

Popular Education for Social Change Class (York University, Faculty of Environmental Studies)

Popular Education: Comparative and International Perspectives Course (AECD, OISE/UT)

The Catalyst Centre

The Transformative Learning Centre, OISE/UT

PRESENT

ENCUENTRO: A Popular Education Encounter

A one-day gathering to share popular education praxis

April 27, 2010

Room 5-250, OISE, 252 Bloor St. West, Toronto, Canada

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

9.30 am - Registration, conversations, mingling

10.00 am - Welcoming Remarks, Introductions

Daniel Schugurensky and Kevin Kester, Transformative Learning Centre, OISE/UT

10.30 am - Morning Keynote Address

Joining Crises: Popular Education in Toronto – Past, present, and prospects for the next decade

Chris Cavanagh, Catalyst Centre

12.00 - Lunch Break

1.30 pm - Concurrent Sessions

Session 1. Grassroots activism and food: CarrotMob and Food Justice

Room 5-250

This session examines community-led nonviolent methods of activism that seek to create social change around issues of food security and food policy.

Facilitators: Nico Koenig, Sarah Power, Kevin Kester, Rebecca Melville, Jasmine Kwong, Cate Ahrens, Malgosia Halliop, and Erica Blesa

Session 2. Indigenous knowledge, health, and popular education

Room 7-162

This session explores the connections between indigenous knowledge, health, spirituality, literacy and social justice movements, on the one hand, and the connections between personal and social transformation, on the other.

Facilitators: Bryan Loucks, Darlene Elm, Pamela Walker, and Archna Sahni

3.30 pm – Networking Break

4.00 pm - Afternoon Keynote Address

**Conflict transformation through popular education:
Experiences from Aboriginal Australia and Timor-Leste**

Deborah Durnan and Bob Boughton, University of New England, Australia

5.30 pm - **Closing Plenary Session**

Moderator, Linzi Manicom, New College Service Learning Coordinator. She is co-editor of *Gender in Popular Education: methods for empowerment* (1996) and *Feminist Popular Education: Building pedagogies of possibility* (forthcoming).

6.15 pm - End of Conference

There are no conference fees, but attendance is restricted to 60 participants due to room limitations. If you are interested in participating in the Encounter please confirm attendance no later than April 20, 2010, by email to Kevin Kester at tlcentre@oise.utoronto.ca. Please put 'RSVP' encounter' in the subject of the message.

For more information, check the Transformative Learning Centre's (TLC) website at www.oise.utoronto.ca/tlc

Encuentro organizers acknowledge the generous support of the Adult Education and Community Development Program (OISE).

PRESENTATION ABSTRACTS

MORNING KEYNOTE –10:30-12:00

Joining Crises: Popular Education in Toronto – Past, Present and Prospects for the Next Decade

Chris Cavanagh, Catalyst Centre

Toronto has been a site, on a global stage, of conjuncture (joining crises) for popular education (and its academic sibling critical pedagogy) for over 40 years. This dissident, wild and heterogenous praxis of social change has been growing quietly and largely out of sight of the dominant gaze (as mold or fungus grows) through individual and community curiosity and interest, through community development practice, solidarity movements, environmental education and activism, anti-poverty and anti-racist activism and more. Popular education, both per se and as an (immodest?) umbrella-term regrouping numerous radical education practices, theories and praxes, is a counter and anti-hegemonic praxis that advocates for change, facilitates change and allows itself to be changed. This presentation will examine and problematize Toronto as a site of popular education conjuncture - the phenomenon of the joining together of a number of crises (political, economic, cultural, philosophical, social-psychological, et al). It will include some brief case studies of popular education projects and critical discussion of their successes and failures. It will conclude with some collective imagining of possible futures.

AFTERNOON SESSIONS – 1:30-3:30

SESSION 1. Grassroots Activism and Food: CarrotMob and Food Justice

Consumer Buy-cott: Reflections from Carrotmob Toronto

*Sarah Power, Nico Koenig, Rebecca Melville & Kevin Kester,
Adult Education and Community Development, OISE/UT*

Carrotmob Toronto took place on April 10, 2010. In this presentation four organizers from Toronto's first consumer driven buy-cott will reflect on their research, their experiences and the successes and challenges that they faced. The presentation will draw on the organization of Carrotmob Toronto, review research and literature on green business and buy-cotts, provide insight into media and community engagement, and discuss the relevance of public space for community activism and education. Attendees will then be given the opportunity to ask questions and discuss the implications of similar activities for popular education.

What Kind of Change and for Whom? Strengthening the Toronto food movement through a Popular Education approach

*Malgosia Halliop, Jasmine Kwong & Cate Ahrens,
Adult Education and Community Development, OISE/UT*

This panel discussion explores the broader context of our food system as well as problems inherent in this model. We use popular education as a lens through which to explore the Toronto food movement. We identify three sectors in the food movement: the environmental, social justice, and service sectors and look at ways that popular education can join these sectors to create a unified food movement which serves the needs of the oppressed and marginalized, and works towards social transformation.

We identify five Toronto food-based organizations as showing the strength of popular education approaches and methodology. We then compare the integrated food justice approach of each of these organizations to other elements of the food movement, which, without a popular education orientation toward the oppressed risks replicating injustice and social inequity, and falls short of creating structural change within our broken food system. To conclude, we initiate a dialogue about the ways that a popular education approach could serve to strengthen the food movement in Toronto and elsewhere.

SESSION 2. Indigenous Knowledge, Health, and Popular Education

Kanikuliyo - Good Minds: Indigenous Knowledge, Popular Education and Literacy Learning

*Darlene Elm, BEST Literacy Program Coordinator, Can Am Indian Friendship Centre,
Windsor, Ontario*

Bryan Loucks, Naugon Associates -Walpole Island First Nation, Bkejwanong Territories

For many generations, government and mainstream designed education systems including employment training and literacy programs have been failing Aboriginal peoples. In 2009, an innovative programming approach was taken to begin to address the complex issues and barriers facing Aboriginal literacy learners at an urban Indigenous organization in Ontario. Informed by Indigenous Knowledge and practices embedded in the local lands, peoples and waters of South western Ontario and concepts from popular and adult education, the program provided a space where “communities of attachment”, “respectful enculturation”, “resiliency” and “peacemaking” could be experienced, learned and lived by participants. The six (6) week program consisting of three (3) integrated streams of learning: Community/Employment Connections; Education Development and Self/Cultural Connections had significant outcomes for learners, their families and community.

A Critical Democratic Conception of Nursing Education

Pamela A. Walker, RN, BScN, M.Ed.,

Lecturer, Lawrence S. Bloomberg Faculty of Nursing, University of Toronto

Across Canada, standards of nursing practice reflect an expectation that nurses will be involved in social justice and policy advocacy, and yet despite having an expensive and highly developed health care system, health disparities persist in Canada. Critical scholarship in nursing maintains that the influence of neoliberal ideology and the hegemonic position of positivist biomedical discourse within nursing interfere with the ability of nurses to confront social injustice and challenge the status quo. In this paper I present a critical democratic conception of nursing education that is designed to disrupt the powerful discourses of biomedicine and neoliberalism in nursing education. The goals of this model of nursing education are to orient students to critical inquiry and social justice, and prepare them for direct involvement in politics and community-based activism.

Critical scholars in education such as Henry Giroux have maintained that education is a key site for citizenship formation, and that the purpose of higher education must be to educate citizens to be capable of participating in and reproducing a democratic society. A critical democratic framework explores how power and authority challenges and threatens democracy, and a critical democratic conception of nursing education demonstrates the application of critical democratic theory to nursing education. Given that nurses are the largest single profession in health care and the trust that the public has in nurses, huge potential exists if nursing students were to graduate from their nursing education programs prepared to advocate for social justice and contribute actively to a critical democracy.

The Erosion of Religious Rights of Non-Proselytizing Faiths -- A Look at India

Archna Sahni, Ph.D, Punjab University, M.Ed, Adult Education and Community Development, OISE/UT

There is an emerging global consciousness on the necessity of preserving indigenous religions/traditions on this planet. Aboriginal traditions in the Americas, the dharmic traditions of India (Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism) and of East Asia (Taoism, Shintoism), as well as the tribal faiths, would come under this. Many 20th century academic disciplines and social movements owe their origin to the holistic perspectives of these indigenous traditions. However, while we continue to benefit from the resurgence of these traditions in the West, no awareness exists on how these non-proselytizing faiths continue to be undermined in their own land through proselytizing by aggressive religions, supported by Western governments, churches, and NGO's. This continues the legacy of colonization, and constitutes a human rights violation. I will look at this issue in the Indian context, specifically, the tension between Hindu and Christian populace and organizations. I shall attempt to briefly situate the conflict in its historical

context and bring out the power politics underlying this phenomenon. I suggest that in order to create awareness around this issue, a two-pronged strategy must be adopted: community leaders must educate their community about this phenomenon, and at the same time attempt to intervene in this 'religious colonization' by striking a dialogue with the religious organizations that promote these proselytizing missions.

AFTERNOON KEYNOTE – 4:00-5:30

Conflict transformation through popular education: Experiences from Aboriginal Australia and Timor-Leste

Bob Boughton, Associate Professor, Adult and Workplace Education, University of New England, Australia

Deborah Durnan, Adult Education and Development Specialist, University of New England, Australia

Both Timor-Leste and Aboriginal Australia have long and violent histories arising from colonial invasions and occupations. In Australia, the direct violence of frontier pacification programs ended early in the last century, but the structural violence of marginalisation, impoverishment and the denial of Indigenous peoples basic rights continues into the present. In Timor-Leste only a decade has passed since the genocidal Indonesian military occupation ended, and formal independence was achieved only in 2002. Today, in both countries, Indigenous people in small isolated and remote communities with high rates of illiteracy are struggling to come to terms with the after-effects of colonial violence, but in very different contexts.

From our experiences working in both countries, we have begun to systematise our understandings of the contribution of popular education theory and practice to the work of conflict transformation and community peacebuilding. In this short presentation, we will outline some basic propositions about colonial violence and resistance, and about the interconnectedness once the direct violence ends, of critical literacy, gender, democratic governance, and the right to self-determination. We will provide some examples from our practice and research to illustrate our argument, and suggest some further questions which popular educators and development workers may wish to pursue.

CLOSING PLENARY SESSION – 5:30-6:15

Moderator, Linzi Manicom, New College Service Learning Coordinator. She is co-editor of *Gender in Popular Education: methods for empowerment* (1996) and *Feminist Popular Education: Building pedagogies of possibility* (forthcoming).