Language-aware teachers; the next generation

Thursday 13 August 2015
2:30pm-4:30pm
Burwood Corporate Centre (BCC)
Videoconference CREFI VMP 52239322 to
Waurn Ponds ic1.108; Warrnambool J2.22

Language and cultural diversity has a significant presence in Australia, yet initial teacher education is yet to take it fully into account. The Australian Curriculum, Reporting and Assessment Authority (ACARA), has made it explicit that all teachers will be required to provide pedagogy that responds to the language learning needs of students whose first language is not English, but has not addressed the ‘how’ of instilling language awareness in teachers across all disciplines. It can be argued that a workforce of language-aware teachers will be of benefit to native English-speaking students as well as EAL students.

European countries such as Germany and Finland have shown that language and cultural awareness are an important element of teacher education and have established it firmly in their curricula. There has been resistance to it in Australia, yet at the same time there is media and official pressure to reinstate ‘grammar’, which has been missing from teacher education and consequently from schooling in Australia, the UK and the USA. Grammar is not the only element of language awareness, however.

The issues are complex. All teaching involves language, but different disciplines have different perceptions of what the important components of language awareness are. There is also tension and confusion about the relationship between knowledge about language, and literacy.

This seminar is informed by an OLT-funded project that sought to identify what kind of language awareness training should be included in pre-service programs for Australian primary and secondary teachers, and by the experience of developing a core undergraduate coursework unit that addresses these goals. This seminar seeks to establish a forum for dialogue about language awareness in teacher education that may be contributed to by academics from a variety of disciplines, as well as policy makers and pre- and in-service teachers.

Doctor Jennifer Alford, Queensland University of Technology
Dr Jennifer Alford is a senior lecturer in TESOL and English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D) studies in the Faculty of Education at Queensland University of Technology. She is interested in positive critical discourse analysis (CDA) of teacher talk and classroom interaction; teachers’ knowledge about language and literacy learning for EAL/D learners, especially critical literacy; and designing language and literacy focused lessons across the high school curriculum. Her PhD thesis was a multiple, instrumental, critical case study investigating the teaching of critical literacy with EAL/D learners in senior high school English.

Doctor Rod Neilsen, Deakin University
Dr Rod Neilsen lectures in linguistics and language testing and assessment and directs the Master of TESOL course at Deakin University, Melbourne. His research interests include teacher and student mobility and language teacher development. He has many years of experience teaching English and training teachers in several countries and cultures. His PhD thesis explored how globalisation affects both the TESOL profession and individual teachers.

RSVP
Please RSVP to lisa.angelini@deakin.edu.au by Monday 11 August 2015
http://www.deakin.edu.au/research/src/crefi/