

JEANETTE RHEDDING-JONES' REPORT FOR CEIEC, APRIL 2008

This report follows Jeanette's Honorary Appointment at Melbourne University. The Honorary Appointment comes with funding from Oslo University College, Norway, where Jeanette has been, since 2000, Professor in Early Childhood Education. She was Visiting Scholar at Melbourne University's Centre for Equity and Innovation for the month of January and for the first half of April. In February and March she was Visiting Scholar at Monash University, based on the Peninsular campus with early childhood education people. After her work in Australia she returns to her double appointments in Bergen and in Oslo. She has a 100% position as Professor in Oslo and a 20% position as Professor in Bergen.

Specifically, for Melbourne University's Faculty of Education, Jeanette has in her six weeks there met with staff and graduate students both formally and informally.

Seminar for doctoral students and staff

Jeanette's seminar to Doctoral students and staff on Friday 4 April was well attended, the focus being on auto-ethnography and other drawings of identity and voice. Here Jeanette exemplified her current project 'Learning with and from Muslims in preschooling'. This project, which is mostly based in Norway but which has international connections, is currently resulting in the publication of two contracted books. Springer will in 2009 publish the book *Muslims in Preschooling: Discourses and Epistemologies*; and Fagbokforlaget in 2008 will publish the book *Beretninger fra en muslimsk barnehage*. The 2008 book is co-written as a series of narratives by Muslim practitioners; the 2009 book is single-authored, with inserts and quotes, and intended for doctoral scholars and theorizing researchers. Both books include narratives and statement written in the Oslo community languages of Arabic, Somali, Bosnian, French and Turkish. For the seminar 4.4.08 Jeanette presented amongst other matters some critical questions around the topic of the 2009 book, with its practical context of preschool pedagogy and care from Islamic and multi-lingual perspectives.

Epistemology: how to do this and undo it

Is it research or not?

Cultural differences in what research is?

Blurring professional learning and research?

Who is learning?

What genres of writing to use for what audiences?

What languages and why?

With and from and for Muslims in the West?

Implications for voice? regarding publishing and non-funded research?

What are its ethics and where are the children and their families?

Is it auto-ethnography (as drawings of identities and voices) and also something else?

Discourses: how to frame them, shiftingly, then unframe them

Voices in writing and between the lines?

Saying what you think is wanted by various audiences?

What if identity is a non-concept?

Differences within Islam, within nations, within languages as ways of making
?meanings?,

within gendered ways of acting, within status as refugee, immigrant by ?choice? or

non-immigrant, within age and time since immigration or family's immigration from an

Islamic nation?

Them and us dichotomies?

Learning, teaching and care when cultural/religious locations are taken into consideration?

Dead discourses of identity when religion is critical? personality, multiculturalism, ethnicity, race?

In the seminar Jeanette linked the Muslim project to some key phrases from Homi Bhabha's public lecture at Melbourne University 17.1.08. Conceptually then, as epistemology and as discourses, Jeanette reflected on her notes from Bhabha's presentation. The key terms she took up from this, as she thought around the project and its effects, were in his words:

'Cultural continuity'

'A deeply ethical agency'

'The space of the future's past'

'Alienation of indigenous and minority peoples from their pasts'

'Unequal narratives of modernity'

'Moments of agency, another way of surviving'

'Intergenerational transformation'

'Not the linear descendents'

'Processes of cultural transmission'

'Space and dimension, narrative and time'

'The first generation survivors of migration'

Melbourne-based activities whilst at CEIEC

Besides the above, Jeanette wrote a Members' Briefing for the CEIEC Newsletter, contributed a chapter in the Citizenship book currently being co-edited by three members of CEIEC and now in press by Cambridge (Hughes, Mac Naughton and Smith, 2008), and worked with undergraduate students.

Her three hours of lecturing and tutorial workshoping with students (10.4.08) related closely to her writing of the Cambridge chapter with Norwegian co-authors Berit Bae and Nina Winger. Here she presented theoretical positionings about young children and voice. Further, she described some of the policy and research work in Oslo Norway, and connected this to the theories. The student group then discussed some of the implications of this, especially as it relates to children's rights as addressed by the United Nations 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child. Here they pointed to practice in preschools as critical issues.

The chapter on which the workshop was based was written from Norwegian experience related to practice in Norwegian *barnehager*: preschools, day care centres and kindergartens, with children aged one to five. In these ways the workshop introduced international connections between ideas, theories, and practices for young children. It also introduced the process of shared writing and publication by academics/lecturers with strong connections to the field of practice with these children.

Tutorial questions for discussion included:

How might you see children differently when you recognise them as capable and able?

What policy documents could you use to support you to listen to children's voices in everyday practice?

What are policy documents and who writes them?

What is theory and what is practice?

What do you know about countries outside Australia and how they are focusing on children in preschooling?

What will adults do differently if they take seriously the politics of 'giving voice' to children? What gets challenged here?

Norwegian-based activities whilst at CEICE

Whilst at Melbourne, from an office and computer on-campus, Jeanette continued her usual Norwegian work of supervising five Norwegian Doctoral students (some writing in Norwegian, some writing in English), and Masters students (who all write in Norwegian). Additionally she mentors and advises colleagues throughout Norway, as they develop their research projects, related theories, methodologies and research profiles. She currently leads an early childhood education Masters degree which functions sometimes without her physical presence but requires her cyberspace skills. She also leads committees, makes decisions, and completes applications and reports whilst outside Norway sometimes. All of this was possible from Melbourne, with many hours of emailing.

International activities whilst at CEICE

Here no-one actually needs to know where you are, as long as you meet your deadlines for editing, refereeing, planning, reviewing and submitting manuscripts for publication. From Melbourne, Jeanette reviewed for a number of international refereed journals, helped organise an international conference in Canada and reviewed conference proposals for presentations, and organised seminars and symposia to take place in Sweden later in the year. To do all this she chatted daily on email with colleagues in Canada, Hong Kong, New Zealand, UK, USA and Sweden.