



SIG 21 Learning and Teaching in Culturally Diverse Settings

July 2008

Newsletter

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Welcome

Welcome to the 2nd newsletter of the SIG 21 in Learning and Teaching in Culturally Diverse Settings. This aim of this newsletter and the SIG more generally is to bring together researchers and educationalists who study culturally diverse schools, classrooms and other educational settings from the perspectives of learning, teaching, social interaction and home-school relationships. We also see this newsletter as a forum for exchanging news and ideas around teaching and learning in culturally diverse settings.

This timely SIG, co-ordinated by Guida de Abreu and Ed Elbers seems more important than ever. Across the globe educationalists and researchers are faced with new migratory challenges within institutional and political contexts which seek to maintain monocultural views of learning. The assumption that learning can be abstracted from culture is erroneous but often supported by political agendas. This SIG seeks to broaden the criteria of what counts as education and what is valued as learning. The invisibility of ethnic minority teaching and learning is not only neglected in political arenas but funding bodies of academic research should also be held accountable for a general lack of focus in this area.

In May 2008 we had our first Biennial Meeting of SIG 21 along with colleagues from SIG 10 (Special Educational Needs) and 15 (Social Interaction) in

Gothenburg, Sweden. It was a pleasure to meet with those of you who were able to make the SIG 21 meeting. Presenters came from as far as the United States and Canada, Germany, Netherlands, Spain, UK and Romania. Perhaps most striking were the range of topics relating to culturally diverse learning and teaching settings. Topics covered mainstream and complementary/supplementary schools, higher education and vocational learning. We were also fortunate to be able to partake of three fascinating keynote speeches by Yrjö Engeström (University of Helsinki, Finland), Sheila Riddell (University of Edinburgh, UK) and Roger Saljö (University of Gothenburg, Sweden). For those of you who were unable to join us this newsletter contains information about the topics covered in the presentations, the discussions we had in the meeting, details about our next meeting point in EARLI Amsterdam 2009, and a conference report experience. You will also find information about members' current research activities, commentaries and conferences that may be of interest.

I hope you enjoy the Newsletter

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News and Events

The 1st SIG 21 meeting in Gothenburg, Sweden (May 19-20)

Two major topics arose during the first official meeting of SIG 21 which took place in Gothenburg. The first was fruitful discussion around future directions for the group and the second, the more immediate aims for the next EARLI conference which will be held in Amsterdam (25th-29th August 2009, details below).

Each SIG group is invited to submit symposia for the EARLI conference. Deadline for symposium proposals is Oct 2008. It was confirmed by Roger Saljö that three countries must participate in a SIG symposium. Guida de Abreu and Ed Elbers will put together an Invited Symposium and a Future & Vision Session. Members of the meeting were invited to suggest possible topics for other symposia and they were:

Idea 1. Learning environments in higher education. There is also interest in the group to study vocational arena's.

Idea 2. Learning in Eastern Europe and changes taking place as a result of EU requirements. Perhaps addressing issues of cultural change in Eastern Europe.

Idea 3. Identity development and learning – interactions in home/school relationships. May also linked to identity in HE.

Idea 4. Assessing cultural diversity – how to use cultural diversity as a resource for learning. Questions around what counts as culturally appropriate pedagogy? The microgenesis and interventions in pedagogy. How do we create cultural learning environments? Members were also keen to look at bringing together individual interventions with a global outlook.

Idea 5. Links between theory and practice

Other activities for the group:

- The group talked about putting draft papers together and placed on the SIG21 EARLI website or for papers to be circulated to other colleagues to comment.
- There was talk about the potential for a Special Issue Journal
- Delegates were in favour of round table paper discussions

Delegates also wanted it noted how positive the conference had been, particularly the poster sessions. They enjoyed coming to a smaller conference.

Wish to extend special thanks to Eva Hjerne, and colleagues from Gothenburg, for her kind support of our first SIG meeting.

13th Biennial EARLI Conference in Amsterdam, Netherlands (25th – 29th August 2009)

The final call for submissions for the 13th **Biennial EARLI** Conference in Amsterdam has now been posted on the EARLI website and the theme for this conference is Fostering Learning Communities.

There will also be an opportunity at this conference for SIG 21 to submit symposia and to hold another meeting.

We are also delighted to announce that **Carola Suárez-Orozco** has accepted an invitation from SIG 21 to attend EARLI as an Invited Speaker.

To find out more about the 13th EARLI Conference in Amsterdam click on the link below.

http://www.earli2009.org/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=1

Information about Carola Suárez-Orozco:

Carola Suárez-Orozco is Professor of applied psychology at the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, & Human Development of New York University and Co-Director of the Centre for Immigration Studies of New York University. She has published widely in the areas of cultural psychology, academic engagement, immigrant families and youth, and identity formation. She is the author of *Children of Immigration* (with Marcelo Suárez-Orozco, Harvard University Press, 2001) and *Transformations: Migration, Family Life, and Achievement Motivation Among Latino Adolescents* (with Marcelo Suárez-Orozco, Stanford University Press, 1995). They are also the co-editors of the six volume series entitled *Interdisciplinary Perspectives on The New Immigration*, as well as of *The New Immigration: An Interdisciplinary Reader* (Routledge, 2005).

To view her home page click on the link below

<http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/immigration/carola.html>

Conference Reports

Attending the Biennial Meeting of SIG 21 in Gothenburg, Sweden (May 19-20)

My EARLI experience: A testimony By Wen-Chuan Lin

My trip from England to the May EARLI SIG meeting in Gothenburg was an adventure and was thoroughly enjoyable. The trip was made possible by the support of the UK ESRC (Economic & Social Research Council) Postdoctoral Fellowship, a new fellowship scheme aiming to scaffold early career researchers to either disseminate their PhD work or network relevant research communities through journal publications, conference presentations and seminar activities.

Several aspects of the EARLI experience made it particularly fruitful. Intellectually, the two keynote speeches were of particular interest to me as a sociocultural psychologist: Yjro Engeström's current research on learning in the framework of 'Cultural-Historical Theory' and Roger Säljö's research, which identified problems with how schools categorise pupils' learning difficulties through the sociocultural lens. Their research used Vygotskian theoretical perspectives to highlight educational issues, which broadened the scope of my understanding of this particular aspect of education both in theory and in practice. Physically, it was clear that a significant amount of careful planning, preparation and coordination had been involved, ranging from pre-conference communication to conference site allocation. Among others, the experience of the poster session differed from what I have had in other 'major' conferences. Participants were cordially invited by the coordinators to interact with presenters, and this helped to generate a sense of learning community. In particular, this small-scale SIG EARLI conference made possible a seamless 'one stop' conference service and, therefore, provided the research community with the crucial mechanisms it needed to meet, make new contacts and develop potential collaborations for research on learning and instruction. All the benefits ideally fit into the goal of the ESRC Postdoctoral Fellowship Scheme and I returned home with invaluable networking contacts. Many thanks, EARLI, and I look forward to renewing all these contacts in the following Biennial Conference in Amsterdam 2009.

Note:

Dr. Wen-Chuan Lin is currently an ESRC Postdoctoral Research Fellow, working with Professor Harry Daniels at the Centre for Sociocultural and Activity Theory Research (CSAT), Department of Education, University of Bath, UK.

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SIG 21 testimonial**By Sarah Crafter**

I share in Wen-Chuan's enthusiasm for the fruitfulness of the scholarly stimulation and timely discussions engaged with at the SIG 21 sessions in Gothenburg. Most striking is the extent to which learning and teaching in culturally diverse situations spans across different sectors of the educational arena. From mainstream schools, supplementary schools, Higher Education, vocational contexts and more, there is a serious need to engage with the ethno-cultural diversity of learners and teachers.

The first paper session addressed the positions of learners and teachers negotiated through cultural contexts. Authors drew on home/school, urban/rural or community/mainstream school in an attempt to unpack how the concept of self is positioned according to other mediators such as language, identity and cultural resources. Sarah Crafter spoke about the ways in which parents in culturally diverse settings draw on a variety of resources to help understand the institutional practices of school. Evangelia Prokopiou and Wen-Chuan Lin drew on the importance of cultural legacies, whether it's being proud of Greek/Pakistani Heritage or establishing a legacy of English as a Foreign Language in a particular context. Shehnaz Bhanji-Pitman teased out issues around the relationship between culture and communication in a French as a Foreign Language course in Quebec, Canada.

Also strongly represented in the group were colleagues interested in Higher Education and Vocational learning whose research remained clearly focused on culturally diverse settings. Marieke Meeuwse, Sabine Severiens and Andries Koster's investigations were particularly focused on Higher Education settings. Marieke and Sabine addressed the issues of ethnic minority drop-out rates in HE and Andries examined the meaningful encounters between ethnic minority students and native Dutch students on a Pharmaceutical Sciences degree. Nicole Kimmerman and Joan Whipp concentrated on 'training the trainers' and how we prepare those preparing to teach in culturally diverse settings.

Discursive and language orientated contributions in micro classroom contexts featured largely in our final session of the conference for SIG21. Bilingual classrooms (Sangeeta Bagga-Gupta), discursive contributions to EFL classrooms (Oliver St-John), sign language classrooms (Karin Allard) and classrooms containing immigrant students (Marie Nordmark) were interrogated. Phuong-Mai Nguyen teased out the issues around culture and cooperative learning when collaborative approaches in European contexts are applied to an East Asian culture. Nuria Gorgorió explored the ways in which teachers' social representations influence the practice of ethnic minority mathematics learning and challenged monocultural views of immigrant learning.

Informal debate and conversation spilled over into the poster session where presenters talked through their work and answered questions from colleagues. Past and present were key themes as Anca Dumitrescu and Mihaela Mocanu addressed multilingualism in Romania and Sangeeta Bagga-Gupta explored socio-historical reflections on a culturally diverse Sweden. Girma Berhanu and Guida de Abreu spoke of current ethnic minority classroom practices in Sweden and the UK.

Overall a valuable and enjoyable event with much to take us forward to EARLI 2009.

Sarah Crafter

Conference Events

ICDS-5 (5th International Conference on the Dialogical Self)

Cambridge, United Kingdom

26-29 August 2008

<http://www.dialogicalscience.com/>

ISCAR (International Society for Cultural and Activity Research)

San Diego (California), United States

9-13 September 2008

<http://www.iscar.org/>

13th EARLI Conference (European Association of Research in Learning Instruction)

Amsterdam, The Netherlands

25-29 August 2009 (31st October call for papers deadline)

http://www.earli2009.org/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=1

CERME 6 Sixth Conference organised by the European Society for Research in Mathematics Education / Group 8 Cultural diversity and mathematics education, Lyon, France

27th January -1February 2009 (papers submitted by 15th September 2008)

<http://cerme6.univ-lyon1.fr/abstract.php>

20th International Conference on College Teaching and Learning

Jacksonville, Florida, United States

13-17 April 2009

<http://www.teachlearn.org/final.html>

ECER (European Conference of Educational Research)

Gothenburg, Sweden

10-12 September 2008

<http://www.ipd.gu.se/english/ecer2008>

30th ISPA Conference (International School Psychology Association)

Utrecht, The Netherlands

8-13 July 2008

<http://www.cmscongress.com/ispa2008/startsite.htm>

38th ISETL Conference (Annual Conference of the International Society for Exploring Teaching and Learning)

Las Vegas, United States

23-25 October 2008

<http://www.isetl.org/conference/>

ICTL (International Conference on Teaching and Learning)

Kuching, Malaysia

16-18 November 2009 (Call for papers now open)

<http://ictl.intimal.edu.my/>

Publications, Research Activities and Commentaries

Readers may interested in the following activities/publications

JEAN PIAGET AND NEUCHÂTEL THE LEARNER AND THE SCHOLAR

Edited by **Anne-Nelly Perret-Clermont** and
Jean-Marc Barrelet

Jean Piaget is widely acknowledged as one of the most important scholars of the twentieth century. His passionate philosophical search for an understanding of the nature of knowledge led him to make major contributions to the study of child development and epistemology. But how did his early life in Neuchâtel inspire him to embark on this search? Taking a socio-historical and cultural perspective, this book outlines the development of Piaget's understanding of major issues regarding mind, faith, science, logic, peace, and social rights in a time of anxiety and world wars. The international and multidisciplinary contributors investigate Piaget the adolescent as he begins his quest for autonomy of reason and sets out to create his own explanatory system for cognitive growth. The latter part of the book goes on to consider the early reception of Piaget's work in different cultural contexts and his impact on issues of psychology and educational reform. Piaget's theoretical system can be seen as an expression of the values he developed during his childhood and adolescence as he searched for the conditions of reciprocal relationships and rational dialogues. Jean Piaget and Neuchâtel demonstrates that in today's climate, the questions Piaget addressed remain very relevant and invite new enquiries from different standpoints. This book will therefore be of interest to psychologists, educators, and philosophers.

Available from Psychology Press
www.psypress.com

CICERO LEARNING: A NETWORK FOR CROSS-DISCIPLINARY RESEARCH ON LEARNING

Kristiina Kumpulainen, Leena Krokfors, Lasse Lipponen, Varpu Tissari, Jaakko Hilppö, and Minna-Rosa Kanninen

Goals

The main aim of the project is to investigate and

MULTILINGUALISM IN ROMANIA PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE INSIGHTS

By **Anca Dumitrescu** and **Mihaela Mocanu**

Romania is a country with 18 officially recognized ethnic communities, the greatest being that of the Magyars which represents 6.6% of the country's population.

The Romanian Ministry of Education has started to get seriously involved and to take many measures to introduce the multicultural education in schools, in partnership with many non-governmental associations such as The Ethno-cultural Diversity Resource Centre, The Roma Community Resource Centre, the Department for Interethnic Relations of the Romanian Government and the Intercultural Institute.

Among the various projects, "Multicultural Education in Schools", which lasted for two years (2004-2006), the researchers developed a curriculum and elaborated methodological materials for an optional course of multicultural education to be taught to 3rd grade and 4th grade children. In September 2005, the assessment of this textbook started in 20 classes. The "Multicultural education for teachers and students" Program offers training for teachers and textbook evaluations. Many references were made to European practices, presenting concrete facts and methodology as well as practical exercises.

Over the last few years, a special attention was paid to the integration of the Roma community. During 2005-2007, together with Bulgaria, Croatia, The Republic of Moldova, Slovakia, and Slovenia the project called "The Success in the School of the Roma children" was developed. Its goal was to develop the tutoring procedures, to field tests, assessments and tutoring strategies. At least twelve students from each participating country were included. The program aims to disseminate the findings, to those responsible with the education of Roma children in each country, and to the involved NGOs.

develop teaching and learning practices and models at the intersection of formal, informal and non-formal contexts. Of specific interest are learning environments situated within and across schools, museums, science centres and libraries.

Research

The project investigates, evaluates and develops pedagogical approaches and models in order to enhance productive collaboration between participants and contexts. The aim of the research is to bridge gaps between formal and informal learning environments so that the funds of knowledge as well as social practices developed in one setting can become resources in the other. Moreover, the project examines the role and possibilities of technology and social media to support participants' transitions and knowledge generation across contexts. The multiprofessional collaboration and learning at work are also investigated in the research project.

Research topics

- Learner agency, identity work and learning transitions in and across different learning environments
- The construction of interaction and collaboration between students, teachers and other professionals across and within contexts
- The role of technology in mediating interaction, collaboration and learning between participants and learning environments
- Pedagogical models and curricula recommendations for productive integration of formal and informal learning environments
- Multi-professional collaboration

<http://www.oppimisensillat.fi>

http://www.cicero.fi/projects_opm.html

Another aspect tackled by the Romanian Ministry of Education is the integration of the immigrants' or the refugees' children in the Romanian school system. In collaboration with the humanitarian organization "Save the children", the Ministry is trying to ensure free preparatory courses for the immigrants' children so that they may integrate in the Romanian society.

LIMCUL: LITERACIES, MULTILINGUALISM AND CULTURAL PRACTICES IN PRESENT DAY SOCIETY

By Sangeet Bagga-Gupta

The National Research School LIMCUL aims at expanding knowledge related to literacy and identity vis-à-vis multilingual lives of preadolescents both inside and outside present day school arenas. LIMCUL raises issues related to culture and diversity (including multilingualism and new literacies expressed in popular culture and interactive technologies) and identities (social, cultural, categorical and intersectional) in the context of school and in relation to preadolescents' everyday activities outside schools.

LIMCUL builds upon a national level cooperation between six research environments at four universities/colleges (Örebro, Uppsala, Mälardalen and Södertorn). It is unique in that it brings together researchers with backgrounds in Education, Communication Studies, Philosophy, Language Didactics, Swedish and Musicology who share a common interest in everyday communication and cultural practices. The research school will be steered by a Coordinator and a Committee and will have support from an international Advisory Board. It builds upon seminars, courses, empirical studies and supervision. Six PhD students will be recruited nationally in 2008 and they will have dual membership status in LIMCUL and at their respective university/college. The participating research environments with their established national and international networks will form the matrix within which the central themes in LIMCUL will be developed.

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<http://www.oru.se/templates/oruExtNormal49412.aspx>

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