Re-framing Education as a Thirdspace: Neonarratives of Pedagogy, Power and Transformation.

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University of Exeter
Graduate School of Education Seminar,
24th October 2012
Positioning the study: the theoretical framework and ‘lens’
Place, time, space and identity: the researcher, the study and the postcolonial context.

POSITION AND CONTEXT
Acknowledgement of Country

I acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands where USQ teaching and research is conducted: the Gaibal, Jarowair, Ugarapul and Butchulla peoples of Queensland. I honour the wisdom of Elders past, present and future, seeking to walk together in the spirit of reconciliation.

Dinawan Dreaming by Donna Moodie
University of Southern Queensland

- 25,648 students
- Students from 85+ countries
- Top 3 international: China, Malaysia & India
- Student to academic rate: 21/1

- Very high (2%) Indigenous students
- 80% Faculty of Education study fully online
- 7,382 postgraduate (very high) 94%
Schools in Australia

- Decreased from 9,600 in 2000 to 9,468 in 2010 (-132).
- Government schools -223
- Non-government schools +91 (+12 Catholic, +79 independent)
- In 2010, 6,743 government schools (71%), 1,708 Catholic schools (18%), and 1,017 Independent schools (11%).

At-risk students

- In 2006, 7% of 15-19 year olds who were no longer attending high school had not completed Year 10.
- This proportion was considerably higher in remote (14%) and very remote areas (36%).
- (51%) of Indigenous 15-19 year olds participating (up from 43% in 1996).
34 OECD countries and 31 partner countries

14,000 students from 353 schools in Australia (randomly selected)

“While females continue to outperform males in reading literacy, the average scores of Australian males and females have declined significantly since reading literacy was first a major domain of assessment for PISA, by 17 and 13 points respectively” (Thomson, De Bortoli, et al., 2009)
Response to the Melbourne Declaration: National Assessment Program (NAP) focuses on: attendance, participation, completion and attainment in schools

Annual assessment for students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 for Literacy, numeracy, science, civics and citizenship, ICT

“...an everyday part of the school calendar and has been since 2008”

National Report on Schooling in Australia (2010, p.6)
Contemporary Postcolonial Theory

Identity
- Agency
- Hegemony
- Resistance
- Alterity
- Symphonic self

Theories of Cultural Transmission

Border Theory
- Place/Space
- Thirdspace
- Border/Boundary

Culture
- Colonization
- Multiplicity
- Doxa/Habitus
- Globalization
- Hybridity
“an international culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity” (Bhabha, 2004)

Colonized Culture and Identity

Imperialism: Highland clearances and diaspora of mother’s family in/from Scotland

Famine and ‘the troubles’: father’s family migrate from Ireland to Scotland

Parents: Economic migrants Scotland to England

Self: British born, but ‘not from here’ after 28 years in Lancashire

Colonizing Identity

- Australia: 11 years
- Canada: 2 years
- Turkey: 6 months
- Korea: 3 months
- USA: 11 months

Hybrid Identity

- Social engagement: teacher, researcher, artist, writer, performer, environmentalist
- Personal engagement: mother, wife, daughter, sister, aunt, friend, mentor
- Tribal affiliation: Celtic, transnational, global, agnostic
Autoethnography in the Study

- Hybrid postcolonial identity informs a “negotiation of meaning and representation” (Bhabha, 1990)


- Re-situating identity and practice to the borderlands for disruption of, and subsequent re-casting of, experience

As beings we are “simultaneously historical, social and spatial... actively participating individually and collectively in the construction/production - the "becoming" - of histories, geographies, societies. (Soja, 1996), informed by Lefebvre (1974) and Heiddegger
The questions

- What happens to the personal and professional understandings of a teacher educator as a result of her reflexive engagement in the third space between traditional and non-traditional educational places?
- How do those understandings impact upon her philosophy and practice of pedagogy?
- What are the implications of promoting a critical and creative approach within an educational policy which utilizes a system of measurable outcomes?
The contentions

- Systemic practices of pedagogy and curriculum in 21st century Queensland appear to be informed by contradictory and potentially irreconcilable ideologies.

- A hidden curriculum may work against change, re-inscribing capital through power relationships that maintain inequalities.

- Culture and identity inform teachers’ personal doxa and habitus, potentially re-instilling established practices and agency.

Firstspace epistemologies (Lefebvre, 1974), (Bourdieu, 2006) privilege scientific modes of thinking, reinforcing static binaries and dialectics.

“rational, scientific, technical justifications, always in the name of objectivity, are relied upon. In this way, the audit culture perpetuates itself” (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 90).
Secondspace theories, underpinned by the “assumption that knowledge is primarily produced through discursively devised representations” Soja, E. W. (1996). *Thirdspace: Journeys to los angeles and other real-and-imagined places.* Malden, MA: Blackwell, p.79

Neither Firstspace empiricism nor Secondspace dialectic can fully represent the complexities of human knowledge and praxis. (Lefebvre, 1974)

an episteme of “intelligibility in terms of opposites” Lefebvre (1974)
A trialectics of being and spatiality. Modified from Soja (1996, pp. 71-74) and adapted from Lefebvre (Lefebvre, 1974)
# Positioning – Pedagogies

<table>
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<th>Positioning Dimension</th>
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<td>Rows of desks facing ‘front’</td>
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<td>My work (students)</td>
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<td>create, innovate, collaborate</td>
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<td>Failure is a learning opportunity</td>
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How much has changed?

- **Pre-1928**
  - “Eyes front! Arms folded! Sit still! Pay attention! Question-and-answer situations – this was the listening regime” (Rugg & Shumaker, 1928, p. i).

- **1928**
  - “Freedom! Pupil initiative! Activity! A life of happy intimacy – this is the drawing-out environment of the new school”.

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Hidden Curriculum
Reflection for change?
Habitus – Wacquant, (2005)

1. learned and social (may change over time, place and contexts of power).
2. transferable (individuals and groups)
3. lasting, but may erode or transform
4. inherent inertia - later schemas are less deeply established than those laid down in early life
Re-writing our world” (Wink, 2005)

- Critical pedagogy seeks to rebalance and democratise education
- Educators are challenged to relearn and to unlearn, questioning received ideologies
- “writing stories” (Richardson, 2000)
- Writing upon writing (Richardson and Adams St Pierre 2005)
Method and processes for the study in a participatory context:
A newly-established primary school in rural Queensland run by a community of parents.
Play-based emergent curriculum.

THE STUDY
Are we at school?
The Magic Gardens Project
At first I (expect the children) to gravitate to me to plan the garden, (then) realizing I must allow the children to plant where they wish, we learn together. Frustrated, I hear my voice on film (addressing) ‘little people’ in a tone that (makes me) fear I am not a constructivist teacher [F.29.04.06:1] or even ‘a good teacher’ [R.29.05.06:3].

On early visits I feel like an alien with my purposeful approach and time-driven schedules. My agenda to ‘build trust’ is from another world where trust has to be proven [F. 13.11.05:2 .4].
A challenge...a garden for the arts
Children have created a mini-town with a train and taxis. They exchange money (leaves). Bert sets up a shop and the girls a day-care centre for their babies. Bert makes a TV show of the town using the video camera: he films Michael, in his train, as he bumps over a crossing and waits for a broken signal. Beverly and Bert try to download the film: ringing Bert’s older brother for help. Ollie sets up a café. He adds coffee to the menu at the request of the late night taxi drivers, and ice-cream but will not serve soft drink because it is unhealthy.
Learning through play

Knights: research into armour, warfare, helmet and shield design, figure painting, filming and acting out. Visiting stunt-man actor shared ‘theatre fighting’. Strategic ‘war games’ for 3 weeks.

Pre-service teacher workshops
Children and parents assessed the pre-service teachers’ workshops. Facilitators also self and peer assessed. One group of visiting pre-service teachers ordered children to ‘line up’ to give feedback....but the children dutifully complied.

This simple shift in agency – and adult concepts of order highlighted a key difference between ‘traditional’ and ‘child-centred’ education.
battling an invisible giant: the ‘factory system’ of education as ‘giant exercise in mediocrity’ (with its) lack of parental choice, and emphasis on testing and teacher-defined curricula. Authorities have described the community’s efforts to keep the school open as “a subversive campaign”. [F.26.09.07:5].
Themes are colour coded in the bricolage
Narratology as method

- Data collection and coding
- Narrative constructions (community, researcher, pre-service teachers)
- Narrative reductions (analysis of gaps/silences/intersections)
- Generation of neonarratives
- Critical analysis/discussion

*Modified from Stewart’s four stage process of narratology (1994, p. 152)*
1. No common elements (Exclusion)

   R1
   C1
   U1

2. Some common elements (Intersection)

   R1
   C1
   U1

3. Identical elements (Equality)

   R1/C1/U1

4. One or more element is subsumed within another (Inclusion)

   R1
   C1
   U1

5. Gap or silence (Negation)

   R1x
   C1x
   U1x
Postcolonialism, culture & pedagogy
Researcher identity, habitus & voice
Bourdieu’s Field Theory
Conformity, control & the hidden curriculum
Curriculum & capital exchange
Firstspace & secondspace epistemologies
Beyond binaries: thirdspace
Trialectics of being & spatiality
Becoming: touching the future
Purposes of systematic education
21st century paradigms of education
Firstspace, secondspace & thirdspace pedagogies

Theories

Postcolonial Theories
Cultural transmission, Hegemony & agency
Border & Thirdspace Theories
Culturally Contested Pedagogies

Themes

School as a place of belonging and safety
Learning through play
Parents as teachers
Seeming, being and becoming
Pedagogy, power and control
Loss and doubt as starting points for transformation
Drumming - learning with adults

Children and adults learning together: music terminology and skills
Children paint their world...
Backward mapping

- All 5 senses
- Light and refraction
- Environmental studies
- Wet-on-wet painting
- Chemistry of water
- Maths Displacement
- Science of waves
- Making music
Michael instructs Pippa (age 3) “Use a bucket to get more coal”. He says “We live in a train world. We’re making a world”. He makes a map and he and Robbie discuss it, adding trees where they stop for lunch, a road that crosses the railway, and water in a river. They locate these things in the real environment [D:08.08.07]
New confidence to create

Michael developed photo stories about himself as Superhero. Then, for weeks he and a younger child developed a game of trains: others joined in creating a shop, childminding service, taxis, ‘money’, bridges, carriages, tracks. Michael wrote his first words on his beautiful poster of a train. He began to create cartoon books...
Creating Special Effects
Parents – the paradox of power

- ...parents who experience a change in thinking, critiquing the school’s ideology, curriculum and pedagogy and seeking power to influence both, seek more fully to engage in school decision-making around practices of teaching than those parents who are empathetic with the school’s play-based curriculum.

- Parent conflict initiates a call to power, leading to the closure of the school.
Pre-service teachers

- This reflective journal ... a valuable guide and reference for me in the future, (to) practice constructivism. [SR.Creative.14.10.06:5.3]
- We were nervous...as we didn’t know the school or how the children would respond. I thought they would be harder to win over, because (they can) make their own decisions and choices. In private and state schools teachers make them sit and watch, clap when told to and make noise (only) when they are allowed to. [SF.03.04.07:S1.1] (Pre-service teacher) said she felt natural within the alternative school environment, but on prac she express concerns that their experience of undergraduate study exposes them to a profoundly normative culture both from peers and from the systemic affordances of the University.
- Systemic assessment and course offerings do not seem to provide support for different behaviours, or ways of knowing and learning.
A disconnection

...between the visionary nature of institutional philosophy and how it is manifest in physical and bureaucratic place and space. Seeming to internalise that dichotomy, pre-service teachers voice a personal awareness that pragmatism informs the “way things are done” in education, a means of resolving conflict.
Issues

- Future educators express concerns that their experience of study exposes them to a profoundly normative culture both from peers and from the systemic affordances of the University.

- University processes: assessment and course offerings do not seem to provide support for different behaviours, or ways of knowing and learning.
Becoming a transformative educator?

- Endeavours towards change may be countermanded by an adaptive self that tends to re-instil and re-create the known (Wacquant, 2005).

- Are professional conversations and reflexive praxis for ‘critical pedagogy’ sufficient to counteract and intervene between the re-establishing forces of personal doxa and personal and systemic habitus (Cornbleth, 2010, p. 296)?

- Importance of ongoing, recursive writing and discussion for change in personal practice – and for professional habitus to transform – and in relation to policy?
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Thank you - Questions Welcome

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