

A Joint Seminar between the Centre for Lifelong Learning, University of Liverpool and Cultural Difference and Social Solidarity: an International Network (CDSS) (www.differenceandsolidarity.org)

Thinking Solidarities in a Global World of Difference: The Role of Learning

Speakers

Professor Larry Wilde, University of Nottingham - **Educating For Solidarity**

*(Larry's latest book, **Global Solidarity**, is published by Edinburgh University Press in January 2012)*

Dr Scott Boyd, METU (Northern Cyprus) – **Social Entrepreneurship of MOOCs: Quick, Effective, Empowerment is Free if You Pay Our Price**

Dr John McSweeney, Ireland – **Parrhesia and Solidarity: Rethinking the Politics of Difference with the Final Foucault**

Burcu Senturk University of York, UK **Learning Through Collective Struggle**

Dr Mark O'Brien, University of Liverpool, UK – **Alienation, cathexis and the 'crisis of interiorisation'. What is 'the university' for?'**

Paul Reynolds, Edge Hill University UK – **Moral Pedagogy and Professional Practice: Solidarity, Ethics and Politics in Practice**

In a global world of difference the balance between representing difference and celebrating (or at least tolerating) difference whilst maintaining solidarity has become a significant common problem for democratic societies across the globe. Central to this balance of solidarity and difference is the role of learning and the view that learning facilitates mutual understandings and communication, and so the basis for new solidarities, between different identities and interests in contemporary societies. These solidarities offer the promise of coherence within societies that is not hierarchical, predicated on dominance and hegemony and constituted on forms of exclusion, marginalisation and prejudicial oppression. Yet whether immigration and labour freedom of movement in Europe, faith communities and conflicting positions on equality and rights or resource redistribution on the basis of politics of recognition, difference remains a significant source of problems for democratic societies. Can learning play a significant part in crafting a balance of solidarity and respect for difference? Many democratic societies have held underlying liberal assumptions that the educated and informed are more likely to be tolerant and predisposed to values of equality, rights and justice, and that education and learning is a significant avenue for social engineering. Is this aspiration realised or indeed realisable, and if so in what way? Has the global neo-liberal political economy agenda and its 'rolling out' into education in the last 30 years meant we should change that aspiration.

This workshop, organised by Continuing Education at University of Liverpool and the international network Cultural Difference and Social Solidarity, is designed to approach those broad issues critically and stimulate thinking on what learning can achieve to avoid division, intolerance and critical social imbalance where solidarity and difference are juxtaposed.

Programme and Abstracts

Time	Speaker	Title and Abstract
10.00am	Paul Reynolds Edge Hill University, UK and Mark O'Brien, Centre for Lifelong Learning, University of Liverpool, UK	Introduction to the day
10.10am	Professor Lawrence Wilde Nottingham Trent University, UK	<p>Educating For Solidarity</p> <p>Encouraging principles of cooperation and social justice is a <i>sine qua non</i> for the development of social solidarity, but increasingly in education there is an instrumental emphasis on preparedness for the market. This paper considers the contributions of three social theorists to the debate about the role of education in fostering solidarity. Alaine Touraine's 'school for the subject', Andre Gorz's 'education for autonomy' and Roberto Unger's idea of schools for 'little prophets' all envisage the development of the critical subject as being essential to the building of social harmony. They also emphasise the importance of further education facilitated by career breaks. The difficult question is, how can such progressive thinking be translated into policy in a world dominated by the imperative of maintaining competitiveness in the global economy?</p>
11.00am		Coffee
11.10am	Scott H. Boyd, Middle East Technical University Northern Cyprus Campus, Turkey	<p>Social Entrepreneurship of MOOCs: Quick, Effective, Empowerment is Free if You Pay Our Price</p> <p>In the last two years, massive open online courses (MOOCs) have been touted as cost effective, egalitarian, and an empowering means of bringing university education to millions of people around the world. Largely dominated by two for-profit companies, Coursera and Udacity, and one non-profit company, edX, MOOCs have made alliances with dozens of universities around the world to create and distribute instructional content. The goals of these companies can sound democratic and philanthropic: educating millions of students around the world for free, with courses developed and taught by the best and brightest professors and instructors at marquee institutions. However, in this paper I argue that underneath the philanthropic patina of feel-good buzz words in company vision statements lies the antithesis of socially responsible educational practices: the entrenchment of higher education institutions (public and private) in a neoliberal market paradigm; a hegemonic homogeneous pedagogical method; an exploitation of the simulacra of social community and further legitimization of the digital means through which it is created; and an increase in erosion of one of the last institutional systems through which shared commitment and social solidarity can be nurtured.</p>
12.00pm	Burcu Senturk University of York, UK	<p>Learning Through Collective Struggle</p> <p>This presentation is based on field research held in a typical slum area (Ege District) in Ankara, where there were rural migrants of different sects and places of origin. Their differences were overcome by their common problems and immediate needs. The socialist movement was relatively powerful and the 'grassroots' activists of this movement were active in many slum neighbourhoods in the 1960s and the 1970s. The socialist movement transformed solidarity in slum areas into political action and it was the main tool to reach the resources through collective struggle in these areas. The relationship between slum dwellers and the activists turned into be a mutual learning process for building up solidarity.</p>
12.45pm	Lunch	

1.30pm	Paul Reynolds Edge Hill University, UK	<p>Moral Pedagogy and Professional Practice: Solidarity, Ethics and Politics in Practice</p> <p>A feature of the professionalization and pedagogization of capitalist modern societies has been the separation of social form and functions on the one hand and potential individual and social affect on the other of education, and particularly higher education. That breeds three problems: the presumption and articulation of a morality to education that focuses on the development of skills and aptitudes as opposed to (except rhetorically) reflexivity and capabilities; the function of education towards market and mechanisms of control, regulation and surveillance and the intolerance of dissidence; and the dissonance between the rhetoric of reflexivity and criticality and the purposive structure and meaning attached to achievement. This discussion will draw upon theoretical and empirical (pilot) research to explore the closed relationship between moral pedagogy and professional practice and argue for a fertile space for the encouragement of social, cultural and political solidarities in the practice and articulation functional requisites and formal curricula.</p>
2.20pm	Dr Mark O'Brien Continuing Education University of Liverpool, UK	<p>Alienation, cathexis and the 'crisis of interiorisation'. What is 'the university' for?'</p> <p>The 'crisis in higher education' is normally understood in relation to matters of funding, subject viability and institutional survival. However the notion of 'crisis' can be understood at levels that are both deeper and more extensive than this: 'deeper' in relation to the purpose of education itself; and 'more extensive' with regard to the interactions between the education system and wider society. Using the concept of 'alienation' and its relevance to our understandings of the inner orientations of the individual as expounded by Istvan Meszaros, this paper will relate these underlying themes to the outward social manifestations of crisis. It will also seek to expand our understanding of this crisis guided by the thinking of the Austrian Marxist psychoanalyst Otto Fenichel, and his observations on capitalist education and the organisation of the erogenous life of the child.</p>
3.10pm		Coffee
3.30pm	Dr John McSweeney Independent Scholar, Ireland	<p>Parrhesia and Solidarity: Rethinking the Politics of Difference with the Final Foucault</p> <p>In <i>parrhesia</i> – the courageous speaking of truth to power – French philosopher Michel Foucault finds an expression of ancient Greek care of the self which is simultaneously a political care for others. This paper examines the implications of Foucault's assertion that among the cynics, the parrhesiastic telling of the truth about oneself is a confession of difference. That is, the cynic parrhesiast reveals a truth about the limits of the norms, structures, values, etc., of the polis by naming how his existence and life constitutes a rupture with them. In particular, it proposes that parrhesia can thus be thought of as a locus of solidarity: an act in solidarity with those who share one's difference and, indeed, with all whose differences constitute them as excluded, marginalised, normalised. The paper concludes by considering how ongoing intellectual practices of the self may contribute to the emergence of solidarity.</p>
4.20pm	Closing Comments	
4.40pm	Close	