

Teaching toward Counter-hegemonic Pedagogies (notes and citations)

Celia Oyler, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York City, USA

March 20, 2015

University of Edinburgh

Email: oyler@tc.eduFor series: *Teacher Education for Changing Demographics of Schooling*;Focus: *Teacher Development in Contexts*

1. U.S. context, including:
 - a. More than 50% children of color, majority teachers are white, middle class
 - b. More and more students with disabilities in general education schools and classrooms, and not segregated; supports are offered through 'push-in', 'pullout', or co-teaching
 - c. Increasing religious diversity
 - d. Largest immigration wave in history; large number of students for whom English is an additional language (English Language Learner); also students with interrupted (or no) formal schooling (SIFE)
 - e. Largest wealth-poverty gap the U.S. has ever experienced
 - f. Growing number of gender-non-conforming (transgender) children and youth; along with visible presences of lesbian/gay/bisexual youth

2. Assumptions undergirding U.S. common schools and their legacy
 - a. Schools designed to assimilate and erase difference; Benjamin Rush (1786) *Thoughts upon the Mode of Education Proper in a Republic*: "By producing one general and uniform system of education, will render the mass of the people more **homogeneous** and thereby fit them more easily for uniform and peaceable government."
 - b. Enduring legacy of white supremacy based on inherent inferiority of African Americans; "... a deficiency of cerebral matter in the cranium, and an excess of nervous matter distributed to the organs of sensation and assimilation, [caused] that debasement of mind, which has rendered the people of Africa unable to take care of themselves. (Samuel A. Cartwright, "Report on the Diseases and Physical Peculiarities of the Negro Race," *New Orleans Medical and Surgical Journal* 7, May 1851: 693)
 - c. Disproportionate number of African American, Latino, and Native American students classified as disabled – in the most subjective categories
 - d. Sorting, leveling, labeling has increased with the neo-liberal accountability movement with classrooms built on "bell-curve thinking" (Lynn Fendler & Irfan Muzaffar, 2008, cited in Florian, L. (2013), *Reimagining special education: Why new approaches are needed*. In *Sage Handbook of Special Education*)

- e. Myth of meritocracy and the “American Dream” with schools as “the great equalizer”
 - f. Today’s standards movement with deep roots in social efficiency; Gary Weilbacher (2012): “Remarkably similar to today’s narrow emphasis on education as the way to compete in a global economy or to find gainful employment, leaders of the social efficiency movement believed that students needed to be sorted into separate groups in order to be provided with an “education according to [their] predicted social and vocational role” (Herbert Kliebard, (2004). (Standardization and whiteness: One and the same in *Democracy and Education*, 20(2).
3. Decentering dominant discourses
- a. Participatory democracy; critical multicultural education; Culturally Responsive Pedagogy; interactive-collaborative learning; feminist pedagogy; queer pedagogy; inclusion
 - b. Eric Rofes: We must “take a fearless look at the downside of the liberal love affair with slow, incremental change and consider radical approaches that strike at the root causes of oppression, marginalization and injustice in our schools and other public institutions” from *A Radical re-thinking of sexuality and schooling: Status quo or status queer?* (2005, p. 140)
4. Teacher education for counter-hegemonic pedagogies
- a. Teacher education for critical consciousness
 - i. Critical interrogation of how hegemonic (Gramsci, 1971) discourses of society shape our consciousness
 - ii. Teachers need to have “ideological clarity” and understand teaching as always political (Luis Moll & Elizabeth Arnot-Hopffer, 2004, *Sociocultural competence in teacher education, Journal of Teacher Education*, 56)
 - iii. Understand difference as institutional and discursive: Thea Abu El-Haj (2006). “By locating the “problem of difference” as deeply embedded within institutional relationships, we shift away from focusing our attention on people defined as “different.” Gender is no longer simply a code word for women, race does not only reference people of color. This relational approach to difference demands confrontation with “whiteness.” “maleness,” “able-ness” and so forth. The relational approach suggests that, as educators, we must examine not only how certain practices result in inequalities for particular children and groups, but we must also attend to the ways that practices simultaneously privilege others. (*Elusive Justice*, 2006, p. 17)
 - iv. Collective analysis and organizing; building intellectual community
 - b. Counter-hegemonic pedagogies

- i. Equalize status interactions in the classroom (Cohen & Lotan, 1997), particularly around class, “ability”, physical appearance, gender and gender expression, race, ethnicity, language
 - ii. Utilize relational approaches to classroom management, discipline, behavior; promote learning not compliance
 - iii. Plan for collaborative inquiry by learners, not passive receiving of knowledge
 - iv. Design accessible instruction for learning (not completion) through multimodality, assistive and instructional technologies, Universal Design for Learning
 - v. Engage in ongoing formative assessment for learning (Florian, 2013) , not for leveling and labeling
 - vi. Position families as experts on their children and communities and listen actively to their needs and experiences to learn from them (Kalyanpur & Harry, 2012)
 - vii. Use assets-based, capacity language and framing with students, colleagues, and families (Fennimore, 1999; Hart, Dixon, Drummond, McIntyre, 2004)
- c. Learning counter-hegemonic pedagogies
 - i. Critical autobiographical analysis
 - ii. Teacher inquiry groups
 - 1. Choice time
 - 2. Inquiry to action teams
 - iii. Community-based curriculum
- 5. Researching counter-hegemonic and inclusive pedagogies
 - a. Recent review of 1500 research papers in teacher education concluded: “Most of the existing research is not sufficiently powerful to substantially challenge the material conditions and social relations that reproduce inequalities and profoundly influence teaching/learning in K-12 schools. We need much more research about aspects of teacher preparation and certification—conducted with many different kinds of research designs—that deeply acknowledges the impact of social, cultural, and institutional factors, particularly the impact of poverty, on teaching, learning, and teacher education.” (Cochran-Smith, Villegas, Abram, Chavez-Moreno, Mills, & Stern (2015) Critiquing teacher preparation research: An overview of the field, part II. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 66(2), p. 118.