

Expanding learning: Codes, skills and *phronesis*.

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In his article 'From Constructivism to Realism in the Sociology of Curriculum' (2008) Michael Young returns to the issue of educational disadvantage by considering powerful knowledge and knowledge of the powerful. He points to a growing concern that the subjects of curriculum are in danger of losing their traditional focus on content under pressure from the outside to respond to market forces. In effect, curriculum content is being reduced and there is a weakening of the boundary between formal and informal knowledge. He argues that the sociology of curriculum needs to fight for the integrity of curricular content if we are not to slide inextricably towards social constructionism with implications of relativism. Education is based on the distinction between formal and informal knowledge; a position adopted recently by socio-cultural scholars within the field of psychology. For example, I have argued for the importance of maintaining the boundary between common sense knowledge and official knowledge, and between the sacred and the profane in relation to sex education (Ivinson 2004, 2010 forthcoming). Education is, in part, an endeavour to open up new landscapes and other knowledge(s) to young people. The issue as Young points out is how to teach young people so that they can both engage meaningfully in classroom activities and enter into what seem like esoteric or reified fields of knowing characterised by abstract, decontextualised discourses. However, we have argued, along with Daniels (1994) that to conceptualise the problem in this way hides disjunctions between levels of structure. Recontextualization, in Bernstein's theory, is a form of mediation which points to the transformation of knowledge between sites or groups of people. While Daniels placed pointed to the need to recognise individual variation in learning, our focus was on the properties of pedagogy itself and our question concerned the ways in which children reconstruct the curriculum as it was made available to them through teachers' pedagogic practices. This highlighted the recontextualization of knowledge that takes place between the education institution and the children within it (Ivinson and Duveen, 2005, 2006). Pedagogic discourse projects an ideal learner/citizen as the imaginary interlocutor. Bernstein's theory is based on a distinction between code and its realisations, in which realisations are "a function of the culture acting through social relations in specific contexts" (Bernstein, 1974, pp. 173-4). At the level of the classroom the concepts of recognition and realization rules (Bernstein, 1990, 1996) were used to specify the manner in which the curriculum is made available to children.

Taking up this line of argument, Evans *et al.* (2007, 2010 forthcoming) have drawn attention to the ideal learner/citizen to whom pedagogic discourse is addressed by bringing the body of the learner into view as recommended by Bourne (2000). True to the spirit of Foucault, they recognise that the pedagogic gaze lands first on the body of the learner. Evans *et al.* have introduced the Corporeal Device to draw attention to the way pedagogic practices are processes that are literally 'embodied'. They demonstrate how societies set up bodily perfection codes that young people encounter in various social contexts and which are recontextualised in pedagogic practice to set

up 'ideal bodies' reflected within and by school practices. They suggest that some young people experience pain and exclusion through being positioned outside ideal body types and how this negatively influenced learning. This is not formally learned, yet it is learned through participation in social practices. Jeanne Gamble has investigated the 'theory-practice' conundrum through her empirical work on cabinet makers. She points out as does Young and Sennet (2009) that a fundamental epistemological element to the master-novice relationship was the trust and hierarchical nature of the pedagogic relationship. A major feature of the craftwork, a 'horizontal knowledge structure' (Bernstein 1996) was the use of models to aid the 'tactic' transmission of craftwork through 'doing' (Gamble, 2006). We can make parallels between visible models and tacit models such as the imaginary learner or the ideal body type because they provide semiotic messages about learning.

The role of the body as a site of learning has received little attention. Within education the body has tended to be investigated negatively using Foucauldian notions of governmentality and biopolitics. The paper will develop Evans *et al's* work on pedagogic discourse and the Corporeal Device by drawing on Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological account of the body to address the body as a site of learning. Merleau-Ponty (1968) undertook a radical reworking of the nature of embodiment from consciousness to intercorporeal being, captured by the term 'flesh'. This has been further developed by Iris Young and Linda Finlay to provide a strong account of how the social is intertwined with bodily practices and can be used to elaborate the interactions between biology and culture that Evans *et al* have started to address. The aim will be to use this theoretical work to start to conceptualise bodily knowing specifically in relation to the burgeoning rhetoric in education about skill. In the UK there has been a move to describe the school curriculum in terms of skill rather than disciplinary content. This chimes with declarations from economists who argue that schools should teach skills required for economic competitiveness (e.g. Porter, 1990) in the face of globalized markets and possible economic decline (Leitch 2006; Webb, 2007). Since 2002, both vocational and academic courses in education have been described in terms of 'skills' (QCA, 2000; WAG, 2002). Evans *et al's* notion of the Corporeal Device provides a much needed way to widen the conceptual landscape and points to the fruitfulness of drawing on Bernstein's conceptual apparatus to broaden understandings of learning. I will draw on Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological approach to develop the Corporeal Device yet further.

The paper will use examples from two current research projects to develop the Corporeal Device. The first study investigated young people's social representations of skills in four contexts using photographs of skills as visual prompts: in the home (ironing, cooking); in the school (writing, reading, doing science), in leisure pursuits (football, biking, singing and dancing) and in the work place (building, mechanics, financial trading). The study started from the premise that learning can not be disengaged from bodily experiences that are 'sensory, affective, mythic or aesthetic' (Claxton, 2000, p.32). Over 50 individual interviews were conducted with young people in schools in post-industrial areas of South Wales targeted for economic regeneration. Analysis is at a very early stage, yet I hope to use this empirical work together with research being undertaken in a second project called 'Young People's Understanding of Place' (WISERD 2009). This study uses multimodal methods including walking tours, classroom map based activities and individual interviews

using photographs of places in the locality as stimulus prompts in individual interviews with approximately 60 young people aged 14 years to understand bodies moving in space. I aim, eventually, to develop a semiotics/grammar of bodily practices to inform theories of learning. My immediate aim in this paper will be to extend the Corporeal Device by theorising between body, practices and knowledge in order to develop theories of learning that can take account of the body as a site for tacit knowledge that does not privilege the mind.