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Literacy learning: Designing and enacting inclusive pedagogical practices in classrooms

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In this chapter we detail our understandings of inclusive pedagogical practices that enable all students to assemble complex literate repertoires. We discuss generative concepts from international related literature (eg Au, Dyson, Janks, Luke, McNaughton, Moll, Thomson,). We then present descriptions of two lessons as examples of how inclusive pedagogical practices might look in primary and secondary classrooms. The focus will be on how texts work to represent the world in particular ways and not others – and the implications of this for the inclusion of diverse student cohorts in developing complex literate repertoires.

Keywords: Literacy, Multiliteracies, pedagogy, inclusion,

Key Learning Points:
After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

- Understand the foundations of critical literacy and how these apply across education contexts;
- Consider what inclusive literacy teaching looks like when part of a broader curriculum;
- Identify key strategies to provide an inclusive curriculum which provides all students with access to quality literacy teaching and learning.

Introduction

A high quality education system is one that achieves quality *and* equity. By this we mean an effective approach is one that ensures *all* children have access to high quality curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. For us, an inclusive approach is founded on principles of social justice, which require that all students receive the resources and support required to make accessing education possible, but also that the curriculum and pedagogy offered recognises the unique and community characteristics and strengths of *all* children – their languages, ways of knowing, cultural and social beliefs, values and practices (Fraser, 1997). The work that sits at the foundation of our ways of thinking comes from approaches broadly conceived as socio-cultural, critical theorisations of literacy, which include feminist, post-colonial and poststructuralist orientations. Such theories raise questions of social justice with respect to race, gender, sexuality, class, locale and disability, and concern any categorisations that might exclude particular groups of people from access, recognition and participation. We begin by outlining selected work in literacy studies which help us to develop a rich and complex understanding of inclusive literacy pedagogy. We then outline two lessons, one

designed for early primary school students and one for secondary school students, which are based on a *critical and inclusive* approach to literacy. Both examples are designed to enable *all* students to participate in critical analyses of texts. Both examples are based on the types of texts which are readily available to teachers - a book from a reading series designed for early childhood classrooms in lesson one and a news article in lesson two. The lessons are designed around the principle that all children deserve to engage with substantive content and to develop capacities in critical approaches to literacy at the same time as they develop other skills such as decoding, spelling, grammar and comprehension.

Inclusive literacy pedagogy

Literacy education has long traditions of theorising inclusive pedagogies. This can be seen, for example, through culturally responsive pedagogy (Au, 2009) whereby children's community ways of interacting are infused into the communication structures of literacy lessons, or in the notion of a permeable curriculum (Dyson, 1993) whereby children make use of their home, peer and school knowledges in the official sanctioned spaces of literacy lessons. Such approaches build on the assumption that all children have cultural resources. McNaughton (2002) writes of 'resourceful families', Thomson (2002) of students' 'virtual school bags', Moll and colleagues of children's 'funds of knowledge' (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992). What these ways of thinking have in common is an assets-based framing. All begin with an assumption of the value of all children's existing knowledges and practices as the basis for quality literacy learning.

Teachers in schools where English is the language of instruction have never been able to take it for granted that all children will bring standard spoken English to school as a common starting point. Some children begin school with little spoken English language for various physical, physiological and psychological reasons, as well as because of differences in mother tongue and dialect. Moreover current economic, social and political contexts across the globe mean that in many countries, linguistically and culturally diverse student cohorts are increasingly becoming the norm rather than the exception. Indeed Blommaert (2013) describes the current linguistic landscape in terms of 'superdiversity'. We cannot - if we ever could - make assumptions about the sameness of students, nor their communities (Moje, 2000). Outside of school, children may or may not know each other, and they may or may not share cultural, linguistic or ethnic heritage. Regardless, questions of difference are central to inclusive literacy pedagogy. Indeed, Janks (2010) argues that diversity is a crucial dimension of critical literacy, as it gives people access to broader varieties of discourses and representational resources.

Dyson (2015) reminds us how deficit discourses, and here we mean how ideologies and language choices erase the cultural, textual and linguistic resources of marginalised groups, work to preserve what counts for literacy achievement in schooling. In other words when the language practices of white middle-class children become the norms of performance for all children, the multilingual and multicultural resources and practices of culturally diverse children are under valued, erased, discounted or even seen as problematic. Dyson (2015, p.206) argues:

> As educators, … we have a particular responsibility to work toward the respectful inclusion of our children as developing learners. In order to see and hear our children's strengths and weaknesses, we must move outside the narrow image of the

> "ideal" child, and we must dismantle the myth of the singular path to language arts success.

Through a case study of one Black American child in kindergarten, from a family of 'limited economic means' (p. 199), Dyson demonstrates how despite this child's evident capacity in 'sociolinguistic gymnastics' (p. 201), he was not recognised as one of the "bright" children (p. 205), a privilege reserved for his white affluent peers, who when judged according to the expected standards could already perform in expected ways.

We take Dyson's argument as a key point of reference in this chapter, because her analysis shows the ways in which normative literacy standards can inadvertently work to exclude some children, even with well-meaning, experienced and talented teachers at the helm. Indeed we have witnessed the same phenomenon in our current studies (Comber &Kerkham, in press, 2015; Comber & Woods, 2015). In contrast, when teachers design a 'permeable curriculum' (Dyson, 1993) children are able to work with the resources they bring from home, community, peer and virtual worlds into the classroom as a bridge to academic learning of substantive content (Luke, Woods, Dooley, 2011). Research on inclusive literacy pedagogies continues to demonstrate the importance of incorporating children's investments in popular culture and digital worlds (Dunn, Niens & McMillan, 2014; Marsh, 2005) and the issues that are important to them and their communities, and more globally. Children's shared interests in popular culture can, not only be a bridge to school literacy practices, but also can enable children to negotiate social relationships (Dyson, 2015; Kliewer, 2012) with peers and adults.

Researching in an early childhood context where 4 of the 16 children had physical disabilities to the extent of no spoken language or mobility, Kliewer (2012) observed how children's shared interest in superheroes and the opportunity to work with an intuitive and responsive teacher aide enabled LeShawn, a boy of 4.5 years who dealt with severe physical disabilities, to participate in a classroom game. Through LeShawn's gestures and the teacher aide's skillful translation and interpretive work, LeShawn was able to negotiate a role for himself amongst the play. Kliewer (2012, p.164, emphasis in original) writes:

> I observed young children with and without disabilities in symbolic-rich environments determinedly and imaginatively *creating* as opposed to *acquiring* literacy through their efforts to construct meaning of their surrounding worlds. They were far from passive recipients of an arbitrary code. I was witness to adults who took this creative and social work of young children seriously and entered into the children's life worlds and zones of proximal development to push and prod, and pull them in further directions of increasingly sophisticated literate citizenship.

In short, meaning-making requires opportunities for investment in social activity and discussion of substantive issues relevant to children's lives. And it requires teachers who are prepared to enter into reciprocal learning relationships where children's knowledge is not only recognised but counts. Inclusive practice requires inquisitive teachers, ever alert to the social worlds of the classroom being negotiated. In such approaches teachers deliberately work with children's linguistic and cultural resources, their home and community funds of knowledge, their interests and investments in popular culture and digital worlds. These different ways of knowing and ways of working with a range of semiotic resources are seen as assets rather than as deficits.

The multiliteracies approach is underpinned by theories of learning that understand the importance of inclusion to children's learning. Multiliteracies theorists, Kalantzis and Cope (2008, p. 233), argue that *belonging* strongly relates to learning.

> In order to learn, the learner has to feel that learning is for them. The learner has to feel a sense of belonging in the content, and that they belong to the community, or learning setting; they have to feel at home with that kind of learning, or way of getting to know the world…. The learning has to include them, and if they are learning in a formal educational setting such as a school, they also have to feel a sense of belonging in that social and institutional context. The more a learner 'belongs' in all these senses, the more they are likely to learn.

The emphasis on belonging, respecting what children bring, and recognising their family and community resources such as is described by Kliewer (2012), does not imply a reluctance to embrace new knowledge, or to learn different discursive practices. In fact, achieving an inclusive approach requires what Nancy Fraser (2009) describes as a three dimensional approach to social justice. According to this way of thinking, ensuring that children see their own languages, values, ideologies, interests, communities reflected in the curriculum and pedagogical approach taken in the classroom is essential, but this will not be enough. So the recognitive practices (Fraser, 1997) of ensuring that inclusion of all children in what is valued and assessed in the curriculum, can only ever be just one element of an inclusive curriculum. Social justice simultaneously requires recognitive, but also redistributive and representative practices (Fraser, 2009). Providing representative justice requires a valuing of a broad range of opinions and voices in deciding what content and ways of knowing will form the curriculum and pedagogical approach (Fraser, 2003). The third dimension of Fraser's approach to socially just, inclusive education requires that we think about distribution of resources. While often framed as being about distribution of financial and social support, redistributive justice is also about ensuring that all children have access to the dominant skills, knowledges and understandings of education systems and society more broadly.

As evident in both of the lessons included in this chapter, providing all children with access to the substantive intellectual codes and processes of how language, text and discourse works to represent people, things and events is crucial to achieving an inclusive approach that serves the needs of all children, their families and communities. So an inclusive approach to literacy pedagogy is framed by high expectations curriculum (Dudley-Marling & Michaels, 2012) and projects of substantive intellectual demand (Comber & Kerkham, in press; Exley, Woods, Dooley, 2014) as well as fore grounding a broad range of perspectives and intellectual and social content.

As we go on to demonstrate in the examples below, enabling, inclusive literacy pedagogy requires knowledgeable teachers aiming high, who are also able to provide the right kinds of help and feedback for students to accomplish tasks together that they may not be able to do alone. In terms of literacy repertoires all children need access to, and participation in, engaging, relevant, conceptually rich and socially significant learning occasions, where the ways that language and text work are laid bare and ready to be reconstituted by children for their own means. This requires intentional teaching and will not occur merely by immersing children in a print rich environment. We argue that critical literacy is one way to achieve an inclusive curriculum based on recognition of children's life worlds, interests, languages, values and beliefs, and at the same time attending to the redistributive goal (Fraser, 1997) of ensuring all children have access to understandings of how texts and language work so that

they might reconstitute these ways of working to resist established and essentialised power relations.

Inclusive approaches to literacy teaching in the primary years: Learning literacy, learning critical literacy

The ways in which we engage with texts and language are related to power. Who gets to speak (or write or design) and the uptake of language choices are not decided on equal grounds. A critical literacy perspective expects a context where students can engage with texts and where the focus is supporting students and teachers to examine the relationships between language and text, power and position. The proliferation of texts and communication, and the variety of forms, modes and genres of these texts in modern society requires literate citizens to be able to analyse – and not just decode or comprehend. Reciprocally they must also be able to use language in ways that can influence their readers – and not just encode or create meanings (Luke &Freebody, 1999). Textual meanings are produced through the purposeful combination of oral, print, visual and moving elements, and are understood through the engagement of both cognitive skills – recognising letters and symbols as an example – and engagement of and with social practices. It is no longer enough to have the capacity to work with print, because today's texts are as likely to combine print with oral and visual textual elements. The multimodal nature of texts means new ways of understanding and engaging with texts are necessary, and for teachers this requires new ways of intentionally providing purposeful instruction in how modality can influence meaning making with and in texts.

As a result of this increased multimodality, and the realization that textual practice is intricately intertwined with relationships, power and authority, and socio cultural characteristics such as gender, class, race, age and language, there is an urgent need to ensure that all children are provided opportunities to learn critical text awareness (Luke & Freebody, 1997). This suggests that all children should learn about social change and the textual practices that will enable their action as social change agents. They should be aware of minority and dominant ways of using language, images and text and the implications of language choice. It is more important than ever to ensure that all children have the opportunity to engage with texts as critical analysts (for examples of this pedagogy for the early years see for example Dozier, Johnston, & Rogers, 2006; Exley, Woods & Dooley, 2014; Ludwig, 2006; Knobel & Healey,1998).

But the reality is that for many teachers and educators critical literacy remains as adjunct to the core business of teaching literacy in the early years at best, and as unviable in this context at worst (Comber, 2012, Exley, Woods, Dooley, 2014). Early years teachers are increasingly finding it difficult to find space in the curriculum to work with their students in ways that encourage critical understandings of text and how texts work, when so much else is required of them. As a response to these real issues of time and space, we have been working with teacher colleagues over recent years to consider ways that goals related to critical literacy can be achieved within the 'normal everyday classroom activities' of those same teachers. This is not to suggest that we are working to find ways for teachers' practice to remain unchanged, but that we have been working with teachers to find ways of fore grounding pedagogies that encourage children to become researchers of their own and other's literate practice, and conscious and deliberate users of language and text in the everyday literacy learning activities of the classroom. We believe there are important reasons in the current context to find ways

for critical literacy to be a feature of the everyday activities of early years literacy pedagogy, and consider it possible to do this without compromising a commitment to question texts.

In what follows we provide the first of our lesson examples. We detail some simple teaching and learning activities that can be adapted for use in early childhood classrooms. The activities aim to provide ways to engage children in learning about how language, still and moving images and oral communication influence the meanings produced by texts, and fore ground ways to engage young children in considering substantive issues of how texts work in the world to name and represent difference.

Lesson 1 - *The merry-go-round*

One way to ensure that time is found for investigating how language works to represent the world, and how the world or our perspective on the world works to influence how we can understand language, in early childhood classrooms is to include activities that provide this level of engagement within lessons that are part of the everyday approach to teaching literacy within the classroom. Activities that engage children in learning about the code and making meaning, that can also ask children to learn about how language, images and texts represent the world can be achieved with any texts – even basal readers. As it is common practice for guided reading, independent reading and intervention programs in early childhood settings to draw their reading material from leveled sets of classroom readers such as the PM Library series (Nelson Cengage Learning) or StoryBox Readers (McGraw-Hill Ryerson) looking to these texts as tools for critical engagement is a great place to start. Teachers and children learn important decoding, comprehension and more recently genre-based skills and understandings in reading groups and through worksheet activities related to these classroom staples. There are also fine examples of classroom practice that has asked children to engage with the stereotypes often portrayed in such texts as a way into critical literacy (see for example Freebody and Baker, 1989). Here we wish to consider how these texts might be used to encourage young children to think more specifically about written language, and how it combines with images to make certain meanings and not others.

The Merry-go-round (Randell, 1993) is published as part of a leveled set of PM Readers and is commonly used to teach reading in early years classrooms in Australia, New Zealand and other contexts. It is unremarkable in that it is like many other books used in classrooms across international contexts to teach children to read in the first few years of school. The book uses simple text with a large amount of direct speech, and simple images to tell the story of Nick and two older siblings being introduced to a merry-go-round by their dad. The language selections are constrained by assumptions about the sight words learnt early by beginning readers – *is, a, come, said, look, on, a* for example – and the introduction to simple punctuation – full stops, exclamation marks, and speech marks for example.

Teachers can draw children's attention to these reading and writing skills and processes as they read books such as these. We do not discount the importance of this, however our point here is that there are other things that can be learnt as well, including learning about different modes and how they combine to create meaning, in other words learning how to become analysts of text.

Who is Nick?

This lesson would fit within a more substantial engagement with the text, elements of which are only touched on here.

1. Introduce the book *The Merry-go-round* and engage the children in relevant 'book talk' activities;
2. The main section of this lesson involves children working in small groups. Children discuss their responses to either the written language or images (pictures). They record their collaborative responses on a prepared recording sheet such as displayed below in figure 1. The children are provided with this recording sheet with the first column already prepared, and asked to record their discussions in columns 2 and 3. The first group is asked to record what they know about Nick as a result of engaging with the written text only, and the children are also required to consider *how* they know this (column 3).

Text and page	What do we know about Nick from these words?	How do we know this?
Title page The merry-go-round		
Pg 2 "Come here, James," said Dad. "Come here, Kate. Come here, Nick. Here is a merry-go-round."	Nick has a Dad. Nick has a big sister called Kate and an older brother called James.	Dad is talking to all of the children so we think they are brothers and sisters.
Pg4 Look at James. James is up on a pig.		
Pg 6 Look at Kate. Kate is up on a duck.		
Pg8 Dad said, "Here is a car, Nick." "No!" said Nick	Nick is naughty and gets her own way	Dad keeps asking her which one she wants.
Dad said, "Here is a plane, Nick." "**No!**" said Nick.		
"A horse! Look! A Horse!" said Nick.	Nick is excited by the horse.	Exclamation marks Bold print. Nick repeats 'A horse' lots of times.
Nick is up on a **horse.**		She gets her own way

Figure 1: An example of the (partially completed) large recording sheet used for groups to record their discussions and thinking as they consider the question: Who is Nick? (text from *The merry-go-round*, Randell, 1993)

> While one group of students works on this activity engaging with the written text or words (see Figure 1), another group of students completes the same task with a recording sheet that only includes the images used in this text. In this case column 1 has the pictures from the text reproduced, and column 2 asks 'What do we know about Nick from these pictures?'. In the reader, Nick is pictured with sister Kate and brother James moving toward a man 'Dad' who is indicating a merry-go-round by pointing. Nick is presented in shorts and a green t-shirt and, as evidenced in figure 2 below, on several pages stands with arms folded, and a sad face refusing to climb onto the ride. The final picture in the book, reproduced in figure 3 below, is of Nick riding a horse, happily waving. To respond to the *How do you know this?* column children need to consider colour, tone, facial expressions, stance etc. Figures 2 and 3 below provide examples of the images used in the text.

INSERT FIGURES 2 AND 3 ABOUT HERE

3. Once the groups have completed their individual group recording sheets, the whole class works together to construct a shared understanding of Nick. The children are encouraged to justify their comments and opinions, so that the focus is always on relationships between language and images and representations. The results of the discussion can be recorded by the teacher and produced as a semi permanent record for display in the classroom.

This lesson relies on children practicing other code breaking and meaning making skills and understandings as well. To complete the activity, groups of children read words, consider text structure and grammar, punctuation. They must rely on fluent reading and sight words more than they might if both text and images were presented together. Those children being asked to analyse the images need to engage deeply with expression and how bodies are represented in the images. But they must also consider and call on understandings about how words and images work to represent the world and are explicitly scaffolded to new learning in this regard through intentional teaching and learning activities.

The lesson not only demonstrates how young children can be engaged in activities that insist that they work as critical analysts, but also provides the opportunity to consider what everyday classroom activities can look like when designed with an *inclusive* framework in mind. This is achieved in part through the following means:

- Teaching practices include all children: This lesson requires children to be grouped in mixed ability groups and as such provides an alternative to the common practice of asking children with similar literacy levels to work together when learning to read. All children can have something important to say about how the text or images are working regardless of whether this book is within their independent reading repertoire or not. As such all children can take an active and valuable role in the lesson.
- Focusing on what is taught rather than on individual capacities or weaknesses of children: This lesson combines work completed by individual children and groups of children into a collaborative response to the text and the content being learned about

how the language and images work in the text. The end product of the lesson is a collaborative understanding and recording of the work completed. As such the individual children have the opportunity to be involved in the content being taught and learnt regardless of their individual capacities with decoding and making meaning from printed texts. This means that all children can engage in substantive, intellectually rigorous activities as they simultaneously learn to crack the code.

- Explicitly valuing responses that can be made in ways other than those traditionally valued in the early years of school: This lesson requires that children think and justify their responses in ways that are not always required in individual cut and past, fill in the gaps literacy lessons. So in this lesson children are expected to justify why, as well as respond, and this contrasts to much early school literacy learning activities that requires correct responses of them only. Children are judged on their processes, the positions they take and their opinions, and their ability to articulate these opinions.

Blended with a variety of other literacy learning activities, those such as described in lesson one provide variety in learning, and more over a broader conceptualisation of what gets valued, what counts as early literacy learning, and who gets to be seen as a successful literacy learner in an early years classroom. It is important to ensure that lessons that encourage critical analysis of language and images are not seen as adjunct or strongly bounded and separate from other literacy lessons. Such practices need to be woven into teachers' everyday pedagogical repertoires for literacy. The *Where is Nick?* lesson described above provides an opportunity to see how this can be achieved as part of everyday literacy teaching and learning activities.

An inclusive and effective approach to literacy means that *substantive* issues are addressed. The Nick series in this PM range provides an opportunity to see how this might be achieved using books commonly found in early years classrooms. As is common with these reading schemes Nick is revisited in a number of texts. A later text in this Nick series -*The flower girl* (Giles, 1997) provides the opportunity to move toward considerations of broader social issues, taking children's thinking further – from how text and images represent people and events in texts, to issues of how texts assign gender and play into common stereotypes of gender, class and race. To explain - Nick is not 'gendered' in the language of the original text, but many children assume Nick is a boy. Nick wears shorts and a green t-shirt, a short bobbed haircut, and as is common in this simple early readers, is always referred to by the proper noun *Nick*. In the later text, *The flower girl*, Nick is discussed as a girl, and this often becomes a talking point for children as it does not fit with assumptions they have made about Nick being a boy. Teachers can draw children's attention to the pronoun *she* which as explained is not used in the first text, and this would promote interesting discussions and comparisons between the language used in the easy first text, and the more complex second text. In *The flower girl*, Nick is also pictured wearing a dress, rather than t-shirt and shorts, when she prepares her own bouquet of flowers so as to copy her older sister Kate's representation as a flower girl.

Follow up lessons could invite children to consider what made the children assume that Nick was a boy in *The merry-go-round*. Teachers could guide children to further explore the language used, and assumptions and ideological beliefs about girls and boys promoted in the images and words. This could provide an interesting space to discuss gender and gender-based stereotypes in books and society more generally. And as a way to ensure that

responding to these more substantive issues does not become disjointed from the study of language, images and texts, asking children to write new texts where Nick is played by either a boy or a girl could ensure a close focus on the technical elements of text and the work they do in representing our world.

Exploring the ways in which texts represent different groups of people is also a key goal of our second lesson designed for secondary school students and outlined below.

Inclusive approaches to literacy teaching in the secondary years: Learning literacy, in diverse classrooms

To address the local and global challenges of migration and the resultant cultural and linguistic diversity now found in education contexts, and to fore ground the rapid technological changes to learning, the New London Group (1996) proposed Multiliteracies as a framework that could provide a socially just and inclusive approach to teaching literacy. Utilising this framework, allows for the "interrelationship of different modes of meaning" to become a feature of learning (The New London Group, 2000, p. 25). The approach proposes that transformative learning can and must take account of resources that students bring. The notion of Design is used to ensure that grammars based on linguistic designs are taught and learnt along with elements of visual, audio, gestural, spatial and multimodal designs, thus taking account of the burgeoning variety of modes and texts evident in our current literacy practice. However Design can also be used to describe a practice, as something that gets done by people, and in this way the concept insists on an understanding that children should be actively engaged in designing texts and in transforming these design elements to make new meanings – or redesigns. When explaining how this might be achieved the framework fore grounds four pedagogical components, situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing and transformed practice, which when considered together enable a holistic pedagogical approach. *Situated practice* assists in situating learning in meaningful socio-cultural contexts that encourage learners to see the purpose and function of what is being learnt. *Overt instruction* allows the teacher to make explicit links between prior learning and experience and the new learning context or concept being learned, and to explicitly model new concepts and skills. *Critical framing* supports learners to develop a reflective and reflexive stance with regards to the concepts learnt, and to denaturalise what they have come to know and assume. Finally, *transformed practice* highlights the need to provide opportunities to make meaning and apply new concepts in different contexts and within different social or cultural routines.

Whether in the context of linguistic diversity (Prasad, 2013) or as a means for identity being generated (Giampapa, 2010), as Macedo (2005) argues, Multiliteracies draws on critical pedagogy to articulate literacy beyond the "mechanical learning of reading and writing skills" (p. 12) and for us this provides an important way to ensure equitable access to substantive, quality literacy learning for all students. In continued development of this framework as learning by design (Kalantzis & Cope, 2005) four knowledge processes[1] are used to provide clearer principles on how to plan for effective learning (Kalantzis and Cope, 2000). These four knowledge processes are:

[1] These four knowledge processes are sometimes presented as eight knowledge processes, with each of the four presented here divided. We find the conceptualisation of known and new; naming and theorising; functional and critical; and creative and appropriate together useful and as such take the decision to name four knowledge processes.

- Experiencing the known and the new - providing a link between prior knowledge and life experiences with new material to be learnt;
- Conceptualising abstract concepts through naming and theorising - thus assisting learners to define, apply and comprehend the abstract in terms of the specific and contextual;
- Analysing the functions of concepts and critically analysing the purpose and intentions of concepts - providing deep, reflective understanding;
- Applying knowledge appropriately and creatively - leading to ownership of knowledge.

The first lesson plan addressed gender and inclusion and in the second of our lesson examples, we attend to race and racial stereotypes by providing a lesson based on a newspaper text about a young person who has been a refugee.

Lesson 2 – *How should I continue?*
Recognising that classrooms have become increasingly diverse, accessible forms of popular texts - such as news articles, music, films, magazine articles and weblogs - can provide a focus for pedagogical strategies that are inclusive while still providing resources that target the development of academic literacy skills. Using the Multiliteracies approach (Kalantzis and Cope, 2000) to plan discussions and literacy activities about news stories with secondary students can provide an inclusive learning experience as it attends to the four knowledge processes. In this example lesson, the news story, *How Should I Continue* (see Figure 4 below) which appeared in *The Sydney Morning Herald* (December, 9th 2014) is used to discuss how a Multiliteracies framework might be employed in a secondary classroom. The news story provides an account of a 15 year old Afghani boy who was orphaned and has tried to reach Australia.

INSERT FIGURE 4 ABOUT HERE

A more detailed outline of the lesson is provided in Appendix 1. Below we explicate the activities involved using the four knowledge processes as a conceptual frame.

Experiencing the Known and the New
In experiencing the known and the new, students can share knowledge of news reports and stories, along with their own anecdotes of family history and identity, and in doing so are able to comprehend the predicament of the refugee boy in this story. By posing critical questions about text structure, purpose and audience, teachers can establish curriculum knowledge of the news genre, while supporting the students to make links between the news story and their own narratives of family history. This is one way to consider difference and similarity as integral to human kind. As a description of a real life event presented in everyday language, news stories can create opportunities that enable all learners to participate in class and, as such, work toward providing an inclusive approach to learning literacy.

Conceptualising by Naming and Theorising
Conceptualising by naming allows students to co-construct knowledge as they work together to identify features of news stories, and to discuss broader issues of the human predicament of dislocation. Examining conventions of genre such as headline, main body, and visual elements can allow students to approach the news story and its structure and purpose in rigorous ways. The images can be analysed through attention to colour, framing, background,

gaze, and can allow student insight into the lived realities of other children in strife. In conceptualising by theorising, teachers could examine with their young adult students, the differences between a memoir and a news story. They could invite students to explore how the autobiographical elements are similar or different in these two genres. Conceptualising by theorising in this instance could allow learners to think about the nature of homelessness, statelessness and transition as trauma. This, along with an investigation of other stories by former refugees, could enable students to think about the concepts of belonging and inclusion as intellectual concepts in themselves. For example, Anh Do's (2010) narrative in *The Happiest Refugee* would provide interesting contrasts in terms of genre, purpose and audience.

Analysing functionally and critically
A conceptual discussion of the destabilised status of people as refugees provides an opportunity to go deep into the issues presented in *How can I continue* and could lead to students discussing migration, regional instability and equal rights. Analysing inclusion and exclusion in a discussion on the graphical representations of a country's refugee intake could bring a new take on the cultural and political climate of the country, in this case, Australia. The nature of human intent can be studied by engaging in a critical analysis of how language works to fore ground the interests of some groups while making the interests of others less visible. As an extension the social, and cultural consequences of stereotyping people could be discussed within an investigation of specific community values of empathy and respect.

Applying appropriately and creatively
In activities such as producing multimodal texts or engaging in role-play, students can collaborate with one another and provide a creative extension to the study of the news story. As one example, by creating a news story about their own or family's history, they would be required to position themselves as narrators. Another activity might be to ask students to survey peers for their cultural or religious practices, promoting discussion on diversity and acknowledgement of difference, and providing data to use in the construction of a variety of different texts on this topic. Role-play activities can convey a strong message about the similarities between people when they are in foreign lands. Through critical framing and questioning, students can be prepared to produce a variety of multimodal texts that present their creative understandings of difference and re-work their initial responses to the text to consider inclusive practices around citizenship. Working with digital texts can further extend this learning. For example setting out a video storyboard helps students get the gist of the story while providing a creative outlet to see beyond refugee status to possibilities of re-location for people.

The lesson described above provides a way to ask secondary students to consider text and language as representations of people, events and relations, but also provides a space to encourage collaboration around substantive issues and to encourage inclusive pedagogical practices. This is achieved in part through the following means:

- Accounting for difference as an essential part of society: This lesson insists on a variety of students working together to unpack the messages conveyed in the newspaper report. More importantly by providing a narrative about another young person at once similar and different to members of the class there is space made for considering the individual elements as well as social and cultural elements of how people behave and experience life. Engaging the textual elements of how the news

report conveys meaning could provide a space to unpack stereotypes and break down practices of exclusion.
- Focusing on what is being taught: By engaging students in important current events the approach insists on students engaging with issues that matter to them and to those around them.
- The production of new texts based on the study of the news report: This lesson provides students with ways to demonstrate learning as they design their own versions of texts that engage with issues of migration and personal history. The collaborative discussion around the news article which marks the beginning stages of the lesson ensures that all class members will have something to say and some knowledge to demonstrate as they engage in the latter, more complex design and redesign activities.

Through these knowledge processes (Kalantzis and Cope, 2005, p. 94), various outcomes could be achieved, for example, collaboration skills could be enhanced, and creativity and imagination fostered. A Multiliteracies approach allows personal and cohort prior knowledge to be applied and promoted. Individuals can be assessed for their contribution to group outcomes which relies on “the ability to make productive social connections” (Kalantzis and Cope, 2005, p. 94). In brief, a Multiliteracies framework promotes two essential aspects of learning (Kalantzis and Cope, 2005). Students engage in learning through participation, therefore, they own the learning through a deeper comprehension of the content; they also acquire a sense of belonging to the community of learners. The framework takes account of individual differences along with differences in values, lived experiences, different ways of gaining knowledge as it takes account of individual meaning making, and student life worlds (see Comber & Kamler, 2005). The possibility of learning as being about transforming thinking, and enacting a cultural transformation requires a move beyond symmetrical education that can reaffirm difference (Kalantzis & Cope, 2005) to a critical stance that questions ways of being different as positive and vital for a strong society.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have argued that an inclusive approach to literacy pedagogy involves aiming high for all students. This means designing curriculum activities where all students can participate in complex and engaging literacy practices regardless of their ability to break the code of written text. This does not mean that learning the code is not important but instead that the opportunity to be positioned as an active critical analyst of texts is likewise important. When students work collectively to discuss and pool their interpretations and analyses of texts, all students can have a say. They can learn to build off each other’s insights and importantly they can learn how to disagree respectfully. Here, for reasons of space, we have focused on reading in particular, however the same principles apply to the teaching of writing or any meaning making processes. Producing texts requires students to consider the possible effects of their narratives and arguments on their readers. For us achieving inclusion is an ongoing everyday practice where all teachers are constantly checking that all students are participating, interacting with each other, with complex ideas, with texts, and in ways that allow them to actively practice all dimensions of literate practice and form complex repertoires of semiotic and communicative practices. And we see this as vital in all phases of education.

Questions to frame reflection and discussion for professional learning.

1. What are some of the basic foundations of taking a critical approach to teaching literacy?
2. Is inclusive pedagogy premised on the idea that all children deserve the opportunity to engage with substantive, intellectually rigorous ideas and issues? Discuss this and link to your thinking about inclusion across other school subjects.
3. How does a social justice approach to educating children promote inclusion?
4. Can discussion in classrooms encourage inclusive practice by enabling all children to engage with substantive content, or is it just a waste of time?
5. How can you ensure that all children can learn about the codes of texts in a curriculum where you encourage them to act as analysts of texts?

Appendix 1: A more detailed lesson plan for lesson

Year 9 - Life worlds of teenagers around the world

Aim:

1. Broaden students' individual comprehension of race related stereotypes
2. Develop a deep understanding of issue related to immigration and identity
3. Comprehend the needs of a refugee
4. Comprehend media stereotypes

ACARA English:

Analyse how the construction and interpretation of texts, including media texts, can be influenced by cultural perspectives and other texts (ACELY1739)

Interpret, analyse and evaluate how different perspectives of issue, event, situation, individuals or groups are constructed to serve specific purposes in texts (ACELY1742)

Resources:

News article: How can I continue? Asks refugee boy, Sydney Morning Herald, December 9, 2014.

Anh Do (2010) *The Happiest Refugee*

In the previous lesson students have been learning about immigrants and immigrant identity. Terms such as race, racism and stereotype have been discussed. This lesson is a continuation of this discussion with a review of these concepts through multiliteracies design

Students have already been involved in activities that required reading through the news story and two pages of Anh Do's *Happiest Refugee* Chapter 2

Experiencing the Known	**Experiencing the New**
Share life stories – my past, my heritage. Share short travel stories- meeting people and the need to belong. Concept of place and space- notions of belonging. Concept map of nations, boundaries and citizenship - illustrating the political and cultural boundaries evident in how we understand the world. How do we differentiate? Draw on commonly known experiences of inclusion and exclusion - how would you continue to live if - you lacked food, or shelter or family?	Learn about countries in strife and people living in those countries. Learn about different cultures, and ethnicities that are discussed in the news article. Use websites to gain knowledge about countries in strife (see for example UNHCR http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home) Invite members of the community who arrived as migrants or refugees to share their stories. Collect news articles that describe refugee arrival events?
Conceptualising by Naming	**Conceptualising by Theorising**
Schema of news stories and news reports. Schema of memoirs. Concept map of news genre- both news production and news dissemination procedures. Different aspects of news stories – how do these texts work? Use the schema to discuss how the story on "How can I continue' has been presented. Does it fit? Does it innovate? Photo Gallery of UNHCR to discuss stories of refugees. Discuss You Tube snippets eg Malik's Story- how does inclusion help resettle young lives? https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z4rpjpoE188 How does this text 'name' refugee young people – and how does this differ (or not) from the news articles being collected in the class?	Identify the features of the news article- how does the headline promote a human element?; how does the story progress beyond being a news story and with what effect? Compare and contrast this news article representation to other life stories. Life by Ghulame Ali in *Dark Dreams* (Edited by Dechian, Millar, and Sallis, 2004) is an excellent resource for this activity. Using the article, *How can I continue* work as a class to produce a Y chart - what does Sammy look like, sound like, feel like and how does this compare to other teenagers? Theorise how different news stories are presented and isolate the human element in each of the stories. What is different about how this narrative is presented and how autobiographical representations put forward similar migration stories? Plan an animation version of one of these stories.

<table>
<tr>
<td>Applying Functionally

Analysing the difference between telling this story orally and the representation in the news story (use you tube as a resource here) - what human elements are present in each and what gets left out. Analyse some of the stories of self that were told by peers.

Focus on ‘the refugee story’ - analyse why this is of particular significance in terms of the cultural, political climate of Australia and other countries today.

Analyse human need for family as reflected in the news story.

Analyse the visual in the article. What does the picture of the boy allow us to know about him? How is the picture here similar or different to other pictures of people in news stories?</td>
<td>Analysing Critically

Discuss how the human element has been projected in this news report.

Whose perspectives are promoted in the news story, and how does this differ from other texts that have been studied?

Critically examine the news story in terms of the focus and content.

Is the boy presented as a stereotype of a refugee? How?

Discuss context specific community values of empathy, respect. Can we assume these in this case?

Discuss and debate: What should I do –and the narrative and sections from Anh Do’s book. How can inclusion help?

What are the possible shortcomings of normative thinking about refugees that need to be challenged?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysing appropriately

Create a news story - you are in a foreign country and have lost your passport.

Survey class peers for their customs, cultural practices, religious practices. How will you represent this data?

Analyse the significance of place and space – role play - use an interactive map to position yourself in another country - evaluate the insecurity and uncertainty of being on borderlands.</td>
<td>Analysing creatively
Reformat the concept map – to include the human dimension to creatively question inclusion from a race, class, gender perspective

Use the story The Happiest Refugee by Anh Do- create a video storyboard of people on boats Present as an animation.</td>
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