



IDENTITY AS AN ANALYTIC LENS
FOR RESEARCH IN EDUCATION*

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Introduction

In today's fast changing and interconnected global world, researchers in a variety of areas have come to see identity as an important analytic tool for understanding schools and society. A focus on the contextually specific ways in which people act out and recognize identities allows a more dynamic approach than the sometimes overly general and static trio of "race, class, and gender". However, the term "identity" has taken on a great many different meanings in the literature. Rather than survey this large literature, I will sketch out but one approach that draws on one consistent strand of that literature. This is not to deny that other, equally useful, approaches are possible, based on different selections from the literature.

When any human being acts and interacts in a given context, others recognize that person as acting and interacting as a certain "kind of person" or even as several different "kinds" at once (on the notion "kinds of people" and the ways in which different kinds appear and disappear in history, see Hacking, 1983, 1986, 1994, 1995, 1998). A person might be recognized as being a certain kind of radical feminist, homeless person, overly macho male, "yuppie", street gang member, community activist, academic, kindergarten teacher, "at risk" student, and so on and so forth, through countless possibilities. The "kind of person" one is recognized as "being", at a given time and place, can change from moment to moment in the interaction, can change from context to context, and, of course, can be ambiguous or unstable.

Being recognized as a certain "kind of person", in a given context, is what I will mean by "identity". In this sense of the term, all people have multiple identities connected not to their "internal states", but to their performances in society. This is not to

deny that each of us has what we might call a "core identity" that holds more uniformly, for oneself and others, across contexts. Core identity is not the subject of this paper, though I will take a stab at defining what this might mean below (in Section 2).

There are, of course, other terms in circulation for what I am calling "identity" (e.g., the term "subjectivity") and "core identity" (e.g., some people reserve the term "identity" for "core identity"). I don't think it is important what terms we use. Rather, what is important for me here is to show how the notion of identity, in the sense I have defined it, can be used as an analytic tool for studying important issues of theory and practice in education.

In Section 1 below I develop a specific perspective on identity built around four perspectives on what it means to be recognized as a "certain kind of person". Section 2 discusses how identities are tied to the workings of historical, institutional, and sociocultural forces. The notion of identity has played a pivotal role in the literature on "modernism" and the critique of modernism embedded in the literature on "postmodernism". In Section 3, I deal with identity in the formation and workings of "modern" societies and in Section 4 I deal with identity from a postmodern perspective. Section 4 also deals with an issue that is a sub-theme of this paper, namely the nature of the so-called "new capitalism" (the capitalism of our current technologically-driven, knowledge-based global economy, see Gee, Hull, & Lankshear, 1996) and its implications for identity and changes in identity. Section 5 develops a specific example of how the approach to identity developed here applies to some sample data, offering a set of interpretive tools that lead us (like all interpretive tools) to look more closely at some issues and less closely at others. Section 6 briefly discusses educational research

and some current trends in that research in terms of the perspective on identity sketched out in this paper.

Section 1: Four Ways to View Identity

Figure 1 below sketches out four ways to view identity, that is, what it means to be a "certain kind of person". In the discussion below I first use an example that might be considered prototypical for each perspective on identity (being an identical twin; being a college professor; being a charismatic person; and being a "Trekkie"). Then I show how each perspective can be applied to a single example (namely "being ADHD").

	<u>Process</u>	<u>Power</u>	<u>Source of Power</u>
1. Nature-Identity: a state	developed from	forces	in nature
2. Institution-Identity: a position	authorized by	authorities	within institutions
3. Discourse-Identity: an individual trait	recognized in	the discourse/ dialogue	of/with "rational" individuals
4. Affinity-Identity: experiences	shared in	the practice	of "affinity groups"

Figure 1
Four Ways to View Identity

Different societies, and different historical periods, have tended to foreground one or the other of these perspectives on identity (Taylor, 1989, 1994). In a rough way, Western society has moved historically from foregrounding the first perspective (we are what we are primarily because of our "natures"), through the second (we are what we are primarily because of the positions we occupy in society), to the third (we are what we are primarily because of our individual accomplishments as they are interactionally recognized by others). The fourth perspective (we are what we are because of the experiences we have had within certain sorts of "affinity groups") is, I will argue, gaining prominence in the "new capitalism" (discussed below). However, in a society like the United States, all these perspectives co-exist.

It is crucial to realize that these four perspectives are *not* separate from each other. Both in theory and practice they inter-relate in complex and important ways. Rather than discrete categories, they are ways to focus our attention on different aspects of how identities are formed and sustained. Another way to put the matter is this: they are four ways to formulate questions about how identity is functioning for a specific person (child or adult) in a given context or across a set of different contexts. Another way to put the matter is this: they are four stands that may very well all be present and woven together as a given person acts within a given context. Nonetheless, we can still ask, for a given time and place, which strand or strands predominate and why.

The first perspective I will call **the nature perspective** (or N-Identities). Let me first use an example from my own life. Part of my identity, one way of looking at "who I am", is that I am an *identical twin*. Being an identical twin is a **state** that I am in, not anything that I have done or accomplished. The source of this state--the "power" that

determines it or to which I am "subject"--is a **force** (in this case, genes) over which I had no control. In turn, the source of this power is **nature**, not society, and the process through which this power works is **development** (it unfolds outside my control or the control of society).

For another example, one to which I will return below when considering our other perspectives on identity, consider the example of a child who is quite motorically active in a classroom and whose attention often wanders. Given other aspects of the context, this child's teacher may send the child to get tested for a variety of "disorders". Either a psychologist or a doctor might, then, diagnose the child as having "ADHD". One common view of this disorder is that it is a fixed internal state of the child, either caused by the child's neurology or by early events in the child's life (Haber, 2000). This is to treat the child's behaviors in terms of an N-Identity, a matter of "nature" (e.g., due to genes or neurological "defects") or of the "nature of the child" (e.g., the child's mind/brain as it has been modified by the child's earlier physical or social environment).

Plato, in the *Republic*, famously argued that people come in different grades or qualities fixed by nature (they are born with gold, silver, or bronze in their souls). He also developed a mating scheme in which gold people would mate with gold people, silver with silver, and bronze with bronze. In turn, these grades or qualities suit people for different (higher and lower) positions in society. Thus, we can see Plato as attempting to ensure that, in a "perfect" society, institutional identities in terms of higher and lower status roles in society would be sanctioned by and aligned with (what Plato took to be) natural (biological) identities. A great many others in Western society have followed in Plato's footsteps in this respect (Gould, 1981; Laqueur, 1990).

Of course natural identities can only become identities because they are *recognized*, by myself or others, as meaningful in the sense that they constitute (at least, in part) the "kind of person" I am. Thanks to "nature", I have a spleen, but this (at least, for now) does not constitute anything meaningful, for me or others, in terms of my being a certain kind of person. Thus, N-Identities must always gain their force as identities through the work of institutions, discourse and dialogue, or affinity groups, that is, the very forces that constitute our other perspectives on identity.

It is because certain institutions (e.g., the medical profession or researchers using twin studies to make arguments about the importance of genes) make something out of the fact that I am identical twin, or because certain people respond to me in regard to being a twin in certain ways, or because I join some affinity group that organizes "twin activities" (perhaps, on the Internet) that my N-Identity as a identical twin becomes an identity at all. In this sense, N-Identities always collapse into other sorts of identities. Of course, when people (and institutions) focus on them as "natural" or "biological", they often do this as a way to "forget" or "hide" (often for ideological reasons) the institutional, social-interactional, or group work that is required to create and sustain them *as identities*.

The second perspective on identity I will call **the institutional perspective** (or I-Identities). To take another example from my own life, it is part of my identity, one way of looking at "who I am", that I am a professor in a University. Being a professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison is a **position**. It is not something that nature gave me or anything I could accomplish by myself. The source of my position as a Professor--the "power" that determines it or to which I am "subject"--is a set of **authorities** (in this case,

the Board of Trustees, the administration of the University, and the senior faculty in my Department). In turn, the source of this power is not nature, but an **institution** (namely, the University of Wisconsin). The process through which this power works is **authorization**, that is, laws, rules, traditions, or principals of various sorts allow the authorities to "author" the position of Professor of Education and to "author" its occupant in terms of holding the rights and responsibilities that go with that position.

Let me return to the example of a child who is quite motorically active in a classroom and whose attention often wanders. Once the child is "officially" diagnosed as ADHD by a psychologist or a doctor, and, thus, potentially gains ADHD as an N-Identity (part of the "nature" or state of the child), the child often (but not always) becomes a client of psychological and/or medical personnel who officially diagnose, attempt to remediate, and continuously monitor the disorder. When this happens the child's ADHD can also function as an I-Identity, an institutional identity (Mehan, Hertweck, & Lee, 1986).

The child takes up a position or role "officially" defined by (the ever changing) psychological and medical discourses and practices relevant to ADHD. Now the child's N-Identity and I-Identity mutually support and sustain each other. The child can, in fact, become deeply socialized as a "representative" ADHD child (in word and deed) as this is defined by the clinical institutions "in charge" of ADHD. Institutions (not just people's "everyday" rationality or "common sense") come to ensure (and sometimes enforce) that the child, and his or her behaviors, are recognized in a certain way, and not others (Foucault, 1973, 1977).

I-Identities can be put on a continuum in terms of how actively or passively the occupant of a position fills or fulfills his or her role or duties. For me, being a professor is a "vocation" or "calling" and I attempt, to the best of my abilities, to fulfill the duties of the position. For prisoners, on the other hand, it may well be the case that they see their position as imposed on them, forcing them into carrying out certain activities that they might not choose to do on their own (though this need not be true of all prisoners, of course). Thus, one can see an I-Identity as either a **calling** or as an **imposition**. For most children with I-Identities as ADHD, their I-Identity is an imposition, rather than a calling (which can, of course, become a significant part of their problems).

The third perspective on identity I will call **the discursive perspective** (or D-Identities). Let me here take as an example a close friend and colleague of mine. It is part of the identity of this person that she is "charismatic"--this is one way of looking at "who she is". Being charismatic, in the sense I intend here, is an **individual** trait, a matter of one's **individuality**. It is not something that one just "is" ("born with"--note that one cannot be charismatic all alone by oneself on an island) and it is not something that some institution creates and upholds. However, to say that being charismatic is an individual trait is decidedly not to say that it is something one can achieve all by oneself. The source of this trait--the "power" that determines it or to which my friend is "subject"--is the **discourse** or **dialogue** of other people. It is only because other people treat, talk about, and interact with my friend as a charismatic person that she is one.

In turn, the source of this power is not nature or an institution, but "**rational individuals**". By "rational" here I mean only that these individuals treat, talk about, and interact with my friend as charismatic for reasons (or for what count as "reasons" to them

and others like them) and not because they are "forced" to do this by ritual, tradition, laws, rules, or institutional authority (which would render the trait an I-Identity). The process through which this power works is **recognition**, that is, the fact that rational individuals recognize my friend as charismatic (in their treatment of, talk, and interaction with her). We have seen above that institutions have to rely on discursive practices to construct and sustain I-Identities, but people can construct and sustain identities through discourse and dialogue (D-Identities) without the overt sanction and support of "official" institutions that come, in some sense, to "own" those identities.

Again, let me return to the example of a child who is quite motorically active in a classroom and whose attention often wanders. Such a child can get recognized in different ways in the same setting by different actors and in different ways in different settings by the same actors. So, for example, in a particularly chaotic, unsupportive, or frustrating classroom, the child may behave in such a way that his or her teacher recognizes and orients to the child as having problems with attention and activity, even as "ADHD" in a "folk" sense (Varenne & McDermott, 1999). There may be no institutional apparatus in the school to officially designate the child as having any particular label, the teacher may simply orient towards the child in terms of her "folk" or "everyday" theories of attention, activity, ADHD, or other disorders. In another classroom, or at home, the child may be recognized and oriented to as "normal" or even proactively creative.

Here we see behaviors being treated, at least initially, as a D-Identity (a discursive identity). The identity is not being primarily sanctioned and sustained by clinical institutions, but arises as an emergent property of the ways in which the child's words and deeds get recognized by actors not officially part of the clinical institutions that primarily

create and sustain ADHD as an I-Identity. Interestingly, in this case, some of the values, attitudes, and viewpoints (however skewed) of institutions "officially" in charge of ADHD have floated into people's everyday recognition systems (which is a common and important matter).

Like I-Identities, D-Identities can be placed on a continuum in terms of how active or passive one is in "recruiting" them, that is, in terms of how much such identities can be viewed as merely ascribed to a person versus an active achievement or accomplishment of that person. For instance, my friend may actively recruit and facilitate the responses of others that constitute her D-Identity as charismatic. Or she may view being charismatic as merely a trait ascribed to her through the ways in which people respond to her in talk and interaction, as well as how they talk and write about her when she is not present. Some well off children today, and their families, actively attempt to get recognized as "learning disabled" so that they can get more time on tests and other sorts of "special" treatment. Other children--often poorer children--have disabilities ascribed to their behaviors even when they are the sorts of behaviors that would not bring such an ascription if they were the behaviors of more privileged children. Thus, one can see a D-Identity as an **ascription** or an **achievement**.

Today there are adults with the sorts of attention spans and motor behaviors that can get one diagnosed as ADHD who have actively redefined their behaviors in positive terms--as examples of fluid and dynamic attentional processes and creative proactivity (Martin, 1995, 2000a, b). These adults seek to get recognized and oriented to in such terms. We can say that they are constructing and negotiating an achieved D-Identity for themselves as "fluid actors and thinkers", let us say (there need not be any widely

accepted label, as of yet, for a D-Identity to be a site of negotiation). They are seeking to get others ("everyday" people, as well as doctors, for instance) to recognize them (in and through their words and deeds) in a certain way, though they do not necessarily want this identity enshrined (or policed) by any institution or institutions. They see themselves as "fashioning" themselves in a particular way.

Let me point out, once again, that, of course, institutional identities (I-Identities) require discourse and dialogue to sustain themselves (thus, they recruit the forces that sustain D-Identities). If no one talked about and treated professors as professors, then the university could not sustain them as professors. However the point is that a given identity (such as being a priest or a professor) can primarily be underwritten and sustained by an institution or institutional forces or not. When an identity is underwritten and sustained by an institution, that institution works, across time and space, to see to it that certain sorts of discourse, dialogue, and interactions happen often enough and in similar enough ways to sustain the I-Identities it underwrites.

Of course, an institution (say a church) could underwrite and sustain "being charismatic" as an attribute of being in a particular position (say their analogue of the papacy). In that case, "being charismatic" would be an I-Identity. However, in the case of my friend, no such institution sustains her charisma, she has to achieve it herself (or have it ascribed to her), albeit through social interactions. It is not attributed directly to a social position within an institution (and, then, secondarily to that position's occupant), as it would if it were an I-Identity. It is a particularly "modern" plight that people must negotiate and sustain a number of crucial identities without overt support from traditional, stable, or "official" institutions. Of course, as people attempt to negotiate and

sustain these identities (e.g., as a "fluid, proactive person", rather than a clinically-sanctioned ADHP patient), they may seek to create new institutions or affinity groups of the sort to which I now turn.

The fourth perspective on identity I will call **the affinity perspective** (or A-Identities). Here I will take the example of someone who is a Star Trek fan in the sense and way the people portrayed in the movie *Trekkies* are. This is one way of looking at "who this person is". Being a Star Trek fan, in the sense I intend here, is composed of sets of distinctive **experiences** (e.g., attending shows, meeting actors from Star Trek at such shows, chatting on the Internet, collecting memorabilia, trading such memorabilia, dressing like a character in Star Trek, reading certain materials, etc.). The source of this access--the "power" that determines it or to which the person is "subject"--is a set of distinctive **practices**. In turn, the source of this power is not nature or an institution, nor even other people's discourse and dialogue alone, but an "**affinity group**".

Let me try to be clear by what I mean by an "affinity group". An affinity group is made up of people who may be dispersed across a large space (may, in fact, be in different countries). They may share little besides their interest in, say, Star Trek. What people in the group share, and must share to constitute an affinity group, is *allegiance to, access to, and participation in specific practices* that give each of its members the requisite experiences. The process through which this power works, then, is **participation or sharing**.

For members of an affinity group, their allegiance is *primarily* to a set of common endeavors or practices and *secondarily* to other people in terms of shared culture or traits. Of course, they need these other people (as well as discourse and dialogue of certain

sorts) for these practices to exist, but it is these practices and the experiences they gain from them that create and sustain their allegiance to these other people. A focus on A-Identities is a focus on distinctive social practices that create and sustain group affiliations, rather than on institutions or discourse/dialogue directly.

Let me return one final time to the example of a child who is quite motorically active in a classroom and whose attention often wanders. There are people today who view and orient to ADHD in terms of their affiliations within shared practices with others, including others who do not have ADHD as a N- or I-Identity. Such people engage in joint experiences with others--for example, attending groups and events, engaging in political action, creating and participating in Internet sites, sharing information and new procedures and practices, and so forth. One need only type "ADHD" into any search engine and some of the resources for constructing an A-Identity will be readily apparent.

These people are spread out, often across the globe. Some have ADHD "officially", some are self-designated, others are simply advocates. They are all part of a "morally heated affinity group" (Beck, 1994) sharing inside information on ADHD and related matters and advocating for various policies and changes in values and attitudes. Here the identity of being ADHD or an ADHD advocate becomes a matter of sharing certain experiences, causes, and conduits of communication with others. It becomes an affiliation.

It would seem that an affinity group is something that one must actively choose to join. While I could force someone to engage in specific practices, I really can't coerce anyone into seeing the particular experiences connected to those practices as constitutive

(in part) of the "kind of person" they are. However, things are more complicated here. It is popular today, in the "new capitalism", for institutions to attempt to create affinity groups (Rifkin, 2000). For example, businesses try to create a specific sort of affinity group out of their employees or customers. The business creates (socially engineers) certain practices that ensure that employees or customers gain certain experiences, that they experience themselves and others in certain ways, and that they behave and value in certain ways. The business hopes to create a bonding among the employees or customers, as well as to the business, through the employees' or customers' participation in and allegiance to these practices.

For example, Gee, Hull, and Lankshear (1996) discuss immigrant women who are assembling electronic boards for computers. They are not merely expected to behave as "workers" (an I-Identity) in the traditional sense in which they carry out the duties prescribed by management. Rather, they are expected to work in teams, meet in "quality circles", and engage in other practices that are meant to constitute them as an affinity group that designs and redesigns their own work processes (and identities) as if they were their own "bosses". It is almost as if they are expected to become a "fan club" for the business, a fan club that actually carries out the work of the company without being "bossed around". Another way to put the matter is this: the business engages in the "fiction" that each team of women is a business in its own right, creating its own "culture". The business seeks to "disappear" or hide itself as an institution that controls and "authorizes" ("subjugate") the women, though, of course, its power is readily apparent in a good many other respects.

To give another sort of example. Many companies today--for instance, the company that makes the Saturn car--create activities around which its customers come together as an affinity group (e.g., proud owners of Saturns). These people attend social gatherings across the country and engage in other practices (e.g., club meetings, newsletters, Internet chats) that create an allegiance to each other as co-participants in these practices. However, a business (an institution) has created and sustains this whole process for its own benefit (however much the Saturn affinity group may feel independent of the business).

It is not just businesses that seek to create affinity groups. A popular wave of school reform has called for creating classrooms as "communities of learners" (e.g., Brown, 1994; Brown, Ash, Rutherford, Nakagawa, Gordon, & Campione, 1993). Such classrooms stress collaborative (group, team) learning, distributed knowledge (that is, knowledge that is not in any one person's head, but distributed across the group, its practices, and the tools and technologies it uses), and a variety of other sorts of distinctive learning practices (e.g., collaborative research, the Jigsaw method, use of the Internet, and email to outside experts, etc.). These practices and the ways in which learners share and co-participate in them are meant to create a distinctive identity for learners (together with others, e.g., university scientists, who may share in the community of learners from afar on email, for example), an identity in terms of which they are proactive inquirers and responsible for each other's learning. The learners become something like an affinity group, though, once again, one that is sponsored by an institution that still retains a good deal of power (i.e., the school, the teacher, and the reformers/researchers)

I will say that such institutionally created A-Identities, whether orchestrated by businesses, schools, or other institutions, are "institutionally sanctioned". A-Identities that are less directly the product of the workings of an institution, I will say are "not institutionally sanctioned".

Ulrich Beck (1992, 1994, see also Beck, Giddens, & Lash, 1994) has argued that what he calls "morally heated affinity groups" are becoming a central organizing force in the new capitalist ("postmodern") world. People (e.g., "greens", school reformers, anti-abortion proponents) engage in a set of practices around a given issue or cause (e.g., saving virgin forests, gaining a charter school, changing abortion laws) through which they come to affiliate and identify with other people with whom they share these practices. However, they may share very little else with these people, may actively disaffiliate with them in respect to other issues, and may end their affiliation once the given cause is "resolved" or they choose to move on to other causes (see, for example, see Holt, 1999 for a fascinating discussion of how African Americans and neoliberal Republican politicians in Wisconsin affiliated to introduce school vouchers in Milwaukee). I will argue below, as well, that some groups of people, especially "elites", are coming to share a set of practices and experiences with other well off people across the world (a certain "lifestyle") in terms of which they are coming to constitute a powerful affinity group that transcends local and state borders.

Section 2: Recognition, Interpretive Systems, and Discourses

One cannot have an identity of any sort without some *interpretive system* underwriting the recognition of that identity (Taylor, 1994). The interpretive system may be peoples' historically and culturally different views of nature; it may be the norms, traditions, and rules of institutions; it may be the discourse and dialogue of others; or it may be the workings of affinity groups. What is important about identity is that almost any identity trait can be understood in terms of any of these different interpretive systems. People can actively construe the same identity trait in different ways, and they can negotiate and contest how their traits are to be seen (by themselves and others) in terms of the different perspectives on identity.

For example, take a label like "African American". This can be understood as an I-Identity in terms of the ways in which institutional realities create positions from which certain people are expected and sometimes forced to act. In the "Jim Crow" system, entrenched in the South after Reconstruction, traditions and laws defined a specific social position for African Americans that constituted an identity. Thanks to more subtle forms of institutional racism still prevalent, many "black" children fill positions in schools that conflate being "African American" with being "at risk" for school failure and with a variety of other negative attributes. These positions come to constitute institutional identities for them, ones which they may accept or resist, but in terms of which their words and deeds are interpreted, nonetheless.

One can treat being "African American" as an N-Identity. Indeed, many a racist has tried to argue that being "African American" is an N-Identity rooted in biology. That is, racists have argued that the attributes of African Americans flow from their genes in

such a way that they are constituted as distinctive "kinds of people" (as opposed to "Anglo-Americans", for example). At the same time, some "Black Nationalists" have connected being an "African American" with more positive attributes, but rooted these, nonetheless, in biology (e.g., an African genetic inheritance) or in African "origins" somewhat more vaguely specified.

Being an "African American" can also be understood as a D-Identity. In this sense, it is seen as an identity that is produced and reproduced in the ways in which people--black and white--talk to and about others in discourse and dialogue. A "black" person may be faced with an ascribed D-Identity as an "African American" that stresses negative features that the person is invited to internalize. At the same time, a "black" person may work out with others a more positive achieved D-Identity (being "African American" with pride) in opposition to the more negative ascribed D-Identity.

In fact, it is a particularly important aspect of contemporary multicultural politics that people demand that others recognize, accept, and honor in talk and interaction such achieved D-Identities and honor them as different from other sorts of D-Identities, especially those associated with "whites" (Taylor, Appiah, Rockefeller, Waltzer, & Wolf, 1994). In the sense of being an achieved D-Identity, being "African American" is an individual accomplishment (a form of self-fashioning), as well as an often politicized interactional accomplishment.

Finally, being an African American can be seen as an A-Identity if a person orients primarily to certain practices and activities through which he or she generates an affinity with others who share those practices. Here a person does not see herself as an African American primarily because of "blood" (an N-Identity), or because of an

institutional category (an I-Identity), or because others respond to her, for better or worse, in certain distinctive ways (a D-Identity). Rather, she sees her participation in certain practices (e.g., wearing certain sorts of clothes, celebrating certain holidays, eating in certain sorts of restaurants, going on certain sorts of trips, buying certain sorts of products, reading certain types of materials, attending certain sorts of cultural events, etc.) as what gives her an identity as a particular kind of "African American". Being "African American" in this sense becomes a sort of "life style" that creates affinities with those who share the life style.

In the A-Identity sense, a "black" person could claim that he or she had chosen or not-chosen to be an African American and a "white" person could be an "African American" if allowed access to the practices and their concomitant experiences. Of course, an institution (e.g., a business or groups of them) could seek to create an affinity group among certain sorts of "black" people, an affinity group that is built around specific practices, products, and services. In this way, the business could attempt to commoditize the identity of being an "African American" in terms of an affinity group that ultimately benefits the business. Indeed, businesses and advertising agencies have sought to create and construe, at least for more affluent people, "African American" and "Latino" as "life styles" connected to shared practices rooted in distinctive products and services customized (thanks to modern technology) just for them.

Thus, people can accept, contest, and negotiate identities in terms of whether they will be seen primarily (or in some foregrounded way) as N, I, D, or A-Identities. What is at issue, though, is always how and by whom a particular identity is to be *recognized* (Wieder & Pratt, 1990; Gee, 1999). While D-Identities appeal to recognition (in

discourse and dialogue) directly, the other sorts of identities rely on recognition, as well, though this recognition is filtered through a particular perspective on "nature", or through the workings of an institution, or through the distinctive practices of a specific affinity group. Nonetheless, at root, human beings must see each other in certain ways and not others if there are to be identities of any sort. If an attribute is not recognized as defining someone as a particular "kind of person", then, of course, it cannot serve as an identity of any sort.

Let us think of the matter this way: At a given time and place, a person engages in what I will call a "combination". A combination is some specific way of combining the following things: a) speaking (or writing) in a certain way; b) acting and interacting in a certain way; c) using one's face and body in a certain way; c) dressing in a certain way; d) feeling, believing, and valuing in a certain way, and e) using objects, tools, or technologies (i.e., "things") in a certain way. This combination can be seen either as an active "bid" to be recognized in a certain way or it can be seen as leaving oneself "open" to being recognized in a certain way (Knorr Cetina, 1992, 1999; Latour, 1987, 1999).

Obviously, one cannot get recognized in any way unless, for social and historical reasons, there are people who recognize certain combinations in certain ways--for example, they recognize a combination as coming from a *Vetrano* street gang member, rather than, say, from a concerned community activist. And, of course, one and the same combination could be a bid to be recognized one way--for example, as a concerned community activist--and yet be recognized by others in a different way--for example, as the combination of a *Vetrano* gang member.

Any combination that can get one recognized as a certain "kind of person" (e.g., as a certain kind of African American, radical feminist, doctor, patient, skinhead, etc.) is part of what I will call a "Discourse" (Gee, 1996a, 1999) with a capital "D" ("discourse" with a little "d" means connected stretches of talk or writing). Discourses are ways of being-doing "certain kinds of people". Being-doing a community activist in a barrio is a different Discourse than being a *Vetrano* gang member in the same community, though one and the same person can alternate between (or even combine) these Discourses. And, there can be complicated moment-by-moment negotiations between self and others as to which Discourse will be operative for interpretation at a given time and place.

The term "Discourse" (with a big "D") is meant to cover important aspects of what others have called by different names (though these are not, of course, all synonymous terms): discourses (Foucault, 1973, 1978, 1980); communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991); cultural communities (Clark, 1996); discourse communities (Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995); distributed knowledge or distributed systems (Hutchins, 1995); thought collectives (Fleck, 1979); practices (Barton & Hamilton, 1998; Bourdieu, 1998; Heidegger 1962); activity systems (Engestrom, 1990; Leont'ev 1991); actor-actant networks (Callon & Latour 1992; Latour, 1987); and (one interpretation of) "forms of life" (Wittgenstein 1958).

At one period of history, or in one society, certain combinations result in recognition of a certain sort, while at a different period of history, or in a different society, the same combination would be unrecognizable or recognized differently. Ian Hacking (1995) points out that for someone to be considered as having "Multiple Personality Disorder" in 19th century France, the person had to display three or four

different personalities, while in 20th century America, the person had to display twelve or more and give evidence of having repressed the memory of childhood abuse. The combinations (words, deeds, ways of interacting, values, beliefs, etc.) that got one recognized as a saint in the medieval church would, today, in many places, get one institutionalized as a mental patient. The behaviors that get many a poor teenager into Special Education, get many a richer teenager labeled as an intelligent "underachiever" who needs to be challenged.

Some institution or set of them or some group or groups of people must work, across time and space, to underwrite and uphold the ways in which certain combinations get recognized in certain ways and not others. Obviously, in the case of Multiple Personality Disorder, what underwrites recognition is the interlocked workings of the medical profession, various other sorts of therapeutic professions, and other social forces such as, in the case of the current United States, academic and non-academic groups that have argued for a connection between child abuse, suppressed memories, and later psychic disorders. An equally complex array of social institutions and social actors underwrites the ways in which certain combinations on the part of lower socioeconomic African American males get recognized as "disordered" and in need of "Special Education" (Varenne & McDermott, 1998).

Thus, one crucial question we can always ask about identities of any type is this: What institution or institutions, or which group or groups of people, work to construct and sustain a given Discourse--that is, work to ensure that a certain combination, at a given time and place, is recognized as coming from a certain kind of person? This is a "macro-level" question. For example, above we discussed how a teacher's "everyday"

recognition of a child as having "attention problems" or being "ADHD" (in the "folk" sense)--thereby constructing a D-Identity for the child--can represent the effects of (clinical) institutional values and categories floating free and crossing the border into people's "everyday" common sense.

We can always also ask a crucial "micro-level" question: How, on the ground of moment-by-moment interaction, does recognition work such that some specific combination is recognized (or not) in a certain way, or contested or negotiated over in a certain way? In the end, we are talking about recognition as a social and political process, though, of course, one rooted in the workings of people's (fully historicized and socialized) minds.

In the case of certain sorts of achieved D-Identities--for example, identities like being charismatic, being a leader, being intelligent (when we don't think of intelligence as an N-Identity rooted in genes)--identities seem to float free of Discourses. We tend to look at such identities as if they were the property of individuals and their across-the-board interactions with others at large. However, these identities, too, are ultimately rooted in recognition processes tied to specific Discourses.

For example, a person recognized in the management Discourse of the old capitalism (and related Discourses) as a "leader" thanks, say, to his or her ability to control others, might very well not be recognized as a "leader" in the management Discourse of new capitalist businesses (and related Discourses), which tends to stress leaders as facilitators, coaches, and partners (for a direct educational application, see Senge, et al., 2000). To take another example: a person who is recognized as "intelligent" in academic Discourses may be viewed as quite dim in a variety of Discourses that

celebrate "street smarts" (Luttrell, 1997). A given person may be "charismatic" to (say) certain sorts of academics and/or certain sorts of upper-middle-class people, but not to anyone and everyone.

Discourses can give us one way to define what I called a person's "core identity" above. Each person has had a unique trajectory through "Discourse space". That is, he or she has, through time, in a certain order, had specific experiences within specific Discourses (i.e., been recognized, at a time and place, one way and not another), some recurring and others not. This trajectory and the person's own narrativization (Misher, 2000) of it is what constitutes his or her (never fully formed or always potentially changing) "core identity". The Discourses are social and historical, but the person's trajectory and narrativization is individual (though an individuality that is fully socially formed and informed).

Section 3: Being Modern

It is a common place in the literature on modernism (e.g., Beck, Giddens, & Lash, 1994; Bauman, 1991, 1995, 1997; Giddens, 1990, 1991; Taylor, 1989, 1994) to point out that pre-modern society (e.g., the medieval ages) was characterized by an emphasis on I-identities, that is, the various positions in social space that Church and state authorized. In medieval Europe, for instance, what it meant to be a male or female peasant, a priest or a monk, or a lord or a lady was largely determined by traditions and laws that determined the rights and duties of these various positions in society. And, of course, it was often thought that God or "nature" validated the ways in which different

people were apportioned to various higher and lower positions in society (that is, that N-Identities underwrote I-Identities).

"Modern society", which has its precursors in the Renaissance and its main "origins" in the Enlightenment, is often seen as the end product of scientific, technological, economic, and social processes that undermined identities rooted in positions defined by tradition, religion, and authority (I-Identities). The Enlightenment begins a long-term historical process in which people are gradually set free (or, at least, come to want to set themselves free) from the demands of tradition, religion, and the state (Beck, Giddens, & Lash, 1994; Bauman, 1995, 2000; Taylor, 1989, 1992, 1994).

But as they are set free, they face the fact that they now must choose and form their own individual identity as a life "project", rather than accept a set of positions determined by "outside" forces. People author their own identities in the sense of creating (or recruiting) what we called above "achieved D-Identities". In turn, this leads to a dilemma: if I work to achieve a certain identity, a certain sense of myself (for example, as a certain type of male or female, gay or Lesbian, Asian American or African American) I need others to *recognize* me in this way. I can't any longer count on institutions or traditional authority to underwrite my identity. Recognition becomes a particular problem for "modern" people:

But the importance of recognition has been modified and intensified by the new understanding of individual identity that emerges at the end of the eighteenth

century. We might speak of an individualized identity, one that is particular to me, and that I discover in myself. ...

This new ideal of authenticity was, like the idea of dignity, also in part an offshoot of the decline of hierarchical society. In those earlier societies, what we should now call identity was largely fixed by one's social position. (Taylor, 1994, pp. 28, 31).

The modern need for recognition, since it is an attempt to create achieved D-Identities, places a particular importance on discourse and dialogue. I work out my identity, in the modern sense, by making sense of, or interpreting, what it means to be a man or a woman of a certain sort; or a worker or professional of a certain sort; or an Anglo-American or African American of a certain sort; or moral, witty, intelligent, or fit for leadership in certain ways and not others. But I cannot make sense of anything or interpret anything *without a language or other sort of representational system within which to do so*. As Wittgenstein (1958) made clear in his famous argument against "private languages", I cannot make up and sustain a language (or any other sort of representational system) all by myself. I must learn or acquire this language from others, and this I can only do in interchange with other speakers, including family, friends, and the groups to which I belong.

To be "modern", then, comes to mean discovering or fashioning my own achieved D-identity (Bauman, 1995, 2000; Giddens, 1992). But I cannot do this in isolation, rather I must "negotiate it through dialogue, partly overt, partly internal, with others ... My own

identity crucially depends on my dialogical relations with others" (Taylor, 1994, p. 34). Of course, I am not arguing that "premodern" people did not depend on other people. In fact, the I-Identity positions they filled or fulfilled depended on other people recognizing those positions and recognizing them in certain ways. But, in premodern society, such recognition was ensured by the fact everyone knew and took for granted the positions that defined their social and political worlds. However, in the modern world, achieved D-Identities don't enjoy recognition as a matter of course. Individuals must win recognition for them through exchange with others and such an attempt can fail.

Of course, this story of what it means to be "modern" is, in part, just a story. From the 18th century onward, the story has been wrought with contradictions. People with time and resources--elites in a society--can "author" themselves in much more socially and politically powerful ways than people without such time and resources. The non-elites are often trapped in positions (I-Identities) defined by the institutional and political workings of the elites.

Furthermore, the elites often define or make sense of themselves (that is, fashion their achieved D-Identities) in opposition to non-elites, to whom they ascribe inferior properties (ascribed D-Identities) that contrast with the elites' more positive properties. This, historically, leaves non-elites with ascribed D-Identities, which they may either "internalize" and, in a sense, accept, or which they may oppose. Opposition often takes the form of solidarity with other non-elites through the formation and celebration of achieved D-Identities that are defined in opposition to the achieved D-Identities elites have fashioned for themselves, leading to class divisions defined in identity terms.

One can readily see why, for those who want to critique "modern" society ("modernism" in one of its senses), the concept of *hegemony* is so important (Gramsci, 1971). In modern capitalist societies, non-elites are "encouraged" to accept the inferior identities elites ascribe to them in talk and interaction (ascribed D-Identities) as if they were the actual achieved identities of these non-elite people, achieved on the basis of their lack of skill, intelligence, morality, or sufficient effort in comparison to the elites.

At the same time, non-elites are encouraged to see the "superior" identities of the elites as achieved D-Identities rooted in their efforts within a fair and open system of competition. In this way, non-elites accept the perspectives of the elites, internalize them, and use them to judge themselves in negative ways. There is no need, as there was in "pre-modern" conditions, for overt force or direct institutional backing for the social hierarchy. Of course, this, too, is in part, only a partial story. Non-elites in modern conditions engage in covert and overt resistance, and overt force and institutions still play a big role in the lives of poor people.

Section 4: Being Postmodern

There are many today who argue that we now live in a "postmodern age". For my purposes here, I take this to mean two things (in the wide literature on postmodernism, it means also a great many other things, as well). First, it means that today there is a foregrounding of, or stress on, *semiotic (representational, interpretive) processes* (Best & Kellner, 1991, 1997; Jameson, 1992; Lash & Urry, 1994; Rosenau, 1991) We have seen that part of what defined modernism was a foregrounding of individuals fashioning their own achieved D-Identities. While we have also seen how such achieved D-Identities rely

on discourse and dialogue for their recognition, this process was very often hidden or backgrounded in modernism. The ideal of the self-fashioned "authentic" person tended to celebrate the individual and the accomplishments of the individual and background the workings of the dialogue with others that produced and reproduced these accomplishments as identities.

However, a number of trends have rendered D-Identities more and more problematic. One of these trends is the exponential growth in diversity in most developed countries and the ever thicker connections in a global world that ensure that nearly everyone confronts a great deal of diversity (Greider, 1997). Another trend is the fast pace of change, thanks to modern science and technology, change which keeps outdating some identities and offering ever more opportunities for the creation of new ones. Yet another trend is the breakdown of the nation state and traditional notions of citizenship. Today, people, especially those with resources, can communicate with (and get recognized by) other people "like them" across the globe, thanks to modern travel and modern communications. They can come to feel that they share more with people far from them, than they do with people closer by (Reich, 1992), people with whom they used to feel "co-citizenship" (and whose demands for help they now ignore).

For all these reasons, and more, people have become more and more aware of the discursive processes through which D-Identities are formed and contested for social, economic, and political ends. This has moved the emphasis from individuals and the identities that seem to be part of their "individuality" to the discursive, representational, and semiotic processes through which identities are created, sustained, and contested.

This is as true for many people living in the world as it is for academic analysts who research or theorize "postmodernism".

One can also readily see why, for those who want to understand and critique "modern" society, the work of Vygotsky (e.g., 1978) and Bakhtin (e.g., 1986) is so central. Modernism is rooted in the workings of achieved D-Identities, but assumes such identities are primarily rooted in the minds and bodies of individuals as individuals, individuals who "merit" (have earned, for better or worse) their places in society. However, Vygotsky shows how people's individual minds are formed out of, and always continue to reflect, social interactions in which they engaged as they acquired their "native" language or later academic languages in school. Bakhtin stresses how anything anyone thinks or says is, in reality, composed of bits and pieces of language that have been voiced elsewhere, in other conversations or texts, bits and pieces that have circulated and recirculated inside the workings of various texts, social groups, and institutions. For Bakhtin, what one means is always a product both of the meanings words have "picked up" as they circulate in history and society and one's own individual "take" or "slant" on these words (at a given time and place).

Of course, more "radical" postmodern critics of modernism often want to undermine the notion of individual minds and individuality much further than did either Vygotsky or Bakhtin (even in their U.S. guise; many outside the U.S., and especially in Russia, read both of them rather differently, see, for example, Emerson, 1997). In this case, they turn to more radical critics like Foucault (e.g., 1973, 1977, 1980) who stressed (through his notion of "discourses") the ways in which the historical workings of texts,

institutions, and social practices, aligned in certain ways, set limits to what can be meant or how things and people can be recognized as meaningful at given times and places.

A second thing that "postmodernism" means is that socioeconomic conditions have changed " (Castells, 1996, 1999; Greider, 1997; Harvey, 1989; Rifkin, 1995). "Modern society" was integrally related to the growth and development of industrial capitalism ("the old capitalism"). However, scientific, technological, and demographic changes have changed the social and economic relations among people within the United States and across the world. "Postmodern society" is integrally related to the growth and development of a new form of capitalism, which I will call "the new capitalism". It turns out that this form of capitalism is becoming more and more focused on the creation and nurturing for what I called above "sanctioned A-Identities".

Here is one "story" about the old and new capitalisms (Gee, 1996b; Gee, Hull, & Lankshear, 1996; Greider, 1997; Rifkin, 2000; Thurow, 1999--yes, it, too, is only a partial story): The old capitalism was rooted in unsaturated mass markets, markets controlled by a small set of countries (especially the United States). The emphasis was on the most efficient and profitable production of things (commodities) for large numbers of people who did not have them. Industry was organized top down, with a small number of leaders, a larger number of middle managers, and a larger number of workers who were managed by the managers and by "scientific" rules and procedures for the efficient and profitable mass production of goods. This was the way in which armies and railroads were organized and it turned out to be an efficient way to organize mass production. However, today, thanks to changes in science and technology, markets are saturated, there is global hyper-competition and world-wide over production of commodities, and

the cost of producing, and the profit to be made from, commodities gets smaller and smaller.

Profit today is primarily made by "creating" new needs and sustaining relationships with customers in which these needs are continuously transformed into ever newer needs. Businesses today create new needs by helping or encouraging people to take on new identities in terms of which those needs arise. Products and services are created for and offered to "certain kinds of people" whether these be "Bobos" (the new "yuppies") who seek to combine bohemian life styles with security and wealth (Brooks, 2000), aging baby boomers seeking spiritual comfort, New Ethnics (of all different sorts), "greens", Rave enthusiasts, Saturn owners, and so and so forth through nearly limitless possibilities. Businesses either seek to relate to affinity groups already formed or to create new affinity groups, that is, they focus on sanctioned and non-sanctioned A-Identities.

It is, thus, not surprising, then, that in our new capitalist world there is a good deal of emphasis on identity and identities. Postmodern theorists like Baudrillard (1989, 1995) and Lyotard (1984, see also 1997) have stressed (often over stressed) the ways in which, in the new capitalist world, signs and simulations often detach themselves from any "reality" they signify or simulate and come to be the primary meanings and values themselves. "Things" (the material world) drop out.

Thus, Disneyland's "Main Street" simulates a small town "innocence" that never existed. Rather, it is created and consumed in its own right as a form of "false" nostalgia. Or, to take another example, a degree from an Ivy League college is much less indicative of learning than it is a sign one is "worthy" to be an elite in our society, where being an

elite is itself more and more composed of a set of signs--really a whole "portfolio" of signs (i.e., the "right" schools, degrees, trips, experiences, and possessions)--than it is of any substantive accomplishments.

Section 5: An Example

Thus far I have sketched out a perspective on identity and have tried to briefly discuss some of its historical and theoretical ramifications. Now I want to turn briefly to a specific example of how this perspective can be applied as an analytic lens through which to reflect on interactions in and beyond classrooms. This example (taken from Gee, to appear) is not meant to be a full research report. Rather, it meant merely to illuminate, in more specific terms, some of the ideas about identity discussed above and some of the ways in which they might enter into research.

Below I present a "scenario" from one school. The scenario comes from a culturally diverse second-grade classroom in a "liberal" school in an urban area. This school, like a good many others, is strongly caught up with the current standards and testing regime. I want to present the scenario first and then discuss how such data can be analyzed in terms of "identity politics", using the framework I have developed thus far.

Scenario

The teacher is sitting at her desk with four children, while other children are working by themselves or in pairs around the room. The teacher dictates a sentence with the word "love" in it and the students write the sentence down. She then dictates a set of

words, each of which the children attempt to spell. An African American girl sitting next to the teacher spells each word as follows:

dove

sume [some]

glove

one

shuve [shove]

come

none

The teacher then has the children correct the original sentence and then each word in the list one-by-one, eliciting the correct spelling of each item from the group of as a whole. When she gets to "some", the second word on the list, the African American girl corrects it, then notices what the pattern is and goes ahead and corrects "shuve" further down the list. The teacher stops her and sharply reprimands her, saying that they have to

go "one at a time" and she shouldn't "go ahead". Of course, there is a certain irony here in that the whole (cognitive) point of this exercise might have been for the child to notice that "oCe" makes up a spelling pattern (really a sub-pattern, one that, in fact, violates a larger pattern that vowel + consonant + e usually contains a so-called "long vowel", as in "made", "code", and "tile").

The teacher moved on to have the small group of children engage in a "picture walk" of a book. This is an activity where children "read the pictures" in a book, using each picture in turn to predict what the story in the book might contain. The African American girl bounced in her chair repeatedly, enthusiastically volunteering for each picture. The teacher told her to calm down. The girl said, "I'm sorry, but I'm so happy?". The teacher responded, "Well, just calm down". We can note that the teacher here fails to respond to the little girl in terms of the values of their shared "lifeworld" (she would, then, have said something like, "But, oh, what happened to make you so happy?") and responds to the girl in terms of their formal roles as teacher (as manager) and student (as controllee).

The teacher then called the next group up to the table--a "better" group of readers. This group contained four children, as well. They were reading a book that said "fifth grade level" on the spine (remember, this is a second grade). The book was written as if a child had written it, so some of its sentences were awkward or too short or too long. The teacher had each student in the group read a piece of the book out loud and then, orally and on the spot, "rewrite" the piece into a more adult-like form. One African American boy took his turn and, speaking in fairly heavy African American Vernacular

phonology, deftly read a very long sentence and shortened it into three separate sentences.

After being in this teacher's class, I attended the end of a class in the basement of the school. This class occurred during the same "literacy block" time I been attending in the other classroom. Thanks to a grant, this school took from all its second grades the "best readers" and put them downstairs with a "gifted and talented" teacher during literacy block, partly to allow smaller class sizes upstairs during literacy time. When I entered the room, it was deadly silent, as each child worked on his or her own activity, reading a new book, writing in a journal, writing an essay comparing and contrasting two books, or writing a review of a chosen book. The teacher sat at her desk, engaged in her own writing, though children could come up to her for guidance and help. All the children were white (save one child of foreign parents) and in designer clothes and with designer hair cuts. In this school, these were close to all the white upper-middle-class children in the second grades.

The teacher, towards the end of the period, called all the children together and read them a story out loud that she later told me was at the "fifth-grade level". It was a story about a white middle-class manager who gets down-sized and loses his job, but later comes into a large sum of money.

Having seen this classroom, I returned to the teacher in whose room I been previously, stuck by the fact that the last group I had seen in her room was composed of minority children reading a book that was also at the "fifth-grade level". I was particularly wondering about the African American boy who had so deftly decomposed the sentence from a book that seemed to me much harder, in fact, than the one being read

downstairs. I asked the teacher why the children in the last group were not "good readers", why they were not allowed downstairs. She said to me, "They're just my good readers, the ones left when they take the real good readers out".

...

There are a number of aspects of this scenario that lend themselves to analysis in identity terms. First, we can see the African American girl as "bidding" to get herself recognized, in talk and interaction, as a proactive and enthusiastic learner, one who sees a connection between her lifeworld (her sense of herself as an "everyday" person), her teacher, and the school. This is a bid, then, for a certain sort of achieved D-Identity. We would certainly want to study how it relates to her other achieved D-Identities, for example, the ways in which she sees and wants herself recognized (or not) as an "African American" child in talk and interaction.

The teacher, on the other hand, reacts to the student as the sort of learner who needs to be managed by the teacher's instructions and by curricular routines and procedures. This is, at this point, an ascribed D-Identity, but one into which the little girl is "invited" to become socialized, eventually rendering it an achieved D-Identity that she accepts and acts out (an example of a certain form of hegemony at work). Of course, the girl may come to resist this ascribed identity.

Second, the African American boy, whatever D-Identities are also at stake here, is "caught" in a specific sort of I-Identity. His school is engaged in a set of reforms which stress smaller classes and specific forms of instruction for so-called "at risk" learners (to ensure that they pass a third grade state-wide reading test). Being poor (e.g., being in the

free lunch program), African American, and speaking in Black Vernacular English phonology are taken, along with other features, as indicators of being "at risk". Reading level, in and of itself, does not appear to be able to out-weigh these other features, all of which have been institutionalized as part of a reform package or system. This young boy is "invited" to take on the I-Identity of an "at risk minority student being served ('saved?') by contemporary school reform". Again, he can resist this identity or it can come to actively "inhabit" it. Nonetheless, it is a "position" that institutional forces have prepared for him and which they "invite" him to inhabit (against, I might point out, the "evidence" of his eyes that he is reading beyond grade level).

The elite children downstairs are exempted from the whole curriculum devoted to the standards and testing regime (so confident is the school and their parents that they will ace the test) and allowed to experience literacy as an arena of their own agency and control, integrated with their own emerging identities as members of an elite social class, a class facing, amidst the new capitalism, a risky world where only agency, self-governance, and entrepreneurial skills will keep one at the top. These children are, most certainly, "invited" to act out or take on achieved D-Identities as proactive learners headed toward success in our knowledge-based society. Ironically, one could easily construe the identity the young African American girl was "bidding" for as just such an identity--or her "bid" could have been "shaped" in that direction.

There is more at stake downstairs, I believe. Being singled out for special treatment and engaging in other sorts of special practices is today part of a system in which elite children come to share experiences with others like themselves, not just locally, but across the United States, and, indeed, other parts of the "developed" world.

These practices include various sorts of special programs, travel, camps, home-based learning experiences, specialized activities, and activities related to getting into elite colleges (activities which start quite early). Such children come to feel an affinity for others like themselves--that is, those children headed towards elite colleges and top carriers in the new capitalism--an affinity based on their access to and sharing of such practices and experiences. Thus, they are forming a specific A-Identity as elites in the new capitalism (see Gee, 2000, to appear, for more discussion).

Section 6: Identity and Educational Research

During the course of this paper I have cited a good deal of research relevant to the sort of perspective on identity I have sketched here. Some of this work comes from outside education (e.g., the work of Ulrich Beck, Manuel Castells, Ian Hacking, Jeremy Rifkin, and Charles Taylor), but holds important implications for education, especially in our changing times (New London Group, 1996).

There are a great many important studies in education dealing with how race, gender, class, and ability shape people's behavior, how they are treated, and the outcomes that result from their interactions with gatekeepers and powerful institutions (e.g., Heath, 1983; Scollon & Scollon, 1981; Walkerdine, 1997, 1998). I am, in no respect, questioning the value of such studies. However, the perspective here would stress, in regard to categories like race, gender, class, and ability, the following sorts of things:

a) They are each, in part, interactional achievements (Duranti, 1997) through which people win and lose recognition as certain sorts of people, e.g., certain sorts of lower or middle-class African Americans, Latinos, Anglo-Americans, women, African

American women, Latino women, Anglo American women, and so forth (e.g., for overviews, see Hicks, 1995; Luke, 1995). This is the realm in which D-Identities are worked out. Working out D-Identities almost always involves interactions across, and relationships among, different (sometimes aligned, sometimes contesting) social groups, not just intra-group relations (i.e., not "culture" as a self-contained entity).

b) They each involve institutional positions and positioning, and attempts to create or change institutions to protect or uphold interactionally achieved or politically contested identities. A great deal of literature has looked at how school as an institution positions various sorts of children (e.g., Mehan, Hertweck, & Lee, 1986; Varenne & McDermott, 1998). However, it is equally crucial to look at how diverse institutions (e.g., schools, business, research, and politics) align and disalign with each other to create positions and outcomes for people, especially in our fast-changing new capitalist times (Bernstein, 2000; Gee, 1996b; Gee, Hull, & Lankshear, 1996). This is the realm of I-Identities.

c) There is a great deal of literature written against seeing children in terms of fixed "natural categories", whether these categories are rooted in genes, neurons, or fixed capacities and abilities (e.g., Sternberg & Grigorenko, 1999). At the same time, there is a significant renewal today of claims that people's biology, chemistry, neurons, and/or earlier experiences (e.g., stimulation before 3 years of age) "determine" their futures in certain very significant respects (see Bruer, 1999 for discussion). This is the realm of N-Identities.

d) Finally, there is today a growing interest in studying how people--especially children--are building identities (often several different identities) through networking

with others in joint activities, causes, virtual communication, shared consumption, and shared experiences (Alvermann, Moon, & Hagood, 1999; Alverman & Hagood, 2000a, b; Knobel, 1999; Lankshear, 1997). These studies deal with how affinity groups or communities of practice form--often outside of school and often across traditional lines of race, gender, class, and ability. Such affiliations are also fast becoming the new basis of class in the United States, as people come to see themselves as the "portfolio" of their experiences and achievements, gained through experiences inside and, more and more importantly, outside of school (Howe & Strauss, 2000). This is the realm of A-Identities.

There is today a growing body of important work that studies children and adults as they are mutually and simultaneously impinged on by all of the aspects of identity we have discussed here: what we might call N-, I-, D-, and A-elements of identity. Much of this work has centered around the production and consumption of popular culture or children's "identity work" in the spaces between home and school. In addition to the work of Alverman, Hagood, Knobel, and Lankshear cited above, Emily Martin's recent work, in particular, stands out here (Martin, 1995, 1999, 2000a, b, to appear).

Martin engages in "multiple site ethnographies", studying how people who are open to being categorized as "ADHD" or "manic", for example (categories closely linked to N-Identities and the institutions that wish to uphold them as primarily N-Identities) come, through the work of social interactions, institutions, and affiliations both to get recognized and positioned in various ways and proactively to create more positive, or, at least, more dynamic identities for themselves and others. Martin discusses, as well, the possibility that amidst the changes of the new capitalism, behaviors that have typically been seen as negative (and given labels like "ADHD" or "manic") may be re-evaluated in

more positive terms. For example, the new capitalism tends to highly value fluidity, flexibility, and multiple identities and not stability, narrow focus, and inflexible identities defined in traditional terms (e.g., static views of culture or ethnicity). Martin raises the possibility as to whether this might lead to a re-evaluation of certain "disabilities" as "gifts".

Conclusions

There are many possible approaches to identity and I have developed but one here, based only on a selection from a vast literature. My approach has been influenced by changes in the contemporary world and what they might portend for the future. More and more, in this changed world it is issues of **access**, **networking**, and **experience** that are paramount (Rifkin, 2000). In the new capitalism, wealth and power tend to stem from whether or not one has access to specific networks of people and information spread across the country and the world and to specific experiences connected to these networks. In turn, these networks and their concomitant practices allow people to form multiple, changing, and fluid A-Identities with others, some of whom they may see in person but rarely.

Mobility, the ability to move to another physical or virtual location, when things change in the local environment, is becoming a defining feature of the elites in the new capitalism. As Zygmunt Bauman (1998) has pointed out, elites today can use their mobility to "flee" local conditions and restraints, leaving the "locals" to clean up the "messes" they leave behind, whether these messes are changed ecologies or economies.

Under these conditions, it is more and more the poor that are left the prey of institutional identities and restraints. In fact, in the contemporary world, a lack of access, networking, and mobility may be one of the root causes of poverty or diminished expectations. At the same time, in such a world it is imperative that we imagine new forms of identities that reinvigorate the local and empower the "locals" through new forms of discourse and dialogue, forms that remain aware, however, of the fact that, in our world, the global has utterly "infected" the local.

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