

LEARNING UNIT

REFLECTION OF PRACTICES THROUGH DIALOGUE WITH IMAGES AND WRITTEN CONVERSATIONS - ACTIVATION OF ARCHIVES OF POPULAR EDUCATION

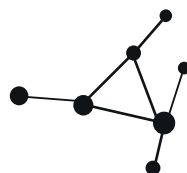
Working Group: Bogotá

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POPULAR EDUCATION

WORKING WITH IMAGES

PAULO FREIRE



intertwining hi/stories

ABOUT THE WORKING GROUP

The current composition of the Bogota Working Group is: Mónica Romero (professor, Master in Arts Education, National University of Colombia), Marcela Garzón (professor, Antonio Nariño University), Moisés Londoño (professor, Minuto de Dios University), Nicolás Navas (teacher, La Pradera School); Lyz Torres, John Vásquez, Miguel Vega (artists/educators, Graduates of the MA in Arts Education at the National University of Colombia).

We work on popular education and the relationship with social movements to rethink current problems and meanings of arts education. The idea of the popular contemplates *democratic access to culture* and perspectives of *empowerment* and *emancipation*.

The construction of *the political* contains a reflection and review of social movements that have influenced the ways of doing and conceptualize the artistic and educational practices associated with the popular. For this reason an important concept for us is *Undoing institutions*. We review terms associated with popular education such as: community education, sociocultural animation, emancipatory practices, critical pedagogies and systematization of experiences.

ABSTRACT

This Learning Unit shows, with the help of a video we as Bogota Working Group produced, a possibility of how to put central concepts of Paulo Freire into a new and present context.

We propose to use writing and working with images to study, discuss and construct knowledges starting from Paulo Freire's approach, to problematize and debate it in relation to current practices. This can lead to recognize the existence and presence of voices, agents and experiences that have had little visibility in the field of popular education, and who enter in dialogue not only with Freire but also with other authors who have written on popular education.

The Learning Unit has two parts: we propose to start with a *Written conversation* about a text by Paulo Freire, before engaging with *Dialogues through images*, the activity based on the video made by the Bogota group.

ADDRESSEES

Artists, researchers and educators interested in reviewing their own practices in terms of critical perspectives related to popular education and social movements.

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Appendix: Paulo Freire: *Receptions and Responses in Art Education. Responses and Correspondences [only in Spanish]*

RESSOURCES

Video: ConversAcciones con Freire/ConversActions with Freire, <https://vimeo.com/236203124>

Text: Paulo Freire: *Receptions and Responses in Art Education. Responses and Correspondences* (English version and Spanish version)

INTRODUCTION: REVISITING FREIRE'S PEDAGOGY IN A LOCAL CONTEXT

This Learning Unit is part of the research we are conducting in the Bogotá group. We started from the following guiding questions: What do we understand as *popular* today in our educational (formal, non-formal, academic) context? And if we look at the archives and histories of popular education, which local art educational practices do we find?

The approach of Paulo Freire has had a substantial impact on the field of education in a perspective of Critical Pedagogy and non-formal education in Colombia. Nevertheless its direct relation with the arts in various educational settings has not been discussed explicitly. To investigate these and reconstruct a historical perspective based on the local histories of this phenomenon is one of the aims of our working group. We are interested in taking a close look at practices that focus on the hybrid field between the arts and education, amplifying and resignifying the "ways of doing" in practice.

In terms of methods, we focus on working with images and texts (creating, appropriating and analysing them) starting from the narratives that exist around popular education. These narratives can be autobiographical or historical, they are not necessarily linear, and they allow for a polyphony of histories to be told. Also our own knowledges and experiences, as a group, are taken into account in the process of joint knowledge construction.

▶ ACTIVITY I: WRITTEN CONVERSATIONS

In our group we worked in two phases: As a first step, we studied the ideas Paulo Freire brought forward in his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire 1972), taking time to review, re-read and analyse each individually the text. As a second step, we met to discuss and share the analyses, ideas, reflections and comments that each of us had previously elaborated in written form.

We wanted to find a format for this exchange that would be coherent with what we most appreciate in our collective work: In the moments in which we get together, spaces of discussion and feedback emerge. In these spaces our knowledges, passions and positions meet and enter a dialogue in an organic way. With this spirit, in the appendix we provide a document that consists of the commentaries that each of us made on the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, and on which others in turn intervened and responded in form of a dialogue within the text. Especially for those who are not familiar with Paulo Freire's writing we suggest to first engage in a reading and discussion exercise before working with our video (Activity II: Dialogues through Images). We propose the format of *Written Conversations* to engage with the text:

Let your group read a text. Every member of the group writes a little description of their own personal relations to concepts the author deals with in the text. This can be related to the knowledge of the group members or to specific lived situations.

Subsequently, each written fragment is uploaded to Google Drive or another platform. Then participants begin to make comments that enhance or problematize what is written there, inviting to rewrite the individual contributions made initially.

At the end, there are commented texts that after a process of editing and online debate become written conversations.

As an example, we share an image of the process described above (on the next page).

releases the student from any possible empowerment.

Freire speaks about dialogicity as a fundamental methodological tool for the development of a individual empowers pedagogy, but one of the structural conditions turns out to be confidence in the process that is conceived from the agreements that are built from the collectivity, problematic situation in a process of medium formation, where rules and structure are given to ensure that the process is not arranged because this would open the possibility for mistake where the condition of student vulnerability as a control form over the processes that the teacher develops.

To develop a process based on the dialogic structure in the classroom requires by the teacher the abandonment of any classification and categorization that can be made on him or the students group, situation that presents a challenge in a curricular structure approach. To think about the classroom as a place in permanent construction is an ideal that does not dialogue with the frameworks that govern the school; since this is thought in terms of planning and structuring in a before, however the logic of a classroom in permanent construction poses a systematization process and reflection that is given in parallel and later of the teacher's action.

I believe that school is the place where forms are cultivated as the oppressive system will act

Activity 1: Written Conversations



Iyz erika torres ramos

The challenge is to assume/work the planning as a pedagogical exercise in constant transformation and to demonstrate this. Mónica



Iyz erika torres ramos

Yes, it turns out that in the school it is normal that one generates a work curriculum that covers all the courses of the formative process, and this with the passage of time does not usually have more changes or adjustments. Likewise it is very likely that a teacher who dictates his course to a sixth grade for example continue to dictándoles these students throughout their formative process to finish their training, this can generate in the teacher a total reading of the student, ie That reconciles him by an impression that was given at a certain moment and from there generated his framework of relationship with him. The teacher frames his practice in a static context, and it turns out to be a possibility for the teacher to conceive his exercise as an exercise in constant transformation doing his practice a place of continuous study..

Nicolas

► ACTIVITY II: DIALOGUES THROUGH IMAGES

This part of Learning Unit seeks to put central concepts of Paulo Freire into a new and present context. This happens in two moments: the first one is the reconstruction and collection of images related to biographical milestones of the person who selects them.

The second moment is to document the influence of these authors and to elaborate visual documents. This with the purpose of reviewing the present and the transformation of the "original" writings.

We did this for example in the video we made in Bogotá for the intertwining hi/stories meeting in 2017 in Vienna.

See full video at: ConversAcciones con Freire / ConversActions with Freire:
www.vimeo.com/236203124

The video documents a series of reflections around Freire's approach, and about whether and how it has been appropriated in our local context in Bogotá. The starting point is a specific experience of a collaborator in our group, Jaime Barragán, in arts collectives and institutional work. In the video, Jaime shares the experience of the self-organised group *Pepitos* and the reflections ensuing from this experience regarding the relations between oppressor / oppressed and victim / perpetrator. These relations are of high importance in the local context, given the peace process that is perceived as a historical moment in the country, which also requires critical perspectives.

In relation to artistic and educational processes, another important reflection was the relationship between artwork/author regarding the configuration of community. The video provides clarification on this relation. Yet it is important to highlight that if we take on Freire's concepts, this also means a shift regarding the idea of the artwork and the author in the field of art. The artist becomes a reader and a mediator of social realities and the work can take forms that rather than being objects are created in the relations between all involved in what is called "community".

With the video we want to invite you to engage in a careful and critical revision of Freire's legacy starting from specific experiences in the local context.



ConversActions with Freire. Video still. Fragment (<https://vimeo.com/236203124>)

About working with images

Working with images can construct narratives about critical moments of learning and creativity in a certain field of action. For this Learning Unit the work with images focused on locating experiences in our context that would reveal the use and appropriation of some of Freire's concepts in concrete experiences. The images were used in two ways: first they served as documentation and memory of an experience; then they became part of the research process itself.

One can question images, their reading, their interpretation, their meaning and the process of their creation not only with regard to what they say by themselves, but also in terms of the representations that they bring forward and the narratives they create, by asking questions beginning with "how?". In this sense, we regard the image as a catalyst, as a dispositive for giving accounts of everyday realities and create narratives and associations, which in turn can contribute to resignify everyday practices and the histories formed through them (Hernández, 2012; Romero, 2017).

Working with images as a social practice means paying attention to the realities in which the images are produced, their contexts of circulation and the learnings that derive from them. Additionally, it means redefining the role and practice of the artist, who is understood as a researcher who has to be accountable for her/his decisionmaking in front of peers for legitimation (Sullivan, 2010; Wesseling, 2011; Lacy, 1996).

The final organisation of the images dialogues with the purposes devised in research processes, amongst others: the use of images for feedback and documentation of researches, for generating further data, for interpreting and representing reality (Weber, 2008).

► Activity

The following activity should be carried out with your own artistic/educational practice as a starting point.

For *Dialogues through images*, we propose to watch the video in fragments. After each part you can talk about the relation with the practices that each one in the group wants to share regarding the topics that are of interest for you from the video.

The following can serve as guiding questions:

- ▷ In which ways is the relation of oppressor/oppressed present in your context? How is it worked on and dealt with?
- ▷ Are there any local practices, or authors or practitioners that are related to popular education and critically reflect on this tradition? How would you describe this practice or present it in images?
- ▷ Which concepts of popular education (or more specifically from Freire, if you are familiar with his work) are relevant in your practice, and how do you appropriate them or give them a specific focus?

These questions can be answered by creating videos in the places of the practices mentioned and with the key persons identified, to extend the reflections on Freire's concepts in different contexts and initiate an exchange. This exchange can also take a written form, similar to what we proposed as Written Conversations, discussing the concepts found in Freire in relation with the specific local experiences.

If you are interested in sharing your videos with us and start a conversation with other collectives, get in touch on: cluster.latin2018@gmail.com or mopomapa2@gmail.com.

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