

Umoja Community

Summer Learning Institute 2018

Homework

As a way of preparing for the SLL, we are sharing 18 quotes from hooks' book, a foundational work for the Umoja Community, and asking you to do a real simple exercise: Match each of hooks' quotes below with one or more of the Umoja Practices. The purpose of this exercise is to get you to play with the Umoja Practices, apply them and reflect upon them.

bell hooks quotes

Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom

<u>Quotes</u>	<u>Practices</u>
1. "To hear each other (the sound of different voices), to listen to one another, is an exercise in recognition. It also ensures that no student remains invisible in the classroom."	
2. When I first entered the multicultural, multiethnic classroom setting I was unprepared; I did not know how to cope effectively with so much 'difference.'"	
3. "Hence, educators are poorly prepared when we actually confront diversity. This is why so many of us stubbornly cling to old patterns. As I work to create teaching strategies that would make a space for multicultural learning, I found it necessary to recognize what I have called in other writing on pedagogy different 'cultural codes.'"	
4. "Rather than focus on issues of safety, I think that a feeling of community creates a sense that there is shared commitment and a common good that binds us."	
5. "Let's face it": most of us were taught in classrooms where styles of teachings reflected a single norm of thought and experience, which were encouraged to believe was universal... Most of us learned to teach emulating this model. As a consequence, many teachers are disturbed by the political implications of a multicultural education because they fear losing control in a classroom where there is no way to approach a subject-only multiple ways and multiple references."	

<u>Quotes</u>	<u>Practices</u>
6. "I celebrate teaching that enables transgressions - a movement against and beyond boundaries. It is that movement which makes education the practice of freedom."	
7. "But excitement about ideas is not sufficient to create an exciting learning process. As a classroom community, our capacity to generate excitement is deeply affected by our interest in one another, in hearing one another's voices, in recognizing one another's presence. Since the vast majority of students learn through conservative, traditional educational practices and concern themselves only with the presence of the professor, any radical pedagogy must insist that everyone's presence is acknowledged. That insistence cannot be simply stated. It has to be demonstrated through pedagogical practices. To being, the professor must genuinely <i>value</i> everyone's presence. There must be an ongoing recognition that everyone influences the classroom, dynamic, that everyone contributes."	
8. "Excitement is generated through collective effort. Seeing the classroom always as a communal place enhances the likelihood of collective effort in creating and sustaining a learning community."	
9. "The first paradigm that shaped my pedagogy was the idea that the classroom should be an exciting place, never boring, and if boredom should prevail, then pedagogical strategies were needed that would intervene, alter, even disrupt the atmosphere. Neither Freire's work nor feminist pedagogy examined the notion of pleasure in the classroom. The idea that learning should be exciting, sometimes even "fun", was the subject of critical discussion by educators writing about pedagogical practices in grade schools, and sometimes even high schools."	
10. "Excitement in higher education was viewed as potentially disruptive of the atmosphere of seriousness assumed to be essential to the learning process. To enter classroom settings in colleges and universities with the will to share the desire to encourage excitement, was to transgress. Not only did it require movement beyond	

<u>Quotes</u>	<u>Practices</u>
<p>accepted boundaries, but excitement could not be generated without a full recognition of the fact that there could never be an absolute set agenda governing teaching practices.”</p>	
<p>11. “...but that excitement could co-exist with and even stimulate serious intellectual and/or academic engagement.”</p>	
<p>12. “And I saw for the first time that there can be, and usually is, some degree of pain involved in giving up old ways of thinking and knowing and learning new approaches. I respect that pain. and I include recognition of it now when I teach, that is to say, I teach about shifting paradigms and talk about the discomfort it can cause.”</p>	
<p>13. “This gives them both the opportunity to know that difficult experiences may be common and practice at integrating theory and practice: ways of knowing with habits of being. We practice interrogating habits of being as well as ideas. Through this process we build community.”</p>	
<p>14. “Many of the issues that we continue to confront as black people - low self-esteem, intensified nihilism and despair, repressed rage and violence that destroys our physical and psychological well-being - cannot be addressed by survival strategies that have worked in the past. I insisted that we needed new theories rooted in an attempt to understand both the nature of our contemporary predicament and the means by which we might collectively engage in resistance that would transform our current reality.”</p>	
<p>15. “Initially, I resist the idea of the ‘oppressor’s language,’ certain that this construct has the potential to disempower those of us who are just learning to speak, who are just learning to claim language as a place where we make ourselves subject. ‘This is the oppressor’s languages yet I need it to talk to you’ ...And even as emancipated people sang spirituals, they did not change the language, the sentence structure, of our ancestors. For in the incorrect usage of words, in the incorrect placement of words, was a spirit of rebellion that claimed language as a site of resistance. Using English in a way that ruptured standard</p>	

Quotes	Practices
<p>usage and meaning, so that white folks could often not understand black speech, made English into more than the oppressor’s language... It is absolutely essential that the revolutionary power of black vernacular speech not be lost in contemporary culture. That power resides in the capacity of black vernacular to intervene on the boundaries and limitations of standard English.”</p>	
<p>16. “Early on, it was Freire’s insistence that education could be the practice of freedom that encouraged me to create strategies for what he called ‘conscientization’ in the classroom” also defined as ‘praxis’-action and reflection upon the world in order to change it’ and ‘striving not just for knowledge in books, but knowledge about how to live in the world.’”</p>	
<p>17. “The unwillingness to approach teaching from a standpoint that includes awareness of race, sex, and class is often rooted in the fear that classrooms will be uncontrollable, that emotions and passions will not be contained. To some extent, we all know that whenever we address in the classroom subjects that students are passionate about there is always a possibility of confrontation, forceful expression of ideas, or even conflict...Making the classroom a democratic setting where everyone feels a responsibility to contribute is a central goal of transformative pedagogy.”</p>	
<p>18. “To educate as the practice of freedom is a way of teaching that anyone can learn. That learning process comes easiest to those of us who teach who also believe that there is an aspect of our vocation that is sacred; who believe that our work is not merely to share information but to share in the intellectual and spiritual growth of our students. To teach in a manner that respects and cares for the souls of our students is essential if we are to provide the necessary conditions where learning can most deeply and intimately begin.”</p>	

hooks, b. (1994) *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*. New York: Routledge.