

## Editorial

Literacy remains one of the central goals of schooling, but the ways in which it is understood are changing due to the growth of the network society and the ubiquity of information and communications technology (ICT). Much can be learnt about students and their literacy practices from the exploration of their engagement with digital culture – particularly computer games – from their out-of-school lifeworlds. Youth's engagement with computer games and virtual worlds signals significant changes to traditional forms of literacy. Older, print-based forms now take their place alongside a mix of newer multimodal forms, where a wide range of elements such as image, sound, movement, light, colour and interactivity often supplant the printed word and contribute to new ways of meaning-making. For young people to be fully literate in the twenty-first century, they need to understand how digital texts organise and prioritise knowledge and information, and to recognise and be critically informed about the global context in which this occurs. That is, to be effective members of society, students need to become critical and capable users of both print and multimodal literacies, and be able to bring informed and analytic perspectives to bear on the diversity of texts they encounter in everyday life. This signals a need for teaching and learning to be transformed in ways that make it relevant and useful for all students by providing increased opportunities to build proficiency in the skills and knowledge needed in the ICT-based world of the twenty-first century. This is part of schools' larger challenge to build robust connections between school and the world beyond, to meet the needs of all students, and to counter problems of alienation and marginalisation, particularly amongst students in the middle years.

This Special Issue of AJLL reports on the Australian Research Council project: *Literacy in the Digital World of the Twenty First Century: Learning from Computer Games*, established in partnership with the Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI), the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD), and the Victorian Association for the Teaching of English (VATE). In response to the challenge presented above, this project was premised on the view that learning more about how young people interact with texts outside of school, particularly computer games, has the capacity to provide insights and information to strengthen the teaching, learning and critical analysis of traditional print and multimodal texts. The project sought to find ways to more powerfully connect pedagogy and curriculum with students' rich experience playing computer games and to learn more about the practical and conceptual challenges in doing so.

The papers included in this issue reflect the work undertaken by teachers and students in project schools, the input made possible through the industry partners, and the multidisciplinary nature of the project team. Characteristic

of the interdisciplinary nature of games studies, the papers approach the phenomena called variously digital, video or computer games from a variety of perspectives, and differently emphasise key debates, priorities and implications.

We are grateful to AJLL for the opportunity to bring these papers together in this form, and to Donna Alverman for so generously agreeing to write an introduction to the issue. We hope readers will find the papers thought provoking and generative, and fuel for the continuing effort to reconceptualise English and Literacy curriculum and pedagogy for the twenty-first century.

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