

Towards a pedagogy of discomfort in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms

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This article explores initial thinking about a pedagogy of discomfort for teaching in the context of cultural and linguistic diversity. To foster inclusive and socially just cultures of participation, contemporary classrooms need to attend to the subtle ways that taken-for-granted teaching practices marginalise diverse cultural and linguistic knowledge. I draw from three critical episodes of teaching in culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) classroom contexts to examine how educators' feelings of discomforts shape their responses to students' histories, cultural experiences and linguistic knowledge. Engaging with Bourdieu's notion of habitus, I illuminate how these emotions are historically and socially shaped. In bringing habitus into conversation with a pedagogy of discomfort, I further reveal how the affective, specifically feelings of discomfort, can contribute to a transformative habitus. Such understandings about affect and teaching practice suggest the need to consider a pedagogy of discomfort for teaching in CALD contexts. To do so, entails acknowledging the challenges and ethical considerations involved in mobilising such a pedagogy in classroom teaching and teacher education.

Keywords: cultural and linguistic diversity; pedagogy of discomfort; teachers' dispositions; habitus

INTRODUCTION

If I were to rewrite the chapter, I would emphasize in more detail how and when an educator's own discomforts inhibit educational exchange with students, prevent the educator from taking risks, and eclipse the educator's very capacity to see, for example, his or her own attachments to particular outcomes. The cultural and social norms and myths that represent teachers as rational, neutral conveyors of information is so far off the mark, yet are as persistent as is the myth of neutral curricula. (Boler in Leibowitz, 2011, para. 6)

Recent literature highlights the potential of a pedagogy of discomfort as a key teaching and learning approach to promoting equity and social justice in the context of multi/intercultural education (Zembylas & Papamichael, 2017). This introduction opens with a quote from a blog post entitled *Boler and Zembylas on a "Pedagogy of discomfort"* posted in 2011 (see Leibowitz, 2011). The blog, *Hopeful Pedagogies @ SU (Stellenbosch University)* afforded a candid opportunity for Boler and Zembylas to expand on their conceptualisation of a *pedagogy of discomfort* (see also Boler & Zembylas, 2003). Boler's (in Leibowitz, 2011) reflections, as quoted above, provide my entry point to engaging with a pedagogy of discomfort. This article is developed from

my presentation at the 2020 virtual conference organised by the Oceania Comparative and International Education Society (OCIES). Ongoing reflections on empirical data from my recent doctoral thesis led me to focus on the teachers' feelings of discomfort as they encounter their students' diverse experiences, knowledge, cultures and languages. Particularly, I speak about interactions which, quoting Boler (in Leibowitz, 2011), result in educators "inhibit[ing] education exchange with students, prevent[ing] the educator from taking risks, and eclips[ing] the educator's very capacity to see . . . his or her own attachments to particular outcomes" (para. 6). As such, I envision discomfort as emerging from encounters with the unfamiliar, the non-normative, or the "Other" in teaching and learning experiences.

In asserting the relevance of a pedagogy of discomfort in teaching practice, my contribution is framed by one Australian school setting characterised by an intensely diverse student cohort, culturally and linguistically. This feature is well-captured through the notions of "superdiversity" (Vertovec, 2007) or "hyperdiversity" (Noble, 2013). This context-specific inquiry emphasises the relevance of considering a pedagogy of discomfort in CALD educational contexts.

In the discussion that follows, I first offer an elaboration of the conceptual frameworks that I employ in this paper. These are Bourdieu's notion of habitus and the concept of pedagogy of discomfort. Following this, I provide an overview of the case study discussed in my doctoral thesis from which I draw critical moments or episodes. I then present the three critical moments to illuminate teachers' experiences of discomfort. The discussion that follows aims to build a case for a pedagogy of discomfort guided by the analysis of the empirical data. I conclude by highlighting my contributions to theorising a pedagogy of discomfort and its relationship to affective encounters and the "transformative" habitus.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Although research shows that teachers' practices can demonstrate racial biases and marginalisation of culturally and linguistically diverse knowledge and skills (see, e.g., Baak, 2019; de Plevitz, 2007; Hogarth, 2018; Rudolph, 2013), how teachers' dispositions are implicated in these practices remains ambiguous. With this as my starting point, I engage with Bourdieu's concept of habitus to demonstrate how the affective can orient teaching practices. I then bring this into conversation with the concept of pedagogy of discomfort.

Emotions and the habitus

The concept of habitus offers a generative lens for unpacking how the affective impacts on teachers' practices. Bourdieu (1990) defines habitus as:

[S]ystems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can only be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them. (p. 53)

Habitus orients the ways teachers respond to the unfamiliar and the unpredictable. Mills (2008) refers to the habitus as the "unconscious habits or actions devoid of thinking that

conditions and orients practices by providing individuals with a sense of how to act and respond in the course of their daily lives” (p. 80). Thus, the habitus operates at a subconscious level producing taken-for-granted or un(der)examined actions and practices. For teachers, the way their habitus operates is significant. This is because encounters with students are spontaneous and unpredictable, requiring teachers to “think on their feet”. In the classroom, teachers occupy a position of power, legitimating the acceptable ways of being and knowing. Thus, how teachers interact with students sets the “rules of the game” (Bourdieu & Lamaison, 1986) or, more specifically, how students should participate in the classroom.

Bourdieu’s habitus has been mobilised and conceptualised by various post-Bourdieuian scholars in different ways. Dianne Reay, in particular, offered a thoughtful and excellent elucidation and extension of the notion of habitus. As Reay (2004) discussed, habitus is both stable and evolving, as well as collective and diverse. One of the more promising illuminations of the habitus is an exploration of the affective aspects that shape individual dispositions. In Reay’s (2015) exploration of this affective dimension, she drew on empirical data to demonstrate how emotions emanating from particular social spaces, or fields, become constituted into habitus. As an example, Reay explained:

[T]he learning that comes through inhabiting pathologized spaces within the field often results in a predilection for shame, fear, anxiety or even righteous indignation, while the internalisation of social inequalities in the privileged can result in dispositions of superiority, entitlement, disdain but also a predilection for guilt, ambivalence, and discomfort. (p 12)

The quote above elucidates how emotions are sedimented in constituting the habitus. While the discussion mainly applies to the habitus’s feature that is stable and durable, it can also be mobilised to the changing and transformative characterisation of habitus. Here, I refer to the discourse portraying the habitus as agentic, ever evolving, and capable of improvisation. Mills (2008), for instance, wrote about the notion of *transformative* habitus in the context of marginalised students’ agency. The focus on the context of disadvantage enabled Mills to argue, echoing Reay (2004), that while there is choice in habitus, the choices can be constrained and limited. Such discourse illustrates that individuals’ actions, although oriented by the habitus, is also limited or facilitated by the field or social context in which it operates.

Reflecting on the transformative potential of habitus (i.e., the ability of the habitus to change and evolve), what is left largely unexplained in the literature highlighted above is how the affective dimension can impact on the habitus’ propensity for change. My own deliberations have led me to suggest that if emotions constitute the durable aspect of habitus, emotions must also play a role in the generative or transformative potential of the habitus. Afterall, Bourdieu (2000) wrote:

[W]e are disposed because we are exposed. It is because the body is (to unequal degrees) exposed and endangered in the world, faced with the risk of emotion, lesion, suffering, sometimes death, and therefore obliged to take the world seriously (and nothing is more serious than emotion, which touches the depth of our organic being) that it is able to acquire dispositions that are themselves an openness to the world, that is, to the very structures of the world of which they are the incorporated form. (pp. 140–141)

The quote above captures how emotions open possibilities for the acquisition of dispositions. Bourdieu, as quoted, gestures towards conditions of possibility that may allow for change in dispositions through the workings of emotions. A pedagogy of discomfort can set such conditions for the habitus to change or transform.

The habitus transformed through a pedagogy of discomfort

Emotions stand at the centre of theorising a pedagogy of discomfort as gleaned from the works of Megan Boler and Michelinos Zembylas (see, e.g., Boler, 1999; Zembylas, 2018; Zembylas & Boler, 2003). Boler (1999), for instance, emphasised that a pedagogy of discomfort is a critical inquiry but that in engaging in critical inquiry, “a central focus is to recognize how emotions define how and what one chooses to see, and conversely, not to see” (p. 176). However, a pedagogy of discomfort is also a call to action stressing the need to act upon one’s critical inquiry. Here Boler (1999) specifically noted the impact of emotional selectivity or the “increased sensitiveness and responsiveness . . . or an impaired capacity to attend to or think about certain things” (Garrison 1997 as quoted in Boler, 1999, p. 180). Emotional selectivity, as Boler (1999) defined, is learned and shaped by social, cultural and political agendas that can be transmitted through education. In a more recent literature, drawing from the initial works of Boler and Zembylas, Zembylas and Papamichael (2017) defined emotions as the central driving force behind a pedagogy of discomfort:

Pedagogy of discomfort, then, has as its aim to uncover and question the deeply embedded emotional dimensions that frame and shape daily habits, routines and unconscious complicity with hegemony. (p. 3)

Mobilising a pedagogy of discomfort has been explored in the context of both student learning and teacher education. The emphasis for both students and educators is to consider teaching and learning experiences that “move outside of their comfort zones” (Zembylas & McGlynn, 2012, p. 41). The potential for a pedagogy of discomfort has been examined in engaging with topics considered as “controversial”, such as social injustices (see Porto & Zembylas, 2020; Zembylas & McGlynn, 2012) and patriotism in the aftermath of terrorism (see Zembylas & Boler, 2002). Substantive research has also examined the possibilities for a pedagogy of discomfort for those engaged in the teaching profession. For instance, Nolan and Molla (2018), writing about educators’ professional development in Australia, offered a framework for a pedagogy of discomfort. Their framework attended to the educators’ professional experiences, their dispositions and moments of “disjuncture . . . or the disharmony . . . or a mismatch between habitus and expectations of the field of practice” (p. 724). Nolan and Molla (2018) demonstrated how their theorisation of a pedagogy of discomfort could open possibilities to transform teacher dispositions which can then orient and guide teaching and learning practices.

Indeed, disjuncture between teachers’ habitus and what takes place in the field of practice, such as a classroom, frequently occurs in the context of cultural and linguistic diversity. Engaging with discomforts is necessary to teach in inter/multicultural schooling contexts (Zembylas & Papamichael, 2017). In coping with increasing cultural and linguistic diversity in schools, mobilising teachers’ discomforts is found productive for challenging discrimination, oppression and racism. Zembylas (2010), in particular, advanced the notion of an ethic of discomfort, “one that emphasizes the proactive and transformative potential of discomfort” (p. 707). Yet, much of the exploration about

teachers' discomforts do not indicate the critical and spontaneous moments emerging from teaching students of CALD backgrounds. My contribution to this discourse, then, is to identify the ways that students' diverse cultures and languages elicit moments of disjuncture for teachers' dispositions. It is here that I begin to entertain the potential of a pedagogy of discomfort in CALD schooling contexts.

In what follows, I examine how different themes and topics of cultural and linguistic significance elicit teachers' discomforts. (Re)Engaging with the narratives and episodes from my doctoral thesis, I attend to the tensions arising between intention and practice by highlighting dispositions of teachers that led them to close down, silence, or ignore topics considered as inappropriate for classroom discussion. As explained in the next section, the superdiverse classroom context of my research offered fertile grounds to illuminate the potential for a pedagogy of discomfort in CALD classroom contexts.

THE CASE: A "SUPERDIVERSE" AUSTRALIAN PRIMARY CLASSROOM

To (re)assert ongoing consideration of a pedagogy of discomfort, I draw from episodes and narratives captured in my unpublished doctoral thesis (see Cabiles, 2020). In the thesis, these episodes were analysed to understand what it means for students to participate in a CALD schooling context. Re-purposing such data and some textual materials to explore the concept of a pedagogy of discomfort attests to the generative character of empirical research. Following Moskovitz's (2020) discussion of the "practice of text recycling", repetition of materials is often part of the process of contributing new knowledge to an established field or discipline (p. 370). Moskovitz refers to this as "developmental recycling" defined as "the reuse of materials from one's own unpublished document" (p. 375).

The empirical case was a composite primary 5/6 classroom (referred to as "Class 5/6k") in a school located in one of the most ethnically diverse suburbs of Melbourne, Australia. At the time of fieldwork, 82% of the school's student population had a linguistic background other than English. The cohort of 23 students in the class represented approximately 15 cultural and/or linguistic backgrounds. The 11 student participants who volunteered and consented to be part of the project came from the following cultural backgrounds: Arabic, Fijian, Russian, Malaysian, Samoan, Iranian, Afghani, Indian, Pakistani and Albanian. Their linguistic backgrounds corresponded to these cultural backgrounds and, in addition, included Punjabi, Urdu, Farsi and Hazaragi.

The cultural and linguistic diversity characteristic of the student cohort, however, was not reflected among the teachers who were mostly of Anglo-Australian cultural backgrounds. Out of the seven educators involved in Class 5/6k, only two came from diverse backgrounds, specifically, Greek and Dutch; the rest of the teachers came from English-only speaking backgrounds. This situation is common in societies where English is the dominant and privileged language (see, e.g, BurrIDGE et al., 2009; Chodkiewicz & BurrIDGE, 2014). Studies emphasise this disparity as a cause for concern because without adequate teacher education in CALD contexts, teachers often lack the competence and confidence to attend to cultural and linguistic diversity in the classrooms (McKenzie et al., 2014).

As foreshadowed in the title, this article builds a case for a pedagogy of discomfort for teaching in CALD classroom contexts. It does not offer a (re)conceptualisation of such

pedagogy. Rather, it seeks to assert and affirm why entertaining a pedagogy of discomfort is critical for teaching in multicultural settings. To do this, I draw from three episodes during my fieldwork reflective of the different ways that educators' feelings of discomforts resulted in practices that constrained the possibilities for critical and profound engagements with the diverse cultural and linguistic knowledge.

Feelings of discomfort towards religious beliefs

Excerpt 1: Classroom teacher, Ms Wright, on Roya's references to God.

Class teacher, Ms Wright, writes a question on the whiteboard: "Is the Earth a boy or a girl?" One of the students had asked this question, which, from where I was sitting, had been inaudible.

Most of the students start to raise their hands to respond to the question. One of the students, Roya, had raised her hand. Roya states that the Earth is a girl because girls are brave and responsible. Ms Wright responds with, "I like that idea". About twenty minutes later, Roya again raises her hand and states that in her culture, when someone good dies, and it's summer, it will rain. Ms Wright then asks, "Who determines what's good?" Roya replies, "God". Ms Wright then remarks, "Not everyone believes in God, but I will let you talk about that, Roya".

The episode described above took place during an observed literacy class when the class teacher, Ms Wright, was delivering a lesson on writing a persuasive essay. After the whole class discussion, as students were accomplishing their individual tasks, Ms Wright was eager to have a chat about the episode highlighting the increased participation among the students. According to Ms Wright, this activity—and specifically the question raised by a student—afforded students the opportunity to draw from their beliefs and values. Ms Wright further explained during a follow-on informal interview about the activity:

They were drawing from their beliefs [and] their family values on what they think. And you sort of know when it comes to boy-girl, earth, spirituality, that they're gonna come up with that sort of stuff, but I don't think it would lead down the God path, but I sorta, yeah it did.

The quote indicates Ms Wright's discomfort about her encounter with Roya's response during the class discussion became apparent. On the one hand, Ms Wright's statement seemingly permitting Roya to talk about God may be construed as Ms Wright's open disposition towards Roya's religious belief. On the other hand, a closer examination of the quote reveals Ms Wright's discomfort at pursuing Roya's thoughts and ideas about the topic. It may also be construed, from the informal interview, that Ms Wright's statement: "Not everyone believes in God, but I will let you talk about that" was a way of subtly closing down the conversation as an unwelcome development in the discussion.

Such discomfort evident from Ms Wright can be seen a consequence of the disparate culturally lived experiences between Ms Wright and Roya. Roya was born in Pakistan, and her parents are originally from Afghanistan. The family moved to Australia when Roya was eight. Roya, like a significant population in the school, follows the Muslim tradition. Apart from English, Roya speaks four other languages, including Farsi, Urdu, Hindi, and Hazaragi. Ms Wright, on the other hand, is of Anglo-Saxon background and only speaks English. She has been working in the school for nine years in different

roles. In our initial interview, Ms Wright expressed her commitment to teach in the CALD schooling context. However, in spontaneous encounters with the “Other” (or the embodiments of difference that depart from the dominant cultures), Ms Wright’s reaction indicates that not all cultural beliefs and knowledge are welcome in her classroom.

Through Bourdieu’s notion of habitus, Ms Wright’s ambivalent reaction is illuminated as an unthinking or subconscious disposition. The habitus as orienting dispositions and actions is understood as a product of the individual’s accumulated historical, social, and cultural experiences (Bourdieu, 1990; see also Jenkins, 1992; Mills 2008). As explained earlier, emotions or affective dimensions may constitute the habitus. Ms Wright’s discomforts vis-à-vis Roya’s ease at engaging with religious beliefs elucidate two different types of habitus formed through very different social and cultural trajectories. As such, the topic of religious beliefs elicited different forms of affect between the teacher and the student.

Although Ms Wright has taught and has been exposed to culturally diverse contexts for nearly a decade, her reaction continues to elicit discomfort towards experiences beyond her autobiography. Specifically, this episode shows how topics related to religious beliefs may be closed down rather than engaged with for generative discussions in the classroom. It is also highly probable that the constantly changing demographic of the community within which the school is located means that teachers in the school will continue to encounter ever-changing features of cultural diversity, including faith-based or religious diversity. However, the example narrated here foresees students’ knowledge related to religion becoming potentially marginalised in mainstream classroom discourses. Constituting such disposition are teachers’ feelings of discomfort towards religious beliefs.

Feelings of discomfort towards perceived traumatic experiences

Excerpt 2: EAL specialists, Ms Kosta and Ms Thomas, on refugee experiences

English-as-additional language (EAL) teachers, Ms Thomas and Ms Kosta introduced the film, “Ali and the Long Journey to Australia”, which highlights the story of a refugee family migrating to Australia. At the end of the film, Ms Kosta discusses the film asking students if they have similar experiences. Ms Kosta calls Mateen, who had his hand raised. Mateen narrates his family’s story traveling from Iran to Australia. He talks about the boat capsizing and the family being in the water for a few hours before being rescued and arriving at what he refers to as a “jail”. Mateen further talked about finding “scary looking lizards” and the family’s advantaged position owing to his father’s ability to converse in English.

The episode above is from an EAL class captured during the school’s observance of “Refugee Week”. Mateen, one of the student participants, had previously shared this experience with me in an interview. Mateen had been described by many of his teachers as shy, quiet and unconfident. The teachers attributed these characteristics to perceived trauma arising mainly from the experience described above. Ms Thomas, for instance, one of the EAL teachers highlighted this when talking about Mateen’s seeming lack of confidence. The teacher noted that, unlike his older sister, Mateen had not initiated discussions about his family’s experiences of traveling to Australia. Ms Thomas further shared:

That's trauma, and they've also come from a war-torn country. So, they've not only got that trauma. They've also got the trauma of war.

The quote above illustrates a deficit positioning of students and their lived experiences. Ms Thomas operates from an assumption that Mateen's seemingly passive participation in class is solely based on a lack of confidence and shyness, a result of traumatic experiences. Richard R Valencia (1997; 2010) refers to such positioning of students as "deficit perspectives" where "problems" of schooling are located solely on individuals (i.e., akin to a case of "blaming the victim") without engaging with the conditions of schooling that may facilitate or encourage what are deemed as "problematic" behaviours. As in the episode narrated above, instead of examining how teaching-and-learning practices constrained and facilitated the participation of students like Mateen, Ms Thomas attributed the problem to Mateen's personality and historical background. However, when presented with a topic that connected with Mateen's refugee experiences, Mateen was found highly participative in class. This affirmed extant research demonstrating the tendency for teachers to position students experiencing challenging circumstances in deficit light (e.g., Dutro & Bien, 2014). Consequently, teachers rarely position the students as empowered, having conquered challenges, and possessing knowledge emerging from their struggles. Zipin's (2009) study, for instance, discussing how "dark funds of knowledge" are mobilised in the classroom reveals that teachers' feelings of discomfort oriented teachers to avoid stories that reflected difficult or negative topics, such as violence and drug abuse, despite students' initiating the topic for discussion.

Employing the notion of habitus, Ms Thomas's assumptions about "trauma" and "students-at-risk" are structured by long-standing perceptions about individuals of refugee backgrounds. Habitus, as explained by Bourdieu (1990), are lasting systems of dispositions that are structured through a process of socialisation throughout an individual's history. Reay (2004) further explained that the habitus "regularly excludes certain practices, those that are unfamiliar to the cultural groupings to which the individual belongs" (p. 433). In this case, Mateen is an Iranian refugee who arrived in Australia with his family when he was seven and, since then, has been in transition from Christmas Island to Darwin to Adelaide, and then, to Melbourne. He speaks Farsi and English. Ms Thomas, on the other hand, is of Anglo-Saxon background and only speaks English. She has worked extensively with refugee students as an EAL teacher and is committed to assisting refugee students in their transition to Australian society. Ms Thomas' incomplete appreciation of Mateen's experiences reveals a habitus that remains distinct from that of Mateen. This is illuminated in their divergent emotional responses to perceived traumatic experiences. Ms Thomas appears to intuitively perceive Mateen's experience as a cause for discomfort—one that inhibits classroom participation. However, this historical episode in Mateen's past is one that he seems to live and narrate with ease as he did with me, an outsider to the school, during an interview and to his peers when an opportunity presented itself.

I want to emphasise, at this point, that I am not assuming that Mateen does not experience negative emotions out of his history and background. Rather, I want to demonstrate the incomplete or fractional judgement that Ms Thomas has about Mateen's experience. Ms Thomas has, as is often the case of how refugees are normally presented (see, e.g., Baak, 2019), only considered the unfavourable consequences of Mateen's experiences without presenting Mateen's strengths and capabilities. As such,

instead of building on Mateen's experiences and strengths, which was achieved incidentally during Refugee Week, Mateen had been simply labelled as unconfident and shy, an unfair deficit positioning of the student. Evidently, the assumed discomfort associated with traumatic experiences had led to a constrained engagement with the refugee experiences in the classroom.

Feelings of discomfort towards students' home languages

My final exploration of how discomforts shape teachers' pedagogical practices in the context of cultural and linguistic diversity emerges from teachers' discourses about students' home languages. During fieldwork, I became aware of an assumed English-only policy in the classroom as expressed during interviews with students. The school leaders affirmed that there was no official English-only policy in school and was surprised to learn about such practice. In interviewing teachers, their responses to encouraging this rule can be classified under two beliefs. The first relates to teachers' beliefs that students' home languages can interfere with English language acquisition. The second relates to teachers' discomforts, somehow stemming from a lack of trust, towards students' use of their home languages. I focus my discussion on the second reason expressed by the teachers.

During interviews, teachers' discomforts were communicated as they explained why an English-only policy was implemented in the classroom. As expressed by a couple of teachers:

I don't know what you're discussing and people here with you don't know what you're talking about. And I said sometimes, you know what, you could be talking about us, and we wouldn't know. "Oh, but Miss, we're not". And I said, "I know you're probably not, but when you speak a different language, how do we know what you're saying? You could be being very rude or very nice. I don't know". I said, "I think out of respect for the other children and the adults, you don't speak your language. I would prefer you spoke English". I said, "When you go outside, recess and lunch, you can speak your language with your friends". I'm not worried about that, but in the classroom, I would like English because that is the one common language that binds us all." . . . I mean, I don't know what they're doing. No doubt they're just discussing something light-hearted, but I think it's just out of respect. (Ms Meyer, teacher aide, Dutch, Dutch/English)

If they're sitting there talking in their own language, I'd never stop it. Unless if I thought though that they were using their own language for bad, like something bad. You can tell by their body language. You can tell by their faces, especially if they're like trying to (whispering gesture). If they're just openly talking, and they'll tell. They feel safe enough. They feel safe enough to say, "Hey, they're swearing in their language". The kids will tell. (Ms Wright, class teacher, Australian, English)

The educators' responses above illustrated teachers' discomforts towards students' use of their home languages. The teachers expressed concern that students use their home languages to speak unfavourably about peers or their teachers. This imposition of an English-only rule, despite the absence of an official policy, may be seen as a form of teacher surveillance of discussions taking place among students. The justification for an English-only policy implemented by the two educators appear to illustrate teachers' under-developed trust when encountering the "Other"—the "Other" meaning different linguistic skills and discursive abilities. Aligned with how habitus, as a thinking tool,

has been mobilised in the previous sections, teachers' dispositions towards home language, as revealed here, displays an uncomfortable response to the unfamiliar. Both teachers, Ms Wright and Ms Meyer, are of Anglo-Saxon background and both speak English, although Ms Meyer also speaks Dutch. Despite having worked in the school for 10 years, both continue to have limited and limiting engagements with students' linguistic resources. Their reactions of discomfort towards students' home languages revealed the durable system of disposition characteristic of the habitus.

In recent years, many concepts such as *translanguaging* (García & Lin, 2014; García & Wei, 2017) and linguistic funds of knowledge (e.g., Coleman, 2015) established the significant role of the use of students' first or home languages in learning and acquisition of a second language. Furthermore, literature has highlighted the ways that students' home languages are significant to the development of students' identity and building a sense of community (e.g., Cummins, 2017). However, teachers' discomforts, as discussed here, continue to constrain the possibilities for mobilising students' home languages as resources in the classroom.

THE PEDAGOGIC POSSIBILITIES OF DISCOMFORT FOR TEACHING IN CALD CLASSROOM CONTEXTS

Teaching in the context of cultural and linguistic diversity involves feelings of discomfort. The three above case studies highlighting teachers' encounters with students' cultural and linguistic knowledge reveal that discomfort powerfully shapes pedagogical practices in the classroom. As evident in the three critical episodes, teachers' discomforts consciously and sometimes unconsciously effectively closed down rather than opened up generative interactions and productive learning about diverse cultural and linguistic experiences. More specifically, discomforts towards religious beliefs, home languages, and perceived traumatic experiences led to the marginalisation of such forms of knowledge. Zipin (2009) refers to this as "boundary-policing", where teachers determine what are permitted within the walls of the classroom while rejecting those that incite feelings of discomfort.

Engaging with Bourdieu's notion of habitus, teachers' discomforts towards cultures and languages are illuminated as products of long-lasting systems of dispositions that orient actions. By highlighting discomforts as feelings articulated in teachers' responses in the three narratives, the affective dimension of the habitus is revealed. As explained by Reay (2015) (and as discussed earlier in the section, "Emotions and the habitus"), the affective dimension of the habitus is situated in the historical, social and cultural experiences of individuals. The disparate emotional responses between teachers and students to diverse cultural and linguistic resources illuminate how the affective, as constituting the habitus, is crafted by diverse historical, social, and cultural trajectories of the students and their teachers. Among the three episodes, this was more pronounced in the case of Mateen, a student of refugee background. While the EAL teacher assumed that Mateen was suffering from trauma, Mateen was observed comfortably speaking about his and his family's dangerous journey to Australia. Entertaining a pedagogy of discomfort in this scenario means teachers need to confront and engage with students' experiences they perceive as "traumatic" or difficult.

Feelings of discomfort, however, can be productively harnessed through pedagogic encounters. Drawing from the studies of Zipin (2009) and Dutro and Bien (2014), I

argue that topics related to religion and those perceived as traumatic can potentially generate productive classroom participation for students of CALD backgrounds. While others may argue that doing so might emulate or encourage unproductive habits, such as violence and drug-abuse, I offer a counter-narrative that is perhaps counter-intuitive; that is, diversifying the kinds of knowledge that are privileged as resources in the classroom can provide inclusive and equitable opportunities for the participation of students with diverse experiences and backgrounds. A good example here would be the narrative highlighted in the first critical case where a student of Muslim background, Roya, volunteered to open a discussion around faith-based knowledge. A pedagogy of discomfort entails pursuing other faith-based knowledge and young students' perspectives about this, including those that may disagree.

In a similar vein, the privileging and inclusion of students' home languages as a teaching-and-learning resource can harness an inclusive culture of participation while mobilising the pedagogic affordances of home languages. The *multilingual turn* has challenged the privileging of the English language in educational spaces (see Turner & Cross, 2016). Furthermore, concepts such as *translanguaging* (García & Lin, 2014; García & Wei, 2017) and *linguistic funds of knowledge* (e.g., Coleman, 2015) emphasise the role and value of students' home languages in students' successful participation in schooling. However, as evident in the third episode discussed earlier (i.e., *Feelings of discomfort towards students' home languages*), teachers were not utilising and perhaps less aware of such pedagogic innovations and possibilities. Thus, there is potential in teachers challenging their initial discomforts to create and imagine more inclusive spaces where diverse linguistic knowledge is attended to and validated as legitimate sources for knowledge creation.

A “pedagogy of discomfort” for teaching in the CALD context can deepen the experiences of students from diverse backgrounds. As discussed in existing literature, a pedagogy of discomfort affords spaces to unpack issues of power, injustice and oppression. Zembylas and Boler (2002), for instance, wrote about mobilising a pedagogy of discomfort in media literacy in higher education institutions. Their discussion of a pedagogy of discomfort emphasised the systematic “analysis of the emotional investments [students] experience in relationship to particular symbols” (para. 20). They argued that a pedagogy of discomfort moves beyond critical pedagogy by centring on the affect or emotions as a way for students to analyse “unquestioned values learned through popular history and the emotions associated with these values” (para. 23). In other higher education disciplines in Australia, a pedagogy of discomfort has been considered to unpack discourses in relation to First Nations cultures and knowledges (see, e.g., Mills & Creedy, 2019). Building on this classroom dimension of a pedagogy of discomfort, I argue for its applicability in critically engaging with the experiences of students in relation to religion, linguistic diversity, and refugee experiences, among others. In societies, such as Australia, that are becoming increasingly and intensely diverse, a pedagogy of discomfort has the potential for generative discourses. However, as Zembylas (2015) emphasised, a pedagogy of discomfort requires thoughtful and serious ethical discussions. As such, while I advocate for a pedagogy of discomfort, how it can be practiced in classrooms requires robust research and continuous intellectual deliberations in different societies and contexts.

To entertain a pedagogy of discomfort in teaching CALD classroom contexts, one must also consider a pedagogy of discomfort in teacher education. Zembylas and Papamichael (2017) argued for pedagogically combining discomfort and empathy in “anti-racist and multicultural teacher education” (p. 1). Their study highlighted that, in practice, the dual implementation of pedagogies of discomfort and empathy offers possibilities for “safe spaces” for student-teachers’ participation. Extending the arguments of Zembylas and Papamichael, I propose a pedagogy of discomfort that encourages teachers to examine their emotional attachments in relation to cultures and languages that are different from their own. As empirical data from my research revealed there is a need to examine the taken-for-granted schooling practices and historical bases of education and allow teachers to understand how their autobiographies are shaped by these influences. Teachers, as suggested in the episodes, were coming from a place of concern and positive intentions for their students. Thus, a pedagogy of discomfort also needs to attend to entrenched assumptions about what is “good” education in the context of cultural and linguistic diversity.

A pedagogy of discomfort offers a transformative potential for teachers to move out of their comfort zones. Such propensity for change in dispositions is captured through the notion of a “transformative habitus”. My reading of affect as constituting habitus, however, has often focused on the durable and deterministic characteristic of the habitus. However, as I bring the conceptual tool of habitus in conversation with a pedagogy of discomfort in my discussion, I am compelled to theorise about how affect constitutes the generative or transformative habitus. Working with Bourdieu’s explication of the habitus quoted in an earlier section (i.e., *Emotions and the habitus*), one can surmise that individuals’ emotions have the propensity to incorporate new dispositions into the habitus. To reiterate, Bourdieu (2000) reminded us that our experiences of emotions enable us to “acquire dispositions that are themselves an openness to the world, that is, to the very structures of the world of which they are the incorporated form.” (pp. 140-141).

I end this paper by offering a conceptual contribution of the habitus in relation to its transformative dimension. That is, the affective dimension can constitute the transformative habitus. I offer here my initial thinking about the habitus and the affect in the hope that it will inspire further deliberations about the role of educators in creating equitable and socially just educational spaces and practices

CONCLUSION

An analysis of three episodes revealing teachers’ discomforts in the context of CALD classroom demonstrates that emotions shape teaching practices. Engaging with Bourdieu’s notion of habitus, the affective is revealed as constraining and regulating what teachers include and exclude as valuable sources of knowledge, culturally and linguistically. Thus, a pedagogy of discomfort is considered for teaching and teacher education in CALD contexts. Data from empirical research illuminates that, in the Australian classroom context, teachers’ discomfort may arise from encounters with refugee experiences, religious beliefs and diverse home languages. Productive engagements with these cultural and linguistic knowledge and traditions require teachers to confront their own discomforts. By drawing from the data, I illuminated ways to enhance teaching and learning through a pedagogy of discomfort. A pedagogy of discomfort however, while asserted in this paper, requires thoughtful and critical

deliberation of ethical considerations without assuming how “safe spaces” can look like as signalled by Zembylas and Papamichael (2017).

A consideration of a pedagogy of discomfort for teaching in CALD contexts reveals how emotions constitute the habitus. On the one hand, teachers’ dispositions reveal that the affective dimension is durable and formed through the social and historical contexts of the individual. On the other hand, the affective can also offer the propensity for change and transformation of the habitus. As I have demonstrated in earlier sections, feelings of discomfort can orient the habitus towards actions that, to use Boler’s (in Leibowitz, 2011) words in the Introduction of this paper, “inhibit educational exchange with students, prevent the educator from taking risks, and eclipse the educator’s very capacity to see, for example, his or her own attachments to particular outcomes” (para. 6). Yet these discomforts can also be harnessed as starting points for generative and productive dialogues.

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