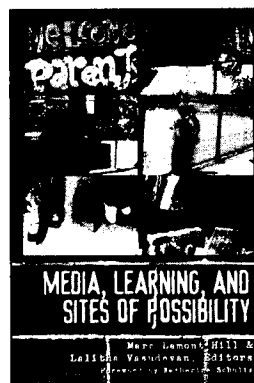


written from the perspective of an educator who prepares high school teachers, the implications in this study have much to offer educators wishing to examine their own professional identities. Teacher-educators, in particular, would find this a helpful supplement to literacy education courses, since it suggests ways to encourage preservice teachers to reflect on their professional dispositions and assumptions.

Alsup discusses and defines identities in terms of how they manifest in interactions with others; she argues that the ways individuals turn into teachers is a process crowded with tension, negotiation, and sometimes failure. Alsup found that of the six preservice teachers, the three who did ultimately enter into teaching "were given the opportunity and provided with guidance to recognize complex relationships among their educational memories, their university education, their practical teaching experiences, and their core ideologies" (p. 126). Using narrative analysis and borrowing the concept of a "borderland" from Gee (*An Introduction to Discourse Analysis*, Routledge, 1999) and Anzaldúa (*Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, Aunt Lute Books, 1987), Alsup discerned a pattern of "borderland discourse" as "evidence of contact between disparate personal and professional subjectivities," which led to "the ideological integration of multiple senses of self" and "identity growth" (p. 36). Those able to negotiate the borderland were also able, with assistance, to construct professional identities that were spacious enough to accommodate expansion and, at times, contradiction.

Ideally, one "learn[s] to occupy the space between" borders (p. 15) and does so in a way that does not sacrifice one's voice. Alsup contends that becoming a teacher involves much more identity work than simply learning "a new set of rules for behavior" (p. 9). In order for teachers to create successful teaching identities, she argues, they must also learn how to combine their personal and professional identities in ways that do not force them to compromise aspects of who they are and are becoming, regardless of whether those aspects fit into the mainstream conceptions of who teachers "are" and "should be." She concludes that "teachers must have the opportunity to *speak* as teachers and discuss their developing professional identities with informed and interested others" (p. 187).

In terms of attracting and keeping teachers within the profession, the question for teacher education programs, as well as inservice professional development efforts, is: how can mentor teachers and colleagues assist each other in facilitating the growth of professionalism so that more preservice candidates successfully enter the teaching profession? To this end, Alsup offers classroom tools that can be used to explore a shifting sense of professionalism, including a visual metaphor project and a more reflexive variation on the popular "philosophy statement" assignment. These tools could easily be used in formal or less-formal groups by teachers who would like to examine and share their struggles with, and questions about, their own professional identities. Current and future teachers will appreciate this combination of theoretical and practical suggestions, the potential uses of which will not leave an educator wondering how to bring aspects of identity into a collective light.



**Media, Learning,
and Sites of Possibility**

Edited by Marc Lamont Hill
and Lalitha Vasudevan

Peter Lang,
2008, 252 pp.,
ISBN 978-0-82048656-7

In *Media, Learning and Sites of Possibility*, educators and researchers reveal ways to use new literacies to involve stu-

dents who might otherwise be silent, and by doing so, supplement our definition of a community of inquiry. A particular strength of this collection is that it might inspire educators to address their own pedagogical challenges in terms of student involvement.

Visual and digital literacies are often more permissive mediums that bolster students' involvement both in and out of school. In chapter two, Wissman describes how her students used photography and poetry to connect to each other and to the larger world. Both Jocson (chapter 6) and Pleasants (chapter 7) describe digital storytelling programs, which involve the creation of multimedia narratives that utilize imagery, written text, voice-over, and a soundtrack; this approach to literacy is notable for its capacity to make teachers and students into apprentices together, since

students' knowledge of technology often eclipses their teachers'.

The most useful aspect of this book for those teaching at the elementary level is not, perhaps, the detailed collaborations with students, since that level of co-construction would look very different with elementary-age children. It is, instead, the approach to interacting with students that is most instructive. In chapter four, Gustavson suggests that we "work with our students to meet the current high-stakes testing curriculum in the same ways these students meet challenges in the work of their daily lives," lives that often involve new literacies and technology (p. 112). Nichols also offers insight into how students creating a school literary magazine demonstrated "ownership and involvement [that] resulted in . . . dialogue, structure, negotiation, collaboration, critique, and representation" (p. 150). Surely these principles would also apply to the process of creating a community of inquiry.

Another connection between these chapters, in addition to their incorporation of visual and digital literacies, is the researchers' emphases on engagement and agency. In chapter seven, Pleas-

ants foregrounds "the idea that people exhibit agency in the selves that they create, even while these selves must be negotiated with others" (p. 211). In Staples's chapter, we see an example of an adolescent combining his or her literate voice with the teacher's to reflect on a peer's death as well as his place in society. After reading some of the research transcripts, he expressed his appreciation for their work, remarking that "I couldn't hear myself before" (p. 67).

On some level, any sort of sustainable community building begins with a space sufficient for all of its members to articulate their concerns as well as their accomplishments. As the best parts of each of these collections and books show, nurturing one's professional voice is not a solitary accomplishment, but a process that occurs in the contexts of the schools and communities in which we live and work.

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CALL FOR PROPOSALS: ATEG CONFERENCE—JULY 9–10, 2009

Yes We Can! is the theme of this year's Assembly for the Teaching of English Grammar (ATEG) conference at the University of Maryland, College Park, July 9–10, 2009. We welcome proposals that share positive, innovative classroom practices in the teaching of grammar. Proposals may be submitted to MrsBenj@aol.com by **June 1, 2009**. ATEG is an organization dedicated to making teachers feel comfortable and competent to include effective grammar instruction as an essential language art. First-time presenters welcome. Additional details are available at www.ateg.org.