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Experimenting with Claymation: how can multimodal pedagogy assist low-level literacy English language learners?

Presenters: Erika Hepple, Margaret Sockhill & Jennifer Alford

In this presentation, we will explore the innovative use of claymation movie-making and its potential for attending to language and literacy learning with beginning English language learners. We will provide an example from a classroom of adolescent low-level literacy learners who are preparing to enter mainstream high schools. The “Claymations Project” resulted in two animations which were designed, narrated and captioned by the English language learners. The claymations were the catalyst for these diverse learners to engage meaningfully with aspects of language and literacy learning required for success in high school. We will outline the stages of the pedagogic process, that is, how to do a claymations project with your learners, and we will demonstrate how this can develop students’ language and multiliteracies capabilities. By profiling three particular learners within the class, we illustrate how claymations can increase learner agency; enhance engagement in learning through collaboration; and provide the opportunities to explore elements of multiliteracies design.



Dr Erika Hepple is a senior lecturer in TESOL teacher education in the Faculty of Education, Queensland University of Technology. Erika has worked as an English as a Second Language/ English as a Foreign Language teacher for more than twenty years, in diverse educational settings from primary school through to tertiary institutions, in a range of contexts including Saudi Arabia, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, U.K. and Australia. Erika has a particular teaching and research interest in international and intercultural education and multiliteracies pedagogy. Email: e.hepple@qut.edu.au

Margret Sockhill is a classroom EAL teacher for students aged 12 – 15 at Milpera SHS in Brisbane. Students at the school are of migrant and refugee background who need to access language and settlement services prior to joining a mainstream high school. Margret taught for 8 years at VIS (Vientiane International School) in Vientiane, Laos. She has a Masters in TESOL Education and a recent publication in the Journal of Adult and Adolescent Literacy, Oct 2014. Margret was a presenter at the ACTA 2014 International Conference in Melbourne; the Camtesol 2015 Conference in Phnom Penn and the TESOL Lao 2015 Conference in Vientiane, Laos. She is a member of QATESOL for EAL/D teachers in Queensland.

Dr Jennifer Alford is a senior lecturer in TESOL and English as an Additional Language/Dialect (EAL/D) studies in the Faculty of Education at Queensland University of Technology. Jennifer worked as an ESL teacher in Qld high schools and tertiary language education settings for over 12 years, and has worked in teacher education since 2000. Her research interests include applied linguistics, critical discourse analysis, second language teaching and learning, and intercultural competence for teachers. She is currently working on a longitudinal research project with Dr Margaret Kettle and Dr Sue Creagh that will investigate the academic transitions of ESL learners in Queensland metropolitan primary and secondary schools and the variables associated with increasing academic achievement. Email: jh.alford@qut.edu.au.