

# Promoting student engagement in the secondary school as a logic machine

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## Promoting student engagement in the secondary school as a logic machine

### Main moves

1. Introduce the paper ...
2. Introduce Redesigning Pedagogy in the North Project
3. Outline our notion of the secondary school as logic machine or apparatus.
4. Map local high school rationality, using data from the RPiN project, for school structures, school culture and pedagogical practice
5. Implications for theory, policy, and practice

# ***Redesigning Pedagogies in the North***

## **Australian Research Council Linkage Project**

- **Hawke Research Institute (UniSA)**
- **NASSPN**
- **the Australian Education Union**
- **the Social Inclusion Unit.**
- **PhD student, 2 honours students**

*connecting lives  
& learning*

Unless we solve the pedagogy problem, all other efforts at reconstruction ... will be in vain. The curriculum is, in the final analysis, what teachers enact in classrooms. (Boomer, 1999, p. 136)

It is through pedagogies that education gets done. (Lingard, 2007, p. 247)

# A RPiN Process...

- develop and sustain **professional learning communities** that enable teacher inquiry into reinvigorating curriculum and pedagogy in the middle years;
- support **teachers to research their students** as people and as learners;
- support **teachers to be involved in projects** that aim for substantial improvements in the quality and quantity of student school work;
- **provide a range of resources**, (including planning time, critical friends, curriculum materials, expertise) to assist in the success of research projects and curriculum work.

# Two stories

Life in schools

Redesigning pedagogy is  
possible

challenge of sustaining high expectations for learning

...the challenge is to provide learning experiences (curriculum) that are intellectually demanding along with appropriate pedagogy that supports students to be successful.

## Challenge of connecting to student lifeworlds

The pedagogical challenge is about finding ways to integrate lifeworld and subject discipline knowledges in ways that that don't trivialise either?

This idea is about treating students' lifeworlds seriously in a curricular and pedagogical sense



STUDENTS

TEACHER

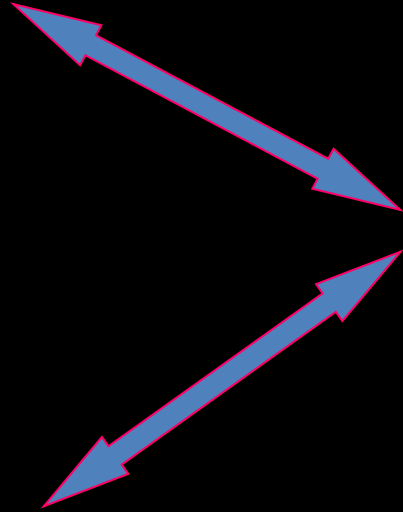
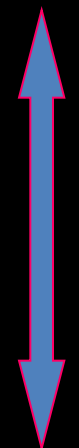
KNOWLEDGE &  
IDENTITY

**Lifeworld knowledge**

- funds of knowledge
- place
- vernacular literacy
- popular culture
- out-of-school learning sites

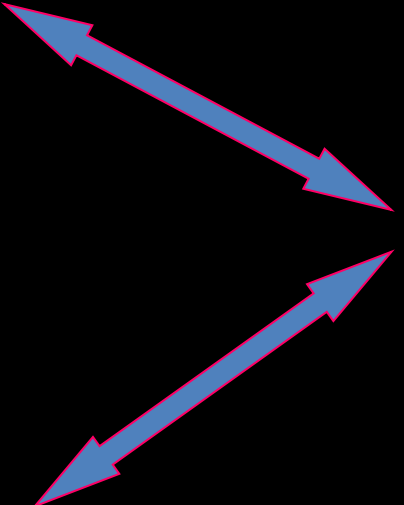
**Subject discipline**

- vocabulary
- deep understanding
- skills
- understandings
- literate practice
- numeracy



STUDENTS

TEACHER



KNOWLEDGE &  
IDENTITY

**Lifeworld knowledge**

- funds of knowledge
- place
- vernacular literacy
- popular culture
- out-of-school learning sites

**strong  
connectedness**

**perform their  
learning**

**Subject discipline**

- vocabulary
- deep understanding
- skills
- understandings
- literate practices
- numeracy

**challenging  
relevant learning  
tasks**

# But how can we understand the whole school as the unit of analysis?

Against School Effectiveness and School Improvement (SE/SI) paradigms that are now very influential in national policy regimes (Thrupp, 2005; Wrigley, 2012).

SE/SI accounts of schools fail to acknowledge the gradient of challenges facing schools across any nation, and that those challenges are qualitatively different in 'disadvantaged' schools.

As well, such accounts of schools under-estimate local interpretation of policy and hence also fail to grasp the significance of practical reasoning at the school level.

**Mapping the local  
logics of schools  
has a number of  
antecedents.**

Tyack and Cuban's (1994)  
grammar of schooling'

Ethno-methodology

National Schools Network;  
structure, culture, pedagogy

**Invoking the  
idea of  
school as  
machine  
*dispositif*, or  
'apparatus'**

The school became a machine for learning, in which each pupil, each level and each moment, if correctly combined, were permanently utilized in the general process of teaching.  
*(Foucault Discipline and Punish p. 165)*

# WHOLE SCHOOL REFORM

## STRUCTURE

- changes at the organisational level
- use of time and space
- groupings of students & staff
- staff roles
- curriculum organisation
- use of technology

## CULTURE

- how the school makes sense of itself
- nature of relationships
- decision making/leadership
- how you challenge the status quo

## PEDAGOGY

Relationships between teachers, learners, knowledge/identity

What is commonly understood as 'good' pedagogy?

What is the 'truth' about the students and their communities?

# SILA WHOLE SCHOOL REFORM

## STRUCTURE

- Developing/sustaining professional learning community
- strategic and focused SIP
- Literacy improvement roles
- Performance management
- Educational leadership

## CULTURE

- Unsettling deficit views
- Changing the talk about what's good enough for literacy achievement
- Whole school agreements
- Shifting focus from bad behaviour to what we can do about learning

## PEDAGOGY

- Challenging pedagogy?
- 'Explicit' teaching
- Bringing together oral language, reading and writing

# The 'structuring' of pedagogy

Pedagogy arises in dependence of an ensemble:

- Architectural forms
- Institutions; regulations, laws, administrative measures
- What's understood as the 'truth' about teaching/learning
- Ideas about what's 'good' pedagogy
- Technology
- The logic of practice
- Teacher biography/identity
- Student identity

Not only constraining but provides possibilities



## STRUCTURE

- Timetable structure
- Teaching teams/faculties
- The architecture
- Opportunities for PD
- Rules for student support
- Assessment and reporting
- Resources for learning

## CULTURE

- 'That's the way we do things around here'
- What is the 'truth' about the students and their communities?
- What is commonly understood as 'good' pedagogy?
- Politics of voice

## PEDAGOGY

- Having to cover specific content
- Keeping students engaged
  - Lesson-by-lesson, short/long tasks
- The logic of writing
- Literacy and learning
- Students as researchers
- Students as learners, in and out of school

# For theory

Devise research that brings school leaders, teachers, and students voices into the policy space

Devise studies that respect the autonomy of schools, but also account for how globalising policy networks constitute teachers' work (pedagogy)

Develop accounts that provide hopeful accounts of pedagogical innovation in schools

Contribute to theories of equality

# But then what about pedagogy?

- Negotiating the curriculum
- Designing challenging learning tasks
- Expecting students to present their learning
- Helping students talk about themselves as learners
- Explicit teaching/scaffolding
- Student feedback on quality

# For Policy

Support models of change that focus on whole change models

Devise policy that assumes teachers are the solution

Devise policy that also listens to the views of students

Advance models of pedagogy that support teachers as curriculum designers

Support action research/practitioner inquiry models of teacher learning that provide thoughtful spaces for development of new practices in school contexts: (it is not about adopting the right answer)