

ICS Seminar Series

INSTITUTE FOR CULTURE AND SOCIETY

Unpacking Pedagogy: Didactics, Paideia and How We Come to Be

Associate Professor Megan Watkins

Date

Thursday 11 September

Time

11.30am – 1pm

Venue

EB.2.21 Parramatta
(South) Campus

Abstract

Culture is a powerful pedagogy; it shapes who we are and how we come to be. Various institutions, everyday life, interaction with others and the manipulation of things all have pedagogic effect. Each leave their mark, but how? In what ways is culture pedagogic? Pedagogy is a term used with increasing frequency within social and cultural theory but rarely is it unpacked; rather it seems to operate as an explanatory term that is never really explained. A central problem in unpacking pedagogy is to ask to what extent we are actively taught to be or whether we simply learn, and what the relationship is between these didactic and paideic elements of culture. Drawing on the philosophy and theory of education, in particular the work of Herbart, Dewey and Vygotsky, together with the early sociology of Tarde, this paper explores how knowledge and skills are both taught and learned. It considers how an understanding of what is involved in these different yet interwoven educative processes—and how they link to notions of imitation, habit and will—have applicability in the analysis of wider socio-cultural practices and forms of behaviour.

Biography

Megan Watkins is Associate Professor in the School of Education and member of ICS. Her research interests lie in the cultural analysis of education and the formation of human subjectivities. In particular, her work engages with issues of pedagogy, embodiment, discipline and affect and the interrelation of these to human agency. These interests mesh with her exploration of the impact of cultural diversity on education and the ways in which different cultural practices can engender divergent habits and dispositions to learning. Megan also has extensive experience as a literacy educator, conducting pioneering work in the field of genre-based approaches to teaching writing and post-progressivist pedagogies. She is a recipient of two Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage grants: *Rethinking Multiculturalism/Reassessing Multicultural Education* and *Discipline and Diversity: Cultural Practices and Dispositions of Learning*. Her recent books include *Discipline and Learn: Bodies, Pedagogy and Writing* (Springer, 2012) and *Disposed to Learn: Ethnicity, Schooling and the Scholarly Habitus* (Bloomsbury, 2013).