

ALEA 2026: 30-minute Research Presentation: 300-word abstract

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Lighting the Way for Relational Literacy Pedagogies: A Practice Architectures Case Study

In an era in which literacy practices and pedagogies are increasingly standardised, this paper argues that co-creation among students, teachers, pre-service teachers, teacher educators, and communities offers a powerful and generative alternative, elevating every voice and transforming writing outcomes. This presentation focuses on a qualitative case study of a triadic community–school–university partnership in Swifts Creek, East Gippsland Shire, Victoria, exploring how this convergence produced deeply engaged student writers and extraordinary literacy outcomes, culminating in *This is Swifts Creek* — a commercially published anthology of poetry and visual art touring galleries across Victoria.

Community-based literacy initiatives are most generative when they move beyond dyadic models and adopt relational triadic approaches, positioning schools, families, and communities as empowered co-educators and co-creators. This case study examines what such an arrangement enables young writers to do.

Situated within a sociocultural understanding of literacy, the study draws on practice architectures as a theoretical and analytical framework. Participants included Years 3 and 4 students, their classroom teacher, pre-service teachers, university teacher educators, a local artist, the Swifts Creek Gallery, and East Gippsland Shire community members. Data consisted of focus groups, recorded reflections, student work samples, and photographs, analysed through practice architectures to examine complexity and relationality between systems.

Findings reveal that the triadic relational structure was critical to sustaining the quality of the co-created literacy curriculum. The embeddedness of place, students' writing about their community for a community audience, created conditions for purposeful authorial agency and transformative moments in students' writing identities and literacy outcomes. Community members responded profoundly; for many, the project validated their town and place in the world. This research has implications for literacy educators and those designing community–school partnerships, suggesting relational, place-based triadic arrangements create richer writing outcomes