



Teachers' experiences in teaching Chinese Australian students in health and physical education



Bonnie Pang^{a, *}, Hannah Soong^b

^a School of Science and Health, Western Sydney University, Locked Bag 1797, Penrith, Australia

^b School of Education, University of South Australia, Mawson Lakes Campus, South Australia, Australia

HIGHLIGHTS

- Teachers' experiences in teaching young Chinese Australians in HPE are multifaceted.
- A heuristic of difference model is presented to illustrate teachers' interview data.
- Three aspects in engagement, equity and empowerment as a guiding framework, in promoting diversity in HPE are discussed.

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 9 March 2015

Received in revised form

17 January 2016

Accepted 28 January 2016

Available online 1 March 2016

Keywords:

Young Chinese

Health and physical education teachers

Bourdieu

Complementary difference

Postcolonialism

Diversity education

ABSTRACT

Despite the increasing number of students from “Asian” backgrounds in Australian schools, little consideration has been given to the experiences of Health and Physical Education (HPE) teachers in teaching these students. This paper centres on the experiences of eight Anglo-Celtic Australian HPE teachers teaching mainly Chinese students in two schools in Queensland. In order to understand the nuanced diversity of their teaching experiences, three key theories were drawn on. They include: Bourdieu's concepts of capital and (mis)recognition, Chinese “complementary difference” and post-colonialism. Underpinned by critical and interpretive ethnographic methods, this paper also discussed key implications for promoting diversity in HPE.

Crown Copyright © 2016 Published by Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Australia, with 27 per cent, has one of the highest overseas-born share of its population of any immigrant country (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2009). Such demand for migrants is said to be driven by economic and demographic factors (Castles, 2013), and is likely to remain strong in Australia (Australia Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2011a, b). Yet the increased Australian population represent great challenges to wider social, cultural, political institutions and structures. For instance, as a result of the gap between the relatively homogeneous teaching workforce (Allard & Santoro, 2006; Santoro & Allard, 2005) and the increasing student diversity (Pang & Macdonald, 2015a; Australia Bureau of Statistics 2011a), research has shown how schools need

to catch up with the rapid change and range of student diversity within the institutions (Johnson, 2003; Singh, 2013; Walton et al., 2014). This need represents a challenge for teachers because of the gap between their cultural and linguistic backgrounds from those whom they teach at school (Rego & Nieto, 2000). Therefore, there is a call for more professional training in multicultural education within schools in order to meet the challenges arising from the increasing student diversity in Australian schools (Watkins, Lean, Noble, & Dunn, 2013).

This explains why delving into the examination of teachers' experiences with Chinese students in Health and Physical Education (HPE), is a timely and complex field to navigate. The increase in students with Chinese ancestral backgrounds, and more broadly, the need to engage with Asia¹ and Asians in education is evident in

* Corresponding author. School of Science and Health, University of Western Sydney, Building K.G.06.H, Kingswood Campus, Locked Bag 1797, Penrith, NSW 2751, Australia.

E-mail address: b.pang@uws.edu.au (B. Pang).

¹ In Australia, the term Asia denotes three regions: Southeast Asia (e.g., Cambodia, Singapore); East Asia (e.g., China, Japan); and South Asia (e.g., India, Pakistan) (Australia Bureau of Statistics, 2011b).

public and educational policies in Australia. The previous Labor Government's *Australia in the Asian Century White Paper* (Australian Government, 2012) sets strategic roadmaps in the fields of schooling and higher education, economics, science and research to navigate the Asian century. The preamble to *The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (Ministerial Council on Education Employment Training and Youth Affairs, 2008), the key government educational policy document setting educational goals in Australia, states that there is a need for young Australians in the 21st century to take into account the global economy, global integration and international mobility, as well as their impact on education. In particular, it states that to be "Asia literate," engaging strong relationships with Asia, building intercultural capacity and developing global citizenship are vital to Australia's multicultural society. The Asia Education Foundation and the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) specify "Asia literacy" and "Asia engagement" as the key directions in cross-curriculum priorities (ACARA 2010, p. 20).

More broadly, in addressing cultural and linguistic diversity, the *Australian National Curriculum* in HPE seeks to address the need for English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D) in providing culturally sensitive teaching and learning content. The Australian Curriculum highlights the importance of intercultural understanding in HPE through various statements, including: "appreciate differences in beliefs and perspectives," "examine stereotypical representations," and "what is valued in terms of health and physical activity within their families, social groups and institutions and other cultures within the broader community" (ACARA, 2014, p. 21).

While previous research has explored Chinese Australian students' resources in their everyday lives, academic studies and physicality (Pang & Macdonald, 2015a), their perceptions and experiences in HPE (Pang & Macdonald, 2015b) and the influences of Chinese families on their children's HPE and physical activity experiences (Pang, Macdonald, & Hay, 2013), this paper extends this field of research by examining the kinds of complexities that HPE teachers experience in facilitating the learning in HPE of Chinese students. In addressing the ethnic groups, we are aware of the limitation in reinforcing the dichotomy of "Chinese" vs "Australians" and the common sense "groupism," that is, "the tendency to treat ethnic groups, nations and race as substantial entities to which interests and agency can be attributed" (Brubaker, 2002, p. 166). Nonetheless, we have used "Anglo-Celtic Australian" as a category within the Australian socio-cultural context to discuss those for who self-identify as having English as their first language and those from European ancestral origin, while "Chinese" are those who self-identify as having Chinese ancestral backgrounds, originating in China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan.

We recognise how complex and difficult it is to examine the relevance of diverse people's cultures through learning without erasing the distinctiveness that coexist within a social space. In undertaking this task, the interplay of Bourdieu's concepts, Chinese "complementary difference" and postcolonialism will be useful for understanding multicultural education in HPE, and this will be explained further in the following section. The results will have implications for the professional teaching and learning experiences that encourage teachers to promote diversity in HPE. This brings us to discuss next on how we build on an array of literature within multicultural education in schooling and on teachers' perceptions of ethnically diverse students in education and HPE.

2. Reviewing the literature

2.1. Multicultural education in schooling

To respond to the increasing diversity of student populations,

intercultural education, critical/multicultural education, and global/citizenship education have received considerable scholarly attention. A review of the literature in these areas suggests that students and teachers need to interact effectively with people they view as different from themselves and to embody a critical perspective that can transform global and local oppression and reduce inequity in schools (e.g., Banks, 2004a, b; Banks, 2009; May, 2009; McCarthy & Kenway, 2014; Sleeter, 2014). This paper uses multicultural education as an umbrella term for intercultural education, critical/multicultural education and global/citizenship education. Although these terms convey subtle differences, these differences have been discussed elsewhere (see Rego & Nieto, 2000).

Recently, advocates who argue for a more dynamic way of understanding the reality of multiculturalism in a contemporary Australia, have focused on the lived experiences of migration process of students in school sector (e.g., Ho, 2011) and in tertiary sector (e.g., Soong, 2016). Relevant to this research study is how in Ho's (2011) view that schools are the potential "micropublics" of a multicultural Australia. The importance of schools as ideal sites for fostering respect for the presence of others, despite some tensions because of cultural difference, has been highlighted in Ho's (2011) research. Schools are argued to be good sites for negotiating cross-cultural differences and engagement within intercultural relations within the school community. This means that the term "multicultural education" is a sub-term of a concept that captures the interpersonal interactions across difference.

Furthermore, research in intercultural education not only provide a few dimensions of understanding culture, they also aim to use such knowledge to reconcile or bridge differences between cultures. In Bennett's (2014) view, there are three aspects of intercultural competence: cognitive (e.g., knowledge about cultural differences and interaction patterns in a culture); affective (e.g., the acceptance and appreciation of cultural differences and a positive attitude toward differences); and conative (e.g., the application of different communication styles and the demonstration of sensitivity to different cultures). According to Bash (2014), another dimension that demonstrates an aspect of intercultural competence, especially for teachers, is how they embrace hope and imagination, or she termed "intercultural imagination". This process includes both an attainment of the intercultural pedagogical competences and an affective engagement with hope and fear towards the others. Other researchers, such as Behrnd and Porzelt (2012), for example, have provided key characteristics of intercultural competent people and how they build intercultural relations. For example, intercultural competent people are found to demonstrate behaviours such as self-reflection, empathy, willingness to learn and tolerance of ambiguity, while those who are less intercultural competent are more rigid and ethnocentric (Behrnd & Porzelt, 2012). Even though, these studies provide multiple understandings in exploring the pragmatic practices of negotiating cultural differences in social spaces, little is known how teachers respond to the fluid nature of daily encounters with a cultural other in schools.

On the other hand, there are researchers who argue that "intercultural relations" research does not adequately capture the complexity of the people's "cultures". According to Noble (2011), cultural complexity goes beyond defined cultural boundaries and needs to be understood in terms of "the multiple forms of adaptation and mixing that mark the process of settlement, intermarriage, intergenerational change and the plural social contexts in which difference is negotiated" (p. 827). This increasing "diversity within diversity" provides a much more nuanced understanding of cultures (Ang, Brand, Noble, & Wilding, 2002, p. 12). Rizvi (2009) also argues that we should move beyond dualisms such as

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/6850769>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/6850769>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)