

An Introduction to IJCP

by

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Academic journals come and go with increasing frequency in the twenty-first century. Like the editors of many journals, we hope that the *International Journal of Critical Pedagogy* will bring something new, transgressive, valuable, and pragmatic to the study of critical pedagogy and its struggle to address imperial forms of social and educational practice. In this process, those of us involved with the journal hope to contribute to knowledge that helps create more insightful individuals who are better equipped to end human suffering. I admit that is an ambitious task, but these are times that demand bold aspirations from those who understand the harm that dominant power blocs do to people, the planet, and the very idea of education. Thus, in this first issue of the journal, we want to begin the establishment of an academic presence that rejects the pomposity, cutthroat competition, and status-anxiety of the academy. We want to produce a journal that is ardently rigorous (in a non-positivistic sense), democratic, disdainful of in-groups and their status-peddling, intellectually innovative, diverse and creative in its stylistics, and iconoclastic in the presentation of academic knowledge.

As editor, I have infrequently been impressed by the way journals treat authors—especially young scholars not privileged by membership in a particular status community. I hope that this journal will cultivate and publish new talent and bring people into democratic, international, inclusive, supportive communities of scholars devoted to social justice, a literacy of power, social action against oppression, and transformative modes of both formal and non-formal education. While we cannot publish all articles and live up to the expectations of everyone connected to the work of the journal, we do not want to be a periodical that brags about its rejection rate or is obsessed primarily with our standing in the scholarly community. We will often offend the guardians of academic publication with our choice

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of essays and topics, with our critique of mainstream academic practices, with the experimental methodologies and theoretical constructs our authors employ, and the social position of some the individuals we publish. I am so tired — after thirty plus years of work in the academy of the politics of academic publication — of traditional merit systems and the incessant posturing of scholars-on-the-make. There has to be another way to be a scholar, a teacher, an academician.

If critical pedagogy can't help construct such alternatives to the Western bourgeois norm, then what can? I personally have faith that we can — and this journal and its parent organization, The Paulo and Nita Freire International Project for Critical Pedagogy, are dedicated to such a reformulation of such ways of being. Elsewhere, I have referred to these transgressive ways of being as a critical ontology (2003). A critical ontology maintains that if we understand the social construction of our selfhood, appreciate the way power operates to shape our values and ideologies, develop an affective commitment to developing new ways of seeing and being, seek out and learn from divergent modes of relating to difference, and commit ourselves to a humility that allows us to listen to people from diverse times and places, we can become better and more worthwhile individuals. We can free ourselves from the narcissistic modes of status-seeking that permeate Western culture in general and academic culture in particular. The self-serving nature of much academic and scholarly activity only hurts the larger critical causes to which we are dedicated.

In response to thousands of questions about the nature of critical pedagogy over the last few decades, I have often contended that first and foremost critical pedagogy is a way of living. “Show us a critical pedagogical curriculum,” many individuals ask. While there is nothing wrong with developing examples (not blueprints) of critical ways of teaching about a particular topic, I would argue that learning to become a critical educator involves becoming someone who lives the transformative concepts associated with the tradition. In the immediacy of interpersonal relationships, classroom interactions with students, the ways we deal with those below us in status hierarchies, and the ways we act against oppression in the world, we live our critical pedagogy. There is never anything easy about this process and I oftentimes (like most people) fail miserably. Living critical pedagogy doesn't just occur after a few months of exposure to criticality or even after a deep understanding of particular critical themes. Such a goal must be practiced over and over again for the rest of our lives on this planet.

Another dimension of *The International Journal of Critical Pedagogy* involves the fact that it is not committed to one “correct” way to live, theorize, and enact critical pedagogy. We all understand that there are many interpretations of critical pedagogy existing in the twentieth century. While I certainly hold particular perspectives and those who work in other positions with the journal have specific “takes” on the tradition, the journal is not interested in publishing a monolithic view of the domain. In the spirit of learning from difference, the journal is dedicated to publishing a wide variety of viewpoints within critical

pedagogy while celebrating our solidarity around multiple forms of difference in the fight against human suffering. There is simply no need for consensus on all of the topics we deal with here. Indeed, a quest for orthodoxy in criticality is, in my opinion, highly undesirable. Thus, the journal is committed to a multilogicality that embraces diversity in multiple forms. Like many have argued before us, we seek solidarity in our differences.

The International Journal of Critical Pedagogy wants to be an open-access on-line journal, totally uninterested in turning a monetary profit for anybody or any organization, that helps redefine the nature of critical scholarship (and scholarship in general), transformative community building, individual and social change, and education. We want to be brave in the struggles against the oppressive imperial machine conquering the world, yet humble in our countenance and sense of selfhood. In this context, I must mention the example set by Paulo Freire. I always admired and attempted to learn from the way Paulo engaged the world in his role as a scholar-teacher-activist. As I have written in other venues, he was a champion of a radical love. My and Paulo's mutual friend, Jesus Gomez from the University of Barcelona, was another outstanding example of a critical pedagogue who developed and lived this notion of a radical love. Although it may be déclassé and gauche to assert in some academic circles, as the editor of *The International Journal of Critical Pedagogy* I want the publication to be grounded first and foremost on radical love. What's this, an academic journal built upon radical love? This is who we are, and we are proud of it.

We welcome contributors from every part of the world to submit not only essays but to become a part of an international community of criticalists who work together in a variety of ways to help one another in unfriendly times and in refining and developing our ideas about critical pedagogy. I have long been amazed that when brilliant scholar-teacher-agents of critical pedagogy are ideologically punished for their ideological activities and pedagogies, there exists no international community to help support such an individual. In this context the *International Journal of Critical Pedagogy* and the Paulo and Nita Freire Project for International Critical Pedagogy can meet needs presently unmet. Only a well-connected, fervently committed, ideologically savvy, and well-informed group can fulfill the hope and enact the radical love of Freire, Gomez, and the many, many others who preceded us. I hope that you will support our journal with your scholarly contributions and your dedication to acting on these goals.