Nonviolent Pedagogies of Africa's Oppressed, from South Africa to the Great Lakes

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Lecture Presented at the Centre for Civil Society, University of Kwazulu Natal
South Africa, 31 July 2012

Topic Rationale and Significance

- The construction of grassroots movements for sustainable peace and justice in violence-prone South Africa and the Great Lakes Region requires a pedagogical underpinning appropriate for these different contexts.

- Improving the conditions of education and building cultures of peace - through new policy, curriculum and pedagogy - can only be accomplished through the engagement of parents, students and educators.

- Building and sustaining grassroots movements of nonviolence and peace requires the implementation of principles of multicultural education, critical pedagogy and peace education.

Relevance and Importance of Education in the Quest for Societal Transformation

"There is no such thing as a neutral educational process. Education either functions as an instrument that is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world."

Richard Shaull, Foreword to *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* by Paulo Freire (1993, p.16)

Education for Freedom vs. Domination: Cornerstone of Critical Pedagogy

"Education as the practice of freedom – as opposed to education as the practice of domination— denies that man is abstract, isolated, independent, and unattached to the world; it also denies that the world exists as a reality apart from people."

Paulo Freire (1993). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* p.62.

Meyer: Time is Tight I
Pan African Concepts of Critical Pedagogy

"The purpose of education is to transmit from one generation to the next the accumulated wisdom and knowledge of a society and their active participation in their maintenance or development."

Tanzanian secondary school educator
Julius Nyerere

Meyer: Time is Tight II
Pan African Concepts of Critical Pedagogy

N.Q. Mkabela and P.C. Luthuli, Towards an African Philosophy of Education (1997): Too often what is called multicultural education loses its focus in diluted, feel-good, same-size-fits-all policies

John K. Marah, "Pan-African Education in the 21st Century" (2000): "Current educational schemes in Africa emphasize academic education for those who already have proven themselves capable of succeeding anywhere."

Catherine Odora-Hoppers (2000): Education in Africa must seek to retrieve the past, engage the present, and shape the future.

Meyer: Time is Tight III
South African Concepts of Critical Pedagogy

The Vulani Project:
- "Three million children have been robbed of the opportunity to dream"
- Quoting Freire and Giroux: Literacy is a process…a form of cultural production…empowering children to transform oppressive conditions
- Educators must be careful in their even mildly discouraging attitudes: "I've tied that before; Our situation is different; That's not my job; We've never done it before; We don't have the authority; We're not ready for that; Good idea but impractical; We've always done it this way…"

Meyer: Time is Tight IV
South African Concepts of Critical Pedagogy

Maqhudeni Ivy Goduka:

"The principles of Yobuntu cannot be taught didactically; they must be caught. For learners to catch these principles, they must live with them, by them and observe them modeled or enacted by significant adults...They must understand the importance of politics, debate, social action and the acquisition of power...and acquire skills for nonviolent conflict resolution."

Meyer: Time is Tight V
South African Questions of Critical Pedagogy

- Where are we at now?

- What roles can civil society activists take to strategically empower critical pedagogy?

- How can our actions be as mass-educational as possible?

- How can our education organically empower and encourage mass action?

Connection between Multiculturalism and Peace

From South African multiculturalist Maqhudeni Ivy Goduka (*Unity in Diversity in Education: Healing with Ubuntu*)-

* In an affirmative concept of peace, the validation of diversity - the teaching of Ubuntu - is a prerequisite.

* Conflict is a normal, natural human process. In a diverse society, and in inclusive classrooms, it is inevitable. It can be constructive or destructive, depending on how it is handled. (Multiculturalism is a means of handling those conflicts peacefully, and with a process that can bring about not just peace, but peace with justice).

Nonviolent Pedagogies and Human Interconnectedness

❖ Nonviolent pedagogies are grounded in human interconnectedness, thus…

• the quest for equity and social justice no longer concerns only those who consider themselves disenfranchised.

• Rather it is a collective call for increased levels of critical social consciousness and for both individual and collective transformative actions for the common good.

• We are a "global family," and we are "so dependent on each other in so many ways that we can no longer live in isolated communities and ignore what is happening outside those communities." (Dalai Lama (2002, p. 118)

➢ "The life of each one of us is connected with the life of those around us."

Thich Nhat Hanh (2002, p.127)

➢ The destiny of all victims of violence and of all people of color "is tied up with the destiny of America and the destiny of the entire world."

Martin Luther King Jr. (2002, p. 112)

Linking Pedagogies to Further Nonviolence and Peace

➢ Effective critical multicultural education must yield agents of peace, and effective peace education must be multicultural in nature and scope.

(Ndura, 2006; Ndura-Ouédraogo, 2009).

➢ "The goals of peace education are towards social change and transformation, or…towards the formation of a world culture of peace."

(Synott 2005, p.13)

➢ In addition to becoming culturally competent agents of social transformation who labor to achieve equity and social justice by challenging all forms of discrimination (Nieto, 2000, 2004) and resisting all forms of oppressive social relationships (Sleeter, 1996), we must become agents of peaceful coexistence who validate others' narratives of suffering, take ownership of our group's actions towards other groups, are empathetic and trusting towards others, and who have nonviolent dispositions (Salomon, 2002).

Localizing Critical Pedagogy Through Ubuntu

Critical Question:

How could Ubuntu values be reclaimed and taught ever more intentionally to help Africa and the African people to develop nonviolent and peacemaking dispositions and engineer their own path to sustainable peace and a more hopeful and nonviolent future?

Multicultural Education Principles

❖ "Multicultural education is a philosophy that affirms the centrality of human diversity in education, and a reform movement that seeks to transform policies and practices to further the quest for social justice and equity in schools and society, and for peaceful coexistence."

(Ndura, in press)

➤ Cultural competence

➤ Liberation (greater than empowerment)

➤ Healthy cultural identities

➤ Democratic and inclusive worldviews, dispositions, and behaviors

➤ Promotes Ubuntu traits (love, generosity, empathy, compassion, kindness)

Reclaiming Ubuntu Through Multicultural Education

❖ Transformative multicultural education, as a philosophy and pedagogy, can foster Ubuntu values, and thus facilitate the development of peacemaking dispositions and worldviews in five complementary and overlapping ways:

1. enhancing cultural competence;

2. fostering healthy identity development;

3. affirming human diversity;

4. clarifying human interconnectedness;

5. strengthening empathic ability.

Enhancing Cultural Competence: Instructional Objectives

➢ Foster awareness and understanding of societal patterns of discrimination, inequity and injustice, and the resulting benefits and liabilities to different ethnic and geographic groups;

➢ Develop the capacity and willingness to critically examine one's own values, commitments, beliefs, influences, and prejudices;

➢ Critically examine the history of the countries from the pre-colonial era to the present, with a focus on inter-group relations;

➢ Develop the skills necessary to break down systems of practice that perpetuate inequities;

➢ Prepare students to become active agents of nonviolence and peaceful coexistence and social transformation .

Fostering Healthy Identity Development: Instructional Objectives

➤ Facilitate the candid exploration of how various cultural variables, such as ethnicity, shape participants' worldviews, dispositions, and behaviors;

➤ Explore how participants' ethnic and geographic backgrounds impact their perceptions of others;

➤ Explore how participants' perceptions of others across groups impact inter-group relations.

Affirming Diversity:
Instructional Objectives

➢ Establish and maintain a safe learning environment that validates voice and agency;

➢ Create a sense of community where participants trust one another enough to share personal stories and insights;

➢ Offer multiple opportunities for participants to share and reflect upon their lived experiences or narratives;

➢ Develop the capacity to listen actively to others' narratives while reserving judgment;

➢ Remove the taboo cloud that often hangs over inter-group relations and other divisive and oppressive sociocultural differences.

Clarifying Human Interconnectedness: Instructional Objectives

➢ Use research and personal testimonials to uncover the nature and magnitude of human suffering caused by conflicts and wars, across groups;

➢ Engage participants in collaborative activities that encourage them to problematize the notion of success and highlight the importance of others' contributions to one's success;

➢ Engage participants in problem-posing learning activities that encourage them to co-construct goals and strategies for a shared vision.

Strengthening Empathic Ability:
Instructional Objectives

➢ Listen with the heart;

➢ Respect the suffering of others;

➢ Build trust.

Conclusions

❖ The ethic of Ubuntu highlights the importance of inclusivity, reciprocity, and a sense of shared destiny among peoples in the peacemaking process. Ubuntu teaches people to forgive one another and feel one another's suffering. Ubuntu fosters healing and both inner peace and outer peace.

❖ Critical multicultural education will humanize the schooling experience for educators and students alike, and facilitate the creation of classroom and school communities capable of problem-solving together and co-constructing shared visions for lasting peace.

❖ Hopefully, critical multicultural education will go beyond clarifying what it means to claim membership in a particular group to help the people of South Africa and of the African Great Lakes region to capture the essence of what it means to be human in their societies traumatized by lived experiences and haunting memories of inter-group conflicts and annihilating inter-group violence.

Questions and Discussion

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