Some fifty academics attended the TASA Sociology of Education symposium. Professor Michael Young and Professor Raewyn Connell raised interesting points of convergence and contention concerning the development and future of the sociology of education in UK and Australia.

Workshop generated the following considerations. These will serve as the basis for discussion at the Sociology of Education Thematic Group meeting at the TASA Conference in Dec 2010.

**SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION AS A NETWORK**

Viewing the sociology of education effort as a network fitted well with the interest in thematic/SIG groups in professional associations to foster networks for flow of information, sharing knowledge and dialogue and help us plug ourselves in to new nodes, be they institutions, people, resources, events and attract new members. Networks are comprised of nodes and connections; relations between sites, institutions, and people which are contingent and dynamic rather than stable and structured. Nodes may be:

- people (own biography, supervisors, colleagues, research teams, students);
- events (conferences, symposia etc. where we come together);
- institutions (where employed, where did doctorate/undergraduate);
- spatial sites (of formative experiences shaping sociological gaze);
- empirical sites and the connections between them);
- theoretical resources (our bibliographies of work we draw on as network of ideas we choose to plug into);
- journals, associations and e-lists (as sites of our 'communing' and connecting).

Participants spatially 'mapped' the networks sustaining their sociology of education work. Some reflections from that process:

- The web of connections extended well beyond the nation;
- Urban centres emerged as common, concentrated nodes where maps intersected, but sites outside urban centres had richly informed research and sociological interests (a good case for employment in regional universities!);
- Some 'maps' told of missing connections – disconnections where previous experiences discounted or erased;
- The looseness and openness of networks making it difficult to pinpoint exactly what the community could bring to the table in terms of progressing knowledge;
- Implicit connections – e.g how research in one empirical site of low SES schooling 'lit up' and speaks to other similar sites around the map;
- Spaces and places unavailable to existing networks - the gaping holes in the map, which we fail to connect with – e.g. much of remote Australia.
- Potential nodes unexplored - in particular people working sociologically outside our academic networks.
TEACHING THE SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION

There was enthusiasm for an AARE SIG that would pay attention to teaching and research in sociology.

There was some debate about whether or not it was necessary to defend a certain degree of "traditional sociology" in the sociology of education. Some in the group were in favour of some return to the discipline in teaching sociology while others felt that the lack of discipline and status in teaching sociology also provided a lot of flexibility in the way sociology was imagined in the curriculum.

The group was also keen to have a website or blog in which it was possible to share resources (reading lists, assessment tasks, unit outlines).

RESEARCH AND THE SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION

There was discussion of a need for a deeper engagement with history and the roots of the sociology of education:

- Do we write too much and read to little?
- Do we need to address epistemological and ontological knowledge and what it means to have a position on interrogating knowledge?
- What about cultural studies and cultural sociology?
- Do we need to consider methodology, historical trajectories, and how we use new tools such as decolonising methodology?

The group also considered how future symposiums could develop research capacity?

- Should symposium panels be organised to address controversial issues?
- Should panels be grouped to develop specific research capacity?
- Could panels track the trajectories of concepts we use and how they are differentially engaged with in other disciplines e.g. pedagogies, literacy, social justice, methodology?
- What is our responsibility to speak other audiences?

WHERE TO FROM HERE?

Raewyn Connell’s closing address noted that issues raised in the sociology of education are extremely important; the project is large and its audience is not only academics. To gain critical momentum the current network could adopt the practice of circulating publications, curriculum documents by email.

- If you have papers you would like to circulate to the network please forward to Julie Matthews. Please contact her if you would like to be removed from the list jmatthew@usc.edu.au

- Jane Kenway and Julie McLeod offered to organise a symposium in Melbourne in 2011.

- Julie Matthews advised the group that Professor Dworkin, president of RC04 of the International Sociological Association (ISA) and Professor Saha, vice president Oceana are interested in supporting TASA Sociology of Education symposium/conference in 2011.

- If you are interested in an AARE SIG please contact Julie Matthews or Mary Lou Rasmussen Marylou.rasmussen@monash.edu.au

Julie Matthews and Terri Seddon, Conveners TASA Sociology of Education Thematic Group