

Harold Rosen Lecture 2018

Dr John Potter, University College London, Dynamic Literacies, Third Spaces and Everyday Practices: The 'Other Possibilities'

Delivered at the 54th UKLA International Conference at the Mercure Holland House Hotel in Cardiff on Sunday 6th July 2018.

Introduced by Dr Becky Parry, University of Nottingham

This talk will mobilise the term 'dynamic literacies' as a way paying attention, in formal and informal settings of learning, to the changing nature of meaning-making in the digital age. It will also address some of the constants and unchanging issues which confront us: the need for a curriculum which is responsive to issues of social justice and equity and which promotes creativity and agency; and for learning activities which are inclusive, related to wider culture and lived experience and which connect pedagogy to children's cultural capital. It will reflect on these issues in the light of a key intervention by Harold Rosen. His 1958 Walworth School syllabus imagined a way of working with all pupils, teaching the canonical texts, codes and conventions of English, alongside providing 'room' in the curriculum for the resources and interests which pupils brought with them from their lived experience beyond the classroom. It ended with an appendix which imagined "other possibilities" for working which included a tantalising, prescient glimpse of media practice: making a 'Documentary film of Walworth School'. Sixty years later, the digital age brings those 'other possibilities' closer, in some ways, through its multiply placed practices, devices and changing social arrangements. The 'room' which Harold Rosen made central to his syllabus can potentially be re-imagined as a 'third space' of learning which offers rich opportunities for the development of a literacy curriculum which is responsive to changing social and pedagogical arrangements. This talk will look at ways in which we can create space for 'other possibilities', by reflecting on research into digital texts and practices and considering how educational systems elsewhere have aligned to the digital age.