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Discourse appropriation and category boundary work: casual teachers in the market

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With the increasing casualisation of the teacher labour force, there is little written on the experiences of casual teachers and the challenges they face in brokering professional identities within constantly shifting and uncertain work contexts. Being a category bound casual teacher (a product of category boundary work) is a complex subject position. The aim of this article is to advance our understandings of the identity work inherent in casual relief teachers (CRT) performativity. Anti-essentialist theories support this exploration of CRT subjectivities and processes of discourse appropriation. Using collective biography methodology as re-storied memory work, this article speaks back to neoliberal politics of casualisation. The stories draw attention to how both experienced practitioners and newly graduated teachers might 'do' category boundary work within the complexity of school politics as they navigate the uncertainty of gaining and maintaining employment in the Education market.

Keywords: performativity, casual relief teachers, collective biography, neoliberal, casualization, employment

Introduction

This article addresses the marketisation of casual teachers' work as border practitioners. In accordance with the rising rates of casual employment there is a visible marketisation of teachers' work in the Education sector. A post-fordist modernisation agenda encourages greater flexibility for employers by ensuring a casual labour pool (Conley, 2006). Blackmore (1997) describes the casualisation of labour in Education, in her scholarship around the gender-related impact of the post-fordist agenda for women in teaching.

> The flexible consumption model of the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand labour markets, for example, does offer more jobs in the service sector. But it also encourages the casualisation of labour for the majority on the margins. Individuals are subcontracted out into an expanding periphery to service the shrinking core in the search for flexibility. (p. 445)

Matthews, Delfabbro and Winefield (2015) observe that across the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Australia is the second highest employers of casual workers. 'Casual employment in Australia has increased from 15.8% of all labour in 1984, to 23.9% (2.2 million workers) in 2012 (Australian

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Bureau of Statistics, 2012). This is an increase of 8.1% over 28 years' (p. 69). Watson (2013) observes that while some commentators on labour trends see a growth of casual employment in the Australian labour market a desirable flexibility, others argue that it represents an increasing polarisation between 'good' jobs (those with permanency) and 'bad' jobs. The notion of 'good' and 'bad' in this instance is an overly simple assessment of Education employment conditions because people elect to be casual teachers for a range of reasons.

Casual relief teachers (CRT), who work on the peripheries of schools, tend to be some of the most unsupported workers within the education sector (Duggleby & Badali, 2007; Jenkins et al., 2009;; Lunay & Lock, 2006). Associated with the increasing casualisation of the teaching workforce, 'CRT' can be seen as a subject position (Davies & Harré, 1999), linked with neoliberal management theory. Neoliberalism is a ubiquitous discourse in the Education sector through which teacher subjectivities are 'reconstituted in economic terms, where market values and commodification thoroughly saturate the construction of self and other' (Ringrose, 2013, p. 3). Therefore, from this perspective, 'casuals' can be positioned as a convenient and expendable labour pool who serve the market. To both survive and thrive, CRTs appropriate discourses as neoliberal subjects.

A recent report on the teacher workforce highlights that across Australia teacher demand is currently strong and trending upwards (Weldon, 2015). Although there is currently an oversupply of primary practitioners emerging from teacher education institutions, primarily in Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales, this does not necessarily apply to regional and rural districts. In some secondary subjects there has been an oversupply of teachers. However, once the predicted rising numbers of students enter secondary schools (from about 2018), it is likely shortages in some discipline areas will become acute unless supply can be enhanced (Weldon, 2015). This forecast of teacher demand is –

> … to remain high in most states for at least the next ten years … The population of primary students is set to increase dramatically over the next ten years. Secondary schools will start to see the increase flow through from 2018. (p. 15)

With increasing labour casualisation and the sector predicted to swell, there is a problematic issue of a growing, under-served and invisible cohort of casual teachers (Victorian Auditor General's Office, 2012). Casual teachers are employed for a range of purposes. They can cover permanent teachers who take leave from their schools for reasons such as sickness, short-term leave, or professional development. As mentioned above, in Australia it is not uncommon for there to be secondary teacher shortages in specific Key Learning Areas (KLAs) and casual teachers are employed to fill the gap.

Due to the nature of the position, casual teachers, as an unprepared itinerant workforce, are largely neglected at a systemic level. Because of the part-time and impermanent nature of the position, casual teachers are under-represented in union affairs (Cleeland, 2007), which can increase their vulnerability. There is less opportunity to contest conditions associated with casualisation, for instance issues associated with employment insecurity, intermittent employment, low wages, and an absence of standard employment benefits (May, Campbell & Burgess, 2005).

There has been some research into the conditions of casual employment (Crittenden, 1994; Edigheji, 1999), the social profile of being a casual teacher (Weems, 2003), and the experiences of CRTs, in particular that they experience feelings of dissatisfaction or alienation (Duggleby & Badali, 2007; Lunay & Lock,

2006; Nidds & McGerald, 1994). In recent years there has been a growing focus on the double challenge of being a beginning teacher and casual (Boyd et al., 2010; Brannock et al., 2001; Jenkins, 2015; Jenkins, Smith and Maxwell, 2009; McCormack & Thomas, 2005; Papatraianou & Le Cornu, 2014; Pietsch & Williamson, 2009). From our engagement with the literature we conclude that, while there has been research undertaken to explore the complexities of casual teaching work, research into CRT experiences are still an under-theorised area. We seek to address the scarcity of research through exploring the collective stories of the authors who have experienced casual teaching.

We are academics and ex-CRTs with a first-hand understanding of the complexity of casual work. We use collective biography as a research method that supports slow scholarship. Informed by the scholarship of Bronwyn Davies and Sue Gannon (2006), we collaborate through a 'technology of speaking, writing, and listening to memory stories' (Gannon et al., 2014, p. 183) on casual relief teaching.

In particular, we make a theoretical contribution to the literature on the politics of casual teaching through reflecting on the broader cultural practices of subjectivation and 'category boundary work' (Petersen, 2007, p. 475). Engaging with identity politics we avoid essentialist conceptions of teacher selves as totalised and universal entities, envisaging teacher subjectivities as multiple and fluid. Within school contexts CRT subjectivities are relationally constituted and boundaries of this category are maintained. Therefore, casual teacher subjectivities are framed through a process of boundary work where only identities that are deemed relationally intelligible within particular school contexts are 'negotiated, maintained, challenged and reconstructed' (p. 475). Therefore CRT subjectivities can be very different depending upon specific school cultures. In school cultures where there was a lack of support (Buchanan et al., 2013), casual teachers can experience feelings of dissatisfaction, alienation, and powerlessness (Jenkins et al.,2009).

In the following, we discuss the politics of casual relief teaching before elaborating on our approach to boundary work. Through collective biography we then explore casual teachers' subjectivities through four stories that illustrate CRT work on the margins of Australian schooling contexts. In the ensuing analysis we locate these experiences within Education's wider socio-political context.

The politics of casualisation

Approximately 16% of all primary teachers and 10% of all high school teachers in Queensland are employed in either casual work or on contracts of duration less than one year (McKenzie et al., 2011). In NSW, Casual Direct (2012) has reported that approximately 45,000 teachers were registered with them, while Victoria reported 13,000 casual teachers in their system (VAGO, 2012). Casual teachers' time in classes has been increasing, as evidenced by the 36% increase in their employment in Victoria since 2000 (VAGO, 2012).

Cleeland (2007) observes that although there are parallels in regard to classroom concerns between CRTs and their peers who are employed full-time, there are also significant differences between the issues that are important to permanent teachers and CRTs in the wider school context. These wider concerns pertain to employment conditions, how they are inducted and accommodated within schools and integrated into school communities. Cleeland argues that CRTs do not receive parity with permanent teachers and there are significant implications for Australian labour

regulation, school system, and for CRTs personally. She highlights that a ‘concerted effort is needed to improve the current state of casual relief teaching and bridge the gap between CRTs and permanent teachers in terms of their professional treatment’ (2007, p. 2).

Addressing mandatory federal standards can be problematic for casual teachers. In our context, meeting the requirements of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2014) can be an issue for many CRTs who find it ‘difficult to recognise their practice in the standards’ (Colcott, 2009, p. 2). In research conducted through with Victorian Institute of Teaching, Colcott found that CRTs assumed that their practice differed from their permanent counterparts and they did not see how they could meet the standards. This can result in anxiety about the registration and renewal process that requires CRTs to maintain professional practice standards.

To look at an example more closely, one standard (Standard 6) highlights a requirement to ‘Engage in Professional Learning’ (AITSL, 2014). In 2009, a ‘Parliament of Victoria Education and Training Committee Report’ on teacher professional development noted a range of factors that impinged on professional learning for CRTs. First, they are often ‘out of the loop’ and lack of information about the professional learning opportunities available. Second, CRTs are usually on a lower wage and yet are required to fund their own professional learning. The third barrier identified in the report was the lack of professional development activities specifically targeted for CRTs. It is also our observation that CRTs in regional areas are required to travel distances for professional learning and as a result, time without income and cost may be another barrier to participation.

It is important to note that schools could not operate successfully unless CRT positions are regularly filled (Duggleby & Badali, 2007). Exact figures are difficult to ascertain as no single entity takes responsibility for these teachers. Yet CRTs are on average responsible for up to one year of K-12 students’ school careers in the US, UK and Australia (Lunay & Lock, 2006, p. 171). While positioned on the ‘edge of employment’, they must still adhere to accreditation processes that are similar to those of permanent teaching colleagues. The main difference between these two cohorts of teachers is that one has ‘assured’ employment and support through induction and mentoring, while the other cohort often has to compete to find and maintain work usually without any systemic assistance. For this reason, newly graduated teachers, who become casual practitioners, do not experience the authenticity, authority or recognition of being a ‘real’ teacher (Duggleby & Badali, 2007).

As part of the neoliberal shift to monitor and measure teacher performance, the transition of pre-service teachers from universities to join the profession has been conceptualised on a professional learning continuum (Adey, 1998; Brock, 2000; Dow, 2003, AITSL, 2014). This transition is an important benchmark in their career and it is at this time when they often, ‘experience professional and even personal vulnerability’ (McConaghy & Bloomfield, 2004, p. 11). This is frequently exemplified by the concerns exhibited by both beginning teachers and beginning casual teachers (BCT) about managing student behaviour and the classroom environment (Jenkins et al., 2009; McCormack & Thomas, 2005; Nidds & McGerald, 1994). When beginning teachers are employed on an intermittent casual or on a short-term basis, it is challenging for schools to provide quality induction or mentoring programs (McCormack & Thomas, 2005).

Beginning CRTs have less opportunity for continuous exposure to institutional practices within a single school context, often needing to teach across multiple

schools and have fewer teaching days than their permanent colleagues (Kelly et al., 2014). Duggleby & Badali (2007) have identified that casual teachers require 'extra skills' to those of permanent teachers (p. 24). The irony is that when casual teachers are employed at a school there is an expectation of pedagogical and relational expertise of these novice teachers. They are expected to transfer skills from school to school on a daily basis, often with limited knowledge about students, colleagues, parents and the school community.

While CRTs and BCTs continually face the uncertainty of finding work (McCormack & Thomas, 2005; Tromans, Limerick & Brannock, 2010)., once employed, comes the constant crossing of boundaries 'into new systems, new schools, new classrooms, new routines … new scenarios' (Jenkins et al., 2009, p. 64; McCormack & Thomas, 2005). The impermanence of the role, the lack of status, and at times the lack of support within the schools that employ them, can take its toll on BCTs, particularly as new teachers who have not experienced longer satisfying periods in the classroom.

Subjectivities and boundary work — to see and be seen

To map the cultural landscape of CRT and BCT subjectivities, we do so by employing an identity politics framework (McNay, 2010; Riggs, 2010), engaging with Butlerian theory. Identity politics captures how one recognises and subverts reified identity categories. It comprises a reflexive awareness of how one is discursively positioned (Davies et al., 2004). Mindful that identity arguments have been critiqued for their pure focus on an abstract discursive argument, we adopt the stance that subjectivities are agentic in their capacity as embodied subjects (McNay, 2010). Discourses do not just describe the present; they create it (Gowlett, 2013). In other words, discourses for CRTs create possibilities for specific practices and subject positions whilst simultaneously excluding others.

> Every discourse constitutes, even as it mobilises and shuts out, imaginary communities, identity investments and discursive practices. Discourses authorise what can and cannot be said; they produce relations of power and communities of consent and dissent, and thus discursive boundaries are always being redrawn around what constitutes the desirable and the undesirable and around what it is that makes possible particular structure of intelligibility and unintelligibility. (Britzman, 2000, p. 36)

The casual teacher is an identity category being produced and reproduced within discursive frameworks. Jenkins et al. (2009) argue that casual teaching is about constantly 'reframing oneself' due to the different places, and due to Australian Curriculum Key Learning Areas, staffs and students with whom CRTs work (p. 72). Building on this notion of 'reframing', we deploy Butlerian (1990) theory to explore identity performance repetition as 'a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being' (p. 33). This iterative process stabilises identities as categories that are constituted through this recurrent resignification. Thus 'identity … is an ongoing process of becoming, rather than an ontological state of being' (Cover, 2012, p. 178). Identities become solidified through performance repetition to become seen by others and ourselves as our 'essential selves'. This means that we are seen and positioned by others in response to our contexts as a certain type of person who becomes recognisable on the grounds of particular activities. To be the 'other' is to be

unrecognisable. Trespassing the borders of these relationally negotiated positions can mean marginalisation, ostracism and even invisibility. In schools, identity categories centre on subject positions like ‘student’, ‘teacher’, ‘BCT’, ‘CRT’, ‘administration assistant’, and ‘school leader’.

To be conceived as a competent practitioner, one needs to ‘perform casual teacher’ in accordance with the historical matrices of intelligibility (Butler, 1990) required by this co-constituted identity category. As a power relation, the subjection and mastery of subject positions can be seen as a double movement. One takes up a position but one also has to be recognised by others. Butler (1997) writes that

> … [t]he more a practice is mastered, the more fully subjection is achieved. Submission and mastery take place simultaneously, and this paradoxical simultaneity constitutes the ambivalence of subjection. (p. 116)

We use the term ‘discourse appropriation’ to describe how casual teachers act on schooling discourses in a ‘double move’. Casual teachers must master ‘the rules of the game’ by both their taking up normative CRT positions within school contexts and submit to the conditions accompanying this positioning.

Matrices of intelligibility are embedded in the machinations of situated power. Taking a Foucaldian perspective of CRT work, we recognise that within schools power does not function like a chain “[I]t circulates. It is never monopolised by one centre. It is deployed and exercised through a net-like organisation” (Foucault, 1980, p. 98). This is enacted through collective biography as an exploration of webs of power.

A collective biography research method

To provide an account of our earlier experiences as casual relief teachers, we delved into experiences ranging from two to thirty years ago as CRTs and BCTs. Two were beginning teachers and two took up casual work during a transition period to higher education, following years of classroom experience as permanent employees. A collective biography was deemed suitable since, as Davies, De Schauwer, Claes, De Munck, Van De Putte and Verstichele (2013) highlight,

> post-qualitative research … seeks encounters, in which the research itself, both its practices and its findings, might emerge as something new, something not-yet-thought. Such encounters do not foster research practices that engage in methodical rule-following, and they do not impose or presume a moral framework (p. 680).

Collective biography (Davies & Gannon, 2006) is a research practice that encompasses a range of processes. Through speaking, writing and listening to memory stories as embodied experiential encounters, researchers undertaking collective biography explore a selected topic. They identify and disentangle ‘discursive threads and familiar cultural storylines through which subjects are constituted and made recognisable to themselves and to others’ (Gannon et al., 2014, p. 183). Unlike narrative inquiry or other approaches that explore life histories, collective biography does not provide psychological accounts of individuals who tell their stories as knowable truths. Therefore issues of bias and trustworthiness are not applicable in this sort of post-qualitative research. Poststructural writers have placed the term validity ‘under erasure’ (Davies et al., 2004, p. 376).

Collective biography as an evolving feminist poststructural research method has been used to explore young femininities (Gannon & Gonick, 2014), the relation between gender and literacy (Gonick, 2015), voice and community within higher education (O'Connor et al., 2015), the notion of joy in academic practice (Kern et al., 2014). As Gonick, Walsh and Brown (2011) note, collective biography questions the notion of neutrality and challenge what counts as knowledge. Originally the approach emerged through a collective engagement with the memory work of feminist writer Frigga Haug (1987, cited in Davies & Gannon, 2006, p. 11) and it was initially framed as a 'means to make visible the discursive processes in which we each have been collectively caught up' (Davies & Gannon, 2006, p. 11).

Although we are academics who work together within a School of Education, we had not sat together to share accounts of our previous schooling experiences. Deciding to dedicate four meetings once a week for a month, we wrote accounts of our experiences in schools as CRTs. In the spirit of determining our own process, we discussed our approach to collective biography before telling our stories. In so doing we constructed an assemblage of the processes from our collaborative engagement with the literature to map a way forward for ourselves.

To delve into each of the stories, we co-constructed protocols that allowed us to stay in the biographic corporeal moment. We undertook to listen closely to each story and afterwards ask reflective questions that gave space for silence and thought. This reflective dialogue was 'characterised by careful listening, active questioning and an openness to potentially profound change to one's beliefs' (Nehring, Laboy, & Catarius, 2010, p. 400). Freed (2003) notes that suspending judgment, listening actively and building relationships on mutual respect are integral features of reflective dialogue. We refrained from analysis and interpretation, striving to ponder ideas with our peers recounting experiences, thoughts and feelings as a resource (Carnell & Lodge, 2002).

We immersed ourselves in collective biography literature (Davies & Gannon, 2006; Gannon & Gonick, 2014; Gonick, 2015). In so doing we constructed an assemblage of the processes from our collaborative engagement with the literature to map a way forward for ourselves. We drew from Davies and Gannon's (2006) poststructural work on collective biography to provide remembered dimensions of our lived experiences as an embodied sociality. In this way our local and situated truths could be foregrounded and not simplified into a totalised account of what occurred. Rather than seeing memory as a definitive account of events, together we talked about and around the memories to elicit further details, experiences and emotions. We wrote stories and gathered together in a campus meeting room to explore how the recounted memories of physical and emotional responses to the schooling discourses shaped us. Although recently writers have taken a Deleuzian turn in collective biography (Gonick et al., 2011), we draw from the Butlerian/Foucauldian approach of revealing discursive regimes that is reflective of Davies and Gannon's (2006) earlier work. This 'discourse work' was high trust as the stories themselves revealed vulnerabilities in their telling. One group member made the comment:

> When you start to articulate the stories that's incredibly powerful … It's made me realise that I really haven't shared them because sharing them is an admission of weakness, or not coping, or you just have to hold it inside you.

We deployed Butlerian theory to analyse how the 'appropriate' performances of identity were constituted by the discursive mechanisms that disciplined the corporeality of the CRT body. This corporeality comprised 'a multiplicity of

performances constituted by actions and practices superimposed upon the surface of the body such that it is shaped by discursive means' (Zembylas, 2007, p. 22). 'Category boundary work', with its origins in Butlerian theory and the work of Bronwyn Davies (1989, 1993), offered us an analytical technology with which we explored the surfaced dimensions of normative BCT and CRT categories (Petersen, 2007, p. 475) within our stories. We examined how these subject positions were embedded and constructed through school power relationships. In exploring the process of subjectification as a production and negotiation of a CRT subject, we went on to consider the boundaries of this discursive category. According to Petersen (2007) in her work on academic subjectivities,

> … [t]he formation of self takes place in conjunction with prior, ongoing and emerging self-performativities. [It is] a process, which for some might be experienced as an unproblematic extension, and for others as a radical and perhaps gruelling transformation. (p. 479)

Through the initial construction of our four narratives we engaged in reflexivity, turning the gaze on ourselves to re-constitute CRT subjectivities and to consider how we may have been subjectivated by others in turn.

> Reflexivity involves turning one's reflexive gaze on discourse—turning language back on itself to see the work it does in constituting the world. The subject/researcher sees simultaneously the object of her or his gaze and the means by which the object (which may include oneself as subject) is being constituted (Davies et al., 2004, p. 360)

In our reflexive analysis, we considered how we surfaced dimensions of the normative category recognised as casual teacher, in particular, how the subject positions we inhabited were embedded and constructed through the specific school power relationships we were engaged in. To engage with 'category boundary work' we explored how we managed casual teacher identity boundaries and in turn felt that others policed them for us. We wrote in the third person with pseudonyms to aid our deconstruction. Placing 'the narrating "I" of autoethnography under erasure', we signal that 'this is only one of many possible tellings of the event' (Gannon, 2011, p. 72).

The following biographies reflect the narratives of two phases of career development. The first two accounts are storied memories of two experienced teachers who, through changed personal circumstances, had taken up casual work (CRT). The latter two accounts explore the subjectivities of two BCTs who began their teaching careers as casual teachers.

Watching and being watched

> The staff hovered around the long bench filling coffee cups in preparation for the morning meeting. Ruby sat at a table with the teachers with whom she interacted on the days that she was in doing relief work. The principal in a smart pencil skirt approached an experienced teacher at the table gesturing to a newcomer at the back of the room. 'Brenda is a new CRT.' The group looked over to the CRT table where casual staff usually congregated. 'Keep an eye on her to see how she goes. Is she any good?' Ruby glanced around at her colleagues—What did they think of her? She had been in the school on and off for a few months now. What scrutiny was she under?
>
> The classrooms walls of glass invited the gaze of senior management as they patrolled the corridors. Students flashed signals to peers as they walked past inviting

> them to illicit rendezvous. Ruby was surprised to see the individual desks in rows. Was student talk seen as a waste of learning time here – a sign of an off-task classroom? Was talking the crime and writing the punishment? It seemed that the students had generated their understanding of what constituted 'good' pedagogy in accordance with the culture of the school. This student culture was not to be trifled with and other approaches from a 'stand-in teacher' were less likely to be seen as legitimate. Sighing, Ruby stuck to the script.

This vignette provides an account of the weblike power performativity of CRT category boundary work as an embodied practice within a school context. Ruby's boundary work was engendered without her thinking consciously about it. In a double move she simultaneously inhabited the subject positions of both 'outsider' and 'experienced' teacher as she sat with the permanently employed teachers who were charged by the principal to keep an eye on newcomer, Brenda. Ruby's subjectification was apparent in the story in that she was subject to the principal's power as she monitored the CRTs; yet Ruby was agentic in that she assumed and exceeded this power by enacting category boundary work through her critique. The constraint of the principal's perceived surveillance could have been imagined, but it was very real for Ruby.

This episode draws from a discourse of incarceration in the form of a panoptical prison. A Foucauldian notion, the *panopticon* suggests that by locating prisoners in cells situated around a central watchtower (or authority), they will internalise the monitoring process and begin to self-regulate and self-surveil regardless of the presence of an authority figure (Foucault, 1979). The episode highlights how through envisaging what the principal saw as effective pedagogy, Ruby undertook 'category-maintenance work' (Davies, 1989, p. 28). She assumed from the physical spaces in the school an identity category for the principal, which was framed through an assumed pedagogical paradigm. Thus, through recognising this category of the 'authoritarian school leader', she presumed an environment of surveillance and strove to perform the subjectivity of 'the good CRT'. By doing boundary work on the principal, buying into the power of the panoptical gaze, Ruby constructed, responded to, and politicised the boundaries of 'the good CRT'.

Ruby experiences her CRT category boundary work in the school as both an epistemological and pedagogical project in that she described the knowledge production in the classrooms as transmissive and objectivist. The boundaries of the CRT category were pushed or troubled when she questioned the recognisability and legitimacy of alternative ways of being CRT. Perhaps there could have been room for resistance and risk taking; however, she conformed to the category of 'the good CRT' that she had conjured as intelligible in that context. Pedagogy was a high stakes territory for boundary work that had potential material consequences. There was a risk that classroom talk could have been construed as 'off task behaviour', which would mean failure to achieve a 'good CRT' subjectivity. This could have resulted in a loss of employment in the first instance and potential diminished marketability. This consideration is also an issue in the following story where Loren, the new CRT to this particular school, finds herself unable to enter the classroom with her students.

The key

> Loren was left standing outside a locked classroom door with no knowledge of how to go about finding the key. How silly she looked? Her face flushed red and her heart

skipped a beat as it galloped in her chest while the other teachers entered their classrooms with orderly lines of students. One teacher cast a disdainful stare towards Loren. This look sent Loren reeling towards the other end of the corridor to find a more friendly face that might help her solve her problem. Trying to keep the class in order with nothing to focus on was indeed a tall order for any teacher, let alone someone who had just entered this school for the first time. Inappropriate student behaviour was 'a huge sin' for any teacher, but moreso for a casual. CRTs were expendable when casual numbers were abundant. Principals, other teachers and staff, parents and even students could wield the power supplied by 'off hand' comments that could truncate a casual teacher's employment.

Loren stood in the enclosed corridor with little she could do except knock on the door of another classroom to ask about where she could find the key. That blasted, precious key! This 'little' key could render the difference between her standing forlornly outside the classroom with her students constantly milling and meandering around and a classroom that looked organised and engaging with students focused on what was happening. Of course, the lingering students took their chance to rabble while they mingled outside the room, which meant more time wasted calming them down when Loren finally gained entry to the classroom.

In this story, Loren an experienced teacher was rendered virtually 'helpless' due to the lack of organisational information provided to her on her first day as a casual within the school. Through no fault of Loren's, the key to the classroom was not present when needed. The issue that the school administration had overlooked the key could be regarded as reflective of the marginality of casual teachers. Loren desperately needed the information about the key to fulfil 'the good CRT' position within the school context.

In a 'double move', Loren acted agentically, ensuring 'the good CRT' position to locate the key. She did not go outside to teach the students in an unorthodox location. The viability of her success as a 'casual' depended on her adherence to the acceptable school discourses and, in particular, on the recognition as 'competent' by the other teachers in the school. Both success and recognition could influence Loren's position in the casual teacher market. The anxious tension of Loren's flush in the narrative suggests a recognition of the 'competent'/'incompetent' binary, that for her regimented the boundary of the casual teacher category.

An awareness of her position precluded Loren from taking an accusatory stance where she could lay blame on those responsible for the oversight. By refusing to be a deferential and grateful 'casual', Loren would have transgressed 'the good CRT' position. Loren knew a 'stroppy' CRT would not be asked back to the school. To gain more work, she needed to be read as compliant, competent and devoid of issues. In particular, she needed to be seen to have effective behaviour management; a 'competent CRT' in control. Inherent in the story is Loren's awareness of the panoptical gaze operating in the school. Others could monitor her practice and actions by scrutinising and reporting anything that was not commonplace (whether it was intentional, on Loren's part, or not.) Thus, the wayward key, the subsequent 'rowdy' students in the corridor, and later the hard-to-settle class in the room, could result in denial of future work.

In the next story Addie also experiences the gaze of others and risks being positioned as incompetent through circumstances beyond her control.

Drowning

Why any school would put a day-to-day casual on bus duty, on their own, never ceased to amaze Addie, and it seemed to happen to her with perverse regularity.

Ignoring her raised voice, hand clapping, arm waving (drowning not waving) the noise and frenetic movement continued, relentless. The sea of faces were excited at their imminent escape and despite being a three-year veteran of the casual teacher circuit, as a first-time employee at this particular school, she was no challenge to their end goal. No credibility, no consequence.

Suddenly a bellowing voice came from nowhere and the ensuing silence was truly deafening. Addie was simultaneously relieved and embarrassed; order had been restored; however, it was the Deputy Principal who was responsible for the instant calm, not her. He did not acknowledge Addie's presence, and seemingly with no effort had the students lined up, silent and ordered ready for embarkation on the numerous vehicles ahead.

As was her way, Addie apologised after the last child was on final bus as they walked back to staffroom. Without looking at her, the DP mumbled, 'you'll get the hang of it … one day', and they parted.

Unwittingly, as a new casual teacher to this school, Addie was positioned as the 'apprentice' by the local moral order (Harré & Langenhove, 1999; Moghaddam & Harré, 2010), enforced by the school leader and the students. As Harré (2012) explains, 'not everyone involved in a social episode has equal access to rights and duties to perform particular kinds of meaningful actions at that moment and with those people' (p. 193). Despite Addie's three year's teaching as a BCT since her graduation, and experience with bus duty in other schools, the actions and final comment by the Deputy Principal (DP) establishes the role of master and apprentice (Petersen, 2014). These relations are embedded in predetermined power relationships in this vignette. Addie herself reinforces this status quo through her perceived need to apologise for not having the students 'under control' and enabling their speedy and safe progress onto the buses. However, within the culture of this particular school, the actions of the DP had further implications.

The decision by the DP to ignore Addie's presence, despite seeing her at the gate preventing the students from boarding the buses, reinforced for the students the local moral order of non-authority, alienation and invisibility of casual teachers in that particular school. In this environment the BCT competent / incompetent binary is essentially an impossible state to positively navigate from a position of invisibility. The question might be asked, did the DP take control of the situation because Addie was under panoptical surveillance and deemed incompetent by this school leader, or was it a case that he was actually rostered on the duty in the first instance, and his disengaged attitude and lack of civility a reflection of this? Regardless of the background context of this vignette, the Deputy Principal's ambivalent treatment of Addie reinforces her precarious and inconsequential position as an outsider in this school.

Boundary riders

And so it was that Anna arrived at a new frontier—casual teaching, few remnants of her teacher training intact. She'd have to teach herself to teach by teaching. The very term casual a taunt—'unplanned, spontaneous and carefree' nothing could be further from the truth! For her, there was nothing casual about it! She'd spent months preparing—gleaning beautiful children's literature and planning whole days, which in an ideal world would seamlessly transport a class along; each child being given the

> opportunity to realise their hidden writer, problem solver or artist self.
>
> Inevitably the naivety of this true novice would collide most harshly with reality … Before the day had even begun Anna stood in the classroom not feeling, not being the least bit in charge. Who was this child confronting her? What could Anna do? What was Anna expected to do?
>
> The bell rang and Anna motioned that they needed to go to lines. The child refused to budge at first, but Anna stretched out her hand and the child head bowed, fists clenched, walked beside her in silence. Anna said nothing to the other teachers—she needed to get a handle on this. Anna was acutely aware of eyes watching her, her dress, how she handled the children, and whether she was aware of the routine of daily PE that followed lines. There was so much she needed to know, to get right, to continue the routines that everyone else was so familiar with.
>
> She must morph; to be herself, impossible. Who was she in this context? To be found wanting was her constant dread. Dare not ask—just do, glean what was going on around her, smile, walk gently. She was exhausted! She smiled at the child so clearly filled with anger, then along the line of children—dare she think that perhaps it was going to be all right, that she would measure up and be invited back again?

In this account Anna conveys the jolting reality of arriving in a new school with a preconceived understanding of the casual teacher subject. As a BCT, Anna understands her subject position as one of connecting with and inspiring students to realise their potential. The will is there, her diligent preparation an insight into the 'necessary spirit and [perhaps] skills to motivate students in the classroom' (Weems, 2003, p. 261). Her preparedness, however, soon contrasts with the realities and complexities of the context. Casual teaching for this beginner is as much about subjectification as it is about teaching.

Anna is forced to move outside the seeming sanctuary of the classroom into the panoptical gaze of the experienced teachers at morning lines. She furtively attempts to understand the local moral order of the school discourses. It is crucial to locate the boundary fences and understand the myriad of taken-for-granted practices. As 'boundary riders' the experienced teachers surveil the children and BCT, signalling the social order. For Anna, category-maintenance plays out through the conservation of the borders and the exclusion of any perceived deviance (Peterson, 2007). The imperative is for her to 'morph … get it right', be 'the competent' BCT. Although relatively new to the casual teaching scene, Anna learns to monitor and conduct herself in culturally intelligible ways. To disrupt or to deviate will jeopardise future employment opportunities.

The production of a casual teacher subjectivity, of *coming to be* (Green & Lee, 1995) for Anna involves deep soul searching, 'What could she do?' 'What was she expected to do?' Being alert to the discourses of power exerted upon her and subjecting herself to these, Anna tentatively 'come[s] to mastery, come[s] into existence and agency' (Butler, 1997, p. 2) as the *good casual teacher*. The process was one of '[l]earning the rules of a certain kind of subjectivity, one that can regulate its own desires, submit to the repetitive practice of rules, and its obedience to authority' (Gonick, 2015, p. 67). In this way, Anna positions herself to compete against others and negotiate her legitimacy in the neoliberal marketplace of the casual teacher labour pool.

Discussion

Using collective biography 'as a means of learning to read/write embodied social selves' (Davies & Gannon, 2006, p. 7), we draw attention to the precarious positioning of both experienced practitioners who relinquish full time employment for CRT work and new teachers who begin their teaching careers as casuals. During this dialogic process we noted powerful connotations of itinerancy embedded in casual teacher interpellations. The term 'casual' could be seen to lurk in the binary shadow of 'formal' or even 'professional'. 'Casual' suggests a practitioner who is 'not quite' professional, 'not quite' authentic, and 'not quite' real. Furthermore, the label of 'casual' calls into play an image of a relaxed, possibly indolent individual who cannot achieve the status of permanence. Synonymous terms are equally problematic. There is a 'substitute' when there is no 'real' teacher, an 'emergency teacher' who is only called on when things are desperate or a 'fill-in', a weak alternative who plugs a hole.

Working casual teacher categories, we found specific subject positions that emerged in the storytelling process. There were the compliant 'good casual teacher' and the 'competent casual teacher' in control. The 'good casual teacher' morphs to become whatever is required to be seen to do the 'right thing'. She/he is consistently obliging and learns to adapt quickly to the dominant school discourses, striving to 'get it right'. Across all four accounts, the casual teachers were embodied subjects within the power relations of the local moral order of each schooling context. Schools as sites of varied discourses produce casual teacher subjectivities within multiple matrices of cultural intelligibility (Petersen, 2007). In the biographies, discourses of compliance, schooling effectiveness, behaviour management, and student welfare were constructed and maintained by school leaders, teachers, casual teachers and students. While sometimes shared and sometimes discreet, these discourses manifested in different ways in different school contexts. Within the embodied sociality of schools, casual teacher subjectivities are fluid and relational. What might be beyond the boundaries of recognition in one school context may be relevant and acknowledged in another.

Power emanates through the practices that are produced within the different casual teaching contexts (Foucault, 2007). In particular, the stories reveal a pervasive panoptical gaze that constructs and maintains the boundary categories of the casual teacher subjectivities. In writing about neoliberal performativity, Ball (2003) makes the point that pedagogy and teacher subjectivities are influenced by the rise of 'management panopticism (of quality and excellence) and the new forms of entrepreneurial control (through marketing and competition)' (p. 219). He observes that this regulative ensemble is based upon –

> … institutional self-interest, pragmatics and performative worth … teachers are represented and encouraged to think about themselves as individuals who calculate about themselves, 'add value' to themselves, improve their productivity, strive for excellence and live an existence of calculation. (p. 217)

Through the neoliberal lens casual are located within a marketplace of performativity as a willing, sometimes reluctant and vulnerable, convenient labour pool. Within the education market they are 'enterprising subjects', enmeshed in a system where 'value replaces values [and] commitment and service are of dubious worth' (Ball, 2003, p. 217).

Across the four stories presented there was a sense that the casual teachers were at once invisible and highly visible, in that they felt surveilled. As substitutes, they are invisible when they are not embedded in the ongoing relational work of the school, yet as casuals when they 'get it wrong' they can also be highly visible. The

Foucaldian notion of biopower comprises control through ‘an explosion of numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjection of bodies and the control of populations’ (Foucault, 1990/1978, p. 140). In the stories, biopower is embedded in the school practices and routines and the actions of the casual teachers who subjugated themselves through acts of self-surveillance and self-discipline.

This necessary self-surveillance at times bordered on paranoia. As ‘good casual’ teachers they were willing to maintain the boundaries by being ‘self-auditing, self-managing subject[s]’ (Davies & Bansel, 2010, p. 11). This ‘self-reference, self-management and self-surveillance amount[s] to self-censorship’ (Davies & Bansel, 2010, p. 17). Within this milieu, the individualised subject takes up the responsibility for self-censoring within the terms laid out for them, submitting to ‘competent teacher’ boundaries placed upon them to ensure re-employment possibilities. As the stories demonstrate, the category boundaries are monitored and sometimes policed by school staff (boundary riders) as well as by the casual teachers themselves. There is inherent complexity in casual teacher self-censorship as it is an ongoing project to identify, recognise and negotiate the relational boundaries within and across school contexts. Relational negotiations are fluid, taking place moment by moment within schools.

Petersen (2007) writes how the ‘formation of self takes place in conjunction with prior, ongoing and emerging self-performativities’ and this process may be experienced as an ‘unproblematic extension’ by some while for others it can be ‘a radical and perhaps gruelling transformation’ (p. 479). Although it is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss prior and ongoing ‘self-performativities’, we can see Butlerian (1990) performance repetition in stories of the CRT selves. The stories demonstrate both ‘extension’ and ‘transformation’ in the ways that the teachers performed CRT selves. For instance, as an ‘extension’, Loren did not challenge the power structure and just located the key, and Ruby opted to ‘stick to the script’. Addie and Anna’s stories were more gruelling although Addie critiqued the injustice of her marginalisation and Anna, although conflicted, strove to act in the children’s best interest. It is telling that Loren and Ruby were experienced teachers while Addie and Anna were new to the profession.

The two biographical vignettes of BCTs transitioning into the teaching profession reflected a particular vulnerability. BCTs face the increased challenge of both building foundational professional skills and learning to navigate ‘casuality’. However, regardless where they are in their career, casual teachers are expected to appropriate the commensurate enactments and desires that are recognisable as casual teachers—ironically without necessarily understanding the particular enactments within complex and varied school contexts. Both experienced and beginning teachers employed as casuals can experience this ambivalence, their knowledge and understandings not being valued or recognised. Through this collective biographical analysis we provide embodied accounts of neoliberal power relations that serve to undervalue casual teachers as some of Education’s most marginalised workers. These stories suggest that by not conforming or resisting the discursive expectations of school communities, it is possible to be rendered invisible or worse, visible for the wrong reasons. To resist dominant schooling discourses within a school context risks censure, or worse, unemployment. The capacity for resistance relies on others (both students and teachers) who ‘ride’ and maintain the boundaries.

The casual teacher subjectivities are discursive and made all the more fraught by the transience of classrooms and schools in which they are new and unsure. In each schooling context the category boundaries change and the boundary riders wield their

power variously requiring ever-evolving casual teacher subject positions. The experiences in the stories above span a wide timeframe yet we argue they resonate today. Duggleby and Badali (2007) observed that –

> … not only are substitute teachers kept on the margins in schools, they also encountered barriers in building communities of support among other substitute teachers … [Their] participants noted that they never felt part of a staff because they were in the school for a such a short time. (p. 22)

Jenkins (2015) cautions, 'Schools of Education in universities and the teaching profession (systems, teachers and principals) must work on ways to prevent these effective and energetic teachers from "falling through the cracks" ' (p. 2).
In reviewing the literature, we acknowledge areas of scholarship such as resilience, school leadership, induction, behaviour management, mentoring, and school culture that have references to the experiences of casual and contract teachers. We view that in regard to directions for further research these links could be made more explicit to centre the experiences of CRTs. In particular, we envisage an important direction forward would be to map the shifts and changes that may have taken place in light of additional support and resources that may be targeted for temporary, casual and contract teachers in schools.

Conclusion

Through collective biography we highlight self-making processes within schools to address the good/ unemployable and the competent/ incompetent binaries to which CRTs are often subjected. In the schools the stories illustrate how CRTs are implicated in a variety of social norms. They reveal the associated messiness of becoming a recognisable and acceptable CRT subject (Gowlett, 2013) who necessarily appropriates schooling discourses (Butler, 1997). In presenting our stories there is no intention to essentialise or unequivocally encapsulate the experiences of others, but rather to provide insight into the way casual teacher subjectivities are wrought by neoliberal social contexts. Casual teachers undertake category boundary work to appropriate commensurate subjectivities and ensure re-employment. In reading casualisation discourse, they understand and engage with how they are defined and positioned within schools. The stories speak back to schooling power relations through highlighting how CRTs appropriate discourse to be 'good subjects' where they self-regulate and self-censor, to internalise the regulatory principles of their normative positions.

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