Newsletter MAY 2022

Welcome to the 4th edition of the Next Generation Literacies Newsletter! In this format, we will provide information about recent and upcoming events, network activities, as well as detailed features of network members and projects.

ABOUT THE NETWORK

Welcome to our new Network Members!

We are particularly excited to welcome our new network members from Canada, Germany, Norway, and the USA!

Our network aims to foster emergent researchers, who are following an international academic career in the topic of language diversity. To support our network members, we focus on three key aspects: **connecting** (organizing network meetings, summer schools and symposia), **guidance** (offering an international mentoring program, workshops on soft and technical skills, joint PhD supervision) and **support** (financial support in travel costs, publishing and conference fee, support in applying for third party funds).

MAY WE INTRODUCE...

Prof. Dr. Carole Bloch, Extraordinary Professor at the University of the Western Cape, South Africa

Prof. Dr. Carole Bloch is currently visiting the Faculty of Education at Universität Hamburg. Here, she is introducing her current work regarding literacy in African multilingual contexts.

I'm working with an integrative body of neuroscience research that supports the view that human beings learn holistically. I'm doing this to support positive change in how young children are taught to read and write in African multilingual contexts. Literacy teaching is seen as complex in South Africa and many believe that we have a 'literacy crisis': children are taught initially with a focus on discrete skills and with poor access to enticing books and knowledgeable adult's to interact with. The topic of how to teach reading in African languages draws much attention now. Some argue that African languages need different teaching methods to English due to their different orthographies.

The reality for most African language speaking children, is that they need to learn to read in two languages as there is still a switch to being taught in English after Grade 3.
A reductive body of neuroscience is increasingly used to argue for a model of reading where an initial focus on teaching skills is seen as an essential prior step to comprehension (the 'simple' model of reading). I reject this model; my experience is that young children make meaning from birth. Having to do exercises which don't link to anything meaningful can be demotivating and lead to some of the problems we see where children learn to 'bark' at print but don't comprehend. I have worked with a body of integrative neuroscience evidence (with George Ellis) about how our brains are structured to seek meaning from birth and how significant prior experience, emotions, prediction and pattern recognition are for learning. In a nutshell, this supports a meaning based model of literacy learning for all children, and not only for the children of the elite.

For further information, please visit the official PRAESA-Website!

NETWORK ACTIVITIES

Connecting - 4. Network Meeting

On May 4th, the Next Generation Literacies Network came together for the 4th Network Meeting. In addition to many founding members, we had the opportunity to welcome a large number of new members that recently joined the network.

In small break-out sessions, members discussed ideas on how to contribute to our networks' key areas. Many inspiring ideas have been collected on joint activities and activities for emergent researchers. For example: **Connecting** - building synergies with other networks and groups, e.g., EERA, WERA and installing informal meetings, such as social get-together and online member

platforms, to strengthen cooperation and contact between network members. **Guidance** – workshops and formal meetings for emergent researchers on data analyses, writing sessions, and career planning, as well as establishing a data forum to share data and knowledge on data. **Support** – connecting global North and Global South, and funding opportunities to support especially researchers from low-income countries.

Thank you to everyone for participating! We are looking forward to the 5th Network Meeting, which will take place on July 20th, 10:00 am – 12:00 am CEST. We will have a guest lecture on our agenda!

Guidance - Mentoring Program

Strengthening emergent researchers is one of our main network-goals. Mentoring programs, as a career development tool, offer the special opportunity to systematically target questions on career in research. Mentoring includes an advanced researcher (mentor), who shares experiences with and gives guidance to a less experienced researcher (mentee) on specific topics within a specific time frame (12 month). Essential prerequisites for the success of the program and the mentoring relationship are, on the one hand, the selection of the appropriate mentor-mentee pairs, and on the other hand, an intensive examination by the participants (mentees AND mentors) regarding the goals they wish to achieve. These topics will be addressed in our kick-off workshop July, 7th.

Every network member is warmly invited to apply to become a mentor AND/OR a mentee. Please fill in these forms (Mentee, Mentor) and send it to Katharina.Ackermann@uni-hamburg.de until May 29th.

More information about the program can be found here.

Support - Scholarship for HISS 22

The Hamburg International Summer School 2022 is coming up soon, and we are excited to announce this scholarship opportunity!

We award a limited number of scholarships to participants of the Summer School. Priority will be given to students from low and middle income countries. Detailed information can be found here.

Please send out this opportunity to late Master and PhD students!

The HISS will take place from 11 July to 5 August 2022, and and we are looking forward to further applications. For more information, please visit the official website!

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