When the Subaltern Finally Speaks
PERSONAL NARRATIVE AS A MEANS TO IDENTITY AND VOICE

Dr. Jyothi Bathina

After escaping an oppressive arranged marriage by being empowered by her education, a teacher uses personal narrative to empower her students and give them voice, while simultaneously building their literacy.

On my first day as a high school teacher at the New School of Arts and Sciences in the South Bronx, the principal pointed out that my classroom walls had been painted a soothing blue over the summer. "It helps keep them quiet," he assured me, clearly proud of his anticipation of and solution for any noise from his student population. Why are we intent on keeping students, especially disadvantaged and disengaged students, quiet? Allowing them to speak is the very means by which we can encourage them to learn the skills they need to negotiate the world (Fielding, 2004; Freire, 1974).

Gayatri Spivak, noted postcolonial theorist, once asked, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (Spivak, 1988). She was referring to the marginalized populations within colonized countries such as India, who, despite independence and a burgeoning nationalism, continued to remain silent, either unwilling or unable to represent themselves. These marginalized populations included women, tribal peoples, and the

Dr. Jyothi Bathina is an associate professor in the Department of Literacy, Early, Bilingual, and Special Education at California State University, Fresno; e-mail jbathina@csufresno.edu.

highly impoverished. Spivak felt that even postcolonial theorists, who fought to point out the oppression, often spoke for such "subalterns" as if they were a homogenous group with fixed characteristics, or passed them over entirely, marginalizing and silencing them.

In this paper, I seek to show one way in which educators, far from seeking to silence marginalized students, can provide the tools and environment necessary for them to find and express their own voices and realities while simultaneously acquiring academic literacy.

The Struggle for Identity

As an Indian woman, I have personally experienced the ways in which circumstances shape one's identity from both ends of the power/language spectrum. I have been colonizer and colonized, oppressor and oppressed, subaltern and silencer (Freire, 1974; Said, 1978). My early years in India were ones of privilege and affluence. At the age of 15, I had a personal maid, Renu, a nine-year-old girl, who slept on a thin straw mat beside my bed at night, and catered to my every need by day. Never once did it occur to me that I was an active participant in the silencing and oppression of this young girl, living apart from her family, a silent spectator of my own privileged adolescence. Nor was Renu disturbed or angry at our disparate circumstances, resigned to the fact that she

was a servant and I was her mistress, and perfectly content with the trinkets I gave her, including my cast-off clothes and sandals.

Just a few years later, I found myself on the other side of the oppressor/oppressed dichotomy, trapped in an abusive marriage, silenced by violence, intimidation, and a tradition which dictated that as a woman I submit, placated by the trinkets my husband chose to occasionally give me as a reward for my docility. Very quickly, as happened with my servant girl, I resigned myself to my new circumstances. Having immigrated with my husband to the United States shortly after our wedding, and living in downtown Chicago, I nevertheless remained imprisoned within the confines of my oppressive marriage. I had changed, once married, from a self-confident and assured young woman into a terrified and compliant wife, based on my environment and those who influenced me, namely my in-laws and my husband.

During the next decade, I begged and cajoled my oppressor into letting me pursue my education. I was able to gain a bachelor's, a master's, and finally a doctoral degree before I summoned up the courage to leave my circumstances entirely and get a divorce.

It was only through the counter-influence and encouragement of my professors in college, the debates and discussions in my graduate seminars, the various readings of postcolonial authors and theorists, and the reflective writing we were encouraged to engage in, that I was able to regain my own identity. While my confidence and self-esteem grew with each class I took, the single most influential and life-changing text in my journey was *Orientalism* (Said, 1989). In a nutshell, Said posited that the narrative representation of groups, cultures, and races as "other," often as exotic, different, and inferior, paved the way to the colonization, subjugation, and oppression of entire continents and races, and facilitated the rise of political and cultural imperialism (Said, 1989).

Said's theory resonated with me as I examined my own circumstances. It occurred to me that my position as subservient Indian wife and mother was also the product of "othering" by patriarchal Indian culture as the self-sacrificing, submissive, Mother Goddess as the

> *"Why are we intent on keeping students, especially disadvantaged and disengaged students, quiet?"*

essential center of the home (Mitter, 1980). Silenced by this simultaneously noble and degrading stereotype, I had spent years unable to escape the role I had been assigned. My introduction to *Orientalism* allowed me to see what forces were at work in my subjugation, enabling me to break free of them through a process of reading, writing, and reflection.

My personal experience has informed my research as I seek ways to blend education and empowerment in the classroom. Transformative literacies, in particular, the reading of relevant literature and the power of personal narrative, stood out to me as incredibly powerful tools for empowerment that I had used in my own struggle for freedom.

Valuing Funds of Knowledge to Empower Student Voice

Once I divorced my husband and found my calling as a high school teacher in California, I discovered that part of my power as an educator lay in my ability to help students discover their own voice. I needed to remind myself that the students in my classroom, who much like Renu, the girl who served me in India, had a limited understanding of their own capacity, could not begin to aspire to the goals that others took for granted. As a subaltern who could not speak for many years, it became imperative for me to encourage my students, many of them marginalized and silenced, to find their voices.

As a high school teacher, I quickly found that my students were disengaged from school and from academic learning, a phenomenon especially prevalent among the impoverished and minority students I worked with in the urban schools of New York and California. This group of students has been shown to receive lower grades (Miller, 1996), score lower on standardized tests (Jencks & Phillips, 1998; Witherspoon, Speight, & Thomas, 1997), and tends to be kept back in the same grade more often (Owings & Magliaro, 1987).

My students in the Bronx, surrounded as they were by poverty and violence, drugs and despair, were not interested in reading books, which dealt with distant worlds and realities. They were not interested in writing five-paragraph essays on what they did last summer, or debating over whether school uniforms were a good idea. My students had much weightier issues on their mind, like whether their mother would be released from prison next month, and how they could best take care of their siblings until that time on their own. Their experience had given them

tremendous funds of knowledge about the street, about gangs, about personal safety, and about the judicial system among other things, yet that knowledge had no apparent value in school.

Using Personal Narrative

Given my own experience of being silenced and accepting the master narrative of patriarchy, I knew that forcing students to accept the master narrative of academic discourse without providing entry or validation of their own discourse would backfire, leaving them without the kind of voice and agency I hoped to encourage in my classroom (Gee, 1996). Throughout my time in college, I had painstakingly reflected and reconstructed my way out of my oppressed circumstances by engaging with relevant writers like Said who spoke to my experience, and through the process of journaling and recounting my experiences both orally and in writing with friends, with family, and in short stories I wrote for class or for publication. It is, in fact, something I continue to do each time I write about my past. As Stanton Wortham (2000) points out in his study of interactional positioning and narrative self-construction, proponents of personal narrative as a tool for identity formation believe that victims of oppression, while discussing their past and positioning themselves within that past, can actually become more self-assertive. Wortham adds to this theory by suggesting that it is not only the act of self-representation but also the way in which narrators position themselves and how they interact with their readers that allows them to construct and reconstruct their identities.

Because of my own successful use of personal narrative and because of the existing research on personal narrative's effectiveness, I felt the best way to build both engagement and literacy and create empowerment for my particular student population was through having students write their own lives.

Personal narratives tend to promote self-esteem and self-empowerment, becoming the medium through which students can create and shape their identities (Fried, 2005; Rosenwald & Ochberg, 1992). By narrating their lives, students are able to examine and reflect on them, understand the choices they make, and make informed decisions about their future (Rossiter, 1999).

In addition to fostering students' personal and emotional growth and building critical thinking skills through reflection and analysis of one's own life, writing personal narrative positively affects academic learning, since students reposition how they view themselves as readers and writers, becoming part of the "literacy club" (Smith, 1987).

The Research Project

After working for several years as a high school English teacher and literacy coach, both in New York and in California, and successfully publishing an anthology of personal narratives with a group of high school students, I entered the academic tenure track as an assistant professor of education at a large public university in California.

As part of my academic research, I began a study in two local schools. While my previous publishing project with students seemed to indicate that personal narrative increased motivation, productivity, and literacy among previously disengaged students, I was curious to see if that success could be repeated and, if so, whether the act of writing and publishing such narratives was truly transformative for these students as well. My aims going into the project were twofold:

1. To see if personal narrative could be used as an effective way of engaging and motivating students to engage in literacy practices such as reading and writing.

2. To see if as a result of engaging in this personal narrative project, students would begin the process of constructing positive identities as active and empowered individuals rather than passive victims of circumstance.

Context

The area I currently teach in is home to some of the most concentrated urban and rural poverty in the United States, with child poverty rates as high as 36%. Primarily an agriculture-based economy, the area's schools are filled with immigrant children, children of migrant farm workers, and day laborers. Drug use and gang affiliation, along with the accompanying violence and high dropout rates, are prevalent. Discipline and classroom management are daily challenges while only 33% of students are rated as proficient in state tests in English, and 23% in Math.

Two teachers were chosen, from two different school districts, one at the middle school level and one at the high school level. Both struggled with student engagement, and both were looking for ways to motivate resistant learners. All names are pseudonyms.

The teacher at the middle school, Elaine, was a former student of mine in the credential program. She had been hired midyear to replace an eighth grade ELA teacher at the middle school she had once attended. At 23, this was her first semester teaching. Her students were from a rural school district. She had a mixed population in her classroom; some students were affluent while others suffered from extreme poverty. Many of them were children of Mexican immigrants while Elaine herself was white. They were all eighth graders.

The teacher at the high school, Lorena, a Latina woman in her mid-thirties, was a third-year ELA teacher in an urban school district. Her students were part of a continuation program and had been either expelled or transferred to the alternative high school where she taught because of discipline or academic problems. Many of them were Latino, with a few white and Hmong students, several were involved in gangs, and some of the girls were either pregnant or had already given birth to one or more children. They were juniors and seniors at the time of the project.

Project Methodology

Before we began the project, I decided to get students excited about writing by sharing my story with them. Using a PowerPoint presentation that highlighted each of my life journey's highs and lows from birth to the present, with vivid visuals that would grab their attention, I explained how I went from a once privileged life to one of fear and oppression, and how I finally managed to regain my sense of self. I pointed out the various challenges I faced—immigrating to a new country, learning a new accent, being ridiculed and taunted by my fellow students, having an abusive arranged marriage, along with the triumphs I experienced, such as pursuing my education, having and raising my son, and regaining my dignity.

Using the map of my own life as a model, I asked students to examine their lives and pick out personal challenges and triumphs that helped or hindered them as learners. I asked that they create a poster using vivid images to symbolize key events in their own lives and add a few lines of reflection regarding each event and how it affected them. After watching my life map unfold, and being invited to share their own, students were eager and engaged.

I initially met with both teachers and gave them an overview of how the project would run. The students would write their own series of vignettes based on the novel *The House on Mango Street* (Cisneros, 1980). I chose this particular novel because of its content, the struggles and challenges of a young Mexican girl growing up in the barrios of Chicago, as well as because of its structure, with short vignettes written in a simple, personal, and lucid manner. Moving organically from focusing on self to finding one's place in the world in terms of family, friends, neighborhood, and world, *The House on Mango Street* is a highly effective model for students to write about their own identity.

Each week, during a period of eight weeks, I visited the classrooms and taught the eight key interactive reading lessons that comprised the writing project. Each lesson included reading and discussing whole text in the form of a chapter from *The House on Mango Street*, and building and practicing specific literacy skills such as descriptive writing and critical thinking:

1. The Learning Life Map. Creating a timeline. Critical analysis of life events.

2. Name. Descriptive writing using similes, metaphors, and literary devices.

3. Family. Developing character through action, dialogue, and description.

4. Neighborhood. Research, comparing, and contrasting. Addressing stereotypes.

5. Love and Friendship. Analyzing Gender Roles and Relationships.

6. Heroes. The Hero's Journey in one's own life. Fact vs. Opinion.

7. Dreams. Using Participatory Action Research to understand circumstances and articulate goals.

8. Peer Editing and Revision.

Each week, following the key lesson, teachers provided time for students to write and revise the chapter addressed by the lesson.

Data Collection. The data collected included student writing samples, attendance logs, teacher observations, teacher reflection journals, interviews with students and teachers, feedback from parents, community members, and school administrators and staff.

Analysis. I tabulated attendance and participation records, gathered observations and feedback, and analyzed student writing for evidence of interactional positioning and narrative self-construction,

paying particular attention to whether there was an obvious trajectory from passive to active and negative to positive identity formation and reconstruction.

Writing. Finally, students were asked to write their own vignettes and begin the process of identifying themselves as the central figures of their own life stories and no longer as passive bystanders. The idea was to allow students to begin articulating their self-image, and then transfer that sense of central identity and the need for proactive participation to their learning as well. We sought to move away from the banking concept of education that Freire (1974) decried in his work and toward the problem posing method, where students set out to solve their own issues rather than become passive receivers of knowledge.

Editing. Once students wrote a rough draft, they peer edited each other's chapters in small groups. They learned to ask questions, to express their own opinions regarding a piece of writing, to create their own narratives, and to write with an audience in mind, all crucial academic skills. They then revised their own chapters based on peer and teacher feedback. The act of cooperating in order to achieve a final product, the sense of community engendered by this group work, and the connections forged by the process are all mainstays of culturally responsive teaching, since students are accountable for their own as well as the group's success (Gay, 2000).

Once all chapters were submitted, the teachers completed the editing and feedback process, and students wrote their final drafts for publication. During the course of the project, I met with teachers every week to discuss the week's lesson and the student writing process. Teachers kept action research journals of

their own, documenting what was and wasn't working in the classroom on a daily basis. Elaine, for example, found it difficult to balance the writing project with the scripted curriculum her district was implementing, while Lorena struggled with the gang rivalries and violence that led to frequent absences among some of her students despite their interest in the project.

Practicing Literacy. After ten weeks, students completed all the chapters of their own personal narratives. The chapters were then edited, compiled into two separate anthologies, and published as paperbacks which students were able to sell for profit. In order to build sales for their books, students created brochures and posters. They spoke at community events and school board meetings. They even created videos of themselves reading excerpts from their stories. These various activities allowed students to speak, to be heard, and to be seen, often for the first time in an academic setting. Each of these acts of representation positioned them for the first time as actively engaged writers who sought to be heard.

Findings

Of the eighth grade class of 50 middle school students who participated in the project, 100% completed the project and became published authors (See Table 1).

At the high school level, while 100% of the 50 students participated, only 65% were able to complete the project and become published authors (See Table 2).

Some of those who did not complete the project were level one English Learners who participated fully in discussions and lessons, often, according to their teacher, for the first time. They struggled with the writing component, however, which suggests that the project needs to provide further scaffolding for

TABLE 1 Middle School Results				
Before the Writing Project				
Attendance	**Participation**	**Completion**	**Discussion**	**Writing**
90%	80%	N/A	80%	85%
During the Writing Project				
Attendance	**Participation**	**Completion**	**Discussion**	**Writing**
100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

TABLE 2 High School Results

Before the Writing Project

Attendance	Participation	Completion	Discussion	Writing
57%	25%	N/A	25%	25%

During the Writing Project

Attendance	Participation	Completion	Discussion	Writing
75%	100%	65%	100%	75%

early level language learners in future implementations. What was significant, however, was that these students, despite the language barrier, did not lack either engagement or motivation when it came to discussing and analyzing topics such as poverty, race, and family, things that mattered to them personally.

Another factor that adversely affected the completion rates for high school students was the lower, more sporadic attendance rates among juniors and seniors, many of whom had jobs and family responsibilities or were caught up in gang activity.

Emerging Identities

While the quantitative findings demonstrate a remarkable influence on attendance, participation, completion, discussion, and writing of the narratives, what they don't show is the impact of enabling students to speak and write their own narratives, which provide a counter narrative to the master discourse of school and society. Not only do the stories that emerge help represent these students, they offer a critique of the circumstances they find themselves in as well as how they respond to those circumstances.

Beginning with their life map and moving on to stories about their name, their family, and their neighborhood resulted in students writing, as most autobiographers do, about pivotal moments or epiphanies in their lives which changed the way they thought or acted and caused them to analyze their actions and experience (Bochner & Ellis, 1992).

Student Narratives

In the following, I look closely at the work of two students, one at the high school level and one at the middle school level, both highly representative of the narratives that were collected in terms of topics such as drug abuse and immigration, and how students responded to those crises in their lives. Both Melanie and Amalia moved from silent victimhood to a

gradual voicing of their circumstances and a shift from passive acceptance or blind rage to a more analytical and active approach to their circumstances. In each, through the process of thematic coding of narrative stance, I examine how students employ interactional positioning and how they construct narrative identity through that positioning (Wortham, 2000; Freeman, 1993; Gergen, 1994; Grumet, 1987; Schiffrin, 1996).

Melanie: Melanie, a senior at the continuation high school, describes the moment when she hit bottom:

> After a year of sniffing up too much meth, my mind became too rotten. I was having sick thoughts. At night I snuck out, in the morning I drank alcohol, I was getting into fights at school, I was popping pills, I spray painted the city, I yelled at my parents, stole money from my family. I was getting high every hour of the day. I was ditching school and coming home late (Bathina, 2010, p. 123).

Here Melanie positions herself as an active participant in her own downward spiral. Wortham suggests that such a positioning is empowering in itself since it gives the narrator agency even in her poor choices (Wortham, 2000). Melanie doesn't portray herself as a victim of circumstance, but rather as someone who chooses to indulge in destructive behavior. Threatened by her parents with being sent to a juvenile home, Melanie tries to change but to no avail.

> I tried to change my life around and I tried to become a better person, but I couldn't. I couldn't do it on my own. I felt I had no one to motivate me, or help me, or encourage me. I began to hang out with the wrong people. Everyday we skipped school and hung out in the streets causing nothing but trouble (Bathina, 2010, p. 123).

Faced with the threat of a juvenile home, Melanie's portrayal and positioning of herself changes from the defiant stance of a rebel, to someone who is sincerely trying to change but has no help. She insists that she tries actively to turn her life around, but that without adequate support, she is doomed to fail. While she continues to portray herself as having choices, she positions herself here as a victim who needs sympathy rather than either admiration or condemnation. It finally takes a friend's mother discovering her drug use to get Melanie to change.

> She was angry with me and gave me the beating of my life. Afterwards she sat down with me and spent hours talking with me about my future, my life and my family… she had opened up my eyes to a lot of things I had never seen before (Bathina, 2010, p. 124).

Having first positioned herself as a lost girl deserving sympathy, Melanie then describes the beating she receives and the talk she gets as exactly what she needed to help her get back on track. Melanie is insisting here that what she was longing for, and lacking, was some guidance, someone to reprimand her and give her a clear picture of the consequences of her actions. While her parents threatened her and her friend's mother began by beating her, it is the hours she spent talking with her that seem to have made the biggest impact.

As we follow Melanie through the chapters on self, home, neighborhood, family, and dreams, we see her moving from a belligerent insistence that she has no regrets, to an honest confession of her mistakes, and finally to a clear vision of what she wants to do in the future.

> I'm going to graduate from high school. I'm going to make my mother and father proud…. I would like to attend the University of Southern California and graduate with a degree in social work. I want to become a substance abuse counselor or a child/adolescent psychologist. (Bathina, 2010, p. 176)

It is only after she is able to write that first chapter, after she names her world, that Melanie begins a closer examination of how things ended up so badly. She engages in what Paulo Friere (1974) refers to as actively renaming both herself and the world around her. She acknowledges the people in her life who have helped her—her family, her counselor, and her friend's mother. Finally Melanie is able to move forward and clearly articulate her plans for the future. Rather than self-destruct, she wishes to use her experience as a troubled teen and drug addict to help others, by becoming a substance abuse counselor.

Amalia: Amalia, an eighth grader, begins her narrative with a very dark view of her own name.

> My name means nothing to me. When I think of my name I think of the color black…. The person who named me was the guy I thought was my dad…. My name is a stone (Bathina, 2010, p. 14).

There is heartache here and loss, being expressed honestly in a classroom setting for the first time. At the same time, Amalia uses the literary devices we have introduced, including similes and metaphors, practicing academic literacy while writing what is relevant to her. In terms of positioning herself for the reader, Amalia assumes a passive tone, like a stone, she is unmoving and without life. Her words are intended to shock and elicit sympathy; she has lost a father figure and suffered disappointment.

By the time she gets to the *Heroes* chapter, Amalia begins to express just what frustrates her and makes her angry. Rather than remaining passive and depressed, she moves toward passion and persuasive writing, pointing out injustice and demanding fair treatment.

> They walked on their knees for more than two miles with their knees filled with blood running down to their shoes. My mom and my sister wanted my family to have a better life here in the United States of America. Just because they're immigrants, doesn't mean that they should be treated like trash…. Why do people judge us because of a paper that wasn't given to us when we were born in Mexico?… Mexicans are humans and should start to be treated like ones now (Bathina, 2010, p. 83–84).

In this passage, Amalia is no longer a victim. She positions herself as the daughter and sister of heroic figures who risked their lives in order to find more opportunity for their family. As a result, she herself begins to take on heroic qualities. As she elevates her family to hero status, Amalia also begins to take on leadership qualities by demanding change and equal rights for Mexicans. By taking on these qualities in one's writing, one begins to change how one approaches the world (Anderson, 1997; Cohler, 1988; White & Epston,1990). Amalia's dreams begin to

take tangible shape in her writing by the end of the project.

> My dream is to become a nurse, and of course finish high school and college with high grades. To make that happen I want to go to nursing school, and to as many nursing programs to get me ready. My sister volunteers at the hospital, and I want to do the same when I turn sixteen (Bathina, 2010, p. 141).

At this point Amalia's writing, like Melanie's, is full of optimism and hope. While circumstances may still be difficult and challenging, both at home and on the street, both girls have moved from silence and anger, to self-examination and analysis, and are taking steps toward empowerment and a vision for the future.

Discussion

Melanie and Amalia are just two of the one hundred students who participated in this personal narrative project. Their stories were representative of many of the narratives which ranged from accounts of drug abuse, gang violence, debilitating poverty, and adolescent angst, with most revolving around the stress of growing up in an uncertain environment with little outside support. After reading and analyzing the stories written by all of the students, I found strikingly similar patterns. As predicted, by writing personal narrative, students automatically engaged in

identity construction. Through interactive positioning, students actively portrayed themselves as victims, activists, and even heroes for the readers of their life stories. Many students moved within their vignettes from an initial victimization by poverty, crime, gang culture, and an unsympathetic, unsupportive society, to a sense of agency and self-determination. Many others remained victims throughout, blaming school, unfeeling teachers, racism, and their circumstances for their own personal failures.

A future project might be a closer study of the discursive moves of students who positioned themselves as agents versus those who continued to portray themselves as victims. What was consistent in this study, however, was that whichever stance they ultimately chose, students moved from silence to finding voice and expressing their views. One finding that seems particularly important is that through the very act of engaging in the narrative project, students discovered an additional identity, that of author. Students who perceived literature and literacy as academic realms to which they had no entry began to perceive themselves as insiders, equipped with the tools and the language needed to enter the discourse. Not only were they now part of the literacy club (Smith, 1987), as actual authors themselves and producers of text, and not merely students or consumers, they could actively engage in criticism, question their circumstances, and create their own literature. Not only did students begin to construct an identity that could lead them to active participation and transformation of their own lives, they had also begun to discover a literary identity that gave them a passport to the world of both academic and critical literacy.

Through writing their stories, students were able to begin the process of negotiating their own identities as literate beings, and finding their place in the world. No longer passive spectators like Renu in India, or frightened into submission as I had been, students took the opportunity to speak their specific truth, shape their own identity, rename the world, and begin the tenuous process of reclaiming their dreams through becoming literate.

Take Action
STEPS FOR IMMEDIATE IMPLEMENTATION

1. Create a warm, supportive environment where students are willing to share by describing your life map, outlining your ups and downs as a learner.

2. Choose engaging and relevant reading material that reflects student lives and experiences.

3. Give students plenty of opportunity to question and to voice their opinions during discussions.

4. Allow time for students to read and critique each other's writing before you provide feedback.

5. Give students an incentive for writing by defining a larger goal such as transforming the community, educating others about their experiences, or publishing their work.

References

Adams, T.E. (2008). A review of narrative ethics. *Qualitative Inquiry, 14*(2), 175–194.

Anderson, H. (1997). *Conversation, language and possibilities.* New York, NY: Basic Books.

Bathina, J. (Ed.) (2010). *Against the odds: Visalia voices.* San Francisco, CA: Booklocker.

Bathina, J. (Ed.) (2010). *Beyond the fields: Sanger stories.* San Francisco, CA: Booklocker.

Bochner, A., & Ellis, C. (1992). Personal narrative as a social approach to interpersonal communication. *Communication Theory, 2*(2), 165–172.

Bruner, J. (1960). *The process of education.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Cisneros, S. (1991). *The house on Mango Street.* New York, NY: Vintage.

Cohler, B. (1988). The human studies and the life history. *Social Service Review, 62,* 552–575.

Fielding, M. (2004). "New wave" student voice and the renewal of civic society. *London Review of Education, 2*(3), 197–217.

Fisher, W.R. (1984). Narration as human communication paradigm: The case of public moral argument. *Communication Monographs, 51*(1), 1–22.

Freeman, M. (1993). *Rewriting the self.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Freire, P. (1974). *The pedagogy of the oppressed.* New York, NY: Seabury Press.

Fried, R.L. (2005). *The game of school: Why we all play it, how it hurts kids, and what it will take to change it.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Gay, G. (2000). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research and practice.* New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Gee, J.P. (1996). *Social linguistics and literacy: Ideology in discourses* (2nd ed.). London, England: Falmer.

Gergen, K. (1994). *Realities and relationships.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University.

Gibbs, J. (2001). *Tribes, a new way of learning and being together.* Windsor, CA: Center Source Systems LLC.

Goodman, Ken (2005). *What's whole in whole language.* Berkeley, CA: RDR Books.

Grumet, M. (1987). The politics of personal knowledge. *Curriculum Inquiry, 17,* 320–329.

Guthrie, J.T., & Wigfield, A. (2000). Engagement and motivation in reading. In M. Kamil, & P. Mosenthal (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research* (Vol. 3, pp. 403–422). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Hickey, S., & Mohan, G. (2004). Towards participation as transformation: Critical themes and challenges. In S. Hickey, & G. Mohan (Eds.), *Participation from tyranny to transformation: Exploring new approaches to participation in development* (pp. 2–24). New York, NY: Zed Books.

Jencks, C., & Phillips, M. (1998). America's next achievement test: Closing the Black-White test score gap. *American Prospect, 40,* 44–53.

Mello, R. (2001). The power of storytelling: How oral narrative influences children's relationships in classrooms. *International Journal of Education & the Arts, 2*(1).

Moll, L., Amanti, C., Neff, C., & Gonzalez, N. (1992). Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory into Practice, 31*(2), 132–41.

Owings, W., & Magliaro, S. (1998). Grade retention: A history of failure. *Educational Leadership, 56,* 86–88.

Rosenwald, G., & Ochberg, L. (Eds.) (1992). *Storied lives: The cultural politics of self-understanding.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Rossiter, M. (1999). A narrative approach to development: Implications for adult education. *Adult Education Quarterly, 50*(1), 56–71.

Said, E. (1979). *Orientalism.* New York, NY: Vintage.

Schiffrin, D. (1996). Narrative as self-portrait. *Language in Society, 25,* 167–203.

Smith, F. (1987). *Joining the literacy club: Further essays into education.* New York, NY: Heinemann.

Spivak, G. (1988). Can the subaltern speak? In C. Nelson, & L. Grossberg (Eds.), *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (pp. 271–313). Urbana, IL: U of Illinois.

White, M., & Epston, D. (1990). *Narrative means to therapeutic ends.* New York, NY: W.W. Norton.

Wortham, S. (2000). Interactional positioning and narrative self-construction. *Narrative Inquiry, 10,* 157–184.

More to Explore

CONNECTED CONTENT-BASED RESOURCES

✓ Cammarotta, J., & Fine, M. (Eds.) (2008). *Revolutionizing Education.* New York, NY: Routledge.

✓ Freire, P. (2005). *Teachers as cultural workers: Those who dare to teach.* Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

✓ Morrell, E. (2004). *Linking literacy and popular culture: Finding connections for lifelong learning.* Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon.