TREMBLING ON THE PRECIPICE OF POSSIBILITY:

A STORY ABOUT BECOMING A TEACHER EDUCATOR FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

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Abstract

This article describes the strategy of creating an illustrated story book as an attempt to invite teacher education candidates to engage in deeper reflection and critical analysis common sense which shapes their teaching. In the process of describing how to teach preservice teachers to teach for social justice, the author uses examples from her own development as a teacher educator for social justice. The author suggests four elements that may be critical to teaching teacher candidates to persevere in rigorous critique of their own common sense. They are imagery and intensifying metaphor; foolishness; a dialectic of criticality and joy; and communal sharing.

Keywords: teacher education, critical analysis, preservice teachers, social justice

In this article, I share my attempts to practice social justice in teacher education. I focus on one process I used as a doctoral candidate to examine my own views about equity, justice, and diversity, and the ways that process translated into teaching and supervision in teacher education. I describe a picture book strategy, not as a model, but as an example of the complicated process of facilitating "conscientization" (Freire, 1994, p. 18). What I intend, both for my own development and for students in teacher education, is to lessen resistance to com-

plicating our dysconsciousness, the "limited and distorted understandings about inequity and diversity" (King, 1991, p. 134) and promote deeper engagement and perseverance in the processes of overcoming our common sense. Freire (2004) describes this as "knowledge made from experience alone and that is characterized by naiveté in contrast to knowledge that results from methodologically rigorous procedures [and] an overcoming [of] naïve curiosity becomes critical without ceasing to be curious" (p. 91). My hope is to elicit curiosity and criticality in ways that are accessible, meaningful, and lead to justice.

I created a picture book to apply my newly awakening critical consciousness and challenge my own common sense. What the book signifies is the "dialectic and recursive" (Cochran-Smith, 2004, p. 2) processes in which, as a teacher educator, I perpetually engage and for which I take responsibility to engage students. These are pedagogical strategies that stimulate:

> ... working the dialectic ...the process of simultaneously theorizing the practice of teacher education and 'practicizeing' a theory of teacher education, thereby generating local knowledge that is useful for an immediate context but may also be useful and relevant beyond the local context. (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, in press, cited in Cochran-Smith, 2004, p. 3).

The picture book serves as an illustration of one local attempt to change a teacher educator's (mine) common sense or dysconsciousness, and to " replace teacher candidates' deficit views about diversity" (Cochran-Smith, Villegas, Abrams, Chavez-Moreno, Mills, & Stern, 2015, p. 114) with social and historical insight; to develop teaching and teacher education as a problem of social justice. It is not my intention that students understand as I do, but that all students have the capacity to overcome naïve common sense with "critical curiosity ... to challenge in order to defend oneself from the traps" (Freire, 2004, p. 91) of dogma and orthodoxy that shape our practices and the experiences of the students in their classrooms.

To contextualize my work, I begin with a brief autobiography. Then, I propose four elements of this strategy which may be helpful in teacher education for social justice: (a) imagery to intensify metaphor, (b) communal sharing, (c) foolishness, and (d) engaging dialectic of

critique and hope. As a teacher educator who agrees it is imperative for teacher preparation to be "conceptualized as both a learning and a political problem aimed at social justice" (Cochran-Smith, 2004, p. 2), this reflective and pedagogical experiment represents, then and now, a process of learning to teach teachers and of preservice teachers preparing to teach with the aim of social justice.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

I spent about twenty years teaching elementary school. In the 1990s, I founded a small, independent, arts-based school with a social democratic framework in the rural, coastal South. In 2000, I returned to school to complete my master's and, as it turned out, doctoral degrees. Like many of the students I teach, I had not been schooled in critical analysis, question posing, or generative imagining until, as an adult undergraduate in the 1980s, I was challenged to develop these skills and propensities because, as a single parent, I earned a scholarship to an elite, private, liberal arts College in the Northeast. In 2002, in the throes of my doctoral work in Curriculum Studies, I became despondent and overwhelmed by the demands of criticality, wherein I recognized the enormity of my ignorance, the complexity of the issues, and the density of the texts' language(s). Although I hadn't read this yet, I wanted to take on the role of intellectual and teacher educator that Edward Said (1994) described as:

> An individual endowed with a faculty for representing, embodying, articulating a message, a view, an attitude, philosophy or opinion to, as well as for, a public [and raises the spaces] ... to raise embarrassing questions, to confront orthodoxy, and dogma ... to be someone who can not be easily co-opted by governments or corporations, and whose sole raison d' etre is to represent all those people & issues routinely forgotten or swept under the rug. (as cited in Ayers, 2006, p. 85).

So, I produced a picture book as recourse to my resistance and despair, and an attempt to articulate pedagogy and a philosophy. I knew myself to be an academic novice and followed what I later found was Mitchells' (2005) advice - that to meet demanding standards "requires an agile, improvisational sense of balance coupled with a dogged and tire-

less preparation for the next moment in the struggle" (as cited in Ayers, 2006, p. 84). I was tired and paralyzed. Improvisation and tirelessness were called for. I was newly awakened to critical theory, liberation pedagogies, phenomenology, revisionist histories, and analytic philosophies of education. As a teaching assistant, I needed to incorporate pedagogy that worked to facilitate new understandings in an "introduction to teaching" class, as well as for me, the novice.

Therefore, the picture book I was making for myself might also become a form of invitational pedagogy for undergraduates in my classes, a method of defending themselves against the dogma and orthodoxy of teaching and schooling. I chose one ubiquitous metaphor to examine: the construction and persistent deployment of the political trope, the "achievement gap," and the directive to "close" it with expediency.

In the intervening years, between the year of the book, graduating with my Ph. D., and this instant, I have taught courses in history and philosophy of education, cross-cultural competencies, arts in education, assessment, instructional planning and classroom management at a small, Quaker, liberal arts college in the South, as well as supervised candidates in highly impacted public schools. I have continuously served as the liaison between our college and the State's department of public instruction. For four years, I served on the State's ad-hoc committee to "re-vision" the standards for teacher education in the 21st Century. I am the chair person of our small Education Studies department in which we all wear many hats. My perspective, knowledge, and memory are in constant alteration and contradiction, and in confrontations with the stories within teaching, learning, schools and education that I knew and practiced, including the story of closing the achievement gap and trembling on the precipice of possibility that I wrote about over a decade ago.

THE BOOK

I used the book to help myself understand the complexity and dominant myths of education policy and practice. The way in which this has translated into teacher education is to help students envision and analyze ubiquitous metaphors in school rhetoric and develop more

multi-faceted understandings of their social-cultural-historic stories and their personal assumptions, values, and biases (see Lakoff & Johnson, 2001; Lakoff & Johnson, 2003).

We start by drawing the imagery that such rhetoric provokes. For example, I started with examining what a 'gap' is. I asked myself where I had seen physical gaps: the spaces between my buttons, the space between my granddaughter's teeth. What is a "gap" year? A year in a space between two years of school. What, then, could an achievement gap be? It must be a space -- a place between two other places. And thus began the illustrated story book.

FOUR PLAUSIBLE ELEMENTS OF TEACHER EDUCATION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

IMAGERY TO INTENSIFY METAPHOR

The interpretation of metaphors is a first step in analysis of the ways in which taken-for –granted language shapes our habits and traps us in orthodoxy or common sense (Lakoff and Johnson, 2003), and in fact, "domesticate" us (Freire, 2001, p. 57). The story book I made is multilayered, multi-textural, and multidirectional. The pages are not bound and can be read as separate 'posters' and in varying orders. It can be read round and round. The images are created with a collage of materials. They have texture. There is the possibility of circularity. The reader may flip the pages back and forth reading both the front and the back of each page or play with changing their order. They might add more to the story in empty spaces. There are flaps that open to reveal messages beneath illustrations and tabs that pull out to extend the meanings of captions and dialogue on the page. As I was working out the meanings and images, I reflected on my experience of being affronted by new information and wondering how and where it had been hidden or kept from me. I wanted the project of making and then reading the book to represent both the feelings of being awakened and the possibilities of hidden-ness, multiple telling, and overlapping stories. These were efforts to make the metaphorical material, and to connect the rhetoric to something tangible. For example:

Figure 1

The first page shows two, opaquely-colored, ambiguous, yet identical figures pointing down into a large hole that has appeared in the street (see Figure 1). The rift here is the so-called gap, the space that opens up between two places. Behind the figures are buildings from which pieces are missing. The holes the pieces left are regularly shaped polygons. I had thought that the achievement gap must be a space in the social structures of schooling, thus the cityscape and buildings.

The dialogue is as follows:

Blue Figure: (pointing into the rift) Look, there are the missing components. They are needed here! Look, they'd fit perfectly.

Again, in thinking of the gap, as a whole in the structure of social enti-
ties, students became the components that leave the structural defects.
I had to wonder what was in the gap. Where had those who were "in
the gap" gone; what purpose would they serve once they got out of the
gap?

In the space at the bottom of the chasm are four construction paper
shapes that match the holes in the "buildings" at street level where the
figures stand. Each shape is attached to the page as a flap. Drawn on
the page to look like the words are coming from what is behind the
flap are speech bubbles that say "I remember". Beneath each flap is
one of the following: "his story", "her story", "our story", and "my
story." Aligned with these components, but at the edge of the page, is
a tab that the reader can pull out and read the following: "What might
it mean to live our lives as if the lives of others truly-mattered? One
aspect of such a prospect would be our ability to take the stories of
others seriously, not only as evocations of responsibility, but as well,
as matters of 'course'" (Simon, 2005, p. 88).

I made the decision to represent the achievement gap as a hole
in the ground, a place where the ground of the society opened up – a
literal gap. I thought of the students who are in the achievement gap as
missing pieces or components in the structures of society and thereby
cause derivative gaps. In creating the scene, I chose a quote which, to
me, countered this image with a prompt that provided another way of
considering those lost components as subjects with stories. I thought
about where I wanted to go with this analysis. I wanted to spur wonder
and curiosity about what gets dropped or lost when we simply see the
achievement gap as a danger or damage to specific structures in the
landscape of schooling, and as something that needs closing.

The dialogue continues:

Red Figure: Yes, they'd be perfect. And I'm sure they'd fit. If only we
could bring them up efficiently.

Blue Figure: I wonder how they fell down there.

At this point, there is an arrow that directs the reader to turn to the
back of the page. On the back of the page are several texts, including
one from G. Stanley Hall (1905), one of the founders of the child de-

velopment movement, in which he makes clear his distinction between those who are capable and "the great army of incapables, shading down to those who should be in school for the dullards and subnormal children" (as cited in Kliebard 1995, 12).

Other texts are glued onto the back of this scene. I deliberately chose texts that I believe represent pivotal "experts" whose words are often excluded or occluded from history, and therefore, from our common sense about schooling. These include: (a) Edward A. Ross (1901) "the restless, stirring, doing Aryan, with his personal ambition, his lust for power, his longing to wreak himself, his willingness to turn the world upside down to get the dame, or the fortune, or the woman he wants [especially in comparison to] the 'docile slav' or 'quiescent Hindoo [*sic*] (as cited in Kliebard, 1995, 79); (b) John Franklin Bob-bit, (1912): "People should not be taught what they will never use" (as cited in Kliebard, 85); (c) A. Ellwood (1914): [Schools] could identify the feeble – minded and take appropriate action before they are allowed to go out into life [and] by the laws of heredity ... inevita-bly pass on to future generations their defects and even diffuse them among the population as a whole" (as cited in Kliebard, 90); and (d) Edward L. Thorndike.(1924): "Those who have the most [native intel-ligence] to begin with gain the most each year" (as cited in Kliebard, 95). Each one illumines theories of social control that are part of the story of the construction of the achievement gap.

These texts are on the back of the page to represent that part of his-tory that isn't read because it isn't seen, that needs the effort of turning the pages over. The workers are good Samaritans/laborers who seek to help fix things/bring things back to normalcy. *They* cannot see what is on the other side of the page, or maybe they relegated those memories out of sight. They, too, are objectified, two dimensional, only vaguely distinguishable, forms.

This combination of words and images that can be easily, although messily, altered but not erased, are literally, layered onto the page. The physicality of reading the 11 x 14, 100 lb, Bristol board, hard copy is symbolic of the enduring and concrete nature of social-historic tropes

like "achievement gap" as well as the difficulty, but not impossibility, of changing them. The book is not an immaculately word-processed, computer-generated artifact. The drawings are not professional and some of the text, especially where I made "corrections," is messy. My own lack of expertise in illustration, story writing, and analysis is obvious.

Figure 2

FOOLISHNESS

You can literally, see the "mistakes" I made as I worked on the book – especially where I couldn't erase (see Figure 2, for example). Where I tried to erase there is evidence of the process of making meaning, "not representation," which Hendry (2011) points to as one of the ways that oral traditions of "passing on 'meaning' differ from a current historical epistemology, an epistemology which emerged over tens of thousands of years and is based in word rather than image" (p. 35). Hendry describes the change as "a shift from consciousness based on image, diffusion, paradox, and a cyclical sense of time as compared

to one based in the word, verticality, abstraction, and linearity ... and results in the concept of 'otherness'" (p. 35).

The story evolved. The repercussions, reactions, policies that seem to grow out of this one trope, this one metaphor, evolved in a web-like manner. Each new "chapter" provided images to prey on my common understandings. At the same time, I wanted this book to invite reading, conversation. Here was an instrument to open up the dialogue, to make critical analysis accessible rather than intimidating, overwhelming, or threatening. Producing the book for public consumption and being vulnerable to critique is part of the process I wanted to model as an invitation to critical pedagogy.

As hooks (1994) asserts, "If we fear mistakes, doing things wrongly, constantly evaluating ourselves, we will never make the academy a culturally diverse place where scholars and curricula address every dimension of difference" (33). As a teacher, teacher educator, and a novice scholar, I often felt the need to defend my expertise because of my own fears of humiliation, rejection, or incompetence. In producing the book, I had to overcome those fears. In presenting the book to other academics and students, I had to face those fears.

I have a background in reading Tarot cards, which can be a foolish confession to make in academic quarters. I drew upon all my experiences to theorize and practicalize this story and so I drew upon the archetype of the fool, one that came up regularly in the readings I did. It was also a time when the terrible seriousness with which it seemed all issues were being taken served to hamper responsiveness. I wanted to be accepted into the academy on my merits, but I was not comfortable, nor did I see the value in taking myself too seriously. A third factor in this part of the process was the rise of the Daily Show and other venues for news that seemed to be having a greater affect on cultural consciousness than the academic austerity I questioned. The image of the fool offers an affirmation of and suggestion to recognize and use our courage, creative expression, wonder, awe, curiosity and anticipation (Arrien, 1997). The fool is child-like even to the point of romanticism or sentimentality, and, as hooks (1994) suggested:

...This childlike nature helps to link lived experience with the-
ory. When our lived experience of theorizing is fundamentally
linked to processes of self-discovery, of collective liberation, no
gap exists between theory and practice. Indeed, what such ex-
perience makes more evident is the bond between the two –that
ultimately reciprocal process wherein one enables the other. (p.
61).

The book, embraces the element of foolishness; it is a childlike artifact
and the act of creating it was both a practice and a theory. This process
also links Freire's common sense and critical curiosity. Demonstrating
my vulnerability by creating work that is simplified, romanticized or
sentimental as a risk for achieving a deeper, more serious and compli-
cated knowing and encouraging students to engage in creative process-
es that are playful and creative, in the process of tackling enormous
complexity and challenge of liberation, is a way into the very serious-
ness of criticality and engaging our courage for the work ahead.

James B. MacDonald (1995) suggested that our work ought to
reflect the "freeing of the human spirit, mind and body from arbitrary
social and psychological constraints [and] should be reflected in our
work in schools" (p. 158). Drawing pictures, pasting, cutting and ma-
nipulating puzzle pieces are not the norms of academic study. We must
reveal our passions, our values and our justifications --- foolish acts
indeed in a world of standardization, hyper- rationalism, quantifica-
tion, and instrumentality. What this less rational approach asks is that
we transcend neutral postures and, even more, that we look past the
edge of rationality (the precipice of possibility), toward liberation and
liberating perspectives that transcend common sense and social condi-
tioning. My attempt to do so is reflected in the playfulness and risk of
over simplification, or foolishness, of the picture book approach. As
the teacher educator I have to demonstrate the process over and over
again. In the book characters are sent down into the gap. They are curi-
ous. They are foolish. They open up some of those components and
take us on a journey through this subterranean world of bouffanted,
wasp-waisted teachers and boxed up standards. Preservice teachers
resist going on that journey. Sometimes, they resist "playing" with the
story as it doesn't seem academically serious enough for them.

The goal of a fool is "not to replace one system with another, but to free us from the fetters of all systems" (Otto, 2001, p. 246). Thus presentation of the serious matters of social justice in teacher education as children's illustrations might be somewhat foolishly in order that we can free ourselves and our students from the fortress of righteousness or paralysis of cynicism, think more fluidly, and communicate with one another in less fettered ways.
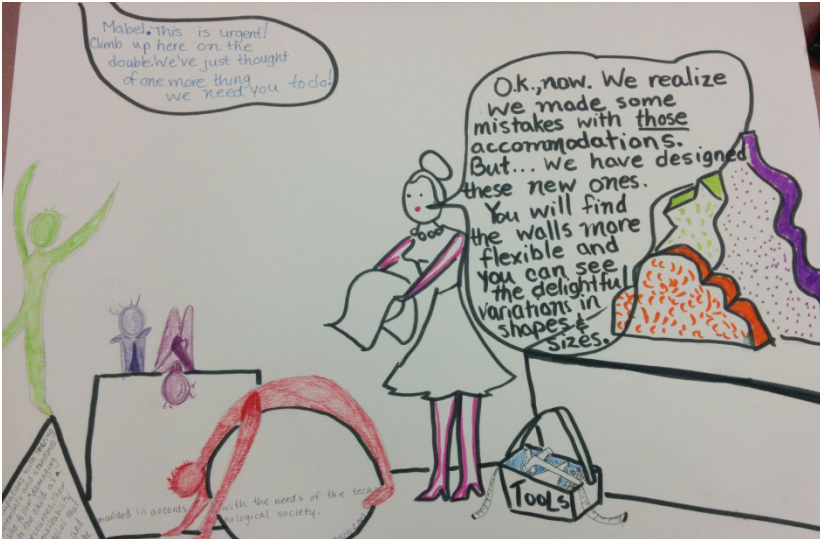

Figure 2

DIALECTIC OF CRITICISM AND HOPE

I often experience resistance from students when my intention is to disrupt cycles of inequity and move them from dysconsciousness towards conscientization. Resistance has a place in the process of developing conscientization, but too often it is an ending place. Freire (2000) argued that conscientization is a way of being "with the world", not adapting to the external forces of it:

> It is the position of one who struggles to become the subject and the maker of history and not simply the passive, disconnected object ... Conscientization is a requirement of the human condition ... conscientization is natural to 'unfinished' humanity that is aware of its unfinishedness. It is natural because unfinishedness is integral to the phenomenon of life itself. (p. 55)

Freire points out a basic contradiction between instrumental dys-consciousness as it exists in teacher education and conscientization. Instrumental dysconsciousness treats conditions as if they are prede-termined and simply need to be worked through to an achievable and desirable end. My intention is that by engaging imagery and foolish-ness we will work through resistance, which often becomes despairing, and beyond naïve hope.

An antidote to the paralysis of critique or cynicism and despair is hope or joy. Hope and joy might be equated with self-gratifying and naïve emotions, because without critique, or cynicism, joy and hope are untethered from social responsibility. As a singular emotion joy "lacks liberating emancipator possibilities" (Kanpol, 1998, p. 124). It is intellectually suspect and self-serving; cynicism without joy is paralyzing. When the two dispositions act in a dialectical dynamic they may become a force for reaffirmation of dreams, hopes, and convic-tions.

Education, schooling and teaching are incredibly complex and complicated considerations. We live in a time of unutterable human suffering and environmental degradation and as teachers we hope to make a difference (Purpel, 1989). We are susceptible to being overwhelmed with, at least, the relativity, contradiction, interrelation-ships, and pressure of such responsibility, when we sincerely question people's motives and the value of living specifically as it pertains to teaching and schooling. Without joy or hopefulness, cynicism wrought from heavily intellectualized or academic critique may produce the dispassionate mind – paralyzed and despairing, endlessly doubting, and ill-equipped to sustain commitment or struggle with conviction (Kanpol, 1998).

In my version of the Achievement Gap Story, the elements of good v. bad, as well as virtue v. vice, are stylized. These elements are essential to the romance genre (Cohen, 1999, p. 70). This historical storytelling is not meant to be functional in a technical or strategic way such that history will do something for us to point the way to better and more expedient progress; however, it is intended as a form of invi-tational pedagogy that is not too laden with neologisms or disciplinary jargon, and yet not overly simplified or simple. Hopefully, its naïve

appearance and prosaic language invites and does not preclude problematizing history and critiquing common sense so that teaching is understood a form of historic agency. I admit to an intention to persuade the reader that there are stories to be told/un-covered/re-membered in the linguistic turns of not only the achievement gap, but in all the policies, practices, and mandates of teaching. I attempt to address the challenge that "[t]here is no one right way of reading ... histories; there are only ways of reading" (Cohen, 1999, p. 70).

Making profound issues into picture stories may appear to be patronizing or counter to the difficult intellectual, emotional, spiritual, strategic and political work of teacher education for social justice. It has been over a decade since I created this book. I can see the cynicism and naiveté in it. Ontologically, my being the author in the past and reader in the present is discomforting – humiliating even, especially in this public forum. That is the point of this exercise. The awakened conscience with which I attempted to show students their own dysconsciousness re-minds me of the easy pride I took in cleverly managing their revelations that there is a different point of view – a more conscious view closer to historical truth and that causes my own hubris to emerge. I am disrupted. In the end, the attempt was made in response to what I experienced as the imbalance between cynicism and hope and it helped to recover my hope without forfeiting my ability to sincerely question and work for change. This is what I believe: teacher education candidates need a balance of cynicism and joy.

COMMUNAL SHARING

The story book is meant to be shared. "Picture books are meant to be shared with others. Active invitations to alter the book, or the narrative, are a collaborative, communicative process. This is a form, a manifestation, of a "public historical memory grounded in a shared pedagogy" (Simon, 2005, p. 89), the process of calling to mind in storybook form a narrative of schooling or teaching fastens contested "meaning[s] assigned to signs and symbols" (Ibid.). It may not meet 'academic' standards, but perhaps makes a place for "*points of connection* [emphasis is the author's], between people in regard to a past they both might acknowledge the touch of" (Ibid.). The book format,

the simplistic, re-framing of the story with illustrations that provoke embodied, experienced, as well as intellectual responses to metaphoric, rhetorical tropes (a gap, a voice, a mold, hard hats, empty heads), is meant to open up relational spaces, which might otherwise be impenetrable across or through the density of our more 'professional 'or expert languages of discourse.

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

In this paper, I described a strategy to introduce teaching as a political problem aimed at social justice. One of my attempts to embed social justice in teacher education is to develop narrative and imaginal, shared products that work to reverse the 'amnesiac renderings of teacher education" (Cochran-Smith, 2004, p. 9). I haven't detailed the ways that this work dovetails with teaching methods, except to imply that an awareness of the ways our work is constructed will guide the choices we make in practice. Therefore, working to awaken new ways of understanding will change pedagogy and, hopefully, cause students and teachers to recognize that content can be understood and pedagogy practiced in ways that are humanizing and just rather than commidifying or degrading. In order to salve the students anxieties about learning "how" to teach, I use metacognitive modeling as we work through the strategies and processes in classes like history and philosophy.

I think the implication of my tale is that we must continue to practice with humility, foolishness, and fearlessness, within a dynamic cynicism and hope. We must be willing to make mistakes and model our own humanity to the students we teach to teach. O'Sullivan (1999) argued for educators to pay more and better attention to the intrapersonal processes of trying to grapple with the complex and profound issues of our times. Denial, one of those intrapersonal affects which is often the first dynamic to emerge in efforts to facilitate criticality, prevents people from being overwhelmed. It is a way to protect one's self from engagement in difficult, complex conceptual grappling which is necessary and daunting. Denial and resistance prevent us from seeing the possibilities for transforming problems of social justice in schooling and teaching.

My experience in teacher education aligns with O'Sullivan's (1999) contention that there is a need to prepare teachers/educators to learn to process denial, despair, and resistance in order to develop their capacities to think creatively and take action towards social justice. Most of the students I've worked with are not prepared to work through these processes. I was not prepared, as a doctoral candidate, to work through these processes! In choosing to use strategies, or processes, that attempt to infuse criticality with foolishness, imagery and sharing, we do not isolate rigorous, and often despair-provoking, intellectual and political critical analysis. Combining and consistently or continuously engaging in dialectic engagement between the seemingly simplistic and the unutterably complex might help create a common ground upon which to resist oppression and create libratory schools. I have tried to describe my own "turbulent notions about things that seem to belong together, although in some unknown way" (Huebner, 1967/1999p., 131) so that teachers may work together on persistent dreams of justice.

The following describes the last page of the book:

Pull the tab – " Empathy becomes border crossing where educators within their multicultural contexts recount and/or recover lost moments in personal memories and histories so as to reconstruct them within a similarity within difference framework of mutuality, cooperation, connectedness and care, despite the clear celebration of my [identity] and your [identity]" (Kanpol, 1998, p. 181). There are several figures converging on the center from the borders of the page: joyously, hopefully. These figures have individual features. Their arms are above their heads and from their hands are flung glittery bits – shining, reflective, holographic, light refracting glitter. This is the happy ending, where the captives get free; they find each other and themselves. These figures have made it out of the gap, into a new space of possibility. I know that this is simplistic – naïve – sentimental. I chose for it to be so. I consciously tossed glitter as light onto the page as sentimental and naïve as that may seem because one of my responsibilities as a teacher educator is to shed some light, some hope, that our work is worthwhile and possible.

The point is that in classes where the approach to altering students' resistance to critical inquiry and analysis of their own common sense beliefs was met with the most success, was in those classes I approached with a sense of foolishness, attempted to balance cynicism with joy, encouraged students to illustrate and play with the metaphors within school rhetoric, and when we shared our memories and uncovered our own experiences. For example, the ubiquitous metaphor that "students are our most precious commodities" is one of common sense that is readily accepted as benign. Many of them do not know what commodities are, so we must start there. In drawing corn, pigs, oil and gold, connections and questions begin to develop between how acceptance of the common sense rhetoric directs our actions, relationships, decisions, and convictions as teachers It is valuable to begin where the students are and let conversation and illustrated story-telling develop.
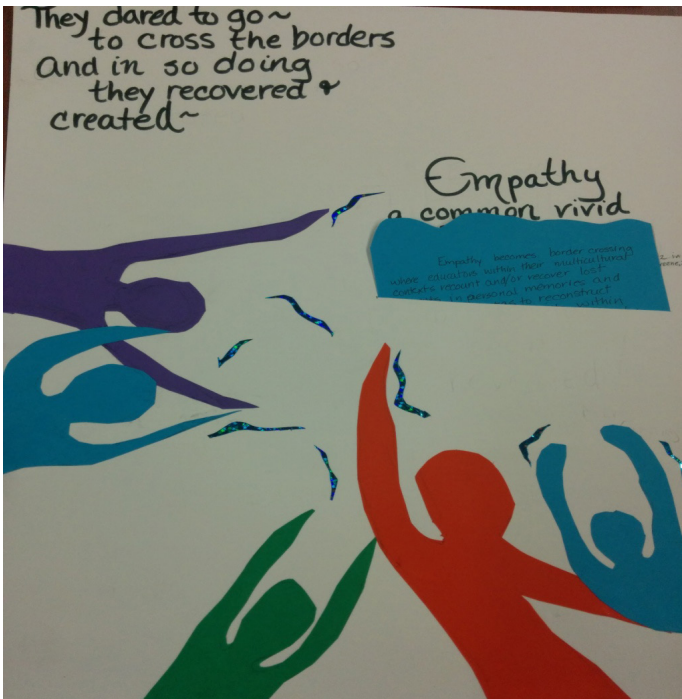
To see the "book" please go to: https://prezi.com/v31lpiobih0b/trembling-on-the-precipice-of-possibility/

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