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Language Borders: Recitation as Hegemonic Discourse

Introduction: Constructing a New Framework for Studying Schools

School is not a neutral enterprise and cannot be evaluated without looking at the underlying ideologies of participants and schools’ hegemonic role as socializing agent in the larger social context of an unjust society.

At the macro level, hegemony, as Apple (1990) defines it, is a set of organized meanings and values.

common sense consciousness and practices embedded in everyday social context.

In the context of school, hegemony needs to be understood as being the product not only of the larger social systems that define our society, but also as the product of the way individual classroom cultures are organized and constructed.

Hegemony as a political and pedagogical process (Giroux, 1992; Gramsci, 1971), then, functions as a controlling force that dominates student and teacher ideology on an unconscious level. In other words, students and teachers assume that the way school functions and the relationships inherent in school structures are unchangeable and not to be questioned. Until these embedded ideologies are transformed, even new instructional strategies that promote meaningful interaction and student/teacher co-construction of knowledge will not affect real change.

In order to begin the process of transforming schools, we need to recognize that reform is complex and therefore requires multiple solutions, multiple theories and multiple methodologies. Critical theory provides a framework within which a macro-level analysis of the role of schools can be conducted to better understand how to transform schools in the context of the current society. However, what is also needed is a re-examination of current assumptions about how people learn and a study of these processes at the micro-level in face-to-face interaction in classrooms; that is, to study these processes in context. Sociohistorical/sociocultural theories provide the framework within which to contextualize learning in schools.

Both critical pedagogy and sociohistorical/sociocultural theories provide different ways of understanding
the critical relationships between development, culture, and the everyday contexts of students' lives both in and out of school. Unlike traditional theories of the schooling and learning processes, these combined theories focus on the social construction of knowledge and the role of collective or joint activity in the critical transformation of the individual. Thus, a unified theory of critical teaching and sociocultural learning emphasizes the importance of understanding the individual as part of a social and historical context. This broader theory further serves to challenge current deficit model explanations of the schooling experiences of particular groups of students such as language and culturally diverse children and refocuses attention on the social context of learning rather than solely on the individual's traits.

In this article, we will bring together critical theory and sociohistorical and sociocultural theories to construct a more comprehensive framework to better understand why current attempts to reform instruction have not significantly changed the nature of the contexts for teaching and learning. The social relationships most often observed in schools, the forms and uses of knowledge constructed in school contexts. In particular, this broader theoretical framework will be used to discuss how literacy instruction continues to function as a way of socializing students into particular forms of knowing and being and how this socialization cannot be understood apart from its context.

Recent studies of the effects of reform-minded literacy instruction for immigrant, elementary school Latino children have identified that there are particular contexts for learning that limit participation in and access to the forms or practices of literacy that are central to language development and successful membership in academic communities (Gutierrez, 1992a, 1992b; 1993: in press a; in press b).

In these ethnographic studies of the social context of literacy instruction, a differential and restricted system of knowledge distribution and access to meaningful conversation and participation characterized the normative practices of "writing process" classrooms of linguistically and culturally diverse children. These studies will be used to illustrate how restricted forms of classroom discourse and asymmetrical social relationships created a hegemonic context that reproduced social inequalities and differential access to knowledge. Specifically, this article will discuss how the patterns of language use and interaction, despite the use of current reform-oriented practices and pedagogy, formed language borders that restricted access to sociocultural practices and meaningful participation as a means of knowing and learning (Lave and Wenger, 1991). Central to the construction and maintenance of these rigid borders were teachers' beliefs and assumptions about how children learned and acquired literacy.

This article, then, will discuss how critical, контextualized and sociocultural understandings of the acquisition of literacy help us better understand (1) how literacy learning is a social process that cannot be understood apart from context; (2) how the participants' beliefs and assumptions influence whose knowledge is constructed; (3) how current contexts for literacy learning are hegemonic and why social relationships constructed in those contexts are necessarily hierarchical; and (4) how the borders of particular contexts for learning restrict access to certain forms of knowledge, learning and legitimate participation. In the following section, we first present a general overview of the theories that have been brought together in this article to construct this analysis.

We need to redefine the function of schools.

Critical and Sociohistorical Theories: Talk the Talk

Critical Theory as Sociopolitical Analysis

Critical pedagogy provides a comprehensive analysis of the role of schools and current educational practices in the reproduction of social class structures, gender roles, and racial and ethnic bias. This theory has articulated, for example, the ways in which the inequities of power and privilege that exist in the larger society are reflected in classrooms; that is, the institutional practices that deny access to knowledge and restrict the distribution of knowledge are extensions of the practices that prevail in the larger society (McLaren, 1991). Therefore, from the perspective of traditional educators, if schools were designed for the reproduction of an unequal social structure and to control the socialization of citizens, then they are in fact "working" insofar as they are accomplishing the intended societal goal. However, if schools are to meet the needs of a diverse society, then we need to redefine the function of schools and what it means for schools to "work."

Critical theorists (Apple, 1990; Giroux, 1983, 1992; McLaren, 1991; Weiler, 1988) have long argued that schools operate to preserve and distribute the cultural capital of the dominant society. From a critical perspective, schools provide the sifting mechanisms that replicate social stratification and power relations defined by class, gender, race, ethnicity, and language (Apple, 1990, 1993: Freire and Macedo, 1987: Oakes, 1985: Ochs, 1988). In other words, schooling perpetuates the needs of an unequal society through its reproduction of acritical students who are socialized to "do-
Reform efforts will not truly transform schools.

ing being student" and to appropriating behavioral norms and values adhered to by society. Likewise, society defines what is appropriate, valuable, what counts as knowledge, and who gains access to this knowledge. Educators, then, cannot ignore that schools both reflect and reproduce inequalities in the larger society. In other words, the construction of cultural capital is bi-directional. In this sense, reforming schools can be seen as one vehicle for restructuring the inequities in the society.

Reform efforts will not truly transform schools, however, if the vital connection between the participants and the larger social context is ignored. Transforming the nature of teaching and learning requires an acknowledgment of the ways teacher and students' social, historical, cultural, and political realities influence and are influenced by the learning environment of the classroom. Critical pedagogists recognize this relationship and have suggested the need to include student and teacher in the creation of curriculum and classroom dynamics. McLaren (1991), for example, suggests that the affirmation of students' experiences as students and the inclusion of their voices as part of the classroom dialogue helps students develop a critical knowledge and perspective of schooling. In doing so, teachers will not only address the individual needs and interests of students, but will also provide the spaces in which students' stories, memories, narratives, and reading of the world can be related to wider social and cultural contexts (McLaren, 1991).

Critical feminists draw from the framework of critical theorists who examine the differential power relations that contribute to the unequal distribution of cultural capital based on class, race, ethnicity, and gender (Larson, 1993b). Critical feminist theory challenges, however, critical theory's tendency to focus primarily on class in their analyses of the social relations of schooling and the distribution of knowledge. This emphasis on class minimizes the importance of race, ethnicity, gender and language in an analysis of power relations in schools. Within this framework, feminists assert, the category of Other is created and its existence perpetuated as students of color, women, and culturally and linguistically diverse students, for example, are relegated to the margins (Anzaldúa, 1987; Ellsworth, 1989; hooks, 1987; Weiler, 1988, 1991, 1992). In other words, an unproblematized critical pedagogy that imposes decontextualized notions of social justice, equity, and access without examining the social, historical context and political position of the critical pedagogue simply perpetuates in schools the inequities of the larger society. Critical feminist pedagogy, then, creates a more inclusive pedagogy by contextualizing critical theory and by advocating a conception of schooling that recognizes and incorporates a multiplicity of narratives.

Critical feminism further considers the social construction of self—a self that is not fixed in a static social context but one that is constantly being recreated through participation in new forms of social relationships that require new forms of discourse (Weiler, 1991). Similarly, critical feminist pedagogy proposes that the subjective, lived experiences of both teacher and student can serve as the content that informs the curriculum and as the departure point for understanding the social processes and ideology that shape their lives (Weiler, 1991). For example, by introducing the narratives of lived experience into the classroom, both children and teachers are challenged to collectively examine the role social and historical practices play in shaping their experience. In doing so, they are provided opportunities to make conscious and challenge the position of student as subject or the position of teacher as authoritarian. Both teacher and student gain the perspective that allows each to recognize the others' experience as valuable and worthy of inclusion in the classroom.

Expanding Critical Theory

An elaborated critical theory incorporates feminist views, recognizes the multiple subjectivities of students and teachers, and makes a part of its text the inherent tensions of society as they are expressed in classrooms. Critical pedagogy acknowledges the conflicting ideologies of classroom participants and argues the need for addressing the tensions these conflicts create (Apple, 1990). As Apple argues,

Conflicts are the systematic products of the changing structure of a society and by their very nature tend to lead to progress. The "order" of society, hence, becomes the regularity of change. The "reality" of society is conflict and flux, not a "closed functional system"... therefore, conflicts must be looked at as a basic and often beneficial dimension of the dialectic of activity we label society. (1990, p. 97)

Conflict can thus become the text for counter-hegemonic teaching in which critical teachers and students become aware of their own gendered, raced, and classed subjectivities.

Critical teaching, then, uses the classroom as a site for the interrogation of texts, the encouragement of critique, and a place where students and teachers actively co-construct meaning. This co-construction allows both teachers and students to question hegemonic values, beliefs, and practices dominant in most curricula and to address their conflicting gender, race, and
class interests. A problematized critical theory further questions the omission of voices of subordinated groups and makes evident the tension that exists between the drive for equality and the preservation of existing inequalities. A critical curriculum, then, encourages the empowerment of both teachers and students.

An expanded critical approach that focuses on the analysis of social texts and social relationships exposes the underlying oppressive social constraints placed on students in traditional classrooms, particularly classrooms with culturally and linguistically diverse children. In doing so, the traditional social relationships and hierarchies of classrooms are made visible and the potential for the transformation of classroom learning is increased. Giroux (1992) has advocated changing the traditional structures: he proposes a "border pedagogy" that is grounded in the notion of difference and that (1) acknowledges the epistemological, political, cultural, and social borders that structure and are structured by discourse, power and the social relationships; (2) advocates for pedagogical conditions within which students can become border crossers: and (3) illustrates the historically and socially constructed discourses and social relations that constitute borders. In particular, border pedagogy requires the construction of contexts for learning in which students can produce meaningful discourse that is both transformative and emancipatory. In order to better understand how classroom culture is constructed, how borders are the social constructions of both the classroom participants and the larger community, we propose an examination of sociohistorical and sociocultural views of learning within which contextualize critical theory.

**Using Sociohistorical and Sociocultural Theories to Examine the Nature of Teaching and Learning**

There are many ways sociohistorical and sociocultural theories help extend the sociopolitical analysis put forth by critical theory. While both theories converge on the social construction of knowledge and the importance of context, their particular emphases differ. Critical theory has provided a sociopolitical lens and a language for talking about the role of schools in perpetuating the inequities in both school and the larger society. Sociohistorical and sociocultural theories of development provide both a means (the theoretical and analytical tools) and a language for describing human activity across contexts and the consequences of particular kinds of activity on the development of particular kinds of skills and practices. In doing so, these theories help account for the relationship between culture, development, and ways of knowing and being.

In particular, sociohistorical/sociocultural theories of learning (Cole, 1985; Moll, 1990; Rogoff, 1990; Vygotsky, 1962, 1978; Wertsch, 1985, 1991) provide a means for linking socially and culturally organized activities and experiences with understandings of the development of higher order thinking. Specifically, sociocultural approaches for studying psychological processes are based in the notion that higher psychological functions are first observed on the social plane—that is, in interaction with others in meaningful contexts—and then on the individual plane as the individual appropriates knowledge and skills. In other words, learning is fundamentally a socially mediated process in which novice and more expert Other participate in joint and authentic activity (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Leont'ev, 1981; Rogoff, 1990). The implications of sociocultural views of learning for education are powerful when we consider that most instructional contexts provide little to no opportunity for the kind of scaffolding and apprenticeship that learning as a socially mediated activity requires.

Knowledge is also situated and is both the process and product of activity (Wertsch and Stone, 1985). If knowledge is the end and the means of legitimate participation in communities of practice, then the knowledge and the cognitive models that arise from activity necessarily reflect the values, beliefs and routine practices of the participants (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Rogoff, 1990). From this perspective, the nature of activity in which people participate shapes and is shaped by the nature of participation, beliefs, and talk within the natural context for learning. Sociohistorical and sociocultural theories, then, have shifted the emphasis from looking primarily at the individual and have refocused attention on examining the subject’s activity and the goals, means and constraints affecting the individual's participation in activity (Cole, 1985; Leont’ev, 1981). Like the critical feminists who locate the individual or subject in a much larger social context, sociocultural theories propose contextualized or situated notions of development. These theories have become useful in explaining the importance of creating effective contexts for learning in schools and the important relationship between the nature of the context for learning and what gets learned and how what gets learned is learned. Such theories have also become useful in understanding how classroom culture is constructed and how socialization, especially unidirectional socialization, takes places in classrooms.

Theories of language socialization (Heath, 1983; Ochs, 1988; Schieffelin and Ochs, 1986a, 1986b) have also identified the social nature of language learning and have helped make evident the ways in which linguistic and social knowledge are acquired through participation in a community's communicative practices. These activities, the constructions of both language and interactional processes, construct the contexts for
development: it is in these socially constituted events that children acquire both linguistic and sociocultural competence. Within a language socialization framework, those participating in these activities are both socialized to use language and, likewise, are socialized through language (Ochs, 1988). From this perspective, what counts as knowledge in educational contexts and what counts as appropriate language in classrooms is constructed as students participate in the contexts of everyday classroom instruction and activity.

Further, language socialization theories help demonstrate the inextricable link between language and culture. It is through participation in socially and culturally organized activity that culture and cognition can be said to be mutually constitutive (Cole, 1985; Wertsch and Stone, 1985). Cross-cultural theories of development also emphasize the socially situated nature of learning and suggest that development cannot be understood apart from the context in which it occurs (Schieffelin and Ochs, 1986a, 1986b; Rogoff, 1990; Scribner and Cole, 1981). In particular, cross-cultural developmental research and research in linguistic anthropology (Duranti, 1985; Duranti and Goodwin, 1992; Goodwin and Duranti, 1992) discuss the mutually constitutive nature of context and talk or language and identify the important relationship between language practices and development. This research has provided significant evidence that the acquisition of language practices is the process by which linguistic and sociocultural knowledge is appropriated. Therefore, how activity is organized and what takes place in activity become central to understanding the nature of learning in particular contexts. Activity theory (Leont'ev, 1981) has helped explain the socially situated nature of development by providing a unit of analysis, “activity,” as the departure point from which to account for observed variations across cultures and contexts.

Such theories and tools help challenge acontextual, deficit model paradigms and explanations for variation in learning and participation in particular contexts of learning. Moreover, sociocultural theories of development underscore the important relationship between language development and the way activity is organized in schools. For example, some activities are organized in ways that provide access to practice as the central means for learning (Lave, 1991; Lave and Wenger, 1991), while others limit the novice's access to participate with more knowledgeable others. The study presented in this article is concerned with particular contexts for learning that deny access to legitimate participation and limit opportunities to actively co-construct discourse and the nature of activity and thus learning.

We also hope to extend the sociocultural analysis of literacy learning for elementary school-aged Latino children by relocating this study in a critical frame. Within the context of a sociohistorical, sociocultural critical perspective and by using discourse analytical tools, we will illustrate how the contexts for literacy learning for limited English-speaking children become borderlands in which children are socialized to replace their language and culture and particular ways of knowing and being with those of the dominant “Other.” Further, we hope to extend current critical theory by using contextualized rather than abstracted notions of classroom learning to make the case for the existence of hegemonic practices in schools for linguistically and culturally different students.

We use the construct of border here as a metaphor to describe the restricted context in which students reside. In these borderlands, students rarely participate as full citizens. Full participants of the classroom. In these borderlands, students function at the margins, never as owners of knowledge or as constructors of knowledge, but instead function as temporary residents or “renters knowledge.” In these contexts, their knowledge and language neither count nor are used to construct the discourse and content of instruction.

Current language practices in schools, despite attempts to incorporate bilingual instruction, still remain the most effective means of denying access to both knowledge and practice. Access to the means and forms of learning is restricted at several levels of instruction. First, language minority students are provided limited opportunities to develop comprehensive literacy skills (i.e., reading, writing, talking, critical thinking) in both their native and second language; that is, they have few opportunities to become biliterate. Second, the classroom discourse that serves as the medium of instruction is restrictive and thus limits opportunities for students to engage in and produce the very discourse they are expected to learn. In this way, the language of instruction and the form of discourse both reconstruct and preserve the traditional forms of language use and interaction inherent in teacher-centered instruction.

In the following sections, we will unpack the borderlands that have been identified in traditional classrooms for language minority children. Using methods of discourse analysis, an analysis of language in face-to-face interaction becomes the means for illustrating the institutionalized nature of schools and, specifically, classroom instruction. In particular, we will illustrate how restricted forms of classroom discourse become both the “vehicle and destination” (Tharp and Gallimore, 1988:93) in that students are both socialized to particular forms of discourse and interaction, as well as socialized through the discourse of the classroom. In this way, socialization to larger societal norms and practices formally begins in the hegemonic language and interactional practices evident in traditional classrooms.

From a critical perspective, these language practices
reflect the values and beliefs of the larger society. Historically, language policies and institutionalized language practices have countered the presence of and silenced the voices of linguistically different people. Language policy research has indeed demonstrated how language policies are, in fact, responses to particular language communities rather than to a need or desire to improve or expand language practices (see Ruiz, 1984, for more discussion). Language policies, then, have helped shape the socio-political identities of people who are characterized, in part, by their language. As previously discussed, if language, culture and cognition are inextricably linked, then the language policies and practices of schools cannot be seen as neutral.

As critical theorists have suggested, language is central to the construction of social identity and the development of the political, ethical, economic and social self (Giroux, 1992). Therefore, the perceptions of language that are constructed in classrooms influence students’ definitions and uses of language in both present and future contexts. In classrooms, hegemonic discourse, in which the teacher controls who speaks, about what, and under what conditions, creates asymmetrical relations of power (Giroux, 1992). In such contexts, the function and forms of literacy that students appropriate make their entry into the discourse community of the academy and their participation into particular communities of practice extremely difficult. This article addresses these hegemonic institutionalized teaching practices that marginalize and define language minority children as the devalued others whose voices rarely become part of the official curriculum.

**Institutionality of Classroom Contexts and Talk**

The institutionality of discourse and interaction is not determined primarily by its setting. Interaction and talk are also shaped or constrained by the participants’ orientations to, and participation in, social institutions and their activities. The socializing nature of institutional contexts might be best exemplified by the distinct formality character of courtroom interaction and talk (Drew and Heritage, 1992). In such formal institutional contexts, institutional talk and the character of institutional interaction are primarily embodied in their discourse forms and, specifically, their turn-taking systems and the sequence organization of the discourse (Atkinson and Drew, 1979; Drew and Heritage, 1992; McHoul, 1978; Mehan, 1979; Sack, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974). In particular, the turn-taking pattern of speech is uniform and exhibits overwhelming adherence to institutionally appropriate procedures—procedures that are both historically and socially situated.

In the case of formal classroom contexts, for example, the turn-taking system is designed, at least in part, “to control or curtail the nature of audience participation in any ongoing exchange” (Drew and Heritage, 1992:27). Thus, turn-taking systems in both schools and other institutional contexts are central to the organization of interaction and shape the participants’ orientation to various contexts (Drew and Heritage, 1992). Similarly, the nature of discourse and interaction in traditional classrooms also shape the participants’ ways of knowing and doing.

In a three-year ethnographic study of the social contexts of literacy instruction of elementary school-aged Latino children, the effects of a writing process instruction—the most current writing reform effort—were examined (Gutierrez, 1991, 1992a, 1992b, in press b). In half of the eight elementary school classrooms studied, the effects of the institutional nature of classroom contexts were observed. In these contexts, traditional belief systems about teaching and learning, and, in particular, the teaching of literacy to language minority children, were evident in the ritualized interactive and discourse patterns of literacy instruction. Specifically, the traditional knowledge exchange system of schools, in which the teacher serves as the primary transmitter and constructor of knowledge, reinforced the asymmetry in classroom interaction and in the distribution and co-construction of knowledge.

These patterns of talk and participation were characterized by the overuse of known answer questions that emphasized the role of teacher as constructor of knowledge and student as recipient of teacher’s information. Over time, these restricted forms of discourse and patterns of interaction became the normative practice.

As in studies of talk in the workplace (Drew and Heritage, 1992), the normative practices of “writing process” classrooms studied were characterized by (1) the differential distribution of knowledge and rights to knowledge; (2) differential access to conversational resources and organizational routines and procedures; and (3) access to meaningful participation in interaction. Thus, the social construction of borders in classrooms for language minority children were both constructed and reinforced by the explicit social hierarchies, participation structures, the low status of participants’ knowledge, and the discursive rights and obligations of participants. The persistent use of one
particular form of classroom discourse and interaction—recitation—insured that both entry and exit from these borderlands were difficult and prohibitive.

The Recitation Script: Patrolling the Border

The features of institutional talk were repeatedly reinstated in literacy activities embedded in "recitation scripts" in the classrooms studied. The existence of the recitation script has been widely documented (Hoetker and Ahlbrand, 1969; Mehan, 1979; Rosenshine and Stevens, 1986; Sulman, 1986). In this study, recitation is characterized by a stable set of features that existed in varying degrees across classroom contexts in which (1) teacher initiates a question; the student responds, followed by teacher evaluation (Initiation-Response-Evaluation or IRE) that constructs a predictable pattern of interaction: (2) teacher selects speakers, and students raise hands to bid for participation: (3) teacher generates topics and subtopics: (4) teacher discourages or ignores students’ attempts to introduce other sub-topics: (5) student responses are short and student elaboration is not encouraged: (6) teacher poses known answer questions or questions for which there is generally only one correct answer allowed; and (7) students have minimal opportunities to participate and co-construct knowledge.

The following excerpt from one classroom is a classic and representative example of recitation in which the teacher solicits answers to the question, “What’s special about mammals?” In this example, the teacher manages the discourse, selects student speakers and in each case evaluates the students’ responses. This particular example is not used to suggest that recitation may not be the appropriate script for taking inventory of what students know, but rather to demonstrate what the initiation (I)/response (R)/evaluation (E) pattern of interaction in recitation looks like.

Example 1
Recitation as Teacher-Managed Discourse

T = Teacher
A = Ana
D = Diego
Ss = Various unknown students
I 01 T: We’re mammals... too... okay... what’s special about all mammals then... and rhinoceroses is going to have the same thing... I wanted to make sure you knew this

04 ahead of time... Ana... now tell us
05 R 05 A: They all have hair
06 E 06 T: Yes... so it’s going to have hair... and what else about
07 rhinoceroses... what about all mammals... they all have
08 hair... Ana... and there was another thing you guys
09 should have learned from the mammal friends the
10 other day... they all have hair and they all have something else... Diego
11 R 11 D: They have live babies
12 E 13 T: They all have live babies... good job... they have live
13 babies... they don’t come from what Diego... Diego
14 I 15 T: they don’t come out of what
15 R 16 Ss: Eggs
16 E 17 T: They don’t come out of eggs... great... and there’s one thing about all mammals... um... Mary

In this study, recitation was observed in every classroom and in most classrooms, the primary form of instruction. Yet, there were notable differences in the ways recitation was instantiated. In several classrooms, recitation was used purposefully and in moderation and thus, assisted the teacher in achieving particular instructional goals. Most often, the recitation script functioned as hegemonic script, which formed rigid borders around activity and closed off participation. In these contexts, students were socialized to only one particular form of discourse and pattern of interaction and thus, were not provided opportunities to develop a repertoire of skills, strategies and sociocultural knowledge. Moreover, they had limited occasions to construct their own text and weave their own sociocultural experiences into the fabric of the curriculum.

This persistent use of the recitation script helped preserve traditional classroom participation structures and traditional beliefs about the social roles and relationships of student and teacher. When recitation was the exclusive orientation to learning constructed in classrooms, students were socialized solely to “doing being student” rather than to being a full participant and member of a democratic community. In democratic classrooms, the curriculum and the context for learning are more evenly co-constructed by both teacher and student. The following excerpt from a second-third grade classroom illustrates how traditional student roles were constructed.
Example 2
"Doing Being Student"

T = Teacher
C = Charlie

10 T:  Okay ... if your hands are in your lap
       ((Ricardo and Peter
       put hands in lap. Ben brings his clay to
       his face and
       smells it. Teacher continues to pass out
       clay and get
       other supplies ready. Charlie watches as
       Ben smells clay.
       Charlie smells clay.))

15 C:  ((softly, waving his hand before his
       nose)) Oo ... it

16 schniks ... I'll ... ( ) you

17 T:  If your hands are in your lap and your

18     ((Peter, Ricardo, and Charlie put hands

19     in laps)) as we

20     wait for the other kids to come in

21     ((Ricardo and Charlie

22     grab clay)) then you're going to be real

23     good direction

24     followers ((sits down))

22 C:  Smash ((squeezes bag))

23 T:  Peter's a good direction follower

24     ((Ricardo and Charlie put

25     hands in lap)) his hands are in his lap

25     ((Donaldo puts

25     hands in lap)) Ricardo's a good direction

follower . . .

The socialization of these young children to becoming "good citizens" of the classroom first required that they acquire the appropriate set of behaviors expected of successful students. In line 10, for example, the teacher defines what constitutes appropriate behavior when she informs students that their hands should be in their laps. When students do not comply, the teacher repeats her request and further orients students to focus their eyes and attention on her (line 17). In line 20, she cues the students that following directions is important to being a good student. To reinforce this point, she identifies Peter (line 23) as an example of a student who is compliant and who receives praise for his compliance. The teacher’s acknowledgment prompts three students, Ricardo, Charlie, and Donaldo, to imitate Peter (lines 23–25). This segment ends with the teacher once again reinforcing good direction following (line 25). Through repeated interaction with the teacher over time, the students begin to be socialized to what counted as appropriate action and what garnered approval from the teacher in this particular classroom. The students’ curiosity about the activity in which they were about to engage was not encouraged. The process of socializing people to the norms, values, and behaviors of "good citizenship" in the larger society begins here.

Becoming socialized to traditional forms of learning is also central to the construction of a hegemonic context in which students’ role as contributor to the construction of knowledge is essentially eliminated. In these contexts, the teacher was the sole constructor and distributor of knowledge and there were no spaces for student talk and participation in the learning process. The following example from a tenth grade, level 3 ESL classroom illustrates what Freire (1989) has termed the “banking” model of education in which knowledge is transmitted from teacher to student.

In this interaction, the teacher leads a class discussion on the issue of prejudice in the novel The Diary of Anne Frank. She begins by asking the students to explain prejudice.

* Photo 2. The socialization of young children to become "good citizens" in the eyes of the teacher is a powerful agent to shape behavior. In too many cases, student construction of knowledge is eliminated in the process.
Example 3
Denying Access to Participation

T = Teacher
S = Student

01 T: Prejuicio... in English we call it prejudice ((slowly))
02 prejudice... who can explain prejudice and
discrimination... what does that mean... how does that
03 work... what does that mean... how do you know when
05 prejudice is happening... I know you're aware of
06 it... haven't you ever experienced it... what or how do you
describe it ((pauses for answer by show of hands)) only
08 one person knows... two people know what discrimination
09 is... why is it always the same people answering ((calling
10 on student)) Jaime... what can you say
11 about prejudice and discrimination ((pause)) you shouldn't
12 raise your hand if you are going to pass ((demonstrates
13 hand raising with a smile)) he's ((Jaime)) passing to someone
14 else... they're ((discrimination and prejudice)) similar
15 aren't they... Junior ((nodding head toward student)) I like
16 people to raise their hand... just not always the same
17 people... okay someone new... someone who didn't answer
18 before
19 S: Prejudice is when (xxx) doesn't like... color-
20 [ [21 T: Excellent...
22 someone doesn't like someone else because of their
23 language, skin color or religion... so
24 Anne was taken away
25 and killed because of her religion... that was the cause of
26 her death... she wasn't killed because of anything she
27 did... only what she was

Teacher-managed and monopolized discourse de-
In this turn, the teacher identifies the focus of the discussion ("I can't imagine having my mother as a teacher," lines 4–5). Instead, the students respond to her initial question about the characters' situation (lines 2–3) and begin to discuss social issues, such as discrimination, that provide an explanation of the shortage of teachers in the black community (lines 9–15). This is the central issue.

Nevertheless, the teacher refocuses the students on her topic as shown next.

Example 5
Teacher's Belief as Curriculum

T = Teacher
S = Sally

02 T: . . . Gus . . . why did this situation exist in the book . . . Mrs. Logan
03 was the teacher of her children . . . I think that's kind of a
04 bizarre concept . . . I can't imagine having my mother as a
05 teacher

As evidenced in the above discourse, the teacher not only continues to move her own agenda forward, but also imposes a conclusion that is only grounded in her particular interpretation of the text (lines 29–30). Yet, the students continue providing other explanations like those offered in the following excerpt:
However, teacher’s interpretation of what counts as knowledge remains the topic of instruction, despite the fact that the students’ interpretations were more plausible and critical (lines 42–46).

The notion of teacher ideology as lesson plan is reflected in the control the teacher has over who talks and about what. This is dramatically illustrated in the following example of an oral narrative in which students’ language and sociocultural experiences are replaced by the teacher’s ideology. In the following example, the students are given the opportunity to narrate stories they’ve constructed, and to ask questions of and discuss one another’s text.

One student’s narrative, Agnes, describes a frightening account of a man in her neighborhood who has killed several children in the name of Satan. As the student narrator tells her story, the students become more engaged and a lively discussion ensues as the students ask questions and even express fear in response to the content of the narrative. Despite the fact that the student presents the story as lived experience, the teacher invalidates the story by labeling it as fiction. The student’s social and cultural capital is devalued.

Example 6
Reconstructing Students’ Narratives

A = Agnes
T = Teacher
S1, S2 = various unknown students

A: (shaking head) He looks like a man that he looks like
he’s a dad but he doesn’t . . . he kills some persons

((Both Agnes and students look to teacher))
S3: I don’t want to go Halloween (this year)
S: Me either
T: [Maybe]
S: Good . . . think about it . . . because it’s a story that’s been
passed down . . . sort of like a folktale and a fairy tale . . . you
know how I’ve told you that folktales are stories that
people tell! . . . and then that story gets passed down to
other families and the story gets passed down and then
you add a little bit to it and you change it . . . you might
even . . . um exaggerate ((Agnes turns towards the
chalkboard)) a little bit . . . like a tall tale does . . . okay . . . so
eventually the story comes out real exciting and scary
and horrible . . . but . . . um . . . my guess would be that it’s really
not based on a lot of truth . . . because I don’t think that that
girl’s mom would—would let her do that . . . and I don’t
know anybody in this classroom who would eat cat meat
if a man said eat the meat . . . I mean . . . would you do
something like that!

The devaluation of student’s social and cultural lives begins when the teacher reclassifies the narrative as folktale and thus implicitly reclassifies the student’s experience as fantasy (lines 129–130). To validate her reclassification, she inserts a mini-lesson on the definition and characteristics of folktales (lines 131–138). She then overtly questions the validity of Agnes’ story (line 139).

Agnes continues her narration providing more vivid detail of the incident and once again the veracity of the story is questioned by the teacher (lines 165–170).
Example 7
Student Experience as Forbidden Subject

A = Agnes
T = Teacher
S1, S2 = various unknown students

156 A: And then the- he lives in . . . um . . . a green house and then
157 he . . . um* . . . he . . . um . . . my
158 mo- my mother told me to don't be
159 passing by there because that- he gives
160 . . . um . . . he gave a
girl . . . um . . . her name was Sheila
161 . . . she gave . . . um . . .
her . . . um . . . some corn nuts and
then she ate them . . . and then
161 he told her to give (her) something
from her body and-
162 and he killed her
163 S1: Oh my god
164 T: [ ]
165 That may or may not be true . . . but I
166 think it's right for
167 your mom to tell you to stay away from a stranger's
168 house . . . if you don't know the person
169 you shouldn't go
170 near their house . . . we don't know if
171 he's done those things
172 or not but the safest thing to do is stay
173 away from his
174 house . . . that's a good rule

Although the teacher provides some acknowledgment of the possibility of truth in the student's story (line 165), she quickly shifts the subject to provide the moral of this folktale, "if you don't know the person, you shouldn't go near their house" (lines 167-168).

Through analysis of the face-to-face interaction in these classrooms, the ways in which students' lived experiences never become part of the classroom discourse are made visible. Further, the set of examples provided above illustrate how students are not allowed to become border crossers, that is, to enter the official community. Rather, through hegemonic discourse and hierarchical participation structures, they remain marginal participants in a community that patrols its borders with vigilance.

Conclusion: Walk the Walk

In this article, we have presented a new framework within which to examine the nature of teaching and learning by using sociohistorical and sociocultural theories of learning to contextualize an expanded critical theory. Ethnographic research of the experiences of Latino children in urban contexts has been used to show how the current conditions and language practices for literacy learning in schools restrict access to certain forms of knowledge, learning and legitimate participation. Further, through examples of the face-to-face interaction in which the children's lives in classrooms are described, we illustrate how language practices and participation structures construct the borders that insures the protection of the cultural capital of the dominant society.

Recitation, it should be noted, is not unique to urban schools with culturally and linguistically diverse populations; it functions as the hegemonic discourse in most schools. Although it limits instructional opportunities for all students, its pervasive use has particular consequences for historically marginalized student populations. First, the social and historical experiences that these students bring to the classroom are ignored or denied when students are provided few occasions to co-construct activity, discourse and the content of the curriculum. As one participant at a recent session on critical pedagogy at the American Educational Research Association eloquently shared, "I came to kindergarten so excited and ready to learn. I came prepared with my 'maleta' (suitcase) full of so many wonderful things, my Spanish language, my beautiful culture and many other treasures. When I got there, though, not only did they not let me use anything from my 'maleta,' they did not even let me bring it into the classroom." Hegemonic classroom practices force children, like the Latino children we studied, to leave their maletas at the classroom door. Moreover, recitation denies these students the opportunity to appropriate the cognitive, linguistic, and sociocultural knowledge that is most valued and critical to academic success.

Hegemonic contexts for learning also have consequences for teachers. We would like to underscore the fact that teachers are not the inventors of hegemony in the classroom. We have used the instructional discourse of teachers and students to both illustrate the normative practices in schools and to build the case for the ways such practices construct contexts for learning that have particular consequences for language minority children. It is important to also recognize that teachers too have been socialized through their own lived experiences as students in classrooms where these were the normative practices. In particular, teachers in their pre-service experience are socialized, in both theory and in practice, to acontextual, aclu-
tural, apolitical, and ahistorical visions of teaching and learning. They too are kept on the margins and silenced through poor working conditions, meager salaries, inadequate preparation, and few opportunities to become the reflective and critical practitioners they struggle to be.

Traditional research paradigms may further perpetuate the devaluation of teachers when teachers become the objects of research rather than co-participants and co-constructors of the research agenda. Action-oriented, ethnographic research in schools attempts to improve these practices by assisting teachers to become classroom researchers and critical practitioners and by providing a more situated understanding of the teaching and learning practices in classrooms.\(^\text{10}\)

Transforming classroom instruction requires that teachers also be given full membership in the community of practice.

Practitioners have often criticized the research community for focusing on what does not work and on how children fail. In studies of the social contexts of literacy, communities of effective practice were identified (Gutierrez, 1993; Gutierrez and Meyer, in press). In one particular context, the responsive/collaborative script, the social relationships between students and teacher were radically transformed. Although teacher was still the authority, she was no longer authoritarian (Freire, 1985); instead, she facilitated students’ performance through guided participation and apprenticeship (Rogoff, 1990). In such contexts, students’ various levels of expertise were acknowledged and scaffolded and students’ “maletas” were an essential part of the curriculum. Curriculum, in these classrooms, was more than getting the right answer or transmitting information; curriculum was necessarily socially and historically situated.

Eisner (1992) has also been critical of the lack of solutions proposed in educational research and, in particular, has compared critical theorists’ emphasis on the negative with the act of pulling weeds. He states that:

Although pulling weeds is helpful, their elimination in a garden does not ensure the presence of flowers: flowers have to be planted. Most critical theorists do not plant flowers; they pull weeds. (1992:315)

By contextualizing an expanded critical theory and sociohistorical/sociocultural theories of development in ethnographic research, the seeds of hope and transformation can be planted. Together, theorists, researchers, and practitioners can help the flowers bloom.

Endnotes

1. See Larson (1993a) for a discussion of the need to combine critical and feminist theory with sociohistorical and sociocultural theories in the study of emergent literacy.

2. The most well-known writing reform movement is known as teaching “writing as a process.” Considered a response to the traditional method of teaching writing that placed emphasis on correctness and the final written product, writing process instruction was designed to help students conceptualize, and thus practice, writing as a process of thinking about and organizing their ideas before producing written text and of revising and editing drafts of their writing. The approaches to writing as process vary widely but generally include a common set of activities and beliefs about writing. Underlying process pedagogy is the articulated belief that students should be at the center of a more relevant and meaningful curriculum (Gutierrez and Meyer, in press).

3. Gutierrez (1992, 1993, in press b) identified the existence of three “scripts” or contexts for learning that were constitutive of classroom discourse, the social relationships constructed by participants, and the physical arrangement of instruction and interaction. These scripts were constructed over time by participants in activity. More important, these scripts resulted in very different orientations to learning in that the rules and rights to participation, the knowledge exchange system, and the kind of knowledge constructed differed in substantive ways. Recitation was identified as the most restrictive context for learning.


5. Transcript symbols: ( ) overlapping speech; ( ) inaudible or unsure hearing; ( ) researcher comments:; lengthened pronunciation: ! rising intonation: ON stressed pronunciation: = latched utterance: - truncated utterance.

6. Recitation was observed as the primary script in four of the eight elementary school classrooms observed in the study. It was also the dominant script of the dozens of classrooms studied by graduate students participating in Gutierrez’s seminars. In all cases, ethnographic methods were used to collect data in which field notes, teacher and student interviews, videotapes and audiotapes of classroom instruction were collected over one academic year. Data were analyzed and video/audio tapes were transcribed, coded and analyzed to determine the nature of teaching and learning of literacy in each classroom. Thus, classrooms identified as recitation, for example, were so classified only if the comprehensive data set indicated a clear pattern and orientation to learning. The study was a collaborative project in which the teacher was provided a voice in the research agenda.

7. This is not to argue against good classroom management: rather, it illustrates that when classroom management becomes the central focus, instruction is set aside.

8. The data collection and initial analysis of teaching and learning in this classroom was conducted by Ellen Osmundson, a student in Gutierrez’s literacy seminar and a doctoral student in Learning and Instruction at UCLA.


10. We are still struggling to improve our own practices so that teachers are included as legitimate partners in the research and their own questions and understandings valued and incorporated. Over time, we hope that we become better in telling not only students’ stories, but teachers’ stories as well.

References


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