CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION: INTEGRATING TEACHING, FIELD SUPERVISION, RESEARCH AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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Nelson Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom

We have not taken the final step of our journey, but the first step on a longer and even more difficult road. For to be free is not merely to cast off one’s chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others (Nelson Mandela, 1994, p. 617)

Being the change we want to see

Using one’s own voice and the particular to contribute to deepened democracies, social justice, and solidarity and to build bridges across difference and diversities
In the face of complex global-local challenges and relationships

How do we prepare students for civic leadership?

How do we “evolve a concept of citizenship that is at once compatible with political action at the local level, while also allowing for the possibility of wider global and cosmopolitan considerations” (Garratt and Piper, 2010, p. 47).
POSITIONING OF THE SELF

Frerian-Gramscian strategies of praxis and consciousness-raising

Label and confront structural injustice

Enhanced my self-esteem

Engaged in political education

Developed a sense of hope for the future

Biographies of students - powerful intersection between key criteria such as race, class and gender [and other criteria such as (dis)ability, nationality and sexual orientation] and how these influence access to power, privilege, status and resources.
Citizenship education

- Engender democratic citizenship and civic responsibility, while ensuring that this is not reduced to political indoctrination and an indiscriminate inculcation of patriotism and compliance.

- Education: Power to enslave or to liberate

- Citizenship education must be promoted together with democratic participation, a critical engagement with state policies and apparatus of state control, power relations and socio-economic justice.

- Education is directed at helping students see themselves as players on the global scene and provides possibilities for intervention at that level.
BILL OF RIGHTS
CHAPTER 2...

16. Freedom of expression
   1) EVERYONE HAD THE RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION WHICH INCLUDED
      a) FREEDOM OF THE PRESS
      b) FREEDOM IMPAR
      c) FRE
“Religion is a big help whenever I have doubts about my homophobia.”
The profile of students: N = 260 SW 1

74% were female. African Black (94%) Majority fit in the late adolescence to early adulthood – 19 to 25 year - category (58%), followed by the 16-18 year group (36%) 84% experienced loss of relatives via AIDS; 5.6% loss of fathers; 5% of mothers; and 7% of siblings. 51% experienced multiple losses with 12% having had lost more than 8 known people through AIDS 55% came from rural areas; 42% urban and 3% from informal settlements. 44% had no piped water in their homes and 31% had no electricity. 30% - no one employed in the family; 33% grew up with both parents; Most notable was the absence of fathers. Women – mothers or grandmothers [51%] bore responsibility for child rearing.
Implications of students’ profile for emancipatory social work education and practice

• 1) The normalisation of poverty and inequality, and the internalisation of oppression

• 2) The internalisation/normalisation of privilege
Dynamics of internalised oppression & privilege

You'll be glad to know that according to the analysts, the economic fundamentals are in place.
“Doing no harm” – the power of socialisation & culture
Intercultural dialogue to challenge taken for granted assumptions & reproduction of human rights violations in the name of culture
Emancipatory education

- CHALLENGE TAKEN FOR GRANTED ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT RACE, GENDER, CLASS, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, (DIS)ABILITY, NATIONALITY, RELIGION, ETHNICITY in order to understand and challenge external sources of oppression, and to understand and undo sources of privilege

- Transform common sense into good sense

- The emphasis is simultaneously on human agency and the impacts of structural factors on our lives and on the relationship between freedom and responsibility

- By being the authors and editors of our own lives we can confront and challenge structural injustices
“Educators must nurture, support, and affirm the identities of students [...] if we expect them to endorse national values, become cosmopolitans, and work to make their local communities, the nation, and the world more just and humane” (Banks, 2008, p. 63)

Beside the geographical and political context, of equal importance was the context of the humane relationship with the educator. One aspect of that was our collective experience of her as a class. She was woman, she was bold, and it made an impression. Another aspect is my personal experience ... I needed the personal affirmation and not merely an abstract theory ... The congruence between the theory being taught and her validation of me contributed to my emancipation. It was critical theory and anti-oppressive practice in action and it related to my own personal challenges. The transformation and liberation that I experienced rekindled the passion and desire to extend the liberation to others (Student)
My introduction to the emancipatory theories of Antonio Gramsci, Henry Giroux and Paulo Freire … in my first year at UKZN, enabled me to understand that I am deeply embedded in structures – cultural, economic, political - that constantly shape my worldview. I began to appreciate that some of the thoughts and decisions that I felt were my ‘own’ were expressions of dominant socialised responses.
The role of the mentor has been crucial in transferring the learning to practice, of making the theoretical knowledge cascade into the field. She created the space for critical action for me and the other students in our practice group. She had the authority to cut through, and help us navigate, some of the bureaucratic obstacles, and she had the passion and personal integrity to model and to inspire us in our fieldwork and our endeavour to integrate the personal, the professional and the political ...

Without [the] practical interventions to adjust the teaching and practice structure to anti-oppressive work and critical action ... my own intentions and efforts ...would have been minimised ...The mentoring relationship was the safe space where I could figure out all the contradictions of identity, privilege and oppression in my own life (Student)
Several parallel processes

- Weekly supervisory meetings; weekly students’ team meetings; focus group meetings with children and youth living on the streets; individual interviews and home visits where feasible; spending time on the streets and getting to know children and youth in their own life spaces; the keeping of reflexive journals by the students; workshops with service providers and stakeholders, such as the police and municipal authorities; workshops with the children and youth; and engaging the media to highlight the life circumstances of children and youth living on the streets.
Student: “Our identity as experts betray us”.

- Often times as a practitioner you are faced with longstanding established traditions that cripple the efforts to effectively engage with the people that you are working with. In the case of the children and youth living on the streets, this was a challenge. Emancipatory education and practice ... demands working with service users. Allowing them to be directors of the process ... The children and youth living on the streets are among some of the lowest ranked. The use of participatory approaches with the aim of achieving real empowerment ... was really a difficult task ... it was even surprising to them that we wanted them to participate in every stage of the processes that we were engaging in.
On the use of journals, a student wrote:

Constantly writing reflections on the processes and events I experienced has helped me in several ways. Firstly, it has helped me to incorporate critical thinking [...] journaling helps me to take a step back and look at situations from different perspectives. It has thus helped me to look beyond the personal problem. Secondly, it is a practical tool for self-reflection. It has helped me to constantly be aware of power dynamics, both among my colleagues and myself and the people I/we work with. It has furthermore helped me to always align what I am doing with my intentions; to scrutinise what is happening and compare with critical theories or the goal of social justice.
SOME KEY RESULTS FROM THE COMMUNITY BASED RESEARCH

- Denial of social citizenship – access to resources, education, health, shelter, security
- Sheer survival struggles and exposure to violence – qualitative data
- Since I came to the streets in 1991, I have seen a lot of my friends die and I am really afraid that next time it could be me (male)
- I was asleep [...] it was around three in the morning. When I went out, I was blinded by the light from the torches. It was then that I realized that it was the Metro Police officers. All of them started beating me up, they did not say why [...]. They pressed me down and sprayed in my eyes [...], as I shook them off to escape through this gap, they flung me to the razor wire and I got cut badly (male)
- He slept with me [...]. And he told me, if I go and tell the police, he’s gonna catch me and shoot me. And I didn’t go and tell the police. I just kept quiet (female)

NOT BEING HEARD!
Youth and children’s participation in survey
In co-operative inquiry all those involved in the research are co-researchers, whose thinking and decision-making contributes to generating ideas, designing and managing the project, and drawing conclusions from the experience; and co-subjects, participating in the activity which is being researched (Reason, 1994, p.327):

Not an easy process
EXPERIENCES WITH THE METRO POLICE

N = 89

- Help: 9%
- Physical abuse: 88%
- Verbal abuse: 75%
- Take things: 73%
- Sexual abuse: 26%

Survey participants
Leonard:

Critical theory is a theory with practical intent [...] playing a crucial role in changing society [...] a critical theory without a practical dimension would be bankrupt on its own terms.

Hoped to engender structural changes by actively engaging the children and youth on the streets. Research reflected democracy enlivened in localized contexts. Children and youth were involved in decided ways with regard to how the research results were to be utilised.

Invitations; Workshop; Media
“It might be too late for us but what can we do help other children. What can we do to stop them from coming onto the streets?”

- Video
- Schools based outreach and education
- Workshop – national conference “Who gets to listen”
CHALLENGES:

Inability to engender meaningful structural changes – neoliberal influences

Without political intervention/will to curb the high rates of unemployment, poverty and inequality we are not going to deal effectively with a range of social issues – and the efforts of social workers as committed and authentic as these might be would amount to small gains.

Commodification, with “education for profit [and] students as customers”, represent a “clear and present danger to the democratic mission of education” (Harkavy, 2008, p. 94)
An approach to social justice and citizenship education based on Quinn’s:

Hopeful vision of teaching that is grounded, against the grain of governmental push and current trend, not at all in the interests of the market but rather in the specific lives of particular children. It is all about ... teaching in the hope of making the world a better place.