Bounded and Fluid Contexts and Identities – Implications for Pedagogies of Life-Long Learning

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ABSTRACT:

This paper re-examines the old sociological question of: who gets access to what kinds of knowledge and with what potential consequences. In recent years, the gaze of educators has turned to the multiple learning environments outside of formal schooling institutions. These environments – informal, workplace, entertainment, digitalised – all compete for the attention of learners. Information bites are grasped by learners who travel in, out, and along the global flows of knowledge (images, ideas, information). According to Basil Bernstein, these multiple learning environments constitute a society that is now 'totally pedagogised'. In such a society, everyone is expected to become a life-long learner making themselves available for learning, unlearning and re-learning as the needs of transnational capital rapidly shift.

Bernstein warns, however, that educators who are seduced by the surface manifestations of this 'totally pedagogised society' risk diverting their attention from the principles or rules which generate complex pedagogic designs. As the gap between the information rich and poor increases it is crucial for educators to focus on the pedagogic principles which enable learners to acquire complex knowledge forms. This paper seeks to do such work by drawing on empirical data from a large scale research project funded by the Australian Research Council (1996-2000). This research project looked at issues of cultural identity, pedagogic designs and learning outcomes. Specifically, the project examined effective pedagogies for students attending secondary schools in low socio-economic, culturally diverse urban contexts in Brisbane, Australia. These students included immigrants from the Pacific Islands, Indigenous students, and white working class students. The findings from this project were also used to research effective pedagogies for Asian international students engaged in Australian higher education (1997-2001), pedagogies for refugee students (2005-2007), and pedagogies of virtual or on-line learning for tech-savvy youth (2006-2008).

The paper teases out similarities in the underlying principles or rules generating effective pedagogies in one case study. In addition, the paper analyses the relation between learner cultural identities and the identities acquired through effective pedagogic designs.

INTRODUCTION

I want to begin this paper by presenting two accounts of my own learning in recent weeks. First, as I drafted this paper for presentation today, I read the abstracts of my colleagues. I noticed that my own paper addressed issues raised by my colleagues: themes of identity, fluid boundaries, global flows of knowledge, accelerated growth in knowledge. I also noticed similarities in terms of academic identity between myself and my colleagues – I too work in an institution of higher education, a product of Western modernity, and my area of research focus is the sociology of knowledge and equitable learning outcomes. My research work is influenced by a number of factors, namely:

1. research funding – who provides it, how much, and what is expected
2. increased demands for accountability and useability of social research
3. increased scrutiny of research, including questioning the capacity of research to solve complex social problems
4. increased demands for more social research to arbitrate the growing uncertainty and complexity of everyday life

(House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Vocational Training, 2007; Muller, 2000).

The second narrative of learning that I want to share with you is from my perspective of being a member of an Asian ethnic group in a nation that has been historically constructed as 'White'. Recently, an elderly member of my family was ill and had to receive hospital treatment. This family member does not speak English as a first language, and cannot read or write in English. I assisted the family member navigate the hospital system, including admission and release forms, translation services, medication scripts and so forth. I was reminded, yet again, that although we talk about life-long learning, the obstacles to such types of learning are enormous for those who do not have standard Australian English language proficiency. Moreover, the translation services provided by institutions to assist these learners are limited, and often ineffective. I have always advocated equality of outcomes in relation to formal schooling: that is, access to, acquisition of, and opportunities to make use of the powerful forms of knowledge transmitted through schooling institutions. I am reminded daily of the powerful knowledge that I have acquired, and the enormous disadvantages to those who are denied such forms of knowledge.

It what follows, I detail for this international audience some of the structural, historical factors in Australia that have produced conditions of educational inequality, before moving onto an account of my research work. I want to note for this audience, that Australia currently ranks among the top ten nations in the world "on the basis of economic growth" (Galligan *et al.,* 2001: 183). In May, 2007 - the national unemployment rate was 4.2 per cent (Megalogenis, 2007). This low unemployment rate is attributed to 16 years of uninterrupted prosperity, and the China-led commodities market (Megalogenis, 2007). However, low unemployment rates and overall national prosperity mask the following:

(1) high levels of under-employment, individualisation, exploitation and casualisation of the workforce (Castells, 2000; Campbell cited in Wynhausen, 2007)
(2) increased levels of the working poor (Castells, 2000; Galligan, 2001)

(3) high levels of inequality. Richest '20 percent earned roughly 10 times more than its poorest sector' (Galligan *et al.,* 2001: 183).

(4) increased levels of social exclusion for vulnerable categories of labour, that is, generic, unskilled workers, 'immigrants, minorities, women, young people, children' who are denied access to positions that ensure an 'autonomous livelihood' (Castells, 2002: 71; Singh & Taylor, 2004; 2007).

Australia, Queensland: The Social Context of the Research Studies
Australia has historically been constructed as a White nation. This white construction of Australia was firstly through the law of Terra Nullius in 1770, and secondly through the Immigration Restriction Acts of 1901 when Australia became a Federation.

Butler (2000) argues that 'Terra Nullius' can be viewed as a section of the international covenant by the expansionist powers of Europe codifying their methods of acquiring territory, the central criteria of this classification being whether or not the Indigenous people 'possessed recognizable structures of government, religion and made productive use of their land.' Australia was regarded as sparsely populated by Aborigines, but these Aborigines were considered as lacking in European notions of civility and therefore denied the rights of other people.

In 1901, Immigration Restriction Policies, infamously known as the 'White Australia Policy' were formulated to construct a homogeneous citizenry – White, British and European. This legislation was abolished in the late 1960s, about the same time that Indigenous Australians were counted in the Australian census and gained the right to vote.

Today, Australia has a population of about 21 million, with an Anglo-Celtic majority, but is geographically positioned within a complex Asian Diaspora. It now has the largest immigration program per capita anywhere in the world, and recent data indicates that 33 percent of the Queensland population were either born overseas or had one parent born overseas (Gopalkrishnan, 2005).

Recent times have also witnessed an increase in racial tensions and conflict amongst diverse cultural groups (Centre for Multicultural & Community Development, USC & Multi-Faith Centre, Griffith University, 2006; Luke, 2002). For example, the Cronulla beach riots of December 11th, 2005 were widely depicted as race or ethnic riots between Middle-Eastern (Lebanese/Muslim) and Anglo youth (Poynting, 2006). Images of these riots were circulated across the globe. Moreover, local city councils have identified through community research that the key barriers that prevent people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds participating fully in community life include: (1) experiences of cultural and social exclusion; and (2) experiences of racism and discrimination (Multicultural Communities Strategy, 2005/6, p. 4).

In addition, full-fee paying international students, typically of Chinese heritage from South East Asia, now make up approximately 23% of the total student population (Department of Education, 2003, 2005).

RESEARCH STUDY: Australian Research Council Funded Project

The research study that I want to discuss with you today focussed on issues of cultural identity, schooling knowledge, and equitable educational outcomes for students living in

poor or low socio-economic areas. The project was funded by the Australian Research Council and was titled: *Constructing 'Australian identities' through language and literacy education in schools, communities and workplaces.*

Social, Economic Context

The public or government funded secondary schools that participated in the study were situated in Brisbane, Australia – the capital city of the state of Queensland. Brisbane is currently the third largest city in Australia, and is experiencing rapid growth – with population flows from the southern states. The four secondary schools that participated in the study were located in culturally diverse, low socio-economic areas – areas that were described by one school principal as *'corridors of pain'*. Median income in these suburbs was low, with a large percentage of the workforce unemployed or underemployed – in casualised and/or contract work. Indeed, one of the school principals suggested that the *level of aspiration was reasonably low* for work amongst many of the students attending the school – because parents, and grand-parents had experienced long periods of unemployment and underemployment. The student population at one of the schools, City Public High, was described in the following way:

> **Extract One:**
> **Principal***: Well in this school there are a lot of marginalised people. For example, recent immigrants are marginalised from their cultural backgrounds, so when they come into Australia, they find themselves in the low socio-economic, group of people. And there are those who traditionally were, or would have been in the working class, doing fairly much labouring-type occupations, which no longer exist, and they can't or haven't been able to, increase their skills to the extent that they're able to overcome that. There's always this gap, which is very hard to address, so we've had those students who are low socio-economic status as a result of unemployment. And we've also had those who are in the low socio-economic status group because of single parent or pension-type family situations and again that's been a new societal change. But it means that a very significant proportion of the school come under those three categories, and as a result of that, if you want to sum up the school, you could say that this is a very low socio-economic status school.* (quoted in Singh, 2006).

The school, City Public High, was also located in a suburb that had one of the highest percentages of overseas born residents in the state of Queensland, and one of the highest percentages of residents speaking languages other than English at home. Approximately 14% of the students who attended City Public High identified as Pacific Islander (Samoa, Cook Islands, Tonga). The other ethnic groups represented in large numbers at the school included: Indigenous, Vietnamese, and White working class.

University-School Research Collaboration

This research project was initiated in response to a request from teachers and school principals for assistance in designing and monitoring a curriculum and pedagogic renewal project. School staff at City Public High were concerned that student enrolments had been declining over a number of years, and large numbers of students travelled out of the area to attend other public or government funded schools. The school principal, in particular, was concerned that City Public High might become a 'ghetto' school in a class stratified public education system. The school principal of City Public High noted that the following needed immediate attention:

1. challenging public discourses which constructed the school as 'working class' and 'unsafe' and therefore not providing 'intellectually rigorous curriculum' or 'respectful pedagogic relations between teachers and students';

2. turning around student enrolment, participation and achievement outcomes
3. improving working conditions for staff by generating a supportive learning community
4. sustaining curriculum and pedagogic reforms

City Public High had a long history of partnerships with university researchers, and indeed involved university researchers in the design and implementation of the curriculum and pedagogic renewal project described in this paper. The project was organized in two phases over a three year period. In the first phase, a phase separate from the ARC funded research project, university researchers engaged with school teachers on a regular basis to collaboratively design culturally inclusive curriculum units and modules of learning. The second phase of the project, which was supported by ARC funding, looked inside classrooms to document the implementation, reflection and redesign phase of curriculum carriage.   The focus of the curriculum renewal project in the second phase was on: effective teaching and learning; curriculum organization and content; technology and student welfare.   In particular, the team was interested in the link between teachers' intended, designed, enacted and reflected pedagogies (see Singh, 2006). The technology focus was about integrating information communication technologies, digitalised flows of images, ideas, sounds, into the everyday work of learners and teachers. Many of the students did not have access to computer technology or even phone technology in the home. The focus on student welfare was in keeping with the School's Social Justice ethos which stated that curriculum and pedagogic renewal needed to encapsulate three views on justice, namely procedural, distributive and enabling (Young, 1990)

Extract Two:
HOD-SJ (2): *Broadly speaking, this equates with equality of opportunity (procedural), equality of outcomes (distributive) and equality of respecting difference (enabling). The last view of social justice means that the school has to critically look at the ways in which it colonizes the identities of students of cultural difference, specifically focusing on the ways in which the school colonizes the identities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students* (quoted in Singh, 2006).

 Specifically, the research team was interested in teachers' talk about theories or models of the learner and responsive pedagogies, as well as how teachers incorporated these ideas/theories into their curriculum design, enacted this design in day-to-day pedagogic practices, and then talked or reflected about the conduct of their lessons. The team was also interested in what students, parents, community elders, and paraprofessionals had to say about learning/educational experiences in these schools, and processes of transition from home, community organisations and schools. In particular, we were interested in which pedagogies made a difference in learning outcomes, why these made a difference, and how teachers' theories of instruction and models of the learner influenced the design and enactment of successful pedagogies. Finally, the research team was interested in issues of sustainability – how might education reforms be sustained in the long term given the moral dilemmas and difficulties faced by staff on a daily basis? For example, the school principal suggested that teachers were often placed in a difficult position in relation to managing student behaviour: should they expel a student and thus protect other students and staff, or should they seek additional counselling and encourage the student to remain at school?

Extract Three:
Principal: *'sometimes staff feel like the little boy who tries to hold back the flood waters by plugging in the holes because the dyke has broken, but as one hole is filled or plugged in, another emerges'* (quoted in Singh, 2006).

RESEARCH METHOD OF THE PROJECT

- Interviews with: community members and mapping of the factions within the local community
- Interviews with: school administrators, heads of departments, teachers
- Interviews with students
- Fieldnotes: school policies, curriculum unit plans, lesson plans,
- Audio-recordings of classroom lessons, interviews – teachers' reflections on lessons.

Interviews with Community Members:

Positions in Local Community	Positions in School	
Ministers of Religion 4 Ministers + 3 Ministers' wives interviewed	• Some assisted with student discipline problems • Some participated in Parents and Citizens Committees	• Uniting Church, Seventh Day Adventist, Assemblies of God, and Methodist • Various levels of English proficiency, educational and theological qualifications
Professionals 6 participants interviewed	• 1 private training provider • 5 cultural education advisors in state agencies • Volunteers on school councils, curriculum committees etc.	• Tertiary qualifications in education, business, engineering, medicine • Residents of higher socio-economic suburbs, but attended Samoan church services in the case study area
Semi-skilled community workers 4 participants interviewed	• 2 cultural consultants: liaised between state agencies and institutions of the local Samoan community • 2 teacher-aides • Worked in schools on a fractional/casual basis.	• No tertiary qualifications • Lived in local community, sometimes connected with the Church (wife or daughter of a Minister of Religion)
Unskilled workers 18 participants interviewed	• 2 home/community liaison officers • 16 parents with children attending secondary schools in the case study area • Worked in schools on a fractional/casual basis, often additional work undertaken in cleaning/fast food industries.	• No tertiary qualifications • Lived in local community • Sometimes connected with the Church (wife or daughter of a Minister of Religion)

TOTAL 35

Table 1: Samoan paraprofessional personnel interviewed for the study [quoted in Singh & Dooley, 2001]

In Australia, teacher-aides, home-liaison officers, cultural advisors, and community representatives on school councils constitute the network established in and around schools in low socio-economic areas. This network of voluntary and paid personnel are responsible for forging lines of communication between the Indigenous, working class, unemployed and migrant families in the local community and the school. It is through these communication channels that knowledge flows between the school and the local community. These knowledge flows are aimed at improving the learning outcomes of students. Interviews with community members and parents focussed on the following topics:

- Job description of cultural and school-community education officers and advisers
- Enactment of the role of cultural and school-community education officer/adviser, and/or parent within the school
- Relation between work undertaken in the school, the local community and home
- Relation to classroom teachers and school administrators
- Socialisation in a professional school role
- Versions of local Samoan culture incorporated in the school
- Relation between professional school role and Samoan cultural identity
- Knowledge of Pacific Islander students' performance in school curricula, and relations with school staff
- Knowledge of the school work undertaken by Pacific Islander students in the home

Two main themes emerged from an analysis of the data collected from the 35 participants: i) differences in pedagogic relations or communication between institutions of the local community (church, home) and the schools; and ii) the difficulties of transition experienced by Samoan students as they moved between different social institutions (Singh, 2000; Singh, 2001; Singh & Dooley, 2001). The network of personnel described above worked to help ease the transition process for students. But this network, by itself, was not sufficient to assist students achieve equitable educational outcomes. There was a need for significant pedagogic renewal that connected with students' life worlds and assisted them with home-school border crossing,

Interviews with Students:

Student Interviews (Singh & Sinclair, 2001)

Students (Age: 15-17): 30 min interviews in groups of approx. 2	Male	Female
Total: 33	15	18

Students : Educational Achievement	High	Low
Total: 33	10	23

Students : Home language	Exclusively Samoan/Pacific Islander	Samoan/English
Total: 33	42%	Remainder

Two-thirds of the students had migrated to Australia from New Zealand in recent years, and all students indicated that they attended church services regularly but were members of different religious denominations such as Assemblies of God, Mormon, Seventh Day Adventist, Methodist and Uniting Church (see Singh & Sinclair, 2001). Students were asked to talk about the following issues during the interviews:

- Australian-Samoan identity formation in school and community institutions
- Relations between teachers and Samoan students in Australian schools
- Relations of Samoan students to school curricular
- Pedagogic work that might improve educational outcomes for Samoan students

Interviews with Teachers:

Fifty-five interviews with teachers in various positions, including Head of Department, Specialist English as a Second Language teachers, and classroom teachers. Teacher interviews were semi-structured and guided by the following themes:

- understandings of inclusive curriculum and social justice policies
- challenges associated with teaching a diverse student clientele
- curricular planning: knowledge selection and organization in order to meet student needs
- how knowledge of local cultures/communities influenced classroom/school practices
- educational difficulties experienced by students in general, and Samoan students specifically
- English literacy difficulties experienced by students in general, and Samoan students specifically
- teacher-student relations at the school, and specifically in terms of Samoan students
- relationship with Samoan parents specifically, and the Samoan community more generally

SOME PROBLEMS THAT WE HAD TO DEAL WITH:

(1) While the teachers' talked up their difficulties of teaching Samoan/Pacific Islander students and relating to the Pacific Islander community – we found it difficult to track down this 'imagined community'. What were the teachers talking about when they invoked the notion of Samoan/Pacific Islanders? How did these discursive constructions of the 'culturally different' learner influence the design of curricula and pedagogy? How did teachers' constructions of the 'culturally different' learner influence the selection, distribution and acquisition of powerful forms of school knowledge?

(2) We managed to interview key people within the Samoan/Pacific Islander local community by working with a number of Samoan-Australian research assistants. We identified a number of factions within the community –mainly organized around religious beliefs and membership in particular churches: United Church; Seventh Day Adventist, Assembly of God, Methodist. The heterogeneity or diversity within the category Samoan, Pacific Islander was also noted → it was the children from the fundamentalist religions that had greater difficulty with school: different codes of interaction between school, church and home; didn't speak English as a first language, and English was rarely spoken at home.

(3) Most of the paraprofessionals talked about Samoan culture and language and the unique communication or pedagogic principles within Samoan culture → they explained that this might be a reason why some Samoan students didn't do well at school. BUT – in Australia these research explanations built on notions of cultural difference have been increasingly labelled as 'racist, culturalist' by postcolonial researchers – who have argued that the explanations do not account for other wider social economic factors that lead to schooling failure, no do they

explain why some students from cultural minority groups do well at school – the 'model minority argument' (see Singh & Dooley, 2001). Yet since these explanations/accounts kept arising in the data – we didn't simply want to dismiss the talk of the participants as outdated, obsolete or irrelevant. Was there something about the communicative codes of schooling, and the communicative codes within the Samoan church and family that created transition issues for students? The crucial issue for the research team related to transition – between the different social and discursive orders of the home/community and school. How could curriculum and pedagogic renewal assist students with this process of transition? What knowledge of learners and local communities was needed to design transition pedagogies/curriculum? We were also interested in how factions of the local Samoan/Pacific Islander community engaged with flows of knowledge from the school – how did they embrace transition pedagogies and adapt, adjust cultural practices?

(4) Community members and students talked about the fluid, shifting nature of Samoan culture – and some core Samoan values, such as different ways of talking to members in the Samoan community, chiefs, religious leaders, parents and children. At the same time, they talked about the historically relational way in which Samoan culture was constructed in relation to European or paligi colonisation, conflict and contestation. They evoked the anthropological debate between Mead and Freeman about what constitutes Samoan identity and culture – often citing Freeman as the authoritative voice, and at the same time questioning the ability of an outsider to understand the changing nature of Samoan communicative practices, and how these may have evolved in opposition to European colonisation. The point here is that many of the community members were aware of different versions or discourses of Samoan culture and identity, the work undertaken by these discourses, and their own strategic positioning within these discourses.

(5) Students talked about the selection, sequencing, pacing and criteria of the instructional discourse/knowledge taught in schools. Student difficulties in school were attributed to two issues: (a) racial and cultural difference; and (b) English language proficiency, scholastic competence in particular subjects, and the pedagogic modes deployed by particular teachers. Issues of racial difference/conflict and cultural identity could be addressed through therapeutic or radical pedagogic modes. Bernstein (1996: 64) suggested that these pedagogies focus on:

Inter-class/group opportunities, material or symbolic, to redress its objective dominated positioning. The pedagogic practice and contexts created by this mode presuppose an emancipatory potential common to all members of this group. This can be actualized by the members own exploration of the source of their imposed powerlessness under conditions of pedagogic renewal.

By contrast, attaining disciplinary knowledge required a different set of pedagogies that focussed on educational performance outcomes. These performance mode pedagogies addressed the following types of questions: What did the learner currently know, what were they capable of acquiring in a lesson, unit of work; and what teaching strategies would work effectively, when, where and why?

(6) By contrast, the teachers often talked about Samoan culture in fixed, static ways: oral cultural heritage, strict discipline, fundamentalist religions. We needed to

work out how home liaison workers, teacher-aides, community workers were positioned in the school and local community as conduits of knowledge flows: what knowledge of Samoan culture and identity, and schooling knowledge was communicated via these flows? Did we need to challenge/change some of the discourses communicated in these flows? what about the flows/channels of communication – did they assist with the transition process and improvement of student learning outcomes?

Theoretically then, we became interested in three concepts: cultural identity, pedagogic relations/models, and transition networks. First we were interested in how the term culture was evoked, taken up and used in different ways to explain students' learning and enact and justify certain curricula and pedagogic practices.

Cultural Identity

(1) Culture Difference Theory: differences in the ways social groups have adapted to social, economic and historical conditions produces different ways of being, or patterns of life. Differences between codes or rules/regulations governing the patterns of life of certain social/cultural groups and schooling. Children from dominant social groups are likely to experience educational success → because their cultural codes are closer to those of the school (see: Bauman, 1999; Eisenhart, 2001; Smith, 2000;

(2) Cultural Frame of Reference: However, some cultural/ethnic minority groups → do well at school → recently migrated groups → the model minorities (Asian students for example). The cultural frame of reference for these students maybe positive and thus enable them to overcome the cultural differences between home and school. By contrast, the cultural frame of reference for many subordinate minority groups may be negative and therefore the cultural differences between home and school more pronounced (see: Bauman, 1999; Eisenhart, 2001; Smith, 2000)

(3) Postcolonial Challenges to Cultural Difference Theory: Although cultural difference theories were formulated to challenge racist assumptions and beliefs (based on biological determinism), they have contributed to the perpetuation of racism through notions of cultural deficit, or attributing all educational problems to the culture of particular groups of students – culturalist explanations. These culturalist assumptions deny the history of oppression, and the socio-economic factors such as poverty that lie behind educational failure (see Hall, 1996a, b; Mirza 1992; Modood, 1997; Said, 1995; Spivak, 1990)

(4) Cultural Productions: Eisenhart (2001: 216) argues, and I quote culture is "the set of meaningful forms that grow out of actual social relations between groups and become dominant or subordinate in a particular context'. Cultural forms take the shape of texts, technologies, artefacts and the actions that various groups take in relation to each other. Emphasis on culture as a continual process of creating meaning, replacing the conceptualization of culture as a static, unchanging body of knowledge transmitted from one generation to the next. Culture viewed as a process, "something which is continually produced, even as it is reproduced" (p.13), and "schools as sites for the formation of subjectivities through the production and consumption of cultural forms" (p.14). (Levinson & Holland, 1996).

(5) Contact Zones: Clifford (1997, p. 11) theorises local communities in global complexity as *contact zones* that have been produced through 'a series of encounters and translations'. Contact zones are more like itineraries rather than bounded contexts. They are spatial and temporal configurations, characterised by highly unequal power relations based on historical legacies of supremacy and subordination, which are re-negotiated and re-configured (see also Pratt, 2002).

(6) Transculturation and Hybridity: With time-space distanciation, cultural and symbolic resources can be appropriated from distant places and recontextualized or indigenized within local places to create new cultural hybrid forms. For example, the mixing of African-American music and language forms to create new Samoan-Australian identities. In addition, when people with diverse cultural trajectories increasing meet in 'contact zones' there is likely to 'intercultural import-export or transculturalation' (see Singh & Dooley, 2004). This means that ideas, images, fashions, sounds, tastes and so forth do not simply move in a one way fashion from the dominant to the dominated group, but rather there is a 'mutual entanglement' and contestations over representations of cultural identity and social practices (see Singh & Doherty, 2004; Papastergiadis, 1997).

Pedagogy and School Knowledge

Second, we were interested in pedagogy – how do we capture it, analyse it, report on what works, when, where and why. Then - how do we work with teachers to try to construct pedagogies that work in culturally diverse, low socio-economic schools. How do we make sure that these pedagogies embrace new theories of cultural identity, and cultural flows? How do we make sure that these pedagogies are aligned to new modes of curriculum design, that not only connect with students' life worlds but are also future-oriented and connected to the new modes of knowledge production and dissemination in the so-called 'knowledge economy' (Kalantzis & Cope, 2004; Education Queensland, 2004)?

In a globalised knowledge economy, there are four crucial points about knowledge and knowledge flows: (1) knowledge is generated in multiple sites, forums and in profit, non-profit and government agencies, (2) it continues to grow exponentially, (3) it enhances productivity or builds capacity; and (4) it can be described as - codified, tacit, disciplinary, and transdisciplinary (see Johnston, 1998). Moreover, for young people, the web serves a key information/knowledge as well as social function. Students rely heavily on online resources such as Google and Wikipedia when working on school assignments; and use MSN, MySpace and YouTube when maintaining friendships and building social networks. These new forms of knowledge production and dissemination, fundamentally challenge traditional, normative models of knowledge creation and publication.

Knowledge production now is no longer simply the preserve of experts using scientific methods of inquiry, adjudication and verification before publication and dissemination. Rather, anyone who has access to the technology of Web2 can create or produce knowledge via bloggging, vloging and wikipedia. The truth status of this knowledge is not determined by the 'expert' status or identity of the knower, but often by the anonymity of the knower who can create a fictional identity. Moreover, knowledge attains truth status by the logic of 'mob rule' – if enough people are saying the same

thing, then the version of truth/knowledge produced by the mob or crowd becomes legitimised (Appleyard, 2007: 12).

In one of our current research projects, numerous students talked about the 'truthiness' of knowledge and wiki-reality – knowledge is assumed to be accurate if it 'feels right, sounds right, and if enough people, on multiple sites are saying the same thing – then it must be right'. This is not simple populism. Rather, the mediating process of the Web market, constructs truth/knowledge by averaging out popular sentiment (Appleyard, 2007). This account of new forms of knowledge production, dissemination and acquisition attests to the importance of student's acquiring formal school knowledge. In particular, it attests to the importance of the following skills, which are articulated in many new syllabus and curriculum designs: deep understanding of knowledge, and problematising knowledge.

Capturing Pedagogy:
The research team and the partner schools were aware of the many different syllabus and curriculum designs available on the market. Indeed, the proliferation of these curriculum materials is perhaps a sign of the times – the struggles of educators and learning designers over: what should be taught in schools, how it should be taught, and how it should be evaluated (Bernstein, 2000). In Queensland, school teachers may choose from these variety of curriculum designs: some produced locally such as: New Basics and Rich Tasks (Education Queensland); Key Learning Areas (Queensland Studies Authority); Essential Learnings (Queensland Studies Authority); Syllabus Documents (Education Queensland, Queensland Studies Authority); Learning by Design (Kalantzis & Cope, 2004), and others produced by overseas colleagues such as Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences and Project Zero's Thinking Routines and Artful Thinking (Harvard University); as well as the International Baccalaureate. All of these materials focus on curriculum content – what should be taught; pedagogy – effective teaching strategies/routines, learning objects, lesson plans; and effective assessment tools.

However, the effectiveness of these multiple resources depends on the work undertaken on a day-to-day basis in schools and classrooms. How do teachers' choose from this array of resources, and recontextualise the knowledge coded in these documents to design, implement, reflect and redesign curriculum units and classroom lessons for cohorts of students in local contexts. How do the global flows of curricular and pedagogic knowledge connect with local school and community knowledge?

In the first year of the study, we captured the classroom pedagogies of a number of teachers across the four schools. We used this data to then focus our detailed study on one case study school, and the lessons of three teachers. We interviewed these teachers on a number of occasions before and after the lessons and audio-recorded a minimum of one lesson per week over a 4 week unit of work. The lessons were audio- recorded using multi-track classroom recording equipment. Field-notes were also taken: including a seating plan and written outline of the lesson's proceedings, the place of the lesson in the whole unit of work, and teacher and student lesson notes.

We analysed the lessons drawing on the pedagogical theories of Basil Bernstein, as well as theorists of classroom talk. We looked at the organisational structure of the lessons: introduction, diagnostic phase, preliminary phase, main lesson, summary. We focussed

on the patterns of teacher – student talk, or what Lemke (1993) calls the activity structures of lessons. And then we focussed on the time spent on the instructional discourses of schooling (Bernstein, 2006), as compared to the time spent on non-instructional activities, such as behaviour management, classroom management and so forth. Our focus on these aspects of the lessons was based on the findings from the Queensland based *School Reform Longitudinal Study*. This study indicated that intellectual engagement and connectedness to school learning are key factors to educational achievement for all students

    (1) **Intellectual engagement** should focus on: analytic depth, intellectual challenge and rigour; critical thinking, critical literacy and higher-order analysis; and dialogue

    (2) **Connectedness to school learning** should focus on: connecting to student cultural background; student knowledge, problem-based learning, and the worlds of work, citizenship and community life (Lingard *et al.*, 2000; Luke, 1999; Education Queensland, 2004).

In this curriculum/pedagogy framework, school knowledge is considered to be 'high stakes discourses' – knowledge, fields and paradigms that are essential to interpreting, analysing and understanding the world (Education Queensland, 2004). This knowledge cannot be invented or accessed by children without support, guidance and direct instruction. Indeed, acquisition of school knowledge necessitates a pedagogic relation. A pedagogic relation is defined as a mentor-student relationship, in this case, the mentor is the teacher with expertise in professional and disciplinary knowledge (Education Queensland, 2004). Bernstein (1999: 266) defined pedagogic relations in the following way:

 'progressive, in time, … purposeful intention to initiate, modify, develop or change knowledge, conduct or practice over time by someone … who already possesses, or has access to, the necessary resources and the means of evaluating acquisition'

Moreover, Bernstein (1999) distinguished between three forms of pedagogic relation: explicit, implicit and tacit. The terms, tacit, explicit and implicit, refer to the visibility of the teacher's intention about what is to be learnt to the student. Tacit pedagogies refer to acquisition of knowledge where both parties may be unaware of the types of learning that are taking place.

Table 2: Heuristics on categories of Productive Pedagogy

Knowledge

Strategy

Higher-order thinking*	Are higher-order thinking and critical analysis occurring?
Deep knowledge*	Does the lesson cover operational fields in any depth, detail or level of specificity?
Deep understanding*	Do the work and response of the students provide evidence of depth of understanding of concepts or ideas?
Substantive conversation*	Does classroom talk break out of the initiation/response/evaluation pattern and lead to sustained dialogue between students, and between teachers and students?
Knowledge problematic*	Are students critiquing and second-guessing texts, ideas and knowledge?
Metalanguage*	Are aspects of language, grammar, technical vocabulary being foregrounded?
Knowledge integration*	Does the lesson range across diverse fields, disciplines and paradigms?
Background knowledge	Is there an attempt to connect with students' background knowledge?

Connectedness to the world	Do the lesson and the assigned work have any resemblance or connection to real-life contexts?
Problem-based curriculum	Is there a focus on identifying and solving intellectual and/or real-world problems?
Student control	Do students have any say in the pace, direction or outcomes of the lesson?
Social support	Is the classroom a socially supportive, positive environment?
Engagement	Are students engaged and on-task?
Explicit criteria	Are criteria for student performance made explicit?
Self-regulation	Is the direction of student behaviour implicit and self-regulatory or explicit?
Cultural knowledges	Are diverse cultural knowledges brought into play?
Inclusivity	Are deliberate attempts made to increase the participation of all students of different backgrounds?
Narrative	Is the teaching principally narrative, or is it expository?
Group identity	Does the teaching build a sense of community and identity?
Citizenship	Are attempts made to foster active citizenship?

Source: *School Reform Longitudinal Study* (Literature Review), University of Queensland, 1999. Education Queensland (2004). *New Basics Project. State Schools: Shaping the Smart Start.* Brisbane: Queensland Government.

Bernstein's Theory of Pedagogic Models:

In this study, we initially looked at the lessons of three teachers across a unit of work, in the case study school City Public High. An initial interpretation of these lessons, and comparison of these lessons with those in an 'advantaged' school located in a higher socio-economic area, indicated a possible 'dumbing' down of the curriculum. In other words, there appeared to be few opportunities for intellectual engagement, that is, opportunities to acquire: deep knowledge; deep understanding; and to problematise and integrate knowledge. Specifically, Freebody and Herschell (2000) suggested that in the 'disadvantaged schools', teachers gave students greater latitude to bring into the classroom information and knowledge that connected with student's lifeworlds or backgrounds. These pedagogic efforts, although designed to construct inclusive curricula and pedagogy, were often counter-productive. In some cases, teachers' attempts at making curricular relevant were questioned by students in terms of relevance and quality. In other cases, students overtly ridiculed teachers' attempts at creating responsive curricula. We found this odd given that the whole school was about curriculum and pedagogic renewal, and the teachers who participated in this study self-selected or volunteered for participation. Indeed, because City Public High was concerned about issues of sustainability in relation to the curriculum and pedagogic renewal project, the Head of School – Social Justice, had initiated the following:

(1) <u>Whole School Approach:</u>

Curriculum Renewal Policies: What is taught has to be relevant to students, connect with where they are at and then move them to acquire complex knowledge forms. The school instigated a vertical curriculum based on modules of learning → students had to successfully pass a module of learning before they moved onto a more advanced module.

Pedagogy: Curriculum cycles moved from open – allowing in student's home /local knowledges to more closed with a focus on disciplinary knowledge outcomes.

Behaviour Management Policies: Time out rooms, Adopt a Cop Policy – Drug problem in the school, and Elders from the local community asked to help with school patrol duties.

After School Homework Room: To provide students with a quite space and computer facilities to complete their homework – supervised by teachers and community members.

Teacher Aides and Home Liaison Officers- professional development programs so that they could acquire certification → movement from casual positions to permanent part-time positions working across a number of schools.

Lobbying for specialist teachers, English as a Second Language funds and so forth

(2) **School Network/Partnership with Other Government Departments**

Closer work with Departments of Family, Housing, Health and Welfare: to ensure adequate accommodation, education of mothers, parenting courses and so forth.

(3) Systematic Approaches to Transition – Local Community, Primary Schools

Closer partnerships with primary feeder schools, networks and partnerships with the local community.

(4) University – School Partnerships:

Research partnerships to ensure that curriculum and pedagogy are systematically informed by new understandings of: knowledge, cultural identity, and effective learning designs.

Point four was difficult to sustain. Many of the papers published from the ARC project were made available to the teachers – but teachers had difficulty translating these into practice. Our focus then became on exploring in depth the work of one teacher and attempting to systematically document what this teacher did to assist students with border crossing or transition processes. Basil Bernstein's work guided us to focus on what he defines as 'framing' – the how of pedagogy, what was the model of the learner constructed by the teacher, how did this model of the learner influence the selection, sequencing, pacing and criteria to assess whether students had acquired the curricular knowledge. What was the model of the teacher, and the pedagogic relation between teacher and learner – and how did this influence the design of lesson plans, curriculum units, and enactment and reflection of lessons. How did the teacher work out where students were at, and where they needed to be in terms of school knowledge. Then, how did the teacher systematically move or 'progress' students 'in time' to acquire more complex forms of knowledge.

Theorising Frames

Bernstein uses the term frame to refer to the how of classroom pedagogies: how are the processes of knowledge selection, sequencing, pacing negotiated in the classroom between teacher, text and students. Bernstein also distinguishes between levels and strengths of framing.

Levels of Framing: Macro level of framing – refers to how school administrators and teachers design the overall school curriculum – what will be taught, to who, when, where and how. The question of *what knowledge selection* refers to the recontextualisation of the multiple models of curriculum on the global market. At the micro level of framing – classroom teachers need to navigate what will be taught, to who, when, where and how. Micro level framing refers not only to the curriculum unit and lesson design, but also to the enactment of lessons, and transitioning within phases or stages of a lesson as teachers systematically ensure that students acquire knowledge, skills, and attributes.

Strength of Framing: refers to **who** exercises control over knowledge flows, when, where and how. Weak framing occurs when teachers/mentors weaken their control over knowledge flows and allow students and community members to introduce personal and local knowledge into the classroom context. Strong framing is when teachers/mentors exercise tighter control over the selection, sequencing and pacing of knowledge in the classroom.

In the study reported in this paper, we found that the lessons of one of the teachers seemed to stand apart. We thus undertook an in-depth analysis of the work of this teacher, Teacher X, for the following reasons:

(1) Quantitative analysis revealed that: (a) Lessons remained focused on instructional content; (b) Minimal classroom time spent on addressing 'off-task' behaviours

(2) Lessons revealed some of the categories of productive pedagogies referred to previously in the Queensland School Reform Longitudinal Study: (a) Students spoke about high levels of pedagogic engagement; (b) The teacher made efforts to connect school knowledge to learners' background knowledge and cultural knowledges → but then quickly moved onto school knowledge; (c) Criteria for student learning performance was repeatedly made explicit; (d) Teacher provided a positive, socially supportive environment –answering student queries respectfully, setting and expecting students to complete homework assignments, and progressing the lesson in time rather than being sidetracked by other issues.

Our question then focussed on what was this teacher doing that was different: how did she generate pedagogic engagement, connect with the students' worlds, and make links between these worlds and school knowledge, so that students acquired the valued knowledge of schooling? I am not suggesting that this teacher, Teacher X, managed to engage the students with complex knowledge forms equivalent to those expected of students in advantaged schools. This was certainly not the case. However, given that many of the 15-16 year old cohort of students had an average reading age of 10 – the lessons demonstrated a connection with where the students were at, and a genuine engagement with moving them to higher knowledge forms. So in a Bernsteinian sense the teacher carefully selected, sequenced, paced and tested students' comprehension of instructional knowledge. This pedagogic work was often done explicitly – the teacher repeatedly reminded the students about what was being taught, how it was being taught (the sequencing and packing of knowledge) and why it was being taught. These explanations to students were made in a variety of forms: verbal, written – on the board, overhead transparency, and student handouts. According to Ritchhart, Palmer, Church, and Tishman, (2006), Teacher X had made explicit the housekeeping and management routines of the classroom to prepare students for learning. The teacher constantly assessed students' understanding of the lesson content, and where it seemed that students might not have 'got the gist' of what was being taught, the teacher back-tracked and taught the material again. So the teacher attempted to start with something that was familiar to all students, in the case of the lessons we observed, it was the narrative of the 'Three Little Pigs'. However, this was a point of initial connection only – the crucial pedagogic work was to move the students from their present state of knowledge to 'those powerful representations of thought he or she is going to need in order to change the world outside (Bernstein cited in Martin, 1999: 123). In the terms used by Ritchhart *et al.*, (2006), Teacher X, had made explicit the learning and discourse routines of the classroom, and was making some efforts to develop thinking

routines – such as the KWL Strategy: what do you **know,** what do you **want** to know, and what have you **learned?**

The second set of knowledges, that Teacher X assisted students to acquire were those to do with 'moral or regulative deportment'. As we have argued in another paper, drawing on the work of Ian Hunter:

> the pedagogy of the modern school system was centred "on the acquisition of conscience in a non-coercive classroom overseen by a sympathetic pastoral teacher" (Hunter, 1994: 78). Through the pastoral pedagogy, the classroom became a space to form the capacities required by individuals to conduct themselves as self-reflective and self-governing persons. Of crucial importance is that the capacities for the reflective person emerge only after individuals have been initiated into the techniques of self-problematisation and self-regulation. Thus, the capacity for self-reflection that is formed within the milieu of the school is a "highly specialised (and highly prestigious) comportment of the person" (Hunter, 1994: 82). [quoted in Singh & Dooley, 2001)

Thus students in Teacher X's class learnt the instructional discourses associated with school knowledge through explicit criteria. At the same time, and through implicit pedagogic routines Teacher X taught the regulative discourses of schooling: how to conduct oneself in the classroom in order to acquire highly complex forms of symbolic knowledge – how, when, where, and what types of questions to ask to acquire knowledge – from classroom teachers, specialist teachers, peers. Teacher X also stressed the importance of pedagogic space-time in the home and community to the acquisition of higher forms of school knowledge.

SO WHAT?

However intractable the problems may seem, we cannot resign ourselves to failure - any more than we can hide behind the contemporary version of Social Darwinism which says that to reach back for the poor and dispossessed is to risk being dragged down (Keating, 1992)

Speaking about the plight of Indigenous Australia, the former Australian Prime Minister Paul Keating stated that we must *recognise that the problem starts with us.* In these global contact zones, where people with disparate historical trajectories and identities meet and clash in highly unequal power relations, we need to recognise that some of us have acquired powerful knowledge, while others have missed out. Earlier I recounted a personal narrative about using powerful forms of knowledge to assist an elderly family member navigate the hospital system.

This paper resonates with this desire to pass on powerful forms of knowledge to 'disadvantaged' groups of students. The research has much in common with the work of other researchers across the world working with disadvantaged communities of learners. There are also a growing number of websites providing information about pedagogies that work, as well as useful learning objects for schools in disadvantaged communities. For example, in Queensland, Australia the following website details curriculum and pedagogic innovations that work for Indigenous students:
http://www.whatworks.edu.au/4_2_4.htm

The issue for our research team was not simply about the availability of resources or ideas, but about implementation – the how of pedagogy at the level of the school and the classroom. Of course, availability of resources is a key issue in 'disadvantaged' communities and schools – many homes were not connected by phone, did not have access to computer technology, or even a quiet space for young people to do home work. The school needed trained staff in the way of English as a Second Language specialists, as well as knowledge about local communities and cultures.

In addition, teachers needed assistance in designing new curricular that was relevant and responsive to an increasingly diverse clientele of learners, and was also aligned to the new modes of knowledge generation and dissemination in the knowledge economy. Crucially, teachers needed to be part of a professional learning community, committed to life-long learning about pedagogic design. Such learning communities need to dialogue about: what should be taught in schools, how it should be taught and how it should be assessed. Such dialogues will necessitate making public: school curriculum programs, units of work, and lesson plans on school websites. It will also be important to capture, analyse and talk about day-to-day pedagogic events – whether these are conducted as individual, group or whole class lessons (see Kalantzis & Cope, 2004).

I have covered a lot of territory in this paper. However, my core focus has been on the life-long learning of students 'at risk' of educational failure attending public or government funded secondary schools in culturally diverse, low socio-economic contexts in Queensland, Australia. I have argued that the life-long learning needs of these students is very much dependent on the professional learning communities of their mentors or teachers. In addition, I have proposed that a focus on curriculum and pedagogic renewal in such schools needs to take account of new theorisations of:
(1) cultural identity and difference
(2) pedagogy and learning design
(3) new modes of knowledge generation, dissemination and recontextualisation

I suggested that the focus of curricular and pedagogic reform should be on 'framing' of school knowledge – the processes of knowledge selection, sequencing, pacing and criteria for assessing student learning.

I suggested that teachers who make explicit the routines of learning, that is, both the regulative and instructional discourses of learning, are more likely to achieve student engagement and improved learning outcomes.

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