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Editorial Introduction

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An On-line Journal
for Teacher Research

Editorial Introduction

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The Fall 2011 Edition of *Networks* highlights a rich range of articles and thoughtful teachers' voices. Of particular interest in this current edition are the reflections of two teachers working in very different contexts. Carolyn Fortuna is an independent scholar reflecting on her experiences working in a public high school. She explores gender construction for students in what might be considered a typical American high school. In particular she explores how the athletic field house, as well as other school spaces, becomes sites for displaying particular ways of being male or female and identifies the performances that are allowed, encouraged, and prohibited in those spaces.

In *Teaching the Harry Potter Generation*, Kerr Houston uses the Harry Potter books as a lens for thinking about the ways her college freshmen make sense of schooling. Specifically she draws on the ways students are positioned at Hogwarts, the relationships young wizards share with their teachers, and the assumptions about teaching and learning that operate in those texts to think about her own students and their beliefs about education. While she notes that her article does not present a "rigorously designed or controlled research project" or "a project executed in a classroom" she believes that there is also room in educational writing for "lighter and more subjective considerations of factors that shape our students' preconceptions

about school." I suspect that many of our readers will appreciate her clever and delightful analysis.

The third article presents a more traditional teacher research report complete with a literature review, methodology section, and helpful findings. Daniel Long and David Carlson present an action research project, conducted in an 8th grade classroom, that explores how thinking maps can be utilized by the students to broaden critical thinking skills and enhance their understanding of content. The authors found that using thinking maps helped students to achieve greater understanding of content than the use of traditional note taking strategies. As the authors report, "Thinking Maps make an excellent addition to any classroom because they teach students to think critically about subjects and form connections between subject disciplines."

The current issue also features a book review by Patricia Venegas of Gerald Campano's book, *Immigrant Students and Literacy: Reading, Writing, and Remembering*. As Venegas writes, "Campano's inspirational research and his ability to empower students from diverse backgrounds allow him to create 'second classrooms' in schools that challenge standard curricula. He argues that teachers can accomplish this while regaining agency and becoming 'intellectual activists.'" Together these articles contribute to an exciting and helpful volume of *Networks*.