Oral Defense Announcement
University of Missouri – St. Louis Graduate School

An oral examination in defense of the dissertation for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy in Education

Meredith Labadie

M.S. in Literacy, August, 2005, University at Albany, State University of New York
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Re-reading, Re-writing, and Re-imagining Texts: Critical Literacy in a Kindergarten Classroom

Date: November 9, 2017
Time: 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
Place: Sigma-Aldrich Room, TLC

Abstract
This qualitative action research study focuses on the integration of critical literacy practices in a kindergarten classroom. Critical literacy recognizes that no texts are neutral, and that authors position their readers in particular ways. Thus critical literacy practices are those concerned with positioning readers to inquire into issues of language and power, and to disrupt, critique, and challenge texts. In this study, critical literacy was brought to life through a curriculum of re-reading and re-visited texts over time. The study took place in the researcher's kindergarten classroom, and follows students' discussion, written responses, and dramatizations around texts read aloud in the classroom focusing on themes of power, justice, and equity. Data was collected across the school year, including fifty lessons. Data analysis such as coding, discourse analysis, and document analysis was conducted during the year and informed instructional decisions. Data analysis also occurred after the year had ended and focused on identifying the different ways that students engaged in critical inquiry into the texts through re-reading, re-writing, and re-imagining scenes in the texts, as well as how the teacher was able to support students with engaging in critical literacy in the read-aloud setting. In particular, analysis of the read-aloud lessons documented ways that students were able to disrupt stereotypes, consider multiple perspectives, engage with sociopolitical issues, and take social action. Critical literacy is shown as a tool for accelerating young students' literacy development, and students' reading and writing skills are documented as they develop through re-reading and responding to texts across the study. This study not only offers a sustained look at how young students can be scaffolded over time to engage in critical literacy practices, but also expands the notion of what types of literacy practices young students are capable of engaging in. Using the tools of process drama as a way to revisit and rethink read-alouds provides early childhood teachers a way to simultaneously engage their young students in rigorous critical thinking around texts that is also active, social, playful, and imaginative.

Defense of Dissertation Committee
Rebecca Rogers, Ph.D. – Chairperson
Lisa Dorner, Ph.D.
Nicholas Husbye, Ph.D.
Kathryn Pole, Ph.D.