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School's Out! Bridging Out-of-School Literacies with Classroom Practice Edited by Glynda A. Hull and Katherine Schultz. New York: Teacher's College Press, 2002, 288 pp.

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School's Out! Bridging Out-of-School Literacies with Classroom Practice edited by Glynda A. Hull and Katherine Schultz raises important issues about teaching, learning, and defining literacy. The book assumes that traditional American school-based views of literacy are insufficient to address the needs of all learners. As a former public school teacher, I agree with this assumption. Indeed, few people would argue that all schools adequately serve all of their students. Among the problems with school-based literacy pedagogy is the top-down nature of our educational system, in which decisions about curriculum, materials, and indeed what constitutes literacy are often made by policy-makers and administrators out of touch with diverse student needs. A more specific problem is inconsistency, not only in the availability of materials, but also in teachers' use of them. While teaching in California, I was given an excellent reading program, but only a fraction of the materials and very little instruction in how to use them. Furthermore, I heard no discussion at either the district or the school level about how to integrate students' home literacy practices into use of the program. In education, adherence to tradition has degenerated into an ineffective pattern of pedagogy, and we need to reevaluate not only curriculum and learner needs, but also our ways of defining success in literacy. This new book by Hull and Schultz' performs such a reevaluation.

In each chapter, *School's Out!* touches on this need to reflect on schools' routine practices. The editors' aim is to introduce the concept of out-of-school literacy, as well as provide examples of how this theory is being implemented and fostered. These examples provide suggestions for concepts and practices that work, as well as some that have failed, provoking thought about how literacy researchers and practitioners might use the idea of out-of-school literacy in their own work.

The four parts of this book form a conversation about current research and programs in out-of-school literacy. In Part I, the editors provide a theoretical framework for the topic and illustrate it with six vignettes about people who, for various reasons, have struggled with traditional school-based literacy but find empowerment in their own innovative literacy practices. Parts II, III, and IV incorporate the work of many authors. Part II contains case studies of English language learners' individual literacy practices in Philadelphia and Chicago, while Part III presents adult-youth collaboration in after-school programs in Pittsburgh, Chicago, and the

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San Francisco Bay Area. Part IV summarizes and advances the challenges presented to conventional notions of literacy pedagogy. Each main article in Parts II, III, and IV is followed by brief responses from professionals in the field of literacy. This is an effective format. The collaboration of many authors allows for a fluid definition and exploration of the relatively new concept of moving pedagogy beyond traditional definitions of literacy. After a comprehensive introduction to the topic of out-of-school literacy practices, the articles about specific programs and individuals provide diverse examples of the benefits of fostering such practices, while the brief responses provide critical reflection on the ideas presented.

In Chapter One, the editors provide a theoretical basis for out-of-school literacy. They explain the three fields that have centrally influenced the conceptualization of literacy beyond the classroom: ethnography of communication, Vygotskian and activity theory, and New Literacy Studies. The editors demonstrate that the development of the ethnography of communication has been important because it has introduced the idea of looking at literacy beyond the classroom. They state that Vygotskian and activity theory perspectives are relevant to literacy studies because they lead to questions about how literacy and learning in school affect cognitive development. In addition, activity theory's broader definition of cognition has directed us to look for literacy beyond school walls. The field of New Literacy Studies focuses on literacy from a discourse perspective. Theorists in this field, such as Brian Street, have argued that schools' claim to "legitimate literacy" has marginalized literacy practices that occur outside classrooms. In this theoretical introduction, the editors provide comprehensible background material for readers who are unfamiliar with these theories, yet the information is succinct enough for researchers in these fields who are looking for a clear connection to their own work. In Chapter Two, the editors present six brief stories that raise several questions about the potential for after-school programs, community-based literacy, and personal literacy practices to inform how we teach literacy in school. The stories are particularly effective because the definition of the issues is articulated by the examples.

The remainder of the book serves to illustrate further the questions and challenges posed by the editors. Part II presents the importance of non-school literacy practices of English language learners. Ellen Skilton-Sylvester documents a Cambodian girl's literacy practices both in and out of an American school setting, while Juan C. Guerra and Marcia Farr offer insight into the personal writings of two Mexicanas living in Chicago. In both case studies, the authors recommend expanding our vision of academic literacy and looking for new methods of teaching literacy within school walls. Guerra and Farr make the important point that educators must value diverse backgrounds and cultural literacy practices while continuing to teach what they term "essayist literacy": academic writing competence. However, in her response, Julia Menard-Warwick points out that Guerra and Farr lack specific suggestions on how to bridge this literacy divide. I found Skilton-Sylvester's article similarly lacking: She does not clearly demonstrate how a student's talent

at drawing and dramatization can translate into improved academic writing. In her comments, Verda Delp notes that such talents indicate this student's need for more language instruction, which should in turn incorporate her individual interests and strengths. At the end of Part II, Kris Gutierrez's response reemphasizes the point of these case studies: Mutual understanding, often across different backgrounds and cultures, is the essence of communication and is therefore a key component to in-school success.

Part III, "Literacy in After-School Programs," begins with Chapter Five, Elenore Long, Wayne C. Peck, and Joyce A. Baskin's look at STRUGGLE, a computer-based literacy program at an urban community center. Teens and adults from the community collaborate on computers to create "life plans." This incredible program fosters not only writing skills and computer literacy, but also identity building and community building. The authors' clear presentation of this program allows the reader to see an important lesson—that literacy is important not for its own sake, but for its power to enact personal and cultural change. In Chapter Six, Gillian Dowley McNamee and Sarah Sivright present a study of the Fifth Dimension, an after-school computer program for children aged 7 to 13. A central aspect of this program is the Wizard, an imaginary magician who writes to the students and to whom they respond via e-mail. The authors clearly outline the foundations and goals of the program and provide background on the community in the children's own words. McNamee and Sivright are also upfront about the many limitations of the program, thus providing readers with a sense of the issues that can arise in after-school programs. The responses to this article are also relevant because they discuss specific problems. Chapter Seven, by Ellen Cushman and Chalon Emmons, describes a service learning course in which undergraduate students from the University of California at Berkeley worked with children at a Bay Area YMCA to build "hybrid literacies." This approach to literacy looks upon all expressions of reading and writing as equally valuable, which is a challenge to traditional academic literacy. Another meaningful message from this article is the importance of contact zones—spaces where groups and individuals who would not normally interact can collaborate to create new definitions of themselves and their shared community. In his response, Porfirio M. Loeza notes that schools themselves are contact zones; understood in this way, the lesson of hybrid literacies could have a direct effect on classrooms. Sarah Jewett praises the idea of hybrid literacies, but argues that such contact zones could bring about more effective change if the direction for cooperation lay within the community, not the university.

The final article and a response comprise Part IV. Elyse Eidman-Aadahl effectively brings together and analyzes the issues and challenges presented in the preceding chapters. She provides a brief history of some of the research, politics, and policies that have formed current ideas about literacy, youth, and non-school time in the United States. In addition, Eidman-Aadahl encourages a continued examination of not only how we define both literacy practices and what she calls "productive spaces,"[1] but also who does the defining. In her view, traditional power

holders must relinquish some authority and instead act as the co-agents of change under the direction of local communities. Eidman-Aadahl also points to federal grant programs and community-based nonprofit agencies as potential bridges between literacy in schools and the literacy work youth do outside of school. In her conclusion, Eidman-Aadahl reiterates the crucial question for all literacy practioners: Now that we have these ideas and understandings, how do we put them to use?

This book is a thought-provoking discussion of literacy, and all the issues raised are pertinent to the question of how our schools can better serve students at all levels. *School's Out! Bridging Out-of-School Literacies with Classroom Practice*, with its fresh look at out-of-school literacy, serves as an inspiration to literacy theorists and practitioners alike.

NOTE

[1] Eidman-Aadahl notes that young people have been gradually shut out of community spaces after school and are seen as not "productively" using the time they have after school in public spaces.