt which are not directly intended by the teachers or trainers, including the beliefs, values, prejudices and norms of those who constructed the learning programme.”

Two kinds of learning, deliberative and natural, shade imperceptibly into one another in a continuum of learning. Both include elements of embedded learning, situated learning, and unconscious learning. Anthropologists have long seen this when exploring how nonindustrial societies help members to learn the ways of their culture.

Also building on the academic literacies and international dimensions of literacy, Constant Leung links these themes to second language learning. In his chapter entitled “Second Language Academic Literacies: Converging Understandings,” he looks at how schools and universities in many parts of the world are expected to serve ethnically and linguistically diverse students. “Scholarly discussions on language and literacy education have, however, tended to maintain either a first language or a second language stance in some mutually insulating way.” This intellectual divide was perhaps fostered by the educational and intellectual climate that prevailed in an earlier historical period. In the past 30 years or so, public educational institutions have been made progressively more conscious of the need and the obligation to serve diverse student populations under the aegis of marketization of educational provision for international students, and/or social integration for all students, irrespective of their language backgrounds. It is recognized that
many linguistic minority students find the use of their second language for academic purposes problematic. The ability to communicate informally for social purposes in a second language, even at high levels of lexico-grammatical accuracy and pragmatic familiarity, does not automatically translate into effective academic language use, particularly in relation to reading and writing. A good deal of discussion in second language curriculum and pedagogy is focussed on this “problem.” Leung also helps the reader by unpacking some of the issues associated with the key terms signaled in this field, such as “second language pedagogy” and “academic literacy,” “language” and “literacy/literacies,” “language lexico-grammar system,” and “English for Academic Purposes” (EAP). And, of course, the term “language” itself, he suggests, needs unpacking and he sees it “in the context of this chapter ‘in relation to observed socio-cultural and pragmatic conventions in discourse’.”

Vivian L. Gadsden then links these broader debates to the theme of “Family Literacy.” She sees family literacy as “a critical part of discussions on children, parents, and family learning,” which she relates to “broad discussions of literacy in and out of school” of the kind we have been considering. Such a view, she argues, “encompasses a wide array of literacy practices and relationships between children and parents, among adults, and within families” and while for many the term may be interpreted as a single concept, she sees the focus on literacy “as a multidimensional concept in which families and literacy are studied in tandem to inform and deepen our understanding of the intersections between the two areas of inquiry.” She seeks, then, “to understand families learning literacy in context – e.g., homes and communities, the relationships that foster learning in these contexts, and the role of the family itself in creating and sustaining literacy learning and engagement.” As with other authors in this volume, she addresses issues involved in “conceptualizations of literacy as cultural and social practices, socio-contextual factors, and social change versus discrete skills that assume universality of interests, needs, and backgrounds of learners.” She uses a range of appropriate sources to review the issue of family literacy “over the past 50 years; the persistence of tensions and problems; and the possibilities that are emerging within and across language and literacy theory, research, and practice.”

Anna Robinson-Pant in a chapter entitled “Women, Literacy, and Development: An Overview” notes that the debates about women’s literacy have been seen as “the key to development,” which “has informed government and international development agency policy and programmes around the world.” For instance, “in the poorest countries, there has continued to be a significant gap between male and female literacy rates: UIS (2013) notes that 64% of the 774 million illiterate adults are women. Within basic adult education, policy makers have focused on increasing women’s as opposed to men’s access to literacy, through programmes designed particularly around women’s reproductive role.” Over the decades, researchers have been concerned to find statistical evidence indicating positive connections between female literacy rates, health indicators such as decreased child mortality and fertility rates, and economic participation.

However, in the 1980s there was a shift to a Gender and Development (GAD) approach which meant that the impact of literacy programmes was no longer
measured only in relation to women. Men were also brought into the picture and there was a “growing understanding that the linkages between girls’ schooling (as well as women’s literacy) were in fact more complex than previously believed,” a theme already signaled by Gadsden in her chapter on “Family Literacy.” The more holistic approach to adult education in general has drawn attention to the importance of supportive development and employment policies. Anna Robinson-Pant’s move to a broader view of “Women, Literacy, and Development” is part of a series of new and more wide-ranging issues being addressed in the literacy field. For instance, “there has been long recognition of the need for improved access to services such as credit, health care facilities and agricultural extension, if women are to be able to use the knowledge and skills learnt in literacy courses; and the current policy shift towards education and sustainable development points to the need to strengthen inter-sectoral linkages and promote a more holistic approach.” The latter view she highlights has begun to be adopted by UNESCO. She concludes: “As well as the need to explore the links between women’s literacy and the economy, there is an increasing interest in how societal discourses shape literacy and development programmes,” which include attention to “the resourcing and the status of women’s literacy programmes.”

And in the spirit of international debate and tensions in the field, Nayr Ibrahim makes the linking overview point with regard to “Developing Literacy, and Identities, in Multiple Languages.” Her account of this theme involves recognizing how “[m]ajor socio-cultural and socio-political developments in the last century have spread languages, literacies and identities throughout the world and accelerated the advent of complex multilingual societies in the 21st century.” One effect of this has been that “adults are confronted with alternative literacy practises in various social contexts, where different languages and ways of meaning are learnt and new identities are forged.” But in addition, this historical move has also affected new generations, as “children are born into multiple language contact situations, in binational families and multilingual communities.” This, then, has affected identities and ways of living in “multiple and concurrent worlds.” Ibrahim, as with other contributors to this volume, makes the link between these social changes and the issue of ideology and what she terms “linguistic power struggles.” These involve “individuals’ rights for self-expression in their languages versus the coercive power of the majority language; access, or not, to different literacies; the need to negotiate identities in these contested spaces.” In her chapter, then, she “traces the growing importance of identity in the development of literacy in multiple languages, over the last 60 years.” This journey, “not linear but overlapping and recursive, spotlights the shift from a monoglossic to a heteroglossic approach in research and practise, foregrounding the everyday practise of local, situated as well as transnational literacies, and recognising and valorising the ensuing hybrid language identities.”

A number of chapters then address the issues raised above in relation to specific national and cultural contexts, ranging from Brazil, to Nepal, Australia, the USA, and Africa. For instance, Maria Lucia Castanheira from Brazil looks at Portuguese-speaking African students in that country. She focuses on the experience of students from Angola and their advisors in a graduate program in a Brazilian public
university, using this as a case study for highlighting the broader issue of examining the situated nature of academic writing and the issues involved in how university tutors and students navigate across contexts. She locates this account in the international context of “academic literacies” research and then provides detailed research-based accounts of students from Angolan backgrounds and of their tutors’ comments. A group of Angola university teachers who came recently to Brazil to enhance their academic literacy practices provide a case study of the issues involved in this field and a comparative basis for further study across countries and cultures. The Angolan teachers, who then became students in Brazil, had schooling experience at home during a period of civil war in refugee camps and local schools. They applied to UFMG in Brazil to develop studies in various educational fields: e.g., language and education, history of education, educational psychology, math education, and science education. A case study such as this, she concludes, focusing on Portuguese-speaking African students in Brazil as an example of academic literacy for minority but same language speakers, can help generate comparative studies that enable us to draw larger conclusions regarding the social and linguistic issues involved in students entering higher education, of the kind signaled by the academic literacies approach.

Bryan Maddox, in a chapter on Nepal, also links the local context to the broader debates we have seen, in this case regarding “Community Literacy.” By this Maddox means “the idea that local meanings and uses of literacy should inform the design and implementation of programmes and that literacy programmes should respond and be flexible to people’s expressed needs.” The Community Literacy Project in Nepal was informed by the sociocultural model of literacy developed within the sociolinguistic and ethnographic studies of literacy, of the kind we have seen above. This perspective assumes that literacy programmes can provide a public space for debate over local “situated” meanings of literacy and provide practical mechanisms to help people to learn and use literacy in real life situations. Maddox discusses some of the tensions between the articulation of “local” meanings of literacy within the wider national and international discourses of development and some of the creative responses that emerged. For instance, “the concept of localised provision was influenced by wider processes of change occurring within Nepal during that time and by broader changes in development discourse and priorities. The national context was in the process of rapid social change, involving a radical democratisation of communication media including literacy practices, as silent majorities claimed a voice in these processes of change, which included more decentralised and democratic access to radio broadcasting and TV and the promotion of language policy and practice in education, media and governance that recognised linguistic diversity within the country.” He concludes by linking this local account to the wider debates about power and inequality that the field of literacy now addresses. Literacy and language, for instance, are “part of ongoing aspects of inequality and social injustice, which the State and donor community have been either unable, or unwilling to effectively tackle.” He concludes: “as Paulo Freire has reminded us, literacy is essentially a political project . . . that challenges us to change the social and cultural norms, patterns and relations” – a theme that runs throughout this volume.
Also drawing on the concept of “Community Literacy,” Trevor Cairney’s chapter on Australia is entitled “Community Literacy Practices and Education: Australia.” He begins by taking on the “narrow” definition of “literacy” that has been operational in many contexts and instead wants to point out, along with many scholars in this volume and in the tradition of literacy as social practice, that “literacy is embedded in all of life and that institutional and formal literacy can never be truly separated from the literacy practices of the world beyond school.” As he points out, this idea has developed especially in the last 20 years, during which “we have developed a richer understanding of what this might mean for literacy practices sanctioned, supported and used within schooling.” Earlier discussions of the importance of community literacy by administrators, schools, and teachers were generally framed by a recognition that the literacy experiences of home and community have a significant impact on literacy success at school. But most interest has been in how families and their literacy practices serve school agendas, with interest being driven by limited definitions of literacy and, at times, deficit views of learning. This restricted view of the relationship between literacy practices in and out of school has limited many attempts to build stronger relationships between schools and their communities. As Cairney states, and as many authors in this volume also concur, “our students are never simply in school or out of school, for their identities move with them and their practices are carried with them across contexts.”

The shift that Cairney notes in the perceived place of “community literacy practices” involved researchers beginning to examine the literacy practices of home and school more closely and noting increasingly that the way teachers shape classroom discourse can be limited in scope and not reflective of the diversity of student language and culture. He lists three related areas of inquiry that have since begun to inform home and community literacy research: multimodality; critical theory; and ethnographic perspectives. Cairney concludes by arguing that all three of these areas of study help us to understand how children from varied cultural and linguistic groups continue to have difficulty in achieving school success. Many students struggle to cope with dominant pedagogical approaches that are based on a “narrow understanding of school knowledge and literacy, which are defined and defended as what one needs to know and how one needs to know it in order to be successful in school and society.”

Maintaining the interest in literacies in and out of school, Kathy Schulz and Glynda Hull write a chapter entitled “Literacies In and Out of School in the United States.” As with other contributions, they see research on literacy practices as “separated into two strands”: (a) “school-based research,” which they argue “has focused on reading and writing in formal classrooms, often by examining teaching methods, curricula, learning, and assessment, its goal being to improve students”; and (b) “out-of-school research” which “has documented the myriad literacy practices that occur in a range of institutions and social spaces with an interest in expanding conceptions of what counts as literacy. Important theoretical and conceptual advances in literacy studies have come from research within the second strand.” However, they point out, “a divide still exists between the engagement claimed for many youth in terms of their out-of-school literacy practices in contrast with their
school-based reading and writing.” So, bringing these themes together, Schultz and Hull “sketch the major theoretical traditions that have shaped research on the relationships and borders of literacy in and out of school.” These include, as we have seen, “the ethnography of communication and recent perspectives from cultural geography.” Research on literacy out of school, they point out, “continues to be an important and necessary corrective to unidimensional understandings of texts, processes, and contexts,” again challenging the dominant narrow view of literacy and learning that many institutions still adhere to. They argue that “the persisting challenge in an age of accountability and testing, narrowing conceptions of literacy, and growing socioeconomic disparities, is how to bridge out-of-school and in-school worlds in ways that make discernable, positive differences in youth’s present circumstances and social futures,” a key theme for the whole of this volume. Indeed, like many of the contributors to this volume, Schultz and Hull conclude by suggesting ways in which we can still detail “differences in linguistic and social practices and celebrating diverse literacies.” It will be for the reader, having perused all of these chapters in the volume, to decide whether such a positive view is still sustainable.

David Bloome, another well known researcher in the USA, along with his colleague, SangHee Ryu, offers a chapter entitled “Literacies in the Classroom” that does indeed reinforce this positive perspective. They see the phrase “literacies in the classroom” as broader than it might at first appear, “indexing a series of debates, discussions, and explorations of how written language is implicated in social, cultural and political ideologies that have implications for what constitutes knowledge, knowing, and rationality, for the relationship of classroom and non-classroom contexts, and for how people relate to social institutions. From the perspective of these deeper levels,” then, “the surface level conception of ‘literacies in classrooms’ is itself an ideological imposition, albeit one that has become naturalized.” Bloome and Ryu “discuss some of the issues raised by this deeper level of defining ‘literacies in the classroom’.” In doing so, they work through a number of key issues in language and learning in such a context. They begin with the notion of “Pedagogization of Literacy Practices. One of the key issues in locating literacy practices and events in classrooms concerns the centrality of pedagogy in defining literacy practices and events.” They then consider “The relationship of literacy practices outside the classroom to literacy practices inside the classroom.” They move on to examine “Knowledge, knowing, rationality, globalization and literacies in the classroom” and then proceed to consideration of “the state and power relations” with respect to literacies in the classroom. Bloome and Ryu conclude with a positive view of how teachers and students deal with such an “extensive apparatus of governmentality.” What they observe is the buy-in of many educators, students, and others, in their daily lives in the classroom, as teachers and students engage in what might be called a series of “tactics” that allow them to engage in illicit literacy practices. They may engage students in literacy practices for exploring their own communities, families, and histories (cf. the chapters on “Community Literacies,” previously discussed), reconstituting what counts as knowledge and personhood, side-stepping state-mandated language policies, mediating the official
knowledge of school texts, mediating official and unofficial literacy practices among other tactics – an interesting list of ways of getting around the narrow views of literacy and learning that might appear to be dominant.

And appropriately again, this part concludes with a chapter entitled “The Politics of the Teaching of Reading” that brings together many of the themes we have been following in Part 2 under the heading Literacies and Social Institutions.

Finally, Part 3 is entitled Living Literacies: Social and Cultural Experience and allows for close descriptions across different countries and contexts signaling many of the concepts and debates raised in the earlier parts. A further eight chapters cover many of these issues across a number of different countries: Africa, USA, Latin America, and the UK.

We begin with an overview of the field by Jabari Mahiri “Literacies in the Lives of Global Youth.” He locates this in a brief historical perspective:

A period of approximately 40 years from the mid-1970s through 2015 frames this chapter’s discussion of literacy practices in the lives of global youth. It reaches back to the 1970s to connect the emergence of two intertwining forces that have significantly influenced the literacy practices and perspectives of youth and young adults throughout the world – the rise of the Internet and the rise of global hip-hop culture. Due to the Internet and other technological influences as well as influences from hip-hop culture, this generation and the Post-Millennial generation that followed it reflect a distinct shift in the forms and functions of literacy – a shift from a static concept of literacy to dynamic one of multiple literacies.

The chapter, then, “delineates a number of considerations regarding this shift.” These include conceptions of literacy prior to the Millennial generation and how literacy scholars have significantly revised these conceptions in the 1980s, as we have seen highlighted in a number of other chapters, especially concerning notions of literacy as social practice. The chapter then shows how these developments too have been transformed by scholarship in the present century. Finally, “it addresses some of the challenges and future directions for research on literacy practices of global youth as they turn from reading the world on pages to viewing and participating in it on screen.” This new experience has involved scholars exploring the workings and implications of novel literacy practices connected to and often enabled through the Internet and other digital technologies. As Mahiri sees it, “their work reveals how Millennial and Post-Millennial youth and young adults engage in and make sense of their worlds very differently from earlier generations. A key feature of this age is that digital media has greatly increased the mobility and accessibility of texts and signs while magnifying and simplifying processes for their production and dissemination,” a theme that again is key to this volume as we find ourselves engaging with these new movements and meanings (see also Thorne and May’s volume in the Encyclopedia).

The remaining seven chapters in this part address these issues in specific cultural and national contexts. Marcia Farr keeps open the cultural and ethnolinguistic issues we have been addressing, as she considers literacy practices in a US city in a chapter entitled “Literacies and Ethnolinguistic Diversity: Chicago.” Chicago, she points out, “is in many ways an archetypal U.S. city; it is now a global city, its traditional
industrial economy having changed into an information and service-based economy.” As a global city, Chicago is linked to other places in the world economically, culturally, and linguistically. Since its inception, of course, Chicago has been linked to other places in the world through its large immigrant populations, but the rapid pace of more recent globalization processes, primarily in transportation and communication, has intensified these connections, along with the change in the economy. Such intensified globalization leads, in some metropolitan areas, to complex migrant communities comprised of populations from all over the world, a phenomenon labeled “Superdiversity” (see also Higgins in McCarty and May’s volume in the Encyclopedia). Although some neighborhoods in Chicago comprise heterogeneous populations, in general, Chicago’s neighborhoods are still ethnically based. Even most Mexicans and Puerto Ricans (the two largest Spanish-speaking groups in Chicago) live in generally separate areas, although the sheer number of Mexicans leads some to reside in other neighborhoods.

Following this contextualization, Farr then links her account to that we have just seen by Mahiri, as she analyzes the “contemporary globalization processes” currently being experienced, which include issues of “transnational communication, especially via mass media like satellite television.” One aspect of this shift as it affects global youth is “the development of a global monoculture, e.g., among youth worldwide who emulate African American musical and verbal style, thus spreading English literacy in song lyrics. Yet global movements toward sameness simultaneously complement the marked differentiation of ethnic, class and other identities at local levels.” At the same time, she points out that the research she has conducted in Chicago communities “has shown the resilience of ethnolinguistic identities as well as the languages and scripts that index them. Such ethnolinguistic identities encompass oral and written verbal styles commonly associated with various identities.” We have, then, both global influence and change at the same time as local identities and cultures, both of which affect the kind of literacy practices that youth engage with, a key theme in the field of literacy at this point.

Moving to South America but maintaining a similar interest in diversity, Inge Sichra writes about “Language Diversity and Indigenous Literacy in the Andes.” This area, she reminds us, stretches out along the entire South American continent and is a cultural not just a physical descriptor. “The Andean space, as traditionally referred to in social studies, especially in relation to languages and cultures present there before the conquerors arrived, is restricted to the Incan Empire’s sphere of influence.” She focuses, then, on “Andean languages that have managed to survive Spanish language rule, which seeks to maintain certain functional spaces in national societies.” An interesting literacy issue here is that “indigenous languages had some sort of graphic or notational, albeit not alphabetical, system” and that for some time this led to Andeans being called “illiterate,” a term that has frequently emerged in attempts to characterize different features of literacy practice. Today, the emphasis has shifted from deficit to identity as the speakers “increasingly hoist Andean languages as symbols of ethnic and political vindication in an attempt to secure prestigious and public spheres for these languages.” From this perspective, Sichra suggests, “literacy acquires or could acquire a driving role in the social participation
of sectors traditionally marginalized by these countries’ societies – in other words, it could be an empowerment mechanism for the individual, the community and the group,” a theme that recurs in many national contexts around the world. Sichra, then, “focuses on the literacy of languages characterized by their orality, with a focus on Spanish literacy,” recognizing ways in which “literacy comprises concrete social practices with certain purposes that depend on previous political and ideological factors.” In order to address these issues, Sichra provides a brief historical context for these practices in the Andes, notably: the Spanish conquest in the sixteenth century; the complex changes in Quechua and Aimara in the eighteenth century; and, more recently, the growing acknowledgment of diversity of Andean languages “as a consequence of currents of political confrontation with authoritarian regimes, established from Ecuador to Argentina from the 1960s to the 1980s … as well as a result of the acceleration of the globalization phenomenon.” So, we can see the link between languages and social and later ethnic vindication movements which “questioned the state’s homogenizing and unifying nature, and its aims at building nations based on one language and one culture.” The Andean data, then, provide a key insight into the debates raised here regarding language identification, political institutions, and cultural identities.

Then we move to Africa for the next two chapters. Firstly, there is a general account of the continent entitled “Literacy and Multilingualism in Africa” by Kasper Juffermans and Ashraf Abdelhay. Interestingly, Juffermans and Abdelhay point out that “with the exception of South Africa,” on which there is a chapter next, “Africa is not at the forefront of discussions in socio- and educational linguistics.” They argue that “this marginality is greatly undeserved” and further point out that “African sociolinguistic realities are among the world’s most complex and [that] there is much to gain if it could inform literacy and multilingualism research more generally,” which their chapter makes an important contribution toward. Indeed, they recognize that things are changing and “in fact, this peripherality has recently been a productive source for a radical revision of some of the metropolitan epistemologies about multilingualism and literacy,” which they address. African contexts, in fact, “present some of the world’s most diverse, linguistically creative and vital multilingual situations, but also feature in the world’s poorest literacy rates and are routinely said to lack a literate tradition altogether.” This chapter, then, like many in the volume “offers counter-evidence for this deceptive view.” Juffermans and Abdelhay do this “by reviewing Africa’s literacy traditions and script inventions, but also point at problems and difficulties in African multilingualism and literacies.” They outline “two relatively young fields of practice and/or study that have begun to make major contributions to literacy and multilingualism in Africa: digital literacy and linguistic landscape.” A key issue they address in challenging dominant stereotypes is that “with the exception of North Africa and only very few sub-Saharan countries, the overwhelming majority of African populations are highly multilingual.” In urban and rural areas alike, people speaking (and identifying with) three or more languages as part of their everyday lives are much more likely to be encountered than monolingual or even bilingual people. Multilingualism is so self-evident in much of Africa that the word “bilingual” tends to be reserved for people in command of two former
colonial languages, irrespective of their repertoire in African languages. Metrolingualism or sociolinguistic superdiversity as a phenomenon is hardly spectacular when compared to African sociolinguistic realities. Large parts of rural Africa are characterized by similar patterns of intense diversity, sometimes thought to be exclusive for metropolitan areas. In the chapter, they provide headings on “African Digital Literacy” and “African Linguistic Landscapes” and in the light of such rich accounts of what is actually going on they ask “how long it will take for language in education to open up to these more dynamic and more African language practices?”

Then we move to South Africa, where Mastin Prinsloo presents a selected overview of research projects there, which investigate alternative ways of conceptualizing literacy learning and perhaps address some of the questions raised by Juffermans and Abdelhay. Prinsloo starts with the complex framing that recognizes “literacy is constructed as a multiple semiotic practice, used, inserted and transformed by agentive human beings across local and global sites, contexts and spaces, discourses, languages and genres.” In these multiple forms of crossings, according to Prinsloo and many of the sources he cites, “the relationship between learning in everyday lives and school learning, and what might be an effective relationship between them, is explored.” In doing so, he “attempts to reconfigure taken for granted assumptions about what constitutes rich locations for literacy and learning,” of which, of course South Africa is one and indeed, as the previous authors noted, so is the continent as a whole. Prinsloo provides an interesting update on educational policy in South Africa as a number of important initiatives took place in the area of literacy research. The post-apartheid South African government, for instance, set out to adjust the assessment framework for education and training and a concern for literacy and adult basic education was included. As Prinsloo observes, “[a] major contribution to re-thinking literacy education within a social practice perspective in South Africa and influencing research traditions, was the path-breaking Social Uses of Literacy by Prinsloo and Breier (1996), a collection of ethnographic case studies on the reading and writing practices of ordinary people in the Western Cape, who had little or no schooling.” Such publications can help readers to follow through many of the chapters in this volume as researchers move on beyond the narrow skills based view of literacy to acknowledge that educational practice needs to take account of the social and cultural context. Prinsloo, then, is able to point forward to positive “future directions” in the field. “As researchers in the New Literacy Studies have powerfully demonstrated, literacy learning is part of much broader chains of sustainability.” He concludes by asserting strongly the importance of recognizing such a view with respect to “a developing country like South Africa, which straddles first and third world economies simultaneously.” It is important in this context to “get everyone on board” to raise public awareness around the value and importance of literacy in sustaining democracy and human rights.

As part of the global dimension of such literacy research, the next chapter looks at what has been happening in the USA as people who went there as slaves from Africa began to engage in education and literacy practices. Elaine Richardson, in a chapter entitled “Africa American Literacies,” shows how this title “refers to the concept that
African American cultural identities, social locations, and social practices influence ways that members of this discourse group make meaning and assert themselves sociopolitically in all communicative contexts.” In the present era, as the reader will by now recognize fully, such a definition goes beyond print and language in a narrow sense “to include African American traditional contexts as well as the contemporary context, wherein African Americans enact creative multimodal meaning making.” As we saw in relation to Africa, and also in countries around the world as new literacy practices emerge, “the term African American literacies encapsulates socio-cultural approaches to African American literacy education advanced by the various subfields: including sociolinguistics, critical pedagogy, reading, rhetoric and composition, and New Literacies Studies.” In this context, with a long migration history, there has been a classic shift from “earlier prejudice and stereotypes about culture and literacy, to more recent awareness of diversity and literacy as social practice.” 

“Americans of African descent had been enslaved and marginalized within American society, the early scholarly thinking about Black language and culture reflected the common prejudices of the time: Blacks were culturally and intellectually inferior.” Since the 1940s, however, “scholars presented . . . the history and development of what is currently referred to by mainstream linguists as ‘vernacular’ language, with many language educators advocating inclusion of African American language and literacy histories, structures, and discourse practices in critical conversation with those of the dominant culture.” Literacy education, then, is seen as being more “socially just by repositioning students as knowledge-making agents of social change.” Again, we might ask how far these progressive ideas about literacy and education are actually being realized in practice – a key question that this volume continues to raise.

Also in the Americas, but this time in the south, Judy Kalman writes a piece entitled “Literacies in Latin America,” which addresses many of the themes we have already seen but also signals specific features of this region. She sees it as “a heterogeneous region with deep cultural, social, economic and linguistic differences.” In terms of how it is labeled, she points out that “International agencies such as the World Bank and the Economic Commission for Latin America (CEPAL) refer to the region as Latin America and the Caribbean in order to include not only the land mass stretching from Mexico to Argentina but also the small English, Spanish, and French-speaking islands as well.”

In relation to a theme that has run through the volume, of the problems with measurement of literacy rates, she argues that “despite region wide efforts to expand access to schooling, the illiteracy rate for people 15 years of age or older is still 9%” (Infante and Letier, 2013). That said, she also points out, in keeping with the qualitative perspective of this volume, that “this measurement varies from country to country, given the difficulties for agreeing on what constitutes literacy.” As Kalman explains, “[d]isparities in class, race, language, and ethnicity shape literacy and illiteracy in Latin America” and indeed the measurements of wealth are seen to coincide to some extent with those of literacy. For example, “in Honduras and the Dominican Republic, the poorest 20% of the population earns only an average of 5% of total income while the richest 20% earns an average of 47% of the wealth” while
“in these same countries, the illiteracy rate is 7.8% and 6.6% respectfully” (CEPAL, 2012). There are also cultural issues at stake, such as the fact that “indigenous peoples are more likely to be illiterate than other groups, as illustrated by Guatemala’s illiteracy rate of 14% and Ecuador’s 11.4%.” There is also a gender issue, where for instance in this part of the world “indigenous women are more likely to be illiterate than indigenous men and although illiteracy in urban centers tends to be 6%, it is twice that in rural areas (UNESCO, 2006).” Kalman concludes with a helpful summary of such complexity: “Any discussion of literacy in Latin America, then, needs to contemplate its socioeconomic disparities, issues of gender and locality and the role of schooling in the dissemination of reading and writing, and education policies promoted by international agencies.”

And finally, we move to the UK where Eve Gregory uses the title “City Literacies” to investigate many of the questions raised above as we look at the ways in which literacy practices are being enacted in cities. While framing her account in terms of the broader debates regarding “superdiversity,” taking account of migration and movement between countries of the kind we have seen frequently in this volume, she focuses on specific examples of “individuals growing up and becoming literate at the beginning and the end of the twentieth century in London, one of the largest and most ethnically diverse cities in the world.” Gregory “summarises problems in this field and finally points to possible future directions for the research on literacies in cities during the coming decades of the twenty-first century.” She argues that “[t]hroughout time, we see the contrasts and contradictions between studies documenting informal literacies taking place in homes and communities which show a wealth of skills, knowledge and inventiveness in cities, and reports relating to school literacy which laments poor performance of city children in classroom tests.” And her conclusion is an apt way to end the volume: “Even the most rural environment can often be connected via satellite or internet to a wealth of literacies, both oral and written, in numerous languages. Nevertheless, cities still remain a hub of literacy. Through facilitating face-to-face interaction for people of all nations and backgrounds they will always provide a haven for the development of new and dynamic literacies.”

London

Brian V. Street
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Brian Street is Professor Emeritus of Language in Education at King’s College, London University and Visiting Professor of Education in the Graduate School of Education, University of Pennsylvania. Over the past 25 years, he has undertaken anthropological field research and been consultant to projects in countries, of both the North and South, and has a commitment to linking ethnographic-style research on the cultural dimension of language and literacy with contemporary practice in education and in development. He has been involved in writing/editing, mostly in collaboration with colleagues, 30+ books and has published over 120 scholarly articles. He is probably best known for Literacy in Theory and Practice (C.U.P. 1985), his edited collection Cross-Cultural Approaches to Literacy (CUP, 1993), and he brought out a selection of his papers with Longman under the title Social Literacies (1995), which was cited in his receipt of the David S. Russell Award for distinguished research by the National Council for Teaching of English in the USA. In 2008, he was awarded the Distinguished Scholar Lifetime Achievement Award by NRC (USA). He is involved in research projects on academic literacies, coauthored with Mary Lea “Student Writing in Higher Education: An Academic Literacies Approach” in Studies in Higher Education, Vol. 23, No. 2. pp. 157–172 (recently listed as one of the most cited articles in the Journal), as well as numerous more recent papers and presentations in different parts of the world. As part of a commitment to linking ethnographic-style research on the cultural dimension of literacy with contemporary practice in education and development, he has published a number of works, including editing Literacy and Development: Ethnographic Perspectives (Routledge, 2000; shortlisted for the BAAL Book Prize, 2002) and coauthored with Alan Rogers Adult Literacy and International Development: Stories from the Field (2012 NIACE), with whom he is involved in an
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