Disturbing the future:
Curriculum Change in an Israeli Kibbutz School

Sociolinguistics and anthropology have often underscored the experiential import of narrative (see review by Ochs and Capps, 1996). Hymes (1975) celebrates narrative as a universal function of language. Nevertheless because of its positioning within a particular context, strong affective cadences, lack of qualitative or quantitative systematicity, linkages to individual experience,—and perhaps even “encounter” in Buberian (1923) terms, we often do not frame narrative as knowledge-making. This talk is encouraged and threatened by all of the above notions because it is a personal narrative that seeks knowledge-making status as, perhaps, the role of the essay seeks knowledge-making status in a recent issue of the Teachers College Record (Hansen, 2011). This talk travels down personal pathways to revisit a communal educational framework within the Israeli Kibbutz Movement where its author spent much of his adult life. It explores multiple explanations for shifts in the equations of the author’s pedagogy that led to exploratory practices, the inclusion of “taboo” political themes, community, and a negotiated project-based syllabus.

Ari Sherris is a lecturer of language and education at Teachers College. His research and development interests include Salish, Miccosukee, and Ghanian oracy and literacy curriculum development. Publications are forthcoming in the International Review of Education, Intercultural Education, and in M. C. Jones and S. Ogilvie (Eds.) Keeping languages alive: Documentation, Pedagogy, and Revitalization, Cambridge University Press.

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