

Visions and Voice: Teaching for cultural connection in the diverse English classroom

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This research's concern is social justice and social transformation through pedagogy. Specifically this research explores how Queensland English teachers account for their own and their students' cultural identities. The research also aims to investigate how English teachers enact strategies to work together with refugee students in classrooms to understand cultural identity, encourage agency and develop social connections. This **Bernstein Basics** presentation seeks to confirm whether applying Bernstein's theory of pedagogic discourse will work effectively with the goals of the proposed research.

Background

In the past decade there has been a great global movement of African and Middle Eastern nationals to Australia as they escape war and oppression across nation-state boundaries. A debate has emerged as a part of the public discourse about Australia's position on the acceptance of refugees and the settlement strategies that are put into place to assist refugees. Much of the debate connected with this global flow of people is couched in negative and problematic terms in popular culture discourses. The movement of refugees across borders and the perceived issues associated with this passage have seen changes in student and teacher dynamics within high school settings (Hamilton & Moore, 2004).

Goals and implications of the research

A goal of this research is to examine how wider cultural narratives and policy dictations, together with personal narratives of change influence teachers' and students' accounts of cultural identity. A second goal of the research is to investigate the implications of pedagogy on these accounts. These goals are a focus within the specific research context of Queensland teachers and refugee students who collaborate within the curriculum area of English.

The implications of the research will practically contribute to the work of teachers who strive to create positive relationships with refugee students and provide opportunities for refugee students to experience social connection and satisfaction in learning. The research will also contribute to educational sociology with regard to understanding how pedagogy can better include and accept the glocalised, cultural identities of refugee students attending Queensland secondary schools.

Theoretical Framework

The research problem necessitates a review of three major concepts, namely, cultural identity, social justice and pedagogy. These concepts are all entwined with the concept of cultural identity. The analytical concept of cultural identity has a complex history and the breadth of work that considers this concept is immense. For this research, the concept of cultural identity does include notions of culture but predominantly, notions of difference emerge as vital to an understanding of cultural identity. This research has therefore identified the work of those who have considered notions of difference. Specifically, Hall's (1990) seminal work on the changing nature of

identities is relevant to the research context. The frontier work of Fanon (1967) and his theorising of othering processes is useful in exploring ways that cultural identities can be negatively conceived. His work is considered together with Fuss (1994), who has drawn on and developed Fanon's theories. Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital is helpful in understanding how patterns of differing through the acquisition of capital are maintained or disrupted. Bhabha's (1983) contributions to literature about stereotyping practices is also a reference for the research.

To frame the research project further, Fraser's work to examine the ways that social justice is sought in major societal institutions is valuable. Fraser's approach to social justice is both socially critical and transformative. It posits a three-pronged approach of redistribution, recognition and representation to address unjust practices that prevent certain people from participation (Fraser, 2003, p. 7,77).

Finally, pedagogy, as a part of English teaching requires consideration. At this point in the research critical pedagogy has been a focus as it is embedded in the current Senior English Syllabus (2002). Henry Giroux, (1997) has been a reference point as has work from Paulo Friere (Friere, 2007). They have both explored many meaningful ways of connecting pedagogy to students who are 'othered'. It is in this area of pedagogy where further links to Bernstein may be found to deepen the understandings within the research project.

Research Methodology

The research project utilises Narrative Inquiry, which can be framed from within the field of Ethnomethodology. This research project will use the method of Narrative Inquiry to analyse the stories that members of an English class- the teacher and refugee students, tell as they interact together and account for each others' cultural identities.

Through the lenses of Clandinin (2000, 2007; Connelly (2000); Riessman (2007, 2009); Andrews, Squire and Tamboukou (2008), the methodology of Narrative Inquiry will be applied to the exploration of the research context to explore how teachers account for the cultural identity of themselves and their refugee students. The methodology allows this exploration to focus on the lived experiences of participants. As a methodology that promotes agency through the interweaving of cultural narratives and personal stories, narrative inquiry can work genuinely in English classroom contexts where narratives can be used as a part of everyday teaching. Narrative Inquiry allows for the participants to be central to the research.

Method and Analysis

For the analysis of data, concepts from Boyatzis (1998), Bamberg (1997, 2000, 2003) and Riessman (2008) will be references. Firstly in interviewing and identifying themes, Riessman's (2008) and Boyatzis' (2008) writings are important. For the analysis of transcripts, Bamberg's (2000, 2003) approach to Narrative Inquiry and particularly the third level of his Three Level Positioning Analysis framework will seek to confirm fluid conceptions of identity alongside contextual discourses as the subject and indeed all participants involve themselves in the storytelling process and create new discourses that speak to the participants' identities

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