

Chapter 1

“Who’s Schooling Who?”: Counter–Schooling Toward Feasible Utopias

H. Bernard Hall

West Chester University, USA

Hannah Ashley

West Chester University, USA

ABSTRACT

In this chapter, we highlight twenty-first century practices of Freirian dialogue (mutual and reciprocal “schooling”) in two community-engaged programs that work full circle with K-12 youth, college students and university faculty. We argue that in our current socio-economic context, uncovering, theorizing and institutionalizing these practices are essential to the practice of “revolutionary critical education.” We also argue that the specific practices—namely, hip hop pedagogy and community-engagement as movement rather than project—powerfully open authentic spaces for the Freirian endeavor of mutual humanizing to happen, and that these practices have wider implications, particularly for teacher education.

One of the most important and fundamental ideas that we can glean from Marx’s explanation of capital is that it is both a process and a relation—a social relation between human beings—and not a thing. (Allman, 2010, 7)

... education throughout life would be continually fostering the abilities of citizens who would be constantly engaged in democratically creating and recreating their society at every level. This may sound utopian, but I think it is a feasible utopia, which revolutionary critical educators should be striving to make a reality. (Allman, 2010, xii)

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-0871-7.ch001

INTRODUCTION: WHY COUNTER THE NARRATIVE OF SCHOOLING?

The product of education is humanity. Here we might cite Marx, Gramsci, Adorno, Freire, hooks, Foucault, Giroux, and others. By this statement, we do not mean schools manufacture tangible people who have a set of defined knowledge and skills. Rather, we mean schooling produces a social relation. Again, at the risk of being heavy-handed, we don’t mean here commonsense notions of having a “positive (or negative) relationship” among teachers and students. We mean that the ideal outcome of education is—not measurable on a high-stakes test—relations of humanity. It is the opposite of the relations produced by the workings of global capital, and it is not a “thing,” just as capital/capitalism is not a “thing,” as Paula Allman, in *Critical Education Against Global Capitalism*, reminds us. That education produces subjects is a given, and thus the question becomes whether and how as educators we can produce *more human* subjects—including ourselves. More human subjects are those more able to respond flexibly with thought and action in, for and with themselves and others. Needless to say, this is not the predominant question being asked about education at this historical juncture.

In a recent op-ed, Giroux (2012) poses the question: *Can Democratic Education Survive in a Neoliberal Society?* He argues that right-wing “educational deformers” have made their answers to questions concerning the role, purpose, and function of a democracy, public education, teachers and students quite clear: the ends of “repression, conformity, and instrumentalism” justify the means of “privatization, commodification, militarization, and deregulation.” In this historical context, our first task is to help teachers and students recognize the subtle, yet intentional ways school has shifted from a public good to a private right. Why teachers are viewed as service-providers rather than public intellectuals, and students are now consumers instead of critical citizens. How policies cloaked in neoliberal rhetoric of “accountability” and “zero-tolerance” are complicit in the criminal conspiracy better known as the school-to-prison pipeline. And how market-based pedagogies have scapegoated teachers as “the new welfare queens” (Giroux). Then, and more importantly, we must turn our attention to how we might overcome these admittedly daunting challenges.

To say that teacher education becomes an important battleground in this fight between good and evil is not an overstatement. We are beginning to acknowledge that traditional approaches to teacher education have failed to prepare prospective educators for the contests that lie ahead of them. Recently, teacher education research has pushed for a move towards service learning approaches to experiential education that combine the academic study of educational theory, research, and practice with authentic, reciprocal community service in schools. Research on service learning teacher education has shown promise, especially when it comes to impacting preservice teachers’ understanding of and beliefs about multiculturalism and diversity (Conner, 2010; Akiba, 2011). That being said, less is known about “*critical service learning*” (Mitchell, 2007) pedagogical approaches that allow teacher-learners and learner-teachers to develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to become active agents in the transformation of their respective educational and lived experiences. A great deal of service learning (and even what is labelled community-engaged learning) is not engaged in the project of humanization. Community engagement “projects” often respond to symptoms, and when reflection is paired with the hands-on work, it is too easy to explain those symptoms as the result of individual pathologies. *But isn’t it nice that we are helping?* End of story. We would hazard this is particularly true at the K-12 level, where teachers of youth are under myriad pressures to “deliver knowledge” into the minds of the individuals who sit in their classrooms, let alone induce those individuals to spit back that knowledge on tests more and more distant from anyone’s lived realities. In urban communities, the pressures to be and do everything for

21 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:

www.igi-global.com/chapter/whos-schooling-who/164327

Related Content

Intelligent Cities: A Compendious and Multidisciplinary Approach – Issues and Opportunities

Kwesi Atta Sakyi (2021). *Developing and Monitoring Smart Environments for Intelligent Cities* (pp. 216-250).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/intelligent-cities/265452

Future Developments of Higher Education on Social Psychology: Innovation and Changes

D. Kalaiselvi, M. S. Ramaratnam, S. Kokila, Ratan Sarkar, S. Anandakumar and Sampath Boopathi (2024). *Social Innovations in Education, Environment, and Healthcare* (pp. 151-174).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/future-developments-of-higher-education-on-social-psychology/350596

Urban Planning and the Creation of Livelihoods in Sub-Saharan Africa in the 21st Century

Idowu Biao (2019). *Learning Cities, Town Planning, and the Creation of Livelihoods* (pp. 55-71).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/urban-planning-and-the-creation-of-livelihoods-in-sub-saharan-africa-in-the-21st-century/228263

Accessing Knowledge, Information and Resources for Planning and Spatial Decision Support: Introducing the Spatial Decision Support Knowledge Portal

Naicong Li (2012). *International Journal of E-Planning Research* (pp. 90-97).

www.irma-international.org/article/accessing-knowledge-information-resources-planning/62042

Surveillance in the COVID-19 Normal: Tracking, Tracing, and Snooping – Trade-Offs in Safety and Autonomy in the E-City

Michael K. McCall, Margaret M. Skutsch and Jordi Honey-Roses (2021). *International Journal of E-Planning Research* (pp. 27-44).

www.irma-international.org/article/surveillance-in-the-covid-19-normal/262506