

**Citizenship Learning at a Time of Intellectual Turmoil:
The Pervasiveness of Language Perspectives**

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Introduction

This is an interesting time in educational and social theory and philosophy as there is great turmoil about the intellectual assumptions and presuppositions of the social sciences, humanities, history, and philosophy. The turmoil relates to the rules of truth that are embodied in knowledge, the politics of knowledge, and the relation of intellectual work to issues of change (Popkewitz 1).

In this turmoil are inscribed education for democratic citizenship including identity formation, which are the focus of our reflection here today. The citizenship debates marking our era call upon us to rethink our society (Hébert and Wilkinson, *Citizenship Debates*); however, we cannot do so without words, without critical thinking, without imagination. In my remarks, I'll provide a brief review of the key elements of critical theory and of its educational offshoot, critical pedagogy, then as a linguist, dwell upon the ways we consider language and its evolution with respect to postmodernism. Then, the pervasiveness of language will be discussed with respect to dialogue, deliberation and democracy, as fundamental to a new vision of what might lead to a more visionary philosophy of citizenship so as to nourish future praxis, policy and research.

Critical Theory and Critical Pedagogy

The idea of a critical theory is not only of the internal politics of schooling but of the social conditions and historical relations in which education for citizenship is positioned. Most of the issues discussed here concern the constitutive role of language in the social construction of knowledge, i.e., knowledge as discourses. We see the concern with language in the work of the Frankfurt school of critical theory, for example, in Jürgen Habermas' use of critical theory's concern with power to develop a theory of communicative action, in the reconceptualization of a critical sociology undertaken by Pierre Bourdieu, and in the studies of Michel Foucault concerning the relationship between knowledge and power. Critical theory then refers to a broad span of arguments about power – how people are marginalized through the practices of school, how power operates in the various forms, and how evidence, postulates, habits, ways of acting and thinking, commonplace beliefs, are shaken up and re-

examined to take a new measure of rules and institutions (Foucault 11-12; Popkewitz 2).

Going against the grain of thinking about the social and intellectual organisation of ordinary everyday life, three strands of critical theory work may be distinguished. One focuses on 'thinking critically' or 'critical thinking' or 'critical skills', which focus on the internal logic, order, and clarity of things under discussion. These approaches however tend to be playing with words rather than undertaking serious intellectual work about the inherent ambiguity and relation character of concepts. In another strand, a major body of work within the critical theory perspective, existing social relations are questioned so as to understand issues of power and institutional contradictions. Within this significant strand, investigations look at how schools work and focus on problems of social inequity and injustice produced through practices of schooling (cf. Wotherspoon; Schissel and Wotherspoon).

More recently, another more evolutionary strand of the Frankfurt school is concerned with the conditions of autonomy, freedom and transformation, and examines change in the struggles within which social practices and rationalities are produced, reproduced and transformed (Owen; Schrift; Popkewitz). Within this third, more recent strand of critical theory, transformation is no longer tied to the direction and actors of change, but to a notion that problematizes the structures of history that embody who we are and who we have become (Popkewitz, 1999). Minority perspectives, articulated, for example, by Francophones and Aboriginal nations in Canada, are inscribed, detailed and described in the second strand of critical theory and supported by studies which have examined relations between knowledge and power as reproduced by school and through curriculum. It is this notion of the common school that Thériault, Mahé and others critique as inappropriately marginalizing, alienating and isolating francophone learners.

The new social studies, however, and especially, education for democratic citizenship calls upon curriculum to include minority perspectives so as to redress inequities and to transform the experience of schooling and the knowledge generated through curriculum into a positive, coherent experience for children and youth of such groups (cf. Hébert and Wilkinson, "Citizenship Debates"; Schugurensky; Pagé; Hébert, "Citizenship Education"; Sears and Hughes). Thus, the new education for democratic citizenship is situated within the third evolutionary strand of critical theory which debates the rules for reasoning for understanding social life and change, and which seeks to implement new sources of power in which knowledge is disciplining and regulating of a person in a social constructivist process of transformation.

Critical Pedagogy

Critical pedagogy places schooling in its full social context, existing with other institutions in a social setting full of economic, political and cultural meanings, and is concerned with the influences of educational knowledge and of cultural formations generally, that perpetuate or legitimate an unjust status quo and create deficiencies in an ability to discern certain kinds of inaccuracies, distortions, and falsehoods. Moreover, critical pedagogues believe that fostering a critical capacity in citizens is a way of enabling the population to resist the aggregate effects of the power structures of society (Burbules and Berk). Since the primary preoccupation of critical pedagogy is with social injustice and the transformation of inequitable, undemocratic, or oppressive institutions and social relations, the first question which critical pedagogy asks about these systems is: *Who benefits?* Other important questions examine the motivations behind those who propound certain views, their group interests, and the effects of their claims on society: *Who is making these assertions? Why are they being made? Who funds this? Who promulgates such views?*

The idea of critical pedagogy begins with the neo-Marxian literature on critical theory (Stanley) and represents the reaction of progressive educators against institutionalized functions that maintain conditions of ideological hegemony that are important for the legitimacy and smooth working of capitalist economic relations (Burbules and Berk). But critical pedagogy also extends these ideas to include the ability of the people to resist and transform the structure within which they live. Thus, critical pedagogy insists upon the possibility and practicality of a pedagogy that contributes to social change (Osborne, *Teaching*).

Critical pedagogues such as Paulo Freire, Henry Giroux, Peter McLaren, Ira Shor and, in Canada, Ken Osborne, Roger Simon, Celia Haig-Brown, Romulo Magsino, among others, raise questions about inequalities of power, about the false myths of opportunity and merit for many students, and about the way belief systems become internalized to the point where individuals and groups abandon the very aspirations to question or change their lot in life. From this perspective, a critical person is empowered to seek justice and emancipation, is adept at recognizing injustice, and is moved to change it.

This emphasis on collective action to achieve change moves the central concerns of critical pedagogy into pedagogical relations between students and teachers, and among students, which promote this perspective. Thus, we note the Freirian concern for 'critical consciousness' as a beginning point of a liberatory 'praxis'. An important way in which Giroux develops this idea is with his distinction between a *language of critique* and a *language of possibility*, as part of what makes a person a critical thinker, with both 'languages' as essential to the pursuit of social justice (*Theory and Resistance; Teachers as Intellectuals*).

To be critical, then, is to be moved to take action, to go beyond reflection and interpretation of the world, to be willing and able to act to change that world. For critical pedagogy, the problems of overcoming oppressed thinking and demoralization is more complex than a direct relation between practical reason and action, as it requires an authentic union between action and reflection (Freire, *Pedagogy and Cultural Action*).

The emphasis on literacy runs through critical pedagogy as Freire's method involves reading the world as well as reading the word. Part of the development of a critical consciousness involved critiquing social relations, social institutions, and social traditions that create and maintain conditions of oppression. On the ground level, Freire was attempting to develop an adult literacy program in which developing the capacity to read was tied into developing an enhanced sense of individual and collective self-esteem and confidence. Thus, the teaching of literacy was a primary form of cultural action and related the speaking word to the transformation of reality. The pedagogical method that he thought promoted all this was *dialogue* whose purpose was to render people aware of social inequalities in a process of conscientization (Freire, *Cultural Action* 47-48). Furthermore, Vygotsky and others argue that social interactions are essential for learning and for dialogue.

Within this perspective, teachers see themselves as transformative intellectuals, with students being critical agents. La maîtresse d'école in Québec is a model of such activist classrooms (Osborne, *Teaching*). For Freire, pedagogy consisted of three components: problem posing, dialogue and social action. Dialogue is the central element in this effective pedagogy. Dialogue is an act of creation, not of transmission, involving the three qualities of love, humility and faith. Content arises from the experience and concerns of the students. The teaching is thus situated within the experience of the students (*Pedagogy*).

As intellectuals, teachers using a critical pedagogy realise that all education is political in that it gives some views of the world more status and condemns others. Critical pedagogy insists on the possibilities of social change as a practical outcome of education for democratic citizenship, where teachers and learners in classrooms can create both resistance to and transformation of society. It uses the learners' voice to structure inquiries as they deliberate towards action for social change. Teachers and learners using critical pedagogy must consciously inquire with key guiding questions for dialogic inquiry such as:

- What counts as knowledge?
- How is such knowledge produced and distributed?
- Who decides what knowledge is valued?

- What concerns do different forms of knowledge and knowledge production address?
- Whose interests does the knowledge serve?
- Do certain forms of engaging knowledge help to legitimate one set of interests over and above others?
- What is the relation of all stakeholders with respect to this knowledge?
- How might knowledge be engaged so that alternate forms of knowledge and knowledge production must be considered?
- What concerns are being legitimated over other concerns?
- What changes have occurred over time and in space?
- Where ultimately will the teacher and student stand regarding the interests which underlie the pursuit of knowledge?
- Given what is now known, what is to be done?
- How should this be done?
- Why should this be done? (Popkewitz; Burbules and Berk; Freire, *Pedagogy and Cultural Action*).

Critical pedagogy creates knowledge within the context of the experiences of the learners, by encouraging multiple points of view on a single event, topic or concept. As each perspective and interpretation is explored, each learner changes his/her internal conception and therefore reconstructs his/her viewpoint to bring it to a new tension. An example relevant to the new education to citizenship, using multiple perspectives regarding historical interpretation, is noted:

There can never be just one history... For there is the history of the conqueror and the conquered; the history of the oppressed and that of the oppressor; the history of the rich and that of the poor; the history of the winner and that of the loser; the history of women and of men; the history of the majority and the minority; for their many histories are rarely the same (Doran, [Council of Europe](#)).

Dialogic inquiry is used within a responding structure where each individual contribution responds to what has preceded and anticipates a further response. The inquiry is both created and situated reciprocally with others in a group and has as its focus the improvement of an idea, issue, problem, object, structure, interpretation and so on. Five kinds of knowing would potentially develop from dialogic inquiry: the instrumental, the procedural, the substantive, the aesthetic, and the theoretical (Wells). Knowing includes not only the representation produced of the process but also the enhanced understanding that the participants gain of the problem or inquiry at hand. *Instrumental knowledge* is concerned with the transformation of the world for reasons of survival.

Procedural knowing occurs when instrumental knowing needs to be shared with others and also requires communications that represent the knowing. *Substantive knowing* occurs when joint planning and reflecting to consider alternative and hypothetical actions/states occurs. *Aesthetic knowing* occurs when myth integrates knowing to make itself-conscious and deliberate. *Theoretical knowing* provides models with which to see and understand where possibilities presented are not currently recognized.

Language and Postmodernism

The construction of the state in the modern era dwelt upon the importance of history for, according to Ricoeur ("Life"), modernity accentuates the following themes:

The availability of history in the affirmation of a new future, that is to say, different than the past, the capacity of men to make history, that is to say affirmation of a freedom of initiative and of responsibility, and changing going forward towards the better, that is to say oriented towards progress (25).

Herein lies our conceptual heritage in education for democratic citizenship and the pre-eminent place accorded to the teaching of history. However, society is increasingly characterized by post-colonialism, post-industrialism, post-structuralism and post-modernism. The four 'posts' open to the marginalized, the frontiers and even the doors to society, bringing about a shift of values, shaking the centres of power, and examining the foundations of reason and of society. As a way of thinking about these transformations, postmodernism is characterized by a rejection of apparent objectivity in order to admit a fundamental subjectivity, which means among other possibilities, the recognition of the social construction of knowledge, of reality and of the subject-object distinction, and of the centrality of society (Madison ix-xvi).

Postmodernism as a philosophical movement, inseparable from modernism, attempts to trace by means of deconstruction, the consequences of modernism and of modern representation of humankind as image/object of which s/he is the observer, even as a voyeur, so as to better understand the totality of social phenomena. Postmodernism questions all the traditional, scientific, philosophical, social and moral legitimacies of our society. This movement raises questions about the fundamental principles of society and creates complete confusion about what were previously our objectives and self-evident ideas (Pouwels, "Values Education"; Hébert and Wilkinson, "Values"). Growing from ideas sown in the early 20st century, postmodernism developed in the turbulent sixties and is characterized by an ideological instability, disorientation,

and emptiness. Humankind appears to be without a rudder afloat in a river of events, without referential schemata, without a vision of the future, without a compass at a crosswalk of life. Freed of the sacredness of the past, humans find themselves in front of a scene that is historically, socially and culturally deconstructed, suffering from their own successes yet without values or principles to guide life.

The central point of the process we name postmodernism slowly seems to become the problem of identity. Everyone searches and struggles for their identity. Be they women, workers, Aboriginals, Québécois, Francophones in minority contexts, polyethnic groups, all claim an honourable autonomous place, at the core of society, thus coming in from the margins of the past. Transformations of society give rise to several tendencies of global proportions including concerns for social cohesion and identity formation. Who am I? Who is the other? Where is my mirror, my frame of reference, my standards of measure? What values are my own? Where do I belong? What is my model of identification? What do I find to be important and valid? Here are the questions posed by the individual whose naked skin serves as the last site of struggle left after having set aside the deadwood and totems of the past.

Language is a social phenomenon, acquiring meaning in social interaction, with words and sentences having as many meanings as contexts in which it is used. This conception of 'language games' that lies at the foundation of postmodern understanding of language (Grenz), was first articulated by Wittgenstein (1889-1951) and furthered by notes of the teachings of de Saussure (1857-1913) later published by his students (Saussure). Rather than focus on the historical development of language, de Saussure viewed language as a freestanding, complete and internally coherent system (langue). As a social phenomenon, each linguistic system, each system of linguistic signs, is determined by nothing else than social convention (Grenz).

Previously language had been viewed as a natural phenomenon that developed according to fixed and discoverable laws, and the structure of sentences reflected the logic of thought processes. In a significant break with previous thinking, de Saussure proposed that language is not a reflection of the structure of thought or the representation of independently given 'facts' but is entirely internal to the language itself (Holdcroft). This means that we can offer no explanation of why words mean what they do, but can at most explain how language functions. We can define words in terms of their relationships within the system of language – and these relationships are culturally determined (Holdcroft). Moreover, de Saussure's focus on relations has another important result for it elevates the category of 'difference' as it is impossible to be absolute about the meanings of words (Grenz). Instead, language is essentially a system of relations and words take on meaning in the context of these relations.

Language then is a system of different sounds combined with a series of differences of ideas (Saussure 17).

While Derrida (b. 1930) emerges later, as a master of double-coding and the hidden message, he calls for new ways of reading and writing (Grenz) whereas Foucault attacks history as fiction and investigates scholarly fields of discourse to uncover the hidden connections between knowledge and power. Derrida critiques the so-called 'realist' understanding of language – the view that statements represent the world as it actually is, apart from human activity. Derrida denies that language has a fixed meaning, refers to fixed reality, or unveils definitive truth. In seeking to answer the question of how language derives meaning, Derrida picks up on the concept of 'difference' from de Saussure and adds an interesting twist. Coining a new word, 'difference' becomes 'différance' which etymologically means both 'to differ' and 'to defer'. Since the meanings of words arise out of their relations within contexts in which they appear, language is self-referential, i.e., words refer to other words with chains of words referring to yet others. Thus, according to Derrida, meaning can never be fully determined; in other words, meaning is never static, never given once and for all. Instead, meaning changes over time and with changing contexts, and for these reasons, we must continually 'defer' or postpone our tendency to attribute meaning (Grenz 144; Derrida, *Positions* 28-29).

This concept of *différance* as the interplay between passive differing and active deferring, provides a radical critique of the concept of 'self' as an entity existing apart from its context. According to Derrida then, there can be no self apart from linguistic activity and what we experience in the present is actually the results of a complex web of meanings that is constantly changing (Grenz). Thus, a mug on a desk in a room is not an objective occurrence but depends on discursive descriptions as possibly a refreshing drink on a work area, or an example of untidiness, or a missive to hurl at a target. Similarly, the meaning of writing arises from the interplay between presence and absence with speech being absent and meaning referring to the presence of 'traces' of former connections to other elements or of now-absent realities.

Postmodern thinkers draw far-reaching conclusions from Derrida's conclusions (Grenz). Since the notion of singular meaning or truth is refuted, there is no place outside of discourse itself. This means that the text is fluid; it has no fixed origin, identity, or end; and the process of interpreting text is never ending for each act of reading is the preface to the next (Derrida, *Of Grammatology*). This continuous process of interpreting leads to questioning the 'order of things' that has dominated Western thought in the modern era. Foucault asserts that this 'order' is the product of selective readings of the past that privilege the powerful whereas Derrida claims that the problem is even deeper as it flows from the use of written text to employ reason. Thus, targeting philosophy, Derrida calls for the use of reason to question reason strategically,

using the tools inherited from tradition to question tradition. However reason is necessary to answer questions, it takes imagination to ask them.

While linguistic philosophers reject the essentialist understanding of language and situate the significance of a sentence as derived in a web of other sentences, they are asserting that both linguistic signs and thoughts are context sensitive. As a pragmatist, the contemporary Rorty extends this assertion from linguistic signs to all objects of philosophical theorizing – truth, knowledge, morality and language. Because it is nonrealist, nonessentialist and non-representationalist, a pragmatist understanding of truth is concerned with coherence rather than correspondence.

As a follower of Dewey, Rorty claims that the aim of inquiry is to make our beliefs and desires coherent ("Inquiry"). He sees language as a tool to use to satisfy a variety of wants: food, an understanding of the origin of the universe, an enhanced sense of human solidarity, and perhaps even a personal identity attained by developing one's own private, autonomous philosophical language. A single vocabulary could serve several of our varied aims just as scientific discourse is just one vocabulary among many. Eschewing Descartes, Kant, Heidegger and Derrida, he encourages us to tailor a coherent personal identity for ourselves that can serve as the foundation for our behaviour, with this task expedited if we view our lives as episodes within larger historical narratives. This means that he places the individual, as well as truth, fully in a social context. Recognizing that the knowing self cannot go beyond our society's procedures of justification, Rorty is concerned with counteracting the unhelpful tendency of Western philosophy to attempt to rise beyond humanity's realities. For him, it is impossible to find a starting point for our discourse that lies beyond our temporal context and to rise above human communities. This then allows us to build our sense of community, to acknowledge our inheritance from and our conversation with fellow human beings as our only source of guidance.

An awareness of this fact can, according to Rorty, help us to move from confrontation to conversation in our ongoing inquiries. For him, inquiry leads to a positive goal, which can be achieved even in a postmodern era, a goal defined by him as "the attainment of an appropriate mixture of unforced agreement with tolerant disagreement" (Rorty, "Postmodernist Bourgeois Liberalism"). For him, cultural pluralism is in keeping with the spirit of tolerance that has made constitutional democracy possible. He affirms that such cultural pluralism will be possible only to the extent that public institutions remain neutral on the central question of the purpose of human existence. Moreover, he leaves it up to social communities to determine through trial and error what counts as an appropriate mixture of agreement and disagreement within the context of this pluralism (Grenz; Rorty, "Science as Solidarity").

These broad brushstrokes of views of language within postmodernist perspectives have far-reaching consequences for minority perspectives,

citizenship and identity formation, all as part of the new social studies. Minority perspectives are compatible with Western philosophies, which embed language and truth as changing and changeable objects in social contexts. Citizenship however as a conception of a state dwells in a modern world whereas, in a postmodern world, citizenship lives in imagined communities and is constantly constructed through language. From postmodern perspectives of identity, the 'self' is constantly being constructed and reconstructed through language and for Ricoeur, life itself is in constant search of a narrator and of an audience (*Soi-même*; "Life").

Postmodernism abandons the belief in universal truth and alerts us to the naïveté of attempting to discover universal truth by appeal to reason alone (Grenz). Assuming that there is no unified whole that can be called 'reality', postmodernism has rejected the concept of objective truth and expresses despair concerning the quest to discover all-encompassing truth. There is validity in the postmodern critique of modernity which was built on the assumption that knowledge is certain, objective and good (Grenz). The rational, scientific method is not the sole measure of truth as certain aspects of truth lie beyond reason and cannot be understood by reason alone, but call upon affectivity and imagination. Knowledge is now seen to be particular to our historical and cultural contexts, and all our intellectual endeavours are unavoidably conditioned by that participation. That knowledge is good is misleading for the knowledge explosion is not going to produce a utopia; and scientific advances bring about the possibility of both good and evil, such as splitting the atom which results in nuclear devastation. Thus, we recognize the strengths of postmodernism as well as its shortcomings.

According to a communitarian perspective of liberal democracy which permits the rethinking of the state, society and school, multiple identifications are not only possible but desirable as is the civic and social engagement of the youth-as-citizen and the adult-as-citizen, both as learners, so as to co-construct a unified (but not uniform) society around the acceptance and valuing of diversity in all its colours and rays. But finding one's way in this collective identity crisis where all is permitted and all is possible, necessitates routes and foundations sufficient to the task of constructing an elastic identity. Herein lies the dilemma of education for democratic citizenship in a postmodern era which desires to remove and deny limits and frontiers while simultaneously providing people with values and standards. Without these, we cannot teach nor survive (Pouwels, "Values Education" 27).

The postmodern critique sought to attack modernity on the basis of its own underlying principles but has not, to date, sought to provide any constructive new proposals. With the postmodern reminder that humanity does not consist solely of our cognitive dimensions, we recognize that we are more than 'rational animals'. Instead we take seriously a dynamic understanding of the role of the

intellectual dimension of human experience and our attempts to make sense of life. In doing so, we as educators and curriculum writers are increasingly interested in the human person as a unified whole, integrating the emotional-affective, the bodily-sensual, and the intellectual-rational within one human being, thus acknowledging our interdependency (Grenz). We look for inner resources and focus on people as whole persons, as persons-in-relationship, and on individuals-in-community.

Linking Social Constructivism, Language, Identity Formation, Post-modernism, and Education for Democratic Citizenship

In part an extension of circumstantialism, the emergence of social constructivism recognized the reciprocal flux between the assignment and assertion of identity, i.e., between what others say we are and what we say we are. Focussing on the ways in which identities are built, rebuilt, and dismantled over time and distinguishing between 'thick' and 'thin' ethnicity built upon shared interests, shared institutions, and shared culture (cf. Gürses et al.), the social constructivist approach centres on interactions between circumstances and groups (cf. James; Cornell and Hartmann).

Three aspects of identity formation are at issue in social constructivism: group boundaries; the perceived social position of the group; and the meaning attached to identity. Any change in any one of these aspects reconstructs group identity (cf. Back et al.; Cohen; Dwyer; Davidson). Circumstances and actions do not deprive groups of power, however, as the power of ethnicity and race depends upon the significance we attach to them, to our own identities, and to those of others. Social construction exemplifies a phenomenological theoretical orientation, concerned more generally with personal and group identification within society, including the social construction of the concept of race (Satzewich). However, social constructivism tends not to look at the influences of space, time, and relation, which are core concerns of postmodernism (Hébert, "Identity").

The mental, social, political and economic institutions we live with, as well as human rights and citizenship, are legacies of the Enlightenment tradition. These are being challenged by globalizing political and economic structures, by international mobility and consequent acculturation and cross-culturalisation of citizens, and by the strengthening of minority communities, as well as by postmodernism and multiculturalism, both of which emphasize differentiation (cf. Yon; Hébert, "Changement"; Hoerder; Massey, "Spatial Construction" and *Space*; Hall and du Gay). For example, Habermas' moral universalism relies on the inter-subjective recognition of self-identification and of reciprocal self-representations (*Communication* 107). This perspective reinforces subject-to-

subject interaction in which moral and ethical questions must be addressed from the perspective of the participants (Habermas, *Justification* 24). Within modernity, the particular and the specific were made to depend on broader and more abstract objectives, i.e., myths or meta-narratives, whereas postmodernism delegitimises such meta-discourses (Lyotard). Moreover, postmodern deconstructionism is a useful political tool for multicultural democracies, according to Fraser (35), because it entails a deep restructuring of relations of recognition. This process relies not only on differentiation but on hyper-differentiation across and between groups. As a result, whereas the most cherished legacy of the Enlightenment tradition was the quest for equality, the main concern today is how to deal with difference by making sure there is equity and equivalence (Byram and Guilherme).

It is in terms of (hyper) differentiation that language-and-culture education may contribute significantly to human rights education and more generally to education for democratic citizenship. Second language-and-culture education provides space for reflecting on the ways in which knowledge and culture are constructed according to contingent and transitory historical constraints (Byram and Guilherme). By juxtaposing two or more realities where cultural/political articulations were accomplished differently, it is possible to raise awareness of the limits of traditions on both sides and provide some grounds for critical cultural revitalisation, transgression, creativity, and imagination. Moreover, it allows learners (learners and teachers alike) to interrogate dominant and subordinate ideologies, to give voice to discourses that have been silenced, and to make connections between different narratives at local and global levels. This enterprise is at once epistemological as well as social, political and ethical since it engages with education for self, for others, and for social change.

Critical intercultural learning involves more than experiencing, interpreting and accommodating other cultures; it entails making connections, exploring articulations, changing representations and imagining possibilities. It has profound implications for the way learners construct their cultural identities and consequently, for the way they respond to their everyday lives. As a cultural worker, the second language teacher collaboratively with the education for democratic citizenship/social studies teacher, may transform second language learning into an act of cultural creation by investing their students with the power to share intercultural events critically, interrogate their own and others' histories and commit themselves to the responsibilities of building this intercultural world (Byram and Guilherme; Giroux, *Border Crossings*). By critically understanding the organisation of meanings and interests embedded in particular cultural codes and how these reflect particular configurations of knowledge and power, learners will critically recognize some of the preoccupations, desires, successes and challenges they face in their everyday lives. Through this process, learners may then make informed choices about

their lives and above all, **become** aware that they are entitled to a choice. By becoming critically aware of the multiple levels of cultural and political identities, learners may develop a desire to be involved in political decisions and in ethical issues as well as a commitment to engage in transformative action (Parker; Byram and Guilherme; Hébert, "Changement").

Similarly, second language education is enriched if it considers human rights education and education for democratic citizenship as referential broader educational frameworks, thus providing second language-and-culture education with culture-universals, basic principles, and values that traverse cultures. Consequently, second language-and-culture education becomes involved in the discussion about the complexities of the interaction between culture-universals and culture-specifics that make issues of human rights and citizenship more difficult today. In doing so, the development of critical cultural awareness of both target and native languages is afforded. For example, equality rights are juxtaposed with rights to difference; the search of consensus with the inevitability of dissensus; the striving after progress with the potentialities of relativism within circles of power; and the vigour of individual emancipation with the motivating force of solidarity. Thus, the negotiation of the tensions between equality/difference, consensus/dissent, progress/relativism, and emancipation/solidarity improves the comprehension of cultural complexities and allows for some flexibility in understanding intercultural interactions, whereas education for democratic citizenship clarifies and reinforces the political nature of second language-and-cultural education (Byram and Risager).

Language: Dialogue, Deliberation, and Inquiry in a Democratic Classroom

Dialogic inquiry focuses on the use of structured discussion between learners for the purposes of inquiry. This legacy of Vygotsky permits children and youth in schools to co-create and re-vision society as citizen participants, within the contexts of school and culture. The insights of Wells allow educators to bring dialogic inquiry into the essence of their pedagogies. The Dewey-inspired views of Rorty allow us to put humans back in social contexts, to focus on differentiation, equity and equivalence with languages serving to enhance cultural and linguistic awareness of self and other, and to conduct inquiries to create coherent identities and communities. From this perspective, then, the classroom is a community of inquiry wherein collaborative work, dialogic knowledge building, and inquiry-oriented curriculum are essential and interdependent components of a vision of education which recognizes both convention and invention as necessary for the development of society as well as for its individual members (Wells).

Dialogic inquiry is part of Vygotsky's theory of learning and development, with its core concept of artefact-mediated joint activity between a learner and another, be it a peer or a teacher (Wells). Although *deliberative inquiry* similarly focuses on the use of structured discussion, it is premised upon mutual respect and reciprocity, involves many individuals and groups in society, and being purposeful, is intended to input and influence civil society, policy and governance. The new education for democratic citizenship ties deliberation to the research inquiry process, as part of the construction of the classroom environment and climate, as well as a specific form of democracy (Wells; Cunningham).

Democratic language provides a potentially useful construct for framing dialogue within education for democratic citizenship. Currently, citizens use four types of language to maintain democratic life, to structure public political dialogue, and to take action and negotiate change: the language of possibility, the language of critique, the language of action, and the language of transition. The language of critique and of possibility were first proposed by Henri Giroux (*Theory and Resistance; Teachers as Intellectuals*), with elaborations of the first three by Caesar L. McDowell and the fourth proposed and defined by Patricia K. Kubow.

The *language of possibility* helps citizens identify their visions of what might be possible in a democratic society, while also capturing citizens' beliefs that democracy can work. The *language of critique* exposes " ... the ways in which we have strayed, either intentionally or accidentally, from the path of building a democratic society.... It is the compass that let us know when we are off course, though it may be not able to put us on the right course" (94). The *language of action* allows citizens to declare their intentions, to name the boundaries of what we believe is a working democracy, to describe things people must do to be citizens, and to describe the work in which we are willing to engage in order to make democracy work (92). The *language of transition* is used to negotiate what changes are needed in order to move closer to the vision of democracy citizens hold and is used in programmes of study to clarify the meaning of genuinely democratic communities and how these can be developed.

It is in a *dialogic curriculum* as an approach to education that student-learners appropriate their teachers' instructional plans and translate those plans in their own terms, into their own intellectual projects (Stock 23). Unless learners are able to relate what they already know to what they must come to know and, in so doing, come to be full participants in courses of disciplined study that enable them to think new and different thoughts, to develop new and different competencies, they are disenfranchised from learning. Active learners realize curriculum **dialogically** in school or it **isn't** realized at all (Stock 24).

Compatible with the deliberative inquiry in an inquiry-based curriculum, the characteristics of a dialogic curriculum are fundamental to a curriculum for the

new education for democratic citizenship that interacts importantly with language and for which deliberative/dialogic inquiry is of essence:

- A dialogic curriculum is introduced when teachers invite and enable students to join them in a broadly outlined field of inquiry.
- A dialogic curriculum is established when students ground the curriculum in topical inquiries – issues, questions, problems – that their prior experiences have prepared them to explore within that field.
- A dialogic curriculum develops as learners enable one another to enrich and extend the understandings and to improve the competencies with which they entered the field of inquiry; and
- A dialogic curriculum concludes when learners carry their enriched and extended understandings and their improved competencies back from their inquiries into their home communities (Stock 24).

Building a Praxis, Policy and Research Capacity: En guise de conclusion

Democratic practices in schools and in classrooms include the following compilation of exemplars of excellent classroom management, fair discipline, and curriculum, to assure that everyone is empowered to speak and to participate (McAndrew and Tessier, to appear; Gutmann; Cogan et al.; Cunningham; Schugurensky; Howe and Covell; Osborne, *Teaching*):

School Context:

- A school-as-community which sees itself as belonging to the students, parents as well as the educators, i.e., schools as active centres of community life and as agents for community development;
- A system for dealing with offences that is fair and is based on fundamental principles of rights and responsibilities, that allow students to explain themselves and which is working for reconciliation and reparation; and that is based on bodies of rights, gives students reference to the value-structure of discourse, and allows for quick reference and discussion of tensions, clashes and competition between rights and duties;
- An open and determined policy to encourage student participation, creating informal and formal opportunities, supported by clear whole-school values and a willingness to believe that the students themselves can make a real difference;
- Listening educators (teachers, tutors, aides, administrators, etc.);

- An effective system of student representation, with reports from each classroom in regular assemblies, a school council that goes beyond the organization of social functions to deal with quality of life and other policy issues;
- Effective means of reporting back to the school for student leaders and administrators alike;
- Extensive liaisons and joint projects among schools and other supportive social institutions (e.g., industry, NGOs, churches, community groups), with opportunities for involvement as part of school curriculum.

Classroom Context:

- Procedures for good mutual discussion, best of all chaired by a young person, for example, 'circle time', with the furniture laid out in a circle and the avoidance of teacher domination of the discourse, as fundamental for effective student participation; with negotiation and deliberation of classroom procedures, with teacher as guide;
- A classroom culture of mutual respect and reciprocity for all, including being safe from ridicule;
- Negotiation of class rules;
- Opportunities for flexibility and individual choice, with a high level of individual responsibility;
- Student responsibility and accountability for learning and for actions, within group work and independent work;
- Cooperative learning;
- Democratic decision-making with significant student participation;
- Student input into curriculum projects and assessment criteria and instruments;
- Student-led conflict resolution including bullying;
- Teacher guidance in a non-authoritarian manner.

Learning Resources:

The new education for democratic citizenship would be enabled with curricular elements such as the following integrative threads throughout:

- Dialogic/deliberative inquiry, situated within critical pedagogical perspectives and process;
- Human rights education as fundamental content, based upon the powerful UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, in combination with the Canadian

Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the UN Declaration of Rights and the UN Declaration on Cultural Diversity as major documents, all inscribed within a full-fledged Canadian model of education for democratic citizenship;

- Particular attention to language, languages and to democratic language especially for deliberative and participatory forms of democracy;
- Democratic practices in classrooms, and to the extent possible, in schools;
- A range of choices for learners that embed multiple types of knowing, multiple formats of activities and assessment, as well as multi-component resources;
- Sensitive representation of francophone perspectives, of the politics of identity and its multiplicity of fluid identifications and meanings; and
- Community-based education.

These forms of praxis involving the school, classroom and curricula, are critical to the construction of self and other, the transformation of Canadian society, and international communication and understanding.

Policy and Research Capacity:

Building policy and research capacity however is crucial. The policy agenda must make possible this form of education for democratic citizenship, whereas the research agenda will raise those critical questions discussed earlier and seek to understand the teaching and learning processes inherent to making democratic meaning and to citizens-in-the-making. How this is to be achieved, however, is in doubt, and with doubt, comes hope. Anyone who doubts is struggling against false certainty, non-ambiguity, and the either-or dichotomy. Once appearing as a weakness in cultures of faith and certainty, doubting now becomes a virtue, the launching point of productivity, to which everything larger than life and generally accepted is alien because it negates the ultimate standards of humankind: reservations, uncertainty, and 'yes-but' (Paakkunainen, 1997).

Attempting to develop a research capacity in Canada for policy making necessitates raising doubts about the efficacy of current citizenship policy and suggests that a reconsideration of that as formulated within modernist perspectives is required for it promised much and delivered less. The public debate on citizenship has increased exponentially, the curriculum industry equally expanded, without much evidence of the latter activity building upon a corpus of research data generated by the former, and yet the lives of young people have changed very little as citizenship education returns to the educational agenda (Hébert and Wilkinson, "Citizenship Debates"; Hébert and Pagé, "Citizenship Education"). In order to address adequately the impact of inclusions and exclusions on young people's, their social and economic futures,

as well as the transnational and pluralist accounts of citizenship as multiple, contingent and subject to rapid change, a more complex view of wider social and cultural power relations that underlie citizenship is necessary, as is a better theorization of citizenship and education for democratic active citizenship, so critical to social and educational policy.

A broad democratic alliance (small 'a') of educators including critical pedagogy theorists is necessary to move a critical praxis forward. In light of the debate in which all notions and issues pertaining to citizenship are contested, the similarity of the criticism from reactionary commentators pressures scholars and activists alike to adopt a more contingent, situational account of citizenship and national identities. In Canada as a polyethnic and multinational state, serious attention must be given to globalization in its many dimensions (economic, social, cultural, religious, and political) and its impact on what it means to be a citizen, on the changing nature of work and schooling; its historical and contemporary links with racism and colonialism; and the differential distribution of social and political power among ethnic, cultural and social groups. Citizenship policy and education are linked to debates in social science theory concerning the historical construction of 'nation-states'; the central role of language and education in perpetuating a common civil culture; the more plural alternatives implied by a politics of multiculturalism in terms of public representation; and the balance between pluralism and the need for social cohesion. Particular attention must be given to how boundaries of membership within and between polities are defined; how the benefits and burdens of membership are allocated; how the identities of members are understood and accommodated (Klusmeyer); and how citizenship education contributes or not to civil society.

The key to the reconceptualization of citizenship policy is to incorporate both a critical and non-essentialist approach to citizenship and cultural difference as current policies fail to **problematize** the limitations of civil, political and social citizenship and of nationalist approaches (Bauböck). Critiques of current citizenship policies point out that it cannot deliver the promised emancipation; that it confuses political empowerment with psychological affirmation; that it fails to see the power relationships between identity construction, cultural representations and struggles over resources; and that it fails to recognize the shortcomings of a shared civic identity and the possibilities of the language and conflicts about a rights-based approach as the basis of integration in liberal democracies (Bauböck; Dei and Calliste; Bannerji; Henry et al.). What is needed is the recognition of the persistence and salience of cultural pluralism as a starting point for critical analysis of various approaches and claims for cultural citizenship towards the development of political theories of language, culture and of liberal self-government (Bauböck) as well as discursive theories of political integration which focus on participation and representation (Favell).

Concerned with how domination takes place, the way human relations are shaped in the workplace, in schools and in everyday life, critical theory promotes self-reflection that results in changes of perspective whereas critical pedagogy helps learners and teachers to understand how schools work by exposing students to sorting processes and power involvement within the curriculum. A critical pedagogy for democratic citizenship concerns itself with issues of justice, social change, and their relation to the pedagogical where the term 'pedagogical' refers to the production of identity, i.e., the way we learn to see ourselves in relation to the world. In a curriculum of critical citizenship, the diverse resources of each community open the school to a variety of community traditions, histories, and cultures formerly discredited within the school. The stories, the worldviews, the music, the politics, the humour, the art, the languages of the hereto marginalized communities become a central part of everyday school life, always viewed within the context of the general curriculum. To implement such a curriculum, it is necessary to critically analyze the nature of past-present relationships and to search for new ways of seeing in a variety of spaces (Kincheloe and Steinberg).

To situate the development of a research capacity within a critical non-essentialist perspective, three principles apply (May 1999; Bhabha). A first step is to unmask and deconstruct the apparent neutrality of civil democracy, i.e., the supposedly universal, neutral set of linguistic and cultural values and practices that underpin the public sphere of the pluralist liberal state. A second key move is to situate differences within the wider nexus of power relations of which they form a part. The third key move is to maintain a reflexive critique of specific cultural practices that allows for criticism, transformation and change, where difference is lived rather than objectified, and where political integration involves participation and representation in civil society for the common good.

Only then could citizenship policy benefit from critical postmodernist research on youth, identities, language, difference, and education. And only then could such research reciprocally benefit from the framework of policy to examine and further theorize practices.

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