Pedagogies for Justice Conference Program

Wednesday, October 2nd, 9:00am - 4:00pm
H2-16, Hawke Building, City West Campus
University of South Australia

Convened by Centre for Research in Education, UniSA & Yunggorendi First Nations Centre for Higher Education & Research

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<td>8:45 – 9:00am</td>
<td>Registration</td>
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<td>9.00 – 10.45am</td>
<td>Session 1. What’s the policy context for thinking about social justice and schooling</td>
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<td><strong>It’s (im) possible?: The role of ACARA in shaping thinking about social justice and schooling</strong></td>
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<td><em>Professor Michele Simons, University of Western Sydney</em></td>
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<td>The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) is an independent institution which has been charged with the responsibility of developing a national curriculum from Foundation to Year 12. As such, it provides the framework which shapes teachers work and the documents that they must ‘use’ with their students. The policy documents (the Shape of the Australian Curriculum and the Curriculum Design papers) set out background information and design specifications for the work of writers and advisors, along with consultation processes to ‘test’ and validate the work of curriculum developers. This paper will consider the ways in which these mechanisms frame the development of the national curriculum and how these processes have the potential to open up, and close off ways in which the new Australian curriculum might be socially just.</td>
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<td><strong>Measuring affect: Some implications of new global data infrastructures for social justice and schooling</strong></td>
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<td><em>Dr. Sam Sellar, University of Queensland</em></td>
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<td>This paper will examine the current global education policy context for schooling, focusing specifically on developments in the measurement and comparison of systemic educational performance and human capital. New kinds of data analyses are enabling an ‘intensification’ of human capital through the measurement and economic valuation of everyday affective geographies. ‘Future-oriented’ dispositions such as motivation and anticipation are increasingly being included as dimensions of human capital, but have also become sites of policy and pedagogical intervention to increase equity and social inclusion through widening participation in education (e.g. aspiration-focused programs). There is a growing convergence between human capital and equity rationales for targeting dispositions such as aspiration, which are considered to have value as resources for collective political projects and as sources of individual human capital value. This presentation will consider some issues for social justice pedagogies arising from this convergence.</td>
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South Australian Aboriginal Regional Authorities: Pedagogies for justice and nation-building

**Associate Professor Daryle Rigney, Flinders University**

Across Australia many Indigenous Australians are engaged in a process of Indigenous nation-building. In South Australia the Ngarrindjeri nation established their contemporary governing body the Ngarrindjeri Regional Authority (NRA) in 2007. The Ngarrindjeri Regional Authority’s exercise of its responsibility to care for country and its citizens has both challenged and attracted the South Australian government to recognise the governing body as a political collective exerting constructive agency and authority. As a response to the NRA’s ‘bold steps forward’ the South Australian Government, in July 2013, announced its desire for a new policy direction in Aboriginal Affairs. A policy direction aimed at expanding and strengthening existing regional structures and inviting other Aboriginal communities to co-design regional authorities to establish ‘more effective working relationships ... build community capacity and leadership and re-engineer government services to better meet local needs.’ This paper begins with the proposition that ontology shapes agency and from an Indigenous centred position the starting point for pedagogies for justice is the validation and affirmation of Indigenous world views. In this context the paper argues that a State wide pedagogical strategy for Indigenous nation-building and justice, built upon cultural match, must accompany any ‘new’ policy direction if a truly postcolonial transformation and reconstruction is to take place.

**Discussant**

*Professor Bob Lingard, University of Queensland*

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<tr>
<td>10.45 – 11.15am</td>
<td>Morning Tea</td>
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<td>11.15 – 1.00pm</td>
<td>Session 2: What do we know about pedagogy and social justice in schools?</td>
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Actually existing pedagogies in actually existing schools

**Associate Professor Robert Hattam, University of South Australia**

In this paper I want to think about ‘actually existing pedagogies’ (Lingard 2007: 246) through the idea of the school as a logic ‘machine’, (apparatus or dispositif). This paper reports on examples of critical educational inquiry that engages with teachers’ and students’ knowledge, and provides local, contextualised accounts that privilege the pedagogical challenges of teachers. In this paper I propose that in order to say anything useful about pedagogy in schools, we need to work with the notion, that pedagogy as practice arises in dependence upon conditions, and specifically, in dependence upon the structures and cultures of actually existing schools. Actually existing pedagogies arise in response to locally diagnosed problems and are sustained as an ‘ongoing practical accomplishment’ (Freebody & Freiberg, 2012: 80), constituted out of the ‘practical reasoning’ or ‘practical theorising’ (p.80) at the local school level. In which case we need thoughtful analyses of localised school level logics that give rise to pedagogical practices. In which case I’m proposing the school-as-logic machine as a theoretical frame for such analysis. The paper brief introduces the theoretical idea of the school-as-logic machine as a frame for such analysis and then provides a case study from the Redesigning Pedagogy in the North Project.
Beyond transmission to a humanizing pedagogy  
*Professor Barry Down, Murdoch University*

This paper draws on a number of Australian ethnographic studies in school communities ‘put at disadvantage’ to identify and describe the cultural, pedagogical, and organisational aspects of schools that serve to either alienate or engage students in learning. Official statistics remind us that far too many young people particularly those from poor and socially adverse backgrounds are not served well by schools. The metaphors of factory and prison are often used to describe their experiences, or in the vernacular ‘school sucks’ (Brock & Goodman, 2013). In this paper I want to address two fundamental and interrelated questions. Firstly, what’s wrong with schools? Here, I will draw on a number of critiques of schooling provided by Paulo Freire’s concept of ‘banking education’, John Dewey’s views about education and experience, and Neil Postman and Charles Weingartner’s notion of teaching as a subversive activity to help us better understand the problem of student disengagement and alienation. Secondly, what can be done about it? In addressing this question I want to consider how the idea of a humanizing pedagogy committed to the Freirian principles of problem-posing education, conscientization and praxis might be of practical use to classroom teachers.

Wrestling pedagogically with the redistribution-recognition tension:  
dialectic and aporia in pursuing social-educational justice  
*Dr. Lew Zipin, Victoria University*

In this paper I argue that serious educational approaches to social justice inevitably encounter tension between two ethical impulses: (1) to redistribute (R1) powerfully selective cultural capital coded in mainstream schooling and inherited in power-elite families but not power-marginalised families; and (2) to recognise (R2)—not tokenistically but by meaningful curricular/pedagogic use—funds of knowledge that have meaningful use in life-worlds of power-marginalised learners. A vexed question is how to balance these seemingly necessary yet contradictory justice impulses. I draw out what I call a dialectical (or both/and) logic for balancing this R1-R2 tension across texts by Nancy Fraser and Lisa Delpit. I support this logic as having cogency, ethical grist, and a track record in various projects that take it up. At the same time, I argue that all such projects inevitably run against the formidable power of capital to co-opt both R1 and R2 impulses within a counter-logic—necessary to capital—of structural inequality. I suggest that this calls not for abandoning Fraser/Delpit’s logic, but supplementing it with the non-dialectical logic in Jacques Derrida’s concept of an aporia: i.e. a condition in which two contradictory impulses, both utterly necessary for justice, are also utterly irreconcilable. I argue that the Derridean supplement vitalises (1) ethical courage in efforts to make the impossible possible; and (2) possibilities that such efforts might make things more just than otherwise.

What do we know about pedagogy and social justice in schools?  
*Associate Professor Deb Hayes, Sydney University*

Based upon what we know about pedagogies in schools, social justice is an unintended and unlikely effect of these practices. Despite the rhetoric of a ‘fair go for all’, markets and the expansion of choice have entrenched highly differentiated systems of schooling in Australia, and produced residualising effects that have impacted most severely on the children of families least able to choose, or to succeed in markets. Choice trumps equity as a desired outcome of schooling. Consequently, social justice in schooling is not considered to be a feature or responsibility of mainstream schools. Instead, responsibly for social justice in schooling is now delegated to an increasing number of unconventional approaches to learning that provide a second-chance of completing school to young people who leave school early.
Session 3: How might we advance pedagogy and social justice through policy and practice?

Inventing and remembering radical traditions in contemporary education  
*Professor Julie McLeod, Melbourne University*  
This presentation brings historical questions to agendas for social justice in contemporary education. Drawing on a study of alternative schooling in the 1970s, it reconsiders radical traditions and aspirations for democratic, community-based and participatory schooling, looking also to the longer history of progressive education in Australia from the interwar period onwards. It asks: How might we tell histories of curriculum and pedagogical innovation that are more than narratives romancing the past or critiques of failure? How are previous reforms for socially-just schooling remembered, forgotten and mediated in the present? How are historical narratives themselves mobilized in pedagogical innovations and strategies? The spatial and socio-material arrangements of alternative schools aimed to create a different ‘feel’ to schooling, reflecting new conceptions of student identities, as choice-making learners and active citizens, of relationships between schools and communities as more open and reciprocal, and of curriculum and pedagogy as having an explicit socially-critical and emancipatory mission. Exploring these reforms in a spirit of defamiliarising the educational past might offer helpful points of insight towards understanding the demands for social justice in the present.

Interrupting and puncturing the ‘neoliberal straightjacket’ by promulgating a pedagogy of the socially just school  
*Professor John Smyth, University of Ballarat*  
In this paper I want to make the case for a different heuristic to the neoliberal straightjacket currently strangling our schools around the world—what I am calling the socially just school. While I will briefly lay out what I regard as the possible features of the socially just school, I want to move quickly to discussing what Stovall (2007) has called ‘the politics of interruption’. We have become fairly adept at critiquing the forms of barbarism being inflicted upon us and pointing to the alternatives—but what have yet to grapple with are the gritty materialities of how to get schools, students, teachers and parents to listen to and work with these alternatives. What I want to rehearse in this paper, are the issues around which we have to win hearts and minds if, to quote from Wrigley (2006), ‘another school is possible’.

Pedagogy, Aporia, Desire; or, Teaching for Difference?  
*Professor Bill Green, Charles Sturt University*  
Pedagogy would appear to be a matter of increasing interest and value. This is not only in contemporary educational debate, but also more widely, for example in fields such as cultural studies. This is somewhat surprising, given that up until relatively recently it has been far from fashionable, even though it has in fact a long history of usage. Indeed what we now seem to be witnessing with regard to pedagogy (and similarly, related terms such as rhetoric) is something of a revival, if not indeed also a re-invention. Why is this so? Is it possible to arrive at an informed understanding of pedagogy, as a
A Pedagogy of contradictions: Students Imagining Education & Teachers Imagining the thrill of Pedagogy
Associate Professor Valerie Harwood, University of Wollongong
Kris: Me and my partner - he’s 17 in a couple of weeks - we’ve been looking after Jye, his little younger brother for the last three years because his mother moved away to Queensland in the outback, in the bush, where they didn’t even have a house to live in. They were in caravans with no running electricity and Jye has difficulties when he goes into a classroom, with trying to settle in with students and teachers...

...Jye doesn’t have a lot of confidence in himself; he thinks he can’t read and write but he can. I’ve seen him – he can write fine on Facebook. That’s when I say: “You can read and write fine on Facebook; that means you can write and read a piece of paper”. It’s the same words, it’s just not on a computer screen and it doesn’t have Facebook written in the corner – it’s just on a piece of paper.
(IUE Interview, South Australia, 2012)

“we must let contradictions stand as what they are, make them understood as contradictions, and grasp what lies beneath them” (Hannah Arendt 1996 Love and Saint Augustine, p. 7)

Pedagogy has, in many ways failed Jye, a young Aboriginal man. Classrooms were places he could not settle in. Since he was eight and sent to non-mainstream schools, they were places he from which he was banned or decided to leave. He now believes he cannot read or write. Yet, when it seems impossible, there are more chances for pedagogy and certainly more potential. Jye’s engagement with Facebook and the actions of his elder brother and Kris (his brother’s partner) keep pedagogy alive. In this paper I consider how to advance pedagogy and social justice in the practice and policy contexts of education. My starting point is the above incitement from Kris, whom I interviewed for a research project on how university education is imagined by young people living in disadvantaged communities and who have precarious relationships to education. To help think this through I turn to Aaron Schultz’s (2001) discussion of how Hannah Arendt’s work on contradictions is useful for education. This leads me to suggest how contradictions are vital if we are to conceive of pedagogy as thrilling and education as an experience to be imagined and enacted.

Discussant
Marie Brennan, Victoria University

3.30 – 4.00pm
Plenary Discussion

4:00pm Close