

Subjectivity, objectivity,
inverting the curriculum,
and educating preservice teachers:
listen, learn, understand, teach..

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My research odyssey started with a dilemma which originated in 1968 - 1972 when I was teaching at a high school in Torres Strait. The dilemma was how to teach Torres Strait Islander students, one group of Indigenous Australians about whom I had learned nothing at school, university, or teachers college. Five years of hard work by, and frustration for, both me and my students and I set out to learn through a Master's degree how to teach Torres Strait Islanders.

The route was circuitous - there was no literature on what to do in a Torres Strait Island classroom and only one paper on broad policy (Orr and Williamson, 1973). So I set off through various research paradigms to seek some answers more directly. When I shifted into tertiary teaching and began to develop formal research skills, I learned how to conduct classroom interaction and cognitive style research, and read research in cross-cultural psychology and in cross-cultural communication. Ultimately I rejected them because they failed to deal with the politics of schooling or indeed the politics of the classroom.

And my search led me to interpretive ethnography which I have been conducting since 1983. By 1990 I had a tentative model of culturally responsive pedagogy which, during study leave, I trialed as a volunteer in one geography class at my old school for one semester. I was confident that the 'model' could work, because I was able to teach differently within it and the students responded well to it. So praxis, that is action and reflection repeatedly informing each other (Freire, 1972: 41), had become a big part in finding my resolution to the initial dilemma. Originally my action had been ineffective, I reflected at considerable length and hunted down a tentative resolution. That changed my actions and my effectiveness.

Now the challenge for me as a teacher educator became how to assist preservice and in-service teachers to engage in praxis in a way that

may be a little more immediate than mine had been. After all, in the

years that followed my awareness of the initial dilemma, many Torres Strait Islander students who have wanted to do well in school have been deprived of that chance if all their teachers had been as slow as me to learn.

Three Key Notions

I have found a partial resolution to the teacher education challenge in the work of Kathleen Weiler (1988), Bob Connell (1989) and the World's Indigenous People's Education Conference of 1993. Weiler used the term subjectivity to mean the values, attitudes and world views that find their origins in our classed, gendered and racialised backgrounds. Each person's 'subjectivity is constantly being redefined as meaning is asserted, contested, affirmed or denied' (Weiler, 1988: 129 citing Bahktin, 1981). She argued that teachers should avoid ignoring/discounting the subjectivities of their students and that this implies teachers being very much aware of our own subjectivities. Then in classroom discussions all voices can be heard, rather than some being silenced by the teacher staying only with those students whose subjectivities are compatible with the teacher's. I try to do this with the preservice teachers I teach, but there are considerable challenges inherent in this approach, to which I will return in a later paper at this conference (Osborne, 1996a).

Connell (1989) argued that both subjectivity and objectivity are crucial to learning, that they are the reverse sides of the same search for meaning. From this notion I seek to have my students not only express their own subjectivities but I also expose them to a set of readings intended to challenge/confirm their subjectivities. He also argued that curriculum is rather arbitrary; comprises content, classroom processes and wider social practices; hegemonises in favour of particular interests in society and should be inverted to serve

better the interests of the most disadvantaged in society. So, his approach was not only based on strong notions of emancipatory social justice he provided some starting points for curriculum reform. And this creates another major challenge for me as a teacher educator - to what extent do I assist pre-service teachers to conform to current school curriculum content, classroom processes and assessment practices and to what extent do I encourage/equip them to be agents of change in these crucial areas? And this dilemma has become even more acute this year as both state and national initiatives for egalitarian reform have been scaled down or withdrawn.

The World's Indigenous People's Education Conference (1993) was based around the following very powerful theme (translated into English from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages) 'Listen, Learn, Understand, Teach'. This theme is repeated on many occasions in one of my core preservice classes. It is quite compatible with the themes I mentioned earlier - praxis, subjectivity/objectivity and inverting the curriculum and it begins to address one of the key themes I had identified in my early endeavours in Torres Strait - the politics of schooling and classrooms. In particular, it champions minority voices, and challenges educators to be attentive to those voices. Furthermore, it supports a finding already in my culturally relevant pedagogy (Osborne, 1996b) which we also use in the same core subject.

My Teaching

My main undergraduate teaching has been in two first year core subjects: Introduction to Education which deals with social justice in relation to class, gender, remote location and students with special needs; and Education and Cultural Diversity which deals with social justice as it relates to cultural diversity and racisms. I routinely

reflect on each of these two subjects and also seek student feedback to

inform my reflections (Osborne, 1994; 1995). My follow up paper (Osborne, 1996a) analyses their responses from this year in the light of some of the ongoing dilemmas and tensions mentioned above. It also analyses them and my teaching in the light of a core third year subject I took for the first time this year. It deals with teaching skills and strategies within a frame of critical reflection and developing a community of critical inquiry. But first let me explain a little more of the two first year subjects.

Introduction to Education begins with the ways that knowledge is generated by research. Habermas's notion of technical, interpretive and emancipatory research interests (Ewert, 1991) becomes a key frame for students reading the positions of various knowledge sources. We then discuss curriculum as content, classroom processes and the social practices in which both are embedded (Connell, 1989) to link into the

hegemony of the curriculum (Young, 1971) as it was set up to serve the interests of capitalist, professional white males and 'to sort and sift' (Connell, Ashenden, Kessler and Dowsett, 1982). Already many students are experiencing considerable dissonance, as they confront messages like: 'Knowledge is not neutral'; 'Curriculum is not neutral'; 'Schooling plays a substantive role in maintaining inequality'; 'Schooling is political'.

And then we look at social justice. It has been a key policy of a reformist Labor state government until early this year when a National/Liberal coalition won leadership and downgraded the prominence of social justice. Social justice means different things to different people and so we tease out the different positions of liberal, conservative and socialist notions of social justice (Starr, 1991). And each of these positions is held often quite strongly by different students within our student body. The challenges of alternative positions again ferments dissonance for many.

With these framings of the issues we then spend several weeks each looking at inequality as it relates to gender, class, students with special learning needs and students from rural/remote settings. We try to engage these issues via students articulating their subjectivities in small group discussions within tutorials. To keep these discussions focused the tutorials are framed around readings which expose students to a wider objectivity. The major source of dissonance for many students during semester 1 originates from our discussions of gender.

Education and Cultural Diversity continues the social justice theme by relating it to matters of ethnic diversity, non-synchrony within ethnic groups (McCarthy, 1990), race relations, and educational policies related to ethnic diversity including assimilation, pluralist multiculturalism, and equitable multiculturalism (Kalantzis, Cope, Poynting and Noble, 1990). We also investigate countering the hegemony (Connell, 1993), inverted curriculum (Connell, 1989; Singh, 1993; Osborne and Carpenter (1993), culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Osborne, 1996) and anti-bias curriculum (Derman-Sparkes, 1990). So while we continue to critique current and historically located schooling, we now begin to offer frameworks to inform resolutions to the dilemmas of teaching across cultures. Issues of ethnicity and racism cause considerable dissonance during semester 2, often more intensely even than gender in semester 1.

So far I have emphasised matters of content over processes and assessment, but given the framing of curriculum I develop with students it is important to run that same template against my own curricula. First comes the processes of learning/teaching. I deliver lectures in note form and encourage students to query and challenge me during lectures. Some, but not very many, do. One reason they give is that they are working so hard to write down the notes that they have little scope to think through what I am saying. I also provide informal

lectures on issues that students raise by writing down a day or two

beforehand. Attendance at these 'continuing seminars' is rarely more than 10% of the total class, but issues of concern to those students who come are discussed and the discussion is generally lively.

Tutorials are organised around two prespecified readings for the week. Each reading has two questions for discussion. After five minutes of clarification of lecture content that was unclear or of assignment details, the tutorial group breaks into four groups of about five and discuss two of the questions for about 25 minutes. The groups combine and share their answers to the questions. During the small group discussion there is plenty of opportunity to share subjectivities but the group is also responsible for focusing on the text and the question. Tutorials run this way achieve much of what I understand to be the unifying of subjectivity and objectivity and considerable pressure is placed on students by their peers to have thoroughly prepared for the discussion.

Second comes assessment. Both my first year subjects are assessed in exam in terms of the tutorial questions. I seek to test the understanding of the issues included in the tutorial questions by asking students to discuss, compare, contrast, and synthesise those issues. And I do this in exam format to establish that the students understand the key ideas of the subjects. Whether they agree with these readings of these issues is not the point - I need to feel comfortable with the idea that students have not only aired their subjectivities (in tutorials, in lectures, in 'continuing seminar', and also in private chats with me and with each other), but that they also know about wider objectivities. My position is that it is great to express subjectivities but without exposure to wider objectivities there is no education. Giroux (1983: 2) took it a step further by saying that pedagogy should seek to be changing 'subjectivity as it is constituted in the individual's needs, drives, passions and intelligence, as well as changing the political, economic, and social foundation of the wider society'.

In assignments I try to relate essay topics to issues they will probably face as teachers and to ensure academic writing skills are developed as part of their socialisation into academia. However as I reflected on my preaching and hopefully modeling of praxis, it dawned on me this year for the first time that I was not 'walking my talk'. In particular students were not being required to engage in any action (apart from writing and talking) upon which to reflect. So in second semester I organised an interview-type task with each student to find and interview a person from a non-English speaking background. For many it was a novel experience to simply talk with such people about their perspectives on society and schooling. It was also an opportunity to 'listen, learn, and understand' before teaching. I also asked them to relate what they obtained in their interviews to four readings from their Education subjects in an attempt to push their newer subjectivities to reflect on a wider objectivity.

There are unresolved tensions for me in the mix of content, learning/teaching processes and assessment. Do I try to cover too much? If so, which content should be dropped? How can I teach the remainder better? Should/would students have more say in the content we cover? Are the learning/teaching processes the best I could use? If not, can I identify them and change to incorporate them? How do I encourage the articulation of subjectivities in written tasks in such a way as to avoid disadvantaging those students who disagree with objective positions? Is encouraging the articulation of subjectivities merely opening a Pandora's box of relativities that are impossible to contain because there is no place from which to critique them? Can I work out assessment strategies which are fair and non-individual? Does all this reflection of mine lead to the presentation of subjects which lack a sense of firm foundation? Does the dialogue I try to establish

help or hinder the development of a community of inquiring students?

Collaboration for Community

A key concern has been to highlight the ways in which we are working to build a community of reflective practitioners in Cairns. One of those ways has been by helping our students to synthesise across the subjects within their program. Our synthesis is based on what we know of each other's work and on the placement of various subjects within the four year program. This knowledge is used to briefly cross-reference/critique each other's positions and content.

At a second level as academics we challenge one another's positions, ask questions of each other about how, where or if certain key issues are dealt within the program and generally share ideas from our own reading and research. Collaboration with Eric Wilson who taught with me in earlier versions of Introduction to Education and Education and Cultural Diversity and who now teaches other core first and second year subjects dealing with language resulted in sharing with students links with classism, sexism and racism as they are constructed in language as well as the other images we are exposed to in the media and popular culture. Collaboration with Dawn Francis to take her third year core subject while she was on special study leave resulted in greater emphasis on reflection, leading to my own written reflections for the first time and beginning to formulate with students what it is to build a community of critical inquiry. Collaboration with Mary Klein keeps us all on the ball about power relationships and how they are inscribed in our daily talk and practices. Sharing the knowledge and approaches we each bring to our program and to teaching with the preservice teachers seems to assist not only with the coherence of the program but also with students synthesising/ critiquing its key elements and linking the parts that they find meaningful to them to

their own subjectivities.

There are several substantive challenges in this collaboration between us as academic colleagues. We share a common goal of educating quality critically reflective graduates. Each of us has our own specific view of what such a graduate might be like and such variations are entirely desirable - we do not clone each others' ideas, nor do we wish our students to be clones of us individually or even of what we stand for collectively. With our students we acknowledge our knowledge of each other's work and frames. From time to time, we mention points of difference that our various positions provide. And this helps students to experience diverse positions and provides optional views on the world of teaching, all of which they may quite legitimately choose to reject. This produces a dilemma already alluded to as the subjectivity/objectivity tension, namely where does a teacher educator draw the line in the sand about what is a position which is acceptable to a credentialller of teachers. And another dilemma is that each of us a lecturers changes over time, we read, reflect, learn from students and from each other. These changes may be substantial and so when we refer to each other's work in class our knowledge of each other could well be dated and hence inaccurate. Closely related to this is the possibility that although we may be using identical terminology we may be using it in substantially disparate ways. Put more bluntly we could be talking at cross purposes using the same terms. This may be confusing to students but it may also sell each other short. It seems to me that identifying such variations on a theme could be helpful on several grounds.

First, it moves beyond the surface features of what we think each other means into a deeper understanding of each other's professional positionings. This is good not only because it provides better knowledge, but also because in clarifying the issues our own positionings are challenged, refined and hence improved. Then, when we

cross-reference each other in class we are better informed, more

accurate and better placed to assist students to see subtle or blatant variations.

Second, it provides opportunity for us to acknowledge the strengths our colleagues bring to the program. This applies not only to strengths in the teaching we do with students but also to the strengths we bring to our research. So, while we might strongly challenge each other's positions, assumptions, and approaches we can affirm their contributions to our collective teaching and research program. Each one brings knowledge, skills and approaches that are part of who we are as individuals. Some of who we each are derives from our subjective experiences as persons, teachers, and lecturers. Some of who we each are derives from our current reading, thinking and exposure to new ideas. And who we are as a team is far greater than the sum of our

individual inputs because we not only share our knowledges to impact on each other's knowledges we also impact differentially on students who selectively impose their subjectivities on what they engage in our teaching. So knowledge and values and skills ripple from each of us.

Another major impact on how and what I teach is the students themselves. As they challenge me, they learn and I learn. As they hurt in the process of becoming more aware of their own subjectivities, they learn and I learn. As they reject the evidence we provide, they learn and I learn. As they reflect on my teaching and share that reflection with me, I learn. As the touchstones (Walker, 1988) I have had with previous intakes of students evaporate before me in a postmodern world (Gergen, 1991), I have to learn. As we work together to achieve the kinds of learning environments we need, I learn. As we read together and discuss they teach me about my subjectivities. And so they engage me in praxis. And as each staff member engages in dialogue with them and with each other so we grow as a team and individually. Indeed I am now searching for a postmodernist explanation of praxis which I had accepted as a given until Dawn Francis pointed me to MacLure's (1995:112) reference to Lather's (1994) postmodernist challenge to praxis.

As our improved knowledges, values and positions ripple out from us to the students, they accept some parts, modify other parts and reject yet other parts. Which ever they chose to do ripples back to us and so the community grows in the richness of its ideas and its relationships.

And as one wave of students passes through another replaces them and the community is renewed, refreshed and strengthened.

Sustaining Community

Until now we have been a small group of staff who have known each other's work well, notwithstanding what I said above about shared terminology not necessarily meaning the same to each of us. But as both tertiary work intensifies and as our team grows in size we have both new sources of strength and a challenge to face in continuing to build the strengths of the team. We will need to develop mechanisms to formalise the sharing has happened informally until now. Part of that formalising may need to delve into the terminology we now use and how it is changing over time, in refinements of meaning and even in ultimate replacement in some cases. Part of that formalising will be to get to know new members of staff and getting to be known by new members of staff.

Some of the terms that seem to be crucial to this more formal process might be some that I have taken for granted here - including social justice, curriculum, team, reflective, community, subjectivity/objectivity, positioning, framing, culture, diversity, and evidence. But even establishing what it is that we might talk about is a topic for dialogue and praxis. So what I am suggesting is that we have some significant initial insights into something which has begun

to develop. We do not have an answer, indeed we each lack faith in

single answers. Single answers presume that there are straightforward problems to be solved. But the challenge of establishing and sustaining a community of reflective practitioners is complex and replete with tensions. Resolving the tensions can only ever be partial and incomplete (Harding, 1986) and the resolutions themselves unearth further tensions and so the praxis cycle continues to repeat itself. Indeed the production of this paper itself has done much not only to clarify how our community developed the way it has so far, but also to help each of us to reflect on our own positions and the teaching of our subjects. Even more crucially it has become a strong catalyst for our future professional development and strengthening our community. It should assist the ongoing conversation we have with each other, our task, our students and the community of scholars who inform us individually and collectively. Accordingly, we have our various resolution(s) of the tensions each of us has, and we as a collective have, for the time being and some sense of where we might go in the immediate future.

My subsequent paper provides insights into student reactions to what I say here. It also explains how other key readings and working with other key colleagues over the years have impacted on the way I teach to help me play a role in creating and sustaining a community of reflective practitioners and indeed how we, in Cairns, work to that end as a team of teacher educators ourselves.

Summary statement about my links to the umbrella of social justice

Implicit in my discussion of my teaching are a variety of positions that carom off one another as I move through time. I started as a technical researcher, moved into interpretive, and dally with critical/post-structural, but that is a very crude overview of a twenty five year history. I have a variety of positions now. One derives from my notions of research - interpretive with a critical sting in its tail. Another derives from my notion of person: from an individual who stands alone, to one who is located in our gendered classed and raced origins (Weiler's, 1988, subjectivity), to saturated self (Gergen, 1991). Yet another derives from my notion of culture: from a notion of custom, to way of seeing the world, to ways of interpreting and generating behaviour within a particular group, to a more dynamic one based on a notion that each of us chooses within our own contexts to select those aspects of our own individual multicultured and saturated selves to suit our current purposes (See attached diagram). Another derives from my changed notions of social justice from conservative to liberal to socialist (or emancipatory) (Starr, 1991). A final one derives from my employment as a teacher educator with responsibilities to prepare and credential teachers for roles in schools that are partly dictated by others. As each of these positions of mine develops and

challenges/refines/deepens each of my other positions and my practices so praxis continues and now praxis itself will be reconceptualised.

I certainly try to articulate not only my positions on the issues I chose to put within my subjects but also to acknowledge the very fluidity of my positions and my current resolutions to the educational/social justice dilemmas that confront students in those subjects (and teachers in classrooms). I am consciously building in space for students to establish their own content, at least in small snippets, within these subjects. And I struggle to find ways to have them build their positions into both tutorial processes and in their responses to assessable activities.

Although I had long known of challenges to individualism (Hargreaves, 1980; and implicit in Connell's, 1985, critique of the competitive academic curriculum) it was not until I came to Weiler's (1988) use of subjectivity that I had a place from which to begin to construct an

alternative to rampant individualism. She says that what we believe is

located at least in part in our raced, classed and gendered origins. So, I now present the notion that we each share with others some perspectives and interests because we have some origins in common with them. As a result we have a chance to form alliances to do social change, and this fits neatly with socialist social justice (Starr, 1991), with Freire's (1972: 40) notions of praxis as 'organised struggle', and with McCarthy's (1990: 135) 'broad-based offensive against inequalities in education and society'. This collectivism is countered in part by Gergen's (1991) notion of saturated self where each of us is torn by competing demands to such an extent that not only are we unable to continue to function as consolidated individuals, many of our experiences of face to face community have been stripped away. Part of the move to reclaim voice, to engage in struggle for change involves moving beyond individualism. Critical to this possibility was the reframing of our BEd program in 1989 around social justice (and away from individualistic psychology) which provided a strong catalyst to find alternatives to individualism. Not that all of us understood the importance of that framing at the time - indeed two of us were not even on staff at that time. Both of us who were had no formal notion of emancipatory social justice nor of the way we would variously begin to move beyond individualism.

Similarly I try to champion multiple voices. At one level I invite students to voice their subjectivities in small groups with each other - and many do this. At another I invite students to challenge me in lectures and tutorials and a few do so. I also try to incorporate multiple voices into the readings, videotapes and guest lectures - Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, Chinese, African American, Filipino, Native American - women and men. The notion of 'listen, learn, understand, teach' is highlighted and linked to countering the

hegemony of the curriculum by framing it around the standpoints of the most disadvantaged groups. And all of this links back into the overarching organiser of the BEd program, namely social justice and in particular emancipatory social justice.

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Building a community of inquiry in teacher education

Pre-service preparation of teachersd set out to provide enriching experiences and rewards which would compensate and provide new bases for learning within (my) curriculum. University studies in psychology reinforced this knowing and underpinned my early work as a teacher committed to support and remediation of non-achieving students. Similarly it supported my valuing of the potential of individual autonomy as I adopted assertiveness training and cognitive conflict resolution strategies as components of communication courses for teachers across cultures and contexts (see Francis, 1981; 1983; 1984)

Immersion in other cultures (Papua New Guinea, Fiji and the mixed language contexts of English as a second language schools in London) began a questioning of the ways in which culture impacts on ways of knowing and communicating but it did not immediately challenge my view of a independent, self- directed individual directing ones' own destiny. Postgraduate ethnographic research and engagement with colleagues pursuing poststructuralist, critical discourse and radical feminist framings of their work and mine , along with my growing frustration at failure to make a difference in the politics of poverty, power and school failure, rendered allegiance to cognitive psychology and the total autonomy of the individual problematic. At the same time on-going work with supervising teachers and pre-service practicum illuminated how people espousing the same theory or practice not only acted differently but had very different impact on groups of students. I have reached a point where I can no longer support normalising practices which hold that application of a particular process or strategy will produce a particular outcome. I have came to see that notions of `good` teaching are always partial, contingent and historically situated and, whether as teachers or as learners, we respond in terms of the discourses available to us in particular contexts at particular times.

The subject in context, as context.

Students at James Cook University enter a four year pre-service teacher

education program. The first two years focus roughly equally on discipline studies outside education and education foundation studies with a strong emphasis on development of a critical knowing of the social contexts of education and appreciation of diversity. The significance of class, gender, culture and race/ethnicity to ways of knowing is given close attention. The structure is premised on the view that these issues are central to educational decision-making and social justice. The structure is based on a critique of teaching and is explicit in its intent to disrupt the `anticipatory socialisation` (Lortie, 1975) of pre-service teachers who have been well served by their schooling while many of their peers have been systematically moved to the margins along class, gender and ethnic lines. Accordingly, in first and second year there is minimal exposure to school-based

teaching, although curriculum studies in language arts and maths are located in second year with some teaching of small groups. Teaching begins in earnest in third year after the critical foundation has been established.

The third and fourth years place increasing emphasis on professional development with curriculum and teaching studies as core, linked to both block Practicum and ongoing active participation in schools. It is the third year professional development component of this that is the focus of this paper. This component was originally developed to provide generic lesson planning and teaching strategies applicable to the various specific subjects taught in the primary school. Over time, paralleling my changing theoretical position from technocist (Francis, 1991) to collaborative (Sellars and Francis, 1995) to critical (Francis, 1995), the subject has moved from a focus on providing generic models which suggest a `best way`, to scaffolding for critical reflective practice which can support multiple constructions of `competent practice`, always with a view to interrupting practices which push some to the margins. Within this there is a caring for the child's learning and development in the context of their biographies (Van Manen, 1991). The challenge continues to be to do this while still providing for beginning teachers being able to meet the competency criteria set for credentialling.

A focus on the school as the desired context

Most of the students enrolled in this program aim to become teachers and thus they see `the school` as the context they need to understand and the employing body as the ultimate evaluator. Engaging with the concern that we in the University might devote time and value to philosophical issues `at the expense of how to teach` (personal communication with a school Principal) along with our questioning of the process-product pedagogy that marked the teacher education of the many of those who are now working with preservice teachers in schools must be an explicit part of our dialogue within the community. There is

always some agonising by students, school based supervisors and university staff as to the roles of each and the way in which `theory-practice` is constructed. The question of whether there is, or should be, a nexus between the university's notion of teacher education, often interpreted as `theoretical`, and that of school based `practical` needs as based on perceptions of beginning teacher concerns (Fuller and Bown, 1975), has been argued ad infinitum. Our approach is based on the belief that this is a partnership and that within it the University needs to attend to both teacher concern for models of instructional practice and to a questioning of the ways in which these are constructed in conjunction with explicit or implicit social visions of institutional practice. This does not need to be done in isolation from the schools. In this particular subject theory is both personally constructed and challenged by others, and the literature within and across contexts. Theory is built first from reflection on experience in and of schools and then illuminated by the literature.

I approach this subject with the belief that the schools our graduates will enter are deeply imbued with a culture of competitive individualism located in cognitive and behaviourist psychology. This culture is inscribed in our knowing of teaching, learning, and curriculum construction. Notions of `ability`, `individual differences`, age-grade progression, normalised teaching and assertive behaviour management strategies are all indicative of this and continue despite the challenges of new language programs, constructivist maths and policies of social justice. Scaffolding for a different knowing requires more than the presentation of alternative theories and the

provision of opportunity to reflect. People reflect (and act) in terms of the positions and discourses available to them and simply providing time for reflection can lead one back to known practices which sustain existing beliefs. Even with a critical foundation established, pre-service teachers also are apt to recognise injustice in others' acts while remaining unaware of injustices in their own thinking and acting. This happens if we fail to situate personal knowing in the context of embodied authoritative discourses, those beliefs and values that are so much a part of our being that they are out of awareness, even pre cognitive. If we are to step outside of these taken-for-granted realities located in these existing discourses we must provide for learners to construct different socio-emotional knowing from experiences that impact cognitively, emotionally, socially and physically on their ways of viewing the contexts in which they find themselves. It is my experience that universities, in attending to the first have too often neglected the emotional, social and physical dimensions of discursive practice.

Like Sumsion (1996, p 43) I believe that the boundaries of teacher educators' responsibilities have changed, so that there is now less responsibility to teach specific low-level technical skills, and an

increased responsibility to foster the development of autonomous and reflective professionals.

Teacher education can no longer be constructed as a simple process for professional reproduction. Thus my task is to find a balance between the development of skills which will give them confidence that they `will survive` and `be seen as competent` in a system that still demands the technical, and support the multi-faceted tension that is essential to working with the complexity of teaching and constructed, rather than received, ways of knowing. The total program is explicit in its desire to move graduates from a naive intent to `fit the system` to a political consciousness of the need to confront the ways in which school structures, curriculum and the acts of teachers can disproportionately benefit some groups in society and fail others (Starret, 1994, p.47)

Constructing the socio- emotional context of university learning : Key concepts and processes

The notion of `critical friendship` and `community of inquiry` are central to my theory of teaching and to this particular subject. Both can be seen as problematic notions that embrace a wide range of meanings located in often conflicting theoretical positions. From the beginning of my interaction with pre-service teachers I articulate my conceptualising of these and explore with them how this effects my practice. Here I am influenced by Jennifer Gore (1993) who advocates that pedagogy not be received by students but unpacked with them. An ongoing component of this unpacking is attention to the ways we interact with and perceive each other within the teaching- learning contexts of the university.

I am always surprised when third year students in a small University claim that they `do not really know` their peers or that they `feel isolated` even in classes of less than twenty. The first three hours of this subject are given to establishing a base for increasing student-student talk. Where I used to believe that I could facilitate interpersonal trust and comfort I now acknowledge that this is a long term process with dimensions that extend beyond the three hours a week we share. The goal in my first meeting therefore is that each person will leave the class knowing the name of every class member and having

shared something unusual and personal about their beliefs and values. I include myself as a member of the class. As part of this sharing I raise questions about the ways my personal biography, race and gender shape my view of teaching and how it might impact on both my curriculum and our learning together. Issues of power and emotion are raised in terms of prior experiences and expectations of what it is to be a `student` and to be a `university lecturer`. I acknowledge that my

institutional role will tend to give my statements and questions weight even though I position myself as learner and my story as but one in the many that can be constructed in this class. As a group we question possibilities for working with this, particularly in relation to the `public text` (Ingram, 1994) created in journal writing. I encourage and participate in on-going dialogue in the weekly journals that are a subject requirement. This leads to a second workshop where each person maps one belief held about `good teaching` which is linked to biography, a time line of memories, and personal-cultural learning. Each also anticipates the way biography and culture shape what is seen to be of value in the classroom. These maps are the base for an introduction to critical friendship and its associated sharing aimed at uncovering and probing the taken-for-granted.

Critical friendship: I conceptualise critical friendship as a trusting relationship in which pairs or very small groups work together over extended time for individual and group professional development. Repeated cycles of sharing meaning-making, as related to curriculum tasks (with curriculum here following Connell's, 1989, definition as including content, processes and assessment), are used with a scaffold of key questions. The purpose of the key questions is to interrupt the taken-for-granted and to support articulation of the ways in which biography, gender and culture constitute knowing. They also promote multiple viewings of what is possible and how teacher action might be given meaning by different stake holders. Within this, both the tension and celebration of grounded (interrogated and articulated) differences can be experienced. Thus I see critical friendship as both an interpersonal context and a process supporting reflection which will lead to new understanding of (i) action situations, (ii) self as teacher in the cultural milieu of teaching, and (iii) taken-for granted assumptions about teaching (see Grimmett as constructed in Francis, 1995, p 231)

More recently I have added , (iv) confidence to take action with a reflective questioning of whose interests one's intent is serving.

Community of Inquiry This extends beyond the critical friendship groups to the year level class, the university team and the school community . Again the articulation of personal theory (s), the probing of self as multiple, constituted and historically situated, and the ways in which this shapes what one sees as worthwhile is paramount. Creating a community of inquiry is a long term goal. As a new campus our direct interaction with the wider school community is just beginning. A series of workshops for supervising teachers, the employment of part-time teachers in curriculum subjects, a joint university committee to input into programs and teaching practicum, collaborative research projects and the opening of in-service subjects to in-service teachers have begun but it is too early to claim that we have had an impact here. Within the university however there has been a growth of collaborative

inquiry across both the lecturing group and theoretical positions. Lecturers not only try to articulate their own personal and theoretical positioning within the subjects they teach but they attempt to understand the ways that others might construct meaning in other parts of the program. Overlap, conflicting theory and contradictions are

foregrounded in our interactions, including interactions with students. Our belief is that in doing this we uncover the pretext that our teaching is neutral and normalised across the program. While I would argue that without this students are forced to compartmentalise their learning in different subjects, ignoring overlap particularly where there is conflict, drawing attention to multiple readings of similar concepts and the absence of a one right way is initially confusing for novice teachers who desperately seek the transmission of a model to be followed. These journal entries are typical:

I came here to learn how to teach and now you tell me there is no best way! How will I know what is going to work? How do I know what is right when you acknowledge that as my teachers you do not agree? I came here expecting to get this from the first year.

I see how those classroom scripts play 'guess what is in the teachers head' but that is the only pattern I know. I don't know enough to do it any other way. I see videos of what I think is good teaching and then you or Eric challenge it... in different ways. Why did those people make those videos (Sydney Micro teaching program)to teach us about teaching if that is not the way to do it? Why do teachers out there keep saying, 'I thought you would have been taught this by now?'

The growing awareness that knowledge is a personal construct and that there are multiple positions shaping content, process and assessment creates frustration. Also, the valuing of inner voice as subjective knowing (Sumsion, 1996) can increase personal confidence, without challenging the taken-for-granted. For students finding an inner voice, external inquiry and disruption of the taken- for- granted can initially lead to retreat to existing discourses, particularly where these are shared by a school based supervisor who is perceived to be 'in the real world'. One preservice teacher, after micro teaching feedback from a critical friend wrote to me:

Competition is a fact of life. Kids have to deal with it and some will be more able than others. I believe it is healthy to learn to win and lose and don't accept what (critical friend) says about institutionalised losing for some kids. I will provide the opportunity and the supports and it is really up to them. When I think I've done it the right way, someone questions it. Surely no teacher can cater for every little group. They all have to learn the basics. My teacher uses competition on a daily basis and those kids really know the basics. She says we need to return to these basics and that kids are naturally

competitive. We are not in a real world out here.

We have to constantly search for ways of exposing this form of binary thinking (co-operative/competitive, in here/ out there, theory/practice) that dominates our ways of thinking and speaking in order to create spaces for reconstructing for multiple possibilities. This does not mean that we have a 'wishy washy' curriculum or that we retreat from pedagogical intent.

We conduct round table discussions where lecturers (both internal and visiting) analyse key ideas (for example, 'self` `subjectivity` `power`, `knowledge/knowing` and transcripts from teaching encounters) with students present and able to participate. This models both the productive tension surrounding the adoption of different theoretical positions and the ways in which these shape what it is possible to see and value. We aim that students who participate in, or witness, such debate are more likely to question, amongst themselves even if not always with us, the language and conceptual underpinnings of our work and our curriculum. Journals here reveal a mixture a excitement and

retreat as shown in these extremes:

I have never seen academics talking to each other like this before. I suppose they do it in staffrooms and among themselves but not usually in our hearing. The ideas were so different and so stimulating . I found myself being pulled in all directions as I was convinced by each. I am now asking myself where I fit or if I even have to... since I am not where they are and I am not what they are and I only caught fractions of the ideas expressed. I might well end up somewhere quite new.

You could cut the air with a knife at times. I could see you using the same words to mean different things. Sometimes one of you would react strongly to a word and I would not know why. It all seems so nit picky. Wouldn't you think with all the years that academics have been looking at language that they would have solved the problem of what is the best way to teach it. What is the meaning of 'discourse'?

As our sharing of our theoretical positions, as academics and teacher-learners, has increased we have become collectively more alert to the ways we use common terms to mean different things, often with other possible uses lying out of awareness. An interrogation of common terminology used in our teaching is an issue on our agenda to pursue further in the next semester.

Despite the frustrations, the reflections of our first graduates suggest that over four years a sense of purpose and empowerment grows , as expressed in increased responsibility for and control over personal learning as distinct from reproduction of lecturer's theory.

I see others (who have not done this program) grabbing every new package or in-service without thinking about how it fits with their beliefs or of how it might impact on different children. As a result they jump from one new fad to another. I am very conscious of integrating within my own developing theories about what is good for me and how this will effect kids, parents... While I did not always like the lack of `do this to solve your problem` when I was at uni I now see how much confidence I have to stand apart if I don't believe...

Sometimes I hit a new dilemma and I say to myself, `Darn you didn't tell me how to meet this one! But then I remind myself that I did learn to think for myself, to speak out from a stated personal position so that others see where I am coming from and to question the immediate solution that presents itself to my mind. I often surprise myself at how far from the first solution we move. `How else might this be given meaning?' is still very much a part of me, not just as teacher, but as wife as well.

(from a graduate writing daily reflections shared with children and parents)I still meet experienced teachers who say, `why bother yourself with all that theorising and self questioning. You are only making more work for yourself.. As if we don't have enough to do now' But it keeps me alive in my learning and I find the children respond in amazing ways to the idea that I don't always feel sure and comfortable and that I am puzzling about my learning and theirs.

I have come to see a community of inquiry as requiring

- caring for other as person intent on reflective practice for professional development
 - trust and mutual respect for multi voice
 - quality time for reflection
 - quality time for dialogue
-
- critique which takes all beyond the taken-for granted assumptions of their existing discourses
 - inquiry about something that touches the inquirers and is deemed to be important by them

Early challenges to critical friendship and community of inquiry

Initially I overlooked the baggage that people viewing themselves as `students` carried concerning the term `critical`. The silences of some class members and written reflections soon indicated that confronting (and even more so, interrogation of personal belief) are not just heard but felt bodily as forms of personal attack to be avoided wherever possible. Years of schooling have positioned them to expect teachers to evaluate on the base of looking for and naming `what is right and

wrong`, `valuable and `not valuable` and thus personal valuing is `not taken as a topic to be aired in class` and especially `not linked to what we write in assignments ... that is really about knowing what teachers believe and matching it`. These evaluative binaries are rarely presented in terms of personal theory or value positioning and even less often is the valuing historically or culturally located. Being critical in this knowing is constructed as normalising and judging. Friendship on the other hand is clearly distanced from this with strong elements of `giving warm fuzzies` and `avoiding criticism`. After working with critical incidents and restructured micro teaching where student interaction illustrated this embodied understanding in strongly judgmental, single best way to teach feedback or in superficial praise statements that ignored key issues observed, we moved back to re examine how critical was being constructed in ways that reflected prior learning and in so doing placed limits on the friendship (caring) dimension of our double-barrel notion. I initially assumed that I could create conditions where all felt safe to speak and to write honestly (see also Osborne, 1994 for a similar assumption made and challenged). I now accept that the extent to which I can do this is limited and varies for different students. I build this within an expectation that our goals here are not unlike those that teachers have meeting a new set of colleagues and a new class. I now incorporate some skill building in the form of analysing feedback for preconceived notions, both positive and negative, specific modelling and practice of the giving and receiving of feedback and in the use of mediating questions (Costa & Garmston, 1991) which focus on data rather than immediate judgment. This work intersects with the discourse analysis done in the language subjects. In both the focus is not to present a normalised skill applicable across contexts but to build sensitivity to the way discourses are constructed. It also incorporates the earlier mapping and sharing of beliefs and values as located in biography and time.

Historically situated theory building linked to skill development

Each of us is constantly constructing and reconstructing theory. I would claim that one of the problems in University education is that learners can come to reify the literature as the only `legitimate` form of theory. In foregrounding the theorising done by others and squeezing this into their talk and writing for assessment, university students are positioned to devalue the issues and questions that are embedded in their own experience. Only when they see themselves as theory builders can they begin the process of interrogating the issues which are located in their own knowing and build bridges between their own realities and others'. It is from this position that I include both reflective writing and the ongoing metacognitive mapping as personal

theory(s) building over the full year of this subject. In this I draw

courage from the work of Kathleen Weiler (1983) and Max Van Manen (1995). Weiler views subjectivities as including values, attitudes and world views constituted in class, gender and race. While I accept this definition I do not share Weiler's belief that we are very much aware of our subjectivities. Part of challenge of theory building is raising more of the out of awareness subjectivity to consciousness so that it can be reflected upon while continuing to acknowledge that this is always partial and in progress. Van Manen's conceptualising helps to clarify this by distinguishing between the 'gnostic' or cognitive self which resides in books, the head and in plans that integrate people's knowledge into rationalised practice, and the more powerful 'pathic' or precognitive self that resides in the body, in action and in emotional experience of the world. It is in subjectivities and in the pathic that one integrates self, knowing and practice and from thus builds theory.

While I lean towards phenomenology as way of capturing and thus opening to reflection one's theories, I recognise that this subject is not one where extensive time can be given to developing confidence in this form of sustained writing. As a compromise I use journalling which can be shaped in many different ways by the writers in on-going dialogue with me. Some write extensive narrative, some write poetry, others diagram or draw (see Francis 1994 for detail of the journalling process used here).

Along with journalling and repeated contexting in historical time frames, and biography, I use critical incident analysis and metaphor construction as ways of enhancing personal theory building. Unlike Schön, and following Eraut (1995), I have moved from focus on incidents that are immediately problematic and puzzling to those that are seen as ordinary and understood (Schön's 'knowing in action') and too often remain uncontested. I believe it is here that we can best confront the values and beliefs that underpin our thinking, perception and action. In doing this I aim to move with students from the naivete of 'this is the way things are' to a problematised shared examination of the underlying values, beliefs and experiences which have shaped our views of what is possible and appropriate. This has the advantage of being viewed as 'real' in that it focuses on personally experienced classroom episodes while incorporating critical theorising through the use of questions that raise the issues of who is advantaged/ disadvantaged and who defines the what is heard and valued. The repeated use of these questions across the curriculum acts against reflection that reproduces within the taken-for-granted primary discourse.

Pre-service teachers are asked to write a metaphor for teaching. We talk in groups about the ways that these might reveal underlying beliefs and values and provide 'coherence and meaning' (Bullough, Knowles & Crow, 1991, p.7) to the ways we differently experience teaching and learning. Verb patterns are identified as possible illuminators of personal theory (eg convey, give, tell might link to a transfer theory; cultivate, encourage, nurture to a growing theory).

Using metaphor they search for impact on views of student and teacher role, for ways of monitoring progress, for explanations of success and failure and for choice of teaching learning strategies.

Biography, metaphors and critical incident analysis, using the scaffold of key questions, can be applied as we move into the competencies that are stipulated on practicum reports and used by Department of Education evaluators determining placement for graduates. Micro teaching in this subject continues to be a scaled down teaching encounter which has a predetermined, though no longer value-neutral, skill focus. It continues to be based on a belief that professional growth will occur

as teachers wholeheartedly engage with others in successive cycles of conceptualising, goal setting, observation and reflection. However, context, personal theorising, conceptualising and decision-making, rather than strict application of a generic skill, provide the bases for observing, analysing, reflecting and challenging. The question 'good for whom and good for what?' replaces check lists of normalised skill application. Within a lecturer-determined focus such as 'teacher talk', or 'feedback', critical friends read, observe and critique a range of examples. They frame critique using the key questions and their own developing personal theories. From this they identify specific elements of the skills or strategies they to apply for particular purposes in particular contexts. In this way we grapple with teaching as a complex, multi-faceted activity which is given meaning in different ways by different teachers and learners.

Multi voice as a challenge to bounded self and reified individualism

Beginning with a focus on probing the self as multiple, constituted and historically situated and sharing this with others provides a base for articulating notions of multi voice. Not only do we see complexities and contradictions in ourselves within and across contexts but we become acutely aware of at least some of the taken-for-granted elements in our world views that are given meaning in different ways by others who react from different positions. One exciting outcome of this has been the way that pre service-teachers have come to value the contradictions and dilemmas in their own theorising and in action. For example Vanessa's journal illustrates not only her embodied knowing of questioning at school and how this conflicted with her construction of teacher role, but also how focussed interaction with others facilitates new questioning:

I remember that I was very shy at school and that I often felt sick in the stomach when the teacher began to throw questions around ... I hated it if the teacher made it obvious that I could not understand even simple maths. I really had not put this together with the things I seein the classroom now. I just assumed that since nice teachers seek

help that this was the thing to do. The more I think about it and put myself in the child's shoes I think that this spotlights the child's not knowing. I wonder what motivates those that 'help'. Is it support or is it competition for teacher approval? How then do you encourage speaking out and the exploration needed for constructing knowledge?

.... The group raised some ideas I had not considered before. The more we talked, the more new ideas came Perhaps if we really believe in constructivism then asking whole class questions (with presumed right answers) is counter to this? How then do we know, as teachers, what process each child is using? What if they go completely down the wrong track? Can I use 'correct/incorrect?' We were all stunned when Kim threw in that others can help only if someone 'failed'. It certainly opened a whole lot more possibilities. It isn't a simple incident at all.

I stress here that recognition and even celebration of difference is not enough to support action for social justice. As McLaren and Lankshear (1993, p 48) put it:

Celebrating difference without investigating the ways in which difference becomes constituted in oppressive asymmetrical relations of power often betrays a simple minded romanticism and exotization of Other Challenging the exotization that (re)produces a mono voice while celebrating difference is an ongoing challenge. Pre-service teachers are confronted, in schools and in resource centres, with curriculum

models of the myth and basket weaving type. It is also 'less risky' to engage in these units which both students and teachers enjoy rather than confront the more complex issues of the every-day politics of modern day living.

Four of our five staff have lived and taught in non anglo contexts. Our student population is a mix of school leavers and mature age entry with the latter this year comprising about half of the class. Like most university contexts there are few who come from non-anglo background and even fewer who do not embrace a 'education- personal effort-success` ethic. Thus we must continually confront the bounded lenses of being located as successful in a mainstream, predominantly white and middle class institution. Identifying voices located in spaces we have never occupied is limited by the very constructions we are attempting to understand. We cannot know what it is to occupy the space , social, psychological and existential, that positions others at the margins. We can however raise to a conscious level the ways in which our unconscious enculturation shapes not only action but what is viewed as acceptable and of value. In Richardson's words:

Rather than decrying our socio-historical limitations... we can use them specifically to ask relevant (useful, empowering, enlightening) questions. Consequently, the most pressing issue as I see it is a

practical- ethical one: how should we use our skills and privileges...
(1990 p.27)

We have not had to go beyond our own classroom to experience examples of multi voice and the influence of biography, class and culture. The move from whole class work to co-operative and collaboration has not been without problems. Those who see themselves as high achievers within the institution and who are positioned to give extensive time to ensuring this achievement often are reluctant to work with those they perceive to be outside of this group, particularly where the task given is to be assessed formally. Allowing students to self select groups for assessment tasks inevitably leads to the self identified high achievers choosing to work together. Those identified as `slack`, `having too many other priorities` or `a record of poor results` are often not chosen and left to form a group. As in the system we are trying to interrupt, this has meant that second language speakers and women whose partners do not support long hours given to academic work are relegated to the margins. This remains a dilemma. I have confronted the class with, `lets look at what is happening here in a program aimed at establishing more equitable outcomes`. This has promoted animated discussion and some redistribution of groups, although usually in the form of accepting an additional person rather than giving up one's perceived more able colleagues as partners. Unlike the situation described by Johnston and Nicholls (1995) where students accepted and participated in a restructuring for fairer learning, where university results are at risk the students in our program illustrate in their less public journalling that `the reality of competition for grades` continues to dominate the discourse of group work. We have been able to make much progress in non assessable activities but the institutional form of assessment remains a key issue sustaining individualism. I have had to retreat from assigning group grades to structuring for an option for the group to designate the contribution of individuals for separate assessment. This year, despite earlier expressions of concern about `social loafing` and `unequal input` only two groups took up this option. More importantly, two of the groups who opted to `redistribute for personal learning about equity` reported that they learned to work in new ways and collectively felt `pleasure` in knowing that `everyone learned` and `some of our members received their first ever distinction`. While the valuing of the qualitative result remained,

there had been a serious attempt to understand and renegotiate surrounding issues of child care, literacy skills and interdependence in constructing goals.

A number of studies (Ball & Goodson, 1985; Bennett, 1991; Bullough & Knowles, 1990; Novak & Knowles, 1992) have shown the complexity of teachers' images of teaching for second career persons. Whether they bring advanced preparation for particular content areas, the values and processes of other work cultures or their children's experience of

schooling, our mature age Graduate pre-service teachers are often less influenced by recent images of self as successful student than those who have come directly from K-12 schooling. Depending on the interpersonal relationships established in workshop groups this can either enhance depth of sharing or be a barrier. Certainly it provokes multi voice. Also, those who have degrees but have not completed the prior two years in education where the language and philosophy of social justice central to the program are sometimes frustrated by their peers 'theorising' while the peers in turn label the graduates 'uninformed in educational issues' and 'often arrogant'.

As a teacher educator I can ignore these elements of multi voice by focussing on a narrow definition of curriculum as program to be taught. However, to do this would be to ignore the physical, social and emotional dimensions of knowing that sustain existing beliefs and practices. What is happening in this tertiary classroom parallels writ small the disadvantage and structural inequality of the classrooms these people will enter as teachers. For me, confronting this with the group is a beginning but it is not yet enough to alter what is valued. Together, in the community of inquiry, we must generate new pedagogical practices which not only support a critical disposition but which alter lived experience. A number of issues become important here. The teacher educator needs to examine the task and what is to be evaluated. If the reconstituted groups find that they do not have the skills or sensitivities to negotiate inter and intra personal multi voice productively, if the structures of time tables, work and family commitments are not addressed, or if their end product receives a grade substantially below that they believe they would have received before the regrouping, there will be no reconstruction.

Continuing quest for new direction

There can be no conclusion to work of this kind. Its value lies in the questions generated and new possibilities raised which will be given meaning within the contexts of the writer and the reader. To suggest that we have a model would be the very antithesis of what we set out to do. However, notions of care, critique and community framing ongoing theory building in which competing discourses collide, intersect and overlap creates a spaces in which curriculum and teaching strategies can be developed and probed as constituted pedagogy (see Figure 1).

For the staff involved in this program seriously engaging in re conceptualising teacher education as the creation of a community of inquiry continues to be both discomforting and exciting. We have an altered sense of community in our embracing, and increasing articulation of, our own multi voicedness. With this has come an ongoing need to address at both the interactive and emotional level the tensions that articulating difference brings and a new attention to the ways in which we act our commitment to care and critique. We read more

across theoretical positions and view these as `in progress` and we intend to explore further, with other members of the community, the way that our language use shapes the meanings we make and communicate to

others.

Figure 1: Framing critical pedagogy in the Professional Development Strand

Within the particular subject of professional development I continue to probe the ways in which critical friendship can be (re) constructed for professional growth and emancipatory social action. Integrating multiple constructions of skills for the competent practice demanded by credentialling bodies with the philosophical questioning of pedagogy is central to this. If we ignore teachers need for practical scaffolds to new practice we risk deleting any progress we have made with an allegiance to critical theory and social justice.

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status and reward attached to research and publication encouraging `a retreat from undergraduate teaching` (Neumann, 1996, p.7) . Restrictions on budgets, the push to teach more students with less, and an increasing public awareness that schools are contributing to the inequality that exists in our society raises questions about long held beliefs about the organising and presenting teacher education. With this comes the need to critically and publicly examine our existing practice and its philosophical bases.

My position is that students should not be excluded from this. This paper is a part of that questioning and should be read in conjunction with the other papers (Osborne et al., 1996) that accompanied it and together present a view of a total teacher education program. Using the weekly written reflections of pre-service teachers and my own learning as a base, this paper examines the professional development component of a four year pre-service education program at James Cook University Cairns Campus where a team of five academic staff, supported by part-time teachers, have committed themselves to the development of a community of inquiry. The professional development component has three explicit goals; first, to build the teaching skills necessary to credential teachers for work in early childhood and primary school settings (and in particular those of planning and classroom management), second, to foster attitudes and skills in critical reflective practice which will alter long-standing relations between teaching and structural and cultural inequities and third, to build dispositions in which teachers see themselves as theory builders working in a community of inquiry where knowledge is always partial, contingent and historically located in discursive practices.

Biography intersecting with professional practice

Walkerdine (1994) has raised questions about where our biography positions us in our research .The same question can be asked of teaching. Growing up in a working class family with strong Protestant commitment to work ethic and a family supported desire to move into a profession via success in the school system positioned me to embrace notions of individualism and personal autonomy. As I entered teaching my view was that equality and justice were rightly dependent on honest hard work. Was I not proof that hard work and commitment made social movement from poverty possible? That my `good family` (Nicklin-Dent and Hatton, 1996) with its assertive discipline supported behaviours and experiences valued by middle class teachers and my anglo culture corresponded with that supporting the existing curriculum was not seen as an issue. My Protestant ethic pushed me toward a liberal humanism which held that I had a social responsibility to support and even remediate those less fortunate. In this I readily attributed poor performance to deficiencies in home background, lack of ability or poor

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Papers form a symposium first presented at 1996 Australian Association of Research in Education Conference Singapore, November.

Liberal humanism here is caring but locates `problems` in the marginalised group, ignoring the politics of social and cultural positioning and where status and behaviour are defined in relation to the dominant group.

Normalising here constructs the class as homogenous. This meaning should be distinguished from Van Manen's (1991) positive construction of `normative` as orienting ourselves to the good or moral.

What is happening here? (what am I / you doing?)

How might my biography and values impact on my interpretation?

How might others give meaning differently?

What alternatives for action are there?

Who might be advantaged / disadvantaged?

Paulo Freire (1995) in his conversation with Donaldo Macedo cautions those who see themselves as `facilitators` without an intent to teach. This is not unlike Max van Manen's(1991) rejection of critical perspectives which construct all pedagogical influence as a form of domination. he generates `pedagogical thoughtfulness` as an agogical

form of influence.

BECOMING CRITICAL: POSTSTRUCTURALLY

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This paper looks at critical reflection in preservice teacher education in mathematics, from a poststructuralist perspective. Essentially it focuses on how questions of identity/desire are central to any hope of changed pedagogical practices in the teaching and learning of mathematics. The critical dimension explores how relationships of power/knowledge within the discourse of mathematics enact liberal humanistic understandings of the individual which prove disempowering for some students.

MATHEMATICS EDUCATION/CONSTRUCTION OF LEARNING AND TEACHING

I teach a maths methods subject for primary and early childhood teachers. It is a subject which students take in the second year of their teacher education course which covers the various theories of learning and development which influence the teaching and learning of mathematics in school. In order to conform with the Discipline Review of Teacher Education in Mathematics and Science (1989) I base my teaching on constructivist principles which prioritise the active construction of knowledge in a supportive and encouraging environment.

In the Construction of Learning and Teaching students are introduced to the theory of constructivism and teaching practices which might be deemed to support this particular view of learning. Whereas previously theories of psychology that have informed schooling were merely introduced and explored as to implications for practice, more recently I have begun to explore how commonsense and taken-for-granted assumptions on which each of these theories is based can prove regulatory and discriminatory in practice. These assumptions have largely to do with a view of the individual as unitary, rational and of knowledge as a cognitive construct.

ARTICULATING POSITION

The position I put forward in all teaching is that as students, or pupils in schools, are learning mathematics, they are simultaneously learning about their own and others' positioning within the discourse. Mathematics is a discourse where socially organised frameworks of meaning define categories and specify domains of what can be said and done (Burman, 1994). However, mathematics is only one of many discourses in which we have been involved which collectively have constituted our respective

desire(s).

From research on my constructivist practice (1991-1993) I began to appreciate the many real constraints on empowerment, on supposed student autonomy and critical reflection. Looking more closely at videos and transcribed communications with students, to my astonishment I found:

- The subject (myself and students) in and of my practice could not be considered unitary, rational, autonomous.
- Power could not be considered only negative and the possession of powerful others; it operated strategically on and through my practice and was productive of identity/desire.
- Knowledge, or knowing, was more than a (critical) cognitive construction. In discourse, power can not be separated from knowledge.

My pedagogical practice, a critical pedagogy in a poststructuralist sense, is based on a perceived interplay and movement between (a) our collective actions/practices within the discourse of constructivist maths, (b) the culture and structures of institutionalised teacher education and (c) students'/my desires or subjectivities. Questions of identity or desire are considered central to any questions of social transformation or changed pedagogical practice. Two movements are seen to be necessary to have students/lecturer's desire (re)fashioned: First, each must come to realise his/her individual constitution, and constitution of others through discourse(s); and, second, each must recognise the constructed binaries within discourse which serve to disenfranchise one half of each binary. Agency/empowerment for participants within discourse becomes "...a sense of oneself as one who can and should provide a critique of existing cultural values and practices such that they might genuinely bring about change" (Davies, 1996, p.34). At the moment this does not appear to be the outcome of involvement in preservice teacher education courses in maths method (see Foss and Kleinsasser, 1996).

COUNTERING INDIVIDUALISM

Within poststructuralist theories of knowledge, the individual can no longer be seen as the rational unitary, humanist self. Rather each individual is constituted through involvement in discourses, such as constructivist maths, is multiple and changing, and in his/her actions constitutive of others. This embodied constitution is often referred to as desire, and it largely influences, though does not determine practice. For example,

preservice teachers desire a pass or high grades in a subject at university, so they (most often) "play the game" according to the institutionalised cultural practices of education. The problem is, of course, that some students are discriminately dealt the trumps in any particular discourse, or "game of truth" (Foucault, 1984) leaving others disenfranchised or not able to participate on equal terms.

Lecturers and students together need to confront desire, where as Davies (1996, p.146) states: Each person comes to see the multiple ways they are positioned and the ways in which they are constituted first through one discourse and then another. Each person ... takes up a knowledge of their own specificity, their embodiment as this person with this specific cultural/gendered/ethnic history, but also with political awareness recognising they are always constituted and always constitutive of others.

This might begin with the lecturer writing/revealing to students how his/her pedagogical desire has historically and socially been shaped through discourse(s). Personal experience of the various meta-theoretical assumptions of the teaching of mathematics have constituted the lecturer to "know" mathematics in a certain way. This

can then be followed by preservice teachers bringing to the classroom examples of mathematical artefacts. For example, one session might concentrate on worksheets/texts/ exercise books; another on exams; yet another on mathematical games etc. Each participant tells a personal story of experience (historical and social) of the chosen artefact. The concern is for the view of maths, the view of learning and the positioning of the individual within the discourse through the use or employment of each artefact. The group might end up with a collective remembering of how, say, the completion of worksheets, constituted members to "know" maths in certain ways.

CHAMPIONING MULTIPLE VOICES

Students need to be aware of the assumptions of discourses and the practices which maintain systems of privilege. They need to understand how binary divisions, acted upon but often not articulated, disadvantage one half of the binary. For example, in maths education, binaries that arise are those of "normal" development/slow development; intelligent student/slow learner; Aboriginal learning style/European learning style; and male/female. Although these binaries are most often not articulated, they are acted upon to group and classify, and so

marginalise some students. For example, when we see some early childhood children as "developmentally slow", we might sit them together in a "remedial" group and give them easier work or colouring in. Eventually they "learn" their exclusion, or at least marginalisation, from the authoritative mathematical discourse. Similarly, for example, in pupil reports, teachers tend to represent female students as conscientious in maths and males as the high achievers, though not so hard working (Jones, 1996). With enough of similar practices of disenfranchisement, women eventually "learn" the maths is not a "game" (discourse) in which they are expected to participate onequal terms.

In preservice teacher education lecturers and students must together confront the "commonsense", "natural", "taken for granted" assumptions of the teaching and learning of maths. What do we mean when we state that a student is "naturally" slow? What are the assumptions on which we make this statement? Who benefits when we state that Aborigines, for example, have a different "learning style"? What is the effect, in practice, of such a statement? Does it mean that nothing changes, because, after all, nothing can be done about an essentially different learning style, presumably a feature of all Aborigineseverywhere.

CONCLUSION

As I write these words I realise that my telling is partial and governed by the historico-social discourses that have constituted my desire, and by the power/knowledge parameters of this time and place. As agency and voice are social effects of practice, I would want to apply this construction to my work with preservice teachers, who, constituted through a different experience of "being" in mathematics may hope (desire) to teach maths more equitably and for empowerment. The interrelationship between what I and students do in teacher education, the culture of teacher education and our desire(s) are represented in the following diagram. Certainly, for lasting social and pedagogical change each element must change, affecting and being affected by

each of the others (Davies, 1996).

CULTURE/STRUCTURE OF TEACHER EDUCATION

DISCOURSES: CONSTRUCTIVISM/PSYCHOLOGY/ASSOCIATED PRACTICES

DESIRE/IDENTITY/SUBJECTIVITY

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