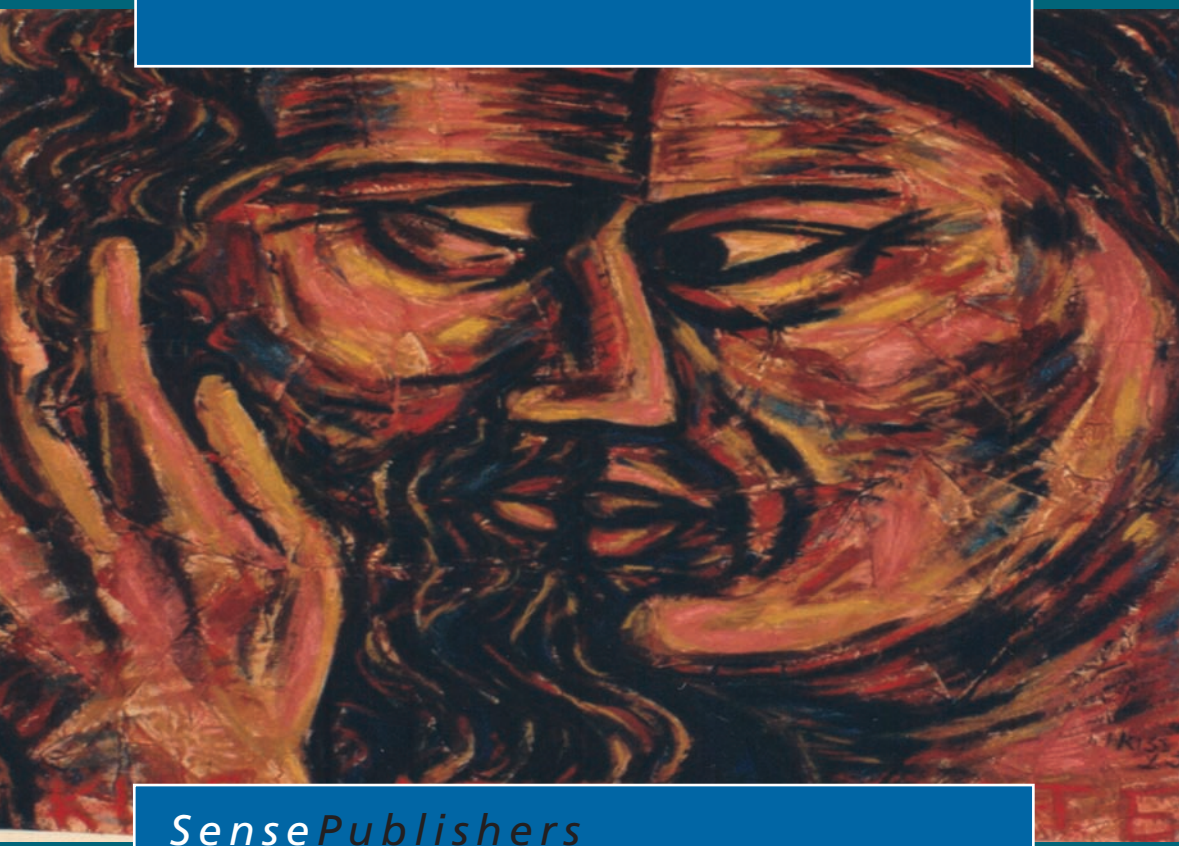
EDUCATIONAL FUTURES: RETHINKING THEORY AND PRACTICE

Educational Enactments in a Globalised World

Intercultural Conversations

Kathleen Quinlivan, Ruth Boyask
and Baljit Kaur (Eds.)



SensePublishers

Educational Enactments in a Globalised World

EDUCATIONAL FUTURES
RETHINKING THEORY AND PRACTICE
Volume 38

Series Editors
Michael A. Peters
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA

Editorial Board

Michael Apple, *University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA*
Miriam David, *Institute of Education, London University, UK*
Cushla Kapitzke, *Queensland University of Technology, Australia*
Simon Marginson, *University of Melbourne, Australia*
Mark Olssen, *University of Surrey, UK*
Fazal Rizvi, *University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA*
Linda Tuhiwai‑Smith, *University of Waikato, New Zealand*
Susan Robertson, *University of Bristol, UK*

Scope
This series maps the emergent field of educational futures. It will commission books on the futures of education in relation to the question of globalisation and knowledge economy. It seeks authors who can demonstrate their understanding of discourses of the knowledge and learning economies. It aspires to build a consistent approach to educational futures in terms of traditional methods, including scenario planning and foresight, as well as imaginative narratives, and it will examine examples of futures research in education, pedagogical experiments, new utopian thinking, and educational policy futures with a strong accent on actual policies and examples.

Educational Enactments in a Globalised World

Intercultural Conversations

Kathleen Quinlivan
University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand

Ruth Boyask
University of Plymouth, UK

Baljit Kaur
University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand

SENSE PUBLISHERS
ROTTERDAM/BOSTON/TAIPEI

A C.I.P. record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

ISBN 978-94-6091-008-1 (paperback)
ISBN 978-94-6091-009-8 (hardback)
ISBN 978-94-6091-010-4 (e-book)

Published by: Sense Publishers,
P.O. Box 21858, 3001 AW
Rotterdam, The Netherlands
http://www.sensepublishers.com

Printed on acid-free paper

All Rights Reserved © 2009 Sense Publishers

No part of this work may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, microfilming, recording or otherwise, without written permission from the Publisher, with the exception of any material supplied specifically for the purpose of being entered and executed on a computer system, for exclusive use by the purchaser of the work.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The idea of this book builds on the joint work that the three of us at various points in our careers has done with Jean McPhail as a friend/colleague or teacher. We would like to acknowledge our intellectual debt to her.

To our contributors, thanks for engaging seriously with our intent and purpose despite some of our false starts and somewhat tardy timelines. We are also grateful to the audience participants at various national and international symposia, particularly at AERA 2009 where significant and extended intercultural conversations did occur, some of which form a part of this text. We would like to specifically mention Lia de Vocht van Alphen, Shane Darmody, Vanessa Andreotti, and Libby Cohen.

Our thanks are due to the New Zealand Association for Research in Education for selecting our symposium for presentation at AERA 2006, giving us the platform from which we contemplated this book. We would further like to acknowledge the financial support from our respective universities to facilitate our attendance at AERA. To Professor Greg Lee, the Head of School of Educational Studies and Human Development, Baljit Kaur and Kathleen Quinlivan thank you for your genuine support of our work.

We are thankful to Paula Wagemaker for suggesting the name of Tanya Tremewan. We could not have completed this book in a timely fashion but for Tanya's energetic support in meticulously copy editing the manuscript.

Finally, our sincere thanks to Michael Peters and John Freeman-Moir, and to Peter de Liefde for seeing the relevance of this book for their Series and the Publishing House respectively, without which this book will not have been a reality.

Kathleen Quinlivan, Ruth Boyask and Baljit Kaur
July 2009

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements v

Introduction: Educational Enactments in a Globalised World: Intercultural Conversations ix
Baljit Kaur, Kathleen Quinlivan and Ruth Boyask

1. Provocations: Putting Philosophy to Work on Inclusion 1
Julie Allan

2. Children Navigating Home–School Relationships: Strategic Compliance, Resistance and Other Survival Strategies 13
Baljit Kaur

3. Contradictory Representations of Identity Formation: Race and Class at Western High 27
Andrew Gitlin and Frances McConaughy

Conversational Interlude One. Hopes, Dreams and Slippages 41

Interstice One: Māori Aspirations in Contemporary Times: Old Narratives, New Articulations, Uncertain Outcomes 45
Hazel Phillips

4. Place, Power and Pedagogy: The Potential that a Critical Pedagogy of Place May Hold for Enhancing Cross-cultural Conversations in New Zealand 51
Richard Manning

5. Perspectives in Equity: What Progress Have We Made? 65
Didi Khayatt

6. When 'Everything Collides in a Big Boom!' Attending to Emotionality and Discomfort as Sites of Learning in the High School Health Classroom 77
Kathleen Quinlivan

Conversational Interlude Two: Emotionality and Learning? 91

Interstice Two. Globalisation and Language Diversity: Implications for the Enactment of Identities and Intercultural Relations 95
Gill Valentine

7. Journeying on the Frinj of Outdoor Education 103
Mary Lou Rasmussen and Lou Preston

8. Changing Concepts of Diversity: Relationships between Policy and Identity in English Schools 115
Ruth Boyask, Rebecca Carter, Hazel Lawson and Sue Waite

Interstice Three. Educational Enactments and the 'New Aid Era': Implications for the Pacific 129
Eve Coxon

9. Discovery Meets Inquiry: A Cross-cultural Essay 137
Jean Claire McPhail and Annemarie S. Palincsar

Conversational Interlude Three. Engaging With Dilemmas and Possibilities 151

Notes on Contributors 157

Index.....163

BALJIT KAUR, KATHLEEN QUINLIVAN AND RUTH BOYASK

INTRODUCTION: EDUCATIONAL ENACTMENTS IN A GLOBALISED WORLD

Intercultural Conversations

What does it mean to learn and educate in these social and historical times? This text represents the result of a series of ongoing conversations about this fundamental question that began with the development of a symposium proposal for the American Educational Research Association Conference (AERA) (Boyask, Kaur, McPhail & Quinlivan, 2006). Since that time, the project has taken the form of ongoing and evolving conversations, a work in progress that spans geographic boundaries and a range of educational contexts. These intercultural conversations put an international group of education thinkers to work on the challenges of education, difference and diversity in today's globalised world. We contend that in this era of globalisation with its concomitant complexities and uncertainties, education that acknowledges and grapples with difference and diversity is of singular importance as growing populations claim recognition of their differentiated identities and aspirations (Kaur, Boyask, Quinlivan & McPhail, 2008; McPhail & Kaur, 2008). Whilst governments around the world attempt to redistribute the public good of education amongst larger and more diverse groups of individuals, rising fundamentalist ideologies, instantiations of essentialist identities, and pervasive instrumental approaches appear to challenge such responses to issues of difference and diversity. These paradoxical global and local conditions require new approaches to education. This introduction charts our shifting and evolving thinking in relation to the issues raised by this book, before commenting on the organisation of the book and contribution each chapter makes to further intercultural conversations, despite the challenges that can characterise such undertakings.

BEGINNING THE CONVERSATION

In 2005 we, the editors and our then colleague Jean McPhail, felt that despite shifts towards a 'global village' culture that makes claims of accommodating diversity and providing for individual freedoms and consumer choice, issues of social justice and equity in schooling remained largely unaddressed. Our interests centred on unpacking the possibilities and dilemmas that emerge when working at the micro level of schools within the wider context of policy initiatives that, while appearing to address inequalities, can operate paradoxically to undermine social justice issues.

Cognisant of the extent to which 21st century rational-economic globalisation is currently informing a range of educational initiatives, we sought to broaden and deepen our understandings of the democratic possibilities of schooling through conversations with educational thinkers from the USA, the United Kingdom and Canada around specific themes that emerged from our analyses of data based on three research projects carried out in New Zealand schools. Our intention was to further our joint understandings for (re)imagining schooling based on the specifics of our situated experiences rather than to draw abstract generalisations across contexts and countries. In that vein, we conceptualised the symposium as an open '… text that resonates between author and audience, not to produce conclusions but to open up possibilities for imagination and creativity' (Gitlin, 2005, p. 21). Didi Khayatt from Canada and Andrew Gitlin from the USA engaged with the papers as discussants.

EXTENDING THE CONVERSATION

Like the symposium that inspired it, the book retains our focus on the contributors identifying examples of localised solutions to the problems of diversity for the practice of education in their own empirical and theoretical research work. These examples or cases, which we term 'educational enactments', are intended to illustrate the interactions of local and global discourses within particular contexts of educational policy and practice. Our emphasis on educational enactments challenges contributors to consider how abstract notions of education (for example, within theoretical or policy representations) are applied through education as a practice and/or subjective experience.

A second AERA symposium (Boyask, Kaur & Quinlivan, 2009) provided another opportunity for several of the book contributors to engage in an embodied conversation in San Diego, USA. The themes emerging from that exchange of ideas have been woven into the text in the form of three conversational interludes, which speak to, and at times question the themes emerging from various chapters and the main conceptual underpinnings of the book itself. Mindful of the structural limitations imposed by the regime of globalisation, our intention is to explore the challenges and the agentive possibilities of working across cultural and material boundaries, and to provide multiple venues in which to transcend the limitations of addressing educational issues through a single lens. So how are we to understand the notions of educational enactments, globalisation and intercultural conversations and the relationships among them?

We use the notion of educational enactments, as it is conceptualised in this volume, in a number of ways. First, it can speak to the possibility of framing a broad range of formal as well as non-formal educational sites as 'educational contexts', in contrast with a narrower 'what works' focus on school practices, which can admittedly be seen as dangerous in these instrumental and (neo) pragmatic times (Lather, 2007).

Second, we are interested in employing it for an exploration of the slippage between the intended discourses operating at the macro level and what actually gets

enacted on the ground within a micro context; for instance, the slippage between intentions of a policy and its enactment in a particular context. An emphasis on an enactment 'on the ground' can provide a more complex analysis in terms of understanding the ways in which global discourses take on particular shapes in specific contexts.

Third, attending to the discursive formation of globalisation as a rule-governed set of material practices (Foucault, 1972) and its understanding 'from above and from below' (Singh, Kenway & Apple, 2005) can enable insights into how macro discourses of globalisation are enacted in the lived realities of individuals in ways that are problematic, and yet can also provide some possibilities (Willis, 2003). Framing globalisation as a discursive formation engages with the ways in which individual subjectivities can be constituted by discourses of globalisation yet, at the same time, exercise some agency in relation to the discourses that constitute them.

In the current global economic recession, the limits and discontents of a globalisation discourse, particularly the neo-liberal variety prominent in the world in recent decades, have been brought into focus. While the destructive influences of neo-liberal globalisation are being justly enumerated, our concern is to simultaneously mobilise the networks created by the technologies of globalisation to counteract these effects and explore the possibilities of facilitating social justice for diverse peoples (Chan-Tiberghien, 2004).

On the one hand, educational globalisation has meant that education the world over is geared towards preparing young people for participation in a global market, and the success of such economic participation is taken as a measure of the quality of education. On the other hand, it is also true that educational globalisation is not a monolithic entity or an absolute phenomenon despite the widespread discourse that gives an impression to the contrary. Such a totalising conception in its extreme form makes local resistances or creative challenges invisible, seemingly rendering the actors in any enactment into mere puppets. We believe that both the 'dead ends and the opening spaces' of globalisation need to be kept in view while considering educational enactments in a globalised world. An interconnected two-way approach seems a reasonable way to proceed. Therefore, we invited fellow researchers to engage in investigating 'the deep politic of everyday life' (Gitlin, 2005) in the local contexts of their own research with reference to the relevant macro discourses operating therein. At the same time, recognising the 'in-process' 'never finished' nature of this endeavour, we engaged with one another around mutually significant issues across disciplinary and national/geographical boundaries to seek possibilities for change through multilayered intercultural conversations.

The extent to which such a double move is productive remains to be seen, particularly in view of some globalisation discourses that assume intercultural conversations to be easy and desirable for all concerned. Such discourses present intercultural encounters as unproblematic and neutral, masking the power dynamics involved. Steiner-Khamsi (2004), for instance, suggests that learning from another culture is generally construed normatively – as unproblematic borrowing or lending 'what works' from one culture and transferring it to another. She favours more complex analyses that probe '… the politics of educational borrowing and lending

("why"), the processes ("how"), and the agents of transfer ("who")' (p. 2). This approach enables the study of '… transnational transfer, globalization, and international convergence' (Ibid.). In this book, we attempt to go beyond this, or perhaps inside these macro-level dynamics, to examine their production through micro-level relationships – that is, intercultural conversations between micro-cultures of schools, between subject-disciplinary cultures or between individual, culturally embedded subjectivities.

The intercultural dimension of these conversations challenges us as educationalists to draw upon the insights of our cultural others to reveal the limitations and possibilities inherent within our own sites of investigation that we may not otherwise notice. As the authors in this collection reveal, finding productive possibilities in a global world for an equitable and just education is not easy. At both the levels of subjectivity and culture, globalisation unsettles hitherto determined identities (Rattansi & Phoenix, 2005) and constructs new and uneasy associations or hybrid identities (Lucey, Melody & Walkerdine, 2003). These challenging conditions provoke yearnings for stability and constancy, intended to act as a social good. Paradoxically, in the current world context, they are also associated with rising fundamentalisms that can work against the recognition of diversity to make meetings between cultures more challenging.

Some of the questions that arise for us in considering the possibilities of productive or successful intercultural conversations include: Whose initiatives do such conversations reflect? Are all parties to the conversation interested in such an engagement, with similar objectives? How is having the possibility or freedom to disengage, an exit strategy if you will, enacted within intercultural conversations? Are all parties expected to change to the same extent and to understand and value each other's world-views? To what extent does the assumed mutuality of interest and reciprocity of desire to engage mask the hierarchical inequalities of knowledge and beliefs across cultures and contexts, and with what consequences? How can such inequalities be mediated, and by whom? And of course, what constitutes a productive or successful conversation?

Finally, what relevance do such questions have for a continuing dialogue along the lines this book pursues? We see this book as one attempt to grapple with these complex issues, not with a quest for definitive solutions, but with a hope for possibilities. As Greene (2000) argues:

> If spaces can be opened that disclose alternative realities or ways of being, individuals are far more likely to break with the ordinary and the taken-for-granted. Visions may appear before their mind's eye – visions of what might be, what ought to be. Experiences of this kind are what direct attention to deficiencies, the inequities in lived situations; they may, in fact, provoke persons to take action together – to transcend the deficiencies, to transform. (p. 8)

ORGANISATION OF THE BOOK

We have aimed to organise this book so that it embodies multilayered intercultural conversations that deliberate upon localised educational enactments and global

discourses that take the shape of all-encompassing theories and/or policies. As such we employ a dialogic structure within the text for *intercultural conversations* that shift between global/local interests and micro/macro contexts. There are nine chapters, three interstices, and three conversational interludes – all responding to and framed by one another to a certain extent. The authors of the chapters drew on their own research to engage with any or all three of the main concepts underpinning the book as outlined below.

For the interstices, three educational thinkers were invited to respond to the issues arising from the overall themes of the project. Drawing upon their own theoretical and/or empirical positionings, they move across macro and micro contexts to pose questions and raise challenges for educational practice and theory, each with focus on a specific question:

Hazel Phillips: How might attention to the interaction of global discourses within localised teaching and learning relationships produce better educational experiences and/or outcomes for diverse learners?

Gill Valentine: How are diverse subjectivities constructed and enacted through local and global discourses and associated practices, both historically and within post-modernity?

Eve Coxon: How are policies and practices that aim to address difference and diversity within a globalised culture enacted through global and local contexts?

As already noted, two conversations that we engaged in at AERA 2009 were audio-recorded. Edited excerpts from these conversations, along with reflections from one author who could not be present are included in the book as three conversational interludes. These reflect our thinking after the chapters had been written and serve to highlight the ongoing and open nature of these conversations.

The opening chapter, by Julie Allan, speaks to one of the most crucial challenges we see as confronting education today: what does it mean to grapple with issues of diversity and difference? Shifting between theory and practice contexts, she puts a number of philosophers of difference to work in order to reframe inclusion as a social, ethical and political activity. Her application of a complex theoretical frame to problems that emerge through the enactment of universal ideals, leads us to consider how the global and the local impact upon the subjectivities of learners in schools. Such an approach, Allan suggests, could enable teacher educators, teachers, student teachers and children and young people to see themselves as capable of enactments of inclusion.

In Chapter Two, Baljit Kaur also discusses the implications of the ways in which children positioned differently within school systems are currently constituted. She uses data from a longitudinal study to identify roles that children enact to illustrate how home–school relationships can interact problematically with the subjectivities of diverse children. Calling into question the universal advocacy of home–school partnerships for effective schooling, and the theorisation of children that underpins it, Kaur draws on the children's cultural perspectives to show how they actively negotiate an issue that has been unproblematically framed and driven by adult concerns.

In the next chapter, Gitlin and McConaughy continue the focus on young people – in their case, adolescents – to provide a complex view of student representation and identity formation that challenges the macro-level discourse of taken-for-granted categories of race and class. Utilising an extended case methodology, they trace more than a decade of significant staff and structural changes within the micro context of a high school in the USA. Gitlin and McConaughy discern contradictions between the school's responsibility to support the achievement of all students, and the effects of the shifting school culture on their diverse subjectivities.

The first conversational interlude, Hopes, Dreams and Slippages contemplates the difficulties associated with enacting aspirations at both personal and social levels. Not only are the outcomes of dreams of self-determination and autonomy affected by context, but the nature of dreams is also dependent upon location. To understand such dissonances, it is suggested that it may be useful to cultivate an (admittedly transgressive) interest in a comparative analysis of educational research as failure.

In the first of our interstices, Hazel Phillips echoes the conversational themes as she considers the extent to which it is possible for the cultural aspirations of the indigenous Māori population of Āotearoa New Zealand to be achieved within a global context dominated by economic imperatives. She suggests that there needs to be a fundamental questioning of the hegemonic neo-liberal discourses and structures that underpin economic globalisation in order for the aspirations of Māori to be met.

In Chapter Four, Richard Manning also speaks to Māori issues as he notes disjunctures between the ways in which Māori elders and high school history teachers viewed the teaching of local, Māori, environmental and New Zealand history, particularly in relation to their own life experiences of learning about past and place. He suggests that the notion of a 'critical pedagogy of place' may hold some potential in enabling further intercultural conversations about the teaching of history and social studies in New Zealand secondary schools within the Port Nicholson Block area, in the southwestern corner of New Zealand's North Island.

Staying with an exploration of the ways in which diverse subjectivities are engaged with in learning contexts, in the next chapter we move to Canada with Didi Khayatt. She delineates her personal praxis as a teacher educator over several decades, showing how she has responded when intersecting or contrary perspectives in relation to sexuality, gender and diversity have been enacted in her classroom over time. Khayatt suggests that although there is a great deal more discursive noise about the topic of equity and social justice in our schools, and a deeper theoretical engagement with understanding and accounting for diverse sexual and gendered subjectivities, the issues in schools largely remain extant.

Kathleen Quinlivan speaks to the challenges raised by Khayatt in the following chapter as she explores what it means to engage with normative understandings of gender and sexual diversity enacted within the micro world of a high school classroom. She suggests that working intentionally with student emotionality and discomfort as a site of learning in the classroom might have enabled the teacher, the students, and herself as a researcher to engage more closely with the destabilisation

of subjectivities that can characterise 'thinking otherwise' in relation to genders and sexualities.

The second conversational interlude, Emotionality and Learning? explores the extent to which engaging in 'learning otherwise' for students, teachers and researchers is a strongly emotional as well as intellectual endeavour. Acknowledging ways in which these constructs might be usefully brought into relation with one another, rather than treated as oppositional, may enable us to engage more deeply with the roles that emotionality and desire play in learning and unlearning, and the challenges involved.

While the preceding interlude highlights the need for emotional engagement in education for diversity, Gill Valentine's concern in the second interstice is with the ways in which language constructs identities. Considering the ways in which diverse subjectivities are constructed and enacted through local and global discourses within post-modernity, she draws on Somali children's everyday practices in the United Kingdom to demonstrate the need for language to take centre stage in debates about cultural connectivity in schools. Valentine suggests that fostering a more diverse range of language practices as part of wider social and economic processes of cultural hybridity might also lead to the development of 'intercultural citizens' who have positive attitudes to diversity.

In Chapter Seven Mary Lou Rasmussen and Lou Preston explore notions of indigenous location as a non-formal site of education through reconceptualising the pedagogy of the outdoors in ways that might prompt students to think differently about relations between people and places of learning. Through the metaphor of a journey, they advocate for making explicit connections between education and location, offering possibilities for outdoor education that can transcend its construction as a discrete 'activity'.

In the next chapter Ruth Boyask, Rebecca Carter, Hazel Lawson and Sue Waite move between the contexts of policy analysis and the lived experience of student difference within a UK schooling context. They explore the conceptual underpinnings of equity-related policy reform since the mid-20th century to reveal a recent global policy discourse that homogenises difference. The authors suggest that in a climate of proliferating identities, closer attention to the subjectivities of learners and how they are constructed, and how they construct themselves as different from one another, may provide policy-makers with a new venue to explore in the search for more equitable social provision.

The third and final interstice, from Eve Coxon, extends the discussion from the individual interests and psychologies missing from the globalisation rhetoric, to its evisceration of local knowledge and culture within a non-formal educational context. Coxon explores the effects of globalisms imported through the rhetoric of development and aid upon small Pacific Islands countries and cultures, and their subsequent strategies of resistance.

The last chapter is an intercultural essay from two academics from the USA, Jean McPhail and Annemarie Palincsar, both of whom, to different extents, experienced local resistance to their globalised identities when they took their culturally embedded beliefs about educational theory and practice to their work within a

primary school in New Zealand. McPhail and Palincsar suggest that although economic ideas may readily cross national boundaries, educational ideas are much more difficult to transport because they are integrally bound with cultural and moral values.

The book closes with a conversational interlude, Engaging with Dilemmas and Possibilities, that speaks to the challenges and the complexities of intercultural conversations in relation to issues of diversity and difference. We acknowledge the limitations of the ways in which dominant discourses of globalisation can homogenise and further silence diverse populations. However we also recognise that our role as educators compels us to engage with the productive possibilities, as well as the dilemmas of what it means to learn and to educate within such 'interesting times'.

REFERENCES

Boyask, R., Kaur, B., McPhail, J., & Quinlivan, K. (2006, April). *Engaging in intercultural conversations on participation, diversity and social justice in schooling.* [Chair: Andrew Gitlin] NZARE-sponsored symposium at the American Educational Research Association Conference, San Francisco, USA.

Boyask, R., Kaur, B., & Quinlivan, K. (2009, April). *Educational enactments in a globalized world: Intercultural conversations.* [Chair: Annemarie S. Palincsar] Symposium at the American Education Research Association Conference, San Diego, USA.

Chan-Tiberghien, J. (2004). Towards a 'global educational justice' research paradigm: Cognitive justice, decolonizing methodologies and critical pedagogy. *Globalisation, Societies and Education, 2*(2), 191–213.

Foucault, M. (1972). *The archaeology of knowledge* (A. M. Sheridan Smith, Trans.). New York: Pantheon Books.

Gitlin, A. (2005). Inquiry, imagination, and the search for a deep politic. *Educational Researcher, 34*(3), 15–24.

Greene, M. (2000). The ambiguities of freedom. *English Education, 33*(1), 8–13.

Kaur, B., Boyask, R., Quinlivan, K., & McPhail, J. (2008). Searching for equity and social justice: diverse learners in Aotearoa New Zealand. In G. Wan (Ed.), *The education of diverse populations: A global perspective*. The Netherlands: Springer Science and Business Media.

Lather, P. (2007). *Getting lost: Feminist efforts towards a double(d) science.* New York: SUNY Press.

Lucey, H., Melody, J., & Walkerdine, V. (2003). Uneasy hybrids: psychosocial aspects of becoming educationally successful for working-class young women. *Gender and Education, 15*(3), 285–299.

McPhail, J. C., & Kaur, B. (2008). In search of a participatory democratic vision in teacher education. In A. Scott & J. Freeman-Moir (Eds.), *Shaping the future: Critical essays in teacher education*. Rotterdam, The Netherlands and Taipei, Taiwan: Sense Publishers.

Rattansi, A., & Phoenix, A. (2005). Rethinking youth identities: modernist and postmodernist frame-works. *Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research, 5*(2), 97–123.

Singh, M., Kenway, J., & Apple, M. (2005). Globalising education: perspectives from above and below. In M. Singh, J. Kenway, & M. Apple (Eds.), *Globalising education: Policies, pedagogies and practices*. New York: Peter Lang.

Steiner-Khamsi, G. (2004). Introduction: Globalization in education: real or imagined? In G. Steiner-Khamsi (Ed.), *The global politics of educational borrowing and lending*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Willis, P. (2003). Foot soldiers of modernity: The dialectics of cultural consumption and the 21st-century school. *Harvard Educational Review, 73*(3), 390–341.

Baljit Kaur
School of Educational Studies and Human Development
College of Education
University of Canterbury

Kathleen Quinlivan
School of Educational Studies and Human Development
College of Education
University of Canterbury

Ruth Boyask
School of Secondary and Further Education Studies
University of Plymouth

JULIE ALLAN

1. PROVOCATIONS

Putting Philosophy to Work on Inclusion

INTRODUCTION

Inclusion is currently characterised by confusion about what it is supposed to be and do; frustration at the way the current climate of standards and accountability constrains teachers' work; guilt at the exclusion created for individual pupils; and exhaustion, associated with a sense of failure and futility. This chapter considers the 'impossibility' of inclusion in the current context and how it has become a highly emotive and somewhat irrational space of confrontation, with questions about how we should include being displaced by questions about why we should include and under what conditions. An attempt is made to rescue inclusion from its valedictory state and to reframe it as an ongoing struggle and a more productive form of political engagement. This reframing takes some of the key ideas of the philosophers of difference – Deleuze and Guattari, Derrida and Foucault – and puts them to work on the inclusion *problem* (Allan, 2008).

THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF INCLUSION

Questions raised by teachers' unions about whether inclusive education can realistically be achieved have emanated from concerns about teachers being unprepared for inclusion (Macmillan, Meyer, Edmunds, Edmunds & Feltmate, 2002) and about the 'collision course' between high-stakes testing programmes and inclusion (National Association of Education, 2005). Researchers report that teachers are increasingly talking about inclusive education as an impossibility in the current climate (Thomas & Vaughan, 2004) and about their lack of confidence in their capacity to teach inclusively (Hanko, 2005). A dramatic U-turn by the so-called architect of inclusion from the United Kingdom, Mary Warnock (2005), who describes inclusion as a 'disastrous legacy' (p. 22), appears to have validated the resistance to inclusion. Although commentators have reacted speedily to the 'ignorant and offensive' nature of Warnock's comments (Barton, 2005, p. 4), this 'stunning recantation … by a respected figure' (Hansard, 22 June 2005, col. 825) has clearly had an influence.

Smyth (2001) acknowledges the extent of the exclusion experienced by teachers as well as children and contends that if we are prepared 'to think radically outside the frame' (p. 239) then we need to find ways of bringing people *into* the frame. Philosophy offers lucrative possibilities for enabling teachers to step out of the

K. Quinlivan, R. Boyask and B. Kaur (eds.), Educational Enactments in a Globalised World: Intercultural Conversations, 1–12.
© 2009 Sense Publishers. All rights reserved.

impasse that has developed with inclusion and into a new and productive frame. The philosophers of difference offer a reimagining of inclusion as a social, ethical and above all political activity, which identifies everyone – including children and young people – as powerful and capable of enacting inclusion. It seeks to change the environments, the spaces and the people within them, to incite them to use this power in productive directions. This is likely to produce change not through revolution or 'grand plans' (Roy, 2003, p. 147), but through 'combat' (p. 147), 'looking out for microfissures through which life leaks' and opening up new possibilities for inclusion.

THE PHILOSOPHERS OF DIFFERENCE

Deleuze and Guattari, Derrida and Foucault, along with Irigaray, Kristeva, Lyotard and others, have been recognised as philosophers of difference because of their concern with achieving the recognition of minority social groups and their attempt to formulate a politics of difference that is based on an acceptance of multiplicity (Patton, 2000). All of these writers have in common an orientation to philosophy as a political act and a will to make use of philosophical concepts as a form of, not global revolutionary change, but 'active experimentation, since we do not know in advance which way a line is going to turn' (Deleuze & Parnet, 1987, p. 137). Their work is a philosophy of affirmation which is a 'belief of the future, in the future' (Deleuze, quoted in Rajchman, 2001, p. 76). It does not offer solutions, but rather produces new concepts, 'provocation' (Bains, 2002) and new imaginings, 'knocking down partitions, co-extensive with the world' (Deleuze, 1994, p. 22). The key elements of the thought of Deleuze and Guattari, Foucault and Derrida that are considered relevant to inclusion are set out in Allan (2008). This chapter shows the provocations at work and unpacks some of the key concepts as they are put to work on inclusion: Deleuze and Guattari's deterritorialisation, the rhizome and difference (Deleuze, 2004; Deleuze & Guattari, 1987); Foucault's practices of the self and transgression (Foucault, 1986; Foucault 1994); and Derrida's deconstruction (Derrida, 1997).

The concepts of the philosophers of difference are made to work in two ways. First, the concepts themselves can be taken and *used* to help with a different way of seeing, thinking about and practising inclusion. It is not, however, a simple task to see, think and do differently. Therefore it is necessary also to use some of the practices of the philosophers of difference to help us achieve a new orientation to knowledge about inclusion – and about ourselves. Put to work in these ways, the concepts of the philosophers of difference open up possibilities for the enactment of inclusion and involve two sets of propositions. The first set of propositions involves *subverting* the balance of power in schools in favour of the students to enable them to participate more fully and effectively, *subtracting*, in order to do less more effectively and *inventing* new ways of learning and engaging together. The second set of propositions is concerned with changes in the processes of learning to teach and in the opportunities available to practising teachers to enable a more politicised form of engagement. These propositions involve *recognition*

of the double-edged and contradictory nature of inclusive teacher education, *rupture* of conventional approaches to learning to teach and attempts to *repair* the profession by encouraging teachers to work on their own selves.

TEACHERS AND STUDENTS: SUBVERTING, SUBTRACTING, INVENTING

The tasks of subverting, subtracting and inventing speak back to power but are also about redirecting the huge amount of energy that already exists in schools in more useful and productive ways.

The rigidly hierarchical and bounded relationships between teachers and children and young people, with the latter subjugated by the former's authority, knowledge and power, could be interrupted by the teacher him or herself. The shift in teacher–student relationships could be characterised as a move, in Deleuzian (Deleuze, 2004) terms, from communication to expression or from the sender–receiver mode, in which information flows along 'established power grids' (Roy, 2004, p. 298) that exist between teachers and their students, to more messy forms of exchange. The challenge for teachers is to try to think from within confusion (Britzman, 2002) without seeking closure through a demand for a clear distinction between the teacher and taught, and to be open to 'the ethically rich drama that runs through education' (Edgoose, 1997, p. 1). Although this may be unsettling to teachers because of its departure from the intended content and may produce anxieties about achieving learning outcomes, such 'failure of fluency' (Edgoose, 1997, p. 6) is more likely to produce inclusive practice.

Transgression, the concept of practical and playful resistance to limits as developed by Foucault (1994), is an important way for disabled people to challenge the disabling barriers they encounter. Transgression is not antagonistic or aggressive, nor does it involve a contest in which there is a victor; rather, it allows disabled individuals to shape their own identities by subverting the norms that compel them to repeatedly perform as marginal. Although it is necessary to continue to work to remove the barriers to inclusion that exist within schools and elsewhere, there is possibly a place for helping disabled and young people to recognise barriers, for example in the form of negative or patronising attitudes, and to find ways to challenge them. Teachers or other adults could work with children and young adults, individually or in groups, to plan transgressive tactics, either proactively or reactively. This could even be a project for disabled children and adults to work on with their non-disabled peers. More generally, students might be helped to become *readers of power*, learning to recognise how it is used to construct their identities and relationships with adults, and control their movements, learning and behaviour. Developing literacy in relation to power would perhaps enable students to understand how adults are also implicated in this way and perhaps make them feel less antagonistic towards them. The students could then direct their resistance towards more productive and positive ends, although this outcome will not, of course, be easily achieved.

The highly rigid and striated – territorialised – space of the school could be worked upon and smoothed out – deterritorialised (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) – by

students. This involves inventing new ways for students to experiment with and experience inclusion and participation.

An example of effective work upon the school space was found in a school in which the headteacher had introduced children's rights (Allan, I'Anson, Priestley & Fisher, 2006). The headteacher's ambition was to explore the limits of children's rights under the terms of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child. Having had limited success with various formal, bureaucratic activities such as assemblies and school councils, the headteacher decided to hand over some responsibilities to a group of children and a parent leader. The group called itself the Special Needs Observation Group, gleefully displayed its acronym (SNOG – a colloquial term for kiss) on T-shirts, and set about investigating inclusion and the right of all children to participate in school. One boy, Alistair, became a strong leader of the group, particularly in relation to shaping the others' understanding about inclusion. The group excelled in identifying the barriers to participation and encouraging the whole school community to think and act more inclusively. Interestingly the members of the group very quickly and comprehensively identified the need to examine inclusion by looking simultaneously at exclusion, a point that inclusion scholars have grasped only relatively recently in spite of enjoinders from Booth and Ainscow (1998), Ballard (2003) and others, and that continues to elude some. They operationalised intuitively the social model of disability, developed by disabled people, and recognised it as an important framework for understanding inclusion because of its shift away from student deficits and onto the environmental, structural and attitudinal barriers to participation (Barnes, Barton & Oliver, 2002; Barton, 2005). The students concluded that the biggest barrier to participation was the attitudes of teachers and students and made numerous suggestions for alterations that would remove the barriers.

The quest for certainty, closure and *outcomes* in learning could be replaced by a search for the undecidable, in which learning cannot be predicted. This alternative quest does, however, involve a considerable subversion of the expectations contained within policy documents that particular behaviours will lead to particular outcomes. It also requires some inventive thinking about the alternative kind of learning that is to take place. The metaphor for the shift in learning used by Deleuze and Guattari (1987), the rhizome, is particularly useful. The rhizome is posited as a contrast to the arborescent tree structure of learning in which knowledge is passed down in a linear fashion. The rhizome, in contrast, proliferates in unanticipated directions, requiring learners to undergo the 'disorienting jolt of something new, different, truly other' (Bogue, 2004, p. 341). The process of learning, thus, is the explication of these new encounters, an 'undoing of orthodox conventions' (ibid).

The invitation to students to narrate their own learner identities and experiences and map their own learning could assist them in becoming better learners, but they are likely to need help in managing the uncertainty associated with rhizomic learning. Experiencing uncertainty as positive, rather than as evidence of a lack of knowledge or understanding of the rules and expectations, could free students up to pursue their own 'new lines of flight' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 161) and avenues of thought and could be enormously liberating. However, although

this approach to learning need not pose a threat to the social order of the school, it may be perceived in some quarters as an unacceptable challenge to authority.

The experience of SNOG was a form of rhizomic learning in which the children experimented with and experienced inclusion. They took rights – literally – on a walk through the school in order to discover the points at which exclusion arose. Simulation exercises of this kind, in which non-disabled individuals pretend to be disabled, can be superficial and essentialist, but these young people – because they had in their minds the rights of students to be included – forced their gaze on the barriers that restricted participation and found themselves constantly surprised and capable of imagining more of the exclusion experienced by their disabled peers. This way of learning seemed to be particularly effective because it took them off in new and unanticipated directions. Having 'dealt with' disability, the group decided to move on to ethnicity, and identified some concerns about the level of participation of some individuals. They then decided to tackle 'fat' issues when they became aware of some of their peers' discomfort when changing for gym. Their experience and experimentation with rights had alerted them to new forms of exclusion that they wished to do something about.

For Alistair, mentioned above for his emergence as a leader of the group, the experience of being part of SNOG and of rhizomic learning was particularly significant in rescuing him from a downward spiral of misbehaviour and exclusion. He described himself as having formerly been out of control, often getting into trouble in the playground for fighting and being regularly excluded. Prior to joining SNOG, he had become a buddy to a disabled child and the experience of being responsible for others who had come with SNOG membership had made him alter his own behaviour. His membership of SNOG had, by his own account, transformed him into someone else, someone who had to have regard for others, and had allowed him to escape his deviant identity. It was a dramatic line of flight:

> Well, when I started to know [disabled students] I was, like, I need to show them I want to be good, 'cos I used to get into fights and stupid things like that but when I started to get to know them and got into the SNOG group I started my behaviour; I wanted to start again and be good … I didn't want everybody to know me as Alistair the bad boy. I want to be good now. So that's what I was trying to do when I went into the SNOG group … sometimes I'm amazing. (Allan & I'Anson, 2005, p. 133)

Alistair had transformed himself, but recognised that he had to police his own newly formed identity and occasionally he lapsed:

> I get into a fight or I get angry because it didn't happen. If I didn't get to sit beside my friends I start to get angry. I just want to be a good boy now. As everybody says 'good boy.' That's what I want to be – I want to prove them all wrong. They all think I [can't] behave but I want to prove them all wrong that I can behave … some people just know me as 'there's Alistair – stay away from him.' But I'm to prove them all wrong – that I'm good. I'm going to be good. I just want to be good now. (Ibid., p. 134)

Clearly such opportunities for escape would not be available to, or responded to by, every student with a label of behavioural difficulties. It is, nevertheless, a heartening transformation that delighted all with whom Alistair was connected – the headteacher, the teachers, the janitor, Alistair's mother and us, the researchers. Most impressed of all was Alistair himself who came to know himself as 'amazing'.

NOMADIC LEARNING TO TEACH: RECOGNITION, RUPTURE AND REPAIR

Although the philosophers of difference can help us to challenge standards and accountability, making headway with our challenges may be a long-term task and it may also be possible to find ways of practising teacher education differently and more effectively – as education – and producing teachers who are keen to participate in the struggle for inclusion. The philosophers of difference assist with the *recognition* of the double-edged and contradictory nature of inclusive teacher education and with the *rupture* of conventional approaches to learning to teach; and they offer opportunities to *repair* the profession of teaching and teachers' own selves.

The most significant challenge for teacher educators is accepting that the aspiration to be inclusive creates a number of responsibilities that pull them, and their students, in different directions. These divergent responsibilities produce tensions because they are assumed to be resolvable or reducible to one choice but might be framed as a series of double duties or 'aporias' (Derrida, 1992, p. 22), both of which must be fulfilled in each case:

- How can student teachers be helped to acquire and demonstrate the necessary competences to qualify as a teacher *and* to understand themselves as in an inconclusive process of learning about others?
- How can student teachers develop as autonomous professionals *and* learn to depend on others for support and collaboration?
- How can student teachers be supported in maximising student achievement *and* ensuring inclusivity?
- How can student teachers be helped to understand the features of particular impairments *and* avoid disabling individual students with that knowledge?
- What assistance can be given to student teachers to enable them to deal with the exclusionary pressures they encounter *and* avoid becoming embittered or closed to possibilities for inclusivity in the future? (Allan, 2003, p. 143)

If these aporias were accepted as an inevitable element of teacher education for inclusion and if the pressure to choose between the double contradictory imperatives was resisted, there would perhaps be less confusion, frustration, guilt and exhaustion. Student teachers could be taught to understand the nature of these contradictions and how to engage with the uncertainty they produce. Uncertainty, the greatest torment for the student teacher, could become acknowledged as an important element that beginning teachers have to enact, with the moments of undecidability being where they learn to do their most inclusive teaching.

Deconstruction, a process of reading texts with an eye out for their blind spots, contradictions and obfuscations (Derrida, 1997), could enable student teachers to see how they work to 'write the teacher' (Cormack and Comber, 1996, p. 119) in

ways that are contradictory and oppositional (Honan, 2004) and constrain how they can act. Recognition of how they are regulated, and thereby controlled, and of the process of producing effective teachers who are 'elastic or infinitely flexible and ultimately dutiful figures who can unproblematically respond to new demands' (Cormack and Comber, 1996, p. 121) may make the passage towards full teacher status less of an ordeal.

The rigid content-driven programmes of teacher education, with their special education orientation, could be replaced through the process of deterritorialisation. The four strands of this activity, developed by Deleuze and Guattari (1987), could be undertaken as a collective task within higher education institutions or by individuals. The first of these, becoming foreigners in our own tongue, would involve scrutiny of the language used in lectures and materials, watching for where the language of special needs is prevalent and creating stutterings over words and expressions that have hitherto been familiar. Colleagues in my own institution developed a game of 'bullshit bingo' in an effort to pick up and subvert jargon in their written work. A similar exercise could be usefully undertaken with the teaching materials used with students.

The refusal of essences or signifieds is an important second strand of deterritorialisation which could be undertaken within teacher education programmes. Instead of attempting, in lectures and materials, to define inclusion, we could point to who is included and who is not. We might also ask not what inclusion is but what inclusion does. This question might take us closer to elaborating some of the consequences of inclusion for children and young people and their parents. We would then perhaps begin to understand how inclusion is experienced rather than how it is represented.

Creative subtraction would involve identifying what not to do within the curriculum. Instead of responding to the latest government imperatives to insert more content by looking to see where it can be squeezed in, there could be a search for what might be removed or reduced. An invitation to lose aspects of what we currently do in the name of inclusion and in education, in order to put some other things in, could be attractive. Such creative subtraction, of course, will not be easy as there will be opposition from those who insist that the items proposed for shedding will remain purely because they have always been there and are precious to the individuals who put them there in the first place.

The acceptance that there is no one behind expression, the final strand of deterritorialisation, is a refusal to attribute blame or responsibility for content to any individuals and to encourage the contribution of new and untried ideas. Greater use of brainstorming sessions could enable staff to roam through the kind of teacher education that they really want to do, rather than what they feel constrained to do, then to ask themselves, 'Why not?' The ruptures provided by deterritorialisation may create opportunities for more productive learning.

Adopting the rhizome as the means for learning to be a teacher ruptures the interpretation of theory (Deleuze, 1995) and privileges experimentation and experience, taking the student teachers on, in Derrida's (1992) terms, an 'empirical wandering' (p. 7). The rhizome allows student teachers to invent themselves as the

kind of teachers they want to become and, instead of absorbing and later replicating content, student teachers would be involved in 'experimenting with pedagogy and *recreating* its own curricular place' (Gregoriou, 2002, p. 231; original emphasis). Rhizomic wanderings, whilst extremely challenging because of the uncertainty they bring, could help to disrupt conventional knowledge about teaching and learning. They could also interrupt the dominant knowledge of *special needs* and enable student teachers instead to experiment with responding to difference in ways that are meaningful to the young people. This would force the student teachers to question what they know themselves, to 'ask what determinations and intensities [they] are prepared to countenance' (Roy, 2003, p. 91) and to abandon ways of working that seem unreasonable.

Student teachers' knowledge and understanding might be fashioned as a series of maps, 'entirely oriented toward an experimentation in contact with the real' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 12). These maps do not replicate knowledge, but perform and create new knowledge. Reflexivity, which students are often demanded to practise but are rarely given guidance on how, could be directed towards producing maps of their journeys as becoming teachers. Maps of their school contexts could also be created by student teachers during their teaching practice. These could detail the exclusionary points, and openings for inclusivity, in the school as a whole, in lessons they observe and in their own classrooms.

Learning to be a teacher through the rhizome is not a journey towards a fixed end, as denoted by the standards; rather it involves wanderings along a 'moving horizon' (Deleuze, 2004, p. xix) that are documented visually. As well as creating new knowledge, these wanderings provide opportunities for student teachers to establish, in Rose's (1996) terms, new assemblages and new selves, as teachers. Students' wanderings need to be supported and responded to in a way that does not entrench further their novice and incompetent identity. Student teachers' 'creative stammerings' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 98), questions and searches for links would be engaged with, rather than closed down as indicative of their failure to grasp content. It is in these spaces or schisms where complex thinking would take place and where 'a new experiment in thought could be inserted … that might help teachers get an insight into the generative possibilities of the situation' (Roy, 2003, p. 2).

Teacher education has traditionally packaged difference for the student teacher in the form of lists of deficits, their causes and their cures. Even if this packaging is done with the caveat 'no two children are alike' and a discouragement of categorisation, it still facilitates a recognition of 'types' of failings in children and what they might expect from them. A rupture in this typing could be achieved by asking student teachers to turn the gaze back on themselves and on the schools in which they do their teaching placements. The refusal to explain children's pathologies to student teachers might provoke wails of protest from them, but the reasons for this refusal could be set out along with an exposition of the consequences of pathologies for those at whom they are directed. Having outlawed pathologies of children, student teachers' energies could be directed instead to trying an alternative – social model – reading of students' difficulties; a reading that identifies the environmental,

structural and attitudinal barriers to their participation. Student teachers could be encouraged to engage with difference *in itself*, as opposed to in relation to identity, and in comparison with the normal. They could undertake the task of finding out about individual children's 'conditions', but could investigate how this description has been arrived at and by whom. Student teachers might also scrutinise their own fears about responding to individuals effectively and share these with more experienced teachers or with fellow students. They might be encouraged to think of their anxieties about responding to the other as precisely the point at which inclusion and justice becomes a possibility:

> As soon as you address the other, as soon as you are open to the future, as soon as you have a temporal experience of waiting for the future, of waiting for someone to come: that is the opening of the experience. Someone is to come, is *now* to come. Justice and peace will have to do with this coming of the other with the promise. (Derrida, 1997, p. 22)

This desire for, and openness to, the other privileges relationships over the delivery of content and makes knowledge of children's *needs* less important than knowing the children themselves. I have suggested previously that a concern for difference in terms of *needs* could be replaced with an attention to the *desires* of the child and young person (Allan, 1999). This is neither excessive nor radical, but simply involves asking the child or young person for guidance on the kind of support he or she is most comfortable with. There is clearly an enormous risk associated with bringing desire into educational conversations and doing so may be perceived as more or less dangerous within different cultural contexts. The Scottish school context is hardly the bedrock of permissiveness and indeed there was some disquiet among parents over the SNOG T-shirts, which also featured a picture of lips. The headteacher's determination to allow the students' enactments to be upheld prevailed but it is easy to envisage a less sanguine reaction to the introduction of desire in other schools.

The student teachers' own desires could be foregrounded in their identity as becoming teachers. Instead of their status representing a lack of competence, they could be encouraged to articulate their trajectory – emotional as well as in terms of their acquisition of skills – towards the kind of teacher they want to become. The narratives of experienced teachers could be a valuable resource in helping student teachers to understand the fractured, partial and embodied process of becoming a teacher and the centrality of desire, or at least emotion. Student teachers could be encouraged to offer and compare reflections on the intensities of their experiences and their 'percepts' and 'affects' (Deleuze, 1995, p. 164), the way they come to think and live as teachers.

Foucault's framework of ethics could be used by student teachers by, first, identifying the part of themselves as teachers that they wish to work on (determining the ethical substance). The second ethical dimension, the mode of subjection, could come from examining the rules that operate within schools or higher education institutions and that create barriers to inclusion. Self practice or ethical work, the third dimension, could be directed towards their professional conduct and attempts

to be inclusive. Taking on this task might necessitate identifying the way in which their own teaching practices and actions, carried out *in the best interests* of children, create barriers to inclusion, and modifying these. Finally, students could be invited to work out the overall goal, the telos, perhaps with guidance on this from children and young people and their families. The ethical project of inclusion is one which we undertake and practise upon ourselves, but on which we can seek advice from those who hold the greatest expertise and who are likely to know what their own best interests are.

Foucault's framework of ethics could also provide a structure for staff development and for supporting the work of practising teachers in becoming more inclusive. Staff development, instead of being a content-driven attempt to skill teachers up in response to the latest government imperative, could provide a smooth space for them to pause, think and repair some of the damage they have experienced. Teachers might be given an opportunity to examine the exclusionary pressures within the education system. By doing some of this collectively they may come to recognise the struggle for inclusion as something that is constant, shared and necessarily inconclusive. Determining the ethical substance, the part of teachers' selves and their schools to be worked on, could be done collectively, perhaps starting with 'confessions' of aspects of their practice that have been exclusionary. The mode of subjection could be identified by examining teachers' own school context and their experiences of exclusion and regulation. Self practice or ethical work could be focused on both making their classroom practice more inclusive and trying to tackle some of the barriers they themselves encounter. Finally they could be encouraged to think about the overall goal, the telos, for both inclusion and for themselves as teachers.

UNCANNY ENACTMENTS?

The philosophers of difference offer possibilities for rescuing inclusion from the impasse that it appears to be in and encouraging all of those involved – teacher educators, teachers, student teachers and children and young people – to see themselves as capable of enactments of inclusion. They allow a response to the demand for practical solutions to educational problems such as inclusion in the form of new routes through the problems. Teacher educators, in facilitating enactments are curious rather than knowing, acting to 'complicate rather than explicate' (Taylor & Saarinen, 1994, p. 7) and pursuing 'interstanding' rather than understanding (ibid., p. 3). The act of interstanding occurs when depth gives way to surface, in a search for what stands between and involves risking the personal (Ware, 2002). In other words, teachers and other professionals may find ways forward in those moments of undecidability when a new thought or a new kind of experiment emerges. These are unlikely to be new in the sense of never having been seen before, but 'uncanny … a thing known returning in a different form … a revenant' (Banville, 2005, p. 10). The provocations from the philosophers of difference allow us to make inclusion a more realistic possibility by 'acting counter to our time and thereby acting on our time and, let us hope, for the benefit of a time to come' (Nietzsche, 1983, p. 60).

REFERENCES

Allan, J. (1999). *Actively seeking inclusion: Pupils with special needs in mainstream schools*. London: Falmer.

Allan, J. (2003). Inclusion and exclusion in the university. In T. Booth, K. Nes, & M. Strømstad (Eds.), *Developing inclusive education*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.

Allan, J. (2008). *Rethinking inclusion: The philosophers of difference in practice*. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer.

Allan, J., & I'Anson, J. (2005). Children's rights in school: power, assemblies and assemblages. *International Journal of Children's Rights, 12*, 123–138.

Allan, J., I'Anson, J., Priestley, A., & Fisher, S. (2006). *Promising rights: Children's rights in school*. Edinburgh, UK: Save the Children.

Bains, P. (2002). Subjectless subjectivities. In B. Massumi (Ed.), *A shock to thought: Expression after Deleuze and Guattari*. London and New York: Routledge.

Ballard, K. (2003). The analysis of context: some thoughts on teacher education, culture, colonisation and inequality. In T. Booth, K. Nes, & M. Strømstad (Eds.), *Developing inclusive education*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.

Banville, J. (2005). *The sea*. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Picador.

Barnes, C., Barton, L., & Oliver, M. (Eds.). (2002) *Disability studies today*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Barton, L. (2005). *Special educational needs: An alternative look*. Unpublished discussion paper.

Bogue, R. (2004). Search, swim and see: Deleuze's apprenticeship in signs and pedagogy of images. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 36(3), 327–342.

Booth, T., & Ainscow, M. (1998). From them to us: setting up the study. In T. Booth & M. Ainscow (Eds.), *From them to us: An international study of inclusion in education*. London: Routledge.

Britzman, D. (2002). The death of curriculum? In W. Doll & N. Gough (Eds.), *Curriculum visions*. New York: Peter Lang.

Cormack, P., & Comber, B. (1996). Writing the teacher: the South Australian junior primary English teacher, 1962–1995. In B. Green & C. Beavis (Eds.), *Teaching the English subjects: essays on English curriculum history and Australian schooling*. Geelong, Victoria: Deakin University Press.

Deleuze, G. (1994). *What is philosophy?* (H. Tomlison & G. Burchell, Trans.). London: Athlone Press.

Deleuze, G. (1995). *Negotiations*. (M. Joughin, Trans.). New York: Columbia University Press.

Deleuze, G. (2004). *Difference and repetition*. London: Continuum.

Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (1987). *A thousand plateaus: Capitalism and schizophrenia*. London: The Athlone Press.

Deleuze, G., & Parnet, C. (1987). *Dialogues*. (H. Tomlinson & B. Habberjam, Trans.). New York: Columbia University Press.

Derrida, J. (1992). Force of law: the mystical foundation of authority. (M. Quaintance, Trans.). In D. Cornell, M. Rosenfield, & D. Carlson (Eds.), *Deconstruction and the possibility of justice*. New York and London: Routledge.

Derrida, J. (1997). The Villanova roundtable: A conversation with Jacques Derrida. In J. Caputo (Ed.), *Deconstruction in a nutshell: a conversation with Jacques Derrida*. New York: Fordham University Press.

Edgoose, J. (1997). An ethics of hesitant learning: the caring justice of Levinas and Derrida in *PES Yearbook*. Retrieved April 27, 2005, from http://www.ed.uiuc.edu/EPS/PES-Yearbook/97_docs/edgoose.html

Foucault, M. (1986). *The care of the self: the history of sexuality, 3*. (R. Hurley, Trans.). New York: Routledge.

Foucault, M. (1994). A preface to transgression. In *Aesthetics: Essential works of Foucault 1954–1984*, Vol. 2. London: Penguin.

Gregoriou, Z. (2002). Performing pedagogy with Deleuze: the rhizomatics of 'theory of education'. *Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain Conference Proceedings.*

Hanko, G. (2005). Towards an inclusive school culture: the 'affective curriculum'. In M. Nind, J. Rix, K. Sheehy, & K. Simmons (Eds.), *Curriculum and pedagogy in inclusive education: Values into practice*. London and New York: RoutledgeFalmer/The Open University.

Hansard (2005). *Debate on special schools and special educational needs*. 22 June.

Honan, E. (2004). (Im)plausibilities: A rhizo-textual analysis of policy texts and teachers' work. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, *36*(3), 267–281.

Macmillan, R., Meyer, M., Edmunds, A., Edmunds, G., & Feltmate, C. (2002). *A survey of the impact of funding cuts on inclusion: a report to the NSTU*. Halifax, UK: Nova Scotia Teachers Union.

National Association of Education. (2005). *Testing, inclusion on a collision course?* Retrieved August 1, 2006, from http://www.nea.org/specialed/research-specialed.html

Nietzsche, F. (1983). *Untimely meditations*. (R. J. Hollingdale, Trans.). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Patton, P. (2000). *Deleuze and the political*. London: Routledge.

Rajchman, J. (2001). *The Deleuze connections*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Rose, N. (1996). *Inventing our selves: psychology, power and personhood*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Roy, K. (2003). *Teachers in nomadic spaces: Deleuze and curriculum*. New York: Peter Lang.

Roy, K. (2004). Overcoming nihilism: From communication to Deleuzian expression. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, *36*(3), 297–312.

Smyth, J. (2001). Managing the myth of the self-managing school as an international educational reform. In M. Fielding (Ed.), *Taking education really seriously: Four years hard labour*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.

Taylor, M., & Saarinen, E. (1994). *Imagologies: media philosophy*. London: Routledge.

Thomas, G., & Vaughan, M. (2004). *Inclusive education: Readings and reflections*. Maidenhead, Berkshire: Open University Press.

Ware, L. (2002). A moral conversation on disability: Risking the personal in educational contexts. *Hypatia*, *17*(3), 143–172.

Warnock, M. (2005). *Special educational needs: A new look.* Impact No 11. London: The Philosophy Society of Great Britain.

Julie Allan
Stirling Institute of Education
University of Stirling

BALJIT KAUR

2. CHILDREN NAVIGATING HOME–SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS

Strategic Compliance, Resistance and Other Survival Strategies

> The *concept* of childhood requires that children be distinguishable from adults in respect of some unspecified set of attributes. A *conception* of childhood is a specification of those attributes. (Archard, 1993, p. 22)
>
> Ultimately, the individual child is largely a tool to illuminate the nature of the autonomous adult citizen by providing the perfect mirror within which to reflect the negative image of the positive adult form. (Arneil, 2002, p. 74)

CONSTRUCTIONS OF CHILDREN AND CHILDHOOD

Children these days are widely construed as active participants in their own development. Yet paradoxically modern childhood is the most regulated and managed period of life (Prout, 2005). Young children in particular continue to be seen as incapable, ignorant, innocent and incompetent, and lacking the capabilities that they must be helped to develop over time. They are subject to hierarchical inequalities based largely on arbitrary distinctions between childhood and adulthood. A child, by definition, is not yet an adult (Archard, 1993), which means that the child has little agency or autonomy and no space in public debate about what is in the child's own best interests.

The predominant *conception* of childhood, to use Archard's term, is largely derived from developmentalism[1] (Wyness, 2006). Children are assumed to develop new capabilities as they move through a more or less linear set of age-related stages that are cumulative and universal. Adults are assigned the duty and privilege to assist in furthering this unfolding of capabilities by supporting the developing child, although the developmental process itself is conceptualised as largely internal to the child. Thus the younger the child, the lower the stage of development and concomitantly the poorer his/her abilities to think reasonably about issues confronting him/her (Cannella, 1997). At least two problematic consequences follow from this perspective. One, children might be conceded to actively create meanings of their life worlds but these meanings are not expected to be based on sound reasoning, and thus not considered worthy of serious attention in research, policy or practice. Second, the assumed nature of development conjures up an ideal global

K. Quinlivan, R. Boyask and B. Kaur (eds.), Educational Enactments in a Globalised World: Intercultural Conversations, 13–25.
© 2009 Sense Publishers. All rights reserved.

or universal childhood, which denies and undermines the multiplicity of childhoods that children from diverse backgrounds experience in their daily lives.

The national and global measures to rescue children from poverty and deprivation by keeping them under adult monitoring in specifically designated spaces such as schools, although enabling and well-intentioned, are not unproblematic given the pre-existing social and economic disparities in children's lives that remain unmitigated. Within school systems children get positioned differently, by others as well as by themselves, based on a range of criteria that reference back to the universal ideal childhood, further marginalising those who already might be disadvantaged on entry to school (James & James, 2004). To what extent do research, policy and practice on home–school relationships take childhood diversity into account when construing the roles of thus 'differentiated' children?

CHILDREN CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE: HOME–SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

> Existing approaches to home–school relations in policy and practice arenas seem to have hardly begun to engage with the diversity of meanings 'home–school relations' might have, the functions they might serve for children and young people, and the underlying broader structural issues involved. (Alldred, David & Edwards, 2002, p. 135)

The meta-narrative of the crucial significance of effective partnerships between home and school for children's optimal development and learning is so widely accepted today as to need no further comment or scrutiny of the claim or its assumptions (Delhi, 2003). As in many other countries, the current educational policy in New Zealand advocates close working partnerships between home/ whānau[2] and school. Several government policy and strategy documents emphasise the need for schools to work in close collaboration with parents and community to enable better educational achievements for all children in the wake of persistent gaps in the measured achievement outcomes for children from diverse backgrounds (e.g. Ministry of Education, 2005). On its website, the Ministry of Education offers a whole section for parents to learn about becoming effective partners with their children's teachers and schools, and close home–school relationships are listed among the Ministry's eight priorities for schooling and early childhood education (Ministry of Education, 2007).

Research on the importance of home–school relationships for children's effective schooling has a long, contested history. The arguments about whether teachers or parents should have more power over shaping the lives and minds of children have occupied researchers since the inception of mass schooling (Bastiani, 1993; Cairney, 2000; Cutler, 2000 Hoffman, 1991). Researchers have elaborated the relative roles of parents and teachers for effective home and school relationships, often advocating interventions for parents, and making suggestions for teachers. Parents' involvement in their children's education has been repeatedly shown to have positive results. Children for whom there is a mismatch between home and school might not do as well in school as those whose home and school hold similar goals, values and beliefs (Biddulph, Biddulph & Biddulph, 2003; Bull, Brooking &

Campbell, 2008; Epstein & Sheldon, 2006; OECD, 1997). The overwhelming congruence between research and policy is reflected in teacher education programmes and teacher practices too. The goal of working closely with families is evident in school charters across New Zealand.

Despite the salience of home–school partnerships for effective schooling in policy, practice and research, children's own perspectives and experiences have been virtually absent till recently (Edwards, 2002). The vast majority of research in this area has been, and continues to be, driven by developmentalist assumptions, which posit that children might have little to add to our understandings about home–school relationships. In this view, children are more or less passive recipients of the concern and benevolence of adults, who act in concert to promote children's best interests. However, for the last decade or so, a new line of inquiry in childhood studies has emerged that takes a critical view of the existing research (James & James, 2004; James, Jenks & Prout, 1998; Lareau, 2000; Qvortrup, Bardy, Sgritta & Wintersberger, 1994). Consequently more researchers have begun to investigate children's own perspectives on issues and contexts of their lives, including the issue of home–school relationships. Some studies have investigated the possibility that the meanings children create have a bearing on how they manage the adult regulation, monitoring or support of their school lives (Alldred et al., 2002; Ericsson & Larsen, 2002; Mayall, 1994).

In this chapter, I argue that the premise of children's rights of participation in their own lives needs to be examined seriously for all children. The unquestioned acceptance of the predominant constructions of universal ideal childhood, founded on the assumptions of linearity of development and deficit thinking about childhood in general and about 'at risk' children in particular, makes us, educational researchers and practitioners alike, complicit in creating and authorising the silencing of children's voices. The normative discourse of childhood and schooling operates to produce children's silence for its own survival. My concern here is to '… search for the breach that permits the silent specter to enter our midst' (Mazzei, 2007, p. 15), by presenting data in young children's voices and actions that challenges the basic assumptions about their lack of competence to understand complex situations and respond in sophisticated ways.

However, let me clarify that while my argument is that children's meaning-making of their lives is worth serious consideration (James, 2007), we need to be cautious to avoid assigning unfettered meaning-making freedom to children, as indeed to any other person, because the meanings largely inhere within a broad cultural frame. Children do not speak in a single voice, nor are they better placed than other social actors to comment on schools. Just because it is the voice of a child it does not have more, nor should it have less, legitimacy than others participating in the home–school systems. Nevertheless, I take the position that children do have unique and so far largely undocumented perspectives on home–school relationships that can widen the current understandings in this area of research.

My overarching research question is: How do young children, positioned variously in the school system, according to perceived ability or cultural or class background, perceive and manage home–school relationships? Some corollaries of

this question are: Do all children benefit equally from closer home–school relationships? Under what conditions might a close relationship work against rather than for a child's best interests? What do children, positioned differently in the school system, think about their parents and teachers collaborating, and what roles do they play in facilitating or impeding this relationship?

In the larger study on which this chapter draws, I was interested in investigating the relative positioning of three 'groups' of participants in home–school relationships: professionals, parents/caregivers and the children themselves. However, here my focus is on children's perspectives. I begin with a brief outline of the context of the larger study, followed by children's views, experiences and strategies of managing home–school relationships. I then consider what can be learnt from children's lived experiences and negotiation of home–school relations, and implications such insights might have for constructions of contemporary childhood.

CONTEXTUALISING THE RESEARCH STUDY: TEACHER–PARENT–CHILD TRIANGLE

Elm Tree Primary[3] was a Decile 3[4] school in a relatively poor neighbourhood with a highly mobile refugee and migrant population when I began my study. In 2000, the Education Review Office put the school roll of 5- to 11-year-olds at 225, with ethnic composition of Pākehā[5] 65%; Māori 25%; Others (including Somali, Ethiopian, Samoan, Chinese and Fijian) 10%. Over a two-year period, extensive data were gathered through school observations (in classrooms as well as in other spaces outside the classrooms) and multiple interviews undertaken with parents, teachers, board members[6] and support staff. In addition to the observational data on children and informal conversation with them over the course of the field work, most children in all classrooms in the 'senior' section (N = 60; aged 7 to 11 years) participated in a 'draw/write and tell' activity using nine prompts, each followed by focus groups. In addition, 23 children from these classrooms whose parents had given permission for further participation in the study were interviewed individually or in pairs at their discretion. This data from children was collected towards the end of the field work when children were familiar and comfortable with the researchers.[7]

The school had recently won a nationally contested award for its effectiveness despite its low decile rating. The principal held the school's close relationship with the community to be one of its main strengths. As the interviews subsequently revealed, the school professed a strong commitment to close home–school relationships depicted through a widely used metaphor, a triangle, which placed CHILD at the apex of an equilateral triangle with TEACHER and PARENT at the other two angles. Most of the school policy documents and communications to families used the triangle symbol prominently. The teachers often referred to it while talking with children and parents. The deputy principal and the principal considered the triangle a distinct characteristic of the school's philosophy and practice. Many children, too, mentioned it during my conversations with them. So how did home–school relationships get enacted in the lives of children at Elm Tree Primary, and what roles, if any, did they take up in such enactments?

LIVED REALITIES OF HOME–SCHOOL RELATIONS THROUGH CHILDREN'S EYES

Trust was a strong theme in children's responses to the issue of contact between parents and teachers; trust they had in their relationship with their teachers or, in a few cases, whether they could trust any adult at all.

Children were clear about whether a teacher liked them and why teachers liked certain children. This perception often had an effect on their decisions on whether to sort things out for themselves or to seek adult help. They said that it took them less than a month to know whether this will be a good year for them or not, based on the teacher's verbal as well as non-verbal behaviour towards them and their classmates.

> I:[8] Why do you think they [teachers] will do that [act mean towards you]? …
>
> C:[9] I don't know, because they know I am a real dick!
>
> I: Who says that? …
>
> C: Me? Nobody, but I think they think I am, probably … you know Sam in my class? He is real smart. He is the smartest kid in our class. [They'll write] probably good things about him because he is like real smart. He is brainy.
>
> I: And you don't think that you are brainy.
>
> C: Na. …
>
> I: So teachers would be nice to that kind of kid who is brainy and very good?
>
> C: Well, they'll probably be nice to other kids like me too. Well, NOT REALLY!

Children as young as seven had well thought out and discerning answers that made sensitive distinctions between 'private' and 'public'. They used their perceptions, observations and experiences to justify their decisions about whom they would share their concerns or secrets with. Often their answers to questions about contact between their home and school, home visits by teachers, teachers and parents meeting, and children themselves sharing an issue that was troubling for them inside or outside the school, began with, 'it depends on who the teacher is' or 'I will tell this teacher because she cares', or 'No. I think that is just a waste of your time, … because they won't listen', or 'Teachers will say you are bad, but you are not … It depends on who the teacher is … It is a matter of trust'.

Some children responded to their perceptions and experiences by saying that they did not care whether their teachers talked to their parents. 'I don't care, I think they talk rubbish.' Others decided to keep out of harm's way or to take a watchful stance, towards not only that teacher but the school in general, thus actively seeking to keep their parents away from school as evident in the roles described below. I discerned five distinct role clusters in these educational enactments and named these: Vigilant Sentinel, Goody Two Shoes, Little Atlas, Assiduous Protector, and Smart Tactician (Clayton, 1993; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

Vigilant Sentinel: 'I Always Keep an Eye on Them'

Many children accepted the reality of contact between their parents and teachers but they did not like them talking to each other without children's knowledge or participation: 'I would want to know what they are saying about me.' At least some of these children asserted their right to know given that the conversations were about them.

> I will not like my teacher to come to my house, because Mum will ask me to go to my room, and I won't know what he said and I'll wonder what he had to say to them.
>
> They should tell me [what they are saying] because it is an interview about me and no one else.
>
> It is a good thing that you [child herself] get to come along to parent interviews and I think that you should get to have your opinion.

When children feared that they were seen as achieving or behaving poorly, they thought about contact between parents and teachers in terms of consequences for their daily life. From their perspective, such contact was not necessarily benign. They were aware of the adults' sanctioning authority and, as is evident below, many wished for a low level of contact between teachers and parents or acted to minimise the chances of facing the consequences. Children often made strong connections between bad or naughty behaviour and the need, then, for parents and teachers to communicate. The punitive possibilities of such adult arrangements for monitoring were uppermost in their responses, and they acted judiciously to avoid such contact between their home and school, by staying vigilant or obeying rules.

> If my mum comes in to talk to my teacher, then she gets to know I am not doing my work well, so I don't get to watch TV. I don't like it.
>
> I do not want [teacher] to come home, because he gives too much homework and I don't like doing homework. So if he came home, he will tell my mum that I don't do my homework.
>
> If my mum found out I was naughty, I get grounded.
>
> I don't want my teacher to know that I am bad, that I can be naughty.
>
> I go to a friend and find out if his parents can take me to school. That is what I do [to avoid his parents coming to school].
>
> If you live close by, you can ask if you can walk to school with other children. That works.

These children strategically managed the demands of home and school in their lives, and did not want that balance disturbed by frequent contacts between home and school. The reality of the sorting function of school was not lost on those who lived its consequences. For children who were not seen as 'star pupils', the contact between home and school served to magnify the adult surveillance and

regulation of their lives. While not always able to control it, they were quick to express displeasure.

A few children said that they neither trusted the teachers individually nor the school as a whole. For instance, a nine-year-old boy from a Pacific Island country had huge distrust of teachers. His father had passed away. He was close to his mother and other members of his extended family, and enjoyed independence and agency at home. He spent a good deal of time outside school with teenage boys who were his cousins or their friends. At school, he was teased by other boys and got into fights over that quite often, but he did not seek intervention. He wanted no contact between his home and school, and had none.

> I: If you get into trouble, say, when you are out and about in town with your older friends, who will you talk to? … Would you talk to your mum?
>
> C: Probably. If I want to …
>
> I: Would you talk to a teacher?
>
> C: NO. When I come to school I will be in deep trouble you see. You see that. I am pretty smart with teachers, eh. Because like, if they come to my house, and I talk to them about it, they come to school and report it on a piece of paper. When I go to high school, that'll get me in big trouble. You see? That is the problem.
>
> I: Is that why you don't want them to come home? And you won't talk to them? [He had already stated these views]
>
> C: Yes, that's right. That is right, because then I can't be my ordinary self …
>
> I: So what do you do? … How are you smart with teachers?
>
> C: I know, I know what they are up to.
>
> I: What are they up to?
>
> C: Ah, when you do your work, you give it to the teacher, eh. Then they write like how smart you are and everything … And then they write it down on a piece of paper. Then they will probably give it to like intermediate, whatever school I am going to. And then they'll kick me out of the school.

This child had very different self identities at school and outside it. He used his ample clout with his mother and extended family to keep the home and the school apart. He insisted, successfully, on no family visits to school. During the two years of field work, I never met any member of his family. He brought back consent forms signed for his own participation, but I never got permission to interview his mother.

Goody Two Shoes: 'We Don't Hide Our Trouble, Because We Don't Mostly Get Into Trouble'

Some children thought that it was fine if their teachers and parents talked to each other, in situations outside the formal parent–teacher interviews. Largely these were the children who thought that they were doing well at school, some academically, most behaviourally. Most, though not all, of these children were from relatively stable, typical middle class, two-parent families of Pākehā background.

> I get along with my teacher as well as my mum, so that's all right … I don't want to know what they are talking about because it is their time to speak. I don't have to worry about it. It is none of my business anyway.
>
> I do not get into trouble. I never lost privilege in my life. If any of them talk to each other, that is fine with me. I am not bothered by that.
>
> I love my parents coming to school because there is no problem.
>
> I: What do you think about teachers visiting students' homes?
>
> C: I think it's pretty cool. If she came into the lounge, I will just probably be sitting on the couch real lazy. At school, I'd probably be working real hard.
>
> I: So you think it will be interesting for her to see you in another way.
>
> C: Yeah.

Many children, particularly girls, managed minimal contact between their home and school by behaving well and staying within the rules, or being selective about what they shared with their parents about school and with any adult at school about their home life.

> Well, I just don't do it. I just stay out of trouble. If I think it'll get me in trouble, I won't do it.
>
> I like my teacher. I feel very close to her because she never tells me off. That's because I don't do bad things. I never get into trouble. I am Miss Goody Good.
>
> If my teacher calls her then I want my mum to come to school … I am never in big trouble, so she will not come for that reason.
>
> I tell my mum about what I did in school, but not if I get into trouble.

Little Atlas: 'I don't know what to draw. I don't have a normal life. I don't have much of a family. I want a better family but I don't have it'

In every class there were a couple of children who, given a choice, did not want to participate in the draw/write activity. The whole subject of pondering over home–school relationships was painful for these children in view of their tough family circumstances. One child felt so angry that he tore his pencil through the sheet of

paper on which he was to write. After testing the limits of my commitment to listen to him should he choose to speak to me, he ended up telling me a woeful narrative of a succession of foster homes in his young life, and the anger he felt at his abandonment by his parents. 'They just don't know what can happen to a young child in foster homes', he finished in a small voice.

Some children carried burdens of poor relationships between the adults in their lives, within their families or between their parents and teachers, acting stoically to protect others or to avoid further dire consequences for themselves.

> I can't really tell you what he [my father] says. It will be wrong for me to say what my father says about the teachers in school. He has said many things about this teacher and other teachers that I can't tell you.
>
> If in trouble, he said, he did not tell his mum, 'because she gets REALLY sad. Yeah, she gets really sad, so I don't tell her anything about school or what happened at school.'
>
> I can tell [a teacher] but I am too scared to, and I don't like what is sort of going on in my life.
>
> No [I can't tell my mother]. I won't want her to come down [to school] … People are mean … it is just that I don't want to get in trouble the next day. Because like whenever you tell your mum, then the next day, 'Oh you have got problem [own name]!' They snap. You get shouted at and get bossed around a lot.

When asked who will she talk to, she said, 'Nobody. I'll talk to nobody.' Without being asked again, she returned to make this statement several times.

> I will talk to my sister [who was five years old] if there was a problem because we can together figure it out somehow.
>
> I will tell my friends. And that's about it.

These children sounded really sad when they spoke of not talking to any adults at home or school, as if they had nobody to turn to, or that they wished they could talk to someone but knew better.

Assiduous Protector: 'It is a Bit of a Personal Thing, Home Life'

A vast majority of children were adamant that their life outside the school was a personal matter, and the school had no reason to know about it. They expressed opposition both to the idea of home visits by teachers and to sharing information of any life events with teachers or others at school by the children themselves.

Some of children's reasons for disliking the idea of home visits by teachers are mentioned above. In addition, many children opposed the idea because they made a clear distinction between 'public' and 'private' in their lives. They were protective of what they perceived to be the private sphere, home. Teachers were not welcome at home because '… they could be invading your private space', 'they have no

right to see your private life', 'It just doesn't feel right', 'It is none of their business', 'I think they should not know what goes on in my private life'.

A few students opposed the idea in the name of efficiency. More frequent contact would put more pressure on parents, teachers or children themselves. 'No, because it is too much time on a regular basis [for parents to spend on meetings at school]', 'No, because they usually give more homework [Wastage of time for the child]', 'No, they [teachers] aren't there to make house calls'!

The majority of children did not want to be 'embarrassed' by their parents' affections towards them in front of their peers or teachers or by their actions in general. Display of such affection, mostly maternal, definitely belonged in the private sphere. They actively sought to ensure that their parents did not come to the school by not telling them about some events, asking them to drop them off at the gate, choosing to walk to the school instead and other such strategies. Similarly some children thought they would be embarrassed by a teacher's visit if their room were not clean. Children from refugee families thought others might tease them about their way of life, so they did not want teachers or children to visit their home.

Both boys and girls often said that they would not involve adults, particularly teachers to help them sort any issues that they may face, deeming this a private matter. Several children felt that nobody really listens to them or cares about them, or that others will not understand. For some children it was a matter of trust as mentioned earlier. For others it was a matter of independence: 'I will not talk to anybody at all.' When asked why, this child said, 'Well, that's how I am. I won't talk to anybody.'

Smart Tactician: 'I do not Want to do Extra Work but I do Need to Know More'

A few of the older children (9–11 years old), who were doing well academically and thinking ahead to attending intermediate school the following year, used their voice and authority to create focused interactions between their parents and teachers. All of them were from middle class families with 'professional' parents. Two of them in a pair interview had this to say:

> C1: I find the work too easy, so I talked to my mum.
>
> C2: I do not want to do extra work but I do need to know more.
>
> C1: I have been asking my parents to ask my teacher to teach us harder work in spelling. They have been teaching me harder stuff than we do at school.
>
> C2: Me too.
>
> It is good if they talk because it might be something good about me … because it is good to know what you have to do more of.
>
> It is important if my teacher and parents talk, because my mum could tell the teacher to give harder work in subjects I do well in.

INTERPRETING CHILDREN'S RESPONSES

Contrary to the developmentalist assumptions about young children's inability to think logically, the foregoing account of children's responses leaves little doubt that they were capable of creating sophisticated and complex understandings of home–school relationships. Further, children acted intentionally and purposefully to negotiate the adult monitoring and interventions into their lives. They made sensitive and well-considered judgements about adult roles, guarding the distinctions of the private and the public in their lives. They actively subverted or facilitated interactions between parents and teachers depending on how they perceived their own positioning in the school and/or home, and flexibly took up a number of complicated roles in relation to those judgements and self/other-positionings.

Children who were from different minority cultures, who were not achieving well academically, who disliked school, or who were seen as problem children or as belonging to problem families, did not want close contact between home and school and acted overtly or covertly to achieve that goal. Logically that seems to be a rather smart move. Given that schooling with its sorting routines and rituals is compulsory and children are seen to be unfit for autonomy within school, it stands to reason to keep such a context as separate as possible from the rest of one's life.

Children who were happy with close relationships between their homes and school and those who sought yet closer relations did so based on their valorised positions within the system. They were doing well at school and were seen as good students. They had inherited the cultural and socioeconomic advantages reflecting their similarity to the universal ideal of childhood. The close home–school relationships enshrined in research and policy and promoted as best practice in teacher education worked to support effectively the schooling experiences of these children. They had nothing to fear from closeness between their parents and teachers.

The actions and reflections of children in the study cast serious doubts over the developmentalist assumptions of incompetence that underpin the widely accepted constructions of young children. The current models of home–school partnerships do not take sufficient cognisance of the diversity of schooling experiences for different children. Overwhelmingly researchers in this area continue to speak of 'the child', even as they fail to consider this mythical normal child's voice, and to recommend interventions driven by a deficit-oriented conception of childhood for those who do not fit the norm. Thus research, practice and policy based on the homogeneous conception of childhood fails to raise the question of whether close home–school relationships that are useful for some children might be necessary for all children. Young children in my study were clear eyed and strong voiced in expressing how they saw and managed the issues related to home–school relationships in their lives. The challenge for us – researchers, policy-makers, teachers, teacher educators and parents alike – is to question our own roles in sustaining the grounds on which children are subjected to hierarchical inequalities and rendered into silent and passive 'not yet' spectres, even as we struggle to find alternative conceptualisations of childhoods. I conclude with Baker (1999) who,

citing Morrs (1996), argues that, '… perhaps it is time to operate in a space that is ambiguous and less clearly defined than what we may be used to and that this is a constructive, not destructive, outcome of antidevelopmental arguments' (p. 826).

NOTES

[1] For discussions of developmentalism see B. Baker (1999). The dangerous and the good? Developmentalism, progress and public schooling. *American Education Research Journal, 36*(4), 797–834; J. Morrs (1996). *Growing critical: Alternatives to developmental psychology*. New York: Routledge; V. Walkerdine (1993). Beyond developmentalism? *Theory and Psychology*, 3, 451–469.

[2] Whānau is a Māori word that roughly translates to extended family.

[3] Pseudonym. All participant and place names have been altered. The study was partially supported by the University of Canterbury (Internal Grant #U6363), and by several grants from the Research Committee of the School of Education.

[4] All New Zealand schools are assigned a decile rating on a scale from 1 to 10 by the Ministry of Education; 1 reflects the lowest socio-economic neighbourhood.

[5] Pākehā are Caucasian New Zealanders of predominantly British/European ancestry.

[6] New Zealand has one of the most devolved educational systems in the world with elected Boards of Trustees (mostly parents) holding the overall responsibility for administration and management of the each school locally. For more information see McPhail and Palincsar, this volume, or visit http://www.minedu.govt.nz/educationSectors/Schools/SchoolOperations/BOTOperationsAndSupport/BOTElectionsCoOptionsSelectionToCasualVacancy.aspx

[7] Some interviews were conducted by Lynn Gardiner.

[8] Interviewer.

[9] Child.

REFERENCES

Alldred, P., David, M., & Edwards, R. (2002). Minding the gap: Children and young people negotiating relations between home and school. In R. Edwards (Ed.), *Children, home and school: Regulation, autonomy or connection?* London: Routledge Falmer.

Archard, D. (1993). *Children: Rights and childhood.* London: Routledge.

Arneil, B. (2002). Becoming versus being: A critical theory of the child in liberal theory. In D. Archard & C. M. Macleod (Eds.), *The moral and political status of children*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Baker, B. (1999). The dangerous and the good? Developmentalism, progress and public schooling. *American Education Research Journal*, *36*(4), 797–834.

Bastiani, J. (1993). Parents as partners: Genuine progress or empty rhetoric? In P. Munn (Ed.), *Parents and schools: Customers, managers or partners*? London: Routledge.

Biddulph, F., Biddulph, J., & Biddulph, C. (2003). *The complexity of community and family influences on children's achievement in New Zealand: Best evidence synthesis.* Wellington, NZ: Ministry of Education.

Bull, A., Brooking, K., & Campbell, R. (2008). *Successful home-school partnerships*. Wellington, NZ: Ministry of Education. Retrieved June 12, 2009, from http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/schooling/28415/28416/1

Cairney, T. H. (2000). Beyond the classroom walls: The rediscovery of the family and community as partners in education. *Educational Review, 52*(2), 163–174.

Cannella, G. S. (1997). *Deconstructing early childhood education: Social justice and revolution*. New York: Peter Lang.

Clayton, M. (1993). *Living pictures of the self: Applications of role theory in professional practice and daily living*. Caulfield, Australia: ICA Centre.

Cutler, W. W., III. (2000). *Parents and schools: The 150-year struggle for control in American education*. Chicago: The Chicago University Press.

Delhi, K. (2003). 'Making' the parent and the researcher: genealogy meets ethnography in research on contemporary school reforms. In M. Tamboukou & S. J. Ball (Eds.), *Dangerous encounters: Genealogy and ethnography.* New York: Peter Lang.

Edwards, R. (2002). Introduction: Conceptualising relationships between home and school in children's lives. In R. Edwards (Ed.), *Children, home and school: Regulation, autonomy or connection?* London: Routledge Falmer.

Epstein, J. L., & Sheldon, S. B. (2006). Moving forward: Ideas for research on school family and community partnerships. In C. F. Conrad & R. Serlin (Eds.), *Handbook for research in education: Engaging ideas and enriching inquiry.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. Retrieved December 6, 2007, from http://www.csos.jhu.edu/P2000/research/index/htm

Ericsson, K., & Larsen, G. (2002). Adults as resources and adults as burdens: The strategies of children in the age of home–school collaboration. In R. Edwards (Ed.), *Children, home and school: Regulation, autonomy or connection*? London: Routledge Falmer.

Hoffman, S. (Ed.). (1991). Educational partnerships: home–school–community. *The Elementary School Journal*, *91*(3), [Special Issue], 193–287.

James, A. (2007). Giving voice to children's voices: Practices and problems, pitfalls and potentials. *American Anthropologist, 109*(2), 261, 12 pp. Retrieved June 11, 2009, from http://proquest.umi.com.ezproxy.canterbury.ac.nz/pqdweb?PMID=27652&TS=1245337296&SrchMode=3&SrtM=1&PCID=36206871&VType=PQD&VInst=PROD&aid=1&clientId=13346&RQT=572&VName=PQD&firstIndex=0

James, A., & James, A. (2004). *Constructing childhood: Theory, policy and social practice*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

James, A., Jenks, C., & Prout, A. (1998). *Theorizing childhood*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors we live by*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lareau, A. (2000). *Home advantage: Social class and parental intervention in elementary education*. London: Rowman & Littlefield.

Mayall, B. (1994). Children in action at home and school. In B. Mayall (Ed.), *Children's childhoods: Observed and experienced*. London: Falmer Press.

Mazzei, L. A. (2007). *Inhabited silence in qualitative research: Putting poststructural theory to work.* New York: Peter Lang.

Ministry of Education. (2005). *Making a bigger difference for all students: Schooling strategy 2005–2010*. Wellington, NZ: Ministry of Education.

Ministry of Education. (2007). *Education counts: Eight education priorities.* Wellington, NZ: Government of New Zealand. Retrieved January 27, 2009, from http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/themes/eight_education_priorities

OECD. (1997). *Parents as partners in schooling*. Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Prout, A. (2005). *The future of childhood: Towards the interdisciplinary study of children*. New York: Routledge Falmer.

Qvortrup, J., Bardy, M., Sgritta, G., & Wintersberger, E. (Eds.). (1994). *Childhood matters: Social theory, practice and politics*. Aldershot, Hampshire: Avebury.

Wyness, M. (2006). *Childhood and society: An introduction to the sociology of childhood*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Baljit Kaur
School of Educational Studies and Human Development
College of Education
University of Canterbury