

A photograph of a student sitting at a long table in a library, reading a book. The student is in profile, looking down at the book. The table is cluttered with papers and books. In the background, there are large, multi-paned windows that let in bright light, creating a warm atmosphere. Other students are visible in the background, also studying.

Creating spaces for the development of the "whole human being"

16 March 2017



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The National and local teaching context: Thoughts on teaching in troubled times

- Apartheid past/current experiences
- Prevailing Capitalist exploitation – impact on students/teachers and teaching?
- Perceptions of identity, relationships and actions (Internalised Domination and oppression)
- #Rhodesmustfall ; #Feesmustfall;
- Free education and Decolonisation
- Response (or lack thereof) from leadership/management



Classroom Context

All have **difficult** (Britzman, 2000:35; Zembylas, 2014) or **troubled** knowledges (Jansen, 2009) which shape how we relate to one another.

Interrogating these knowledges through a critical **Pedagogy of Discomfort** (Boler, 1999; Boler and Zembylas, 2003, Ivits, 2009) through storying

Necessary for inhabiting **new, extended, incomplete** (Britzman 2000) ways of **being, knowing and doing**.



HE and the focus on cognitive learning only

- Western culture's preoccupation with the "mind/ body binary" as though the mind is completely separate from (and therefore superior to, in worth) the body (Orr, 2002:479)
- Link with cultivating the heart /mind connection, finding ways to bridge the gap between "mind-intellect and body-spirit" (Ng, 2005)
- Finding a common focus for the "[my] spirit-seeking heart" and [my] "knowledge-seeking mind" Palmer (1993:xxiv)
- Pedagogies of reason and sentiment Kahane (2007) fall short of genuine transformation as they require only intellectual engagement and never involve the heart.



Pedagogy of discomfort

- Acknowledges the **affect** and **somatic/embodied** experience of hearing and telling stories of pain and trauma
- Potentially uncomfortable and difficult experience (North 2006:527; Brooks, 2011) is not a purely cognitive nor rational experience and involves a multitude of **emotions** (Zembylas, 2003; 2014).
- Acknowledging the **body as an agent of “knowledge production”**and its “complex relationship with subjectivities” (Wilcox, 2009; 105) makes it a useful “locus of learning in the anti-oppressive classroom” (Wagner and Shahjahan, 2014: 3)
- Invite students to be wholly present, in mind, body and spirit.



Difficult knowledges and troubling dialogues

- “Learning from another’s pain requires **noticing what one has not experienced** and the **capacity to be touched** by what one has not noticed, identifying with the pain requires **a self capable of wounding his or her own boundaries, the very boundaries that serve against pain**” (Britzman 2000:30)
- How does the self come to terms with the (difficult) knowledge of others, and how do the representations of social and historical traumas, and students’ encounters of these (Zembylas, 2014:392) shape learning experiences in the university

Teaching *for a different world*

- The fostering of **critical hope** (Bozalek, Leibowitz, Carolissen, and Boler, 2014) and **imagination** aimed at working towards a better world for all
- Higher education for **Public good** (Leibowitz, 2012)
- **Humanising pedagogy** and **mutual vulnerability** (Keet, Zinn and Porteus, 2009)
- How can we work productively with **painful experiences, difficult knowledge** (Boler and Zembylas (2012) as teachers who are ourselves “**carriers of troubled knowledge**” (Jansen, 2008; 2009)



A different approach to teaching?

Brookfield and Holst (2011) make a case for adopting a *radical* approach

Stetsenko (2008) advocates for “**activist transformative**” stance

How can we work in ways that could instil critical hope for the future while still working honestly and authentically with difficult knowledges existing in the present?



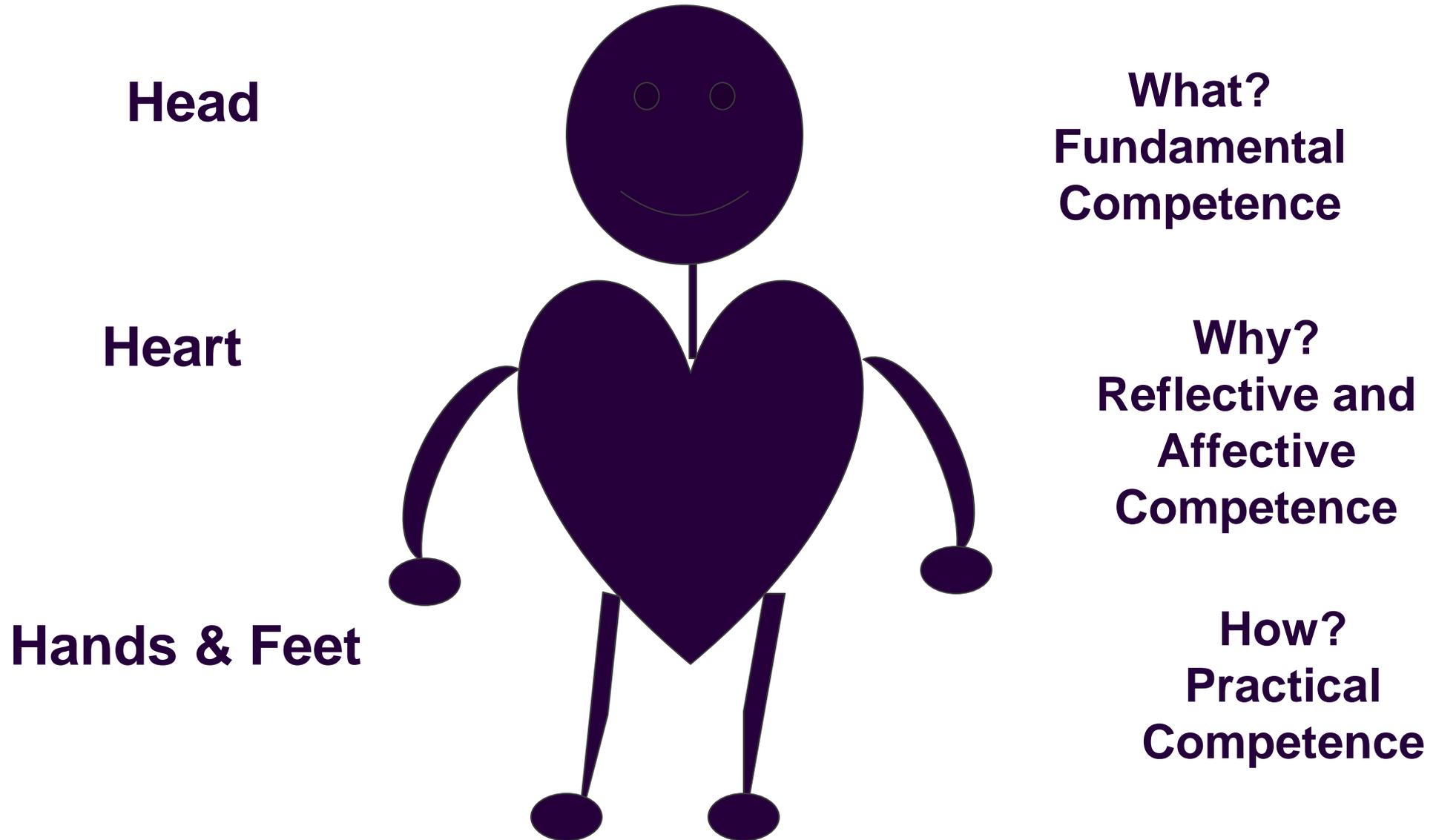
A Vision for the future for our students?

Grow a graduate who is a “radical, a transformative and public intellectual, and a prophet”...

But this needs a teacher who will teach for an alternative ““way of being in the world”” and who will view their relationship with their students (and their communities too) as a partnership in pursuit of ...reflective actions that liberate.” (Dallaire as quoted in Miller 2006:84).



What our students might look like?



Re-thinking, re-centering and re-imagining teaching and learning for a different world

An alternative way of educating/ working with students – towards an integrative, holistic form of education, centred on ***where we are right now in our history***

Zajonc and Palmer (2010:22) sound a call for the movement towards what they refer to as an “**integrative education**” and propose an education which aims to ““think the world together” rather than “think it apart”, to know the world in way that empowers educated people to act on behalf of wholeness rather than fragmentation”.



Who am I and what is my story?

Starts with the self...

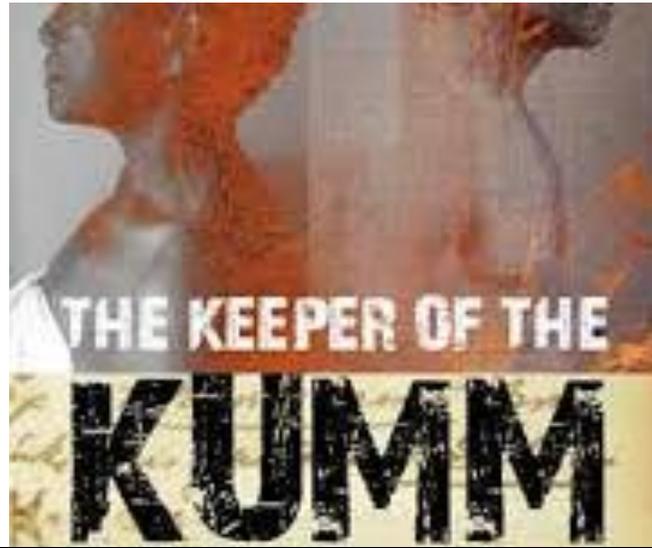
'Seldom, if ever, do we ask the "who" question – who is the self that teaches? How does the quality of my selfhood form – or deform – the way I relate to my students, my subject, my colleagues, my world' Palmer as cited in Finney (2013:3) in *Strong Spirits, Kind Hearts: Helping students develop inner strength, resilience and meaning.*



Notion of teaching as “narrative sharing”

”When we teach, we tell stories. We tell stories about our disciplines, about the place of these disciplines in the structure of human knowledge. We tell stories about what it is to be a human knower, and about how knowledge is made, claimed and legitimated” -Notion of teaching as “narrative sharing” (Pagano, 1994: 252)





Sylvia Vollenhoven

A story is like the wind

It floats from a distance

Comes to us from afar

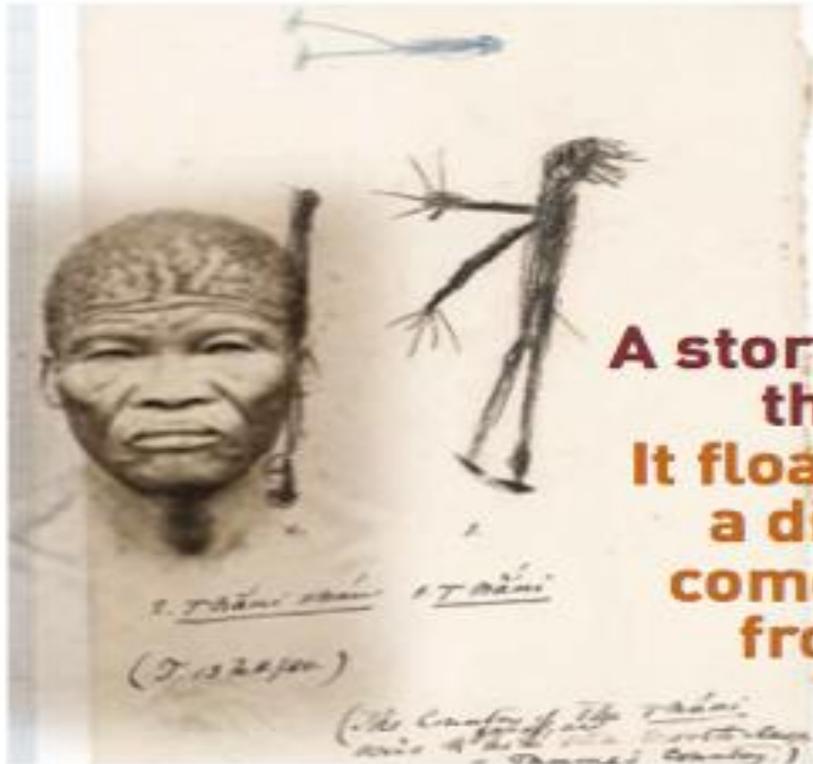
In the story wind floating along

I journey down the road

Catching the stories

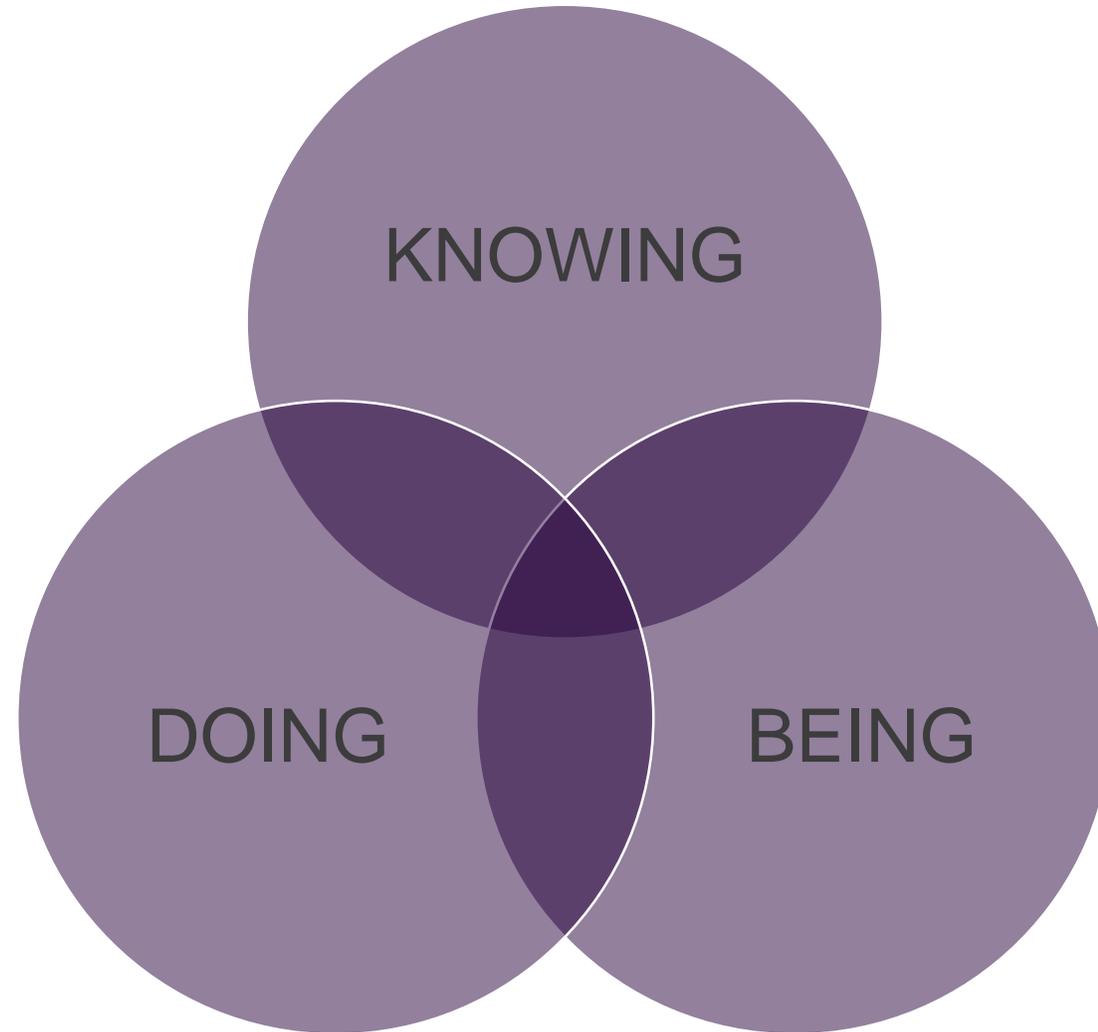
That come like the wind

From other places



**A story is like
the wind.
It floats from
a distance,
comes to us
from afar.**

Exchanging stories of our...



In the world

In our classrooms



KNOWING

Disciplinary knowledge as central –the expert teacher of the discipline?

Pedagogical/technological content knowledge – disciplinary specific

Who am I and who are my students?

Whose “powerful knowledge” do I teach?

Knowledge as contested and contingent - knowing the **context** in which I teach

Knowledge as **research**, co-constructed/co-created with students and others

Students’ knowledge of themselves, their histories and stories – is it brought into the classroom in creative and productive ways?



Research

- Do we think critically about our scholarship?
- Maxwell (2008:103) warns that “the danger is that scientific and technological research will respond to the interests of the powerful and the wealthy, rather than to the interests of the poor, of those most in need”.
- Brookfield and Holst (2011:188) pose a number of important questions in this regard





DOING

Tasks of the critical activist scholar?

What do we do in our classrooms?

How do we engage with students to support their learning?

Working with a pedagogy of discomfort

Fostering dialogue as a principle and practice



9 tasks of the “critical activist scholar” Apple (2014: xvii-xx)

The teacher as a critical activist scholar involves, amongst others,

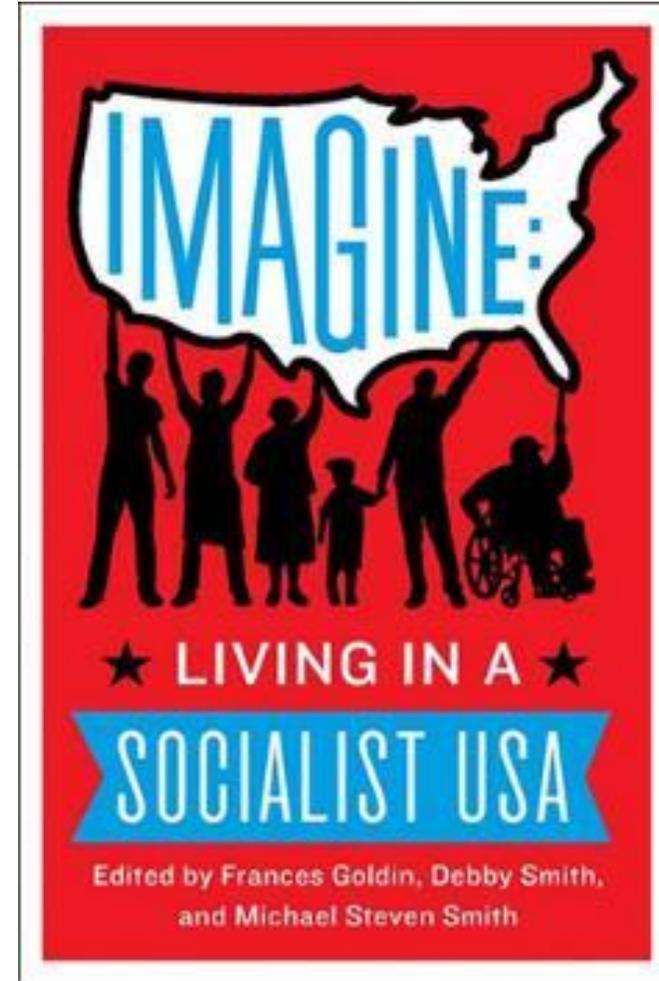
- *Bear witness to negativity* i.e. explore and address how educational policy and practice perpetuate domination and exploitation
- Explore spaces for counter hegemonic action in teaching and research
- Work as public and organic intellectuals to advance powerful knowledge which serves to liberate and emancipate through mutual dialogue
- Maintain, critique and extend the vibrancy of theoretical, empirical, historical and political traditions
- Participate in, support counter hegemonic community and social movements that advance humanity through critical scholarship. This is to be done in ways that open and extend knowledge, dialogues and agency both within and outside of the academy and is aimed at greater access and social justice.



Dialogue

William Ayers: Teach Freedom!

Ayers (2014: 168) points out that: “Dialogue is both the most **hopeful** and the most **dangerous** pedagogical practice, for in it, our own dogma and certainty and orthodoxy must be held in abeyance, must be subject to scrutiny” making it a fundamental part of engaging with issues of justice.



Dialogue: why listening matters

- **Deep listening** - Mary Rose O'Reilly, *Radical Presence; Teaching as Contemplative Practice*
- Miller (2009) Are our “**students heard into existence**” or “**welcomed wholly to exist**” in our classrooms.
- Jansen (2009:93) In a “culture that **still values silence over dialogue** about the past” how do we listen and honour the diverse voices in our universities?
- Listening with the “third ear” and or listening “with the heart”. What are the messages we present that might serve to silence rather than foster dialogues with one another

Teaching of, and for social justice

Social justice education – conceptualised as students:

- Learning *about* (**intellectual** understanding)
- Learning *to see* (ability to **identify** and **reflect** on injustice, both our own **actions and perceptions** and those of others)
- learning *to be* (**actions** in the world - **relational** engagement, **citizenship** and **activism** for change)
- Teaching for **Knowing, Being, Seeing and Doing differently**



BEING

What are our ways of being in the classroom?

How do our pedagogies, philosophies and epistemologies support the fostering of holistic human beings?

How do we teach (and learn) in authentic ways

Cultivating respect and honouring others?

Why love matters.....



What's love got to do with it

When we teach with love, combining care, commitment, knowledge, responsibility, respect, and trust, we are often able to enter the classroom and go straight to the heart of the matter. That means having the clarity to know what to do on any day to create the best climate for learning.

Teachers who are wedded to using the same teaching style every day, who fear digression from the concrete lesson plan, miss the opportunity for full engagement in the learning process. hooks (2010:161)



In defense of Love as a central tenet

Epistemology of love

- *Respect*
 - *Gentleness*
 - *Intimacy*
 - *Vulnerability*
 - *Participation*
 - *Transformation*
 - *Imaginative insight*
- (Zajonc & Palmer, 2010: 94-96).

Revolutionary love

- Emotion
 - Choice
 - Response
 - Relational
 - Political
 - Praxis
- (Lanas and Zembylas, 2014, 2015)



Emotion	Choice	Response	Relational	Political	Praxis
<p>Entails vulnerability Responding with love is NOT repressing emotions such as fear shame anger, but the choice to move against and beyond it</p>	<p>Voluntary Brought into existence through performance, something we DO Decisions are constantly reaffirmed</p>	<p>Response can either Limit or Open up possible subjectivities If we accept and act upon the responsibility for our responses that can play a part in the “coming to being” of another</p>	<p>Dialogic and relational Transcends the self and means non sovereignty Manifest differently between different individuals and socio material surroundings, within different socio political, historical, cultural and contextual, spatial contexts</p>	<p>Influenced by social historical and cultural contexts Moves us toward something A politics of love entails the possibility of love as a site of “collective becoming”</p>	<p>Love is as love does Both intention and action “Loving acts” – require Discipline Concentration Patience Concern/care</p>

Teaching and Learningas a continuous journey of becoming

- Shaped by thoughts of **incompleteness**, and the openness to “**staying with the trouble**” Haraway (2016)
- This means forging ahead no matter how hard the journey seems, with regular pit stops for reflection (critical)
- DeRosa (2002:1 on racism) Facing the fear and finding the courage to engage with it, **even when it becomes painful**
- Intention is not the same as **impact**...importance of (social) **action** inside and outside of our classrooms



Teaching and Learningas a continuous journey of becoming

There are always opportunities to learn more, hear more ...the story that we are yet to hear (even when it could cause wounding and pain) may change the way we are, see, think and act in the world.

Essentially, teaching is a very personal journey of becoming.....that never ends



Some final thoughts

- What are our Visions of the re-humanised future (Gidley, 2009)
- Recognition of our interconnectedness and the possibilities of raising the frequency for a different way of knowing, doing and being in the world
- The importance of **Imagination** - courageously envision a different future with our students of what is possible...
- From storying, move to action and an emphasis on activism where there is a vested interest in shaping and creating a more nonviolent, equitable future for all



THANK YOU



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