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DOCTORAL THESES

ADULT EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

2010-2016

2016

Telling the story of Nikis (My Little House): An arts-based auto ethnographic journey of a Cree educator.

Author:

Brenda Wastasecoot

Advisor:

Jean-Paul Restoule

Issue Date:

October 2016

Abstract (summary):

As I look back at my childhood, I search for what was there, in order to explore and understand how I experienced the residential school policy of Canada. I use arts based methods as my approach to Cree autoethnography. My memory map, drawings and poems of Nikis (my little house) reveal the life of a Cree family as I revisit the 1960's of the Flats, Churchill, Manitoba, Canada. Lines are drawn and connections illustrate my spiritual journey as Cree adult educator. As I take the story of Nikis to many communities, I find a space for this truth, people are ready to hear these stories. Ultimately, this journey has brought me to my own reconciliation with the past and the residential school policy. What emerges is ethnography of the Flats, which goes beyond my loss of siblings to residential schools. I searched for Skwessis, the girl left behind, but found my wholeness, my history and my understanding of key issues: removal, sexual abuse, lateral violence, cycle of violence and how these affected my life as a Cree woman.

By allowing others to look into my house of the Flats, they can get an inside look into the experiences of a Cree family. My journey as educator is a spiritual journey as I find self-healing and strength in showing and telling the story of Nikis. I offer my life and my lived experience as the context from which to explore the reality of being Cree and to encourage others to speak about their own culture as well.

A long way home: First Nations Adoptions and Repatriation.

Author:

John Doran

Advisor:

Jean-Paul Restoule

Issue Date:

August 2016

Abstract (summary):

This dissertation project explores a phenomenon known as the Sixties Scoop and some of its consequences as told by survivors through their own oral testimony. The Sixties Scoop was a period of aggressive adoption of Indigenous children in Canada and the United States in the 1960s. The Sixties Scoop did not happen in a vacuum; it was part of an ongoing attempt at genocide against Indigenous peoples of the Americas. This study is situated within the history in the eastern Maritimes of genocidal attempts towards the Wabanakis, the Indigenous peoples of the Maritimes. First hand accounts of sailors, traders, soldiers, missionaries and settlers describe observations, interactions and policies. The far-reaching effects of The Indian Act, passed in 1876, are also addressed. Survivors of the Sixties Scoop are interviewed in Toronto between 2012 and 2013. Much has been written about Indigenous Research Methodologies, which is discussed in the thesis. Although autoethnography is used in this study the thesis is only partly autoethnographic. Autoethnography was used as a tool to help Sixties Scoop survivors to speak more freely. The method of a scrapbook of memories relating to the adoptive experience (Arts-informed/Indigenous) was also used to help build a relationship with the adoptees that are interviewed. These adoptees expressed many of the same symptoms described by Residential School survivors. These are the symptoms recognized as posttraumatic stress disorder. Some of the experiences these adoptees relate are long-term depression, recurring suicidal thoughts, a feeling of worthlessness and abandonment, chronic tiredness and a marked tendency to sabotage relationships. These experiences are coupled with a seeming irreparable sense of loss and broken relationships with both birth and adoptive families and communities. These adoptees feel their voices have not been heard and have difficulty finding a place to call their own.

'Borders.... are no longer at the border': High skilled labour migration, discourses of skill and contemporary Canadian nationalism.

Author:

Soma Chatterjee

Advisor:

Kiran Mirchandani

Issue Date:

2016

Abstract

My dissertation explores the curious gap between immigrants' desirability for national prosperity as articulated in Canadian national policy discourses and their labour market integration compromised by a persistent discourse of skill deficit. Emerging in the decades following immigration liberalization (1962), this discourse of deficit constructed the figure of the immigrant as a prototypically skill-deficient subject struggling to integrate into the Canadian labour market, and by extension, to the larger Canadian society. Scholarship on labour market integration frequently applies a liberal remedial lens on the issue and proposes training and administrative pathways to economic integration. In contrast, I argue that skilled immigrants' marginalization in the labour market of the very nation that recruited them as vital for national prosperity is fundamental to the construction of contemporary Canada as a privileged geopolitical and techno scientific site whose superior standards immigrants have to measure up to. I conduct a critical discourse analysis of post-liberalization skilled migration policies and related texts (government commissioned reports, press releases, ministerial speeches, and policy backgrounders) and show how the nation continues to be an exclusive space where immigrants' welcome is contingent and conditional on their ability to approximate an ambiguous Canadian worker subject. I argue that it is through the mobilization of deficit discourses that the post-liberalization nation state negotiated its increasing reliance on immigrant labour with the historically racially conceptualized criteria for national membership. A suffering, struggling, skill-deficient immigrant subject needing the assistance of a benevolent state, I suggest, accomplished major conceptual task for the nation needing to compete for the foreign other as necessary labour and yet anxious about its dissolving borders following liberalization. My research, therefore, contests the postracial claims of immigration liberalization, I argue for a systematic scholarly attention to and engagement with (sorely missing from contemporary integration research) what appears to be a reconfiguration of the nation in its classical, exclusionary form in the façade of progress/improvement and the inclusion of Others. An inattention to this re-formation, as I show in my research, has implications for our understanding of a key mode for contemporary Canadian nationalism - simultaneous welcome (as labour) and expulsion (as political member) of the economic immigrant. This dissertation makes three key interventions: 1) it repositions the high skilled labour market typically considered unfettered by practices of racialized nationalism - as a key site for its exercise in post-liberalization era, 2) it argues that training/learning discourses in this context are better seen as nationalist discourses, and finally, 3) it proposes a dialogue between scholarships on Canadian nationalism and immigrants' labour market integration since their mutual disconnect is analytically costly for our understanding of post-liberalization Canadian nationalism.

Making space for social innovation: What we can learn from the midwifery movement?

Author:

Keita Demming

Advisor:

Quarter Jack

Issue Date:

September 2016

Abstract (summary):

I contend that the emerging field of social innovation is at risk of “social innovation washing” — organizations capitalizing on the trend of social innovation, rather than actually innovating. The current discourse is loaded with language and approaches that suggest market-force solutions to social change and largely ignore that notion that each time we attempt social innovation, we evoke a site of struggle. I draw on literature that is grounded in understanding society from a lens of domination of others to propose a strategic approach to social innovation as an alternative to current conceptualization of the term. The thesis explores the question, how can social innovation be understood or used as a strategic or intentional approach to social change? I use a reflective and iterative approach to conceptualize social innovation. I argue that for an activity or process to be considered a social innovation, it needs to accomplish three things: to have changed social practices, relations, or interactions; deeply challenged or changed our existing paradigms (or stances); and significantly changed resource flows within an existing social system. After considering several potential case studies (for example, credit unions, insurance, or the internal combustion engine), I selected midwifery. Midwifery was the only example I could find that had experienced social innovation

multiple times. Prior to the invention of hospitals, all births happened in homes and within communities. Later, and in many parts of the world, birth moved into hospitals and many communities were excluded from the birthing process. Today, we are witnessing a trend toward births occurring in homes, birthing centres or hospitals, with varying degrees of community inclusion. The thesis argues that for agents to achieve social innovation they need free spaces where they can co-develop their collective identity. Next, agents need to transform current spatial and social practices, existing stances, and finally, the extent to which they can be autonomous or dependent on the existing system. The thesis explored, midwifery communities in Trinidad and Ontario and proposed a model that forefronts the production and reproduction of space as being integral to creating the conditions for generating social innovation.

A Bridge to Where? An Analysis of the Effectiveness of the Bridging Programs for Internationally Trained Professionals in Toronto.

Author:

Abdulhamid Hathiyani

Advisor:

Kiran Mirchandani

Issue Date:

September 2016

Abstract (summary):

The biggest hurdle for new immigrants in Canada is their integration into the economic system. These immigrants have higher levels of education but their earnings have been lower and falling in comparison to the native-born Canadians (Akter et al., 2013; Block and Galabuzzi, 2011; Reitz, 2011). The issue of integrating Internationally Educated Professionals (IEPs) into the labour market in Canada is complex and multifaceted. In its effort to ease this gap of integration, the provincial government has invested millions of dollars to establish numerous “bridging programs” in Ontario. These bridging programs that are supposed to integrate IEPs quickly into the labour market vary depending on the profession, service providers, their length and structure. Utilizing qualitative research and an interpretivist lens, with the help of IEPs (n=20) who have completed the bridging programs and service providers (n=8) for primary data, it has become apparent that although these programs were of benefit to some participants, they do not live up to expectations for many IEPs who continue to struggle to get employed in their profession. This thesis identifies neoliberalism as not only an economic and political force but a potent ideology that solidifies its existence by instilling self-blame on the victim and to internalize its acceptance. The bridging programs are short term courses of varying lengths that are supposed to help IEPs address and overcome the challenges of economic integration. They may help in certain ways but are neither equipped to address, nor capable of addressing, the systemic issues of discrimination or racism, with issues of inconsistencies, instability and short sidedness surrounding them. An overall change in attitude to embrace social responsibility and renewed commitment to social justice is required by all stakeholders, if we are to address the ongoing plight of the so many IEPs who are qualified and skilled, but cannot practice in their professions.

An Aesthetics of Relationality: Exploring the Intersection among Embodiment, Imagination, and Foolishness in Research-Informed Theatre.

Author:

Julia Gray

Advisor:

Burstow Bonnie

Issue Date:

September 2016

Abstract (summary):

Despite that qualitative health researchers site the embodied nature of performance as a way to move beyond the constraints of the written word and draw multiple perspectives into their research and dissemination practices, much of this work is informed by an “aesthetic of objectivity” (Denzin, 2003, p. 73). Researchers taking up this perspective assume a linear trajectory between research findings and performed representation, overlooking the multiple embodied perspectives that are implicated in the development of research-informed theatre. In order to challenge this assumption I explore how artist-researchers draw on their own embodiment and imagination as ways to understand the research findings, how they conceptualize the intended audience, and how those understandings shape the creative process of the research-informed play. Using the case study of the research-informed play *Cracked: new light on dementia* (of which I am the playwright and director), I focus my analysis on three concepts: embodiment (the interrelationship between body and social/cultural/historical spaces), imagination (extending beyond one’s own experience to relate to and envision that of another person) and foolishness (engaging bravely and vulnerably with a willingness to fail). Throughout their work artist-researchers playfully extend from their own embodiment towards the experiences of other people using a multiplicity of actions, such as word choice/language, movement, spacing and timing. Central to this playful extending is a disruption of their own embodiment and social/cultural/historical spaces that itself requires a willingness to fail. Audience members are assumed to participate in the performance and the play is created to support their playful extending with the potential that they might also become foolishly disrupted.

In this way, artist-researchers draw on the artistic form of theatre as a frame to aesthetically explore ideas, concepts and experiences, inviting other people to explore with them. The aesthetic space that is created by the ways artist-researchers playfully extend and foolishly/inventively disrupt is called an aesthetic of relationality. An aesthetic of relationality provides multiple people a unique space to aesthetically explore the interrelationship between their own bodily horizons and surrounding social/cultural/historical spaces.

Understanding Supportive Employment and Job Training in Canadian Social Purpose Enterprises: Drawing from Theories of Social Support

Author:

Chan, Andrea

Advisor:

Quarter, Jack

Issue Date:

Jun-2016

Abstract (summary):

This thesis contains three papers that examine the socially supportive experiences of working at social purpose enterprises across Canada. The first paper presents a mixed-methods study exploring the range of work-centered social supports that can be part of the social purpose enterprise experience. From the perspective of managers and supervisors of these organizations, it explores the potential influence of these supports on the work outcomes and overall wellbeing of participants who often face significant and multiple barriers to employment. From the perspective of employees and job training participants, the second paper quantitatively examines the influences of practical and emotional social support on changes in participants's personal and vocational wellbeing during their time at the social purpose enterprises. Through participants's own personal accounts, the final paper explores the nature and meaning of their experiences of social support, both as provider and recipient of support. Findings from all three studies point to the importance of matching social support to the needs and goals of the employees and training participants, as well as the relevance of how people perceive their experiences of being supported in determining whether they actually benefit from the support. Presenting social purpose enterprises as vehicles for mobilizing social support through alternative work arrangements draws attention to the number of vulnerabilities faced by people most socially and economically excluded, of which employment is but one area requiring attention. This research contributes to a growing body of literature that demonstrates the holistic way these organizations can address issues of long-term employment exclusion as well as individual and community wellbeing more broadly.

Understanding the Use of Cost Benefit and Cost Effectiveness Analysis in World Bank Education Proposals

Author:

Roth, Wendy Ingeborg

Advisor:

Mundy, Karen

Issue Date:

Jun-2016

Abstract (summary):

This dissertation explores how, why, and under what circumstances cost benefit analysis (CBA) and cost effectiveness analysis (CEA) are being used in assessing World Bank education Project Appraisal Documents (PADs) from 2010 to 2014. Choices made when allocating limited education funding to unlimited education needs are challenging as they involve a multitude of factors and CBA/CEA tools are intended to help guide these choices. However, the literature shows that the field of education leverages CBA/CEA tools with low frequency and poor quality compared to other social services. The World Bank offers an opportunity to explore and gain insight into the use of CBA/CEA tools in education projects, as they are the largest funder of education projects and a pre-eminent source of applied development economics. I have adopted a two-phased mixed methodology approach giving priority to the qualitative dimension. I use a lens rooted in the context of an institutional system—including organizational, personal, project, and worldwide dimensions—to analyze data collected via semi-structured interviews revolving around six specific World Bank Education projects. I found that CBA dominates CEA use, and CBA use swayed upward from 2011—with CBA becoming the norm by 2014. CBA/CEA tools are used for their value well beyond the initial choice decision, with an emphasis on facilitating rich education discussions and refining project details. Multiple inter-related factors direct how CBA/CEA is used—with data, timeline, and skill set leading the way. However, the systemic organizational norm that roots CBA use in human capital theory has resulted in an overly mechanistic CBA process that is often out of context. This study shows the importance of thoughtful deliberation and concise governance over how CBA/CEA is defined, the triggers that indicate when to use CBA/CEA, and the protocols for authoring a CBA/CEA for an education project.

An Exploration of Teacher Candidate Willingness and Readiness to Incorporate Aboriginal Content into their Teaching Practice

Author:

Nardozi, Angela

Advisor:

Restoule, Jean-Paul

Issue Date:

Jun-2016

Abstract (summary):

Teacher education is a crucial site for the (re)education of the Settler Canadian public concerning Aboriginal perspectives on histories and current events. This thesis explores the infusion of Aboriginal content into one professional learning community (called Central Option) of approximately 70 teacher candidates at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education over the period of its Aboriginal infusion initiative (2009-2014). The research emerged from a framework of Participatory Action Research, Research as Ceremony, and Appreciative Inquiry. Our work was guided by the question “what strategies increase teacher candidate willingness and readiness to incorporate Aboriginal histories, current perspectives, and pedagogies into their teaching practice.” Three instructors who led the Aboriginal infusion within the Central Option participated in one-on-one interviews which gave context to the decisions behind their efforts. Their experiences are interpreted based on the relationships which emerged when their transcripts were considered together in accordance with Wilson’s (2008) framework of relationality. The thesis positions those various relationships as the vehicle through which the work to further Aboriginal education within the teacher education program was carried out. Quantitative and qualitative data was also collected from the 2012-2013 cohort of Central Option teacher candidates through surveys at the beginning, middle and end of their program, and through one-on-one interviews with five candidates conducted twice that year. The findings are that the majority of candidates entering into Central Option had little knowledge of Aboriginal content, and if they recognized the importance of including this material in their future curriculum, lacked the confidence to enact it. Strategies such as inviting Indigenous guest speakers into the program was a powerful tool for teacher candidate learning, as was in-depth instruction on current and historical events, and a continuous examination of privilege as means to prepare teacher candidates for incorporating Aboriginal content into their future practice. Comments reveal that a political understanding of Aboriginal perspectives often bolster teacher candidates to give Aboriginal content prominence in their future teaching. Candidates also indicated that more guidance and clear instruction on exactly what this material might look like in a classroom would be helpful to build their confidence and willingness

Understanding your Education: Onkwehonwe and Guests Responsibilities to Peace, Friendship and Mutual Respect

Author:

Koleszar-Green, Ruth

Advisor:

Restoule, Jean Paul

Issue Date:

Jun-2016

Abstract (summary):

This thesis explores how Guest participants have engaged with Onkwehonwe (Original People in Mohawk) worldviews as they enrol within post-secondary courses about Onkwehonwe topics, taught by Onkwehonwe instructors/professors from Onkwehonwe perspectives. In order to acquire an understanding of what it means to be a Guest, I spoke to nine Elders and Traditional Teachers on expected Guest behaviour and actions. These teachings along with teachings of Wampum Belts were used to understand and analyze the stories of nineteen Guest participants. Grounded by Onkwehonwe worldviews, the methodology of this research project centered ceremony. The data collection method was storytelling in sharing circles. In hosting three large sharing circles and seven small ones, participants answered open ended questions. These circles were hosted in Toronto, Ontario between September 2014 and April 2015. The main findings of this thesis are 1) the primary, secondary and post-secondary education systems are not providing students with a historically accurate or relevant current education in relation to Onkwehonwe people, histories and topics; 2) when participants engaged in Onkwehonwe courses and pedagogies they all experienced a paradigm shift that lead to personal and professional growth; 3) this growth fuelled a desire to work in solidarity with Onkwehonwe peoples and a responsibility to share the learnings with other Guest people. This thesis is novel and contributes to scholarly discourse on Onkwehonwe research as it employs Onkwehonwe methodologies with Guest only participants (other than myself). It also offers the term Guest instead of using words like 'non-Aboriginal', or 'settler' and provides alternative ways of looking at Onkwehonwe/Guest relationships. In staying true to the data collection method of sharing circles, dissemination of the last question is as a sharing circle chapter. Individuals that are interested in how decolonial methodologies can have practical applications as well as those interested in Onkwehonwe/Guest relationships will find this work of interest.

2015

ESL Education for Social Transformation

Author:

Biazar, Bahar

Advisor:

Mojab, Shahrzad

Issue Date:

Nov-2015

Abstract (summary):

If one considers the colonial history of TESL, its ties to imperialism, and capitalism's need for a cheap labour force which instigates movement of both people and corporations, one will see that TESL is a very social and political activity. Furthermore, since our current social organization and economic model are guided by capitalist social relations, it is crucial to place teaching ESL within these relations in order to shed light on its role in capitalism's reproduction. In this study, I focus on the learner as a social being and investigate the potential of English language learning as a social and political act for the purpose of social change. My main research question is: What is English language learning from the perspective of the learner who is motivated by pursuing social transformation? What would an ESL class aimed at social change look like from the perspective of the learners and teachers of this study and a dialectical theoretical framework? To what degree are ESL teachers and institutions aware or accommodating to these learners' needs? To pursue these questions, I have conducted a qualitative research study to explore the barriers and successes that ESL teachers attempting to do critical work have had. I have also interviewed ESL learners who are motivated by their desire to be politically and socially active in order to gain insight about their English language learning and their ESL classes. My theoretical conceptualization has allowed me to see how our actions as ESL teachers and theorists at times reproduce capitalist social relations and at other times challenges and disrupts them. It is my hope that this study will generate theory in the field of language education that helps other language learners and educators to politicize, decolonize, and radicalize the field of ESL.

Bunkhouse Drama: An Examination of Control and Agency among Migrant Farm Workers in Ontario, Canada

Author:

Perry, Joseph Adam

Advisor:

Burstow, Bonnie

Issue Date:

Jun-2015

Abstract (summary):

This thesis examines workers' experiences of control and agency at the micro-political level of the dormitory/workplace in the context of Canada's Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (SAWP). I ask: 1) How are individual migrant workers responding to workplace and (im)migration policies and practices that aim to produce a flexible and compliant workforce; and 2) what forms of creative research strategies are best suited to documenting and examining the private, largely hidden lives of migrant farm workers? The thesis sheds light on the daily forms of resilience, opposition and survival among an entrenched, yet largely hidden workforce on the margins of Canada's labour market. I conducted my fieldwork in the town of Leamington, Ontario, a well-established hub of Canada's greenhouse industry, and as such a significant terminus for SAWP workers. In order to fully engage workers in the research process, I incorporated a qualitative, embodied, active and participatory approach to research grounded in life history, personal narrative, and drama-based methods. Through my interactions with workers I explore in detail how colonial attitudes operate alongside Canada's official policy of multiculturalism in the context of migration and employment among 'low-skilled' guest workers. Throughout the thesis I examine workers' stories through the conceptual lenses of worker agency, workplace relations and worker emancipation. My research reveals that in tightly controlled and surveilled workplace environments workers learn to be intensely competitive and to distrust each other as a means of survival, resulting in a deep sense of isolation among workers, thus stifling potential opportunities for building group solidarity. However, I found that workers' participation in non-work related activities during leisure hours produced small breaches in the accepted norms of control, offering potentially rich opportunities for critical reflection and dialogue. I argue that an analysis of complex and even contradictory worker subjectivities that are developed and performed in everyday life among Canada's SAWP workers offers a more nuanced understanding of worker solidarities, collective social movements and the potential for labour education at the margins of Canada's labour market.

Challenging Workplace Bullying: The Shaping of Organizational Practices Toward Systemic Change

Author:

Berlingieri, Adriana

Advisor:

Mirchandani, Kiran

Issue Date:

Jun-2015

Abstract (summary):

In the last two decades, much effort has been invested in empirical research to understand workplace bullying. However, the identification, development and use of practices to counter it remain one of the largest research gaps in the field. This study centres on how the current conceptualization of bullying places an exclusive focus on individual actors and acts which directly shapes prevention and intervention organizational practices limiting the potential for long-term, systemic change. I sought out an organization that is attempting to take up the concept of bullying differently and trace how this conceptualization shapes their practices. As a critical organizational ethnography, guided by institutional ethnography and practice-based studies, this study includes fieldwork within a major healthcare organization. I examine practices in depth, in particular policies and education and training programs, using participant conversations and textual analysis. I examine links between how the concept of workplace bullying is constructed on an everyday basis by organizational members and internal organizational practices. Bullying in this organization is conceptualized as an interpersonal issue, as well as an organizational and societal issue and as interrelated with other forms of violence. Changes in interpersonal relations of their members, as well as systemic and organizational changes, are central goals. It is important for anti-violence (including bullying) practices to not focus on individual acts and behaviours alone. Workplace bullying is best recognized and dealt with also as an organizational issue. If the organization's role remains hidden, its systems and practices interrelated with violence will continue unaltered. In particular, organizations need to view anti-violence practices as interrelated to those countering inequities in the workplace. Effective anti-violence practices do not stop with implementation. They are ongoing, collaborative processes of development, evaluation, learning, communication and unwavering commitment. Practice do not stand alone, but are related to, support and shape one another.

Transgressing Boundaries Of Izzat: Voices Of Punjabi Women Surviving And Transgressing "Honour" Related Violence In Canada

Author:

Mucina, Mandeep Kaur

Advisor:

Burstow, Bonnie

Issue Date:

Jan-2015

Abstract (summary):

This study is an act of witnessing second-generation Punjabi women who have survived displacement/excommunication/exile from their family and/or community after transgressing boundaries of izzat. Izzat is a cultural construct that holds particular importance in the Punjabi community of Northern India and is translated into English as meaning "honour". The life histories collected in this study are a result of in-depth interviews through narrative inquiry with 5 second-generation Punjabi women living across Canada. The women's stories speak to the complexities of "honour" related violence in the West, they challenge the dominant discourses that frame family violence in South Asian communities, and they allow the reader to hear how they resisted/reclaimed izzat while challenging/surviving layers of heteropatriarchy, violence and racism throughout their lives. This study aims at shifting dominant discourses that use "honour" related violence as a tool to justify Orientalism/war and cultural racism towards South Asian bodies and it does so through the use of stories. Critical race theory, post-structural feminist theory and narrative inquiry are the lens through which the central question is asked, how can second-generation Punjabi women's voices be heard and contribute to change inside their families and community, while challenging dominant discourses surrounding "honour" related violence? As the researcher, my story and autoethnographic voice is layered throughout the writing and I share my own story of displacement/exile/excommunication throughout this study. In order to understand the history of izzat and violence in the Punjabi community I conduct a genealogy of izzat and trace its development from Northern India to Canada, from a system of morality to a tool of violence against women. Finally, action research informs the final aim of this study. The women gathered and created a piece of collective writing to raise critical consciousness in the Punjabi community, as well as in dominant Canadian society, about the impact of izzat on their lives. Their words and action push us to question how we engage with violence in our communities and instill the importance of listening to young second-generation women's voices and stories of everyday survival against racism, colonialism and heteropatriarchy

2014

The Art of Remembering: Iranian Political Prisoners, Resistance and Community

Author:

Osborne, Bethany Joy

Advisor:

Mojab, Shahrzad

Issue Date:

13-Aug-2014

Abstract (summary):

Over the last three decades, many women and men who were political prisoners in the Middle East have come to Canada as immigrants and refugees. In their countries of origin, they resisted oppressive social policies, ideologies, and various forms of state violence. Their journeys of forced migration/exile took them away from their country, families, and friends, but they arrived in Canada with memories of violence, resistance and survival. These former political prisoners did not want the sacrifices that they and their colleagues had made to be forgotten. They needed to find effective ways to communicate these stories. This research was conducted from a critical feminist–anti-racist perspective, and used life history research to trace the journey of one such group of women and men. This group of former political prisoners has been meeting together, using art as a mode of expression to share their experiences, inviting others to join their resistance against state violence. Interviews were conducted with former political prisoners and their supporters and artist facilitators who were part of the art workshops, performances, and exhibits held in Toronto, Canada from January 2010 through December 2011. This dissertation examines the importance of memory projects and of remembering in acts of public testimony and the significance of providing spaces for others to bear witness to those stories. This research also contributes to the body of knowledge about the role that remembering, consciousness, and praxis play in individual and community recovery, rebuilding community, and continued resistance.

The Ecology of Transformation: A Relational Study of the Ecology of Leadership Program at the Regenerative Design Institute

Author:

Madjidi, Katia Sol

Advisor:

Restoule, Jean-Paul

Issue Date:

25-Jul-2014

Abstract (summary):

This research project is based upon the assumption that humanity is passing through a period of great transition, or “Great Turning,” in which we have a critical opportunity to pass from a destructive “industrial growth society” to a “life-sustaining society” (Macy and Brown, 1998). I argue that the current scale of social, political, environmental, economic, psychological, and spiritual challenges reflects an underlying “disconnect disorder” (Arabena, 2006), and that these combined external and internal crises present an opportunity for widespread transformative learning and a collective shift. My core hypothesis is that this transition depends on humanity’s ability to engage in a dual process of individual and collective transformation through remembering our connections with ourselves, with one another, with the natural world, and with a sense of purposeful engagement in the world. I investigate this hypothesis through an in-depth, relational study of the Ecology of Leadership program (EOL) at the Regenerative Design Institute (RDI) in Bolinas, California, an organization that aims to “serve as catalyst for a revolution in the way humans relate to the natural world.” The Ecology of Leadership represents a unique model of transformative adult education that incorporates the principles of “inner permaculture” and regenerative design to support participants in cultivating personal and collective transformation. I introduce a “relational” theory and methodological approach, which centralizes Indigenous and ecological principles of relationship, respect, reciprocity, and regeneration. Using interviews (p=20), surveys (p=409), arts-based data (p=12), sharing circles (p=8), and participatory research, I integrate personal and participant narratives together with images, graphics, poems, and practices to bring this case study of the Ecology of Leadership to life. I also advocate for a new model of “regenerative research,” in which the research itself is life-giving and contributes to the healing, transformation, and regeneration of the researcher, the community of research, and the whole system. Based upon my interactions, observations, and interviews in the EOL program and my reflections and supportive research, I conclude by articulating the “Ecology of Transformation,” a holistic model for transformation that incorporates inner and outer change with practices for reconnection to oneself, the natural world, and the village.

Getting Beyond Equity and Inclusion: Queering Early Childhood Education

Author:

Janmohamed, Zeenat

Advisor:

Mirchandani, Kiran

Issue Date:

22-Jul-2014

Abstract (summary):

The Canadian early childhood landscape is changing substantially, pushing early childhood from a private family responsibility into the greater public policy discourse. New investments in early childhood services, combined with research that defines the importance of early years learning, requires a careful analysis of the professional preparation of early childhood educators. At the same time typical understandings of family and childhood are being challenged through legal and social policy reforms. Although Canadian demographic changes indicate a growing number of queer families with children, the gap in addressing the interests of queer identified parents and their children is exacerbated by the dominance of a heteronormative perspective in early childhood theory, training and practice. My study demonstrates the disparity between the professional preparation of early childhood educators in Ontario and how queer families are understood in the Canadian context. I draw upon queer theory to deconstruct how educators understand child development patterns and family composition including the newly defined family units that can include single or multiple parents of varying sexual identities that may consist of, but are not limited to lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer and trans parents. Using qualitative methods, the research is grounded in data sources including text analysis of key early childhood texts, focus groups with early childhood educators who have graduated from ECE training programs in Ontario during the last decade and interviews with queer parents with young children enrolled in early childhood programs. I argue that the inherent heteronormative discourse of developmentally appropriate practice silences queer in early childhood training and is embedded in foundational approaches including standards of practice, curriculum frameworks and textbooks commonly used in the training of early childhood educators. Notions of diversity, equity and inclusion structure this silencing. My study also found that early childhood educators have a narrow understanding of how queer parents may be similar or different from other parents. Educators have a limited capacity to support and engage with parents that do not fit the dominant framework of family identity. The queer parents' narratives consistently present subtle forms of homophobia and transphobia through the silencing of their family in their child's early childhood program. The results of the study provide an opportunity to reimagine the professional training of early childhood educators embedding a much richer theoretical grounding and teaching practice of diversity and difference that includes queer parents and their children.

Post-Conflict Afghanistan: A Post-Colonial Critique

Author:

Chishti, Maliha

Advisor:

Mojab, Shahrzad

Issue Date:

Jun-2014

Abstract (summary):

Abstract This dissertation responds to a growing body of literature that points to a crisis in post-conflict aid interventions. These complex, costly and risky international undertakings have not only failed to produce desirable results, but have left efforts to effectively and successfully restructure post-war states and societies an elusive goal. Focusing on Afghanistan, I offer a postcolonial analysis to unmask and interrogate the underlying knowledge base and institutionalized sets of power relations that govern post-conflict reconstruction and statebuilding interventions in the country. Therefore, this study is preoccupied with not only what we in the west are doing wrong in Afghanistan, but why we are there, how we perceive ourselves and Afghans as well as the way we work and the kinds of relations that are fostered. This study argues that one can detect the continuity of a colonial worldview in modern statebuilding practices in Afghanistan. As such, interventions primarily rekindle and reassert the west's own sense of meaning and purpose in the country, ensuring that westerners, and not necessarily Afghans, are the primary beneficiaries of post-conflict interventions and that westerners are never made to feel 'out of place' in Afghanistan. Interventions, therefore, construct an outwardly oriented state, responsive to the desires and needs of the international community, rather than being inwardly oriented and responsive to the needs, expectations and lived realities of the majority of Afghans. To substantiate this claim, this dissertation focuses on the concepts of colonial ambivalence and mimicry as well as terra nullius in order to unmask some of the hidden, obscure and implicit assumptions, ideas, values and relations that underpin externally facilitated interventions in Afghanistan.

Young, Queer, Homeless, and Besieged: A Critical Action Study of how Policy and Culture create Oppressive Conditions for LGBTQ youth in Toronto's Shelter System.

Author:

Alex Abramovich.

Advisor:

Burstow Bonnie

Issue Date:

2014

Abstract

This dissertation is about lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, and queer (LGBTQ) youth and the shelter system. This work focuses on the denial of home and safety to queer and trans youth. Over approximately two years, different groups of people came together to discuss what is holding up and sustaining the homophobia and transphobia in the shelter system, how homophobia and transphobia occurs and is managed in the shelter system, and how broader policy issues serve to create oppressive contexts for LGBTQ youth. This is a Critical Action Research study that was informed by Critical Ethnography and Institutional Ethnography. In order to investigate what disjunctures occur for LGBTQ youth in the shelter system and how those disjunctures come about, this dissertation draws upon one-on-one interviews with LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness, shelter Executive Directors, City of Toronto management, and training facilitators; focus groups with frontline shelter staff; and training observations.

This study suggests that it is both the excessive bureaucratic regulation and the lack of necessary bureaucratic regulation in highly significant areas, that play a key role in creating the disjunctures that occur for queer and trans youth in the shelter system. This dissertation describes the findings of this study in five major themes, which include: Homophobia and Transphobia in the Shelter System, LGBTQ Youth Invisibility, Inadequate, Invasive and Otherwise Problematic Rules, Lack of Knowledge, and Inconsistent Conformity to Formal Rules. A Digital Storytelling project was created with one youth and was used as a Knowledge Mobilization strategy for this study. The film helped generate extensive media attention and facilitated change in the shelter system, at the City of Toronto, and at a policy level.

This research study has made it possible for the voices of LGBTQ homeless youth to be heard in the context of a critical public health and social justice problem. Detailed policy and practice recommendations and changes to the Toronto Shelter Standards are provided at the end of this dissertation and are meant to help Toronto's shelter system become safe, accessible, and supportive of LGBTQ youth.

Multiculturalism Policies: Identifying the Dialectic of the "Ideal Type" within the Practices of Canadian Nursing

Author:

Prendergast, Nadia

Advisor:

Magnusson, Jamie-Lynn

Issue Date:

Jun-2014

Abstract (summary):

Since Canada's first multiculturalism policy in 1971, there has been an influx of Internationally Educated Nurses (IENs) of colour to Canada. Studies show IENs occupying low-paid menial positions, while being excluded from policy-making leadership positions. Colonial values currently function through the notion of the "ideal type", a term defined as a nurse who is white, middle class and occupying policy-making leadership roles. Within Canadian nursing, there appears to be a dialectic relationship between multiculturalism policies and the ideal type that become camouflaged by the term I have identified as the "hybrid space." The hybrid space consists of public health nurses, clinicians, clinical case coordinators, and unit leaders who are registered nurses that work on the front-line with minimal leadership responsibilities. Although these nurses have comparable qualifications as their Canadian-born counterpart, they are not groomed into policy making leadership roles, but rather remain fixed in the hybrid-space. Through the experiences of IENs, this study shows how the dialectic relationship helps in maintaining Canada's favourable position within the global market. Post colonial theory, antiracist feminism and Black Canadian feminist thought were used as theoretical frameworks to expose issues of racism and inequalities within the hybrid space. In-depth interviews, a qualitative methodology, explored the experiences of these IENs in the hybrid space. Ten IENs of colour who were from the United Kingdom and the ex-British colonies (India and the Caribbean) were recruited using the snowball method. The research uncovered several major themes such as, Non-Recognition, No Leaders of Colour at the Top, Faith and Spirituality and Valuing Their Heritage. The themes were divided into two further categories: 1) Challenges and 2) Resistance. Although the hybrid space was challenging, the IENs used these barriers as spaces of resistance in order to survive.

Household Educational Decision-making in Low-fee Private Primary Schools in Kenya: An Exploratory Mixed Methods Study

Author:

Sivasubramaniam, Malini

Advisor:

Mundy, Karen

Issue Date:

Jun-2014

Abstract (summary):

Despite the pronouncement of Free Primary Education (FPE) made by the Government of Kenya in 2003, not all households have equally benefitted from its implementation. Children from many poor households, particularly in urban informal settlements, continue to attend fee-charging private schools which have continued to grow exponentially and to figure prominently on Kenya's educational landscape. To address this conundrum as to why poor Kenyan households are using low-fee private schools (LFP) when there is free primary education in the public schools, I apply notions of social capital and habitus to examine household decision-making pathways. Specifically, I ask which households are using low-fee schools, why, and how do these households navigate and negotiate this emerging educational market. In this study I problematize choice processes as a complex interaction between macro-level institutional policy frameworks, meso-level organizational practices, and micro-level decisions. This mixed methods multilevel study was based on a survey of 209 households from one village in Kibera, and involved five target schools, one public and four low-fee schools. Qualitative in-depth interviews at the state level with Ministry of Education officials, donors, and civil society organizations, as well as school level interviews with school proprietors, teachers, pupils and school management committee (SMC) members, and household level interviews with a smaller set of 21 parents were used to triangulate and to complement findings from the household survey. Overall the study found that decision-making for the economically disadvantaged households in this study was differentiated by the social, cultural, and economic capital they own. As households navigate between public and LFP schools, the results suggest that choice is not equitable as not all households are able to fully exercise their right to choose nor, do they have agency. In many cases households are pushed into a decision. Based on these findings, I propose a categorization of households based on their decision-making pathways into two groups: default decision-makers and strategic decision-makers. The analysis also shows that households rely on social networks, and ethnicity considerations in making school decisions. These decisions however, appear to be reinforcing existing boundaries of social class, and exacerbating stratification in the schools.

The Institution of Becoming Canadian: A View From the Margins

Author:

Myers, Jeffrey Anthony

Advisor:

Burstow, Bonnie

Issue Date:

13-Jan-2014

Abstract (summary):

Combining historical and ethnographic approaches, this thesis explores the relationship between marginality and the Canadian state's organization of national belonging through the technologies of immigration, settlement and citizenship. In the process it reveals how the lives of people who navigate this institution of becoming Canadian from or into marginalized social positions are shaped in complex ways by the relations of ruling underpinning the nation as a whole, such as colonialism, capitalism, and patriarchy. Data-gathering and analysis proceeded from the standpoint of people whose religion, sexuality, "race", gender, or class positioned them in the margins of a textually mediated and hierarchical policy matrix that justified either their outright exclusion or else inclusion on certain conditions. The impact of this arrangement is queried and we find that, while the fact of being Canadian often leads to improvement in life quality, this is in addition to—or even in spite of—the institutional process of becoming Canadian. The institutional process, by contrast, was found to cause things like downgrading, separation, fear, and changed beliefs and behaviours. The study also examined how people deal with this system, including the purposeful acquisition of knowledge or skills, and reliance on support networks among family, friends, and fellow migrants. Finally, some strategies of mitigation (e.g. rule-breaking) are explored. The study concludes by contrasting the institution of becoming Canadian against a universalist philosophy premised on "global citizenship" and the possibility of a world without borders. Unsurprisingly, there is considerable distance between them, but this contrast reveals inspiring areas for resistance, action and change.

Advocacy as Political Strategy: The Emergence of an “Education for All” Campaign at ActionAid International and the Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education

Author:

Magrath, Bronwen

Advisor:

Mundy, Karen

Issue Date:

13-Jan-2014

Abstract (summary):

This dissertation explores why and how political advocacy emerged as a dominant organizational strategy for NGOs in the international development education field. In order to answer this central question, I adopt a comparative case-study approach, examining the evolution of policy advocacy positions at two leading NGOs in the field: ActionAid International and the Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE). Although these organizations differ in significant ways, both place political advocacy at the centre of their mandates, and both have secured prominent positions in global educational governance. Through comparative analysis, I shed light on why these organizations have assumed leadership roles in a global advocacy movement. I focus on how the shift to policy advocacy reflects the internal environment of each organization as well as broader trends in the international development field. Ideas of structure and agency are thus central to my analysis. I test the applicability of two structural theories of social change: world polity theory and political opportunity theory; as well as two constructivist approaches: strategic issue framing and international norm dynamics. I offer some thoughts on establishing a more dynamic relationship between structure and agency, drawing on Fligstein and McAdam’s concept of strategic action fields. In order to test the utility of these theoretical frameworks, the study begins with a historical account of how ActionAid and ASPBAE have shifted from service- and practice- oriented organizations into political advocates. These histories are woven into a broader story of normative change in the international development field. I then examine the development of a number of key advocacy strategies at each organization, tracing how decisions are made and implemented as well as how they are influenced by the broader environment. I find that while it is essential to understand how global trends and norms enable and constrain organizational strategy, the internal decision-making processes of each organization largely shape how strategies are crafted and implemented. These findings offer insight into the pursuit of advocacy as a political strategy and the role of NGOs in global social change.

Bimba's Rhythm is One, Two, Three: From Resistance to Transformation Through Brazilian Capoeira

Author:

Liu, Lang

Advisor:

Restoule, Jean-Paul

Issue Date:

10-Jan-2014

Abstract (summary):

Capoeira is a Brazilian fighting art with roots in slavery that blends live music, dance, play and ritual. It is also an embodied form of knowledge that is holistic and sometimes profoundly transformative - a way of seeing and being that embraces an Afro-Brazilian vision of the world. Using personal lived experience and collected oral testimony related in a story-telling form, the study explores the knowledge embedded within capoeira through the lives of practitioners and through practitioners' explanations of their teachings. The question of whether capoeira has a common essence, or more specifically, whether the capoeira of twentieth century Bahia from which all modern schools ultimately trace their origins has an essence, is explored. In the thesis, capoeira is discovered to be an expression of resistance and transformation. Capoeira, the author discovers, is a form of resistance in that its traditional teachings reflect a communal, non-materialistic and sensuous stance, in opposition to the dominant individualistic, capitalistic, techno-scientific approach that has dominated the industrialized West. Capoeira is also a source of transformation in that it allows individuals to develop to their fullest expression - a self that encompasses the physical, spiritual, emotional and intellectual dimensions - and helps people integrate within a web of relations, human, animal, or other. Using a Transformative Learning approach informed by an Indigenous framework, this dissertation attempts to bring the reader on a journey of the mind, body and spirit. In three books, each one describing a separate fieldwork trip to Brazil, the author weaves a tale that is both personal and profound in its planetary implications.

Small Spaces for Meaningful Participation in Democratic Life? A Community's Perspectives on their participation in an Early Education and Care program

Author:

Hooper, Sally

Advisor:

Mundy, Karen

Issue Date:

9-Jan-2014

Abstract (summary):

Because the majority of children in many countries are being raised in the dual contexts of home and early childhood settings, early childhood education and care programs are an important site of inquiry not only because of their implications for children's cognitive, social, and emotional development, but also for their influence on early childhood educators, parents, and the community at large. At the same time that researchers and practitioners were increasingly recognizing the importance of community involvement in early childhood programs, reforms in governance worldwide were giving rise to discourse on small participatory spaces that theorists contend are crucial to the health of a democracy and core to the idea of civil society. This study helps close the gap in the scarcity of research knowledge and educational practice that considers the perspectives of teachers, parents, and other members of a marginalized community in a non-western setting of their participation in an early childhood program. In particular, it sought to understand better whether parental and community participation in an early childhood setting in a South African township has the potential for constructing and strengthening citizenship. This study found generally that participation in this pre-school offered opportunities for meaningful participation in civil society; some participants, however, expressed disappointment and frustration at continuing disparities and inequities.

2013

Social Contexts in Postsecondary Pathophysiology Textbooks: How Type 2 Diabetes is Understood

Author:

McCleave, Sharon

Advisor:

Quarter, Jack

Issue Date:

8-Aug-2013

Abstract (summary):

Abstract Type 2 diabetes mellitus is a disease that has trebled in incidence over the last 25 years, affecting both adults and increasingly children. The rapid increase of the disease mirrors the gradients of social position and income distribution, and parallels the accelerated environmental changes witnessed with the rise of neoliberal capitalism. This research situates neoliberal capitalism as a collection of political and economic policies that form an ideology suited to protect discrete elite interests. The current ideology has permeated all social aspects of society, including education and healthcare. Therefore, it is argued that the practice of healthcare and the education of healthcare students are shaped by the sociopolitical environment in which they exist. Ten best-selling postsecondary textbooks in pathology, pathophysiology, and disease processes were selected for content analysis to determine if the interpretation of type 2 diabetes in pathophysiology textbooks reflects neoliberal thinking. The data were interpreted within the tradition of critical discourse analysis and theoretically enriched using Foucault's descriptions of governmentality, biopolitics, and discursive formations. The results indicate that notions consistent with neoliberal capitalism permeate pathology textbooks in the understandings of type 2 diabetes. Consistent with how neoliberal thought embodies and explicates social conditions, type 2 diabetes is described in a way that stresses self-responsibility and culpability for falling ill. The texts also impart the importance of biomedical industry interventions for the treatment of the sick and the surveillance of the healthy. Finally, in a way that substantiates the degradation of the environment and retrenchment of social welfare policies, the textbooks fail to make any reference to the ecological factors that contribute to type 2 diabetes, including urbanisation and the propagation of food deserts, environmental toxins, income inequality, the steepening of the social gradient, and the deleterious effects of globalisation on human nutrition.

HIV Vulnerability amongst South Asian Immigrant Women in Toronto

Author:

Kteily-Hawa, Roula

Advisor:

Mirchandani, Kiran

Issue Date:

8-Aug-2013

Abstract (summary):

This thesis focuses on the structural and behavioural factors that placed South Asian immigrant women living with HIV/AIDS in the Greater Toronto Area at risk. Informed by Connell's social theory of gender (1987), this study examined the role of hegemonic masculinity in legitimizing male power and contributing to the HIV risk of these women. By conducting one-on-one interviews with 12 HIV-positive immigrant women, meaningful constructions of the women's narratives and accounts of their experiences relative to HIV were created. This study examined the intersection of power ideologies such as gender, race and class in specific contexts as they generated particular experiences that affected women's risk for HIV. Following a community-based research approach, a collaborative relationship was established with the Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention where qualitative methods of analysis and an inductive approach with an iterative process were followed. Factors such as isolation, economic dependence on their husbands, discrimination, racism, investment in psychologically and emotionally abusive relationships, combined with the absence of support from their family of origin exacerbated the women's risk of HIV infection. The strong ties exhibited by most of the women to their religious/ethnic communities helped sustain a gender-based social hierarchy. To facilitate dialogue and social change for South Asian women, gender and culture need to be situated in social and historical contexts. As such, programs should be understood within a larger critical understanding of the social power relations and history of Canadian immigration patterns. Using anti-racist frameworks, initiatives should address violence against women, while tackling interrelated issues (i.e., housing, poverty, etc.). This work draws attention to oppressions through the experiences of a community of women who are rarely given a voice within the context of research on HIV/AIDS. It will be also helpful for Ontario's HIV prevention strategy and the field of women's sexual health.

A Comparative Study of the Shifting Nature of International Non-governmental Organization Global Education Programming in Canada and the United Kingdom

Author:

Weber, Nadya

Advisor:

Mundy, Karen

Issue Date:

8-Jan-2013

Abstract (summary):

International development non-governmental organizations (INGOs) in the United Kingdom and Canada have demonstrated a distinct withdrawal from education programming towards campaigns and fundraising. This study explores how the nature of INGO global education programming has shifted over time. The purpose of this research is to gain a better understanding of a) the place of INGO-produced global education within the context of international development and the field of global education, and b) what type of role (if any) INGOs have to play in future global education programming. The shifts in INGO global education over time are identified through a comparative historical analysis of the socio-political and funding conditions affecting INGO-produced global education programming in Canada and the UK including the embedded case studies of two sister organizations, Save the Children UK and Save the Children Canada. This study looks broadly at the fifty year history of INGO global education, then focuses on the current experiences of two INGOs that are representative of conditions of INGO dependency within their country contexts. A conceptual framework based on the work on the educational typologies of Askew and Carnell (1998) and the ethical positionings of Barnett and Weiss (2008) is used to analyze, evaluate, explore, and describe the global education programming mechanisms prioritized by INGOs. The trend of INGO global education programming as fundraising campaigns lacks the commitment to relationship building, and the acquisition of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are important for developing informed and capable constituencies who would understand systemic inequalities. This begs the question as to whether INGOs are satisfied with the short-term, socially regulatory outcome of fundraising when they have the potential to facilitate the dialogical, equitable relationships that can increase the possibilities for social transformation.

2012

Re(art)iculating Empowerment: Cooperative Explorations with Community Development Workers in Pakistan

Author:

Shama, Dossa

Advisor:

Kiran, Mirchandani

Issue Date:

6-Dec-2012

Abstract (summary):

Situated in the postcolonial modernizing discourse of development, many empowerment narratives tend to pre-identify, pre-construct and categorize community development workers/mobilizers as empowered bodies, catalysts, and change agents. These bodies are expected to and are assumed will facilitate a transformation in oppressed peoples' self image and belief's about their rights and capabilities. Although feminist academics/activists have been critical of imperialist, neo-liberal and politico-religious co-optations of understandings of empowerment, limited attention seems to have been paid to the material effects of empowerment narratives on the lives of these community development workers. Nor does there appear to be sufficient analysis into how local community development workers/mobilizers who find themselves in precarious positions of employment, engage with these narratives. Provided with guidelines based on project objectives and lists of targets, many development workers/mobilizers in Pakistan tend to live with expectations of how best to 'translate/transform' empowerment from the abstract into the concrete while restricted in their space to critically reflect on theoretical notions that drive their practice. This thesis provides insight into the economy of empowerment narratives and the potential they have to mediate 'encounters' shaping 'subject' and 'other' by critically exploring how bodies of community development workers are put to work and are made to work. Drawing on feminists poststructuralist and postcolonial theory my work explores how these community workers/mobilizers located in the urban metropolis of Karachi, embedded in a web of multiple intersecting structures of oppression and power relations 'encounter', theorize, strategize and act upon understanding of empowerment and community development through an arts informed cooperative inquiry. Through the use of prose, creative writing, short stories, photo narratives, artwork and interactive discussions my participants and I begin to complicate these narratives. As a result empowerment narratives begin to appear as colliding discourses, multi-layered complex constructs, which may form unpredictable, messy and contradictory assemblages; as opposed to linear, universal, inevitable and easily understood outcomes and processes. I conclude that the insistence to complicate and situate such messy understandings in specific contexts is important for women's movements if empowerment is to retain its strategic meaning and value in feminist theorizi

Learning Land and Life: An Institutional Ethnography of Land Use Planning and Development in a Northern Ontario First Nation

Author:

Gruner, Sheila

Advisor:

Mojab, Shahrzad

Issue Date:

16-Nov-2012

Abstract (summary):

This study examines intricately related questions of consciousness and learning, textually-mediated social coordination, and human relationships within nature, anchored in the everyday life practices and concerns of a remote First Nation community in the Treaty 9 region. Through the use of Institutional Ethnography, community-based research and narrative methods, the research traces how the ruling relations of land use planning unfold within the contemporary period of neoliberal development in Northern Ontario. People's everyday experiences and access to land in the Mushkego Inninowuk (Swampy Cree) community of Fort Albany for example, are shaped in ways that become oriented to provincial ruling relations, while people also reorient these relations on their own terms through the activities of a community research project and through historically advanced Indigenous ways of being. The study examines the coordinating effects of provincially-driven land use planning on communities and territories in Treaty 9, as people in local sites are coordinated to others elsewhere in a complex process that serves to produce the legislative process called Bill 191 or the Far North Act. Examining texts, ideology and dialectical historical materialist relations, the study is an involved inquiry into the text process itself and how it comes to be put together. The textually mediated and institutional forms of organizing social relations—effectively land relations—unfold with the involvement of people from specific sites and social locations whose work is coordinated, as it centres on environmental protection and development in the region north of the 51st parallel. A critique of the textually mediated institutional process provides a rich site for exploring learning within the context of neoliberal capitalist relations and serves to illuminate ways in which people can better act to change the problematic relations that haunt settler-Indigenous history in the contemporary period. The work asks all people involved in the North how we can work to address historic injustices rooted in the relations and practices of accumulation and dispossession. The voices and modes of governance of Aboriginal people, obfuscated within the processes and relations of provincial planning, must be afforded the space and recognition to flourish on their own terms.

Against the Medicalization of Humanity: A Critical Ethnography of a Community Trying to Build a World Free of Sanism and Psychiatric Oppression

Author:

Diamond, Shaindl Lin

Advisor:

Burstow, Bonnie

Issue Date:

21-Aug-2012

Abstract (summary):

We have to stop inventing disorders for every human experience that challenges the status quo... I dream of a world where people can peacefully co-exist... [where] differences are accepted... [and where] I, and everybody else, has a place (Jackie, psychiatric survivor and mad person). The thesis is a critical ethnography of a political community in Toronto, Canada whose members are challenging the theories and interventions of biological psychiatry and developing approaches to understanding and responding to human experience in alternative ways that empower people who are conceived of as "mad". Based on the emerging ideological and practical differences among participants, a model of the community was developed that includes three main constituencies: the psychiatric survivor constituency, the mad constituency, and the antipsychiatry constituency. This thesis includes descriptive accounts of the philosophical understandings, priorities, goals, actions, and strategies emerging from each of these constituencies; some tensions and conflicts that arise in the community around working across difference; the genuine attempts made by community members to build alliances, the challenges they face, and the notable progress they have made. The thesis grapples with how community members might work towards building a paradigm for solidarity work with others who share a stake in building communities that are free of sanism and psychiatric oppression. The dissertation ends with an exploration of how clinical and counselling psychologists might proceed in their work taking into consideration the experiences and perspectives shared by participants.

The Impact of the Grameen Bank upon the Patriarchal Family and Community Relations of Women Borrowers in Bangladesh

Author:

Rouf, Kazi

Advisor:

Quarter, Jack

Issue Date:

11-Jan-2012

Abstract (summary):

The purpose of the study is to: (1) examine the degree to which women borrowers of the Grameen Bank are being empowered to participate in familial decision-making around the management of income and expenditures like food, children's education, dowry and teenage marriages; and (2) to examine women borrowers' engagement in community activities such as the degree of freedom women are granted to visit public places like schools, local councils, banks and markets. In particular, the study explores the role of the Grameen Bank (GB) in women's empowerment through the Sixteen Decisions, an educational program designed to empower women in the family and community. This study used a mixed-methods research design that included 61 GB women borrowers selected through purposive sampling. The data suggest that the participants have assumed leadership roles within their families: more than 80% of the study's participants led decision making within their family; more than 90% supported their children's education financially; 91% reported that they worked together with family members to manage day-to-day expenses; 80% reported that they manage their family incomes; 98% reported they do not like dowry marriages and teenage marriages; and 33% view male-dominant values as a hindrance to women's development. The findings indicated that 98% of GB women borrower participants are engaged in community organizations and 94% do not face problems with this engagement. In the 2009 UpZilla (Municipal Sub-district) Election, out of 481 seats, 114 Female Chairs (25% of the total) were elected from the GB women borrowers and their families (Grameen Bank, 2009). In addition, the number of women borrowers serving as councilors has increased from 1,572 in 1997 to 1,950 in 2003; these data indicate that the number of women borrowers acting in formal leadership roles is increasing (Grameen Bank, 2009). The study finds the GB program has had a positive impact upon the borrowers' relations in the family and community. In spite of these developments, one-fifth of GB women borrowers' husbands control their wives' loan money, an indication of the strength of patriarchy in Bangladesh. Although GB's Sixteen Decisions have included economic issues and other social issues, none directly discusses gender inequality, which the study findings suggest is important. Hence a revision of the Sixteen Decisions is suggested.

The Social Organization of the Ontario Minimum Wage Campaign

Author:

Wilmot, Sheila

Advisor:

Mojab, Shahrzad

Issue Date:

11-Jan-2012

Abstract (summary):

My dissertation research is interdisciplinary in nature, at the nexus of three areas of scholarly work and actual practices: union renewal and non-unionized workers-rights organizing in Canada and the US; feminist, anti-racist Marxian approaches to class relations as being racialized, gendered and bureaucratic; and, the institutional ethnographic method of inquiry into social reality. My empirical focus is on the Ontario Minimum Wage Campaign (OMWC). The OMWC was a Toronto-based labour-community project to raise the minimum wage to \$10 per hour. It was started in 2001 by Justice for Workers (J4W), was carried on by the Ontario Needs a Raise coalition (ONR) from 2003 to 2006, and was re-launched in 2007 by the Toronto and York Region Labour Council (TYRLC) in association with some community groups. The OMWC brought together across time and space activist groups, community agencies and labour organizations, all of whose volunteers, members, clients, educators, officials and staff were the agents and/or targets of the campaign. The apparent victory of the OMWC is quite contested. Local campaign realities were compartmentalized in numerous ways and OMWC involvement met different institutionally specific and coordinated needs. And while coalitions generally arise as vehicles to transcend such institutional separation, the campaign was challenged to materially bridge such compartmentalization. The fragmentation of reality amongst institutions and how it was managed in practice affected how collaboration, participation, and decision-making happened and appeared to have happened in organizing and educational activities. While there were at times transformative intentions, there was generally a pragmatic anti-racist organizing practice and effect. I contend that the complexity of contemporary society poses great challenges for the possibilities for human-agency based labour-community workers-rights organizing with a broad-based, political capacity for movement building orientation. I suggest that this is largely so because the social coordination of what we do and what we understand about what we do turns on at least three components of social reality: an institution-based organization of multi-layered social relations that is generally locally circumscribed but extralocally driven; a conditioned individually-driven orientation to meeting human needs; and an ideological orientation to both the content of ideas and thought, and the process of that reasoning.

The Role of Social Networks in the Decision to Test for HIV

Author:

Jumbe, Clement Alexander David

Advisor:

Quarter, Jack

Issue Date:

10-Jan-2012

Abstract (summary):

The major global concern of preventing the spread of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) requires that millions of people be tested in order to identify those individuals who need treatment and care. This study's purpose was to examine the role of social networks in an individual's decision to test for HIV. The study sample included 62 participants of African and Caribbean origin in Toronto, Canada. Thirty-three females and 29 males, aged 16 to 49 years who had previously tested positive or negative for HIV, participated in interviews that lasted approximately 60 minutes. Measurement instruments adapted from Silverman, Hecht, McMillin, and Chang (2008) were used to identify and delimit the social networks of the participants. The instrument identified four social network types: immediate family, extended family, friends, and acquaintances. The study examined the role of these network types on the individuals' decisions to get HIV testing. A mixed method approach (Creswell, 2008) was applied, and both qualitative and quantitative data were collected simultaneously. Participants listed their social networks and retrospectively described the role of their network members in influencing their decision to test for HIV. The participants' narratives of the influence of social networks in HIV testing were coded. A thematic analysis of the qualitative descriptions of the network members' influence was performed. The quantitative and the qualitative analysis results were then tallied. The results of the study demonstrated that the influence of social networks was evident in the individuals' decisions to test for HIV. The most influential group was friends, followed in descending order of influence by immediate family, acquaintances, and extended family. These social network ties provided informational, material, and emotional support to individuals deciding to seek HIV testing. For policy makers and health professionals, coming to a more complete understanding of these dynamics will enable them to make institutional decisions and allocate resources to improve and enhance the support available from within these social networks, thus encouraging, promoting, and leading to increased testing for HIV.

Theorizing Praxis in Citizenship Learning: Civic Engagement and the Democratic Management of Inequality in AmeriCorps

Author:

Carpenter, Sara Catherine

Advisor:

Mojab, Shahrzad

Issue Date:

5-Jan-2012

Abstract (summary):

Over the last twenty years, the academic work on citizenship education and democracy promotion has grown exponentially. This research investigates the United States federal government's cultivation of a 'politics of citizenship' through the Corporation for National and Community Service and the AmeriCorps program. Drawing on Marxist-feminist theory and institutional ethnography, this research examines the ways in which democratic learning is organized within the AmeriCorps program through the category of 'civic engagement' and under the auspices of federal regulations that coordinate the practice of AmeriCorps programs trans-locally. The findings from this research demonstrate that the federal regulations of the AmeriCorps program mandate a practice and create an environment in which 'politics,' understood broadly as having both partisan and non-partisan dimensions, are actively avoided in formalized learning activities within the program. The effect of these regulations is to create an ideological environment in which learning is separated from experience and social problems are disconnected from the political and material relations in which they are constituted. Further, the AmeriCorps program cultivates an institutional discourse in which good citizenship is equated with participation at the local scale, which pivots on a notion of community service that is actively disengaged from the State. Through its reliance on these forms of democratic consciousness, the AmeriCorps program engages in reproductive praxis, ultimately reproducing already existing inequalities within U.S. society. The primary elements of this reproductive praxis have been identified as 'a local fetish' and the 'democratic management of inequality.' The local fetish refers to the solidification of the local as the preferential terrain of democratic engagement and is characterized by an emphasis on face-to-face moral relationships, local community building, and small-scale politics. The democratic management of inequality refers to the development of discursive practices and the organization of volunteer labor in the service of poverty amelioration, which is in turn labeled 'good citizenship.' This research directs our attention to a more complicated notion of praxis and its relationship to the reproduction of social relations. Also, this research brings into focus the problem of the conceptualization of civil society and its relationship to democracy and capitalism.

Race, Resistance and Co-optation in the Canadian Labour Movement: Effecting an Equity Agenda like Race Matters

Author:

Nangwaya, Ajamu

Advisor:

Quarter, Jack

Issue Date:

11-Jan-2012

Abstract (summary):

The purpose of this research project was to analyze the dialectic of co-optation/domestication and resistance as manifested in the experience of racialized Canadian trade unionists. The seven research participants are racialized rank-and-file members, elected or appointed leaders, retired trade unionists, as well as staff of trade unions and other labour organizations. In spite of the struggle of racialized peoples for racial justice or firm anti-racism policies and programmes in their labour unions, there is a dearth of research on the racialized trade union members against racism, the actual condition under which they struggle, the particular ways that union institutional structures domesticate these struggles, and/or the countervailing actions by racialized members to realize anti-racist organizational goals. While the overt and vulgar forms of racism is no longer the dominant mode of expression in today's labour movement, its systemic and institutional presence is just as debilitating for racial trade union members. This research has uncovered the manner in which the electoral process and machinery, elected and appointed political positions, staff jobs and formal constituency groups, and affirmative action or equity representational structures in labour unions and other labour organizations are used as sites of domestication or co-optation of some racialized trade unionists by the White-led labour bureaucratic structures and the forces in defense of whiteness. However, racialized trade union members also participate in struggles to resist racist domination. Among some of tools used to advance anti-racism are the creation of support networks, transgressive challenges to the entrenched leadership through elections, formation of constituency advocacy outside of the structure of the union and discrete forms of resistance. The participants in the research shared their stories of the way that race and gender condition the experiences of racialized women in the labour movement. The racialized interviewees were critical of the inadequacy of labour education programmes in dealing effectively with racism and offer solutions to make them relevant to the racial justice agenda. This study of race, resistance and co-optation in the labour movement has made contributions to the fields of critical race theory, labour and critical race feminism and labour studies.

2011

Redirection: Using Career Development Theory to Interpret the Volunteer Activities of Retirees

Author:

Cook, Suzanne L.

Advisor:

Quarter, Jack

Issue Date:

30-Aug-2011

Abstract (summary):

The purpose of this study was to examine formal volunteering among retirees in order to explore whether their volunteer experiences represent an extension of their career in the paid workforce or whether their volunteer activities represent a completely new direction, and how this influences their career self-concept, as interpreted through Donald Super's life-span, life-space theory of career development. This study employed a developmental mixed-method design. In Phase 1, qualitative interviews were conducted with 12 participants to better understand retirees' volunteer experiences. Phase 1 informed the design of an instrument for the Phase 2 survey which examined the issues among a larger sample of 214 retirees. The Phase 2 results supported the Phase 1 findings and indicated that many retirees sought an extension of career in volunteer activities in that they used similar skills and knowledge. Study participants also displayed a desire for lifelong learning. Retirees relinquished their paid-work career, took on the retiree and volunteer roles, and integrated these roles within their career self-concept to create a new sense of self. These results indicated that the retirees had entered a new stage of life, qualitatively different from 'retirement'. To better reflect the experiences of these retirees, it was proposed that Donald Super's life-span, life-space theory of career development be extended to include Redirection. This theorizing is consistent with the finding that retirees both wanted to and are able to integrate previous paid work elements as well as seek out lifelong learning opportunities within their volunteer activities. This study demonstrates that the volunteer role in the lives of retirees can lead to personal renewal and reshaping of the career self-concept, or what is labeled as the stage of Redirection. This study also has implications for volunteer management, retirement planning and social policy, and may be of interest to volunteer managers, nonprofit organizations, career counsellors, financial planners, retirement planning consultants, life coaches and policy planners.

Non-Status Women: Invisible Residents and Underground Resilience

Author:

Pashang, Soheila

Advisor:

Mojab, Shahrzad

Issue Date:

31-Aug-2011

Abstract (summary):

Although activists' conservative estimate of the number of non-status people living in Canada is well over 500,000, the Canadian government, through its exclusionary immigration, civic, and public policies, has criminalized their existence and forsaken its responsibility for their human rights. It has been abetted by international law, which largely leaves it to individual states to resolve their own issues with unregulated migration by means of deportation or regularization. This anti-racist feminist research relied on multiple methods to collect 155 survey questionnaires distributed by service providers to non-status women within the Greater Toronto Area; it also relied on thirteen individual and two focus-group interviews with service providers and activists in order to: (1) explore the lived conditions of non-status women, and (2) examine how the activities of service providers and activists address these women's needs. The results show that living without legal immigration status has dire consequences for non-status women, placing them at high risk of physical and sexual abuse, labour exploitation, sexual and mental health challenges, excessive caring responsibilities, and unstable housing conditions. Since most publicly funded human-service agencies come under governmental control through the process of funding allocation, practitioners must meet their non-status clients' needs in an underground manner or on compassionate grounds, while facing dual workloads, limited referral sources, and work-related burnout. This adversely affects the quality of the care these women receive. As a result, in recent years, many frontline practitioners and human-rights activists have formed campaigns and networks to confront neoliberal state policies and act as the voice of non-status women. At the same time, non-status women's resilient power, informal learning mechanisms, and social networks have enabled them to learn new skills, navigate the system, and make Canada their new home.

2010

Redefining Enterprising Selves: Exploring the ‘Negotiation’ of South Asian Immigrant Women as Home-Based Enclave Entrepreneurs.

Author:

Srabani Maitra

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Kiran Mirchandani

Issue Date:

2010

Abstract

This study examines the experiences of highly educated South Asian immigrant women working as home-based entrepreneurs within ethnic enclaves in Toronto, Canada. The importance of their work and experiences need to be understood in the context of two processes. On the one hand, there is the neoliberal hegemonic discourse of —enterprising selfll that encourages individuals to become —productivell, self-responsible, citizen-subjects, without depending on state help or welfare to succeed in the labour market. On the other hand, there is the racialized and gendered labour market that systematically devalues the previous education and skills of non-white immigrants and pushes them towards jobs that are low-paid, temporary and precarious in nature. In the light of the above situations, I argue that in the process of setting up their home-based businesses, South Asian immigrant women in my study negotiate the barriers they experience in two ways. First, despite being inducted into different (re)training and (re)learning that aim to improve their deficiencies, they continue to believe in their abilities and resourcefulness, thereby challenging the —remedialll processes that try to locate lack in their abilities. Second, by negotiating gender ideologies within their families and drawing on community ties within enclaves they keep at check the individuating and achievement oriented ideology of neoliberalism. They, therefore, demonstrate how the values of an —enterprising self-ll can be based on collaboration and relationship rather than competition, profit or material success.