

Critical Adult Education for Food Sovereignty, Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems

Symposium – Call for Papers

Guest Editors

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This symposium in *Agriculture and Human Values* will explore the intersection between critical adult education, radical food movements and social transformation. World over, there is a growing food movement made up of farmers, indigenous peoples, fisherfolk, peasants, pastoralist and peoples that are contesting the way that food is grown, distributed, and consumed. Radical approaches to food system change are being taken up by actors in social movements using the frameworks of agroecology, food justice and food sovereignty. These are rooted in strategies and actions at multiple scales that seek to transform society in pursuit of social justice, ecological sustainability and emancipation. Critical adult education can form a central component in strategies for social transformation but are an under-researched dynamic in radical food movements.

Teaching, educational institutions and learning are deeply political - even if they are not always acknowledged as such - and are fundamentally shaped by historical, sociocultural, and political relations (Freire 1970; Luke, 1996). All forms of pedagogy and educational institutions are embedded within and often reify structures and cultures of uneven power and privilege in society (McLaren, 2000). Indeed, mainstream education acts as a constitutive process of neoliberal capitalist society. In this regard, agricultural and food education generally promotes top down capitalist knowledges such as industrial agriculture, green revolution technologies and conformity to productivist and corporate logics. Further, dominant educational practices, pedagogies and learning processes often reflect one-way or “banking style” education (Freire, 1970). Here, the role of the teacher is of a depositor of (predominantly western scientific) knowledge into the minds of passive learners who are considered to be empty objects of teaching to be filled with wisdom. The banking mode of pedagogy provides the basis for cultural hegemony and cognitive injustice (Visvanathan, 2005), effacing the knowledges, cosmovisions, practices, politics and visions of learners. This dominant technocratic mode of teaching ignores how power - including racial and class privilege and patriarchy - shapes knowledge, food systems and society.

Although the dominant education system and practices serves to integrate learners into the logic of the corporate food regime, it is not absolute and there are a wide range of countervailing pedagogical approaches based on democratic, transformative, countercultural and radical politics and principles. Indeed, education can and should be a practice of freedom aimed at liberating learners from oppression as a part of a wider emancipatory political project (Freire 1970, 2004; hooks 1994). Articles in this symposium will examine the multiple critical educational sites, strategies, institutions and pedagogies within food movements to understand their role in food system and societal transformation.

First, we invite articles that explore *pedagogical praxis* in the formal and informal spaces of the food movement. Adult educators are using a range of critical pedagogical approaches that contribute to individual, social and political transformation across both formal (e.g. universities and

colleges) and informal sites of learning. The latter include for example: social movement gatherings and networks, community centres, farmer's fields, public protests, community gardens, social media and kitchen tables. In these multiple sites, a wide range of actors can be 'educators' and 'teachers' including farmers, activists, community leaders, as well as those whose profession is to teach in universities and in colleges and agricultural extension professionals. We invite authors to critically analyze pedagogical praxis, across the multiple sites in the food movement, from the basis of different critical traditions including: popular education, participatory action research, public pedagogy, critical pedagogy, experiential learning, phenomenological learning, campesino-to-campesino learning, transformative learning, and dialogues of wisdoms and cultural pedagogy (Beckie & Berzan 2016; Ellsworth 2005; Hickey-Moodey, Savage & Windle 2010; Giroux 2004; Martínez-Torres & Rosset 2014; Roset et al. 2011; Sandlin, Schultz & Burdick 2010; Swan 2009 & 2012).

Second, we invite papers that examine *institutional configurations and innovations* that enable radical or critical pedagogical praxis or, conversely, that offer a critical analysis of institutional structures that disable critical adult education. While the pedagogical praxis of individual educators is important to consider, it alone is insufficient for broader transformation. There is a need for institutional and cultural change and contestation around the nature and role of educational institutions and further to create new institutional arrangements. By challenging the disabling institutional and cultural environments of formal educational institutions, new spaces for transformative pedagogical praxis can emerge. Alternatively, social movements and farmers are establishing new autonomous educational institutions (e.g. agroecology schools, farmer-to-farmer learning networks) outside of the formal educational institution that are creating new opportunities for radical adult education and food system transformation. We thus invite articles that critically analyze one or a combination of: a) the institutional context of agriculture and food education; b) the innovative institutional arrangements within formal education that is enabling critical adult education for food system transformation; and/or c) the autonomous or alternative institutional arrangements forming outside of the formal educational system. More generally, articles can explore the political strategies, enabling conditions, challenges and opportunities to foster radical educational institutions.

Third, we invite papers that examine how critical and transformative learning can challenge actors within social movements to deepen the political commitments of learners and to critically examine and transform their own practice and politics. For example, how can anti-oppression methods (Sbicca 2012), critical pedagogy (hooks 1994) and decolonial methodologies (Smith, 1999) be used to challenge the ways that food producers, activists and community organizers may reproduce or exacerbate uneven power in social movements based on gender, age, caste, class as well as other dimensions of interpersonal, cultural and institutional positionality (Etmanski's 2012; Guthman 2008). How can critical adult education act to strengthen the inclusiveness, relevance and democratic character of food movements?

We invite articles that explore the links between adult education, pedagogy and processes of transformation. In addition to the above, some topics might include:

- The role of pedagogy in social movements and social transformation
- Critical adult education in rural, urban and rural-urban contexts amongst diverse constituents in the food system (e.g. fisherfolk, peasants, indigenous peoples, pastoralists, citizens, food workers, etc.)
- Intersectionality and decolonial thinking/practice in adult education examining overlapping or intersecting social identities and related systems of domination and privilege including related to gender, age, sexual orientation, culture, race, location, ability, class, etc.

- Pedagogic praxis including related to: transformative learning, critical pedagogy, decolonizing pedagogy, phenomenological learning, experiential learning, farmer and peasant pedagogies, activist pedagogies and popular education
- The relationship between political, scientific and practical education in agroecological adult learning including related to farmer-to-farmer learning networks and agroecology schools
- The relationship between universities, communities and social movements in adult education and how critical adult learning can be enabled in mainstream institutions (e.g. neoliberal universities)

Please email a 350-500 word abstract to colin.anderson@coventry.ac.uk. We will review proposed papers after September 30th and will invite selected authors to submit a full paper into the peer review system by March 1, 2017 at the latest.

We will also be collating a list of references for literature that addresses the intersection of critical adult education and food/farming. Please visit: <http://www.peoplesknowledge.org/criticalpedagogy/> to explore these references and email colin.anderson@coventry.ac.uk if you have other literature to suggest for this reference list (please send a full reference and a copy of the PDF if possible).

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