Outline

Policy Summary

Theme 1: English Language Education

Theme 2: Evidence of a Neoliberal Agenda

Theme 3: Attempts at Civic Multiculturalism

Recommendations

Policy Summary:
Description

- New South Wales (NSW) is one of the most diverse (culturally and linguistically) societies. All people are free to practice their culture and heritage and should work towards a unified NSW (NSW Department of Education and Communities, 2012).
- The Multicultural Plan has been established (as an "underpin" to the "5-Year Strategic Plan") to develop students' knowledge, skills, values, and understandings so that they may participate fully in society, support all learners, and promote cultural harmony.
- The plan focuses on three priorities (each with multiple strategies and indicators): Quality Teaching and Leadership; High Expectations, Closing the Gap; and New and Better Ways of Doing Business.
  - These address seven outcomes (planning, consultation and feedback, leadership, human resources, access and equity, communication, social and economic development).
- "Senior Officers" are responsible for managing and reporting achievement.

Policy Summary: Goals

Describe Department of Education and Communities' strategy to ensure that educational and training needs of a diverse NSW are met.

Demonstrate Department's commitment to all students from "culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse backgrounds" (p. 1)

Provide framework for educational programs and services to meet legislative requirements under the "Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Act" of 2000.

Policy Summary:
Problems to Address and Intended Audience

Problems It Seeks to Address:
1. Teachers Lacking the Knowledge and Skills needed to succeed in a culturally and linguistically diverse Classrooms.
2. Close the Gap between Members of the Dominant and Minoritized Groups
3. Failure to Deliver Educational due to a Lack in Infrastructure and Community Collaboration

Intended Audience:
- "Public Sector Agencies" (Public Schools)
    - Teachers
    - Administrators
- Data Collection Intended for
    - Government Agents
        - Parliament
        - Regional Directors & Institute Directors
    - Researchers

Theme 1: English Language Education
Introduction

- Almost 30% of NSW public school students and more than 40% of preschool students are from language backgrounds other than English (NSW Department of Education and Communities, 2012). The common language of NSW is English, as stated in the policy's "Principles of Multiculturalism."
- The policy discusses meeting the English language and literacy needs of students from language backgrounds other than English:
  - Providing "professional learning activities" for teachers
  - Employing bilingual staff
  - Delivering high quality programs that meet English needs of students learning English as a second language (ESL)
  - Providing ESL teaching materials and resources
  - Making interpreter services available for parents and community members

While the policy does a good job discussing the importance of maintaining students' heritage languages, it still validates English as the necessary and therefore superior language.

By upholding the value of English, the policy is defining multicultural education as corporate multiculturalism (Resnik, 2009) and strategic cosmopolitanism (Mitchell, 2003), where multicultural education is motivated by the desire for global competitiveness.

Theme 1: English Language Education
Globalization of English

- The globalization of the English language is a phenomena that has upheld the Western model of education as the "global cultural ideal" (Spring, 2008, p. 334).
- English is the language of a "global industrial-consumer culture" (Spring, 2008. p. 352).
- In discussing bilingual education, Leonard (2002) describes the "global privilege of English as the international language of business" (p. 34).
- For example, 72% of world's secondary schools teach English as a modern foreign language; however, English speakers make up 7.6% of the world population, compared to 15.2% for Mandarin and 6.4% for Hindi in 1992 (Spring, 2008).

- "The rationale for the English language in education policies is framed almost exclusively in terms of system efficiency and the requirements of the market" (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p. 176).
  - Though the policy does not explicitly discuss the global market-driven desire to teach English, it states that "all individuals and institutions should respect and make provision for the culture, language and religion of others within an Australian legal and institutional framework where English is the common language" (p. 2).
- The importance of English language education is stressed throughout the policy and appears to stem from upholding the superiority of English in the global market.

Theme 1: English Language Education
Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy

- By emphasizing the importance of learning English and not providing true bilingual education, the policy is considering NSW students with language backgrounds other than English as having deficits.
  - While the policy states, "All institutions of NSW should recognise the linguistic and cultural assets in the population of NSW as a valuable resources," it also states these "assets" are necessary to "to maximise the development of the State" (p. 2). This goes back to the
  - Furthermore, while the language of the policy may refer to linguistic diversity as an asset, the
- In contrast to deficit based approaches, culturally sustaining pedagogy seeks to perpetuate and foster linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism (Paris, 2012).

Paris (2012) explains that there is a difference between curriculum that is "based in the cultural-linguistic reality of students" and curriculum that is culturally appropriate and responsive (p. 95). Providing special training to ESL teachers and interpreters for ESL families does not result in culturally responsive pedagogy.

Multiculturalism is often reduced to cultural forms that are most visible in language, habits and customs, and iconic objects (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). The language of this policy document is at times an example of this reduction of multiculturalism to simply diversity in language.

Theme 2: Evidence of a Neoliberal Agenda Associated with Globalization

*"Multiculturalism, as an educational philosophy, has begun to move to a more strategic form of utilizing culture for **economic purposes**, and away from **individual fulfillment** and necessity of forming bonds of **social and national cohesion**" (Resnick, 2009, p. 219).*

A neoliberal influence attempts to shift from a "person-centred education for all, or the creation of the tolerant, 'multicultural self', towards a more individuated, mobile and highly tracked, skills-based education" (Mitchell, 2003, p. 387).

Outcome #7 - Programs "are in place to develop and use the skills of a culturally diverse population for the social and economic benefit of the State" (p.15)

Strategy 2.1 - "Targeted vocational programs are provided to meet the needs of students and clients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds" (p.10).

Principle # 6 - "...recognize the linguistic and cultural assets in the population of NSW as a valuable resource and promote this resource to maximise the development of the State" (p.2).

Theme 2: Evidence of a Neoliberal Agenda Associated with Globalization

Not that equality is being abandoned by the policy makers of NSW, but equality is being "re-articulated" to "dominant economic concerns" (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p.72).

Strategy 3.7 - "Develop, use, and celebrate the skills of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds for the social and economic benefit of the state" (p. 14).
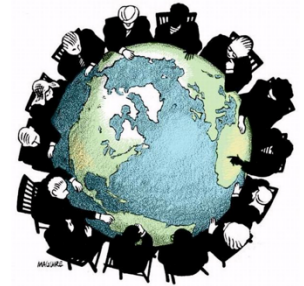
A neoliberal approach associated with globalization has not only shifted the focus away from the student and social/national cohesion, it has "also eliminate[d] the capacity of a national governments to respond effectively to social inequalities" (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p.142).

Theme 2: Evidence of a Neoliberal Agenda Associated with Globalization

"…Western model is now a global cultural ideal that has resulted in the development of common educational structures and a common curriculum model" (Spring, 2008, p. 334).

Standardization as means of ushering in a neoliberal agenda associated with globalization.

- NSW, as a member of Western society, is attempting to create "globally oriented state subjects" (Mitchell, 2003, p. 388).

- Through this process, NSW has standardized its' educational structure and curriculum with that of other Western nation-states.

- **"**Shift from multiculturalism to accountability & standardization**"** (Mitchell, 2003, p. 387)

- The policy is unable to clarify whether the "focus [is] on democracy and equality" or "values of efficiency and accountability" (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p. 72).

Theme 2: Evidence of a Neoliberal Agenda Associated with Globalization

A National education system is aimed at "state building and economic development" (Mitchell, 2003, p. 399).

While this NSW plan (2012) aims towards helping migrants and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, it is also a "bold and calculated effort to introduce children to a particular way of thinking and working and to a particular way of belonging to the nation at the same time" (Mitchell, 2003, p. 399).

Principle #2: "unified commitment to Australia, its interest and future..." (p. 2)

Principle #6: "all institutions of NSW should recognize the linguistic and cultural assets in the population of the NSW as a valuable resource and promote this response to maximise the development of the State" (p.2).

Theme 2: Evidence of a Neoliberal Agenda Associated with Globalization

State Building & Control:

- State building and this approach to education can also be seen as an effort and "ability to **control** difference" (Mitchell, 2003, p. 391).

- The goal has now become to create "individuals oriented to excel in ever transforming situations of global competition, either as workers, managers or entrepreneurs" (Mitchell, 2003, p. 388).

Introduction: "preparing children and young people for work and for equipping them with the knowledge, skills, understandings, and values required to participate in, contribute to and face the challenges of our democratic society in the 21st century" (p.1).

Theme 3: Attempts at Civic Multiculturalism
Introduction to Priorities

- "**Civic Multiculturalism,**" that prioritizes "reconciliation and social understanding" is declining (Resnick, 2009, p. 217-218)
- NSW plan (2012) includes:
  - Goal to increase access for "culturally and linguistically diverse families" (p. 11)
  - Requirements in "strategies" for teachers to be educated about anti-racist and anti-discrimination education (p. 11)
  - Resources and materials for teachers to assist them in creating classroom culture that "counters racism and promotes intercultural understanding (p. 11)
  - Ongoing data collection related to these trainings (p. 8, 9)
- Rizvi and Lingard (2010) assert that adequate training, attitudes, and access is required in order for there to be true progress towards equality; not just about access; NSW Plan does include these three requirements

Theme 3: Attempts at Civic Multiculturalism
Towards Harmony Building

- Mitchell (2003) also emphasized the decline of true multicultural education when he said, "There is no longer much need for the multicultural subject interested in working towards harmony across differences of race or class," the spirit of multiculturalism is gone and replaced by "production and consumption" (p. 392)
- NSW policy (2012) DOES include aspects of **harmony building** as priority:
  - **1.1:** Staff development to help teachers develop students' "intercultural understanding and promote community harmony" (p. 8)
  - **2.5:** Strategy to promote intercultural understanding and positive community relations; activities, education activities, resources and materials for teachers Additional strategies go beyond the "ludic multiculturalism" described by Leonardo (2002, p. 37)
  - NSW Indicators include: developing and maintaining first and heritage languages, bilingual staff, community liaisons, supports for refugee and humanitarian entrant students

Theme 3: Attempts at Civic Multiculturalism
Is this an Authentic Effort?

Are these priorities and standards put forth by NSW truly being used for "liberation of minorities" and signs of genuine interest in multicultural education or are differences embraced to be "assets for market growth" (Resnick, 2009, p. 239)?

Mitchell (2003) gave a framework to further critique these attempts at multiculturalism and its use for unifying differences and contributing to nation formation

- Multicultural education creates a sense of a unified, tolerant, and coherent nation despite differences (391)
- Gives state an enhanced ability to control differences - individual rights and preferences; *cultural pluralism is accepted as long as following certain rules* (392)

Is NSW truly invested in the original "spirit" of multiculturalism or is the root motivation to prepare knowledge workers in order to meet the needs of the economy? (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010)

Recommendations

Bilingual Education

- Imposing English as the common language can undermine academic achievement (Spring, 2008).
- While the policy describes employing bilingual staff and creating high-quality programs that meet the needs of ESL students, it does not describe bilingual education where bilingual pedagogy and curriculum are present.
- Under the "Quality Teaching and Leadership" priority, the policy should include explicit explanations of bilingual education for NSW students.

Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy

- Though the policy mentions supporting "multicultural, anti-racism, and ESL education programs" (p. 9), these programs may not be interpreted by practitioners to be true examples of culturally sustaining pedagogy (Paris, 2012)
- The policy should be updated to include specific examples of culturally sustaining pedagogy, as "beneficial effects are produced when the language of education is the language of culture" (Spring, 2008, p. 352).

Recommendations (continued)

- Ensure voices from the community are heard and involved in the decision making process to prevent the replication of "privilege's structures and logics" (Pollock, 2008, p. 245)
  - Good intentions can do more harm than good when they don't take into account authentic voices
- More clarity and specificity about what "Anti-Racist" and "Anti-Discrimination" training are.
  - Include "critical historical understanding" of how those in power came to be (Leonardo, 2002, p. 37)
  - "Cultivating white people's consciousness of their 'privilege' is critical to antiracist education" (Pollock, 2008, p. 227)
  - Include "historical and political contexts" (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p. 166)

Recommendations (continued)

- More explicit and purposeful involvement from local cultures and traditions in the formation of curriculum
    - Without the consideration of local policies and tradition we run the risk of "endangering" local cultures (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p. 149)
- Incorporate or follow similar guidelines of the UN's Millennium Global Development Goals (MDGs) and develop partnerships for addressing range of issues that contribute to inequality (such as poverty, hunger, women empowerment, health, environment) (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p. 147)
    - In order to truly combat educational inequities, all previously named factors must be considered and addressed

Recommendations (continued)

- Any emphasis or attempts to validate a multicultural plan through economic implications should be removed due to the fact that it alludes to intentions for the plan's development. (Mitchell, 2003, p. 399).
- Issue of resources and equity (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010)- Strategy 3.3 (p. 14) calls for allocation of resources but there is no mention as to how much is being invested in these policies and practices
- Space for acknowledging past wrongdoings and for reconciliation (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p. 146)
- Currently there is an absence of any consequences.
  - Consequences for lack of follow through would transform this from a broad plan into a more concrete plan of action.
  - Additionally, using data and analysis to identify staff members that are maintaining their distance from full investment - may need further support to interact and associate fully in the plan (Ogden, 2007)

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