

Transforming epistemological invisibility: (re)claiming intercultural learning within an ESOL teacher education programme

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Abstract

This paper analyses critiques, shared by first generation migrant ESOL(English for Speakers of Other Languages) teacher 'trainees', on officially validated dominant perceptions of professional competency and identity within an ESOL teacher education programme. Drawing on the work of Street and Lea (1999;2000) and Dahlstrom (2006) this paper seeks to address the following questions:

- What type of issues related to voice, visibility and agency are involved in officially validated conceptualisations of ESOL teaching competency and professional identity?
- How is the learning trajectory of first generation migrant ESOL teacher trainees impacted on by issues of power and representation?
- How do they critique ESOL teaching/learning practice in terms of second language acquisition theory, teaching methodology and reflective practice?

Through ethnographic vignettes I (re)present the multicultural practices and identities of first generation migrant ESOL teacher 'trainees' as forms of (un)validated knowledge. I examine how intersectionality in terms of ethnicity, class, age, religion and gender impacts on their learning and learning identities. I consider how a process of (re)claiming intercultural learning (see Collard and Wang 2005) may encourage a more active engagement with the (un)validated knowledge and socio-cultural realities of minority groups of ESOL teacher 'trainees'. Based on a twelve month ethnographic style study on a pre-service ESOL teacher education programme, this paper strives to provide insights into 'other' realities which form a part of the subjective processes through which diverse polyvocal situated gendered first generation migrant ESOL teacher 'trainees' understand, use and create knowledge to write themselves into multilayered representations. Through the use of data collection methods such as: participation observation, semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussions my presentation provides an account of historical practices not possessing a 'knowing' of ESOL teacher 'trainees' but rather miming the route of how I could not 'know' without their voice (Spivak 1999).