SUBJUGATED KNOWLEDGE AND THE POTENTIAL TO FOSTER CHANGES IN STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS HISTORY AND THEIR WORLD VIEW: A CASE STUDY IN AN AMERICAN HISTORY CLASS

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Abstract: The concept of subjugated knowledge suggested by Foucault (1980) has been rigorously studied and applied by educators and scholars across disciplines in an effort to devise a transformative education approach that embraces multifaceted nature of knowledge, and simultaneously challenge the authority of the dominant epistemology. This paper presents the preliminary results of an experimental study in an American History class, in which subjugated knowledge is incorporated with an attempt to enable students to 'think differently' and to question the reality constructed in mainstream history textbooks. Findings reveal that regardless of the initial difficulties in familiarizing themselves with the concept and the practice, students are enthusiastically engaged throughout the process and signs of changes (though still modest) have been identified in the analysis of their final papers.

Key words: subjugated knowledge, attitudes, different ways of thinking, epistemology, history

1. Introduction

Approaches to pedagogical practices have always been at the forefront in education, especially in the humanities and social science. However, as indicated in the diagram of the educational triangle by Jean Houssaye (1988), no matter what approach is applied; the teacher, the student and the knowledge are always at the center. With regard to the two former poles, i.e. the teacher and the student, perhaps the most fundamental change has been the shift from teacher-centered to student-centered approach which embraces students' role and authority in the classroom. The third pole, knowledge, has also witnessed a paradigm shift with the emergence of an interdisciplinary approach with an integrated, interdisciplinary curriculum linking a variety of learning subjects as they are related to the topics of integrated curriculum units. The emphasis on connecting and synthesizing information around topics of interest to the students provides favorable conditions for the acquisition of knowledge from different disciplines through congruous concepts and ideas (Bar-Yam et al., 2002).

There are important implications for the preparation of students to navigate and function productively in a world with diverse populations, different economic conditions, multitudes of cultural, religious and ethnic groups, and a vast array of other different factors. Furthermore, it is highly beneficial to begin early in the educational process to organize learning around problem solving, critical thinking and more importantly, the transformation of students' attitudes and behaviors towards knowledge and themselves. In particular, education has to be geared towards providing learners with an environment in which norms are contested, and prior schemata is deconstructed to make room for the remaking of the self. This begs the question of dismantling the sedimented and dominant epistemology with the introduction of different bodies of knowledge including subjugated knowledge.

The purpose of this paper is twofold, yet pretty modest. It is meant to present some initial outcomes of an on-going effort from the researcher's part in reshaping the dynamics in her own pedagogical practices/approaches.

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As it draws from and builds upon a number of existing forays into the use of Foucault's later work to think differently (*penserautrement*) about teaching and learning (Allan, 1999; Butin, 2006Chokr, 2009; Leask, 2011) among others; what is offered here can only be some possibilities and starting points, provocations rather than firm proposals. As a result, the paper is also geared towards receiving contributions and criticism for better implications in the long run. Ultimately, it seeks the answer to the following question: What are the potentials of subjugated knowledge in teaching and learning; and particularly, what is the role of subjugated knowledge in changing students' outlook?

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. Subjugated knowledge

When Foucault (1980) considered the relationship between power and truth, he described subjugated knowledge as a whole set of knowledges that have been disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated: naive knowledges, located low down on the hierarchy beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity (pp. 81-82).

As knowledge is the foundation on which we create our reality and identity, which would involve a view of knowledge as games of truth, and in relation to this 'the collapse of objective meaning leaving us free to create our own lives and ourselves' (Code, 2007, p.173). This might also involve the recovery of subjugated knowledges and thinking 'tactically about the multiple effects of texts and classroom engagements' (Code, 2007, p.69) and drawing out and making 'visible subjugated meanings and unsettle and open up to troubling those meanings that inscribe the normative'. At the same time we must come to see and understand past subjects differently, by activating counter-memories. That is, a struggle against collective forgetting particularly in relation to social injustices. This might also involve a focus on the writerliness of texts and 'de-naturalizing our habitual economy of reading' and 'the consumerist model of reading' (Zalloua, 2004, p. 239). Such critique enables us to recognise that the things, values, and events that make up our present experience 'have been constituted historically, discursively, practically' (Ball, 2018 p.4).

This is a form of 'combative' or guerrilla pluralism' in which there is no epistemic innocence (Medina, 2011, p.30). What the guerrilla pluralism of the Foucaultian genealogical method can help produce is epistemic insurrections that have to be constantly renewed and remain always ongoing in order to keep producing epistemic friction. (Medina, 2011, p.33). 'Dislocation' and 'decoding', as Chokr (2009, p.62) puts it, are necessary to place 'in abeyance the propositions and assumptions underlying and governing understanding and behaviour'. To reiterate, this is not an abdication of truth but rather a self conscious engagement in the games of truth, destabilising truth rather than learning it, historising excellence and beauty rather than appreciating it - 'a commitment to uncertainty' (Youdell, 2011).

In other words, Foucault, as a philosopher of contestation and difference, seeks to undermine self-evidence and open up spaces for acting and thinking differently about our relation to ourselves and to others and identify and refuse and transgress the horizon of silent objectification within which we are articulated. Underlying the philosophy of subjugated knowledge is also the resurrection of different bodies of knowledge that have been marginalized either in the course of history and time.

2.2. Subjugated knowledge and its implications in the classroom setting

The work of Michel Foucault offers one of the most effective ways of naming, tracking, and developing multiple modes of resistance, as well as ways of devising a model of education which challenges the status quo of the conventional system. Drawing on the later works of Foucault and forays into the application of subjugated knowledge, Ball (2018) encapsulates the ethos of Foucault's philosophy in a model of education that has the capacity of "fostering a learning environment that encourages experimentation." Here, according to Ball, the classroom is an ethical space, a political space, and a concrete space of freedom. The goal, according to Ball, "is to

create a space within which it is possible to begin to confront and reimagine the historically sedimented questions and problem(atizations) through which we address the world" (2019, p.12). That is, an environment with a curriculum within which we can re-constitute our present – opening up a room, understood as a room of concrete freedom, that is possible transformation' (Foucault 1972, p. 5, as cited in Ball, 2018).

Second, according to Ball, the goal of incorporating subjugated knowledge is also to enable the development of an awareness of one's current condition as defined and constructed by the given culture and historical moment. What this means is to bring learners to the awareness that what they conceive as reality is, in fact, orchestrated by the culture and the time during which they exist; and that this reality should be dismantled to make room for other versions of reality.

Third, such an education environment should encourage an attitude of critique with a focus on the production of particular sorts of dispositions that would be valued and fostered, made explicit (questions of subjectivity) – like skepticism, detachment, outrage, intolerance and tolerance. This would involve the valuing and facilitating both what Olssen (2009, as cited in Ball, 2018 calls 'difference', as the basis of 'thin' community, and audacity and fearlessness.

Conceived and practiced in this way education becomes an exploration and mapping of limits, and testing and crossing them when possible – a set of multiple transgressions that allow 'individuals to peer over the edge of their limits, but also confirms the impossibility of removing them' Ball, 2018, p.18).

Such experiences have 'the function of wrenching the subject from itself, of seeing to it that the subject is no longer itself, or that it is brought to its annihilation or its dissolution. This is a project of desubjectivation' (Foucault 2000, p.241). This is a sequence of moments, openings, spaces in which unlearning is possible – an exploration of ethical heterotopias, real and unreal, where difference is affirmed, 'a sort of simultaneously mythic and real contestation of the space in which we live' (Mahmood, 2011, p.48). In relation to this first and foremost, students must be recognized as ethical beings capable of reflection, decision-making and responsibility for their identity and their social relations. That is to say, 'ethical self formation as moral pedagogy allows for the maintenance and production of the learners' freedom' (Infinito, 2003 p.68). In a similar way, Sicilia-Camacho & Fernández-Balboa (2009, p.458), as cited in Bar-Yam et al., 2002recast critical pedagogy in Foucauldian terms and assert that, '[O]ur version of CP [critical pedagogy] seeks the construction of personal-pedagogical-political ethics while acknowledging the legitimacy of different 'pedagogical games' and "regimes of truth'. Likewise, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, bell hooks, Rey Chow and other women of color practicing cultural studies have extended the cultural studies notion of Otherness as "affirmation of otherness and negation of metadiscourse" Bar-Yam et al., 2002

This study employed the three elements of Foucault's 'philosophical ethos', i.e. experiment, awareness and critique as these have been adopted across disciplines in the humanities and social sciences, especially in cultural studies, feminism and other areas. Foucault's critique has been proven to have positively affected students' learning outcomes. Moreover, the capacity of activating counter-narratives and understanding the past differently which is inherent in his philosophy creates a perfect fit for a course in history, the subject in this study.

3. Methodology

The method utilized in this study is qualitative, with the combination of classroom observation and text analysis as means of data collection.

Led by the philosophical tenets inherent in Foucault's critique of education (1980), the researcher designed a course that embraces the concepts of freedom, awareness, and critique along with the incorporation of subjugated knowledge. The course spanned over the second semester of the fiscal year 2019-2020, during which two textbooks were used. Students were notified of the purpose of the course prior to the beginning of the semester.

Over the first half of the semester, students participating in the class were responsible for reading, presenting and discussing issues in the text *American History* (11th edition) by Alan Brinkley, a mainstream and influential historian. The narratives included in this text are told from the perspective of the dominant American groups, i.e. Whites and males. In the second half, students did the same with the text *A People's History of the USA* by Howard Zinn, a revisionist and well-known historian while comparing the content and writing styles between the two authors. Materials covered in the text by Zinn are subjugated knowledge as history in this text is written from bottom-up through the lenses of marginalized people such as the Black, Native Americans, and women. The themes covered in the semester included the depiction of Christopher Columbus and the discovery of America, the Indians, the slavery system in America, the American revolution and the role of women in colonial America.

Towards the end of the semester, the students were allowed to choose one of the themes and write a paper for their final assignment. The task involved the comparison and contrast between the two authors (i.e. Alan Brinkley and Howard Zinn) with regard to their ways in the depiction of personalities/people and events covered in the semester. After being collected and graded, the papers were analyzed to identify evidence of critiques from students.

3.1. Participants and object of study

Participants in the study were 32 junior students taking the course of The U.S History in the second semester of the fiscal year 2019-2020. The objects of this study are students' participation in classroom activities and reflection indicated in their final papers.

3.2. Data collection procedure

Data in this study, which is descriptive in nature, was collected between March and August, 2020. The procedure was divided into two phases with the first one being reserved for classroom observation (from March 2020 to June 2020) and the second one for text analysis (from late-July to mid-August 2020). During the first phase, notes were taken in class sessions with regard to the impact of the experimental education model on students' engagement in classroom activities and discussions as well as the fashions in which they carried out their learning process. The second phase involved the collection and analysis of students' final assignments for evidence of reflection after the intervention. More specifically, details of comparison, contrast and critique by students in the papers were identified for analysis. To ensure confidentiality, students participating in the research are referred to in this paper with their initials.

4. Findings and discussion

4.1. The impacts of the experimental education model on students' engagement in classroom activities

At the beginning of the semester, students were required to form 10 groups to be responsible for the synthesis, presentation and discussion of 10 topics from the two textbooks. The instructor only gave the topics and left the rest for students to make their own decision. This was carried out without any intervention from the instructor with the purpose of giving students more agency with regard to whom they wanted to work with and what they wished to work on.

Observations in class indicate that students were a lot more active and really took control of the activities in the classroom. For this particular course, the instructor always entered the classroom through the backdoor, and sat in the back row with other students, leaving the front for those (students) who were in charge for each class session. Students, with the self-assigned tasks, presented the materials, conducted the discussion and gave critique to each other's ideas. Students also manifested a much higher level of concentration to their peers' performance.

The amount of time allocated for these activities was pretty balanced, and the manner in which these activities were carried out was various, especially in the discussion session. Each leading group usually divided the class into smaller groups and gave them discussion questions. Sometimes, the leaders allowed students to form

discussion groups on their own. The instructor only engaged in the final stage to wrap up the session, mostly by synthesizing the materials and students' ideas, and giving feedback on students' performance. However, there were also occasions when the instructor had to intervene when discussion came to a halt due to students' lack of ideas or leaders' failure to engage their peers.

4.2. The impacts of the experimental education model on students' ability to provide critiques and reflect attitudes

Table 4.2. Results from paper analysis

Topic	No. of students choosing the topic	No. of Instances of comparison and Contrast	No. of Instances of critiques	No. of Instances of attitudes
Slavery system	12	20	7	4
Roles of women	5	5	3	1
Christopher Columbus	4	4	2	1
The Indians (Native Americans)	3	3	0	0
The American Revolution	6	6	3	2
The American Civil War	1	1	1	1
The Vietnam War	1	1	1	1

For the final assignment, students were allowed to choose a topic of their interest about American History. In particular, students were requested to make a comparison and contrast between Alan Brinkley and Howard Zinn in the depiction of the event or personality incorporated in the topic and draw a conclusion for themselves. The results from Table 4.2 reveal that the slavery system in the U.S was the most popular topic with 12 students opting to write about it. This was followed by the American Revolution, the roles of women and Christopher Columbus with 6,5, and 4 students picking them respectively. Meanwhile, the number of students who chose the American Civil War and Vietnam War was the same, with only 1 for both topics.

The data also show that all students, except for the one who chose to write about Indian-Americans, fulfilled the requirements to compare and contrast, critique and express their attitudes about the event/personality.

Closer examination indicates that evidence of in-depth analysis of the texts was found in most students' papers prior to their conclusion on a particular issue. For instance, over the topic of slavery system, one student wrote, "*Besides [sic] the same views, the difference in the arguments of Brinkley and Zinn stand out more. First, while Alan Brinkley wanted to amend the traditional narrative of American history, Howard Zinn* **had revealed the truth about the abuse and greed of the government in history**" (L.H.B.C - student assignment submitted online on July 17, 2020). This is an example of how students were informed and their outlook could be changed thanks to being exposed to different bodies of knowledge. In this particular example, the students used the phrase 'revealed the truth' (in bold) to talk about not only another version of truth but also his/her recognition of this version of truth.

Some students even went far and beyond the requirements to provide a critique of the authors' writing styles, as illustrated in this excerpt, "*Brinkley tended to structure his content by placing them under headings. By*

doing so, he intentionally shaped how readers would [sic] view of a particular event or issue. [...] This made his pieces of writing quite subjective, one-sided, imposing and opinionated when mentioning women." (T.K.M, student assignment submitted online on July 17, 2020). The student juxtaposed this with "*[t]his contrasts sharply with Zinn, who wrote his book in general and the way he referred to women in particular was in an unbiased manner using a host of sources to back up his arguments* (T.K.M, student assignment submitted online on July 17, 2020). Through the comparison and critique of the authors' writing styles in their portrayal of women in colonial USA, the student indirectly expressed his/her preference (ie. his/her attitude) towards the version penned by Howard Zinn.

Ultimately, the target of the assignment was to encourage students to draw their own conclusions about the chosen topic. Analysis of their papers indicate that the majority of students appreciated the multi-faceted knowledge provided by the combination of both texts, claiming this gave them a more well-rounded understanding of the historical event/figure. For instance, as the student reflected upon the analysis of the American Revolution depicted in the two textbooks, this was found, "*Both Howard Zinn and Alan Brinkley brought out many aspects in the American Revolution with the similarities or [sic] the differences views. But [sic] all really interesting and [sic] meaning for us. All [sic] views of two authors convey more valuable knowledge about the United States of America history"* (Đ.T.*Q.N,* student assignment submitted online on July 17, 2020*).* Another student who chose to write about the depiction of Christopher Columbus wrote, "*Columbus was neither a demon nor a saint. His characteristics were positive and some rather negative. [...] However, good or bad, Columbus created a bridge between the old and new world" (L.H.Đ,* student assignment submitted online on July 17, 2020). Such examples reflect the effect of subjugated knowledge on students' perception and understanding of the nature of knowledge.

There were also instances in which students delved into the authors' background to provide an explanation for the authors' stance and attitudes prior to drawing a conclusion of their own although the proportion of those who could do this was marginal. One student wrote, "*However, it appears to me that due to the fact that Zinn is a Jewish, a group of people who suffered a troubled past, his way of writing seemed to be friendlier and more sympathetic towards the marginalized people, including women. Personally, Zinn's pieces of writing made me realize that there are unknown facets which may not be consistent with [sic] the mainstream history, as opposed to Brinkley who tended to summarize facts and events. Therefore, Zinn's book is more intended to and for the people of the United States" (T. K. M,* student assignment submitted online on July 17, 2020). In this particular example, the student's performance was up to a whole new level when s/he was able to demonstrate the reasons behind his/her attitude towards a text (a body of knowledge).

From the findings in classroom observations, it can be inferred that the experimental education model did exert positive impacts on the classroom dynamics. As students had few constraints regarding the organization of class activities, they were empowered and more aware of their active role in their own learning process as well as the education environment in which they participated. Moreover, the fact that the instructor sat in the back row mingling with other students did alleviate the pressure of being under surveillance from students. In other words, this practice allowed students to have more freedom in conducting their own learning process, which ultimately results in more autonomy from their part. Applied this way, two initial criteria of the education model inspired by Foucault - freedom and awareness- were achieved. The higher level of concentration observed in class can be understood as active learning among the students which included learning the material and their peers' ways of navigating in class. Ultimately, students are recognized as ethical beings capable of demonstrating reflection, decision-making and responsibility for their identity and their social relations. Difficulties encountered by students during the process were observed, with tackling long texts and finalizing the research questions being the most obvious. However, those were overcome as students proceeded further into the semester and assistance was provided by the instructor.

With regard to students' choice of topics for their final assignment, statistics speak volume about the impact of subjugated knowledge on students' motivation to explore and study. As the fashion in which these themes (i.e. the American slavery system, the American Revolution, the roles of women and Christopher Columbus) are

executed in the texts reflects the most distinctive differences between the two authors, students' curiosity to explore the themes further was triggered. In other words, it was in these themes that the stark contrast between the two versions of the American history was found, which could be used to explain students' preference over these topics. The timing of the application of this experimental education model was reasonable since the students in this class were all junior college students who had already undergone 4 semesters prior to this and had acquired a decent amount of knowledge in their major. Hence, 'unlearning' (Foucault, 1980) was possible.

Results from in-depth analysis of students' papers show that the majority of students were able to provide critiques towards the texts and the manner in which those texts depict historical events or figures. This is an indication of initial success in the application of the experimental education model based on subjugated knowledge because students were able to not only synthesize the materials but also reflect upon the historical event/figure of their choice. Inherent in this is their recognition that one's background can have pivotal impacts on how one perceives and portrays reality, and along the way, creates knowledge. As a result, knowledge (and epistemology) should be contested and should not be taken as it is. This can also be understood as an indication of how students' awareness about themselves and their relationship to others is enhanced and reflected.

The preliminary results of this research have significant implications in the teaching and learning process, especially in the humanities and social sciences. As educators, teachers should be aware of the fact that teaching and learning is not just a process of transferring and acquiring knowledge, rather it is a process of transforming, contesting and dismantling the sedimented epistemology. As a result, teaching should not be restricted in reinforcing norms and power hierarchy; rather, it should be geared towards fostering changes in students' perceptions and outlook. In order to achieve that goal, teachers should be open, and proactively seek and incorporate other bodies of knowledge into the curriculum; which can be translated as giving more power to both teachers and students in the classroom.

Students should be aware of the multi-faceted nature of knowledge as well as their active role in their own learning process. Hence, establishing a practice of questioning the validity of knowledge/information, examining different perspectives and delving in the quest of truth should be instilled in them from early on. Students can look for other sources of knowledge and information in their self-studying process or with the help of their instructors.

5. Conclusion

The study was undertaken with the aim of evaluating the impact of subjugated knowledge on students' performance in class and on their perception of knowledge in general. The researcher deployed a combination of classroom observation and text analysis for data collection. Ultimately, it seeks the answer to the question: What are the potentials of subjugated knowledge in teaching and learning; and particularly, what is the role of subjugated knowledge in shaping students' outlook?

Findings reveal that the experimental education model was relatively effective in bringing about a healthy learning environment in which freedom, awareness and critique are ensured and encouraged. As a result, students were a lot more proactive and confident in their learning process with clear evidence of their initiatives in all stages throughout the semester. The application of the tenets in Foucault's philosophy of subjugated knowledge also resulted in students' recognition of the multi-faceted nature of knowledge, which was reflected in the analysis of students' final papers. More importantly, students have come to realize that there are other bodies of knowledge and the possibilities of understanding the past differently, which can result in social justice.

In conclusion, the classroom dynamics and students' learning outcomes have shown positive transformation owing to the exposure of students to a body of subjugated knowledge in the history of the United States of America. This revelation is of great significance in fostering changes in teachers' pedagogical practice and students' learning approach. Although further endeavors could be carried out for more data, especially those on

students' response towards the application of the experimental education model, initial feedback constitutes affirmation about the validity of this application.

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KIẾN THỨC PHI CHÍNH THỐNG VÀ TIỀM NĂNG THAY ĐỔI THÁI ĐỘ VÀ THẾ GIỚI QUAN CỦA NGƯỜI HỌC: NGHIÊN CỨU Ở MỘT LỚP HỌC LỊCH SỬ HOA KỲ

Tóm tắt: Khái niệm kiến thức phi chính thống do Foucault (1980) đề xuất đã được nhiều nhà giáo dục và học giả nghiên cứu và ứng dụng rộng rãi trong nhiều chuyên ngành và lĩnh vực khác nhau nhằm tạo nên một phương pháp giáo dục đề cao tính đa diện của kiến thức đồng thời thách thức sự thống trị của khoa học luận chính thống. Bài báo trình bày kết quả sơ bộ của một nghiên cứu thực nghiệm sử dụng kiến thức phi chính thống trong nỗ lực nhằm khuyến khích người học suy nghĩ khác biệt và hoài nghi về thực tế được xây dựng trong các sách giáo khoa lịch sử chính thống của Hoa Kỳ. Kết quả cho thấy mặc dù có nhiều trở ngại ban đầu trong việc làm quen với các khái niệm mới, người học rất hào hứng và tích cực trong suốt quá trình học tập. Bên cạnh đó, các dấu hiệu về sự thay đổi trong cách nhìn nhận về lịch sử của người học (dù còn khá khiêm tốn) đã được thể hiện trong bài tập cuối kỳ của sinh viên.

Từ khóa: kiến thức phi chính thống, thái độ, suy nghĩ khác biệt, khoa học luận, lịch sử