MAKING TRANSFORMATION VISIBLE

A KEYNOTE PRESENTATION

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ABSTRACT

When students are asked to name the things that most help them to learn critical thinking and reflection, they rate instructor modeling at the top of their list. Consequently, the aspect of pedagogy that instructors could most profitably focus on is making their own engagement with critical thinking, reflection and transformation publicly visible in the classroom. In this paper Stephen Brookfield draws on his own life and practice to describe his own engagement with these process and how he understands the dynamics of modeling transformation.

Transformation is a process involving a qualitative shift in our ways of perceiving, and acting in, the world. After transformation it's impossible to return to one's earlier state of thinking or being. Think of it as a shift in the tectonic plates of one's assumptions. Four personal experiences are examined as examples of transformation; being fired, dealing with mental illness, understanding personal racism and enacting power. Being fired transforms assumptions about the nature of organizational loyalty and the strategies one uses for institutional survival. Dealing with clinical depression challenges the ideological foundations of patriarchy including the traditionally male reliance on reason and logic, and the reluctance to make public disclosure. Changing one's identity from a 'good White person' to someone who enacts racism and micro-aggressions suggests teaching in multiracial teams as a strategy for uncovering supremacist assumptions. Finally, the paper examines how teacher authority and power can be placed behind an intentional public disclosure of one's positionality.

SELECT REFERENCES

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