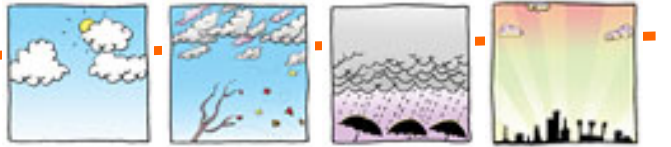


four seasons in one day –

literacies in changing climates

Adult Literacy Conference ■ Melbourne ■ September 10-11, 2004



Faces in the crowd: consent and resistance

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OUTLINE

Topic:

This talk explores the complexities of emerging identities of adult ESL learners whose literacy practices focus on developing acceptable personal and other narratives in their second language. New language skills and discourses shape their old/existing identities. The conflicts they experience through speaking/writing reflect the efforts of these migrants/refugees to resettle by continuing their education and/or finding employment.

Site:

A group of 20 students is attending an advanced ESL class in preparation for further studies in TAFE institutes or universities and/or is looking for work.

Key issues:

By making them the centre of an analysis of subjectivity, identity and literacy, new questions arise, focussing on the relationship between the self and Other, staying afloat in rapid external changes, and literacy as social/cultural practice. How can the learners reconcile their personal narratives with culturally specific practice? Do newly acquired literacies give them visibility and voice? What are the implications of being *the other*? How are their identities reshaped?

Conclusions:

Some of the views and key findings that arise from the analysis reflect the ideological basis of learning and classroom practices, migration as a traumatic event, loss of voice and dimensions of stress, disempowerment by exclusion, taking control by crossing the boundary of new discourses and acceptance of change.

The title emphasises 3 points:

1. Learners as embodied subjects (migrants & refugees)
2. Invisibility/visibility – acceptance/resistance
3. Existing tension within individuals and between them and the society (psychological & cultural consequences)

Focus:

- ☐ Comparing 2 learner groups – Certs 3 & 4 ESL – Further Study
- ☐ Site - Educational setting/TAFE-ESL classroom
- ☐ Challenges they face in life and education

Educational setting – key issues:

- 1) Implications of being the other
Self-definition / boundary creation / disassociation from people
- 2) Aspects of emerging identities
Multi-identities – fluid / changing / responding to context / shifting positions
- 3) Literacies acquired & required
Multiliteracies – new pedagogies / embodied subjects / multimedia communication
- 4) Learners' (critical) voice
Voiceless / inner voices / reconciling narratives / speaking out

Response to cross-cultural classroom survey:

- ☐ Change of life & culture – global subjects
- ☐ Acceptance / Discrimination
- ☐ Job search / Further studies
- ☐ Message to Australia

- ❑ Student motivation for learning
- ❑ Student definition of good educators
- ❑ Quality of life re knowledge of English
- ❑ Self-definition – shifting identities

Embodied learners:

- 1) Holistic approach to adult teaching
Collaboration / knowledge transfer / experience & values
- 2) Hybridity & multiplicity in classrooms
Diversity of cultures & ID positions / dynamics /border crossing
- 3) Privileging forms of learning
What types of learning occur? / inclusion & exclusion
- 4) Situated experience
Learner choice / engaging the whole being / liberating / authentic
- 5) Reconciling the challenges of needs & desires
Options / choices / realistic approach

New discourses: further studies & employment:

- ❑ Application to tertiary institutions / VTAC
- ❑ Competition – migrants/refugees vs native speakers
- ❑ Gatekeeping tools to employment / CVs & job interviews
- ❑ Consent & resistance to new discourses
- ❑ Personal & official narratives
- ❑ Acculturation stress & stressors
- ❑ Coping strategies – resilience & assertiveness

Conclusions:

1. Tensions to be considered – xenophobia / divisions / discrimination
Social tensions
Sense of belonging
2. Pedagogy implications for educators – inclusiveness / cultural sensitivity
Privileging types of knowledge
Rethinking teaching styles
3. Societal responsibilities – governmental level / communities
Globalising processes
Integrating trends