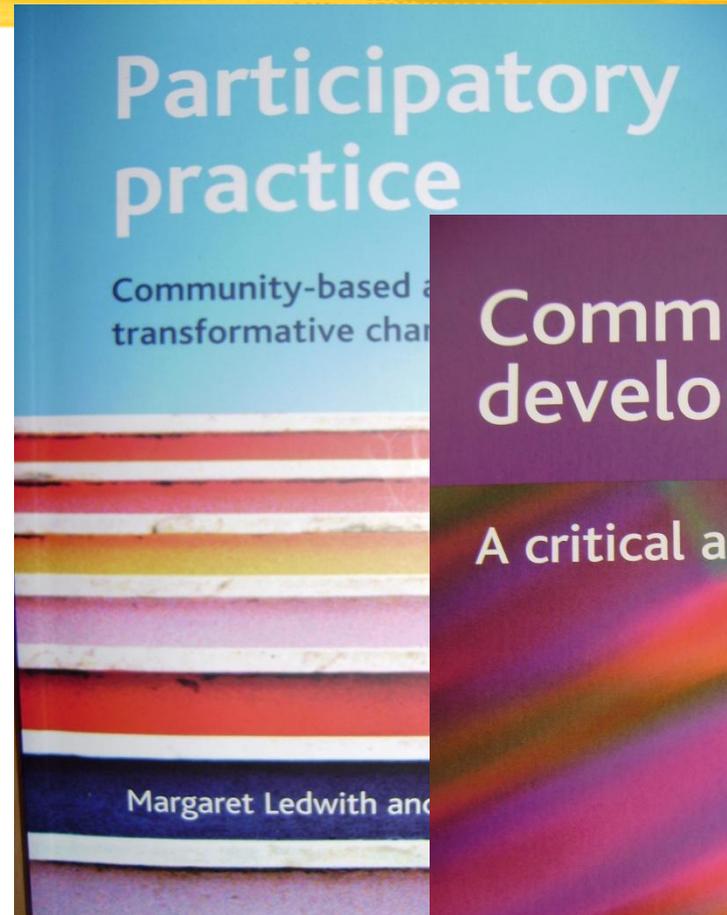


Community Development: Reclaiming the radical agenda!



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Who am I?

How can I change the world?



Transformed by:

- z Vietnamese refugees
- z Paulo Freire, Antonio Gramsci, feminism
- z Participatory democracy in Nicaragua
- z Black communities of inner-city Manchester
- z Hattersley: 'the forgotten town'

I am interested in...



1. Stories of ordinary, everyday life
2. Dominant narratives that tell us how to think
3. Little stories become collective narratives that change the way we see the world
4. How seeing the world differently changes the world

New possibilities for knowing and being



1. Community development as action for social justice and sustainability
2. Creating critical praxis
3. Telling stories of differently experienced power
4. Changing the story!

1: What is community development?



- **Principles:** social justice and environmental justice
- **Vision:** just and sustainable world
- **Values:** ideology of equality - dignity, respect, trust
- **Process:** popular education, practical projects and collective action for change
- **Theory:** analyses of power and discrimination
- **Political context:** world crises of social justice and sustainability

CD Strategic Framework for NI

CD Strategy for Health/Wellbeing



- **Equality and Anti-discrimination:** challenges oppression
- **Social Justice:** works towards a more equal, inclusive society
- **Collective Action:** organise, influence and take action
- **Community Empowerment:** build self-esteem, confidence, identity
- **Working and Learning Together:** popular educators using everyday experience as knowledge for change

Using policy documents



'The main purpose of this strategy is to recognise and support the important and pivotal role that community development plays in improving health and wellbeing'

'Community development tackles the root causes of inequalities'

(CD Strategy for Health and Wellbeing, 2012)

Closing the Gap in a Generation: Social justice and health



WHO Commission on Social Determinants of Health (CSDH) 2008:

1. Improve daily living conditions
2. Tackle inequitable distribution of power, money, resources
3. Understand the problem and assess action

ANALYSIS, ACTION and CHANGE

Reclaiming the radical agenda



1. Reminding ourselves of CD principles
2. Practical theory in action
3. Collective action local to global
4. **Begins by creating critical spaces for dialogue** 'extraordinarily experience the ordinary' (Ira Shor, 1992:122)

**What is going on? Where?
What's his story? Why?**



10-minute dialogue: Problematising poverty



1. Over $\frac{3}{4}$ of UK districts where child poverty is most acute are in N.Ireland, a new report has revealed
2. 11 of 14 council wards with over 60% of children in families struggling to manage are in N.Ireland
3. The disturbing new statistics are linked to rising unemployment, according to the End Child Poverty (ECP) campaign (a coalition of child charities)
4. Across N.Ireland, last year 17% of children were living in homes where parents are without work, as opposed to 13% in 2008. (Belfast Telegraph: 19.4.13)

2: Dominant narratives: The story of the welfare scrounger



- Free market: profit over people and planet
- Demonisation of the world's poor
- Rich got rich, poor got poorer
- Social inequalities divided societies and countries
- Neoliberal globalisation divided the world!

Profit over people and planet: A politics of disposability



The story of our times!



- z The same old story: dehumanising poor people as deviant!
- z Global recession paid for by poor
- z Social divisions in rich countries
- z Inequalities cause unstable societies
- z World crises as China, Brazil, India follow neoliberal story of profit

Demonising Poor as 'Other'



- z Poverty as a human failing: a powerful story
- z UK world's 7th richest country
- z Does not feed its poorest children
- z 1:8 of poorest children get no hot meal
- z 75,000 UK children homeless (Shelter)
- z 62% children in poverty have working parent/s
- z Child Poverty Act 2010:end child poverty 2020
- z 2015: 4,000 more children in poverty (IFS)
- z 2020: 4.2 million children growing up in poverty (CPAG)

Poverty violates human rights

Poverty kills/makes people ill/destroys hope
Killeen (2007)

Northern Ireland:

- 23% higher rates of emergency admission to hospital;
- 66% higher rates of respiratory mortality; 65% higher rates of lung cancer;
- 73% higher rates of suicide;
- Double the number of self harm admissions;
- 50% higher rates of smoking related deaths;
- 120% higher rates of alcohol related deaths.

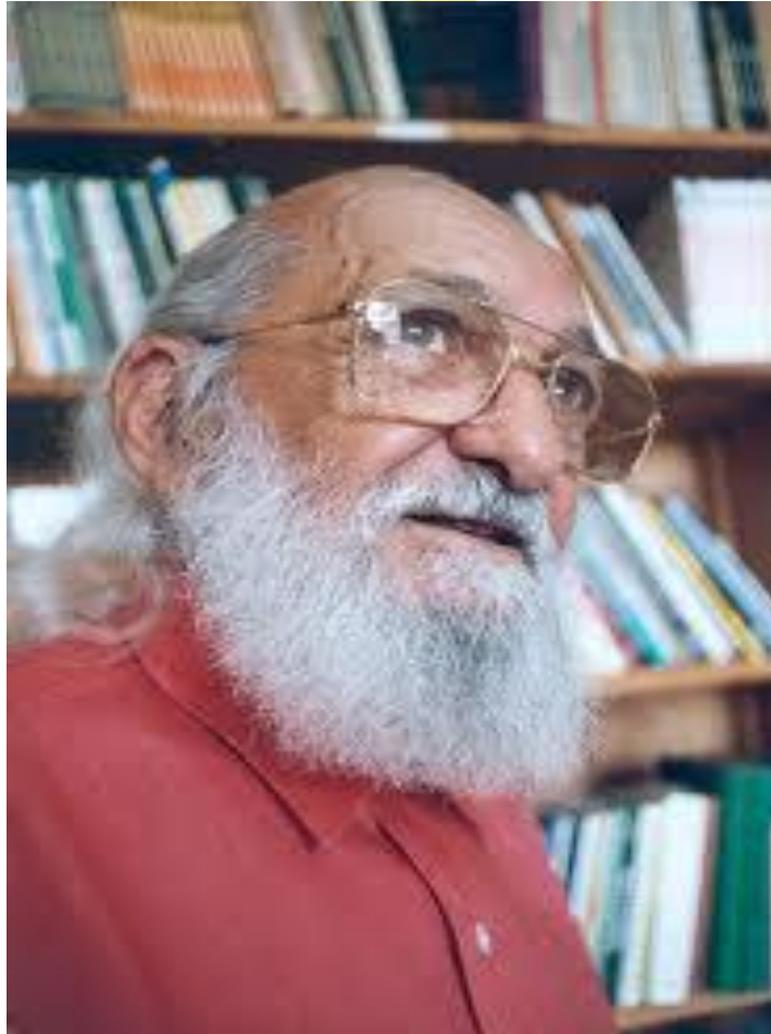
(2009 Inequalities Monitoring Report, DHSSPS)

10-minute dialogue



- z Reflect on the stories you hear in the media, in practice and in your own mind that reinforce poor people as deviant?
- z Is poverty a violation of human rights?
- z Why is decontextualised practice placatory?

3: Theorising CD: Paulo Freire



Stories: the key to theory, practice and social change



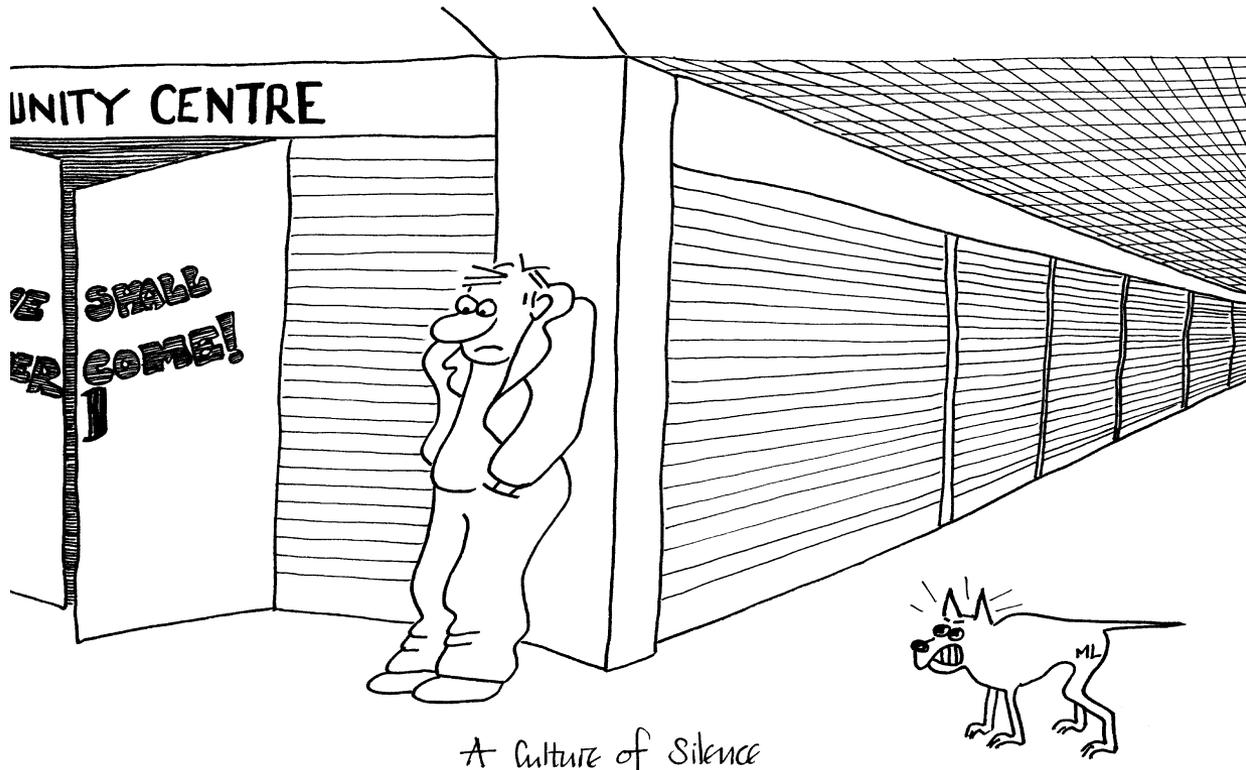
- Paulo Freire: everyone an intellectual and activist capable of recreating the world
- Stories: basis for transformative change
- Dialogue: critical consciousness

Listening from the heart



Listening from the Heart

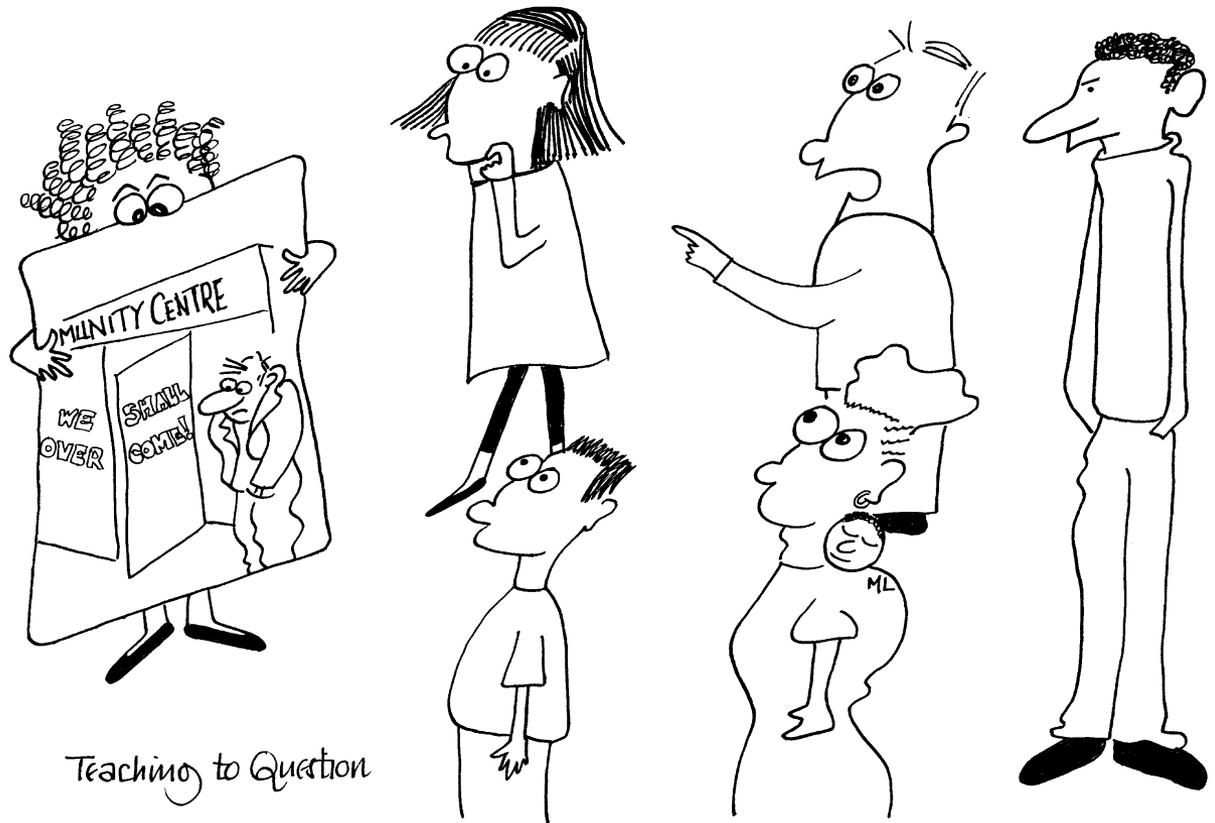
Culture of silence



A Culture of Silence

Teaching to question:

'Questioning answers not answering questions'



Dialogue: Questioning the taken-for-grantedness of everyday life



Dialogue: Connected Knowing

10-minute dialogue



- z How do these ideas give you insight into a more critical approach to practice?

4: Action research:

A process of becoming critical



- z Develop critical self-reflection
- z 'When stories go unchallenged they silently seep into the public mind' (Jean McNiff 2012)
- z Question everything - expose contradictions
- z Replace stories of coercion and exploitation with life-affirming stories of social freedom
- z Structure practice: cycles of action/reflection

Action research radicalised community development



- z 1968: 'revolt, reaction and rebellion'
- z Urban Programme: response to social unrest
- z Community Development Project, 1969
- z 'Cycles of deprivation' theory
- z AR exposed flawed analysis
- z Birth of radical CD – political vs pathological
- z Gramsci, Freire, feminism
- z Grassroots social movements – theory in action

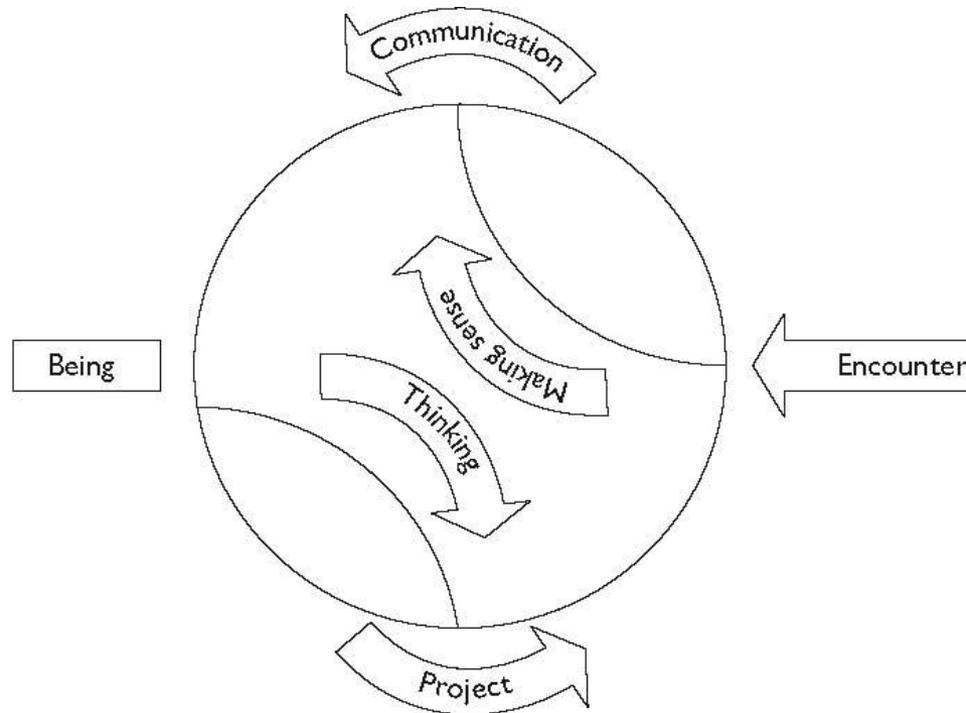
Participatory/emancipatory action research



- Committed to social justice
- Values: dignity, equality, respect, mutuality
- Working *with* not *on* people
- Co-researchers in mutual inquiry
- Equalising power in process and outcome
- Different ways of knowing the world
- Experience captured in dialogue, story, music, drama, poetry, drawings, photographs...
- Action for change based on new understanding of lived reality

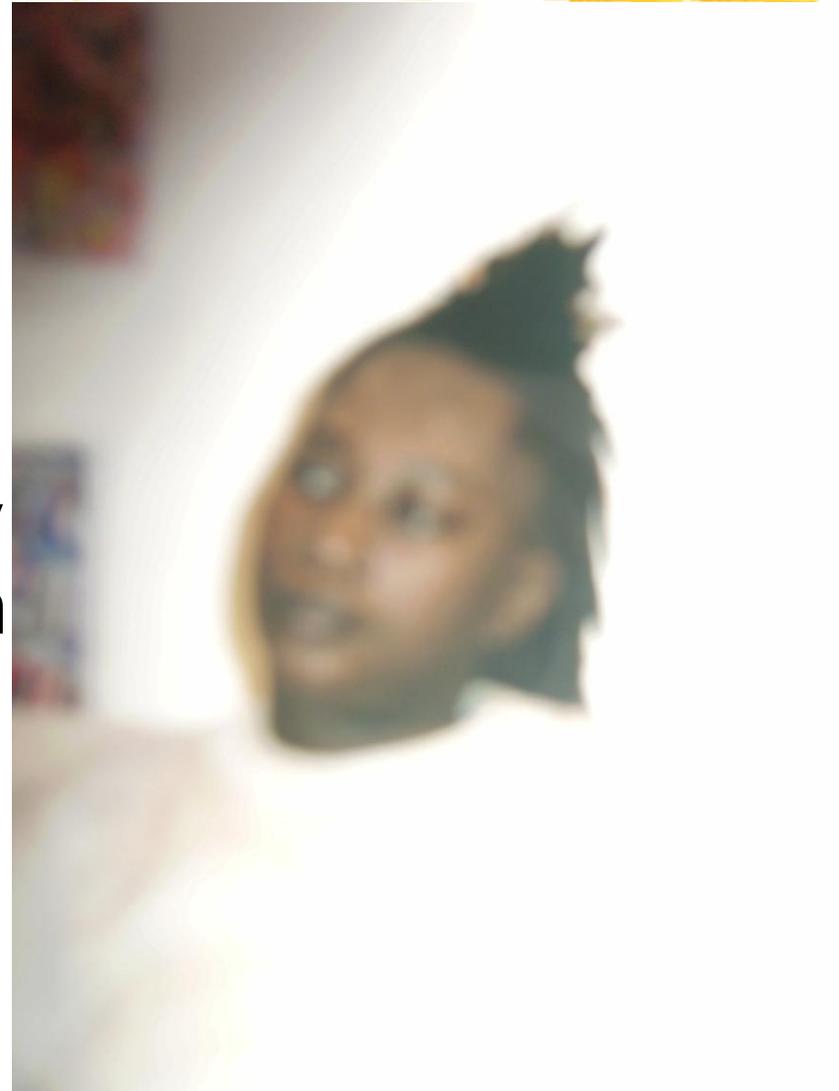
Cycles of Action/Reflection

(The Cycle Model:Rowan)



Paula's story: action research deepens my understanding of power

Aim to construct counterstories that give shape and direction to the practice of hope and the struggle for an emancipatory politics of everyday life. It is a pedagogy that attempts to exorcise from the social body the invading pathologies of racism, sexism, and class privilege (McLaren, 1995, p 105).



Whiteness: a theory of power



Peggy McIntosh(1988) revisited

White superiority embeds 'race', racism, patriarchy:

- z invisible systems of privilege that reinforce dominance and superiority;
- z challenges White people to examine assumptions of 'normality';
- z McIntosh's 'invisible knapsack': unearned privileges, invisible, assumed, equating normality with White culture and patriarchy.

Peggy's reflections



- z I can walk down the street and feel that I belong
- z I can go out without being followed or harassed
- z I can count on my skin colour/gender not working against getting a job, getting credit, being listened to, respected
- z I can remain oblivious of the language and customs of Black people who constitute the world's majority
- z I can go to meetings feeling accepted rather than isolated, out-of-place, outnumbered, unheard, held at a distance or feared

10-minute dialogue: Changing the story: Born Free!



- z What daily freedoms do you have?
- z What values underlie these assumptions?
- z How do they underpin your behaviour/thinking?
- z Place these in a larger political context
- z How do these practices impact on society?
- z What principles and values inform these practices as 'normal'?
- z Tell a different story inspired by alternative values
- z Does this offer insight into the way that power permeates personal lives along lines of prejudice?

Counternarratives of freedom

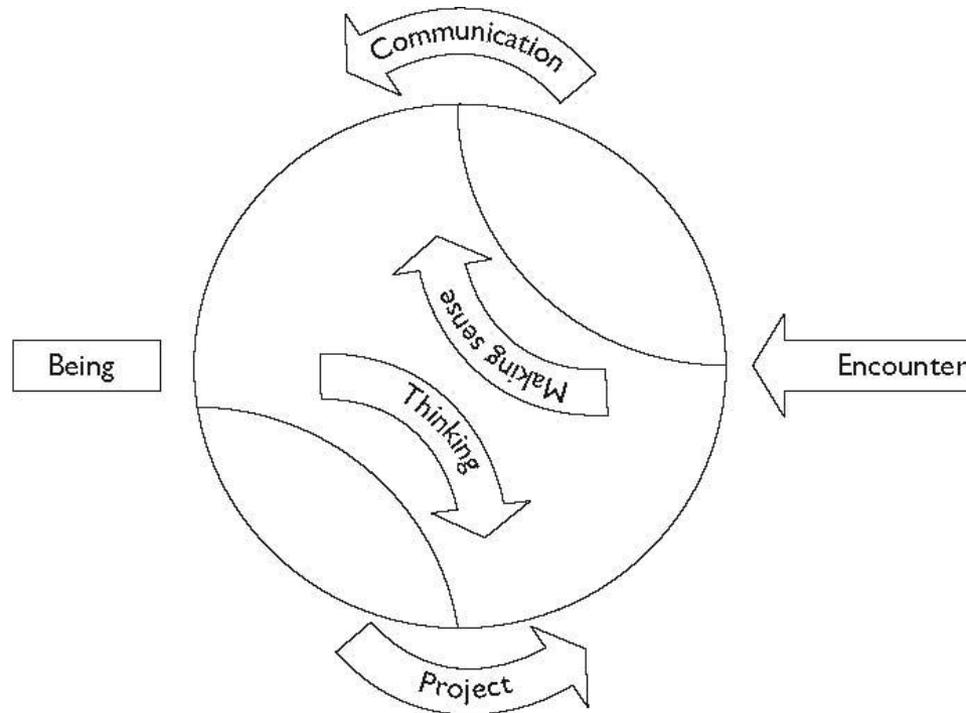


Counternarratives not only counter grand narratives, but they also challenge the hegemonic narratives of everyday life that manipulate people to think and behave according to a dominant set of cultural beliefs

In these ways, counternarratives are little stories that have transformative potential

(Giroux, 1996)

5: The Cycle Model: Theory in action



Stories from everyday life



- z As a team, share stories from practice
- z Choose one of the stories
- z Link aspects of structural discrimination
- z Decide how to respond at a local level?
- z What are the ideas/theories that inform your practice response?
- z How might this be extended beyond the community to a more collective potential?

CD uses PAR to create a unity of theory and practice



- '...action research should aim not just at achieving knowledge of the world, but achieving a better world'
- (Kemmis, 2009)
- 'inadequate action research' is decontextualised from social, economic, political structures' Kemmis (2006)

CD and social change: Focus for large group dialogue



Key points:

- Practitioners are critical educators
- Creating a questioning culture
- Building theory in action
- Analysing power relations
- Connecting with the root sources of social/environmental injustice
- Structuring local to global action
- By contextualising wellbeing politically/environmentally
- A world worthy of human aspiration! (Reason & Bradbury, 2001)

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