AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF TWO TEACHERS’ ANTIRACIST AND CRITICAL MULTICULTURAL PRACTICES

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ABSTRACT

Educational theorists concerned with antiracist and critical multicultural practices have identified the need for teachers to begin changing the processes of social exclusion which children of colour experience in the school system. An ethnographic study of critical educators teaching practices is provided as a useful directive. The study examines how two critical educators respond to the diversity represented in their school by incorporating antiracist and critical multicultural approaches in their teaching practice. Of interest in relation to Julia Neuman’s practice is the question: How do white teachers negotiate their ‘whiteness’ in relation to the diversity in student population? In the case of Sita Ramana a South Asian teacher, the study considers how cultural and linguistic congruence with her students engages their interests in culturally response reading programs that involve dual language books as well as parent - student active participation in heritage language programs.
Critical ethnography applies a critical theory based approach to ethnography. It focuses on the implicit values expressed within ethnographic studies and, therefore, on the unacknowledged biases that may result from such implicit values. It has been called critical theory in practice. Of critical theory, this approach seeks to determine symbolic mechanisms, to extract ideology from action, and to understand the cognition and behaviour of research subjects within historical, cultural, and social contexts. Critical ethnography also owes a great debt to interpretive movements in the fields of anthropology and sociology. Influenced by phenomenology, structuralism, semiotics, hermeneutics, and linguistics, interpretive ethnographers in anthropology raised fundamental questions about both the practice of ethnography and the nature of culture. Tracing their lineage to Malinowski’s (1922) concern with “the native’s point of view,” they engaged in discussions of the nature of “local knowledge” and viewed social life as consisting of negotiated meanings (Geertz, 1973, 1983). The transformation of ethnographic practices: Past and current challenges. Qualitative Research, 2(3), 283-299. The article further addresses challenges to basic tenets of ethnography, showing how the concepts of culture, population, identity, the study site, and researcher stance traditionally used by researchers must be revised to conform to realities of contemporary technological, global, and multicultural, racial, and linguistic existence. It appears widely in basic ethnographic research, in cultural studies and critical ethnography, and even in educational policy, however, veiled, in contestations over which groups in society are advantaged by proposed reforms, including those involving curricula, assessment, and reorganization of finance and control of schools. Using critical multicultural perspectives and practices in teacher education. 02-May & Sleeter Ch-01:02-May & Sleeter Ch-01 26/10/2009 7:35 PM Page 20. T&F Proofs, Not for Distributions. Locating the Critical in Multicultural Teacher Education. Today, multicultural education in higher education is explicitly located within. highlight how drawing from critical pedagogy, critical race theory, and antiracist education, a critical multiculturalism can “steer the course of transforming education more strongly” (p. 252). Yet, as Sleeter and Bernal aptly observe, this the racist exclusionary practices. (Vavrus, 2002, p. 55). This conclusion continues to hold with NCATE's newest standards for higher.