

Deakin Research Online

Deakin University's institutional research repository

This is the published version (version of record) of:

Brown, Jill, Charles, Claire, Doecke, Brenton and Kostogriz, Alex 2004, Heteroglossia : a space for developing critical language awareness?, in *AARE 2004 : Doing the public good : positioning educational research ; AARE 2004 International Education Research conference proceedings*, Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE), Coldstream, Vic., pp. 1-13.

Available from Deakin Research Online:

<http://hdl.handle.net/10536/DRO/DU:30024250>

Reproduced with kind permission of the copyright owner.

Copyright : 2004, the authors

DOE04570

Heteroglossia: A space for developing critical language awareness?

Jill Brown, Claire Charles, Brenton Doecke, Alex Kostogriz

*Faculty of Education
Monash University*

**Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Australian Association for
Research in Education
Melbourne, 28th Nov – 2nd Dec, 2004**

Heteroglossia: A space for developing critical language awareness?

*Jill Brown, Claire Charles, Brenton Doecke, Alex Kostogriz
Faculty of Education
Monash University*

Abstract

This paper reports on research into the challenges of implementing a critical writing pedagogy within a teacher education program in Australia. Participants in this study are student teachers enrolled in a compulsory subject, 'Language and Literacy in Secondary School', a subject requiring them to develop a knowledge of the role of language and literacy across the secondary school curriculum and to show personal proficiency in literacy (this is dictated by state government specifications of graduate outcomes for teacher education programs). To develop an understanding of the way that language has shaped their lives, students write a narrative about their early literacy experiences – a task which they all find very challenging, especially in comparison with the formal writing of other university subjects. Rather than simply reminiscing about their early childhood, they are encouraged to juxtapose voices from the past and the present, and to combine a range of texts within their writing. They thereby create a heteroglossic text (Bakhtin, 1981) that stretches their repertoires as language users and enables them to develop a socially critical awareness of language and literacy, including the literacy practices in which they engage as university students. Later in the semester they revisit these accounts of their early literacy experiences, and (in a separate piece of writing) endeavour to place these accounts within the contexts of theories and debates they have encountered in the course of completing this unit.

The students' writing provides a small window on how they are experiencing their tertiary education, including the managerial controls that are currently shaping university curriculum and pedagogy. Their writing also raises questions as to extent to which tertiary students are actually able to formulate a critical language awareness that will subsequently inform their professional practice as secondary teachers.

Keywords: Heteroglossia, Critical Language Awareness, Writing Pedagogy, Teacher Education

1. Introduction

We live in an 'audit society' characterised by a culture and technology of performativity and neo-liberal corporate accountability (Power, 1999). This culture has become deeply rooted in the governance of education. Neo-liberal practices of institutional control and accountability extend into every corner of Education Faculties, reflecting the economic imperatives of 'new capitalism'. Teacher educators experience such pressures in the form of work performance standards, including 'client' satisfaction surveys and other internal auditing mechanisms, as well as requirements by governments to produce graduates with certain attributes. 'New managerialism' and the rituals of performance surveillance bite deeply into the identities and activities of teacher educators. They are required to enact a set of practices which mediate their understandings of themselves and their relationships with others, as they try to cope with the accelerated pace of external and internal pressures (Ball, 2001). These 'inside out' and 'outside in' controls and performance pressures generate identities disciplined by imposed targets and performance indicators, causing people to rethink what counts as teacher education and teacher professionalism.

To borrow from the title of this year's AARE conference, the regime of neo-liberal accountability in teacher education might be said to be 'doing the public good', though this only reveals how the 'public good' is a contested term that can be appropriated by a range of ideologies (Bakhtin, 1981). According to a list of graduate attributes prepared by the Victorian Institute of Teaching, student-teachers must display a 'basic knowledge' of literacy pedagogy and the role of language and literacy in learning, a requirement which might be

thought to reflect a worthy emphasis on the need for all teachers – regardless of their disciplinary area – to accept responsibility for teaching literacy. Yet this reflects a very limited notion of public accountability, in that language and literacy are treated as a set of basic skills that can somehow be conceptualised apart from the contexts and practices in which they are applied. The list of graduate attributes do not invite student-teachers to recognise how certain literacy practices mediate the relationships of diverse communities in Australian society, or to interrogate how school literacy practices privilege the literacy practices of dominant social groups at the expense of others. The external, ‘outside-in’ imposition of such graduate attributes on teacher education often conflicts with the possibilities opened up by a critical pedagogy that encourages student-teachers to conceive literacy as literacies – as multiple sociocultural and ideological practices – and to recognise the political role they might play in ameliorating social inequalities when they become teachers. The neo-liberal modalities of control over teacher education arguably become a major hurdle in raising students’ critical awareness of language and literacy.

In the current climate of teacher education, the writing students produce often takes the form of assignments that reflect outcomes ideology and a culture of compliance engendered by managerial control over professional learning. A successful performance in writing tasks, from a managerial perspective, often equates with the reproduction of dominant knowledge and the ability to demonstrate this through a ‘critical’ expression of one’s individual viewpoint. Students must typically demonstrate a mastery of formal writing genres such as the academic essay, ‘finding their voice’ in a situation characterised by a contradiction between a neo-liberal celebration of individualistic freethinking and a panoptic control via a plethora of academic/professional standards and learning outcomes. Given this combination of neo-liberal and managerial approaches to academic writing, it becomes difficult to see how students can develop a critical awareness of professional knowledge production. Everything seems to be pinned down in advance in the form of pre-specified graduate attributes, unit outcomes that reflect those attributes, and formal assessment tasks that show individual students have achieved those unit outcomes.

Our aim in this paper is to explore whether it is possible for students to gain a critical perspective on their professional learning by engaging in different textual practices from those usually associated with the production of academic knowledge. We are especially keen to investigate the potential of heterogeneous texts that enable students in Education Faculties to explore some of the tensions we have just considered. Their struggle is not simply a matter of understanding a certain ‘content’ (e.g. critical language awareness) but of engaging in a set of textual practices that might open up such understandings (cf. Steiner *et al.*, 2000). To see their writing as a space for heteroglossia or the play of conflicting voices is to conceptualise their learning as a struggle over power and meaning, rather than as a steady progress towards the attainment of stable, uncontested graduate attributes or professional standards.

2. Writing space and heteroglossia in professional learning

While much has been said about the role of writing in tertiary education, little thought seems to have been given to how students come to articulate their new understandings in conditions of ‘new managerialism’. Our interest was originally triggered by assessing our students’ writing, when we became increasingly conscious of the conflicts they were experiencing when tackling the issues with which we were concerned. It seemed that their fashioning of their professional selves was marked by a tension between critical approaches to language and literacy education and the managerial climate of teacher education. In our attempt to re-mediate students’ understanding of literacy as social practice and its implications for schooling, we became aware that merely pluralising ‘literacy’ and ‘discourse’ (i.e., to speak of ‘literacies’ and ‘discourses’) does not finally resolve the problem of how to surmount traditional understandings of literacy education. And this was not simply because our students clung to common sense notions of literacy which they imbibed as children and consumers of

popular media. To the contrary, many were able to embrace ‘literacies’ (even to speak of ‘multiliteracies’), but they were still positioned as the recipients of a certain type of professional knowledge and training, and their writing revealed ambiguities and contradictions that could not be contained by the logic and flow of a traditional academic essay. To understand the tensions and struggles in their writing and professional learning, and to open up the possibility of disrupting the lines of power in teacher education, we began to draw on a concept of writing as a social-semiotic space (see Doecke & Kostogriz, 2004).

Spaces come in all shapes and sizes, and the category of space has been increasingly used in educational research to study the ways of (re)presenting and (re)making professional, teaching and learning environments (Edwards & Usher, 2000; Doecke & Kostogriz, 2004; Kostogriz & Peeler (forthcoming); McGregor, 2003). However, we cannot really use notions of spatiality productively unless we think of space as something constructed by language. As Crang and Thrift (2000, p. 4) argue, space always ‘occurs through the medium of language’ and because ‘texts are worldly and worlds textual ...we also need to consider the relationship of space and language’. This idea also runs through the works of Lefebvre (1991) and Foucault (1986), who argue that the production of space is inseparable from language and the workings of discourses. Language does not stand outside spatial locations and these locations do not pre-exist the acts of enunciation and narration. Rather, spaces are produced through language; they are written and spoken, as it were, into material existence.

Given these intimate relationships between language and space, *writing space* can be defined as a socio-culturally situated pattern in the production, consumption and dissemination of texts – a process which is mediated by cultural and textual resources at hand, by institutional organisation and its discursive practices, and by the experiences, histories and communication networks of people that cut through the seemingly secluded boundaries of the local and the situated. What and how one writes is related to how one is situated ‘here and now’ and to one’s location in other places – to the ‘there and then’ or ‘chronotope’ (Bakhtin, 1981) of one’s social life. Writing space is as much about social determination as performativity; it is constituted by and constitutive of power-knowledge systems. However, this also suggests the possibility of re-framing the writing we ask our students to do, opening up dimensions that can be more or less consciously realised on the spatial boundary between the inside (socially situated and relatively fixed) and the outside (temporally unstable, semiotically fluid and socially diverse) in the production of meaning.

The notion of writing space has proved increasingly helpful in our research into teacher professional learning. In our particular case, writing space is the space constituted through the discursive tension between the official/prescriptive and unofficial/counter-prescriptive representations of professional identity and knowledge and, through what appears in students’ texts, constitutive of this ‘power geometry’ (Massey, 1994). Given our commitment to critiquing dominant representations of language and literacy, to disrupting the lines of power that enable the reproduction of dominant knowledge by engaging students in ways of writing that would reflect the sociocultural heterogeneity, difference and multiplicity of textual practices, we conceive of writing space as an arena of struggle for meaning. But while this critical take on writing pedagogy in teacher education appears to be a worthy goal, it also needs to be acknowledged that the writing process as it is experienced by our students is fraught with challenges. These challenges involve, as Giroux (1992, p. 210) suggested, teaching ‘students to resist particular readings while simultaneously learning how to write their own narratives’, and ‘at issue here not merely the need for students to develop a healthy scepticism towards all discourses of authority, but also to recognize how authority and power can be transformed in the interest of creating a democratic society’. Herein lies an enormous task for teacher educators and students alike, for critical awareness of these issues calls into question not only mainstream practices related to language and literacy, but also a whole range of social, cultural and pedagogical practices.

3. Multiple Spaces/Multiple Voices

In what follows we offer a preliminary analysis of the ways our students' writing constructs multiple spaces and voices. Mindful that these spaces are constituted by words, we shall focus on how the students 'borrow' or 'appropriate' language (Bakhtin, 1981), thereby conveying a variety of discourses. We shall firstly consider the writing the students produced at the beginning of the unit, when they were required to write a story in an effort to reconstruct significant literacy events from their early childhood (see Doecke & Kostogriz, 2003, 2004). We shall then examine the final piece they wrote for this unit, when they were asked to incorporate a range of theoretical perspectives by drawing on key readings they had done in the course of the semester. By contrasting these two assignments, we shall gain insight into their continuing efforts to grapple with issues raised in this unit and to reconceptualise their professional practice within the analytical frameworks we provided them.

(i) Constructing the social spaces of childhood

Students invariably construe the task of writing a narrative about their early literacy events as an invitation to transgress the boundaries posed by traditional academic writing. By this stage of their tertiary education, most of them have come to accept the privileged status of the essay as embodying academic knowledge (though paradoxically few conceive of the essay as a vehicle for academic learning). To avoid nostalgia, they are asked to place their early childhood experiences within a critical perspective by writing a concluding reflection that draws on key readings (most notably Shirley Brice Heath's 'What no bedtime story means', Heath, 1984). In addition, they must also think carefully about how to construct their narratives, the point of view from which the events are narrated, and the range of perspectives they wish to include in the text. As a result, the richest narratives usually involve complex constructions of time and place, as the narrator invokes scenes from the past, and then explores how those scenes continue to resonate within the present moment.

Many students evoke images of family life in order to explore their early literacy events. Jane first tells a story about growing up in rural Victoria. Her reflections of her early literacy events are imbued with feelings of warmth, security and comfort, as she revisits her family's daily routines and practices:

'The kitchen door in the corner opened ever so slightly, both parents immediately glancing at the change in their enclosed personal space, and seeing a gorgeous blue eye peering around the corner, they both smiled reassuringly at what was inevitably going to change their quiet time together this morning'.

Later she describes the event of being read to by her father:

'His arm encircled her and held the book open for them both to see as he read the story with their heads next to each other looking at the fantastically colourful and very realistic illustrations. They both drifted into a world of their own imagination, with the daughter getting completely lost in the story of words and pictures, and the soft tone of the Dad's voice soothing her'.

Her writing typically reconstructs the 'enclosed personal spaces' of childhood, implicitly contrasting these spaces with the larger space of the networks and relationships that now shape her world as a university student.

In Toni's narrative the space of the family home is also significant, as she describes the ritual of listening to a bedtime story:

'Dad comes in and mum goes to read to Megan (my younger sister), our old dog Junior sits in the hallway between our two rooms, just to keep an eye on things'.

Again, there is a strong sense of security, routine and familiarity, as Junior oversees the space between their two rooms.

By way of contrast to scenes that feature bedtime stories, John begins his narrative by recollecting annual family road trips to the beach.

‘Every Christmas holidays our family would cram into our tiny white 1978 Toyota Corolla and head for the beach. With our suitcases, towels, swimmers, sand buckets, shovels, cricket sets, beach bags and assorted belated Christmas gifts all packed in, we were left with very little breathing space, let alone seating space...After eventually getting on the road mum would reveal the novel and try to excite us with the blurb’.

We can see how the social space of John’s childhood is formed by his relationships with his siblings, as they listen to the story amidst a pile of sand buckets and other objects.

Patricia situates her early literacy experiences within the context of her relationships with parents who lamented their own ‘lack of learning’ and were determined to raise children who were able to obtain a university education. She explains that:

‘The mother and father lamented their predicament and hoped for some release. And so it came, not in the form of monetary gain but in the guise of a small human child, a girl, who they called Patricia. They raised her to have a love of books for, with a love of books, they expected a love of learning would follow’.

That the rhythm of her prose is reminiscent of the language of fairy stories conveys a sense of how the stories she was told formed the fabric of her daily life. She shows how her explorations of the world around her were mediated by language:

‘I loved reading so much that I would always read anything, from the backs of packets of detergent to the car instruction manual. I soon learnt that this gave me greater knowledge about items in my world often even greater knowledge than my parents possessed. This gave me control over certain things and gave me power in my family. This was a direct link to being able to read’.

For Patricia, the acquisition of literacy is interwoven with a sense of ‘power’ and the achievement of a social status which her parents lacked.

Sophie delves into family history in her narrative, as a way of making sense of her own childhood literacy experiences. Her account offers an insightful glimpse of the socially grounded nature of literacy practices:

‘Considering the language barriers and also the types of learning my parents had experienced in their childhoods as well as in Australia, it becomes clear to me that my pre-school learning involved and centred around the traditions, skills and capacities that my parents knew and were able to offer...talking, listening, showing and doing’.

Sophie situates these practices outside what she considers ‘the norm’. In a reflection following her narrative, she explains: ‘[M]y early childhood learning was not the norm and so as a consequence my transition to school was not quite so progressive.’ She views this disjuncture in a positive light, and observes:

‘[L]iteracy is much more than being able to read and write at a specific level judged or dictated by a mainstream educational system...literacy is about who we are as individuals and how we explore our worlds in terms of our interactions with different people, places, books, things, traditions, values, beliefs, norms, languages...our whole environment’.

The students’ accounts of their early literacy ‘events’ are diverse in the activities, situations and spatial dimensions they reconstruct. Yet we can see how each individual’s experience of literacy ‘events’ are situated within broader social movements and patterns, such as the nuclear family, and (in Sophie’s case) the experience of postwar migration . Nearly all the narratives convey the complexity of the literacy events of childhood by pondering how those early scenes are contained within the present moment, specifically the practices in which the writers are currently engaged as university students – something which is underlined by the fact that their efforts to reconstruct the social spaces, relationships and languages of childhood are directed towards satisfying a work requirement for this unit. The nature of the task means that they are obliged to look beyond their immediate setting (the space of the university

classroom as it is constituted by practices and processes they must follow in order to demonstrate that they have achieved certain learning outcomes), to disturb that ‘immediacy’ by considering how their identities have been shaped by a complex network of relationships.

Their writing does not passively ‘reflect’ the social spaces of their early childhood, or present subject matter that might be grasped apart from the form it takes. The act of writing is itself a continuation of their struggle with language and meaning, even as that struggle provides the topic or focus of their narratives.

(ii) Revisiting their early literacy experiences

The students have an opportunity to revisit (and reconceptualise) the spaces of their childhood when they complete their final assignment for the semester. This assignment takes a more traditional form, in that we ask them to write an essay reflecting on what they have learnt by doing this subject. Most students are canny enough to know that this request does not invite a negative response, and some explicitly structure their essays in the form of conversion stories, in which they contrast their beliefs about literacy prior to commencing this subject with the views they hold now. This usually involves a journey from a view of literacy as simply decoding to an understanding of the ways in which literacy variously mediates the social relationships of diverse communities. In this respect, the language they borrow is arguably the language they think we want to hear.

Yet such journeys towards enlightenment remain only a thread within their writing, which is richly contradictory. Many combine these stories with theoretical analysis, when they use analytical categories borrowed from writers like Heath, Halliday, and Gee to re-examine the conditions of their socialisation into literacy. They also use these theorists to analyse their experiences while on teaching rounds, with the result that interesting tensions emerge between the understandings of language and literacy they have explored in their university classrooms and the discourses and practices they have encountered in schools. This combination of theory with stories about their teaching round experiences poses difficulties for them, because the theoretical frameworks provided by these writers force them to scrutinise their experiences in ways which they do not always find comfortable.

Jane returns to the importance of family in her final assignment:

‘I know that in my home my parents greatly valued reading and we were constantly read to until we were old enough and our skills were developed enough to read to our parents. And while I know that not everyone had the same privileges that we had, I would say that it isn’t a case of parents not valuing literacy, it is just that they value other things more highly’.

There is an understanding in Jane’s writing that literacy practices are situated in specific social contexts. Concentrating on the literacy practices of a rural community, she differentiates between these practices and those of urban dwellers, whilst being careful not to generalise. Yet although she appears to approach an understanding of the socially grounded character of literacy practices, she also constructs ‘literacy’ as an abstract quality that is ‘valued’ by some people and not others.

This is not an uncommon tension in the students’ writing. Even as they actively construct rich accounts of how literacy is embedded in social practices, they continue to draw on notions of ‘literacy’ as a de-contextualised set of skills that schools, teachers and parents should impart to students. When referring to school literacy practices, many students use language such as ‘building blocks’, and ‘low’ or ‘high’ ‘levels’ of literacy – words that convey a conventional notion of literacy as something measurable, which everyone must acquire at an early age in order to grow into ‘literate individuals’ (cf. Luke and Luke, 2001). Simon reflects: ‘The games and attention that my parents gave me at such an early age were the first building blocks of creating my literacy life’.

Reflecting on what she has learnt by doing EDF 3004, Anna claims that ‘this unit has certainly made me think about the environment a student is raised in and its impact on their language and literacy skills’. But when she goes on to refer to the ‘passive literacy

environment' of the Roadville child (cf. Heath, 1984), it becomes obvious that she is still constructing 'non-mainstream' literacy practices as deficit. Another student, Laura, reflects: 'In my 5 days at XX Secondary College, a low reputation school in the Western Suburbs, I was quite observant of the low literacy levels of many of the students - much of it due to family backgrounds'. Here the importance of family is revisited, but treated as 'background' (cf. Comber, 1997) which explains the 'low levels' of students at this school.

Toni appears to acknowledge the importance of 'difference', even appearing to suggest that literacy should be pluralised (she refers to 'literacy abilities'), and yet her notion of literacy finally seems reductive:

'[E]veryone acquires and uses literacy differently and every person's literacy abilities are different. However, with good teaching methods students can be taught how to communicate effectively and to use language and literacy to their full potential'.

She falls back on a normative definition of 'literacy' as something that people typically achieve if they are raised in a 'Maintown' family (cf. Heath, 1984).

Many students continue to assume that literacy is something that can be standardised and measured. Some even echo rhetoric about declining 'literacy standards', conflating that decline with other social ills. Drawing on her teaching experience, Narelle observes:

'[W]hen I asked students what they wanted to do when they finish school I became aware of the lack of ambition and faith these students hold within themselves. Few were looking towards further study however many said they would carry on with their parents "blue-collar" trade work. Most seemed blasé about their futures and happy to revolve in the cycle of low opportunities. This seems to me as the vicious circle causing declining literacy skills in the youth today'.

Narelle's argument retails the view propagated in the media that 'literacy' is bound up with self esteem and a desire to better one's place in society. To become literate means not only developing an ability to read and write but accepting conventional values such as having 'ambition' and 'faith' in one's capacity to succeed

As can be seen from Narelle's statement, such reflections were prompted by the students' teaching rounds, which at this stage in their program consist of five days observation in a secondary school. When they write their final assignments, students are invited to explore the connections between the ideas they have been discussing in class and their experiences in schools. This involves confronting many tensions, such as those which Toni makes explicit when she notes how trying 'to apply the ideas of Brice-Heath, Gee, and Lankshear and Knobel' to her teaching practice 'proved much more difficult than anticipated'.

Toni's comment suggests that she is open to the insights of critical pedagogy, while at the same time feeling the pressure to operate within a professional landscape shaped by standardised literacy testing and other forms of performance appraisal. Flo uses the categories she has derived from Heath to describe the activities of a student she observed during her teaching rounds: '[T]his child clearly belongs in Heath's *Roadville* category, as his literacy is most commonly engaged at home in regards to his religious faith. What is important is that it was again by entering his discourse and his primary knowledge that I was able to find a passage into helping him with his literacy'. We can trace within this last sentence a characteristic tension between a view of literacy as deeply embedded in particular socio-cultural practices, and a definition of literacy as an abstract cognitive ability unanchored in social settings.

Sophie's writing provides a basis for an interesting case study in this respect. The child of Italian migrants who speak Italian at home, she has formed a critical stance vis-à-vis 'mainstream' literacy practices, as could already be seen from the narrative she wrote about her early literacy events. She continues to develop her critique of 'normative' literacy practices in her final assignment:

‘[M]any forms of literacy exist in our society, and although they may not be judged as “correct” against the dominant view orchestrated through the mainstream schooling system, each one of them is valid’.

She begins her final assignment by reflecting on the unit as a whole:

‘The narrative exercise allowed me to relate my struggles throughout my primary and secondary schooling to my cultural upbringing. Coming from an Italian background, which was far from mainstream, I had acquired different skills in my preschool years that did not link with the skills needed, and that would be built on, in primary school. As Heath (1982) explains, the children from Roadville, Trackton and Maintown all respond differently to the requirements at the school level, because the different methods and degrees of taking from their environment that they experienced in their preschool years, influenced what and how they learned. This allowed me to understand that it was not necessarily my ability or capacity that was holding me back from doing well, but rather my cultural experiences which played a major part in my struggles’.

Sophie’s reflection draws together many different social spaces and voices in her search for meaning. Firstly she reflects on her own experiences of primary and secondary schooling, a time and place in the past. She makes sense of this memory by locating it within the context of a different time and place, namely the university classroom and the relationships which she must now negotiate as someone who is engaging in tertiary studies. Her experiences as a child growing up in an Italian family continue to shape her sense of herself. By referring to her Italian ‘background’ she conveys the marginalisation she experienced as a child – the word itself reflects this marginalisation, echoing conventional understandings of the division between community and school (cf. Comber, 1998).

Sophie attempts to conceptualise her role as a teacher who is torn between a view of literacy as a measurable ‘skill’ and a view of literacy learning as deeply grounded within the social practices of specific communities. She has a clear grasp of the managerial pressures that will shape her work as a teacher:

‘I will be working within a system that expects a certain standard and measurement of competence. So the questions I ask myself are, to what degree will I impose the dominant mainstream view of competence? Will I be able to detach myself from my expectations, and consider diverse students and what they bring to the classroom? Will I look outside the “square”?’

At the same time as being aware of this pressure, Sophie passionately puts forward her desire not to be constrained by these forces: ‘We as teachers must embrace, value and work with... what students bring with them to the classroom, rather than streamline diverse students to fit into the mainstream’.

It would be possible to cite the work of other students who show an awareness of the ways in which school literacy practices involve a form of ‘Othering’ that produces deficit constructs of students from certain communities, although Sophie is exceptional because of the strength of her determination to critique mainstream practices. Other students who draw conclusions as to how they will approach these issues when they become teachers reflect a familiar compromise between valuing socio-cultural diversity and inducting students into mainstream discourses.

4. Re-reading/Re-writing

It seems fair to say that many students in our unit have been caught up in a meaning-making paradox. When criticizing holistic and psychologistic notions of literacy and learning as objective facts of contemporary schooling, they have recognized the way literacy practices differ because of their socially grounded character. The narratives they write at the beginning of the semester contain acute insights into the way language and literacy mediated their own early childhood experiences, and in some cases they construct powerful images of times and places that continue to shape their sense of identity and their participation in society. At the same time, faced with the reality of managing these differences in classrooms, where they must enable their students to meet pre-determined literacy standards and learning outcomes, many have reverted to pragmatic arguments about how best to teach students these necessary skills. Their writing shows them grappling with these tensions - located somewhere between managerial discourse, stressing performance and accountability as measured by standardised literacy tests, a neo-liberal perspective on difference which accepts the hegemony of particular social and textual practices, and a socio-cultural perspective on literacy, accentuating the 'ecological' coexistence of multiple literacy practices.

Vis-à-vis these tensions as they become evident in their writing, it might be argued that we have simply failed to convince them of the value of a critical perspective on literacy education. Their consciousness remains, to use Freirean words, 'anesthetized' and submerged in the endemic realities of a 'banking' approach to teacher education. Yet such an explanation is at the expense of acknowledging how productive such writing has been, not only for students like Sophie who were open to critical pedagogy, but for others who experienced significant tensions even as they affirmed the value of 'mainstream' literacy practices. The very force of their accounts of their early experiences of literacy, when they explored how their encounters with language and literacy were mediated by their home and community relationships, may explain why many of their attempts to embrace a critical pedagogy 'failed'. This, at least, appears to be the paradox with we are confronted as teacher educators as we reflect on the learning they appear to have experienced. For embracing a critical pedagogy cannot finally be a matter of an individual making an informed choice amongst the alternatives that are on offer. Such a choice only becomes meaningful within the context of an ongoing struggle to cultivate a reflexive stance with respect to one's upbringing and education, of seeing further than the conditions of one's socialization.

But, with this in mind, we finally wish to question whether the academic essay provides a form that adequately allows students to explore the questions we have been raising. We have already observed the way the students embraced the opportunity to write a narrative, when the images of specific places and times resonated beyond their own reflections about the significance of those details. By reverting to the conventional form of an academic essay for their final assignment, many felt obliged to somehow resolve tensions by the end of the piece, drawing their writing together and neatly tying the ends of the threads they had explored. The foregoing analysis of their writing suggests that as teacher educators we might usefully reconsider the way our students use writing as a vehicle for constructing knowledge, enabling them to explore contradictions and tensions without necessarily feeling the need to resolve everything by the time they reach the conclusion. Indeed, rather than expecting their writing to demonstrate the 'logic' of an academic essay as traditionally valued in English speaking countries (cf. Clyne, 1999), it may be more productive to treat their writing as a space for conflicting voices and contrapuntal movements, writing that remains open and experimental, and refuses the possibility of a resolution of the tensions explored. We are currently contemplating revising their final assignment, in order to encourage them to think about their writing differently, as a heteroglossic space for developing a critical language awareness.

To better understand the challenges of introducing critical literacy in a university setting that is increasingly shaped by managerial processes, we finally wish to return to the Bakhtinian

notion of heteroglossia in writing space. For Bakhtin (1981), discourse always represents a world view – i.e. it is ‘ideologically saturated’, and there are two distinct ideological forces in a social and linguistic sphere of a nation-state – one is centripetal and another is centrifugal. Centripetal discourses are ‘monoglossic’ in that they tend to centralise or standardise language and fix or close meanings, while centrifugal discourses gravitate towards the periphery, decentralise and diversify language, and resist closure by articulating unofficial world views. Heteroglossia, according to Bakhtin (1981, pp. 271-272), refers to the conflict between these two forces:

The centripetal forces of the life of language, embodied in a “unitary language”, operate in the midst of heteroglossia. At any given moment of its evolution, language is stratified not only into linguistic dialects in the strict sense of the word ... but also – and for us this is the essential point – into languages that are socio-ideological: languages of social groups, “professional” and “generic” languages, languages of generations and so forth... Alongside the centripetal forces, the centrifugal forces of language carry on their uninterrupted work; alongside verbal-ideological centralization and unification, the uninterrupted processes of decentralization and disunification go forward.

Heteroglossia therefore is a political-semiotic concept that can not be confused with ‘polyphony’. While polyphony implies co-existence of different languages within national boundaries, heteroglossia denotes internal struggle and differentiation within a language.

Once heteroglossia is incorporated into writing space (whatever the form of its incorporation), the process of writing ceases to represent an ‘individual voice’ and the author’s intentions become expressed in a subjected way as the enactment of twofold direction in meaning-making. Bakhtin (1984, p. 185) calls this phenomenon a double-voiced discourse which is ‘directed both toward the referential object of speech, as an ordinary discourse, and toward *another’s discourse*, toward *someone else’s speech*’. Authorial writing, in this case, becomes dialogised in heteroglossic utterances, thereby permitting ‘a multiplicity of social voices’ and a wide variety of their links and interrelationships to different discourses and languages (Bakhtin, 1981, p, 263). These distinctive links and interrelationships between utterances and multiple discourses and languages is an elemental feature of heteroglossic writing space in which conflicting world views collide. Therefore, in the process of writing, heteroglossia is the context-dependence of particular utterances and dialogism is the driving force of meaning-making. By its sheer location within a writing space created by heteroglossia, the writing subject is decentred and her consciousness is located in-between conflicting discourses, created by heteroglossia. In this matrix of dialogised heteroglossia, meaning-making lies on the inter-discursive and inter-textual borderline, and appropriating these social discourses and texts is a complicated struggle and ideological activity; ‘it is from there that one must take the word, and make it one’s own’ (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 294). From this Bakhtinian position, then, we might argue that writing as a situated practice of professional learning is not just about the reproduction of a unitary knowledge and fixed meanings but rather involves their transformation based on rich heteroglossic potentiality. However, meaning-making dynamics is marked by dialogic uncertainty, for writing space is a site where multiple discourses clash, producing particular modalities of power dynamics in writing.

The main challenge in espousing critical pedagogy in teacher professional learning is to recognise and come to grips with the conflictual nature of students’ writing – conflicts generated by power relations between discourses of language and literacy education, between discourses of teacher educators and students, and between individual students. These conflicts penetrate deeply into heteroglossic writing space, and the discursive effects on students might be better understood if we conceive of their writing as performative (cf. Butler, 1993, p. 187). Performative writing is not a willful act but is always a reiteration of normative discourses, and it often conceals or disguises the effects of discursive conventions of which it is a repetition. Different discourses produce different effects and hence influence what kind of

meaning-making actions students perform in writing. From this perspective on writing space as a site of professional learning, our students' writing provides a range of platforms to understand the interplay of discursive effects on conscious and unconscious performativity in writing and, in turn, in student-teacher professional becoming. How their professional identities and understandings are shaped in the era of 'new managerialism' and how they articulate what they have learnt in our unit are particularly explicit in their responses to the effects of bureaucratic, pedagogical and teacher professional discourses. How these discursive 'geometries of power' work within the heteroglossic writing space is also more obvious in tasks when they come to know what they know during the course of writing.

By constructing student-teachers' learning as a unitary and continuous movement towards imagined professional standards, managerial discourse locates student learning in a neutral realm above social division and conflicting opinion. It thereby refuses to recognise the way that learning is caught up in a complex web of power relations, relations which, according to Foucault (1980), connect power and knowledge and which are constituted through language and social practice. Outcomes ideology in teacher education works precisely this way to ensure that dominant meanings, which underlie the regulatory discourse of what counts as teacher professionalism, are not questioned (Doecke & Kostogriz, 2003). The logical way of demonstrating that one has achieved the outcomes specified is by producing an essay that is coherent and negotiates its way between conflicting viewpoints. Yet, as our students' writing shows, the contradictions they experience between the university classroom and their teaching rounds cannot be accommodated within this kind of writing space. The alternative approach to writing that we are envisaging means stepping beyond the managerial control of learning outcomes (cf. Sachs, 2001) which inevitably depoliticises and dehistoricises the construction of teacher identities by removing professional learning from the arena of power and struggle over meaning, and encouraging students to actively engage in this struggle. We are, in short, imagining a form of writing that is more open ended and reflexive, where students might develop a sensitivity to the ventriloquial character of their utterances and be prepared to trace the conflicting discourses that shape their professional learning and identity.

Another way of capturing the focus of this paper is to say that we are interested in reconceptualising the notion of 'voice' in writing. We wish to appropriate the word 'voice', but, in a typically Bakhtinian gesture, we shall differentiate between our understanding of this word and a romantic notion of 'voice' as simply an individual expression of the creative subject who produces and 'owns' the text. The writing that our students have produced for this unit (both the introductory narrative and the final assignment) reflects a complex intersection between managerialist discourse, the ideas (and ideologies) they encounter in their teacher education programs, the pedagogies and professional discourses they find in schools, and their own 'locations' in diverse sociocultural milieux, such as ethnic communities, workplace settings, and other discursive sites. Rather than supposing that they should somehow reconcile these conflicting perspectives within their writing, within a seamless text that expresses their individual point of view, it is more generative to see them as appropriating the words and voices of others. Writing is both reflective and constitutive of power-knowledge relations, and so by disrupting the textual practices by which students are required to demonstrate that they have achieved pre-specified outcomes, it may be possible to open up alternative ways in which students might negotiate a pathway through the managerialist environment of university classrooms and beyond.

References

- Bakhtin, M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination*. M. Holquist (Ed.). Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- Bakhtin, M. (1984). *Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics*. C. Emerson (Ed.). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Ball, S. (2001). Performativities and fabrications in the education economy: Towards the performative society. In D. Gleeson & C. Husbands (Eds.), *The performing school: Managing, teaching and learning in a performing culture*, (pp. 210–226). London: Routledge.
- Butler, J. (1993). Bodies that matter: On the discursive limits of “sex”. London: Routledge.
- Clyne, M. (1980, rpt.1999) Writing, Testing, Culture. In B.Doecke (ed.) *Responding to Students' Writing: Continuing Conversations*, (pp.165-176) Adelaide: AATE.
- Comber, B. (1997). Literacy, poverty and schooling: working against deficit equations. *English in Australia*, 119-120, October, pp. 22-34.
- Crang, M., & Thrift, N. (2000). Introduction. In M. Crang & N. Thrift (Eds.), *Thinking space*, (pp. 1-30). London and New York: Routledge.
- Doecke, B. & Kostogriz, A. (2003). Teacher education and critical inquiry: The use of Activity Theory in exploring alternative understandings of language and literacy. Paper presented at the Joint Conference of the AARE and NZARE, Auckland, December.
- Doecke, B. & Kostogriz, A. (2004). Heteroglossic spaces: Interrogating academic literacies in teacher education. Paper presented at the National Conference of the Australian Teacher Education Association, Bathurst, 7-10 July
- Edwards, R. & Usher, R. (2000). *Globalisation and pedagogy: Space, place and identity*. London: Routledge.
- Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings, 1972-1977*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Foucault, M. (1986). Of Other spaces, *Diacritics*, 16 (1), pp. 22-27.
- Giroux, H. (1992). Resisting difference: Cultural Studies and the discourse of critical pedagogy. In L. Grossberg, C. Nelson, & P. Treichler (Eds.), *Cultural studies*, (pp. 199-212). New York & London: Routledge.
- Luke, A. and Luke, C. (2001). Adolescence Lost/Childhood Regained: On Early Intervention and the Emergence of the Techno-subject. *English in Australia*, 131, July, pp. 35-48.
- Massey, D. (1994). *Space, place, and gender*. Minneapolis, MI: University of Minneapolis Press.
- Lefebvre, H. (1991). *The production of space*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- McGregor, J. (2003). Making spaces: Teacher workplace topologies. *Pedagogy, Culture & Society*, 11(3), pp. 353-377.
- Power, M. (1999). *The audit society*, (2nd edn.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sachs, J. (2001). Teacher professional identity: Competing discourses, competing outcomes, *Journal of Educational Policy*, 16, pp. 149-161.
- Steiner, S., Krank, H., McLaren, P., & Bahruth, R. (Eds.) (2000). *Freirean pedagogy, praxis, and possibilities: Projects for the New Millennium*. New York & London: Falmer.