Literacy Instruction as Disciplinary Practice in a First-Grade English Immersion Class: A Foucauldian Analysis

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In *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Foucault (1977) discusses the transformation of power relations that accompanied the population explosion and the rise of democratic forms of government and industrialized labor practices in Europe during the 18th and 19th centuries. According to Foucault, these new social formations necessitated and facilitated the development of “the disciplines,” subtle and productive techniques for “the ordering of human multiplicities” (p. 218) that quickly permeated the military, schools, workplaces, hospitals, and other institutions. Given Foucault’s premise that the new social configurations of the 18th century led to the emergence and spread of the disciplines, it seems significant that the present period — replete with its increasingly complex global economy, technological advances, shifting demographics, and postmodern cultural conditions — also represents a new historical juncture (Bauman, 1998; Harvey, 1988; Luke & Carrington, in press; Luke & Luke, 2001). Several scholars have argued that these contemporary “new times” have given rise to increasingly disciplinary literacy pedagogies aimed at normalizing the practices of diverse student populations and inoculating schools and children against the perceived dangers of new communication technologies (Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López, & Asato, 2000; Luke & Luke, 2001). In this paper I provide empirical support for and ethnographic nuance to these largely theoretical claims through a detailed analysis of a reading group in a first-grade English immersion class in California.

During the last few years political support in California for highly prescriptive reading instruction stressing intensive phonemic awareness and phonics training and the legislation of English-only instruction have combined to create a new blueprint for the education of the state’s 1.5 million English language learners. To describe the experience of young Spanish-speaking Latina/o children learning to read and write in this new era, I conducted an ethnographic study of the language and literacy practices in Room 12, a first-grade English-immersion classroom in a suburban elementary school on the outskirts of Los Angeles. In this paper I focus on one of the class’s salient instructional practices, a reading group taught by a literacy support teacher who worked regularly with the children in Room 12. The reading group featured the type of early literacy instruction for English language learners that is currently in vogue in California and elsewhere (Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López, & Asato, 2000; Mora, 2001). This paper illuminates the complex meanings arising from the local enactment of this form of literacy pedagogy with a group of linguistically diverse children. In the following sections I articulate the theoretical perspectives that framed my analysis of Ms. Ramirez’s reading group; describe the setting, participants, and method of my study; and present and discuss findings from my analysis of Ms. Ramirez’s reading group.

LITERACY PRACTICES

The literacy practices perspective provided a general framework for my study of reading and writing instruction in Room 12. In contrast to approaches that focus narrowly on the cognitive processes of individuals attending to print, the literacy practices perspective emphasizes that instances of reading and writing are always rooted in and shaped by historical, cultural, and social contexts. Barton and Hamilton (1998) have defined literacy practices as the observable, recurring ways...
that people interact with text along with the assumptions, values, cultural patterns, and social processes that underpin those interactions. Drawing on the literacy practices perspective, numerous scholars have argued that classroom literacy instruction represents a set of culturally and socially organized practices that have complex meanings and consequences for teachers and students (Baker & Luke, 1991; Freebody, Luke, & Gilbert, 1991; Gutierrez & Larson, 1994; Luke, 1992; Willet, 1995). However, while the literacy practices perspective makes visible the social purposes, power relations, and identity processes inherent in reading and writing instruction, it provides few tools for analyzing these elements in specific settings. In Luke and Baker’s (1991) words, sociocultural and sociolinguistic approaches “can name [social and discursive forces that impact literacy instruction] as variable factors but, without recourse to critical theories of knowledge and cultural transmission, of discourse, and of cultural and economic reproduction, cannot go beyond that” (p. xiv).

Consequently, to elucidate the social purposes and power relations underpinning the practice of Ms. Ramirez’s reading group, I drew upon Foucault’s (1977) notion of disciplinary power. I now discuss this strand of critical social theory and its relevance for the analysis of literacy instruction.

**DISCIPLINARY POWER**

Foucault described the disciplines as a set of techniques that operate subtly to create the useful and docile individuals required by democratic forms of government and modern forms of labor. In *Discipline and Punish* he examined the genesis of these techniques and their rapid spread through the social institutions of 18th-19th century Europe. In order to introduce the concept of disciplinary power to readers who may be unfamiliar with it and to provide a framework for understanding research that has analyzed classroom practices from this perspective, I have distilled four propositions that capture the broad contours of Foucault’s argument. In this section, I briefly outline these propositions.

**Proposition 1:** The democratic and industrialized societies that emerged during the 18th and 19th centuries required and facilitated the development of nearly invisible techniques of power to regulate and to enhance the productivity of their citizenry.

Prior to the 18th century, Foucault suggested that power operated within an “economy of visibility” (p. 187) in which public spectacles of punishment clearly displayed the authority of a sovereign monarch. However, the emerging democracies of 18th century necessitated more subtle, economical, and productive means to order their growing populations. According to Foucault, the disciplines fulfilled this need, evolving into an application of power that operated “at the lowest possible cost (economically, by the low expenditure it involves; politically, by its discretion...[and] its relative invisibility...)” (p. 218) and that functioned “to increase the possible utility of individuals” (p. 210).

**Proposition 2:** The disciplines represented a multiplicity of unremarkable regulatory mechanisms that spread through social institutions and that collectively constituted a new economy of power. Foucault described the techniques of disciplinary power as “minor processes, of different origin and scattered location” that developed “in response to particular needs: an industrial innovation, a renewed outbreak of certain epidemic diseases, the invention of the rifle...” (p. 138). These minor processes – mobile, pliable, apparently harmless, efficacious in ordering small aspects of behavior – colonized social institutions such as schools, workplaces, and hospitals; multiplied and combined with one another; and finally, “became general formulas of domination” (p. 137).

**Proposition 3:** The disciplines fabricated the individual as the “fictitious atom...of society” (p. 194) and as the object of new fields of knowledge that facilitated and authorized practices of classification, hierarchizing, normalization, and exclusion. Through architectural innovations and various methods for organizing space and activity, the disciplines broke up utterly, transient, and inefficient collectives and in their place created a “cellular, organic, genetic and combinatory individuality” (p. 192). Foucault argued that the production of this new form of individuality played a central role in the functioning of disciplinary power, making it possible to establish presences and absences, to know where and how to locate individuals, to set up useful communications, to interrupt others, to be able at each moment to supervise...
the conduct of each individual, to assess it, to judge it, to calculate its qualities or merits. (p. 143).

The process of supervision, classification, and judgment of individuals also benefited from new procedures of examination and documentation, disciplinary techniques that provided a rationale and method for carefully observing individuals and fixing them within categories and grids of specification. Foucault suggested that the “constitution of the individual as a describable, analyzable object” (p. 190) coincided with and was furthered by the founding of the human sciences. Under the auspices of “all the sciences, analyses or practices employing the root ‘psycho-’,” (p. 193) individuals came under the sway of multiple forms of hierarchical observation and normalizing judgment. These powerful techniques established “over individuals a visibility through which one differentiates them and judges them” (p. 184) and produced “a comparative system that made possible...the calculation of the gaps between individuals [and] their distribution in a given population” (p. 190).

Proposition 4: Through the close ordering of time, activity, and gesture, the disciplines sought to produce useful and docile bodies. Foucault (1977) emphasized that disciplinary power aims at the minute control of the body. In particular, he identified a series of techniques that served to organize, map, and subjugate bodies in relationship to time, gesture, and objects. For example, the temporal elaboration of the act involved the breakdown of activities into carefully defined stages that allowed for the detailed prescription of proper behavior. In Foucault’s words,

A sort of anatomo-chronological schema of behaviour is defined. The act is broken down into its elements; the position of the body, limbs, articulations is defined; to each movement are assigned a direction, an aptitude, a duration; their order of succession is prescribed. Time penetrates the body and with it all the meticulous controls of power. (p. 152)

A related technique, the correlation of the body and the gesture, imposed “the best relation between a gesture and the overall position of the body” (p. 152), thereby insuring the efficient movement and speed of bodies during each stage of activity. A third technique, the body-object articulation, similarly prescribed an “obligatory syntax” for the efficient handling and use of objects. Taken together, these disciplinary techniques, in combination with others, constituted a comprehensive technology for regulating bodies and extracting their forces in the most economical manner.

These four propositions provide an overview of Foucault’s notion of disciplinary power. I now consider scholarship that has focused on points of intersection between disciplinary power and the social practice of literacy instruction. This discussion allows me to situate my own study in the context of previous research.

LITERACY INSTRUCTION AND DISCIPLINARY TECHNIQUES

In Discipline and Punish Foucault punctuated his description of disciplinary techniques with numerous examples from treatises on school organization and instructional methods. More recently, a number of educational researchers have applied his analytic of disciplinary power to data from studies of classroom practice. Gore (1998) has taken up the question of the presence of disciplinary techniques in contemporary pedagogical sites. Looking across four widely divergent sites (several of which centered on literacy), she found that such techniques permeated each location, that they overlapped and combined with one another, and that they were deployed in varied ways and to varied ends. Based on these findings Gore suggested the need to make the micro-level power relations ubiquitous in everyday pedagogy visible and, more importantly, to carefully analyze their consequences so as to be able to “identify which [techniques of power seem essential to pedagogical enterprise and which might by altered...” (p. 248).

Drawing on insights from Foucault and Bourdieu, Luke (1992) constructed a critical theoretical lens for understanding reading instruction. Specifically, he argued that educational discourses and the pedagogical practices that they authorize function to inscribe students’ bodies with “particular ways of speaking, acting, and being” (p. 121) that have come to represent the
“morally regulated, literate subject” (p.123-124). Luke further contended that this inscription works to “generate self-surveillance, wherein the subject internalises the disciplinary and cultural gaze as her or his own” (p. 111). After developing this theoretical framework, Luke analyzed brief transcripts of a literacy activity in a primary-grade Australian classroom. However, this analysis served primarily to illustrate the potential in viewing literacy instruction using his theoretical framework and did not attempt to provide a thoroughly contextualized depiction of the meanings and consequences of particular literacy practices.

Chouliaraki (1996) provided a more empirically grounded case of the disciplinary nature of classroom literacy instruction in her analysis of the teacher-student discourse in a language arts class of 11-12-year-old students. After describing how the teacher emphasized “good habits” during writing instruction, Chouliaraki argued that this instruction represented the Foucauldian ‘utility-docility’ double bind” in which “disciplinary power establishes, for the pupils, both a relationship of usefulness that allows for a positive use of the body’s own forces (the writing capacity) and a relationship of constant training that effects obedientience and subjection…” (pp. 113-114). Consequently, Chouliaraki concluded that the students’ conceptual understanding was subjugated to procedural issues and proper body positions. While this analysis represented an empirical attempt to connect local classroom literacy instruction to broader purposes of regulation, Chouliaraki provided little evidence of how the children interpreted, took up, or resisted the admonitions toward good habits over time or how these admonitions fit within the overall scope of the class’s literacy practices.

Gutierrez, Baquedano-López, and Asato (2000) analyzed recent language and school reform policies in California with special attention to the literacy instruction of Latina/o children. They suggested that the state’s increasingly diverse population and student demographics have prompted a legislative and pedagogical backlash aimed at “controlling difference vis-à-vis the normalized world of those in power” (p. 12). Gutierrez and her colleagues argued further that this backlash has authorized a reductive set of classroom literacy practices that “define diversity and difference as problems to be eliminated” (p. 14) and that “categorize and sort [culturally and linguistically diverse] children in ways that undermine their competence and confidence” (p. 15). This argument moves forward cogently at a theoretical level, linking contemporary literacy pedagogy in California to broad demographic changes and corresponding sociopolitical purposes. However, while evocative, the empirical data that Gutierrez, Baquedano-López, and Asato presented came from a number of sites and activities and do not provide a thoroughgoing analysis of classroom practice in any particular setting.

In this section I have reviewed selected research focused on the relationship between disciplinary power and literacy instruction. Taken together, this scholarship makes the following points: 1) Power relations and disciplinary techniques permeate various forms of literacy pedagogy; 2) classroom literacy instruction targets students’ bodies, inscribing the culturally-determined disposition of a “literate subject;” 3) such instruction resonates with broader social purposes of normalization and moral regulation; 4) culturally and linguistically diverse students appear to be particularly vulnerable to the normalizing effects of disciplinary literacy pedagogies; and finally, 5) careful analyses of local settings are necessary in order to understand the various consequences of disciplinary power as it operates through pedagogical practice. In light of the last of these points, it is significant that the studies that I have discussed do not offer the kind of comprehensive ethnographic analysis that would allow for robust conclusions about the effects of disciplinary literacy instruction in specific settings or on particular populations. Consequently, in order to extend the conclusions of previous scholarship, this paper provides a systematic and detailed description of the nature of a single classroom literacy practice.

SETTING AND PARTICIPANTS

The data in this paper are taken from my year-long study of the language and literacy practices in Room 12, Mr. Grant’s first-grade English-immersion class at Foothill School. Foothill School is nestled in a quiet neighborhood in a small suburban city located on the periphery of Los Angeles. During my study, the student body at Foothill School numbered 700 and was 57 percent Latina/o and 35 percent European American, with the remaining 8 percent made up of small numbers of
children from other ethnic groups. Three-fourths of the students at Foothill School qualified for the federal free lunch program based on family income. After Proposition 227 eliminated Foothill’s bilingual program, each grade from kindergarten through third had an English immersion class of all limited-English-proficient Latina/o students taught by a bilingual teacher. Room 12, the first-grade English immersion class, consisted of 20 Latina/o children whose home language was Spanish. Based on the LAS 1 test of oral English, 18 of these children began the year as non- or limited English speakers. The teacher in Room 12, Mr. Grant, was a middle-class, European American man who spoke fluent Spanish and had his BCLAD, California’s bilingual teaching certificate. I chose Room 12 as a research site based on three criteria: 1) the students manifested low levels of English proficiency and were not yet conventionally literate; 2) the teacher consciously organized for children’s full participation in a wide range of literacy activities; 3) the teacher was bilingual and valued Spanish as a resource for classroom learning despite the restrictions of Proposition 227. These criteria assured my collection of rich data addressing the following research questions:

1. How did the English-only mandate of Proposition 227 affect the language and literacy practices in an English immersion class of Spanish-speaking students?

2. How did the members of Room 12 participate in classroom literacy practices and what kinds of knowledge, skills, and identities did they acquire through this participation?

This paper addresses these questions in the context of Ms. Ramirez’s reading group. Ms. Ramirez, a bilingual reading support teacher at Foothill School, provided small group instruction in English reading to students from Room 12 twice weekly throughout the year. A child of Mexican immigrants, Ms. Ramirez was fluent in Spanish and English and possessed California’s bilingual teaching certificate. Prior to Proposition 227, she had provided literacy instruction in Spanish. During the year of my study, Ms. Ramirez, in accordance with Proposition 227, provided only English-language instruction. In addition, much of her instruction drew from a highly structured program focused on segmenting and blending letter sounds of simple words that she had been trained to implement by the district the previous summer.

As the findings in this paper demonstrate, Ms. Ramirez’s reading group constituted an unproductive literacy-learning context for many of the children. However, my purpose in writing about the reading group is not to engage in fault finding with regard to Ms. Ramirez’s instruction or to suggest that the group was primarily responsible for any particular student’s difficulties in acquiring conventional literacy. To pursue either of these lines would amount to neglecting numerous contextual constraints that operated upon the reading group. Consider, for example, the following points:

1) Ms. Ramirez was subject to the English-only mandate of Proposition 227 and to a broad social discourse regarding the superiority of “standard English.”

2) The instructional activities of the reading group reflected the current political and institutional preferences with regard to literacy instruction in California and, more specifically, resulted from Ms. Ramirez’s training in a district-adopted program.

3) Ms. Ramirez was not responsible for the main literacy instruction in Room 12 and, in her own words, had “just a small segment of time” with the children. Furthermore, Mr. Grant, the classroom teacher, also struggled to address the children’s needs within the context of Proposition 227.

4) Mr. Grant and Ms. Ramirez both suggested that their lack of communication hampered Ms. Ramirez’s instructional planning and both attested to their mutual responsibility for this shortcoming.

I hope that these points make clear that my analysis of Ms. Ramirez’s instruction is not intended to represent her as an ineffective or insensitive teacher. Furthermore, I do not mean to represent the type of segmenting and blending activities that the children engaged in during reading group as an inappropriate method of early literacy instruction. Instead, by examining the social practices of the reading group and the group’s location within broad social discourses and institutional practices, I seek to fulfill in part the criteria for meaningful critical analysis described Apple (1993): “...being critical means something more than simply fault-finding. It involves understand
ing the sets of historically contingent circumstances and contradictory power relationships that create the conditions in which we live...” (p. 5)

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Since I sought to understand what it meant for linguistically diverse children to participate in the literacy practices in an English immersion class, I chose ethnography as a research design. In keeping with ethnographic tradition, I utilized several methods of data collection and pursued data that addressed the multiple contexts that impinged upon the classroom literacy practices in Room 12. During the 1999-2000 school year, I made 106 research visits, 24 audio-recordings of teacher-student or student-student interaction and conducted 19 interviews. This paper examines data related to Ms. Ramirez's reading group. I observed the reading group 18 times and audio recorded it 6 times during the course of the year. To supplement these observations, I interviewed Ms. Ramirez at the beginning of March. The interview lasted an hour and my questions focused in part on the salient themes that I had identified in my ongoing analysis of the practice of her group.

My analysis of the data occurred concurrently with its collection throughout my study of Room 12. On a weekly basis I used methods of constant comparison to code fieldnotes and interview transcripts and create conceptual categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). At the end of the study I reread my entire corpus of fieldnotes and transcripts, adding to and refining my earlier codes. My analysis of Ms. Ramirez’s reading group focused on fieldnotes from my observations, transcripts from audio-recordings, and the transcript of my interview with Ms. Ramirez. As a part of this general analytic work, my analysis of Ms. Ramirez’s reading group focused on fieldnotes from my observations, transcripts from audio-recordings, and the transcript of my hour-long interview with Ms. Ramirez. Guided by Strauss and Corbin’s (1990) discussion of axial and selective coding, my ongoing analysis of these data produced three major analytic categories: individual performance, proper procedures, and correction. These categories gave focus my continuing data collection as I sought to confirm, disconfirm, and add conceptual density to these categories. Finally, I identified trenchant examples of the conceptual categories and subcatego-

ries in transcripts of interaction from the reading group and engaged in close analysis of these transcripts. In particular, I utilized tools for discourse analysis developed by Bloome and Egan-Robertson (1993) and Luke (1996) to investigate how language use scripted the social work of the practice, how identity positions were assigned and negotiated through this social work, and how various contributions to joint activity were picked up or disregarded. I have woven insights from this stage of analysis into my findings. In the following sections, I present findings that develop the three major analytic categories and their meanings for the participants.

FINDINGS

Individual Performance

The children’s participation in Ms. Ramirez’s reading group consisted primarily of individual performance. Such performances particularly predominated during word segmenting and blending tasks. After modeling these tasks, Ms. Ramirez called on one child at a time to perform and encouraged the other students in the group to watch and “check [the child’s work] in their heads” (fieldnotes, 10/12/99). While this structure allowed Ms. Ramirez to observe each child’s performance and to provide constant feedback, it also established the children as individuals who were solely responsible for their own cognitive-academic performances and fixed each student in turn under Ms. Ramirez’s evaluative gaze. Furthermore, by encouraging the children to observe and critique their peers, Ms. Ramirez recruited the students as accomplices in the meticulously ordered routine of surveillance and evaluation. For their part, the children fulfilled the role of co-evaluator by enthusiastically calling out when peers deviated slightly from the authorized procedures or otherwise stumbled while performing a word segmenting or reading task.

In keeping with her summer training, Ms. Ramirez actively forestalled the students from helping one another during the word segmenting tasks. On numerous occasions she reprimanded children who gave answers to their peers, reminding them to wait for their own turn and emphasizing that she alone would provide any necessary assistance.
This action disqualified peer collaboration as a viable source of learning within the group. The transcript below exemplifies Ms. Ramirez’s insistence on individual performance during word-segmenting tasks.

**Transcript, Ms. Ramirez’s Reading Group, 2/3/00**

MR: Laura, it’s your turn. Are you ready? Okay, Laura. Nobody help Laura. Let her do it by herself. Remember, if you don’t know what it is, just say, “I don’t know what it is, Ms. Ramirez.”

(MR gives Laura a picture.)

Alberto: ¿Sabes qué es eso? [Do you know what it is?]

MR: Sh. Do you know what it is? OK. That is a toy and it’s called a top. Top.

(Alberto starts to arrange letters.)

MR: No, no, no. Wait a minute Alberto! Are you ready to go to Mr. Grant? Then why did you dare to touch her work?

This exchange occurred on Laura’s first day at Foothill School. Since she was a new neighbor to Alberto, he had had taken responsibility throughout the day for guiding her through the unfamiliar routines of Room 12. However, when Alberto tried to help during reading group, Ms. Ramirez vehemently scolded him – perhaps demonstrating a special concern that Laura be properly socialized to the participation structure of the group. By doing so Ms. Ramirez preserved the individual nature of Laura’s performance. Consequently, Laura’s inability to negotiate the instructions and demands of the word-segmenting task constituted the first chapter of her biography as a learner in the reading group. In addition, by usurping Alberto’s query and rephrasing it in English, Ms. Ramirez’s marked Spanish as an unsuitable tool for participating in the group and positioned herself as the only appropriate resource to support Laura’s academic performance. Finally, the harshness of her re-buke, “why did you dare touch her work;” suggests that Ms. Ramirez viewed Alberto’s actions as a kind of moral transgression and not as a simple failure to follow directions.

Having noted the significance that Ms. Ramirez placed on individual performance, I questioned her about this aspect of her instruction during our March interview. The following transcript presents her response.

**Transcript, Interview with Ms. Ramirez, 3/3/00**

I think that when they were working...because they liked that white board so much, that when it was their turn, they wanted to be the one to be able to do it. The good thing about that was, it’s kind of a psychological thing that when you know that you can’t help the other person, you want to help them. [The students who are not performing] are all thinking, “Oh, put it there, or put it there.” That to me is good because they all want to be involved in what this person is doing. But, at the same time, this person has the limelight and this is their turn. So they get a chance to do it. And if they need me, then I am going to help them... It kind of goes back to self-discipline also, learning to discipline yourself when you know the answer and you want to say the answer to just kind of hold on to it. And that carries over all the time, because you have to control yourself even though you may feel like doing something else. So, that was important to me.

In this explanation Ms. Ramirez drew upon three levels of reasoning to support her emphasis on individual performance. First, based on her reading of the children’s preferences and actions, she suggested that they enjoyed the opportunity to work alone in front of the group. She then articulated a psychological rationale, stating that prohibiting the students from helping one another motivated those not performing to attend closely to the task. Finally, Ms. Ramirez linked the children’s ability to withhold help from their peers to a broader discourse of self-discipline. By placing restraints on the children’s behavior in reading group, Ms. Ramirez sought to help them develop a sense of self-regulation that would transfer to other settings and situations. Thus, guarding the individual nature of the children’s participation in reading group not only supported Ms. Ramirez’s pedagogical purposes but, in her mind, also served a broader moral regulatory function.

The children appeared to recognize the performance-oriented nature of their participation in reading group and occasionally cheered for or hugged peers who successfully accomplished a task. However, many students did not enjoy the spotlight of individual performance. As I describe in later sec
tions, such performances often resulted in the public display of their inability to follow the procedures of reading group tasks. Consequently, rather than engaging seriously with the content of the tasks, students increasingly relied on tactical behaviors that enabled them to avoid the degradation of public correction.

Proper Procedures

In addition to the emphasis on individual performance, Ms. Ramirez also carefully defined the tasks that the children performed and the correct procedures for accomplishing them. These procedures aimed at regulating the timing of the children’s behaviors and their body positioning and movements. In this section I present findings that elaborate on the nature of these procedures and the children’s response to them.

Timing

Given the short time that Ms. Ramirez had to work with the children from Room 12, it is unsurprising that she often spoke rapidly and attempted to move efficiently through literacy activities. In particular, Ms. Ramirez paid special attention to the synchronicity and timing of the children’s actions during the tasks of reading group. When the children were not performing individually in front of the group, they typically engaged in synchronized performances. Such performances occurred during print tracking, choral reading, and spelling exercises and involved a group of children performing the same task simultaneously. Since the children did not collaborate during these tasks, synchronized performances amounted to a coordinated set of individual performances. Ms. Ramirez appeared to encourage this synchronicity in order to keep watch over each child’s actions while surveying the entire group. Several times I observed children incline their books away from Ms. Ramirez during choral reading in a way that shielded their actions. In each case, Ms. Ramirez asked the children to place the books flat on the table so that she could observe their movements. In addition, as the following excerpts from transcripts and fieldnotes indicate, Ms. Ramirez intervened frequently if a child moved ahead or fell behind the others while the group was tracking print or reading chorally.

Transcripts/Fieldnotes,
Ms. Ramirez’s Reading Group, various days

- MR: Put your finger on the first word. Marisol, you’re not reading it with us. Hold on, together. One, two, three... (Transcript, 10/28/99)
- MR: “How come we’re all doing different things? We should all be doing the same thing” (Fieldnotes, 11/2/99).
- MR tells the students: “We all have to be on the same page.” The students read chorally.
- MR interrupts: “Let’s all be together.” (Fieldnotes, 11/9/99)
- (Students are reading cacophonously.) MR: “What is wrong with you guys that you are just talking and taking and talking? I just said to open to page 2, I didn’t say to read. (12/7/99)

Through this insistence on synchronicity, Ms. Ramirez attempted to keep the students moving efficiently through tasks, to track each child’s individual participation, and to order the potential heterogeneity of the children’s behavior during group performances. The enforcement of synchronicity also constituted another criteria for evaluating and intervening in the children’s literate behavior.

In addition to synchronization, Ms. Ramirez also attended carefully to the timing of the children’s actions. When the group engaged in spelling, the children used folders with flaps that allowed them to write a word, cover it up, and then write it again from memory in the subsequent column. As the following transcript reveals, Ms. Ramirez carefully regulated the timing of the children’s behavior in this activity.

Transcript, Ms. Ramirez’s
Reading Group, 5/4

MR: Okay, we’re going to do our spelling folders right now. Do you remember the directions? ... It’s look, count, write it, and then you are going to check it with the very first one. And you are going to repeat it how many times?

Susana: five.

MR: ... Okay. And then wait for me to write the word. (MR writes the word “not” on a white board and the students copy it on their papers.) Okay, now that I have seen
all of your words...I am going to erase it. Now I want you to keep the flap closed. Hold on. Look at it for just a minute before you write it. Open up your flap.

Susana: I see it good.
Daniel: I already counted.
MR: I want to see you guys do it at the same time.

This transcript represents a typical spelling session and demonstrates Ms. Ramirez’s concern with sequencing and regulating the timing of the children’s behavior. The majority of Ms. Ramirez’s utterances aimed at insuring that the children’s actions corresponded to the temporal ordering of the practice. Students were admonished to write words the correct number of times, to count properly between each word, to not get ahead, and to not fall behind. In this way Ms. Ramirez sought to make efficient use of instructional time by homogenizing the children’s actions. However, this focus on efficiency also served to mark children who struggled to perform in keeping with the tight temporal ordering of activity.

Body Positions and Movements

The various tasks of reading group also involved numerous procedures directed at the children’s body positions and movements. First, throughout the group, Ms. Ramirez demanded proper body positioning from the students through the habitual refrain, “Show me that you are ready.” Showing readiness involved sitting up straight, looking attentively at Ms. Ramirez, refraining from speaking, or positioning oneself properly in relation to one’s materials. These bodily demonstrations functioned as a prerequisite to participation in reading group and Ms. Ramirez frequently refused to begin a task if children did not exhibit the proper “ready” posture.

Second, a set of procedures for word segmenting and print tracking tasks involved the careful articulation between body movements and vocalizations. In accordance with the training that she had received in the summer, Ms. Ramirez modeled the proper way to complete these tasks and observed closely to ensure that the children followed her example. The procedures for the segmenting and blending activities included specific instructions on the physical movements and the sequence of operations that the children were to perform. When the students performed the word segmenting tasks, Ms. Ramirez consistently intervened if a child failed to follow the procedures prescribed by the program. For instance, in the following brief excerpts, the students correctly spelled the assigned words but did not execute the proper procedures for their tasks.

Fieldnotes: Ms. Ramirez’s Reading Group, various days

- Yesenia puts the letters in order. MR tells her: “When you bring down the letters, say each sound picture.” Yesenia lines up the letters again. MR tells her: “No, as you bring it down, say the sound.” (10/12/99)
- MR tells Doris her word: “You’re going to get ‘zag.’” Doris writes the word without making the letter sounds. MR tells her to try again and asks, “What are you going to do as you write?” (10/21/99)

While the children in these cases successfully spelled or read the words assigned to them, they failed to produce the precise coordination of body movements and vocalizations that the program demanded. Consequently, Ms. Ramirez intervened, asking each one to repeat the task. By doing so she reduced the nature of the word reading task to the following of proper procedures involving the children’s articulation of movements and vocalizations. Furthermore, each part of the procedure provided Ms. Ramirez an opportunity to evaluate the children’s performance and, if necessary, to correct their behavior.

This emphasis on the articulation of movement and voice continued when the students read connected text. Reading such texts typically involved
three stages. First, Ms. Ramirez read and the children tracked the print in their books in time with her voice. Second, the group read the text chorally and tracked print. Finally, the children read individually in round robin fashion. The following portion of transcript from a reading session demonstrates the intensity of Ms. Ramirez’s attention to the children’s coordination of voice and finger while reading.

**Transcript: Ms. Ramirez’s Reading Group, 10/28**

MR: Maybe we should read it together again. Make sure your finger is on the first word.
(A few students are reading.) Make sure your finger is on the first word.
S: I wanna read it.
MR: Put your finger on the first word.
Students (beginning to read): I...
MR: Put your finger on the first word. Marisol, you’re not reading it with us. Hold on, together. One, two, three:
MR and students (reading): I like my home said the spider.
MR: Your finger is very important. Remember, we are practicing our finger with our words. Let’s read the next one.
MR and students (reading): IS (reading): Like
MR and students (reading): Like my home said the bird.
MR: Marfa, each word. Marfa, when we say a word your finger moves. Okay? Next.
(The group finishes the book reading chorally and MR then calls on each student to read one page each in round robin fashion.)
Daniel (begins to read): I
MR: Where’s your finger?

Like the procedures for word segmenting, this form of tracking print focused on the articulation of body movements and vocalizations and involved no attention to the meanings or functions of print. In essence, not even proper decoding counted as reading if it was not carefully coordinated with the correct movements.

Resistance

While a number of students focused on mastering the proper procedures for the various tasks of reading group, several others resisted the temporal demands and bodily training that inhered in these procedures. This resistance involved mocking or rejection of Ms. Ramirez’s close ordering of their movements. Juan was one child who consistently resisted Ms. Ramirez’s correction. While Juan was able to read conventionally from the beginning of the year, he often refused to track print during choral reading. On one typical occasion, he began to move his finger in an exaggerated way while covering his eyes with his other hand after Ms. Ramirez had admonished him to point to the words. His behavior suggested that Juan interpreted the procedures in Ms. Ramirez’s group as baby steps that positioned him as a novice reader. Juan’s behavior earned him numerous warnings and occasionally he was asked to leave the group.

Similarly, Daniel evidenced highly embodied forms of resistance to the procedures of reading group. For example, on the same day that I documented his success during free reading, my fieldnotes from reading group included the following descriptions of Daniel.

**Fieldnotes: Ms. Ramirez’s Reading Group, 5/4/00**

- Daniel and Jose slide their books on the table.
- Daniel is turned around in his chair, draped over it.
- Daniel looks up at the ceiling, shooting an imaginary gun.
- Daniel is wiggling, kind of dancing in his chair.
- Daniel falls off his chair onto the floor.
- Daniel is standing, rolling an erasure in his hands.
- Ms. Ramirez sends Daniel back to class.

Through his unruly kinesis, Daniel rebelled bodily against Ms. Ramirez’s ordering of his movements, an ordering that had often led to the public display of his lack of competence on reading group tasks. For Ms. Ramirez, this resistance marked Daniel as a struggling reader and a problematic student, and thus he continued to attend her reading group with the other low readers until the end of the year.

**Correction**

Ms. Ramirez’s correction of the children represented the principal form of interaction during
reading group. As I detailed in the previous section, Ms. Ramirez often corrected children who failed to follow the proper procedures required by the tasks. She also required carefully articulated pronunciation of English phonemes and corrected the students when their letter sounds were tinged with Spanish. This correction also involved an element of bodily training as Ms. Ramirez modeled the tongue or labial positions required for proper enunciation and attended to the children’s imitations of these positions.

The act of correction typically involved a series of prompts through which Ms. Ramirez tried to elicit correct behaviors from the children. I have called this form of interaction a correction sequence. The following transcript presents a typical correction sequence; it occurred when Ana attempted to separate the phonemes of a three-letter word and write the corresponding letters.

**Transcript: Ms. Ramirez’s Reading Group, 10/21/99**

MR: Ana, are you ready to map? Your word is “wag.”
(Ana writes “uag.”)
MR: What’s this? (pointing to the “u”)
Ana: /u/ (makes the sound of the Spanish “u”)
MR: You’re right in Spanish. But in English it makes /u/. (makes the short “u” sound.)
(Ana erases the word. MR tells her to find the /w/ on the alphabet on the wall.)
Marisol: I can find-
MR: Yeh, but it’s her turn... (Ana looks but does not appear find the letter.) Do you see all the sound-pictures lined up?
(Ana stares blankly.)
MR: Do you know Zoophonics? (Ana nods.) It is Willie the weasel...
(Ana writes an “m.”)
MR: No, that is m...
(Ana changes it to “n.”)
MR: No, that is ‘n’...
(MR then shows Ana the “w” on the word card.)

A small, timid girl, Ana was the most limited English speaker of the children in Room 12. Despite the fact that Ana’s original written response, “uag,” represented a logical effort by a Spanish-dominant child to write the phonemes in the word “wag,” Ms. Ramirez’s neglected the appropriateness of this approach. Instead, she began a correction sequence that publicly positioned Ana as highly incompetent. Most notably, by prompting Ana to use the wall alphabet and then Zoophonics, Ms. Ramirez scripted the specific resources that Ana should use in sounding out the word and obligated her to use them spontaneously. Ana’s inability to utilize these resources on Ms. Ramirez’s cue compounded her original spelling mistake and subjected her to increased degradation in front of her peers.

Due to the public nature of these correction sequences and the inhospitable ways that such correction positioned the children, many students developed tactical forms of participating in the reading group. I defined behaviors as tactical when they functioned to shield the children from the potential degradation of a correction sequence. For instance, students frequently tracked print while looking at and trying to coordinate their movements with Ms. Ramirez rather than looking at the text itself. While such tactics aimed at deflecting degradation, they also inhibited students from taking risks with print or even attending to the content of the reading group tasks. With their attention focused on such tactical behavior, it is unsurprising that the students who continued to work with Ms. Ramirez made little progress on these tasks over the course of the year. In March I questioned Ms. Ramirez about this lack of progress. She responded:

The more you expose a child to what they need to know—when they are ready, they are going to get it. And if you are exposing them to—let’s say letter sounds—and they don’t know their letter sounds after you have gone over them every day—because it hasn’t meant anything to them yet—but, continue to expose them to it and at some point it will mean something and they will understand. That constant exposure to it is very necessary. It hasn’t clicked in some of them.... When they are ready...they will get it. I just think that that is how it is working for them.

Here Ms. Ramirez articulated a learning theory that featured the following logic: 1) children learn through continuous exposure; 2) when they are ready, they will learn; 3) if they have not learned,
it is because they were not ready. This logic locates the source of failure to learn in the child’s lack of readiness and thus absolves instructional methods and the social dynamics of the instructional setting for any responsibility for that failure. Buttressed by this learning theory, Ms. Ramirez pursued the same types of word segmenting and book reading tasks throughout the year and appeared unaware of the children’s tactical responses to the negative ways that they were positioned in these tasks.

**DISCUSSION**

In the preceding findings I have developed three analytic categories that constitute a detailed account of Ms. Ramirez’s reading group. As I have stated previously, I do not intend for this account to read as simple denunciation of the use of word segmenting and blending tasks with beginning readers. Research has demonstrated the utility of such activities for developing necessary code-breaking skills. However, reading and writing exercises such as the segmenting and blending of letter sounds are always embedded in distinct social practices that powerfully influence their meanings. I now draw upon the notion of disciplinary power and the previous research that has applied this notion to classroom literacy instruction in order to draw out the meanings of Ms. Ramirez’s literacy instruction. In particular, I consider the nature and consequences of Ms. Ramirez’s reading group as a disciplinary literacy practice and situate this local practice within the broader sociocultural discourses and practices that shaped it.

**Constructing Individuals**

As I documented, Ms. Ramirez’s instruction constructed the children as individuals who were responsible for their own cognitive-academic performances. Poststructuralist theory suggests that this type of construction draws upon longstanding discourses on the nature of human individuality and cognition and thus appears so commonplace that it often escapes analytic attention (Weedon, 1987). However, as Foucault consistently demonstrated, such discourses represent socio-historical constructions created from the coalescing of particular practices, bodies of knowledge, and official and folk theories. In particular, his account of the disciplines describes how contemporary, common-sense conceptions of the individual have resulted from specific practices that partitioned, prescribed, sequenced, measured, and compared human bodies and behaviors in space and time (Foucault, 1977). Furthermore, he demonstrated that these individualizing practices, the human sciences that they enabled, and the resulting corpora of knowledge about human beings are not neutral. Such practices and knowledge were and continue to be deeply implicated in a sophisticated “micro-physics” of power that serves complex social purposes. For instance, in the case of literacy instruction, careful observation and documentation of children’s individual efforts on reading and writing tasks clearly can enable responsive forms of feedback that extend students’ repertoire of knowledge and skills. However, the same instructional practices also fabricate children as individuals who can be evaluated, ranked, categorized, normalized, and excluded on the basis of cognitive-academic performances without due consideration to the sociocultural practices that structure those performances. The likelihood of this later consequence increases when literacy acquisition is viewed exclusively as the individual internalization of knowledge and skills related to print and measured “along a single continuum oriented toward school standards” (Solsken, 1993).

In the case of Ms. Ramirez’s reading group, the individualizing nature of the literacy instruction appeared to have several theoretically and materially significant effects. First, the participation structure clearly inhibited the children from utilizing peer collaboration or other socially distributed resources to support their efforts on reading group tasks or, more generally, to enhance their literacy development. Second, the practice of the reading group potentially cultivated in the students a narrow definition of literacy that revolved around the public display and evaluation of individual competence. Furthermore, through the explicit request that the students observe and assess their peers’ literate performances, Ms. Ramirez merged the children’s subjectivities with her own position as teacher-evaluator. Thus, the children became both the subjects and objects of a system of evaluation and correction in which they learned to differentiate/compare/rank their own behaviors from/with against those of their peers. In this light, it seems
significant that within and outside of the reading group the children frequently evaluated their peers’ literate acts and ranked themselves vis-à-vis their peers as readers and writers, substantiating in their own actions the grids of specification in which they were beginning to be placed (Manyak, 2002). While the children’s actions should not be ascribed solely to the effects of Ms. Ramirez’s reading group, it seems indisputable that the children’s participation in the group contributed to their impulse to compare and rank themselves on the basis of literate performances.

The individualizing practices of the reading group also served to bind the children to their cognitive-academic performances and thus to begin the process of ranking, normalization, and exclusion on the basis of those performances. For instance, children like Ana and Daniel, whose linguistic and bodily habitus conflicted with the kind of literate disposition called for by the practices of reading group, were singled out as problematic readers and thus attended Ms. Ramirez’s group for an increasing period of time as the year went on. Thus, the practice of reading group, like the social practices that Toohey (1998) described in a first-grade Canadian classroom, placed the children within a stratified community and resulted in “the exclusion of some students from certain activities, practices, identities, and affiliations” (p. 80).

**Literacy Instruction and Bodily Training**

In addition to constructing the students as individuals, the literacy practices of Ms. Ramirez’s reading group also involved concentrated bodily training. In developing the notion of habitus, Bourdieu (1990) underscored the significance and durability of “childhood learning that treats the body as a living memory pad, an automaton that leads the mind unconsciously along with it, and as a repository for the most precious values…” (p. 68). Bourdieu’s insight into the intense durability of embodied forms of learning heightens the significance of those reading group procedures that targeted the children’s bodies, sequenced their movements in time, and demanded careful articulation between their gestures and vocalizations. While designed to facilitate the effective acquisition of important code-based reading skills, in practice these procedures had several other effects. First, the breaking down and sequencing of actions and the prescription of movements increased Ms. Ramirez’s ability to observe, assess, and correct the children’s behaviors in each moment of time. Second, the procedures of reading group tasks imposed a particular habitus on the students. The habitus represents the deeply embodied repertoire of knowledge, dispositions, inclinations, and values that shapes individuals’ orientation toward and participation in social practices (Bourdieu, 1990). Carrington (2001) suggests that the imposition of a habitus constituting the “idealized…institutional version of the literate” (p. 281) stands as the primary goal of school literacy instruction and she contends that this imposition weighs heavily on children from non-White, non middle class backgrounds:

The physical structuring of literacy instruction, as one part of the physical totality of school participation, acts to deculturate in that it attempts to subsume and if necessary, over-ride existing embodied habitus predispositions. The experience of this deculturation for students becomes more overt and insistent the further they are perceived to be from the idealized literate norm…. Indeed, the symbolic violence of cultural imposition may be accompanied by increased physical and social pressure to conform. (Carrington, 2001, pp. 275-276)

In Ms. Ramirez’s group proper habitus included a “ready” bodily disposition, a pliability to conform to prescribed body movements, and the articulatory gestures necessary for standard pronunciation of English phonemes. For many of children in the reading group, the acquisition of this habitus often took precedence over and deflected the their attention from the actual print tasks. Behaving tactically, these students attempted to avoid correction by demonstrating appropriate bodily dispositions and gestures. A second set of children resisted the reconstruction of their habitus, contesting Ms. Ramirez’s strict control of their body positions, gestures, timing, and pronunciation. Consequently, despite their ability to perform print-related tasks in other contexts, resistant children like Juan and Daniel acquired problematic identities within the group and were singled out for more
Man yak intensive training. In summary, the disciplinary techniques of Ms. Ramirez’s reading group served to train students’ bodies toward a putatively ideal version of the literate subject and to identify and begin to categorize those children who, for whatever reason, resisted this training. In this way the group demonstrated the dynamic which Foucault (1977) found at the heart of the disciplines: “The chief function of disciplinary power is to ‘train’, rather than to select and to levy; or, no doubt, to train in order to levy and select all the more” (p. 170).

While issues related to children’s bodies and bodily training have received relatively little attention in scholarly and practical literature on literacy instruction, I have highlighted here the significant consequences resulting from the embodied nature of students’ participation in classroom literacy activities. Based on the preceding discussion, I suggest that it is critical for teachers to recognize that children enter school with a habitus - a repertoire of embodied knowledge, dispositions, and values generated by early socialization in families and communities – that should be incorporated into rather than replaced by school literacy instruction. In order to accomplish this, literacy educators must carefully analyze the kinds of bodily prescriptions that inhere to various literacy activities and perhaps relax or dispense with those prescriptions that do not appear absolutely necessary to developing students’ competence with print. More generally, teachers may benefit from access to constructs that would enable them to analyze their own literacy instruction for the ways that this instruction positions students and delimits legitimate learning resources. Such analysis might enable teachers to make adjustments in the social organization and relations of their instructional practices in order to maximize students’ development as readers and writers.

The Context of Ms. Ramirez’s Reading Group

This paper has provided a fine-grained analysis of a set of the unremarkable processes that together constituted a disciplinary literacy practice in a first-grade class of Latina/o children. While I have offered a critical reading of Ms. Ramirez’s reading instruction, it is important to recognize that she did not construct the activities and social routines of the reading group in a vacuum. Her reading group was located at and shaped by the intersection of powerful discourses, educational reforms, and institutional practices. Here, I discuss the effects of the contemporary discourse on early reading instruction and achievement and the English-only mandate of Proposition 227 on the practice of the reading group.

Ms. Ramirez’s summer training and her corresponding instruction during reading group must be situated within a prominent public discourse on early reading instruction and achievement. I use discourse here in the Foucauldian sense to mean “A systematic grouping of ideas, opinions, concepts, ways of thinking and behaving which are formed within a particular context” that shape “what we perceive to be significant and how we interpret objects and events and set them within systems of meaning...” (Mills, 1999, p. 17). Variously fueled by allegations of a contemporary literacy crisis in the U.S.; concerns over teaching standards, student achievement, and accountability; a recognition of the increasingly sophisticated forms and functions of literacy required for life and work in the 21st century; and, as Luke and Luke (2001) have argued, the desire fold children safely into traditional print literate subjectivities and thus inoculate them against the perceived dangers of New Times; this discourse has produced strident rhetoric centering on the need for efficient methods of teaching children to read. Unsurprisingly, the discursive push for efficient methods of teaching reading has resulted in a resurgence of instructional programs and practices that involve the careful breaking down, sequencing, and prescription of content, activity, body movements, and vocalizations in time and space. Foucault (1977) made clear that such disciplinary techniques spread quickly across social institutions such as schools precisely because of their efficiency in ordering various forms of behavior and in producing useful individuals. However, he argued that the efficiency of disciplinary practices also served to increase the docility of individuals subjected to those practices.

The linking of efficiency and docility appears particularly salient in my analysis of Ms. Ramirez’s reading group. While the literacy practices of the reading group were designed to enhance the efficiency of young readers’ efforts to “break the code,” they also demanded and rewarded the children’s compliance with a host of procedures aimed
at regulating the timing and sequence of their actions and their body positions, movements, and vocalizations. It might be argued that the efficiency of such practices and the docility that they engender may represent a developmental step that prepares children for more sophisticated forms of literacy (Snow, 2000). However, my findings suggest that disciplinary approaches to early reading instruction such as those enacted by Ms. Ramirez also represent a heightened effort to construct docile individuals “who embody respect for institutional power” (Carrington, 2001, p. 281) at a time when new technologies and life pathways have destabilized the traditional image of the literate subject (Luke & Luke, 2001).

In the context of Ms. Ramirez’s instruction, the discourse on early literacy instruction interacted with a social and institutional endorsement of English-only instruction. Historical analyses have clearly depicted the assimilatory nature of schooling in the United States with regard to children from culturally and linguistically diverse communities (Cummins, 1996). As Wiley and Lukes (1996) demonstrate, language ideologies that consider “language diversity as an alien and divisive force” (p. 511) and that “[stress] the importance and superiority of the standard, ‘literate,’ or ‘unaccented’ variety of English” (p. 514) have long contributed to this assimilationist project. School language policies based on such ideological principles have served as instruments of social control, privileging speakers of the anointed “standard language” and positioning children from linguistically diverse communities as deficient, thereby reproducing and justifying the respective places of each group within social hierarchies (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Cummins, 1996; Wiley & Lukes, 1996).

Just prior to my study of Room 12, the schooling of linguistically diverse children became an object of intense public debate in California. This debate concluded in June of 1998 with the passage of Proposition 227 and the corresponding institutional sanctioning of monolingual instruction. Significantly, the Proposition 227 followed on the heels of laws that abolished the state’s program of affirmative action and that attempted to bar undocumented residents from education and health services. Gutiérrez, Asato, Santos, and Gotanda (in press) have ascribed these related pieces of legislation to “backlash politics,” the ideological and political maneuvering—fueled by in part by the increasing social and political presence of California’s Latina/o population—intent on “legitimiz[ing] and maintain[ing] privilege, access, and control of the sociopolitical and economic terrain” (p. 5). These authors argue that such backlash politics have supported “backlash pedagogy,” a movement within the state’s schools that

...does not harness diversity and difference as resources for learning; instead, it is characterized by its reductive notions of learning...that define diversity and difference as problems to be eliminated or remediated. Thus, backlash pedagogy necessarily prohibits the use of students’ complete linguistic, sociocultural, and academic repertoire in the service of learning” (Gutiérrez, Asato, Santos, & Gotanda, in press)

My analysis of Ms. Ramirez’s reading group supports these claims. The group’s focus on segmenting and blending decontextualized English words chosen for their consonant-vowel-consonant structure frequently resulted in the children manipulating meaningless bits and pieces of a language that was largely incomprehensible to them. Furthermore, Ms. Ramirez’s focus on surface correctness in the children’s pronunciation of English phonemes often resulted in the type of public correction that caused the children to tactically or overtly resist the goals of her instruction.

In conclusion, I want to stress that my analysis of the reading group should not be taken as a simple indictment of Ms. Ramirez’s instruction. In fact, I find it telling that in prior years Ms. Ramirez primarily taught Spanish literacy utilizing very different methods. Furthermore, before and after her reading group she often interacted with the children in an affectionate manner, chatting with the children in Spanish and showing interest in their home lives and families. Thus, while I have drawn attention to the negative ways that she positioned the children during reading instruction, I would argue that such interactions resulted from her attempt to conscientiously implement the instructional program that she was required to use. I have suggested that this instructional program re-
resulted from the intersection of theories of learning and literacy that occlude the influence of sociocultural context on cognitive/academic performance, political endorsement of reading programs designed to produce results in high stakes testing, and broad social responses to increasingly diverse school populations and the destabilization of traditional child subjectivities. While the interaction of such forces inevitably produces complex consequences that must be examined in specific contexts, the findings that I have presented in this paper suggest that the commingling of these factors has resulted in a renewed commitment to disciplinary forms of literacy instruction that appear particularly perilous for linguistically diverse students.

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