4. IMAGES OF TEACHER AND STUDENT POSITIONINGS

Storylines from speech acts to body acts

INTRODUCTION

We study, we learn, we teach, we know with our entire body (Freire, 1998: xviii).

The question: What are the possibilities in a classroom when “teacher” and “student” roles are problematised?

The context: 2006. A classroom with middle years students, student-teachers and teacher educators in suburban Victoria, Australia.
STORYLINES OF SHIFTING POSITIONING AND IDENTITIES

Situated in a middle years classroom, in the state of Victoria, Australia, this chapter draws from research focussed on what it means to “teach”. The first pages of the chapter could be read as an illustrative segue to the written work of an introduction. My opening of the chapter is intentional. As is often expected on the first pages of an academic text, a main argument appears. What I provide is a provocative assertion of the shift in my attention from word to image. I have been inspired, reassured and intrigued by feminist philosopher Luce Irigaray (1991, p. 58) who reminds us we are embodied creatures and that “words fail us”. Following MacLure’s call to “(re)mobilize discursive literacy in educational research” (2003, p. 8), I argue for images as a way of engaging the embodied knowings, constructions and representations that resists the certainties of language.

This chapter exposes and argues an innovative use of Positioning Theory (Harré & van Langenhove, 1991, 1999) and images. The chapter is also a reflexive account of being and going in-between “words” and “image” and “student” and “teacher”. Through research, I confront how classroom engagements play out the
multiple constructions of teacher and student. As a teacher educator and a school teacher in earlier times, I have struggled with ways of “making the familiar strange, rather than the strange familiar” (Van Maanen, 1995, p. 20). Returning to a classroom, how do I see in this (un)familiar classroom environment? I scrutinise and explain the ways I have worked with images in a pedagogical landscape. Initially, I position myself in the pictorial turn and the landscapes of pedagogy. I then lay bare the ways I have engaged Positioning Theory to further understandings of what I see. The methods are not “tools” of data collection and analysis but rather “contrivances” (at the one time inventive and deceitful) for data collection and analysis. This process has been generative of multiple understandings and interpretations, brushing lightly, glimpsing, noticing the engagement, negotiation and renegotiation of agency and identity. Never innocent work, the research troubles the treacherous business of privileging knowledge and voices. Teacher and student are constructed not in opposition to each other, but argued through the multiple and conflicting realities of learning to teach and vice versa, rather than being framed by image.

The chapter has two parts. The first section describes my methodological positioning and how I designed the study, complicating the roles of teacher and student, student and beginning teacher in a learning space away from the confines of the university teacher education lecture theatre and weekly workshop. The second part is a theoretical overview of Positioning Theory (Harre & van Langenhove, 1991, 1999) and foregrounds the data analysis used in the study, bringing together image-based methods and Positioning Theory within educational research.

**Shifting researcher positions**

I came to the research site of a secondary classroom – a temporally and spatially (dis)located teacher (Usher, 2002). The details of the method and analysis are provided later in this chapter, but my work in that classroom was as a teacher of the classroom participants – a mix of secondary students and of student teachers. I was also a researcher in that space. In that teaching and research site I was essentially concerned with how we learn and how we support ways of being. I enacted my teaching through an embodied reading of the learning teaching moment (Aoki in Pinar & Irwin, 2005). As a teacher educator I had in recent years moved my practise from the familiar academic, linguistic discourse of lecture and workshop to teaching in embodied ways – opera and art-making in teacher education courses (Senior & Dixon, 2005; Dixon & Senior, 2006). Through the intertwined work in this study of teaching and researching, I came to recognise that the research process and the teaching process were more than aligned. The ways of knowing were externalized differently but the link between the body and other ways of knowing were central in both the research process and the teaching process. After Leitch, I acknowledge that “Embodied knowledge is a way of knowing that goes beyond the intellectual, logical and rational mode of thinking that has traditionally
been defined as knowledge to include emotions, culture, physical sensation and life experience” (2006, p. 552).

Elyse Pineau (1998, 2002) also foregrounds active body-knowing and advocates a body-centred experiential method of teaching. The body, she argues, is an initial location of meaning making, of struggle and resistance and, through bodily engagement, a site for the practice of emancipation. Irigaray (1985) theorises the relationship between/of light and touch, embodiment and image. She argues that without the sense of touch, seeing would not be possible. In the research site of a secondary classroom from which this chapter springs, I came home to the classroom, the sounds, the smells, the physical constrictions of the walls and windows, the tables and chairs, the whiteboard and storage rooms and computer pods, the bells and timetables, the absent notes, the staffroom politics. I found the familiar, and struggled to see through the normalizing gaze of teacherly discourses.

Like many education researchers I am struggling with emancipatory and critical attempts at “hearing the silenced voice”, “giving voice” or even recognizing the other (Jones, 1999). In her recent work on research paradigm proliferation, Lather (2006, p. 40) refers to “both our longing for and a wariness of an ontological and epistemological home”. This dissatisfaction is not coincidentally occurring at the time of a pictorial turn. I find myself moving from the linguistic-centred grand narrative of the word, returning to teacherly attention to embodied knowings and a research focus on “visuality” (Mirzoeff, 2006). Researching from a feminist poststructuralist sensibility (Atkinson, 2003; MacLure, 2003) I confront a crisis of authority in the account of the lived experience. Recognizing the other and attending to voice and language, as Denzin and Lincoln notice, “qualitative researchers can no longer directly capture lived experience” (2000, p.17). This assertion implicates and repositions ethnographic work in education. This is what I am attempting to reveal, unravel and position through positioning, image and word, student and teacher. Working in a large research-centred education faculty, dominated by centres and large-scale survey work, I found myself “already swept up in language games that constantly undid (undo) themselves” (Lather, 2006, p. 52).

I am drawn to the metaphorical use of “seeing” by Rodgers and Raider-Roth in their account of “presence” in teaching. “As less time, money, space and value are given to a more complex notion of teaching, the voices of both teachers and students are being squeezed out and we are losing sight of what it means to teach” (2006, p. 265). Later in the work they quote a student’s description of his teacher and argue how it “holds the image of that teacher” (p. 274) and permits the writer to “see a teacher” (p. 274). Using metaphorical language, they argue that they “fill in the image by describing …” (p. 274). Their words, “losing sight of” and “fill(ing) the image”, however, drew me not to see metaphorically, but to look and to attend to the images from within the classroom, which was the site of my research. I recognized these pictures as data communications in themselves – not to be reduced to words. I sought the meaning in the image “producing” a story that we can identify not in terms of difference of the linguistic model – but through the combination of internal elements, and because of intertextual literacies that confirm
for us, on the basis of experience, what they mean" (Schirato & Webb, 2004, p. 65).

*Words to pictures for embodied knowing*

The images in this chapter were taken by the participants – middle years students and beginning teachers. There were multiple digital cameras available and hundreds of digitised images were kept. No guidelines were laid down for the photography. I was present throughout and can bring my knowing of these texts to the analysis; but I have resisted using methods such as photo elicitation (Harper, 2002; Collier, 1957), that is asking those in the chosen images or those who took the images about their understandings in regard to their positionings to the events, and their roles in this space. The large collection of images was eventually used in the final end-of-year public art exhibition. The images were printed as miniatures, thumbnail size, and each painstakingly glued onto hard card. The collection of miniature tiles was used by the classroom participants during the exhibition to create representations of “teacher” and “student”. I am attentive to the implications of “voice” in this act. I have resisted engaging words as a source of greater access to some essential truth. Instead I noticed the participants’ responses to the photos in general. So often their first glance was intended to seek out their own image. And then there were myriad stories about the events depicted, recollections of previously forgotten incidents, gasps of disbelief and of delight and unexpected insights that were told and retold. Outsiders who saw the photos were intrigued. They were often unsure of what to make of this classroom. Most often they were unsure of who was teacher and who was student. So I asked myself how do I/we know who is who? In analysing the images I asked how did the participants construct and represented their identities? To what extent and in what ways were teacher and student identities and relationships drawn upon? What other identities and relationships were brought into play?

*Teacher/student – roles and positions*

The classroom, when interpreted as a text, is often articulated through binary oppositions of teacher and student. The issues of teacher and student identities have long been dichotomized in educational discourses (Britzman, 2003; MacLure, 1993; Sachs, 2001). In the current educational climate of marketization, standardization and accountability, teaching is aligned more with skills and content knowledge, and learning with scores and measurable normative achievement (Apple, 2004; Giroux, 2004). The distinctions of teacher and of student identities have become part of our ordinary way of pedagogical knowing. For example, Lusted draws distinctions between “the transformation of consciousness that takes place in the intersection of three agencies – the teacher, the student and the knowledge they together produce” (cited in Lather, 1991, p. 1) “How one teaches ... becomes inseparable from what is being taught and, crucially, how one learns” (Lusted, 1986, pp. 2-3). Classroom participants are constructed and constrained by polarized
and often adversarial roles. Each role locates the participants within a particular moral universe, a world view with attendant deep-seated storylines. Within the discourse of educational research and policy, teachers variously assume roles as reflective practitioner, nurturer, technician, scientist, artist (Ferguson et al., 2004). I have not “settled” on an identity tracing for any participants. Rather, the analysis has given a structure to what I notice of possible identity constructions or fabrications and positionings. I resist the “settling” of roles. What is possible for participants when roles are problematized?

How do we recognise/name teacher and student? This research considers the positions and identities of participants in a classroom involving middle years students, student-teachers and teacher educators all “learning” and “teaching” about what it is to teach through creation of visual art about teaching and learning. Secondary students were invited to teach student-teachers how to teach and to create art alongside or with the student-teachers. The roles of teacher and student were called into question as occurred in the recent research of Pearson and Somekh (2006) in their theorization of transformative learning. In their study of Developing Pedagogies for E-Learning Resources (PELRS), Pearson and Somekh (2006, p.527), found when students were given the role of teachers and researchers that:

both the teachers and the pupil researchers confirmed that all the pupils in the class had significantly changed their behaviours as a result of taking on the role of “teacher” and relinquished much of the learned dependence that was a normal part of playing the role of “pupil” (when teachers were in the reciprocal role of “teacher”)

However, they noticed during filming the shifting of both teachers and students between and into “new roles not normally associated with formal teaching situations where the lead is taken by the teacher and the pupils are closely guided in their work” (p. 527).

This classroom

The context of my research provoked the possibility of drawing into play teacher and student roles and identities. This was a classroom within a school during school hours. However, the roles of teacher and student had been discarded. The engagement between teacher and student in the striated space of the classroom is regulated by roles played out from (and in) the stuck places of hierarchical discourses of knowledge and power. The ridges and barricades that mark the space, like roadway spikes, had been recessed – an alertness was present that they would resurface at the flick of a switch. And yet in that open, uncoded moment, in that smooth space, participants were present through multiple and shifting identities. There were many groupings, a few participants working/being alone. The only constraint on the participants was the knowledge that there was to be a public art exhibition at the end of the semester for all students. Participation in the tasks of teaching how to teach and art-making was always at the discretion of the individual. No one was asked to work in a particular way or
with particular groupings. A couple of year nine students left the space to wander only to return minutes later. Some student-teachers appeared to spend considerable time in silence, staring out the window, actively touching their art work but on infrequent occasions. The participants, I believe, were (dis)located in this learning landscape. Laclau (1990) used the term “dislocation” to characterize a “contemporary society with a plurality of centres, engendering a condition of decentredness where no fixed, essential identities can be produced” (Edwards & Usher, 1997, p. 255). For Edwards and Usher (1997) (dis)location is a preferable term “where the bracket signifies that location and dislocation are simultaneous moments always found together, a positioning with simultaneously one and many positions (1997, p. 255). The dynamics of (dis)locating both refuses a privileging of particular locations and voices and accepts the inherent power/knowledge dynamics of all pedagogic situations. The binaries which have dominated a spatially stable, modernist perspective are called into question – home and homeless, insider and outsider, familiar and unfamiliar, location and (dis)location (Usher, 2002; Gruenewald, 2003). Usher uses the locality of cyberspace to examine constructions of identity from positions of being neither here nor there, yet also of being here and there (Usher, 2002, p. 50). In a similar way, the participants in the classroom were able to position themselves as student and/or teacher or neither student nor teacher. They were insiders to this familiar context, positions and storylines of a classroom, but outsiders to the newly available positions and storylines.

Teacher educator as itinerant worker

I describe my travelling to a middle years classroom, as being not dissimilar to an itinerant worker. I bring bodies of pedagogical knowledges appropriated by and assigned to teacher educators and research experience in classrooms. These are enmeshed with researcher/teacher identities and a lifelong questioning of how we learn/teach, and of engaging and exploring the ways in which we know ourselves and others in order to learn/teach. I chose to run my university student-teacher classroom in a school with middle years students and in a team-teaching situation with another teacher educator from my university for one day per week for 18 weeks over the year. The student-teachers and the school students chose to be part of this structure. On the first day we asked our school students – a mixture of year 8 and year 9 young people – to teach the student-teachers how to teach. In the first half of the year the school students spent time with the student-teachers working on various tasks – teaching student-teachers how to make digital portfolios, attending classes throughout the school, workshoping school policies. Halfway through the year we began work on a collaborative art project about learning and teaching.
Who holds the knowledge?

Through the experience of this classroom, the normalized understandings and questioning of who holds the knowledge were problematized. The participants were called into teaching and learning without recourse to assumed roles. The secondary students were asked to be the teachers of the student-teachers. The student-teachers were in a classroom but were not asked to teach. In this classroom the participants were given the opportunity to reposition themselves. In conversations we position others and ourselves sometimes intentionally and often unintentionally. Harré argues that positioning is “the discursive construction of personal stories that make a person’s actions intelligible and relatively determinate as social acts and within which the members of the conversation have specific locations” (Harré & van Lagenhove, 1991, p. 395). These positionings and repositionings are recursively and dialectically related to power and identity. “Positionality is about historical inscription, multiplicity and specificity; situated selves, power regimes and contested meanings” (Lather, 2006, p. 44). This work is located in a particular classroom with its own spatial and temporal context of an Australian middle years grouping, but it is read within an understanding that the experiences and the identities of those who are present – including myself as researcher – are temporally and spatially (dis)located. We are present but the work we do of constructing, reconstructing and representing our multiple identities is not fixed in this space or in this time. Our identities are not caused or brought into being by that experience in a linear, generalizable or stable way. The location brushes our work. It is lived in those moments but also again in following moments and is taken into the future and into our pasts. Our identities are present in the classrooms we inhabited as young children and in the classrooms we will inhabit in the future. It is read with mindful attention to the “tremulous simultaneity of pasts and presents and futures” (St Pierre, 1997, p. 368)

This, however, does not make this location, these experiences, empty and meaningless. Nor does it lead inexorably to the paralysis of nihilism (McLaren, 1998). Rather, the acknowledgement of the fluidity of the temporal and spatial nature of our identities permits a rich “noticing” (Dixon et al., 2004; Mason 2002) of that work, a playful illumination of that which is usually obscured by the more rigid and discursively constrained understandings of roles and of teacher and student. To assert understandings of – to analyse - this location/experience is not to assert generalizable truths of teacher and student identity construction that will hold for these participants in this location. Nor is it to say what is true for others in this situation. Their previous and future spatial and temporal locations are just as fluid. What it does permit is a way of seeing, a way of reading or analysing a complex and unstable set of storylines made available within the conversation of this classroom. I am interested in the practices of space not an essential understanding of the space.

The analysis was spatially and temporally divided from the fieldwork. Pink (2001) argues the use and analysis of images cannot be used independently of other methods and suggests a reflexive approach where “the context of image production
should be analysed reflexively to examine how visual content is informed by the subjectivities and intentions of the individuals involved” (p. 99). Pink has made good argument for this interweaving of language and image and the place of participant voice. In this work, however, I have resisted this recourse to hearing what the participants have to say and have kept my eyes on the image to hear and see from that knowing. In analysing the images, I was seeking the ways participants constructed and represented their identities in a situation where roles had been problematized. In what ways were teacher and student identities and relationships drawn upon? What other identities and relationships were brought into play? This concern with roles, identities and positioning drew me to the work of Harré and van Langenhove (1991, 1999). I have used their work on Positioning Theory to frame the analysis of research data. To explain Positioning Theory, I have provided an abridged account of key elements of the theory as developed by Harré & van Langenhove (1991, 1999), Howie and Peters (1996) and the more recent work of Harré and Slocum (2003).

POSITIONING THEORY

The problematization of role and positions has been engaged within the poststructural conversational Positioning Theory of Davies and Harré (1990) and Harré and van Langenhove (1991, 1999). Positioning Theory is an explanatory scheme to understand and study discourse that is based in the understandings of social constructionism and is seen by some theorists as a basis of new social psychology (Howie & Peters, 1996; Harré & van Langenhove, 1991, 1999; Harré & Slocum, 2003). Research using Positioning Theory is largely situated in the fields of psychology and health education (Phillips, Fawns & Hayes, 2002; Stephens, Carryer & Budge, 2004). There has been some take-up of this work in education (Stables & Gough, 2006; Glazier, 2005; Dixon, 2004) and a few research projects where images within an educational context are used as photo elicitation (Wegerif, 2002; Kendrick & McKay, 2002).

The origins of the terms “positioning” and “position” – from the field of marketing where a position refers to communication strategies that allow one to place a certain product among its competitors, and from a military meaning in the sense that a position is always taken against the position of the enemy (Harré & van Langenhove, 1991, p. 395) – are metaphorical. Positioning involves a tripolar relationship, evident within the conversation, of position, storylines and speech acts (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999). Within the conversation, we position others and ourselves. Positions can and do change; these positionings and repositionings are constructed and brought about within the conversation of the participants. The positioning of participants within a context speaks to the power available to them.

Davies and Harré (1990) argue that one of the products of such discursive actions is the self of the person who engages in them. The positioning concept affords us:
... a view of ourselves as choosing subjects, locating ourselves in conversations according to those narrative forms with which we are familiar and bringing to those narratives our own subjective lived histories through which we have learnt metaphors, characters and plots (Davies & Harré, 1990, p. 52).

Positioning Theory allows a dynamic alternative to role theory. Positions are situation-specific and, unlike roles, are not always defeasible (Harré & Slocum, 2003, p. 104). In order to cope with the situations in which they usually find themselves, people use fluid positionings, not fixed roles. A Positioning Theory perspective, rather than the more rigid role theory, gives access to the multiple positions and multiple relationships in which we operate and also permits the recognition of their shifting nature (Davies & Harré, 1990). Positioning Theory recognises the distinctions of position, storylines and speech-acts.

**Positions**

Conversations have storylines and the speech-acts create and reflect them. In speech-acts and storylines, authors establish, either intentionally or unintentionally, a position in relation to themselves and to others. The structure of positioning is thus tri-polar. Positions are relative to one another – self-positioning may force another’s positioning. Two or more people in a relationship might each simultaneously occupy more than one position. Each may adopt or ascribe a different set of positions-pairs. “The more a person’s actions cannot be made intelligible by reference to roles, the more prominent the personal positioning will be” (Harré & van Langenhove, 1991, p. 398).

**Storylines**

Storylines are realised in the conversation. Social episodes display storylines, as if the speakers were living out of narrative conventions. The speakers positioned by others or by themselves, may draw on both the storylines made available within their context of the conversation and those that are embedded in a broader set of discursive actions. Storylines are multilayered, with the possibility of several unfolding simultaneously from the same pattern of speech-act.

**Speech – act/image**

Harré and van Langenhove’s Positioning Theory (1991, 1999) offers a process or method of linguistic analysis and is firmly located within the field of conversation analysis. Here I have turned my reference from the speech act to the body act. In the above discussion, describing the traditional use of positioning analysis, the attention is on the speaker. In this analysis, the use of images replaces the use of conversation. Attention is given to the body acts in what is seen, not the speech-acts which are heard. Reading images for storylines requires a rewriting of the way
storylines are made available to the researcher. Thus I have attempted this rewriting of the above paragraph on storylines:

The actors (speakers in original paragraph) positioned by others or by themselves may draw on both the storylines made available within their context of the interaction (conversation) ... Storylines are multilayered, with the possibility of several unfolding simultaneously from the same pattern of image (speech-act).

Often contradictory, there are a plethora of storylines, made available within each image. Those discernible to the reader or made available to the reader are constrained by the reader. The storylines analysis creates a new discursive space. It permits the production of generic storylines which are present in situations that have proved opaque because of the normalizing gaze of the teacher student discourse (Harre and Slocum 2003). The task is to see through the storylines for the sense people make of their lives, the identities they construct and reconstruct.

Process of analysis

In Harré’s analysis of “a seemingly irresolvable conflict between Georgetown University and the residential community of Georgetown” (Harré & Slocum, 2003, p. 112), storyline analysis was used to create a new discursive space. Conflict between the two groups was brought to a head when the university applied to the District of Columbia to increase its student enrolments. Harré and Slocum draw on the broader discourse of “The American Dream” to distinguish several storylines in the conflict (2003, p. 115). This is particularly relevant as it is how discursive psychology moves beyond the micro textual analysis and engages with a larger societal context and the discourses that operate in that sphere.

The Georgetown community storylines included “The Students as Savages Story”, “The Aggressive University Story” and “The Georgetown University as Neglectful Parent Story”. The Georgetown University storylines included “The Malicious Residents’ story”, “The Benevolent University Story”, and “The Historical Rights Story” (Harré & Slocum, 2003, pp. 114-15). Through the application of Positioning Theory analysis, it was revealed that there was a single, generic storyline underlying the seemingly antithetical narratives of both the community activists and the Georgetown university administrators. The identification of this common storyline as the “Students are children and the university is their parent” provided a space for a new storyline. It is not suggested that the case in this research is one of conflict. However, the Georgetown University analysis is useful as it provides a way of identifying the different storylines and associated positioning from two groups in conversation or, as in this case, in interaction.

In order to carry out a Positioning Theory analysis with an emphasis on storylines, Harré and Slocum suggest a two-step approach. The first step involves the identification of the main issues in the conversation. The second stage of the analysis is to identify:
Mary Dixon

• the various storylines that constitute the discursive conventions revealed in the narratives;
• the positionings of the actors relative to each storyline; and
• the illocutionary forces of utterances in the conversations recorded in the various documents available for analysis (Harré & Slocum, 2003, p.113).

This stage is not intended to reveal the “truth” but to make the identification of storylines and the accompanying positions reveal the intelligibility of positioning. Such analysis may reveal a “a thick, intricate catalogue of positions, metapositions, storylines and available speech-acts relative to each person and institution engaged in each episode” (Harré & Slocum, 2003, p. 113). From these, the dominant positioning of some storylines may be discerned. A successful analysis would distinguish the generic storylines from the plethora of storylines in the extended discourse. I have followed these analysis steps used by Harré and Slocum (2003) in analysing the images.

Using Positioning Theory with Images

In this chapter I have taken a small sample of the data set of photographs and fragments of the analyses to provide a working example of one possible interpretation of using Positioning Theory with images. The limitation has been set in order to maintain the focus on the methodological considerations that are raised when images as a data source are linked to Positioning Theory. What follows are fragments of a pedagogical argument discernible as the workings of an image analysis. Initially, I give a brief overview of the questions used to guide the application of Harré and Slocum’s (2003) process steps in this research. Then I offer more detailed analysis of images from the data set. The context of the research is situated through the student-produced images, as outlined earlier, and the site is a middle years classroom in which students and teachers are engaging with what it is to teach and to learn.

First step:
- Identification of the main issues in the “conversation”/image regarding teacher and student — What can be created? What does it mean to be a student? What does it mean to be a teacher? What is available for the construction of identities between those to whom these roles are normally ascribed? In what ways are these identities subsumed, aligned or rubbed up against other identities?

Second step:
- Identification of the various storylines — of the student, of the teacher, of the teacher educators, of participants — do they begin or end?
- Positioning of each relative to each storyline — thick intricate catalogue of positions
- What are the generic storylines? Why are some storylines in dominant positions over other storylines?
- Link to the discourses of the classroom — knowledge discourse, power discourse
During the process of analysis, I made the following "image" notes. The work is fragmented and is full of complications from the classroom. I do not delineate between what is seen, what is invisible and what is imagined – working "between vision and visuality" (Mirzoeff, 2006 p. 64).

*Analysis notes regarding Tripolar relationship – Positioning and storylines and image (speech act)*

Cues:
*Objects* – what is there – where is it – the student work – in front of the seated participant, on the table, near to where she is seated
Her hand is over the work
The pen – she is holding the pen

*Body positions*: he is standing over her – leaning in – space between faces – space between his face and the work, she looks up to him, his eyes travel between the work and the person seated
Direction of eyes – she looks at him – he looks at the work

*If the person who is seated is the student, and the one who is standing is the teacher ...*

*Storyline*:
Teachers oversee student work
Students explain their work to the teacher
Teachers appraise student work
Teacher and student are concerned with the work of the student

*Position*:
The teachers position themselves as overseer of the work
The teachers position themselves as judge of the work
The teachers position themselves as the holder and arbiter of the knowledge
The students position themselves as the doer of the work
The students position themselves as the recipient of judgment and appraisal

*If the person who is seated is the teacher ...*

*Storyline:*
Students can ask the teacher questions regarding their work
Students are not the final judges of what is acceptable – they do not hold the knowledge of acceptable work

*Position:*
The teacher holds the knowledge – positioned by self and by student
The student learns from the teacher
The teacher may or may not respond to the student

*If neither is student or teacher, or both are students or both are teachers ...*

*Storyline:*
In collaboration parties come together for discussion
Both parties may own the work
Judgment and appraisal are relevant to the work not the person or their learning status

*Positions:*
One participant helps the other
One participant can question or respond to the other

These notes were used to identify the possible storylines and accompanying positionings. In the following section three generic storylines are argued:

- The embodied presence of the teacher is distributed among the others and throughout the room – holding the class.
- Teaching is linked to the ways knowledge is held and distributed.
- In a classroom where roles of teacher and student are uncertain, identity construction or representation through group affiliation is given greater space.
Teaching relationships can be constructed in embodied close alignments between student and teacher. They involve listening and noticing. Student-teacher Shawn, in his striped shirt, is easily discernible in these images (figures 10 and 11). He was involved in a small group construction and in that work and interaction he positioned himself as a student, working alongside the others, generating ideas, discussing, solving problems, – moving around the room, asking others – particularly the year 8 students but not exclusively – about their work. In particular, he positioned his body (figure 10) to diffuse volatile situations.

In figure 12 Shawn squats next to a year 9 boy – a familiar teacher movement as he comes to the student’s height to engage in conversation. Within this storyline the teacher is a “carer” of every student in the class – watching the back of the student, protecting, including, paying attention. The teacher is an attentive listener – positioning the other as the informer, the holder of knowledge, the source of interest. Shawn was the only student-teacher who consistently took on this teacher identity for the whole class.

Some other student-teachers are seen in photos (for example, Catrina, figure 12) positioning themselves as “carer” and attentive listeners to the students in their small group. What was of greater interest to me as the outsider was that two of the year 9 students positioned themselves in this way – maintaining a student position in a small
group but “teacher roaming”, like Shawn, listening, discussing and caring. Andrew, the student in the hooded jacket to the right of figure 13, is seen as he discusses an issue with a group of student-teachers regarding their work before he moves on to another group. The other student, Nicholas, (not seen in images here) was seen in many images using the same body-acts as Shawn, moving around groups – listening, gently inquiring, praising and then returning to his own small group to work on their clay construction.

**Storyline: Teaching is linked to the ways knowledge is held and distributed**

In these images the adults are positioning themselves in distinct ways in relation to the work and as a consequence to the others in the group. This relationship to the work, to the knowledge of the work positions each of the participants. In figure 14 the student-teacher sits around the table with the students. He is not, or is barely, discernible from the others – sharing the space, working on the material the group is sharing, in conversation with others. The group, student-teacher and students, have positioned themselves as equal collaborators on jointly-owned work. In figure 15 the teacher stands alongside student – positioning herself looking over the student and the work. The ownership of the work, held by the student rests with the student. The teacher positions herself as overseer, as attentive listener, as adviser. In figure 16 the male student-teacher positions himself directly with the work. His hand on the clay asserts ownership. He works alongside students but is attentive and concerned with the quality of the work.
Most of the participants in the class formed stable groups. The strength of these groups and their openness to others varied. Three groups were formed around the works being done. They included student-teachers and students. Two other stable groups were formed from previous alliances or friendships – one was a group of students (figures 17 and 18). This group had long-term relationships and were seen together outside the classroom. They were easily noticed by their close physical proximity, their relaxed and intimate conversations. They were open to others working with them and included one student-teacher and one teacher-educator. The other group was a group of student-teachers (figure 19, left hand corner of the photograph). This group did not invite others in. They kept close to each other and to their work. When groups were formed voluntarily the students and the student-teachers positioned themselves together and at the same time apart from others by proximity, clothes, and gestures. Within the group, participants positioned each other and were positioned through reference to the group. As group members, each was positioned as an entity within the class. These close groups rarely moved from the group to others. It appeared that safety and comfort was provided by these groups.

PLACING AND POSITIONING IMAGES

In this chapter I have engaged one attempt at placing images at the centre of education classroom research. I call for attention to these images as an act of resymbolization – a resistance to the language-centred symbolic, a masculine domain with a universal subject position (Irigaray, 1985). This chapter has worked a method, but methodologically my aim is to reveal the problematics of the process of analysis. Lather has argued for “a space of constructed visibility of the practices of methodology” (1994, p. 676). In responding to this challenge I have not attempted to achieve greater clarity of the readings, or indeed a validation of the
research. What is more apparent are the partial and situated knowledges that are constructed and represented.

These images do not "directly capture (the) lived experience" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 17) of the research site. However, they give access to embodied knowings, identities and representations. The work of discerning engagements of agency and identity in these images is supported by applications of Positioning Theory. The storylines constituted and lived out in the classroom conversations are made more available from an active engagement with these images of body acts. The multiple position and storyline statements generated by the images are constitutive by the contrivances of the process and also by my angle of repose (Richardson, 2003, p. 517). I have drawn attention to multiple and varied research contrivances, inventive and deceitful. I have opened the work to the uncertain and complex nature of partial, situated knowledges. I have resisted seeking linear relationships between roles/agency/identities. I indicate to the researcher, to the teacher, to the student a return to teacherly ways of embodied knowings. The working of images with Positioning Theory warrants further engagement to trouble the work of research and teaching.

REFERENCES


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