

Viele Menschen haben es nicht geschafft, mit den rasanten gesellschaftlichen und ökonomischen Veränderungen mitzuhalten. Folgen sind Passivität und Apathie, entsprechend gering ist das Interesse, sich fortzubilden. Eine Befragung von Arbeitslosen in Liepaja ergab, dass nur 6% an der Teilnahme von Weiterbildungs- oder Umschulungsmaßnahmen interessiert sind. Es wird auf einfachere und schnellere Lösungen von oben gewartet, die Verwertbarkeit von Bildung scheint zweifelhaft.

### Methode um der Methode willen?

Das kleine Lettland hat den großen Vorteil, einen Neuanfang zu machen und keine alten Strukturen überwinden zu müssen. Man kann sich umsehen, vergleichen, auswählen. Es gibt eine Vielzahl unterschiedlicher Einflüsse und Bildungsansätze – dä-

nische Volkshochschulen, schwedische Studienzirkel, amerikanische Rezepte, Qualitätssicherungsmodelle aus der Schweiz. Wenn in den ersten Jahren der Unabhängigkeit noch unkritisch alles Angebotene entgegengenommen wurde, hat sich diese Einstellung mittlerweile gewandelt. Es wird kritischer ausgewählt und zielstrebig auf die Verwertbarkeit geachtet. Aber nach wie vor passiert es regelmäßig, dass Ideen ohne Adaptation an hiesige Umstände übernommen werden, beispielsweise populäre gruppenspezifische oder psychologische Aufgaben, die ohne kritische Auseinandersetzung Einzug in den Unterricht halten.

Trotz solcher Einzelfälle ist jedoch in Lettland eine atemberaubende Dynamik zu spüren, die zu Hoffnungen für die Zukunft berechtigt und einen autoritären Führungsstil, überalterte Hochschuldozenten und belächelte Abendschulen zu Randerscheinungen werden lässt.

#### Abstract

*Within the process of socio-political transition adult education is an important tool for Eastern Europeans to orientate themselves in their rapidly changing social environment and to find new professional perspectives. Nevertheless, there are many obstacles blocking the way to the participation of all ethnic groups of the former Soviet Union in adult education courses. The article intends to show that besides various objective reasons, e.g. the disastrous economical situation, there are several mental reasons for this phenomenon.*

# Critical Teaching and Learning Blockage

## A Contextual Analysis

Kyung Hi Kim

**Welche Formen von Lernwiderständen können in einem Universitätsseminar über „multikulturelle Gesellschaft“ in den USA auftauchen und zunächst ein „kritisches Lehren und Lernen“ verhindern? – Die Autorin analysiert anhand eigener Erfahrungen als Gastdozentin aus Südkorea solche Widerstände und deutet sie als eine „kulturelle Lernverweigerungshaltung“, die reflexiv bearbeitet werden muss, bevor ein kritisches Verstehen, Aufnehmen und Bewerten von Lerninhalten möglich ist.**

Critical understanding, critical analysis, and critical evaluation, I believe, are constitutive of constructing knowledge and critical pedagogical practice. How are critical understanding, analysis, and evaluation different from uncritical understanding, analysis, and evaluation? Students can have some understanding of material-based information but they may not necessarily „make sense“ of what they have received. A critical under-

standing can be attained when students start to analyze the materials in their efforts to „make sense“ of the received information. However, analysis can be oriented from one particular standpoint or perspective. Analysis may become critical when students are able to examine further from different and alternative standpoints and perspectives. This critical understanding and analysis can lead students to engage in critical evaluation, which requires continuous questioning and examination of any and all criteria employed rather than uncritically meets the given criteria.

Does critical pedagogy foster the development of good quality of learning and knowing? How do learners respond to the critical pedagogical practice? Does critical teaching fulfill learners' learning interest with no conflict? Is there any resistance of learners to the critical teaching approaches? What are the reasons of learners' resistance? I will attempt to answer these questions based on contextual analysis of the course that I taught in the U.S.A. The class context that I am going to analyze is multicultural education. It was a great challenge not only for me to teach but also for my students to learn even though

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our reasons of being challenged might be of different kind. I could locate some conflicts within this course, for example, conflict between the nature of the course and learners' learning interest, conflict between my teaching approaches and learners' learning attitude. In uncovering and analyzing the conflicts that I encountered and experienced while teaching, I will explicate the class contexts in terms of the purpose and orientation of the course, learners' characteristics and background including learners' learning interest and attitude, and the character of the teacher including teacher's teaching approaches.

### Cultural reasons for resistance

I taught several multicultural education classes between 1993 to 1994 at Northern Illinois University. This course was intended to fulfill a general education/multicultural education requirement. The focus of this course was related to the perception of the reality that we are living: we are truly living in the multicultural society. It is important for us to understand the multicultural aspect of society and education in our efforts to live together, that is, with a less violent and destructive behavior against others.

Unfortunately, not that many learners have opportunities to understand and to be aware of the complex and interconnected dimensions of modern and postmodern culture and society. Because of this lack of encounter with, and understanding of, plural culture and reality, learners usually tend to have unexamined, one-sided, and biased views about different ways of living. Furthermore, this kind of ignorance often breeds prejudice, misunderstanding, hate, and discrimination against different cultural perspectives and people with different views.

What this course purports to achieve was to develop a better understanding and analysis of complex and interconnected multicultural aspects of society and the educational process through identifying, locating, and analyzing the social and cultural issues, problems, and solutions in order for us to live together in the multicultural society. Through examining the problems of cultural and social bias, injustice, and irrational practice, we ought to be in a better position to look for the possibilities for social change through bridging the gap between what is and what ought to be the nature and character of culture and society. In other words, we could be in a better position to connect enlightened understanding and knowledge about multicultural society to the emancipatory construction of life and society that characterizes more open, just, and better lives within society. In short, this course was oriented towards practical and emancipatory interests: the former purports to develop critical understanding of the multicultural aspect of social issues, and the latter to develop the will to work together for social change.

Now I turn to the description of learners including their characteristics and their learning interests. While teaching this course, I found that the majority of learners were white, middle class, and suburban students. Very few of them were African, Hispanic, or Asian learners. Their beings of middle class whites put them in an advantageous position in the society whether they were conscious of it or not. For most of them,

taking this course might not be a comfortable thing because it pushed them to acknowledge their position in the society and face the power issues. When I presented social injustice issues or cultural problems arising out of differing cultural perspectives, the students tended to either show indifference or avoid the issues by saying, „We always have social problems. Society is never perfect. Why should I take responsibility for what others have done in the past? Social injustice has nothing to do with me.“ For some learners, however, this course was an eye-opening experience. These learners had practical or emancipatory interests. They genuinely wanted to know, and clearly understand how multicultural society positively or negatively affects people's lives and how social discrimination and injustice could be resolved. However, the learners who had practical and emancipatory learning interests were the minority in this course.

The majority of this class had technical interests. What the majority of learners were interested in was to obtain or purchase more techniques, skills, tools which could be used for self-advancement. Their learning interest was concentrated to attain marketable instruments that would be advantageous to get a job. The social issues or problems that this course emphasized, unfortunately, were not their primary interest. This implies that this course was far off satisfying learners' technical learning interest. In fact, the practical and emancipatory character of this course was conflictive to the learners' technical learning interests.

The third aspect of this context was the teacher. The instructor of this course was I, an Asian, relatively young, and single woman. My being an Asian, young, and single woman did not constitute an authority figure as a professor in the customary sense. The status of not being an authority figure could provoke the problem of not procuring appropriate respect and attention. On the other hand, being an Asian, young, and single woman are adequate multicultural attributes. Clearly this class contexts embraces conflictive, yet challenging elements. My teaching approaches augment the conflicts further.

### Critical teaching approaches

In teaching this course, I took three critical teaching approaches. The first approach that I took was a Freirian problem-posing approach. This approach presupposes that we create and recreate our reality through problematizing reality rather than uncritically take the pre-given set of problems and solutions. This approach was a great challenge to most learners because they were not accustomed to this approach. For most of them, a problem-posing approach was perceived as a negative thing to do. It took some time and a good deal of struggle for the learners to grasp that problem-posing was practical efforts to reconstruct our reality together.

The second approach was the Habermasian communicative action-oriented approach. This approach is characterized by the provision and development of an ideal speech situation – the development of rational discourse to exercise communicative rationality. This approach attempts to capture „the ideal of a

situation in which disagreements and conflicts are rationally resolved through a mode of communication which is completely free of compulsion and in which only the force of the better argument may prevail“ (Pusey 1987).

What communicative action seeks to achieve is to reach an understanding rather than to win over someone or to obtain means for achieving a pre-given goal. Bernstein comments further:

„The goal of coming to an understanding is to bring about an agreement that terminates in the intersubjective mutuality of reciprocal understanding, shared knowledge, mutual respect, and accord with one another. Agreement is based on recognition of the corresponding validity claims of comprehensibility, truth, truthfulness, and rightness“ (Bernstein 1985).

This approach was very effective and relevant in teaching courses within the context of multicultural education. The issues and problems within multicultural society and with which multicultural education was concerned, such as gender issue, race issue, freedom of speech issue, religion issue, the issue of tracking, and bilingualism for example, were not clear cut matters. It required a good quality of discussion, argument, debate, and dialogue in facilitating critical understanding, critical analysis, and critical evaluation. In reaching understanding and agreement, each learner should be able to see, to recognize, and to criticize the validity claims related to issues and problems within multicultural society.

The third approach that I took was a project-oriented approach. This approach incorporated learners' own research, investigation, and examination of current multicultural policies, studies, and practices. My idea about this approach, through assisting learners to engage in their own projects to search, was to help learners to achieve a sense of praxis, that is a unity of theory and practice regarding multiculturalism. I hoped that learners could be enabled to see that the knowledge that we have co-constructed could be grounded in our concrete lives within our multicultural society. In other words, I hoped that learners could be able to feel and say that multicultural society related social issues and problems were no longer others' concern but our business to work together.

Were these three approaches effective and appropriate ones in teaching multicultural education? I believed so. However, from the learners' standpoint, these approaches were not easy ones to deal with, in fact, demanded a great deal of efforts in many ways. It may be imagined how agonizing it was to change the learners' learning attitude and interest. Regardless of the nature and character of the course and teaching approaches, learners come to class with their prefixed learning attitude and interest. When frustrated in establishing these preconditions for practicing critical teaching, the teacher as a co-learner faced a dilemma. I found that not many learners are interested in developing a high quality of learning or knowing experiences that require their active and challenging involvement in learn-

ing. Rather, most learners are more interested in having an easy going, and 'fun' class experiences that do not require serious effort, thinking, and investigation related to multicultural social issues.

When confronted with the above dilemma, several questions came up to my mind. Was I reasonable? What kind of learning should I promote in teaching multicultural education? Was it a reasonable attempt to keep co-learning or co-teaching relationship and practice? Was it unreasonable to expect that we could transcend individual technical interest and to discover and develop some common human interest through working and struggling together? What blocked us from thinking and learning together? What hindered us from being bonded together in the construction of a genuine humanizing process?

## Conclusion

While teaching this course, I found that there were two preconditions for making these approaches work. The first precondition was related to overcoming uncritical and unexamined subject and object relationship between teacher and learners. This entailed being able to develop co-teacher or co-learner-oriented relationship and practice. Overcoming the subject and object relationship and participating as co-learners or co-teachers postulated overthrowing elitism-oriented or subject-centered teaching and learning practice. The latter practice often assumed the teacher as a subject whose role was confined to transmit knowledge to the learners, the objects and who also take charge of directing and shaping students' behavior and conduct. However, in our multicultural world, we cannot but admit that we are, in some way or other, ignorant, insensitive, or arrogant no matter who we are and what we do. Through examining and criticizing our reality including the validity claims of comprehensibility, truthfulness, truth, and rightness in our be-

liefs, attitudes, and ways of living, we are teaching and learning together. For many learners, who were so accustomed to the subject and object relationship and practice, the concept and practice of co-learning and co-teaching was conflictive to their perceptions of what learning or teaching was about. A number of learners tended to consider that a good teaching was depended upon how much and how well a teacher transmit the given sets of information and knowledge to the learners. According to this perception, the practice of co-learning or co-teaching was perceived as poor teaching. Some learners revealed their sense of resistance against the critical teaching approaches by saying, „I thought I paid to obtain the answer not to be challenged and to take part in searching for an answer together.“

The other precondition is related to the possibility of shifting learners' learning interest from technical to practical and emancipatory learning interests. Even though the possibilities

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of this shift could be stemmed from interdependent and multi-institutional sources, some possibility depended upon the persuasiveness of the teacher (as a co-learner). As a co-learner, the teacher must be able to inspire learners sufficiently to understand and recognize that examining multicultural aspects of society and education was practical matters for all of us living in a multicultural society. When this shift become actualized, it could lead to transcending self-centered, individualized, technical interests sometimes represented by the following expressions, „I did not create this social problem. Why should I care

about social injustice.“ This shift could enable us to realize that our reality has been socially constructed and that this socially constructed reality can be reconstructed and that the direction and the ways to reconstruct the society are our concern and business that we should not ignore.

#### References

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#### Zusammenfassung:

*Am Beispiel eines Seminars zur multikulturellen Gesellschaft, das die Autorin – selbst Gastdozentin aus Südkorea – an einer US-amerikanischen Universität hielt, deutet sie Lernbarrieren der Studenten als Folge der Verdrängung globaler Machtverhältnisse. Die Teilnahme am Seminar zwang die Studenten, ihre eigene privilegierte Position als Angehörige der weißen Mittelschicht und ihre Involviertheit in soziale Ungerechtigkeit zu reflektieren. Die Folge waren verschiedene Formen der Verweigerung, die zunächst reflexiv bearbeitet werden mussten, bevor die Gruppe bereit war, den Unterrichtsstoff anzunehmen.*

# Sprechen, Denken, Lesen und Schreiben

## Das Projekt „Gilgamesch“

Marie-Cécile Bertau

**Wie können Jugendliche ohne Abschluss, die nicht mehr schulpflichtig sind, alphabetisiert und gefördert werden? – Marie-Cécile Bertau beschreibt Ausgangspunkt, Konzept, Erfahrungen und Ergebnisse eines Kooperationsprojekts von Universität und Volkshochschule in München, mit dem explizit und systematisch Zwischenbereiche und Übergänge zwischen Theorie und Praxis aufgegriffen und bearbeitet werden.**

Im Projekt „Gilgamesch“ (nach dem frühesten schriftlich erhaltenen Epos der Menschheitsgeschichte) sollen Jugendliche mit erheblichen Schwierigkeiten im Lesen, Schreiben und Rechnen gefördert werden. Jugendliche ohne Schulabschluss können in München u.a. im Zweiten Bildungsweg der Volkshochschule einen Schulabschluss nachholen; zunächst müssen sie einen Aufnahmetest bestehen, der sie schriftlich in Deutsch und Mathematik prüft; zusätzlich wird ein ausführliches Interview durchgeführt. Scheitern die Jugendlichen an dieser Stelle, so bleibt ihnen wenig mehr übrig, als die Aufnahme erneut zu versuchen.

Die Idee zum Projekt setzt an dieser Stelle ein. Den grundsätzlich motivierten Jugendlichen soll eine Alternative ange-

boten werden, über die sie Zugang zur regulären 9. Klasse des Zweiten Bildungswegs finden können. Zu dieser Idee tritt ein weiterer, für die gesamte Konzeption tragender Gedanke hinzu: Theorie und Praxis sollen verknüpft werden, um dem Problem des funktionalen Analphabetismus wirksam begegnen zu können. Erfahrungen und Konzepte der unterrichtlichen Praxis sollen im Lichte dieses Problems bedacht und diskutiert werden; Grundlagenforschung und Erkenntnisse zum Schriftspracherwerb, mit welchen die Prozesse des Denkens und Sprechens eng verwoben sind, sollen zu dieser Diskussion beitragen. Der organisatorische Rahmen sowie die Konzeption und Durchführung des Projekts selbst spiegeln diese Grundidee wider.

Im März 1997 wurde zwischen dem Fachgebiet Sprechwissenschaft und Psycholinguistik am Institut für Phonetik und sprachliche Kommunikation der Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität und der Abteilung Zweiter Bildungsweg der Münchner Volkshochschule eine Kooperation vereinbart. Beide Bildungsinstitutionen erklärten sich bereit, das Projekt in ideeller, logistischer und nach Möglichkeit finanzieller Form zu unterstützen. Damit steht das Projekt zwischen zwei großen Bildungsinstitutionen und verbindet sie zugleich.

Von der Struktur her entspricht dies der Stellung der Jugendlichen, die mit ihrer erfüllten Schulpflicht zwischen zwei Zustän-

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**Kyung Hi Kim**

## **Critical Teaching and Learning Blockage**

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## **Abstract**

### **Kyung Hi Kim: Critical Teaching and Learning Blockage**

Am Beispiel eines Seminars zur multikulturellen Gesellschaft, das die Autorin – selbst Gastdozentin aus Südkorea – in einer US-amerikanischen Universität hielt, deutet sie Lernbarrieren der Studenten als Folge der Verdrängung globaler Machtverhältnisse. Die Teilnahme am Seminar zwang die Studenten, ihre eigene privilegierte Position als Angehörige der weißen Mittelschicht und ihre Involviertheit in soziale Ungerechtigkeit zu reflektieren. Die Folge waren verschiedene Formen der Verweigerung, die zunächst reflexiv bearbeitet werden mussten, bevor die Gruppe bereit war, den Unterrichtsstoff anzunehmen.