RESISTING EDUCATIONAL INEQUALITY:

REFRAMING POLICY AND PRACTICE IN SCHOOLS SERVING VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

Kingswood Campus
Wednesday 28 October – Friday 30 October 2015

Full Program and Book of Abstracts
RESISTING EDUCATIONAL INEQUALITY:
REFRAMING POLICY AND PRACTICE IN SCHOOLS SERVING VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

Focus Questions that will drive this symposium

- What are our better explanations for the persistent nature of educational inequality in Australia?
- What do we know about how to improve educational engagement and success in ‘disadvantaged’ communities?

This Symposium will bring together leading educational researchers who are engaged in significant empirical and/or theoretical research in disadvantaged communities around the nation.

The Symposium will develop better explanations for the persistent nature of educational inequality in Australia, and identify what schools, teachers and communities can do to improve educational success for vulnerable young people and their families. It will establish a national network for reframing research, policy and practice in this area. The network will co-ordinate and consolidate an (inter)nationally significant research program.

A number of high profile academic researchers from around the country will present their work, facilitate discussions and contribute to the launch of a network of researchers working with low SES schools and communities.

This symposium has been coordinated by

A/Professor Susanne Gannon
Equity Theme Leader, CER
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Professor Wayne Sawyer
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RESISTING EDUCATIONAL INEQUALITY:

Refining policy and practice in schools serving vulnerable communities

Wednesday 28 October - Friday 30 October 2015

DAY 1 Wednesday 28th October 2015

09:30-09:40  | 1.14  | ACKNOWLEDGEMENT TO COUNTRY - Shirley Gilbert
09:40-10:00  | 1.13  | INTRODUCTION
10:00-10:30  | ROOM: 1.17  | MORNING BREAK
10:30-10:55  | ROOM: 1.17  | Mapping Possible Futures: Funds of aspiration and educational desire - Susanne Gannon, Mohamed Mountakim, Dorian Stoicescu & David Wright
10:55-11:15  | 1.13  | Blindfolding Funds of Knowledge: When curriculum cannot see life-worlds - Lew Zipin
11:15-11:30  | 1.17  | Effective pedagogies for enhancing pre-schoolers' engagement with learning in “disadvantaged” communities - Leonie Arthur & Chris Woodrow
11:30-11:55  | 1.14  | Posters of educational failure: Broadening the diagnostic frames - Roger Slee
12:00-12:25  | ROOM: 1.17  | LUNCH
12:25-12:55  | ROOM: 1.17  | Overcoming educational inequality: Connecting policies and practices through a whole-child healthy learner approach - Ted Noon
13:15-13:35  | 1.17  | Large-scale assessments and multilateral accountabilities in schooling - Sam Sellar
13:35-14:00  | 1.14  | AFTERNOON BREAK
14:00-14:30  | 1.14  | Public Lecture - Rearticulating, and contesting, equity in education policy - Professor Bob Lingard, The University of Queensland
14:30-16:00  | 1.17  | CLOSED DISCUSSION - NETWORK MEMBERS
17:00-18:00  | 1.11  | 2015 BOOK LAUNCH - SWAMP BAR - KINGSWOOD CAMPUS
18:00        | 1.11  | BBQ - SWAMP BAR - KINGSWOOD CAMPUS

DAY 2 Thursday 29th October 2015

09:30-09:55  | ROOM: 1.18  | Transcultural and Translingual Potential: Exploring the plurilingual competencies of Australian students in two new arrivals classes - Jacqueline D’Warte
10:00-10:25  | ROOM: 1.17  | Reconfiguring educational spaces for equity: innovations from early years’ education - Chris Woodrow, Anne Power & Joanne Orlanda
10:25-10:55  | ROOM: 1.17  | Youth disaffection: the challenges of contemporary schooling and the transformative possibilities of informal education - Mohamed Mountakim
11:00-11:25  | 1.18  | MORNING TEA
11:25-11:45  | 1.17  | Researching the ‘North’: Educational ethnography of a (sub)urban region - Rob Hattam
11:45-12:15  | 1.18  | Reinscribing inequality: Reflections on raising the school leaving age, credential inflation, streaming and the academic/welfare divide in schools - Marie Brennan
12:15-12:35  | 1.17  | LUNCH
13:30-13:50  | 1.17  | CLOSED DISCUSSION - NETWORK MEMBERS
17:00-18:30  | 1.14  | PUBLIC LECTURE - Rearticulating and contesting equity in education policy - Professor Bob Lingard, The University of Queensland
19:00        | 1.11  | SYMPOSIUM DINNER

DAY 3 Friday 30th October 2015

09:30-09:55  | ROOM: 1.17  | Flexible schooling options: Widening possibilities or restricting opportunities? - Martin Mills
10:00-10:25  | ROOM: 1.17  | Hope, spaces, and possible selves: Processes of becoming socially critical teachers - Alison Wrench
10:25-10:55  | ROOM: 1.17  | MORNING TEA
11:00-11:20  | 1.17  | CLOSED DISCUSSION - NETWORK MEMBERS (OVERVIEW/WHAT NEXT)
11:20-11:40  | 1.17  | LUNCH
11:40-12:00  | 1.17  | CLOSE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT TO COUNTRY - Shirley Gilbert
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MORNING BREAK
Mapping Possible Futures: Funds of aspiration and educational desire - Susanne Gannon, Mohamed Mountakim, Dorian Stoicescu & David Wright
Blindfolding Funds of Knowledge: When curriculum cannot see life-worlds - Lew Zipin
Effective pedagogies for enhancing pre-schoolers' engagement with learning in “disadvantaged” communities - Leonie Arthur & Chris Woodrow
Posters of educational failure: Broadening the diagnostic frames - Roger Slee
LUNCH
Overcoming educational inequality: Connecting policies and practices through a whole-child healthy learner approach - Ted Noon
Little room for capacitacion: Rethinking Bourdieu on pedagogic Action as Symbolic Violence and the Reproduction of Educational Inequality - Megan Watkins
Large-scale assessments and multilateral accountabilities in schooling - Sam Sellar
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ABSTRACTS

DAY 1 Wednesday 28 October

MAPPING POSSIBLE FUTURES: FUNDS OF ASPIRATION AND EDUCATIONAL DESIRE
Susanne Gannon, Mohamed Moustakim, Dorian Stoilescu & David Wright, Western Sydney University
Day 1 10:30-10:55  I.1.17

This paper traces the temporality and potentiality of aspiration amongst young university students from disadvantaged locations and backgrounds who show great leadership and have recently started to be educationally successful. It draws upon Zipin et al.’s (2013) notion of funds of aspiration as emergent trends but difficult to see, to articulate and to research through conventional means. We argue that aspiration is dynamic, and that while some dimensions are at a ‘tacit or latent’ level of consciousness, the mobilisation of aspiration also requires strategic intentionality that is developed over time within families, communities and schools. In this paper we map these trajectories over time as they are represented in a scholarship application written in the final year of high school, with interviews conducted with three of these young people 2 to 4 years subsequently. We ask when and how do desires for particular futures emerge, under what influences, how they are sustained over time, and how they are negotiated or modified when the future turns out to be different.

RE-ENGAGEMENT WITH LEARNING: TRIGGERS AND PROCESSES
Margaret Vickers & Katrina Barker, Western Sydney University
Day 1 10:30-10:55  I.1.14

Equity concerns related to high school completion and engagement with learning have driven the production of an enormous body of research over the past three decades. With extensive reliance on Bourdieu’s theorizations, much of this literature focuses on the reproduction of disadvantage among young people from families of low socio-economic status who are in many cases attending public schools populated by students from similarly disadvantaged backgrounds. The study reported here took a different approach: rather then focusing on reproduction of disadvantage in these contexts it attempted to identify the triggers and processes that can lead disengaged students to turn around and re-engage with learning. A targeted sample of 95 students was selected from a large student survey (N=1950) that was carried out in nine low-SES high schools across both urban and rural areas of NSW. These 95 students were selected for inclusion because they stated that they disliked school and wanted to leave before Year 12. Although there was some attrition, 55 of these students remained in the study, participating in both surveys and interviews each year for 3 years. During this period, one in three of them turned around to re-engage with learning. Their stories speak eloquently of the convergence of influences that led them to change. Within their experience, respect from teachers and support from parents was not always forthcoming but made a substantial difference when it occurred. The dynamics of peer relations were complex and could override the salience of other influences. The results of this study provide guidelines for practice for teachers and schools as they continue to struggle against student disengagement, early leaving, and failures in the transition to further study or work.
This paper emerges from a research project funded by the Australian Research Council (DP120101492). Working with schools in Melbourne’s ‘low SES’ western suburbs, the project aimed to further Year 9/10 students’ capacities to aspire towards viable futures (Appadurai 2004; Zipin, Sellar, Brennan & Gale 2013). This aim was operationalised in one project school through a semester-long Year 10 subject created by a project researcher (the author of this paper) in collaboration with a classroom teacher, who taught the class together. The plan was: (1) for small student groups each to research a particular issue of local community change which the group saw as mattering for their futures; and (2) for classroom dialogue to occur in which, informed by their research, students imagined likely, desirable and possible futures for themselves and their communities. A further intent was to elicit and make curricular use of cultural resources from the students’ life-worlds—their ‘funds of knowledge and identity’ (Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti, 2005; Zipin 2009, 2013; Moll 2014; Esteban-Guitart & Moll 2014)—as assets for building student capacities to research and to aspire. Ideally, and crucially, the issues of local change the students chose to research were to have meaningful connection to their funds of knowledge.

The author worked closely with a group of students concerned with questions of racism in the future of the suburb in which their school was located, as this suburb gentrified (a process already well underway). These students were power-marginal in race and/or class terms, and they were ‘not academic’ in the school’s ways of seeing. Yet the author found substantive evidence, in recorded conversations with them, of capacities to read the present and imagine potential futures in complex ways, bringing their funds of knowledge to bear. However, these funds of knowledge and associated capacities required moments and spaces of trust, which the author struggled to create, against grains of mainstream curriculum and evaluation processes that the students were habituated to expect, and that the experiment of this subject could not simply bracket. Consequently, students’ imaginative use of their funds of knowledge emerged largely outside of school recognition. Indeed, the students tended to avoid revealing their funds of knowledge within mainstream school time/space, which they saw as not ‘for them’; and their teacher could only manage sideways glances at manifest capacities that, in a different regime, it is the author’s view they would have liked to engage pedagogically. The paper argues that current policy exigencies acting upon schools make it increasingly harder for alternative curricular approaches to succeed in engaging students’ funds of knowledge. The paper concludes that there is critical need for more thoughtful educational policy that does not block the capacity of schools serving power-marginalised young people to see, and to work with, their life-world assets for learning.

References


ABSTRACTS

MOVING BEYOND THE ACADEMIC AND VOCATIONAL DIVIDE IN AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLS
Barry Down, Murdoch University
Day 1 11:00-11:25  I.1.14

Historically, Australian secondary schools have been preoccupied with the preparation of young people for the world of work. In response, governments of all political persuasions have pursued educational policies framed within a narrowly conceived technical, vocational and instrumentalist logic. These pressures are intensified in times of economic crisis such as the 1970s recession and the recent 2008 Global Financial Crisis. Accordingly, educational knowledge and school practices are refashioned to produce worker citizens with the skills, competencies and dispositions required by the economy. This paper will examine how these issues are played out in one low SES school community in which students are streamed into low level competency-based programs because of their perceived lack of ability, motivation and/or aspirations. While vocational orientated programmes can provide some relief from the boredom and irrelevance of abstract academic subjects, they primarily serve to reinforce the bifurcation in which it is acceptable for large numbers of young people to ‘work with their hands not their minds’ (Kincheloe, 1999, p. 139). This paper will draw on ethnographic evidence of young people themselves to interrupt these deficit discourses and identify the kinds of policies and practices required to advance a socially just curriculum for the least advantaged (Connell, 1993).

EFFECTIVE PEDAGOGIES FOR ENHANCING PRE-SCHOOLERS’ ENGAGEMENT WITH LEARNING IN ‘DISADVANTAGED’ COMMUNITIES
Leonie Arthur & Christine Woodrow, Western Sydney University
Day 1 11:30-11:55  I.1.17

This presentation draws on research in low socioeconomic communities in Chile and Australia to highlight pedagogies that enhance young children’s engagement with learning and support their successful transition to formal schooling. These pedagogies include strong partnerships with families and communities that recognise and build on funds of knowledge and classroom resources that link to children’s family and community experiences. Also critical to pre-schoolers’ engagement with learning are literacy and numeracy-enriched learning environments, a focus on sustained shared conversations that extend children’s learning, and a greater recognition of children’s agency in their own learning. Opportunities for educators to engage in collaborative professional learning and practitioner research has been found to support educators to expand their pedagogical repertoires and to strengthen the preschool’s connections with families.

PROXIES OF EDUCATIONAL FAILURE: BROADENING THE DIAGNOSTIC FRAMES
Roger Slee, Victoria University, Melbourne
Day 1 11:30-11:55  I.1.14

The Irregular School (Slee, 2011) warns of the elaboration of diagnostic schedules as means for assisting schools to manage students who are deemed to present risk to a school’s academic profile for their performance ranking. The new edition of DSM presents expanded options for calibrating and dividing the student population into categories of special educational needs. The Australian Institute of Health and Wellbeing recently suggested that 1 in 4 Australian students will experience some form of mental illness. While not wanting in anyway to undermine the push to raise awareness about mental illness and its under-recognition and under-funding, there is a need to exercise some caution to prevent mental illness and behaviour disorders becoming a proxy for larger social issues. This paper will examine the way in which traditional approaches to diagnosing student behavioural disorders attenuates opportunity for genuine school reform. Alternative frameworks for meeting the challenge of diversity in disadvantaged schools will be presented as a tool for education reformers.
ABSTRACTS

OVERCOMING EDUCATIONAL INEQUALITY: CONNECTING POLICIES AND PRACTICES THROUGH A WHOLE-CHILD HEALTHY LEARNER APPROACH
Ted Noon, Public High School Principal, PhD candidate, UoN

Day 1   13:00-13:25  I.1.17

Australian governments have for some time had an overarching commitment to equity for young Australians, yet arguably have failed to deliver. The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians commits to a goal of ‘equity and excellence’, and the elements associated with ‘promoting the intellectual, physical, social, emotional, moral, spiritual, and aesthetic development and wellbeing of young Australians’ (MCYEECDYA, 2008). This Declaration sits together with many well-intended interrelated policy documents that are strong on rhetoric, but not on viable, connected, proactive and sustainable practice. The leadership of our true purpose at a national level has been skewed to a more narrow focus on academic achievement at the expense of the many other elements that collectively constitute human existence and development. The ideal of an equitable comprehensive approach to learning is most often lost in a sea of market-oriented ‘bottom-line’ approaches to educational orientations, including the marketization of the institutions themselves. The gap between rich and poor is further accentuated, and has perpetuated a growing problem where pockets of educational communities struggle to keep up in both learning and the interconnected health related outcomes. The argument in this study is that educational purpose should be based on an authentic interconnected comprehensive model of learning through the promotion of each of the elements, each supporting the other.

A particular focus for this presentation will be on one significant project from within a whole-child research program as it sits within the context of an inequitable environment. The Healthy Learner concept was an initiative of a low SES public secondary school in south west Sydney. It is one part of a whole-child approach the school has embedded within its purpose. The school found that a high percentage of enrolling students had undiagnosed or poorly managed health issues that often correlated with poor learning outcomes. This paper presents the findings of a pilot study to determine the impact of the Healthy Learner model where an experienced primary care nurse was embedded in a newly developed Student Support Services faculty in the school. The clinician works within an allied health team together with learning interventionists. Year 7 students in the lowest quartile of NAPLAN scores were assessed by the nurse and a comprehensive care plan was developed. Thirty-nine students were assessed in the initial study. The nurse identified up to seven health problems per child ranging from serious neglect to minor problems such as uncorrected vision or hearing. Semi-structured interviews were undertaken with parents and staff to determine their views of the service. Candidacy theory guided the analysis. The Healthy Learner model piloted in this high school has identified considerable unmet health needs that impact on a child’s ability to learn. The families required extensive support to access the healthcare they required. Building a more proactive community approach to a whole-child conceptual model that is supported by the connection of key agencies and related policies is strongly recommended, together with the need for stronger authentic political advocacy. Further extensive longitudinal studies are strongly recommended.

References

1 Noon, Ted. PhD candidate, University of Newcastle. A longitudinal examination of the elements associated with a whole-child model of learning and educational outcomes in diverse high school communities. (Study)
2 Dennis, Sarah (Syd); Liaw, Teng (UNSW) Noon, Ted (UoN). Healthy learners: Early integrated intervention in a disadvantaged school community. (Draft paper).
ABSTRACTS

WORKING WITHIN AND AGAINST THE GRAIN OF POLICY IN AN ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL
Stewart Riddle, University of Southern Queensland
Day 1  13:00-13:25  I.1.14

Investigating the ways that different alternative schools can operate as sites of political struggle and boundary work enables the speaking back to power by marginalised and disaffected groups in education. The labours of the school staff at Harmony High offer an intriguing narrative of working both within and against the grain of policy mandates, curriculum narrowing and the pervasive effects of neoliberalism. The boundary work being done by teachers in alternative schooling contexts such as that of Harmony High – while situated, meaningful and deeply contextualised – offers hope for reconstituting mainstream education in socially just ways that serve the needs and interests of everybody.

This paper is concerned with how policy movements and political work are undertaken in alternative schools to produce a non-damaging, meaningful education for young people. The methodology informing data collection and analysis is one that takes up what Richardson (2000) refers to as a crystallised approach, where the multi-faceted elements of experience might be examined through different narrative lenses. This works in a refractive sense, to produce an effect, a narrative, an event, a moment, rather than to pinpoint some stable and obvious truth. Using a narrative arts-based inquiry, the refraction of data in this paper includes conversations held with teaching and administrative staff at Harmony High in 2014, and examines how the policy and political movements of the principal and other staff members works to create a meaningful, contextualised account of ‘boundary work’ in motion.

Particular interest is given to how the staff at Harmony High navigate the complex policy terrain while adhering to a strong ethos of democratic schooling and social justice. In doing so, the paper engages with five themes for re-engagement identified by Smyth, McInerney and Fish (2012): encompassing socio-material dimensions of young people’s lives; rethinking learning spaces and places; attending to affective dimensions of learning; critical pedagogy of engagement, and a less prescriptive curriculum. The notion of transforming the social and material conditions of lives through a meaningful education is central to the argument for rethinking schools as sites of radical counter-politics and boundary work. It is important to commit to an enduring sense of social justice and community, which are the foundations of an ethical and connected schooling. The argument is not that alternative schools should replace mainstream schools, but rather that mainstream schooling might be reimagined in the interests of those who are least advantaged by the current systems.

References

LITTLE ROOM FOR CAPACITATION: RETHINKING BOURDIEU ON PEDAGOGIC ACTION AS SYMBOLIC VIOLENCE AND THE REPRODUCTION OF EDUCATIONAL INEQUALITY
Megan Watkins, Western Sydney University
Day 1  13:30-13:55  I.1.17

In Bourdieu’s early work on education and cultural reproduction, he declares that ‘All pedagogic action is objectively symbolic violence insofar as it is the imposition of a cultural arbitrary by an arbitrary power’ (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977: 5). This paper rethinks Bourdieu’s proposition and certain orthodoxies within the sociology of education around the reproduction of educational inequality. It questions not only whether all pedagogic action is symbolic violence, but the very notion of a cultural arbitrary upon which this view is based. For Bourdieu, culture is framed narrowly in terms of class, and pedagogy a mechanism by which it is reproduced. As such, it functions as a form of violence having much in common with Foucault’s notion of discipline as a technology of power. Unlike Foucault, however, who also acknowledges the enabling potential of power as a technology of the self, Bourdieu has no such equivalent. His concept of pedagogic action leaves little room for capacitation wherein, rather than a cultural arbitrary, certain skills have an inherent use value, equipping individuals with capacities that provide the means for social access and transformation.

This reconceptualization of pedagogy as enabling allows us to reconfigure the field of education as a domain of social action, not just a domain of reproduction and distinction. It also allows us to grapple with the transferability of these capacities across fields, a process Bourdieu only characterised as a conversion of capital. To address these issues it is also important to map Bourdieu’s discussion of pedagogic action onto contemporary characterisations of pedagogy within the wider field of education. This conceptualisation of pedagogy, the paper argues, replicates key binaries within educational discourse between notions of teacher- and student-directed learning, neglecting the inherent relationality of pedagogy, the pivot upon which agency is generated but which Bourdieu similarly neglects.
ABSTRACTS

LARGE-SCALE ASSESSMENTS AND MULTILATERAL ACCOUNTABILITIES IN SCHOOLING
Sam Sellar, The University of Queensland
Day 1 13:30-13:55 I.1.14

Large-scale assessments have become one of the most widespread means for generating data in schooling and for assessing the performance of students, teachers, schools and school systems. There are strong arguments for conducting large-scale assessments, including for the purposes of monitoring performance across systems, determining whether all students receive equitable opportunities and making decisions about the distribution of resources. Assessments such as the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) or the OECD’s Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) generate large amounts of data on student learning outcomes and shape media reporting on schooling, the management of school systems and the education policy agendas of governments. Data generated by assessments of this kind have become central to new modes of accountability in schooling.

Ultimately, school accountability is about comparisons: comparison between values, standards and performance; comparisons between one set of practices and another; and comparisons between different kinds of information. The Belgian philosopher of science, Isabelle Stengers (2011, p. 56), has suggested that ‘comparison must not be unilateral and, especially, must not be conducted in the language of just one of the parties’. On their own, large-scale assessments are a form of unilateral accountability through which schools and systems are generally held to account based on criteria that are generally decided elsewhere. Moreover, large-scale assessments do not make visible everything that counts in schools and do not enable everyone with a stake in schooling to debate what counts. Drawing on data from an ARC Linkage project, Pursuing Equity through Rich Accountabilities, this paper will introduce the notion of multilateral accountabilities and will discuss how schools can make visible the diverse ways in which they make a difference for students, families and communities.

Multilateral accountabilities include large-scale assessments as part of a broader strategy for enabling schools to give accounts of what they achieve by drawing on various kinds of data and by including a wider set of stakeholders in debates about the purposes of education. As the French economist Thomas Picketty reminds us, we cannot ignore numbers if we are concerned with improving the lives of people who are the least well-off in our societies. One important element of multilateral school accountability is thus developing the data literacy of teachers, school leaders and administrators. But neither can we ignore values, narratives and professional judgment, which are not easily measured or translated into policy-relevant forms of information, but which are necessarily at the centre of richer and more complex modes of school accountability. Multilateral approaches to accountability require mechanisms for including multiple stakeholders in this discussion and enable ongoing revision of the relationships between information, practice and values. Each of the three elements should feed into the others, with values framing the creation of information and its usage to change practice, information changing values and practices, and practice generating information and passing on the values that are most important to us.
DAY 1 Evening
Wednesday 28 October

CER & School of Education
2015 PUBLICATIONS
SWAMP BAR DECK
DAY 1  17:30

Children, Place and Sustainability
(Palgrave Macmillan, 2015)
Margaret Somerville
Monica Green

Practitioner Research in Early Childhood: International Issues and Perspectives
(Sage, 2015)
Linda Newman
Christine Woodrow

Understanding Sociological Theory for Educational Practices
(Cambridge University Press, 2015)
Tania Ferfolja
Criss Jones-Diaz
Jacqueline Ullman

Embodied Masculinities in Global Sport
(FiT Publishing, 2015)
Jorge Knijnik
Daryl Adair

Cultural Pedagogies and Human Conduct
(Routledge, 2015)
Megan Watkins
Greg Noble
Catherine Driscoll

Technology Integration and High Possibility Classrooms: Building from TPACK
(Routledge, 2015)
Jane Hunter

Compulsory Schooling in Australia: Perspectives from Students, Parents, and Educators
(Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2015)
Carol Reid
K Watson
This paper presents current research situated in one low SES, culturally and linguistically diverse school community. It details the ways the community’s transcultural and translingual competencies were acknowledged and used to enhance educational engagement and learning in this setting. Australian Census data (2011) revealed that 23.2% of Australians speak a language other than English at home and 46% have a parent born outside of Australia (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011). Although unevenly distributed, Australia's increasing multilingual and multicultural composition is evident in schools. In NSW government schools, 30.9% of the student population speak a language other than English (Centre for Educational Statistics and Evaluation, 2014). While the Australian Curriculum: English (ACARA, 2012), acknowledges Australian students' linguistic diversity, the Australian education system frames linguistic homogeneity as the norm and maintains what Coleman (2012) describes as a monolingual and monocultural orientation. Correspondingly, societal and institutional mandates have been slow to recognise the complexity of language/s and literacies across all domains of students’ lives. The relationship between students’ school and out-of-school language and literacy practices and experiences has important implications for equity in educational outcomes, particularly in culturally and linguistically diverse, ‘disadvantaged’ schools. Recent scholarship calls for a reimagining of literacy pedagogies in order to cultivate what scholars describe as young peoples’ increasing transcultural and translingual competencies (Canagarajah, 2013; Guan et al., 2014; Rampton, 2014; Reynolds & Orellana, 2014). This paper contributes to this work and details how one Australian school community worked to reveal and cultivate the plurilingual (Council of Europe, 2001) competencies of students in two new arrivals classes.

New thinking, often derived from classroom studies, asks us to consider that multilingual students may not be going from one language system or another, but instead, are drawing on one linguistic repertoire (Garcia, 2012; Paris, 2012), that includes multiple languages, knowledges and experiences. Multilingualism identifies the knowledge of a number of languages, or the co-existence of different languages in a given society. Recent work on plurilingualism (Moore & Gajo, 2009) is reinforced by the idea that languages can be used separately or together for different purposes in different places and spaces with different people and that these myriad communicative ways may result in plurilingual repertoires, where languages are rarely equal or speakers entirely fluent in their languages. Despite uneven competence, this associated knowledge contributes to the overall growth of communication skills. Plurilingualism takes up the idea that languages offer the user an interactive plurality of skills, rather than limited masteries. Languages and cultures are viewed as interrelated and interactive rather than strictly separated and links are made between and across languages; learners are viewed as possessing skills and competence rather than lacking. This framing has key implications for educational access and equity; this paper considers these implications and offers an understanding of how these ideas were realized in one diverse school setting.
This paper takes a wondering stance (Somerville, 2007) to think about the articulation of new methodologies and epistemological positions from which to read the radical inequalities that characterise the workings of advanced capitalism in our schools today (Braidotti, 2014). The paper is provoked by a personal existential crisis precipitated by two collaborative studies with a high Aboriginal, high multicultural, high needs school in western Sydney. In a recorded interview for the Open University, Braidotti offers an analysis of advanced capitalism as a process ontology that codes and recodes the existing rules that construct our socio-economic relations. She argues that we cannot use the existing language of universities based in logic and a linear sequence of cause and effect because advanced capitalism does not work like that. Advanced capitalism contradicts itself, changes the rules with perfect ease and panache, and does not care for anything other than immediate profit. In advanced capitalism subjectivities are produced in which difference is capitalised upon and highly valued in terms of creating new markets but these differences are subsumed into a market economy, disconnected from the emancipatory potential of making a difference in the world.

Braidotti offers two strategies which will be taken up in the analytical work of this paper in relation to data and fieldwork experiences with schools in the two studies. The first is a return to the feminist politics of location in which the only site of possibility is the local, and the second a reconceptualization of the Freudian/Lacanian concept of desire as ‘lack’ to desire as ‘positivity’. Drawing on Deleuze and Spinoza, Braidotti proposes we re-think desire as ‘plenitude’, for example we could share sadness and happiness, desiring in the mode of sharing and not acquiring. We could desire clean air and clean water, things that are not coded as a commodity because we need to confirm our place in a social order striated in lines of captivity. These two epistemological positions are used to think about the possibility of escape from the seemingly inevitable captivity of poverty in relation to aspiration and school success for some children in these schools.

References

This paper is concerned with how the re-organisation of dispersed early childhood programs into an integrated school-based provision might better facilitate children’s and families’ educational engagement and success, particularly in disadvantaged communities.

Early childhood programs are important sites for addressing equity and the persistent educational under-achievement of children living in disadvantaged circumstances. In Australia, the dominant response to this imperative has been to mandate a universal year of preschool for all children before school commencement. There have also been efforts to raise the educational quality of Long Day Care and preschool through regulatory mechanisms such as increased qualifications, mandated curriculum, learning outcomes and quality assessment processes.

However, Long Day Care is becoming increasingly conceptualised as a mechanism for increasing women’s workforce participation rather than an education facility addressing equity, and typically operates independently from state education systems. Similarly preschool provision is uneven. The reality is a fragmented service system addressing early learning and development. Research shows that children do not always transition easily or successfully from these dispersed early childhood programs to formal schooling, particularly in communities where families are experiencing difficulties in their social and economic circumstances.

This paper draws on data collected as part of an ongoing study by the paper authors investigating alternative innovative policy responses in the ACT for service delivery for children 0-8 designed to address equity concerns. The paper presents innovations of the Koori Preschool program and the Early Childhood School where Long Day Care, preschool and the first years of primary schooling are located on a school site. Governance of both programs is vested in the school leadership. This model relocates children’s transition to when they are in their third year of primary schooling. The Early Childhood Schools also include the co-location of child and family health and wellbeing programs.

Using aspects of institutional ethnography, the paper explores the structure of these models and considers how the integration of early childhood and primary programs, teachers and health support services provides effective integrated service delivery for children Birth-8 years, and contributes to improved family support, participation and parental engagement, to high quality early learning programs and practice and to effective governance models and leadership structures to support these initiatives.
ABSTRACTS

THE ROLE OF MAINSTREAM INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION IN PREPARING TEACHERS IN AUSTRALIA FOR HIGH POVERTY SCHOOLS: THE NATION EXCEPTIONAL TEACHERS FOR DISADVANTAGED SCHOOLS PROGRAM

Bruce Burnett and Jo Lampert, Queensland University of Technology

Day 2  10:00-10:25   I.1.17

Research into the dearth of quality teachers in low socioeconomic schools accentuates the recurring issue of some teachers’ ineffective teaching practices, inexperience, and lack of preparedness (Whipp, 2013). Consequently, there is an increasing demand for explicit research focusing on teacher education programs that prepare high-quality teachers for the schools that need them most (Cochran-Smith, 2005). The objective of this paper is to investigate the impact in this area of Australia’s National Exceptional Teachers for Disadvantaged Schools program (NETDS), a partnership between universities and departments of education, partially supported by philanthropy.

The first NETDS program, based in Queensland, has now graduated over 100 teachers. Due to the NETDS model’s success, other universities across Australia have also adopted it as part of their mainstream teacher education programs. In 2008, prior to the graduation of the first NETDS group, only 35% of a similar snapshot of high achieving graduates ended up teaching in high poverty settings (as identified by ICSEA level). Now over 90% of NETDS graduates are employed as teachers in schools in low SES communities. For NETDS graduates, what was once the least preferred schooling sector is now their first choice of employment.

The research associated with NETDS is underpinned by sociocultural understandings of educational disadvantage (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) and complex frameworks of quality teaching and teacher education (Darling-Hammond, Newton, & Chung Wei, 2010) to examine how teachers’ skills, attributes and knowledge can be mediated by a specialized mainstream initial teacher education program. Now in its 6th year, NETDS engages in research that tracks NETDS graduate employment in low SES schools, and seeks to better understand the nature and impact of quality teaching within disadvantaged schools. Research methods include quantitative analysis of data collected from teacher efficacy surveys as well as the more contentious ‘high-stakes’ data about student outcomes of NETDS teachers that is supplied by the Queensland Government’s Department of Education.

References

YOUTH DISAFFECTION: THE CHALLENGES OF CONTEMPORARY SCHOOLING AND THE TRANSFORMATIVE POSSIBILITIES OF INFORMAL EDUCATION

Mohamed Moustakim
Day 2  10:30-10:55  I.1.18

Dominant discourses of youth disaffection fail to locate the debate about learner engagement and academic achievement in the wider context of social inequality, choosing instead to continue to attribute marginalised students’ disconnection from school to their cognitive, emotional and behavioural deficits or in terms of a moral underclass culture in their communities. However, evidence suggests that students in poverty who are also from minority groups, are more likely to face inequalities in education, (Blanden, Hansen and Machin, 2008). Furthermore, an increasingly target-driven school system not only impedes teachers’ attempts to achieve socially just outcomes, it also has marginalising effects on students who are on the verge of dropping out of school.

This paper examines the discourse of students’ disaffection captured in the stories of a teacher, a learning mentor and a group of six young people in a secondary school in south London. The educators’ explanations for some marginalised students’ disconnection from schooling simultaneously echoed and contradicted dominant policy rhetoric of social exclusion (Levitas, 2010). They oscillated widely between blaming poverty, to attributing failure to the young people themselves and to a preoccupation with attainment targets. Their ambivalence was reminiscent of what Whitehead and MacNiff (2006) called 'living contradictions', when personal values and commitments are negated in professional practice, leading to what Ball described as 'structural and individual schizophrenia' (2001). The young people, on the other hand, argued that their lack of interest in formal schooling was a rational response to a lack of curriculum relevance and to asymmetrical ‘economies of respect’ (Warren, 2005) in their relations with teachers. The high level of enthusiasm they showed for the alternative education project was a strong indicator that the respectful relationships they had with the staff at a youth centre were crucial to engaging them in learning and pointed to the transformative possibilities that informal education can offer marginalised young people, particularly when negotiating important transitions from school to work or higher education.
A TALE OF TWO PRIMARY SCHOOLS: CHANGING WHOLE SCHOOL CULTURE TO IMPROVE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT
Katina Zammit, Wayne Sawyer and Julie Fendall, Western Sydney University
Day 2  10:30-10:55   I.1.14

One strand of work in researching low SES school communities has for some time focused on what is most open to influence by schools and teachers, viz. curriculum and pedagogical practices that ‘make a difference’ to students in poverty (Munns et al, 2013). These researchers have seen teachers as a decisive educational resource in narrowing the equity gap of social and academic outcomes for such students. Despite the fact that students in poor communities have often received a diet of low-level, functional tasks (Luke et al, 2010; Darling-Hammond, 2010), the education research community by now has a good sense of what high order engaging pedagogy is (Newmann & Associates, 1996; Lingard et al, 2001) - including, crucially, for students from poor backgrounds (Hayes et al, 2005; Munns et al, 2006; Sawyer et al, 2013). This paper discusses how earlier work on teachers’ individual practices (Munns et al, 2013) was taken forward through a focus on embedding strong pedagogy within and between schools. Teachers researched their pedagogy, and the value of collaborating teacher teams was fundamental. This paper will consider how two primary schools enacted processes of whole-school change. Data were collected on a regular basis over a year from a range of sources: minutes of meetings (at the school level, between academic partners and leadership teams); classroom observations; school artefacts (school plans, teaching programs, coaching plans, student products); interviews with principals, teachers and students; school presentations at Fair Go project evaluation days, and reflections (online and hard copy) from teachers and members of the leadership teams. It will outline and compare the processes and the changes that ensued in relation to instructional leadership and school change in low-SES communities.

References

RESEARCHING THE ‘NORTH’: EDUCATIONAL ETHNOGRAPHY OF A (SUB)URBAN REGION

Robert Hattam, University of South Australia
Day 2 11:30-11:55 I.1.18

Unfortunately education policy in Australia is under the influence of positivist decontextualised knowledge that pretends objectivity and offers little insight into ‘actually existing’ schools. Such accounts assume linear causality, that researchers are somehow outside of power/knowledge, and often pretend to play the ‘god trick’ (Haraway, 1988), that is, to see everywhere from nowhere. At best, such knowledge offers banal versions of a normative project that provides two-word slogans for politicians such as ‘quality teaching’, which is apparently self-evident, and generalisable. What could be easier than that! Australian educational systems have unfortunately normalised such slogans and many of them operate as ‘common sense’. Against neoliberalising policy conformity, this paper argues for contextualised understandings of schooling (Ball et al 2012). At a minimum such accounts: are located in ‘real’ places and do not pretend universal generalisation; demonstrate reflexivity of the researcher; acknowledge that power works on and through knowledge, and subjectivity or researcher and research subjects.

This paper takes up the challenge for critical contextualised knowing about actually existing schools and provides a brief reading of a collection of studies that have examined schooling in the Northern suburbs of Adelaide—one of the most educationally disadvantaged regions in Australia. The paper argues that context can be a suburban region. The paper briefly revisits Making the Difference (Connell et al 1982), Schooling the Rustbelt Kids (Thomson, 2002), and various reports for the Redesigning Pedagogies in the North Project (Prosser et al 2010, Hattam et al 2009). The paper also reads three recent studies that contribute to studies that have been conducted in the Northern Suburbs. The first, (Rogers 2013) reports on the constitution of leadership practices in Northern suburbs public schools during a recent intensification of ‘devolution’ logic, or local school management. A second, (Semmens 2014) examines how principals of public secondary schools operated with and against marketising logics. The third, (Hattam, Comber and Hayes, 2016) examines precarious leadership in public primary schools.

The paper concludes with making a case for a national approach for designing and enacting multi-sited (Marcus 1999) regional educational ethnographies that draw on historical archives, and that provide ways to understand complexities, divergences and differences across locations but also the chance to note similarity and shared experiences. A national approach could enable research designs/conceptual frameworks that are more internationally compelling in terms of policy and practice.

References

ABSTRACTS

REINSCRIBING INEQUITY: REFLECTIONS ON RAISING THE SCHOOL LEAVING AGE, CREDENTIAL INFLATION, STREAMING AND THE ACADEMIC/WELFARE DIVIDE IN SCHOOLS

Marie Brennan, Victoria University, Melbourne
Day 2 12:00-12:25  I.1.18

When states and territories quietly raised the school leaving age to 17 in the first decade of the 21st century, there was little debate. Such a move seemed to be the ‘new normal’: recognising the restructuring of the youth labour market and the need to complete year 12 as a pre-requisite for entry to vocational education, higher education or workplaces. The restructuring of the labour market continued a forty year plus process in which there remain few entry level jobs for young people and few expectations of ‘careers’ without credentials – even where the credentials are irrelevant to the positions in question or when youth unemployment is high, even for those with credentials. However, despite some efforts in some states, there has been inadequate attention paid to curriculum innovation in senior schooling by which students who might previously have left school earlier could be constructively engaged in senior schooling.

Drawing on findings in three ARC projects – Pathways or cul-de-sacs: the causes, impact and implications of part-time senior secondary study (LP0455760), Pursuing Equity Through Rich Accountability (LP100200841) and Capacitating Student Aspirations in Classrooms and Communities of a High Poverty Region (DP120101492) – this paper considers the multiple and contradictory consequences of national and state authority efforts in Queensland, South Australia and Victoria to address the accountability drive in public sector management in education, and the continued associated standardisation of curriculum. While some teachers are continuing to create spaces for some levels of innovation, there are many more examples of schools reverting to more intensified streaming, based on NAPLAN results throughout the secondary schools, resumption of dead-end so-called vocational courses that do not lead to employment, individual responsibilisation of students in parallel to a stronger investment in ‘health and wellbeing’ courses, chaplaincy and counselling programs that emphasise the divide between the ‘academic’ students and those considered largely in need of welfare efforts. Thus, whilst more young people are forced to stay at school for longer, the challenge in current conditions to develop innovation in senior secondary curriculum policy and classroom practice has not been appropriately taken up. This results in a continuing negative pressure downwards in the secondary schooling that does not work towards inclusion and success for the full range of students. Brown, Lauder and Ashton (2011) talk of this as the ‘opportunity trap’ which breaks the promise of the link between schooling and access to jobs – a promise which underpins most of the restructuring of schooling and curriculum.

The paper will argue that there is a serious tension between the current policy climate which requires more students to stay in school and treating too many of them as if they were not educable. Although these curriculum policy and school-level practices are not new, efforts to consider how they might be addressed in the current context require new theoretical resources that pay attention to re-purposing of schooling and imagining it otherwise. Some efforts to sketch out new openings for curriculum that link knowledge and action in new ways will be made.

References

This paper will document the conceptual, political and practice rearticulations of equity in contemporary education policy in Australia. Conceptually, the focus will be on the ways that policy as numbers globally, nationally and in state systems has reconstituted social justice as equity and in turn reconstituted equity through comparative and numerical expressions based on test data that untether such concerns from conceptual definitions (Lingard et al., 2014). The paper then looks at the way the political process denies and neglects both growing inequality (Picketty, 2014) and growing inequalities of educational opportunity as documented in Volume 2 of the OECD’s analysis of PISA data in terms of equity. The previous Newman Queensland government’s Great Teachers = Great Results policy is also analysed to demonstrate this policy denial of the significance of socio-economic context to schooling. Next and related, the current policy fetish with a decontextualised focus on quality teaching is documented and analysed in terms of national and Queensland policy. Against these three elements of the regressive rearticulation of equity in education policy, the paper will attempt to offer a positive thesis that focuses on: a progressive conceptual rearticulation of social justice in education, appropriate policy and funding models, consideration of an accountability approach geared to achieving equity and the enhanced learning of all, and the place of teachers and pedagogy in this holistic policy ensemble. The assumption here is that the achievement of a more socially just schooling demands a multifaceted approach and one that takes cognisance of broader structural inequalities.

References

Professor Bob Lingard is a Professorial Research Fellow in the School of Education and the Institute for Social Science Research at The University of Queensland and a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia. Bob is an internationally renowned sociologist of education. His recent books on educational policy include Politics, policies and pedagogies in education: The selected works of Bob Lingard (2014, Routledge) and Globalizing Educational Accountabilities (with Martino, Rezai-Rashti, Goli, & Sellar, 2016, Routledge).

http://researchers.uq.edu.au/researcher/40

Facilitator Professor Michele Simons is Dean of the School of Education at Western Sydney University. She is President of AVETRA - Australian Vocational Education and Training Research Association - and Treasurer of the Australian Association for Research in Education. Her research expertise is in Social Sciences, Human Services and Adult and Community Education.
FLEXIBLE SCHOOLING OPTIONS: WIDENING POSSIBILITIES OR RESTRICTING OPPORTUNITIES
Martin Mills, University of Queensland
Day 3 9:30-9:55  I.1.14

Many of the most highly marginalised students (for example, those who are homeless, live in poverty, or are independent) do not attend mainstream schools, but have been pushed to the margins of the schooling system. In Australia, and elsewhere, there has been a growing alternative education sector that caters to the needs of these young people. This sector has included a large number of schools that are referred to as ‘flexible learning’ centres or schools. Some are independent, some come under the umbrella of religious organisations, such as the St. Edmund’s Youth Plus schooling program, and some are attached to one or more high schools. In most instances, by the time young people who attend these schools have reached the doorstep they have been rejected by, or have themselves rejected, one or more mainstream schools. In the vast majority of cases these young people speak highly of their new location. Their highest praise is often for the way in which they are now treated by teachers and other workers in the sites, both in terms of everyday interactions and assistance with learning. Whilst there is some support for approaches to curriculum, this is often a low priority. Even so, there often appears to be high levels of engagement with the range of curriculum options on offer.

This paper will seek to provoke discussion on the extent to which flexible schooling options inhibit or enhance marginalised students’ educational opportunities. It will suggest that for many of these young people, they would not be in any form of schooling if it were not for the existence of such schools. This is clearly a positive occurrence. The paper will also suggest that many mainstream schools avail themselves of the opportunity to refer students to such schools rather than adjusting their practices in ways that meet the needs of highly marginalised students. This abrogation of responsibility for all students by mainstream schools is a key driver in the increased demand for flexible learning. However, if such schools, many of which experience funding difficulties and uncertainties, have limited resources and narrow curriculum choices, are unable to provide a rich and meaningful education to their students, then those who attend them may find their existing marginalisation compounded. Key questions then become: How can mainstream schools change to meet the needs of marginalised students? Can they learn how to do this by paying attention to the ways in which flexible learning centres engage young people? Can flexible learning options be a viable choice for those whose values, dispositions and life circumstances are not aligned with the expectations of mainstream schools? How can flexible learning centres be supported to ensure that the quality of education experience provided is equivalent to, or even better than, that offered by the mainstream? In order to provide some tentative answers to these questions, student and teacher interview data collected in flexible learning sites in Australian and the UK will be drawn upon.

The paper will be informed by, but will extend upon, the following references:

LESSONS FROM ELSEWHERE: THE POST-PRODUCTION WORK ASSOCIATED WITH AGGREGATING THE INFLUENCE OF ETHNOGRAPHIES IN EDUCATION

Deb Hayes, University of Sydney
Day 3  9:30-9:55  I.1.17

Educational ethnography has played an important role in describing how the schooling experiences of young people are shaped by a range of historical, social, spatial, economic, and political conditions, to name a few. The particularities of inequality in education are illuminated by fine-grained analysis of how these conditions operate at the local level in schools. This kind of research process is by nature small-scale, generally taking place in 1-4 schools, and deploying a range of qualitative methods, including interviews, observations and focus groups. These approaches have the capacity to produce rich descriptions and powerful stories like the kind politicians are inclined to use in speeches that tell of heroic struggles by individuals against the odds. However, when it comes to policy development, politicians tend to favour large-scale quantitative studies, with individual stories displaced by statistics that are often claimed to be generalisable and infallible. The issue addressed in this paper is that of impact, and the challenge faced by those who undertake ethnographically informed research in education to be heard in ways that influence policy and practice. In anthropology, and more recently in education, multisited ethnographies have delocalised traditional notions of situated fieldwork. More than a form of ethnography conducted across many sites, multisited ethnography entices the fieldworker beyond the local, tracing connections and relations, such as the construction of identities, across landscapes that take shape as they are mapped. Perhaps the most important aspect of these found perspectives in educational research is their involvement of reflexive subjects across multiple sites, and the mediating role of ethnographers in developing coherent articulations of collective cultural critique. This paper has two main purposes: to report on a meta-analysis of ethnographically informed research in education, and to suggest how developments in ethnography that are mainly occurring in other fields might enhance the impact of this kind of research in education. The meta-analysis is intended to show how research conducted in isolation can be usefully aggregated to enhance its potential influence, and to draw out the types of post-production work involved in this kind of analysis. The discussion of developments in ethnography is intended to highlight work in education that is exploring new approaches to investigating persistent problems that contribute to deepening inequities in educational outcomes.
HOPE, SPACES, AND POSSIBLE SELVES: PROCESSES OF BECOMING SOCIALLY CRITICAL TEACHERS
Alison Wrench, University of South Australia
Day 3  10:00-10:25   I.1.14

‘I think I can be more than teachers I’ve seen and had.’

In ‘developed political economies’, such as Australia, educational institutions are under assault from a convergence of neo-liberalising forces with neo-conservative values and ideals (Apple 2004, 2006a, 2006b). Proposed reforms are underpinned by ‘marketised’ solutions and calls for a ‘return’ to higher standards, common culture and traditional values (Apple 2004). These reforms, as they relate to teacher education, encompass movement away from deep and generative conceptions of teaching to instrumental understandings. There is the concomitant marginalisation of social justice issues and pedagogical practices that focus on the needs of diverse student learners (Sleeter 2008). The constitution of ‘new’ teacher subjectivities is also an aspiration of proponents of this hegemonic alliance (Apple 2009; Ball and Olmedo 2013). Significantly little is known about how, within this complex context and times, pre-service teachers negotiate and constitute teacher subjectivities and pedagogical practices. In this paper I draw on the narratives of pre-service teachers learning to teach within a middle-schooling degree founded on principles of social justice, futures orientations and place–based learning as a means to explore processes of becoming teachers. Foucault’s theorisation of the constitution of subjects, specifically in relation to technologies of self, care of the self and ethical self-formation is drawn on in exploring how the pre-service teachers actively constitute and adopt socially-critical teacher subject positions. Foucault’s theorisation of power relations, in terms of disciplinary power, bio-power and governmentality is also significant in understanding processes of becoming socially-critical teachers. My intention is to provide insights into how these pre-service teachers refuse to be fixed by instrumental and narrow constructions of teacher subjectivities, privileged by neo-liberal and neo-conservative governmental rationalities. That these pre-service teachers actively— albeit partially and contradictorily— privilege, ethical, socially-critical and affective dimensions of teaching and teacher subjectivities, is significant in the quest of preparing teachers who can work in ways that disrupt hegemonic discourses as means for developing pedagogies for greater justice.

References

BEGINNING TEACHER SUBJECTIVITIES AND PEDAGOGICAL ENCOUNTERS IN LOW SES SCHOOLS

Susanne Gannon, Western Sydney University
Day 3 10:00-10:25 I.1.17

In previous work I have suggested that pedagogical encounters in classrooms and other spaces are imbued with particular spatial, temporal, material and affective dimensions, and that they require an ethics of encounter and responsibility. This ethical dimension becomes all the more acute as classroom spaces are increasingly striated with differences including class, race and gender. These categories are moreover experienced at different depths and intensities, and, rather than fixed or static, are better thought of as ‘mobile’ and ‘strangely supple’ (Deleuze 1994, in Gannon, 2009, 73). At the same time I have argued that the process of becoming a teacher is more complex, volatile and contingent than beginning teachers – and the discursive apparatus that frames their ‘becoming’ including the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL, 2011) – have led them to expect. Rather than demonstrating smooth and linear mastery of the domains of Professional Knowledge, Professional Practice and Professional Engagement, they find that they must forge professional identities in sites of practice that are ‘complex, unpredictable, paradoxical, affectively and physically potent’ (Gannon, 2012a, 423). This is not to argue that apparatuses like the Standards are not useful, but rather a recognition that sites of practice are messy and require ingenuity and responsiveness that may not be thoroughly represented in the Standards or yet available to inexperienced teachers. Furthermore, the ethical dimensions of pedagogy are entirely absent in the Professional Standards (Gannon, 2012b).

This paper returns to a series of interviews conducted with high quality beginning teachers of English in their first, second and third years after graduation in order to trace how they map pedagogical encounters in and out of classrooms, how they position themselves and their students in those encounters, and the extent to which they are able to draw upon an ethics of encounter and responsibility as they grapple with what went wrong (or right) in their classrooms. It suggests that more nuanced understanding of the complexities of pedagogical encounters may assist beginning teachers and those who work with them.

References

Linking with networks and partners is an important part of our research in CER. Such networks both reflect and facilitate relationships with relevant groups outside the Centre and the University. They reflect relationships with partners in educational systems, at the levels of praxis and policy. Our partners range from individual schools or personnel to policy makers and other researchers. Creating networks from our partnerships allows the Centre’s research to link up with expertise in a number of fields and assists our research to be both inter-disciplinary and outward looking.

NETWORK OF AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION RESEARCHERS IN LOW SES COMMUNITIES

This is a network of Australian educational researchers with strong research histories in low SES communities, including in schools within such communities.

The network represents some of the most influential researchers in these areas in the country. Members of the network have been part of Equity conferences at Western Sydney University in 2013 and 2015. Out of the 2013 conference came the edited collection ‘Contemporary Issues of equity in Education’ and a similar publication is planned for the 2015 conference. Cross-institutional teams within the network have also pursued competitive funding.
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