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Tom Wilson | Suzanne SooHoo | Don Cardinal

Essays on

URBAN EDUCATION

Critical Consciousness, Collaboration and the Self

Dolores Gaunty Porter

Jan Osborn

Jeff Sap

Penny Bryan

Susie Westin

Themes in Urban and Inner City Education |

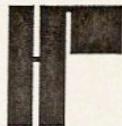
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With Suzanne SooHoo

Chapman University



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5

The Curriculum of the Self: Critical Self-Knowing As Critical Pedagogy

Jeff Sapp

*Once upon a time there was a little boy
named Sorrow and Fear
Sorrow and Fear had no friends
And lived all alone.
At night the Death Dragon came to him and, by force,
stole days from Sorrow and Fear's life.
The "taking" as he called it, was terrible.
Our words can't describe it.
You'd need another language,
the language of song.
But not songs with words like we know songs.
Just songs with sounds.
And Sorrow and Fear had no voice.
("The Death Dragon"—the first story I penned in my personal journal)*

I moved from rural West Virginia, my home state, to what my Mother calls "that big evil high-falootin City of Angeles" in 1993. I was seeking community and, specifically, a gay community. Having recently Come Out, I felt alienated because I had never really seen myself reflected in people around me. I moved to Los Angeles and began teaching at Occidental College.

Moving into the urban environment reminded me of that old science experiment where you put a frog into a pan of cold water and then turn on the heat. The frog simply isn't aware that the water is getting hotter and hotter and, finally, it boils to death. Stress in the urban environment is just like that. It sneaks up on you. It begins with the simple suggestion of a friend that you need to get a "Club" (a device that locks the steering wheel of your car and prevents theft). "Rent an upstairs apartment . . . it's safer," they say. The noises of the City itself are a stress factor: the traffic, the car alarms, the neighbors fighting at two in the morning, and the sheer density of people trying to live together.

Training new teachers in schools in urban Los Angeles created new situations for me. I remember one of my student-teachers, Debra, and the time a student shot another student outside her door and the bleeding student stumbled into her classroom for safety and help. Debra, gifted even as a novice, was focused on things like writing a good lesson-plan, implementing a fair classroom management system, and making literature relevant to her students. Nowhere in her training had she been informed that a student who had just been shot might enter her room. There was the time when ten of our student-teachers were in a local middle school. A man murdered his wife and then turned the gun on himself. The children of these two were students of most of my student-teachers. Crisis-intervention had become a major part of our curriculum. The water in the pot was getting hotter and hotter.

I saw the frog boiling recently, though. I just last week talked to Jennifer, a student-teacher I had four years ago. I immediately asked her about a recent stabbing at her school between an Armenian student and a Latino student—these two groups have quite a bit of racial tension between them. I had heard about the stabbing on the news. Her response? "Ah . . . it wasn't that bad. Would you like another cup of coffee?" Columbine shocks us. Paduka shocks us. When these things happen in Los Angeles and other urban centers people simply ask you if you'd like another cup of coffee. We have gotten so used to the hot water, it seems, that we don't even give it a second thought anymore.

I don't think we realize the stress we live under in urban environments. Only recently, in our own department, we had a colleague

go "postal" on us. It was very traumatic and resulted in a psychologist who specializes in work violence coming to do some sessions with those who experienced this violence. A different colleague of mine is losing her hair. Each morning she actually touches up her hair with some type of cosmetic paint that is made for just this purpose. I could spend pages and pages going on with multiple examples of both subtle and blatant stress stories like this. They have become, sad to say, the norm. How do we train future teachers to live in an environment that is filled with such Sorrow and Fear? What kind of a model do we give new teachers who are training to live in this environment?

Let me tell you a story of how my personal search for freedom changed my teaching. Maxine Greene said that a teacher in search of her/his own freedom may be the only kind of teacher who can arouse other people to go in search of their freedom (Greene, 1988). John Dewey stated that we are free "not because of what we statically are, but in so far as we are becoming different from that we have been" (Dewey, 1928/1960). Freedom is to be found in the continuity of developing experiences (Dewey, 1938).

I will tell you a story of voicelessness to Voice. Like most people who begin journaling, it was crisis and desperation that brought me to the blank page. My desperate crisis was dealing with my sexual orientation and Coming Out. I thought if I could just write it all out and look at it that perhaps I could learn something about myself. I started by telling my stories to myself on the blank page. Isak Dinesen said, "All sorrows can be borne if you put them into a story or tell a story about them" (Keen, 1989, p. 1). I could hardly bear hiding from my sexuality anymore. I didn't know what to do and so I picked up black ink and blank page and began to decipher myself.

I do not know and so I start with a blank page. I do not know and so I pick up an ink pen. I do not know and so I look at what is in front of me and I write about what it teaches me. I do not know if I am the tattered and marked up book I am reading for the third time. I do not know if I know my story line or plot. I do not know what chapter I am in. I do not know what my title is. I do not know is the one thing I know most. I do not know why knowing that compels me to pick up blank pages and scribble with black ink onto them. I do not know why I have to write so much. And I did not know that somewhere in the liquid white empty pages I would start to know. And understand. I did not know that. (personal journal, p. 3598)

Each day as I wrote myself onto the page in an attempt to deal with my sexuality, I became more and more clear. I had lived my

life letting others define me. I was an unhappy wreck and suffering from a terrible bleeding ulcer. I understood the hopelessness that gay and lesbian teenagers feel, the hopelessness that leads to ever-increasing rates of teenage suicide (McConnell-Celi, 1993).

My research methodology for my dissertation was a critical point in saving my life. I chose a qualitative research paradigm, heuristic research, for my dissertation. Moustakas (1990) states that in "heuristic research, the investigator must have had a direct, personal encounter with the phenomenon being investigated." In a very real way, all research is autobiographical. The researcher must have experienced the phenomenon being studied in its entirety. My primary task as the researcher is to recognize whatever exists in the consciousness of the participants and myself as a fundamental awareness, to receive and accept it, and then to dwell on its nature and possible meanings (Moustakas, 1990). In heuristic research there is an unshakable connection between what is out there and what is in the investigator in reflective thought, feeling, and awareness (Moustakas, 1990). The truth is that what is "out there" and what is "within" the researchers cannot be separated. The heuristic process challenges the researcher to rely on her/his thoughts, feelings, senses, and intuitions (Moustakas, 1990). I also drew from Denzin's (1989) work on interpretive interactionism. Interpretive research has, as one of its main criteria, the reality that research begins and ends with the biography of the researcher. The focus of interpretive research is the epiphany—a life experience that radically alters and shapes the meanings people give to themselves.

I had this sudden moment of revelation: "Everything I know about being gay I've heard from white, conservative, heterosexual males! No wonder I'm messed up. How is it possible for someone who is not me to name and define me?" I immediately made a commitment to begin reading material written by gay people for gay people. Likewise, I realized that I was the greatest authority on my own life. The revolution had began.

In my writing I am sniffing myself out. I am rooting through the dense forest of pages seeking my scent. Sniff, sniff, sniff. So many things have smeared their goop all over me to hide my authentic humanity. Society. The church. My family's expectations. No wonder it's taken me so long to catch wind of myself. Suddenly I write something so randomly in the path of myself and wham! The hound dog in me catches a whiff! I grow excited and begin to run with it. Ink flying through the pages. The smell getting stronger and stronger. Finally I get it treed. Here in the pages that were wood and bark and leaves before this blank whiteness.

My beagles self flips through the pages scent seeking. I discover that I am incense and offer myself up to the Universe as an offering. (personal journal, page 3564)

If you came to my home you would find a wonderful Pinocchio puppet hanging from my ceiling. If you came to my office you would find a large Pinocchio book standing up on my shelf. They are there to remind me of how incredible it is to finally be Real. I have spent most of my life being unreal and I want to be reminded every day of how incredible it is to finally be Real. The sacred Journal was the instrument with which I loved myself to Realness by becoming, like the archetype Pinocchio, a teller of Truth. "We teach who we are" (Palmer, 1998, p. 1). I moved from West Virginia to Los Angeles in 1993 and began teaching at Occidental College. Occidental College is right in the greater Los Angeles area and, as teacher-educators, we were training teachers to work in the urban schools within and around one of the largest cities in the world. When I entered the urban environment, I simply brought with me stories of my journey to Realness. I brought with me a love of black ink and blank pages. I brought with me a great love of reflection. My first day of class I told Occidental College student-teachers about the teacher-as-reflector. I held in my hands my own instrument of transformation. I opened it and read to them from the "Curriculum of my Self."

I read to them of teaching from who they were . . . and that they could find themselves in the blank page as I had.

When I was a small child in the rural Appalachian Mountains of West Virginia, my childhood friends and I would spend the lazy, hot summer evenings catching fireflies. We ran like banshees collecting them one-by-one-by-one. Soon, after imprisoning several dozen, we'd have nature's flashlight to guide us through the dark forest to home. Keeping a journal is like that. One-by-one-by-one you set free the celestial moments of your life. And after collecting dozens and dozens of them you begin to see the light—the patterns and themes of your life. Captured in your Journal Jar. Together they bring illumination to your dark journey through the forest and back home to yourself. (personal journal, p. 1118)

I read to them about social justice.

Sometimes I write in red. I write in red when those who once loved me as a liar don't speak to me anymore now that I speak my Truths. So, I write in red. I wrote in red last Tuesday when Dan died of AIDS. And each letter I wrote in red stood for a thou-

sand-thousand Dans. So I wrote in red and I capitalized all my letters and underlined all my words. There was another gang killing of an innocent child this week. So I wrote in red. I wrote in red the day I heard a teacher speak a mean word to a student. And I wrote in red the day my brother stopped speaking to me because I was gay. I write in red a lot these days. Well . . . truth is I actually make it a point to write in red at least once a day now. There is, after all, so much to write about in red. (personal journal, p. 1127)

And I gave them loving warnings.

But I should warn you before you go on. If you fall in love with ink and blank pages it will change everything you have known. Sooner or later it will be time for you to write your own authentic version of yourself. And the people who are used to doing the editing for you may not like it. That one thing alone will tell you that you are on the right path. When people get nervous. (personal journal, p. 3564)

As an act of social justice, I simply wanted to use my new-found Voice. I wanted to speak about reflection and how it had changed my life. I wanted to be identified as my authentic self, an aspect of which was my gay identity. I wanted to break the silence that some homosexual people feel and that gay educators particularly feel. I wanted to end some stereotypes and educate. I wanted to model that my journey to my Real Self had drastically changed who I was and, thus, how I taught. Social justice is not only about the acts we do in the world. I believe that social justice is about being a reflector and critical thinker of myself, my place in the world, and the way I act in the world. When the person is transformed, the teacher that the person is likewise is transformed. I wanted to tell my story. Little did I know that I was entering my Voice into a 20-year legacy and joining colleagues who had set the precedent 20 years earlier. Gay and lesbian professors met in New York City in 1973 for the first conference of the Gay Academic Union (D'Emilio, 1992, p. 127). They wrote in their statement of purpose words I would honor 20 years after their ink had dried:

As gay men and women and as scholars, we believe we must work for liberation as a means for change in our lives and in the communities in which we find ourselves. We choose to do this collectively for we know that no individual, alone, can liberate herself or himself from society's oppression. . . . We assert the intercon-

nection between personal liberation and social change. We seek simultaneously to foster our self-awareness as individuals and, by applying our professional skills, to become the agency for a critical examination of the gay experience that will challenge those generalizations supporting the current oppression. . . . Our hope is that by pooling our experiences and sharing our expertise, we will be able to begin the arduous job of challenging the sexiest myths that now dominate public discourse and influence private association.

Story had changed my life and, honestly, I just wanted to let student-teachers in on a good thing. Thus, a cornerstone in my teaching philosophy is that good teachers know who they are and that knowing affects everything about their teaching. I saw that the student-teachers who were struggling were ones who had a weak sense of themselves or no sense of themselves. They were overcome by their woundedness and often perpetrated it upon the children in their classrooms. For instance, those student-teachers with a low sense of self-esteem often relied heavily upon getting their sense of self from how their students responded to them. They did not have self-esteem, they had "other-esteem." Their sense of self was explicit. They fed upon their students. They were powerless and looked to their students for power. In contrast, I saw student-teachers with a strong sense of themselves who inspired students from the overflow of self-power they had to freely give those students. Every chance I could get I would weave a story into the curriculum that was from what I called the "curriculum of my Self." I began to wonder what impact my personal transformation might have on my students and my research. My original intent for this chapter was to ask former students if an Out gay professor had any impact on their current teaching experience. I e-mailed former students this question.

Certainly I saw an opportunity to make a dent in the institutional homophobia that permeates schools. McConnell-Celi (1993) states that "Lesbian and gay adolescents have one of the highest suicide rates, one of the highest drop out rates, and one of the highest substance abuse rates in the country." One out of ten teenagers attempts suicide. A third of these do so because of concern about being homosexual. That means that in every statistical classroom across the country there is one young person in danger of dying for lack of information and support concerning his or her sexuality. In his book, *Telling Tales Out of School: Gays, Lesbians and Bisexuals Revisit Their School Days*, Kevin Jennings (1998) writes that "Our stories are our best weapons in the fight against homophobia."

I found that my story did a great deal of educating for diversity. Tina speaks of her total shock at finding out that she had a gay professor:

I still remember that first night of class and someone asked how your winter break was. You mentioned that you had visited West Virginia and something about “. . . ever since I Came Out.” I felt shock immediately—a gay professor! I could not believe it (and you were open about it). I remember feeling disgust—the idea of two men together repulsed me. However, as time went on, I saw you as a person, a good person, a good educator and I did not care whether you were hetero/homosexual because that did not influence the way you taught (directly at least). I developed respect for you and soon admired you for being honest with yourself as well as with your students. You are courageous because you do not hide from the truth and do not care what people think. Having an “open” professor was a wonderful experience for me because I have lived a somewhat sheltered life and after meeting you, I learned to look beneath, to look at the spirit.

Very recently I received an e-mail from one of Tina’s high school science students. She was upset by a negative article on homosexuality in her school newspaper. Tina had given her my e-mail address so that she could gather some information and write a rebuttal. Three years ago Tina and I wrote our stories together and, now, her student adds her voice to our conversation.

Carlos shares about his concern about having a gay professor. “Initially I might have had reservations about the nature of your class because of your gay orientation. I knew some about you because my girlfriend was in your class before. I never have seen her take such an interest in any professor’s class before. I lost any reservations within weeks because I learned so much information about education and about you.” There were many students, like Willow, that talked about how my being gay had little impact upon them except that it continued to deconstruct societal stereotypes of what is meant by being gay. “On a personal level it was good to get to know someone who was gay on a more intimate level and keep reinforcing the idea that stereotypes of someone who is gay are just that . . . stereotypes.”

When we tell our stories to each other, we both find the meaning of our lives and are healed from our loneliness and isolation (Keen, 1989). Every I is a we. When you tell your story, I am able to see some of myself in it. When I tell my story, you see your reflection. Is this not, simply, what Freire wrote of when he spoke of the importance of dialogue? bell hooks (1994) states that “As a classroom com-

munity, our capacity to generate excitement is deeply affected by our interest in one another, in hearing one another's voices, in recognizing one another's presence" (p. 8). She goes on to say that "any radical pedagogy must insist that everyone's presence is acknowledged." There is universal truth and wisdom in story. To understand yourself is to understand all people. Story changed every aspect of how I taught.

Certainly, my being an Out gay professor who is training teachers is an act of social justice. I believe, though, that any time any of us speak our Truths it is an act of social justice. hooks (1994) calls this "engaged pedagogy." Engaged pedagogy is to educate as the practice of freedom. It is to believe that not only is it our job to share information with students, but that it is our privilege and responsibility to "share in the intellectual and spiritual growth of our students" (p. 13). hooks states that we must teach "to transgress those boundaries that would confine each pupil to a rote, assembly-line approach to learning" (p. 13). Engaged pedagogy is an act of political activism in and of itself. Surprising to me, though, was that most of the responses students e-mailed me were not about the affects of my being Out. Instead, it was the "Curriculum of my Self" that seemed to have left the larger impact. Mary says, "I am not sure if my educational experience was really in any way affected by your being gay. It was strongly influenced by who you are." Carlos stated:

You know what I really gained from you? It was seeing you model everything. It was your showing me and my peers about you—the Jeff Sapp who taught my class, the Jeff Sapp—the person. Who you were. Where you were from. What you were about. Before this I wouldn't tell my students anything about me. If I modeled poetry writing, vignette writing and journal writing I would make up the entry/experience and I would tell them that. After Sapp, I opened up and related every one of my "modelings" to my life. To what I was about. Where I was from. Me. This is the greatest gift you gave me. You modeled for me how I could open up to my students and make myself more of a person and not just a figure in front of a classroom setting.

Indeed, it was the sharing of the "Curriculum of the Self" that deconstructed the traditional power paradigm of teacher and student in the classroom. Students saw my sharing of my sexual orientation as the sharing of an intimacy. One student wrote: "One way that your being gay might have affected your role as a professor was that it was something very personal that you shared with us. It was like a confidence you trusted us with (not meaning that it was a

secret or anything). It was a way of bringing in your personal life to the course." Education typically divorces the self from knowing and, in doing so, creates a power struggle where people only have two choices: be a person who forces their distortions on others or be a person who has succumbed to others' distortions of themselves (Palmer, 1983). Donna demonstrated the theme of the deconstruction of power when she stated that "I am mildly embarrassed to say that it was quite late in the term before I even realized you were gay. Being a good Jewish mother, my first reaction was, 'How do I go about introducing my wonderful gay professor Jeff to my beloved gay cousin Joel?'" Donna didn't see her relationship with me in traditional teacher-student parameters. Instead, she saw me as someone she would want as a member of her family.

Let me tell you a story that is an old story, but one that bears repeating. Dewey (1938) stated 65 years ago that "education is essentially a social process." He wrote about how democratic social arrangements promote a better quality of human experience. "Enforced quiet and acquiescence prevent pupils from disclosing their real natures. They enforce artificial uniformity. They put *seeming* before *being*" (Dewey, 1938). I still find that the most amazing indictment about many schools today . . . putting *seeming* before *being*. I just this day finished reading a set of papers in which preservice teachers interviewed children. One of the typical questions they asked children of all ages was "What is a good student?" Even the first graders had already mastered the art of *seeming*. They replied, "Someone who sits quietly, sits straight, and has their hands folded on their desk and does what the teacher says." Dewey said that "the non-social character of the traditional school is seen in the fact that it erected silence into one of its prime virtues" (Dewey, 1938). I agree with Freire (1990) that "innumerable cultures of silence still exist; there are numbed, hungry, and compliant populations everywhere." Freire goes on to say that those who are oppressed must see examples of vulnerability from the oppressors so that a contrary conviction can begin to grow in them. I believe that sharing stories from the "Curriculum of the Self" can do just this. "When professors bring narratives of their experiences into classroom discussions it eliminates the possibility that we can function as all knowing, silent interrogators. It is often productive if professors take the first risk, linking confessional narratives to academic discussions so as to show how experience can illuminate and enhance our understanding of academic material" (hooks, 1994, p. 21). Sharing our stories creates a place where "freedom can sit down" (Greene, 1988). It is a way of being co-present with each other.

The "Curriculum of my Self" is only the model. What I really want to do is redirect students' attention away from my voice and to each others' voices. I am deliberate about this. I even go as far as to begin each class session with what is known as a Gratitude Walk (Jenson, 1999). Students take a ten-minute walk with each other and share with each other the GLP of the Gratitude Walk. The GLP helps them remember the three questions they share with each other during their walk: What are you *Grateful* for in your life right now? What are you *Learning* (in class or in life)? What is a *Promise* you can make to yourself today? The Gratitude Walk becomes one of the best loved practices in our learning community because, as students walk with a different class member each time, they are invited to become a real part of each others' lives. "How much does the possibility of freedom depend on critical reflectiveness, on self-understanding, on insight into the world? How much does it depend on being with others in a caring relationship? How much depends on actually coming together with unknown others in similar predicament, in an 'existential project' reaching toward what is not yet? How much does it depend on an integration of the felt and the known, the subjective and the objective, the private and the public spheres?" (Greene, 1988).

I have a running joke with my students that at any given moment I may make them stand in a circle, hold hands, and sing "Kumba-ya." We always chuckle together at this. It is after the chuckle that I embed the story that I have just shared with them into the theory and practice of teaching. I know that people are suspicious of teachers talking too much about themselves. After all, who didn't have that old teacher in high school that you baited with a story about his experience in World War II so that he'd go on and on about himself and you wouldn't have to do any work in class that day? The danger in telling our stories is that our ego can get out of control. Dewey (1938) said that "the road of the new education is not an easier one to follow than the old road but a more strenuous and difficult one." I think he knew that his dear Deweyian midway—the balance between the cognitive and the affective—was a hard-won accomplishment. "There is no discipline in the world so serve as the discipline of experience subjected to the tests of intelligent development and direction" (Dewey, 1938). Freire also wrote about this when he penned that for dialogue to be liberatory it had to be infused with love. "Because love is an act of courage, not of fear, love is commitment to other people. No matter where the oppressed are found, the act of love is commitment to their cause—the cause of liberation. And this commitment, because it is loving, is dialogical. As an act of bravery, love cannot be sentimental; as an act of freedom, it must not serve as a pretext for manipulation. It must generate other acts of

freedom; otherwise, it is not love" (Freire, 1990). We do not share our stories with each other so that we can wreak emotional havoc on each other and manipulate each other in our preordained directions. We share our stories so that we may enter into communication with each other in states of being, not seeming. It is as Buber (1958) said when he stated that we could interact with each other as objects in an I-It relationship, or as subjects in an I-Thou relationship.

In his now classical work, *To Know as We Are Known: Toward a Spirituality of Education*, Parker J. Palmer (1983) talks about the origins of our knowledge. History suggests that there are two primary sources for our ways of knowing. One is curiosity. The other is control. Curiosity is knowledge as an end unto itself. Curiosity can kill. Control is knowledge as a means to a practical end. Our desire to control has put deadly power in some very unstable hands. Another word for control is power. These ways of knowing are the "objective" ways of knowing that schools so value. The Latin root of "objective" means "to put against, to oppose." In German its literal translation is "standing-over-against-ness" (Palmer, 1983). Objective knowing, in and of itself, puts us in an adversary relationship with each other and with the world. It has made us enemies of ourselves. Objectivism believes that the knower and the objects that are to be known are apart and independent from each other. I believe this is really about power. As long as I can remove myself from what I do and hide behind my larger mastery of content area knowledge, I remain more powerful than my students. It is when I step out from behind the podium of fear and reveal myself to my students that I become a colearner with them. I am heartened by Maria Harris' (1987) extension of Buber's I and Thou. She extends the I-Thou relationship to include what we'd normally see as lifeless objects—the physical arrangements of our classroom, chairs, and spaces between us. They are not an I-It—lifeless. They are an I-Thou—alive and mediating.

Palmer states that there is a third way of knowing though and it is the knowing that Freire spoke of—a knowing that originates in compassion and love. The goal of this knowing is "the reunification and reconstruction of broken selves and worlds . . . a knowledge born of compassion aims not at exploiting and manipulating but at reconciling the world of itself" (Palmer, 1983). hooks (1994) speaks of how Thich Nhat Hanh, the Buddhist monk, informed her pedagogy. He "offered a way of thinking about pedagogy which emphasized wholeness, a union of mind, body and spirit. His focus on a holistic approach to learning and spiritual practice enabled me to overcome years of socialization that had taught me to believe a classroom was diminished if students and professors regarded one another as 'whole' human beings, striving not just for knowledge in books, but

knowledge about how to live in the world" (p. 14). Palmer (1983) states that this way of knowing is an "act of entering and embracing the reality of the other, of allowing the other to enter and embrace our own. In such knowing we know and are known as members of one community." Palmer reiterates what Dewey and Freire have said. He states that this kind of knowing is "not a soft and sentimental virtue; it is not a fuzzy feeling of romance." Instead, it is a "tough love" that calls us to involvement, mutuality, and accountability. Consequently, I would say that this communal knowing is what keeps ego in check. It is in relation to others that I can live out (or discover that I am lacking) my ways of knowing.

It is the teacher that is the mediator between the knower and the known . . . between the learner and the subject to be learned. We may teach our students about democracy (the subject being learned, the known) but if we merely tell them about democracy and run a classroom in a Hitler-esque fashion then, trust me, we have not taught them a thing about democracy. They have learned the "Curriculum of the Self" of that teacher (the knower). "I am forming students who know neither how to learn in freedom nor how to live freely, guided by an inner sense of truth" (Palmer, 1988). What I am really teaching is a mode of relationship between the knower and the unknown. I am teaching a way of being in the world (Palmer, 1983). More is caught than taught. In his book, *The Courage to Teach*, Palmer (1998) states that "Teaching, like any truly human activity, emerges from one's inwardness, for better or worse. As I teach, I project the condition of my soul onto my students, my subject, and our way of being together" (p. 2).

The root meaning of "to educate" is "to draw out." I cannot imagine a teaching that does not want and need to hear the stories of students. We teach people, not content. If we see ourselves as the holders of an objective truth that needs to be deposited into our empty-bank students, we are working from an unbridled ego. The humanist, revolutionary educator's "effort must be imbued with a profound trust in people and their creative power. To achieve this she/he must be partner of the students in her/his relations with them" (Freire, 1990). Power in the form of knowledge is not the property of any one individual. Students know when a teacher works from ego and power. Myss (1993) states that "when an individual is focused upon the acquisition of any form of external power, it is indicative of what is absent internally in that person. The stronger the obsession, the greater the lack of authentic power" (p. 12).

In his book *The Seat of the Soul*, Gary Zukav (1999) says that authentic power is aligning "our thoughts, emotion, and actions with the highest part of ourselves" (p. 26). Sadly, most schooling does not

model for students what authentic power is because, as hooks states, "the objectification of the teacher within bourgeois educational structure seems to denigrate notions of wholeness and uphold the idea of a mind/body split, one that promotes and supports compartmentalization" (1994, p. 16). Dewey said that "children are more sensitive to the signs and symptoms of this difference than adults are" (Dewey, 1938). He also said that when education is based upon experience and educative experience is seen to be a social process, that the teacher loses the role of external boss and takes on the role of leader of group activities. Greene (1988) says that freedom shows itself when people come authentically together without masks, pretenses, and badges of office. I heard the story once of a first night of class introduction activity. Everyone was going around telling their degrees, their experiences, and their titles. The introduction came to an African-American woman and she spent a half-hour telling the class about her family, their roots, their hopes and dreams. Not once did she ever mention what she did. We must come together to be affected by each other, to be involved with each other. "Realities ultimate structure is that of an organic interrelated, mutually responsive community of being. Relationships—not facts and reasons—are the key to reality" (Palmer, 1998). One of today's leaders in brain-compatible teaching told me that the number one factor in a brain-compatible classroom is its relationships (Jenson, 1999). I loved how Martin Buber, in his classic work titled *I and Thou*, states that "In the beginning is the relation" (Buber, 1958, p. 69).

I think we are afraid. Of each other. Of ourselves. Of coming together in vulnerability. I recently sat in a meeting where we were developing a new MAT program (Masters in Teaching). Some of my colleagues were concerned that people who had only been teaching for a few months were going to be getting a Masters degree. "What can they offer in reflective practice and research with such limited experience?" they said. I considered this Deweyan/Freirian heresy. I told them as much. Dewey assumed "that amid all uncertainties there is one permanent frame of reference: namely, the organic connection between education and personal experience." Ron Scapp (hooks, 1994, p. 148) states that "when one speaks from the perspective of one's immediate experiences, something is created in the classroom for students, something for the very first time. Focusing on experience allows students to claim a knowledge base from which they can speak." hooks states that:

... more radical subject matter does not create a liberatory pedagogy, that a simple practice like including personal experience may be more constructively challenged than simply changing the

curriculum. That is why there has been such critique of the place of experience—of confessional narrative—in the classroom. One of the ways you can be written off quickly as a professor by colleagues who are suspicious of progressive pedagogy is to allow your students, or yourself, to talk about experience; sharing personal narratives yet linking that knowledge with academic information really enhances our capacity to know. (1994, p. 148)

The founder of Foxfire (Wiggington, 1991) said that “To make our education effective, we must start with the real-world reality of our students’ lives, be it centered around raccoons, ginseng, a little tavern, McDonald’s, or a ghetto street—accept that, build on that, and broaden that. Otherwise, we demean that reality, or negate it. We imply that nothing they’ve learned in their lives is valid or has relevance. We deny their past, deny their present, and proceed from the assumption that they’re ignorant and deprived and that we must correct the situation or they’re doomed.” Freire (1990) stated:

How can I dialogue if I always project ignorance onto others and never perceive my own? How can I dialogue if I regard myself as a case apart from other men—mere “its” in whom I cannot recognize others I’s? How can I dialogue if I consider myself a member of the in-group of “pure” men, the owners of truth and knowledge, for whom all non-members are “these people” or “the great unwashed”? How can I dialogue if I start from the premise that naming the world is the task of an elite and that the presence of the people in history is a sign of deterioration, thus to be avoided? How can I dialogue if I am closed to—and even offended by—the contribution of others? How can I dialogue if I am afraid of being displaced, the mere possibility causing me torment and weakness? Self-sufficiency is incompatible with dialogue. Men who lack humility (or have lost it) cannot come to the people, cannot be their partners in naming the world.

The problem is that, in education and in urban classrooms, the focus is always outward. These huge books contain the realities that we deem important and anything inside the teacher or the students is suspect. A teacher talks about how he or she has experienced these outside realities and tries to relate that to students—or even worse, relates how someone else has related to outside realities and then tries to relate that to students. Palmer says that the student becomes the spectator and is “sitting in the far reaches of the upper grandstand, two or three times removed from what is happening on the field” (Palmer, 1983). Yes, involvement has its problems, but is

detachment the solution? It seems logical, as we enter a new millennium, that we move toward a balance of teaching to the whole person. We must recognize "that no human can live happily when one part of his being is nurtured at the expense of another. In doing so (teaching to the whole person), we will be better equipped to nurture more than just the minds and bodies of the students within our schools and will as well begin our work in rediscovering and caring for the lost souls in American Education" (Lawrence, 1996, p. 229).

Plain and simple, we need teachers who have done "inner work." How can we expect to teach transformation when we do not even understand what is meant by the word? Thich Nhat Hahn believed and called for healers, teachers, therapists, and those in the helping professions to first heal themselves. He said, "If the helper is unhappy, he or she cannot help many people" (hooks, 1994, p. 15). "The transformation of teaching must begin in the transformed heart of the teacher. Only in the heart searched and transformed by truth will new teaching techniques and strategies for institutional change find grounding" (Palmer, 1983). I am calling not only for the "teacher as reflector" of their practice, but for the "teacher as reflector" of themselves. We can blame the "system" only so long and we have been doing so for decades.

Dewey said that there was something immoral about how things have stayed exactly the same for so long. I am a great fan of the history of education and teach a foundations course on the subject. I find irony in showing students quotes from the Quintilian in 95 A.D. that say the exact same things about curriculum that we are still saying today. I watch their mouths gape in astonishment. At some point we must realize that institutions are only projections of what is going on in the human heart.

For things to change, I must change. This is not California New Age mumbo-jumbo. We simply teach who we are. A wounded person teaches woundedness. A person in search of her freedom teaches others how to search for their freedom. You can't teach liberation. You have to *be* liberation. "If professors are wounded, damaged individuals, people who are not self-actualized then they will seek asylum in the academy rather than seek to make the academy a place of challenge, dialectical interchange, and growth" (hooks, 1994, p. 165). Nel Noddings (1984) said that the caring teacher must struggle with students as subjects in search of their own projects, their own ways of making sense of the world around them. I spent 30-some years teaching from my unknown self. I was teaching fear, voicelessness, and conformity. It wasn't until I began to journal in search of my own liberation that I began to be a participant in liberatory, emancipatory education.

Dewey, like the existentialist thinkers, didn't think that the self was complete. He said that the self was "something in continuous formation through choices of action" (Dewey, 1916). We create ourselves by going beyond what exists and bringing something new into being (Sartre, 1943/1956). We must always be birthing ourselves. "Education as growth and maturity should be an ever-present process" (Dewey, 1938). Freire spoke about an education that affirms people as being in the process of becoming—" . . . as unfinished, uncompleted beings in and with a likewise unfinished reality" (Freire, 1990). Indeed, he even stated that "The joy of being human is our unfinishedness." I am reminded of Paulo Freire writing that we all have the same profession and it is the "humanization" of each other. We must affirm each other as "subjects of decisions" instead of "objects." We must all strive for our own completion and this is a striving that can never end (Greene, 1988). hooks states that "I celebrate teaching that enables transgressions—a movement against and beyond boundaries. It is that movement which makes education the practice of freedom" (hooks, 1994, p. 12). I started this chapter with the first story I had ever written, "The Death Dragon." I will end the chapter with its conclusion.

*One day, after Death Dragon had stolen years
and years and years and years from Sorrow and Fear's life,
he heard other songs.*

They were different songs but they were the same.

Sorrow and Fear was scared at first,

but then decided to find the other Singers.

He found them gathered at The Holy.

And there they sang. Some alone. Some together.

Taking turns singing about their Dragons.

And there were no words. Just sounds.

And Sorrow and Fear understood all songs.

It seems that there were other Dragons about.

He hadn't been alone.

Terrible Dragons.

Hopeless Dragon. Shame Dragon. Despair Dragon. Guilt Dragon.

And the worst Dragon of all . . . only known as "Conquered."

Some of the songs were about Singers who had been silenced forever.

Sorrow and Fear wept. But still he listened.

The Singers had other songs. Songs that told of horrible battles.

Of Dragons chained. Of Dragons Slain.

Of Singers freed. Of Singers changed.

And Sorrow and Fear felt The Happy spring up in him for the first time.

*And still he listened.
And sometimes he sang along. And all rejoiced when Sorrow and Fear found
his voice.*

*And one day Sorrow and Fear sang alone.
And Singers wept, but Happy-weeping, not Sorrow weeping.*

*And when Sorrow and Fear ended his song the Singers told him that
now they had to change his name because he had found his voice.*

*And so they called him
Courage and Hope.*

I once read "The Death Dragon" to Joseph Campbell's successor-of-sorts, Jamake Highwater. When I finished the story Jamake said, "You have written your myth." We must all live the hero's (and shero's) journey, the search for the Holy Grail of ourselves. I believe in the transformative power of story more than anything. When Czeslan Milosz won the Nobel Prize for literature he said, "In a room where people unanimously maintain a conspiracy of silence, one word of truth sounds like a pistol shot." Dewey called for the education of the whole child and I, likewise, am calling for the education of the whole teacher. Urban education can be enhanced, but it's not going to be enhanced by endless political reforms. Palmer (1998, p. 6) states that "to educate is to guide students on an inner journey toward more truthful ways of seeing and being in the world. How can schools perform their mission without encouraging the guides to scout out that inner terrain?" I believe that the way to seriously work for the transformation of schooling is to vigilantly work for the transformation of Self. Yesterday, as I put my finishing touches on this chapter, there was yet one more violent school shooting here in Los Angeles. A man walked into a daycare center and fired upon five- and six-year-old children, sending several wounded children to the hospital. It has been the most common image we have had of education and schooling this year. We need images of hope to diffuse these images of horror. I believe that the images of hope will come from the transformed hearts of teachers. It is the only way to turn Sorrow and Fear into Courage and Hope. And it is why I start each class session with the phrase—Let me tell you a story. . . .

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