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Roots and routes to belonging and participation – Translanguaging as pedagogy with youth from refugee backgrounds

Saskia Van Viegen
York University

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Date: November 21, 2019
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Time: 12-1:30pm

Location: 3700 McTavish
Street, McGill's Faculty of
Education

Room: EDUC113

Language of presentation:
English

Contact Information:
plurilinguallab@gmail.com

Children and youth who have experienced forced displacement and migration face formidable challenges of social and educational integration in host countries. Resettling in and entering local school systems requires rapid development of new language and literacy skills to stay abreast of same-age peers in school, particularly for those who have had limited or interrupted access to formal schooling prior to their arrival. At the same time, their cultural and linguistic identities and funds of knowledge are critical resources for learning. Sharing insights from case study research conducted in a Canadian secondary school with youth from refugee backgrounds, I present how students and their teachers actively engaged a multitude of semiotic resources – a fluid mixing across languages and modes of communication and meaning making – in an open and porous process of navigating borders and boundaries of language and linguistic identity. I explore approaches to educational integration and resettlement wherein teachers work to valorize linguistic competence and accelerate new language learning – both roots and routes to belonging, civic engagement and full participation in a new social and educational context.

Saskia Van Viegen is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Languages, Literatures and Linguistics at York University. Her research focuses on language in education, bi/multilingualism and biliteracy. Her current projects explore multilingual assessment, youth language and literacy practices, and multilingual university contexts. Recently, she coedited (with Sunny Lau) the book *Plurilingual Pedagogies: Critical and Creative Undertakings for Equitable Language (in) Education*, to be published for Springer Educational Linguistics series.