

CULTIVATING EXPERIENTIAL KNOWLEDGE: PEER EDUCATORS WORKING DISCIPLINARY BORDERS

Joseph P Zanoni

University of Illinois at Chicago

ABSTRACT Peer educators cultivate knowledge and practices for people to address their broad health needs. Confronting the process of disciplinary colonization, peer educators in occupational health enhance their experiential knowledge function by describing their approaches to facilitating learning dialogue with peers.

KEYWORDS Dialogue, Peer education, Popular Education, Facilitation, Trust.

Introduction

One element of culturally relevant curriculum practice is the use of first languages, such as Spanish for immigrant Spanish speakers for teaching, learning and curriculum. The goal of my inquiry is to examine the complexities of power manifest through dialogue practices that cultivate exchange of experiential knowledge in peer leaders and participants in community based workers centers. Through a postcolonial social justice lens, I will analyze the construction of knowledge, worker praxis, and describe the role that disciplinary knowledge plays in these exchanges. I propose using a dominant culture curriculum evaluation framework, called fidelity of implementation (FOI) (Century, Rudnick and Freeman,

2010), as a tool to promote discourse and facilitation practices to reflect post-colonial curriculum critique. I will utilize interviews of stakeholders including peer educators in an occupational health educational program. "More than Training" (UIC, 2010), documents and measures the impact and effectiveness of training dissemination, using worker trainers recruited by community based workers' centers to lead activities in a popular education approach. Leaders and participants of the program use Spanish learned in dispersed areas including Spain, Mexico, the United States, Central, and South America and have distinct roles emphasizing experiential and disciplinary knowledge.

Neocolonial practices are used by persons or organizations with economic resources who position themselves in superior hierarchal relationships with peoples who are constructed as "Others" with the intention to control, dominate, and extract value. Education is used to form subjectivities and relationships that facilitate extraction, deepening inequitable power (Darder, 2011; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). The essence of curriculum critique is to recognize that both knowledge and the creation of knowledge are never neutral. Inquiry is required to uncover processes of domination that are rooted in values associated with recognition of sources of knowledge, what knowledge needs to be shared, who has power in the learning exchange and how learning and knowledge are developed. Practitioners and promoters of disciplines such as public health, law, or medicine assume that the content of expert knowledge is objective and universal, the process to obtain the

knowledge is transparent, and the persons who concentrate and communicate the knowledge deserve their respect and power. In this inquiry, I follow postcolonial scholars to recognize the movements of colonial domination and racism in these seemingly neutral and reproducible disciplinary knowledge practices and to offer alternatives to learning approaches that critique global capitalist neocolonialism and racialization (Asher, 2007, 2009; Darder, Baltodano and Torres, 2003; Pascale, 2008; Rhee, 2008).

Postcolonial theoretical frameworks are used to critique ideologically neutral assumptions about scientific inquiry into the need and means for effective outcomes of educational interventions (Darder, 2011). While Burke and colleagues established that participant engagement in learning on public health content and practices defined as “empowerment” resulted in greater workplace impacts on mediator of injury and illness (Burke, Sarpy, Smith-Crowe, Chan-Serafin, Salvador, and Islam, 2006), other federal occupational health researchers say that a gap exists regarding valid attribution of specific educational practices of “empowerment education” for reproducible effects in participants (Robson, Stephenson, Schulte, Amick, Chan, Bielecky, Wang, Heidotting, Irvin, Eggerth, Peters, Clarke, Cullen, Boldt, Rotunda and Grubb, 2010).

Robson and colleagues' bottom line is that without the value of studies designed with “gold standard” research methods, particularly randomized control trials, authors of science cannot prove why and how

more engagement of training participants may lead to improved practices and less injury, illness and death.

The aim of my inquiry here is to develop rationales for critique of dominant culture educational practices in public health and to describe how both experiential and disciplinary knowledge may be accessed, utilized and cultivated through the dialogue facilitated by peer educators. In a broader public health perspective, dissemination of educational programs targeting behavior change needs to be decolonized as well to challenge the process of “evidenced-based” practices being applied to communities of people without their participation in the program design. From a post-colonial viewpoint, what may be happening is a sharpening of domination practices in order to reproduce effects without the conscious engagement of the targets of the interventions. Worse still is the process of community participants' consent to the governmentality of being targeted (Asher, 2009; Foucault, 1991), meaning that persons engage in the process of self-regulation directed by dominant culture interests in order to assimilate or co-exist with dominant culture systems.

Neo-liberal regimes of truth are circulating to frame the purposes of education, the means of quantifying effectiveness, and the standards of legitimacy undergirding warrants of investment (Darder, Baltodano and Torres, 2003; Foucault, 1980b). Education is increasingly commodified by dominant culture groups so that interactions can be measured as units of treatment which have reliable effects (Chow in Asher, 2009; Luke, 2011). Post-

colonial theory offers an analytic tool to unpack and deconstruct the unrecognized assumptions and mechanisms of power, domination, and extraction that underlie the treatment/outcome focus and processes for staking the boundaries of knowledge (Ayers, 2010; Mishra Tarc, 2005; Smith, 2010; Subedi and Daza, 2008).

Colonial educational goals prioritize specific tests or certificates, documenting certain capacities that are used to establish quantifiable boundaries of legitimate disciplinary knowledge (Lyotard, 1984). What is obscured in this dominant culture gaze is the context, social history, or differences within and between peoples' teaching and learning (Rhee, 2008). The desire by scientists to model the mechanism of power in occupational health popular education approaches and to cast doubt on participatory learning contributes to subordination of neocolonial subjects and replication of the subaltern through obfuscation and omission (Freire, 1970; Smith, 2010). The motive to explicate a participatory curriculum is a way for dominant institutional power to minimize social and cultural human variability in teachers, students, leaders, and participants, and to enforce disciplinary boundaries, consolidating colonial effects (Bhabha, 1994; Leavitt, 2010;).

Education is now justified and positioned as developing human capital for new alignments in a global capitalist economy (Hickling-Hudson, 2011). Human capital is presented as a neutral description of the knowledge and capabilities that persons can offer. Critically, however, the term capital registers with

capitalism, investment, and banking (Lightfoot, 2003). Skills, and literacies are seen as deficient in "Others" and, when developed, are valued for specific marketplace uses, to be evidence of the efficient performativity of education or health or as a way to recognize a disciplinary boundary (Heller, 2003). The performance of efficiency, doing more with less more accurately, may be viewed as a practice of neocolonial mimicry (Bhabha, 1994).

The partners in our research are leaders and participants of workers' centers who may be day laborers trying their luck on the street corner looking for construction jobs, household workers providing care for elders or children, or cleaning homes, or working in temporary labor agencies for industries. One contextual description of their work is precarious, meaning that workers experience fear, stress, wage theft, illness and injury leading to death outside the protections of dominant culture institutions (Ahonen, Benavides and Benach, 2007; Quinlan, Mayhew and Bohle, 2001). Part of the precarious condition is due to the documentation status of some immigrants and "illegality" creating responses and subjectivities that constrain and enable expressions of knowledge and agency (DeGenova, 2005). To respond to these conditions, occupational health education utilizing community peer educators seeks to strengthen worker praxis and disrupt the replication of extraction and the dissemination of colonial practices (Hickling Hudson, 2011; Zanoni, In press).

More than Training: Workers' Rights Centers Empowering Hazard Awareness and Response, is a

NIOSH-funded translational, and community based participatory research CBPR partnership between investigators at community-based workers' centers, Rutgers University, and the University of Illinois at Chicago, designed to provide OSHA 10 hour construction training in Spanish to participants of workers' centers (UIC, 2010). The three year project is based on a program developed by New Labor, a workers' center in New Brunswick, NJ, and the Occupational Training and Education Consortium of Rutgers University, funded by CPWR, the Center for Construction Research and Training. Their collaboration demonstrated that worker leaders could be trained to lead participatory OSHA 10 hour training in Spanish in collaboration with OSHA authorized trainers, and that members of workers' centers gained skills, capacities, and the OSHA 10 hour construction card for their efforts (Williams, Ochsner, Marshall, Kimmel and Martino, 2010).

Language and literacy are vital capabilities for adults to use for agency and social goals. Culturally relevant curriculum practices utilize first languages and interactive activities to engage participants in learning. For the More than Training program, a recognized national English language occupational health curriculum has been created in Spanish to reach Spanish speaking immigrants who offer construction work as day laborers on street corners or through workers centers (Baltodano, Choudry, Hanley, Jordan, Shragge and Stiegman, 2007; Bobo, 2009; Cho, Oliva, Sweitzer, Nevarez, Zanoni and Sokas, 2007; Fine, 2006). The program has several levels of actors: certified trainers facilitate programs led by worker

trainers for participants recruited by center organizers. As a co-investigator, I noticed that where the actors developed their Spanish language skills varies from Spain, to Mexico, to Columbia, to Ecuador, to the United States, and that actors have capabilities across continua of literacy (Hornberger, 2004).

The More than Training project seeks to show how the approach developed in New Jersey will transfer to workers' centers in other parts of the US and that an evaluation design could measure what participants learned and how they used the skills they gained after the training session. To uncover the capabilities of peer educators as community health workers developing language practices, I interviewed stakeholders of the project about the impact of Spanish language dialogue in participatory safety training and how the peer educators supported discussion and dialogue.

Theoretical Framework

De Oliveira (2011) presents a post-colonial approach using colonial discourse analysis as a means to uncover the desires and directions of educational practices through a critique of language. A post-structural view of language holds that knowledge is essentially linked with power in how it is socially constructed and aligned as in Foucault's notion of power/knowledge (Foucault, 1980b). The workings of discipline and the promotion of self-regulation called governmentality are rooted to the creation of knowledge through language that can generate

authentic praxis as well as constrain agency.

If we view the perpetuation of dominant culture disciplines as the domain of the author function, we can see the capabilities developed in peer educators as expressing the experiential function. In the space of the dialogue created in *charlas* or in the small group activity method, peer educators and authorized trainers are creating exchanges with participants to propose, critique and promote practices hybridizing narratives or discourse from disciplinary and experiential viewpoints (Gutiérrez, 2008; Zanoni, 2008, in press).

By prioritizing the experiential function, post-colonial educators can foreground the way that knowledge is recognized, expressed, and communicated through the dialogue about the experiential practice of indigenous practitioners. The FOI framework offers a structure to evaluate how the experiential function is manifest in worker trainers and how curriculum can provide the peer educators' skills in recognizing and expressing this function as well as utilizing disciplinary knowledge in culturally relevant and practical ways. The skills that workers' centers leaders, peer educators and researchers gain through this analysis offers pathways and possibilities for immigrant workers to move toward social justice and respect in their work and expand healing and sustainability envisioned in post-colonial futures.

Central to this theoretical discussion is a perspective on the unique interaction of authorized trainers and peer educators. This partnering shows how content related to disciplinary knowledge

necessary for dominant culture enforcement is in dynamic tension with the possibility of post-colonial praxis. Peer educators can present and promote experiential knowledge and practices related to disciplinary occupational health laws where workers may then act in their workplaces in their own ways, recognizing but not submitting to the dominant culture context.

I propose that authorized trainers represent the disciplinary author function in the sessions whereas peer educators express themselves as the experiential function. This function, active in disciplinary and experiential knowledges, should not be viewed as a binary nor a continuum but seen more as locations with boundaries (Mayo, 1999). Dominant culture explanations of the sessions are that the Latino workers are learning the terms and conditions under which safety can occur at work given an instrumental view of knowledge as power, where the experiential function of the peer educators is utilized as a translation in the process of cultural assimilation. The presence of the author/ized trainer ensures that the boundary of the discipline is established and maintained. A post-colonial view is that peer educators are utilizing the experiential function in their role as educators to validate the viewpoints and practices of their cultural peers, to introduce challenges to their actions and supportive contexts to propose variations of agency and praxis.

Foucault (1977, p. 131) describes the importance of the author function in discourse as its basis for legitimacy through an ability to reflect power inherent

in rules merging, stressing, and suppressing arguments across a history of intellectual dialogue and transcending ego locations. The “I” of an author varies in a text based upon what the author is trying to achieve at each stage, who the author invites into the text, and how the readers identify with the author as they project themselves into the constructs or potential action proposed. Foucault's author function is related to the power of voice that Bakhtin (1981) explains with a similar characteristic of variation, sourcing, and addressivity within a seemingly uniform text. Language is a tool for the creation of meaning in discourse and authors have a responsibility to recognize the potential impact of their meaning choices related to power in the design and techniques of the language they choose (Coloma, 2011, p. 192; New London Group, 1996, p. 81). What may be happening as the experiential function of peer educators is that they are considering, expressing, and hybridizing the unique personal narratives grounded in the social knowledge construction of their participants and balancing them related to the precarious employment conditions under which they are currently constituted (Borg and Mayo, 2006; Choudry *et al.*, 2009; González, N and Moll, 2002).

Experience may be one of the most unifying conditions across sentient beings; we recognize that entities manifest a state of experience through reception and perception of phenomena. Experience is vital to socio-historical inquiry; experience generates the phenomena and framework around which knowledge is produced (Scott, 1991, p. 779). Language is the means for the expression, description,

and representation of experience and how subjectivities can be collectively constituted and communicated (de Oliveira, 2011, p. 87; Scott, 1991, p. 793). Lived experience is a construct that reflects social location, authenticity, the subjectivity of knowledge, collective knowledge, and indigenous conditions that are constructed and reflected upon in educational activities and through research (Darder, 2009, p. 228; Daza, 2009, p. 331, de Oliveira, 2011; Krieger, 2011; Ochsner, Marshall, Martino, Casillas Pabelón, Kimmel and Rostran, 2012; Solorzano and Yosso, 2002; Suarez-Balcazar, Harper and Lewis, 2005; Subedi and Daza, 2008, p. 6; Subedi, 2009, p. 322). Lived experience is a vital resource and can serve at the basis for repertoires of cultural practices exchanged and critiqued in education (Gutierrez and Rogoff, 2003).

Post-colonial theory recognizes the role of discourse and cultural practices in establishing and critiquing colonial power relations (Hoff and Hickling-Hudson, 2011; Rizvi, Lingard and Lavia, 2006). In marking the role of knowledge creation as a defining feature of disciplinary knowledge, de Oliveira (2011) states: “Therefore as every knowledge is based on ontological and metaphysical choices that foreclose other choices, every knowledge is also an ignorance of other knowledges produced in different contexts” (p. 6). Education based on lived experiential knowledge captures the passion and recognition of authenticity and struggles with seeing and responding to the disciplinary borders and their implications for self worthiness, inclusion or rejection that is the core function of disciplinary knowledge in positioning

colonial subjects for extraction (Asher, 2009; Borg and Mayo, 2006). Important tasks for critical, post-colonial educators are recognizing the gateways of disciplinary knowledge and uncovering the tensions and potential ruptures in boundaries of dominant discourse to promote authentic dialogue across differences (Asher, 2007; Borg and Mayo, 2006; Darder, 2009; Mishra Tarc, 2005).

To bridge the dominant culture view of educational evaluation, the Fidelity of Implementation (FOI) framework (Century *et al.*, 2010) will be the specific lens to analyze both the structural and instructional critical components that relate to the worker trainer role leading discussion in Spanish language occupational health sessions (see Table 1). Priority structural-educative critical components related to the dialogic development of content knowledge in worker trainers; instructional-pedagogical critical components are teacher facilitation of participant discussion, participant risk taking, and assessment. This framework is useful in this inquiry because it synthesizes a dominant culture view on categorical elements of educational interactions related to the desire for colonial evaluation, rigor, and replication that I argue may be deployed in post-colonial contexts to describe and reflect upon local practices supporting social justice praxis.

Table 1: Fidelity Implementation Framework

Structural Critical Components		Instructional Critical Components	
Procedural	Educative	Pedagogical	Student Engagement

(Century, Rudnick and Freeman, 2010, p. 205.)

Methods of Inquiry

The More than Training project has the goal of offering construction safety training in the Spanish language to immigrant participants of workers centers, using a popular education approach that focuses on worker trainers offering interactive activities to participants for group discussion and problem posing. As a co-investigator of this NIOSH funded project, I supported and facilitated a multi-year process where community and university partners from New Labor in New Brunswick, New Jersey, came to Chicago to teach worker leaders from two of our partnering centers to lead the activities (Suarez-Balcazar *et al.*, 2005). In year one we held three sessions for a total of 58 participants, with five worker trainers, two certified OSHA instructors, two workers' center directors, and two bilingual researchers. In year two, 131 participants completed training in seven sessions held in Chicago, Milwaukee, Cincinnati, and Memphis. We completed the project with the participation of workers

centers in Phoenix, Austin and Houston in year three and trained 257 that year with a total of 446 workers trained over the years (Forst, Ahonen, Zanoni, Holloway-Beth, Oschner, Kimmel, Martino, Rodriguez, Kader, Ringholm and Sokas, 2013).

In the process of learning about our partners, I realized that there is much variety in the origin of their Spanish. This group of certified trainers, worker leaders, participants, workers center organizers, and researchers is the core of the dissemination project. Both Spanish language varieties and a hierarchy of power are evident in the interactions of the training program. The hierarchy is not negative, but subversive in some ways, since More than Training utilizes worker leaders as the main teachers, facilitating the discourse and dialogue of participants, with the certified OSHA trainer providing validation and correction as needed when topics emerge in discussion. In a more typical industrial occupational health session, the presenters lecture to the group presenting projected digital slides. Here the workers teach as leaders and promote discussion and interactive learning, in dialogue with their peers and an expert. The workers' center organizers and researchers are participant observers during the training sessions, where we take notes and make plans for future work along with follow the dialogue of the sessions.

My methods of inquiry were to interview 11 worker trainers, organizers, OSHA authorized trainers, and researchers (see Table 2), who are bilingual Spanish/English speakers about their use or

observation of Spanish in the training sessions. I am asking them about their awareness of Spanish language varieties, English use, and how the differences were noticed and responded to in the sessions (Alim, 2005; Hurtig, 2008; Philips, 2004).

Through constant comparative thematic analysis of the interviews coded via FOI priorities, I gained understanding about how worker leaders learn to guide informal discussion, called *charlas* in Spanish (Charmaz, 2003; Glaser, 1965; Portelli, 1991). I am particularly interested in how the dialogue or discussion may have been impacted. Through constant comparison and thematic analysis of the interviews, I gained understanding about how language and power are displayed. I describe an analytic lens regarding how awareness and use of language varieties impact the discourse and agency of the actors (Pascale, 2008; Street, 1995).

Table 2: Participants Interviewed for the Study

Authorized OSHA Trainer	2
Workers' Center Organizer	3
Worker Trainer	4
Researcher	2
Total	11

Findings

Of the many elements available in the FOI framework, I focused on four of the components that had priority regarding the role and actions of the peer facilitators. The competencies demonstrated in these elements relate to how peer educators may be developed and how they may reflect on their own performance and the outcomes with participants. Facilitator content knowledge is the first element in the analysis framework defined in FOI as structural-educative. Facilitators are aware of the expectation that they will know the material presented and may be cast into the role of an expert in banking education processes, which is a traditional colonial role. Although the SGAM approach foregrounds content knowledge in the fact sheets of the curriculum manual, it does not relieve the facilitators of some responsibility in knowing the technical aspects of the content knowledge. The interview participants acknowledged their role as a leader of the learning activity and provided reflections and themes related to their position.

The remaining three FOI components are described as instructional-pedagogical, meaning that the language practices of the facilitators guide the learning of the participants in specific ways. Three priority components are how relations are facilitated between the learners, how risk taking is promoted and managed, and how assessment and evaluation of learner arguments and descriptions is accomplished.

When open ended discussion takes place around intentions of learning it is important for egalitarian or democratic relations between the participants be established. The decolonizing move of shifting the role of the teacher from content expert around closed ended questions to facilitator of dialogue is accomplished by promoting equal relations between the participants, so that each has the power to control a turn in conversation.

This may happen in both small and large group contexts. The facilitator then has to balance the art of promoting risk taking among the learners so that they will experience trust to reveal their authentic positions and rationales for action. Another step in the learning process is for the participants to assess and evaluate the viewpoints and propositions offered, guided by the facilitator. This process is a model for further cooperative learning in the sessions and also more closely reflects the informal learning and interaction of workers in workplace settings.

Regarding facilitator content knowledge the peer educators were keenly aware of the traditional power and expectations that are part of the role of the teacher. By standing at the front of the room, they acknowledged that the learning participants wanted them to know the material. Some of the peer educators felt they had to stand and deliver. Even so, a more dialogic approach was described focusing on an exchange of knowledge and practices between the learners and the facilitator that was grounded in reflecting upon their experiential knowledge. If a response was not satisfying to learners, one peer

educator said that he would try to explain the concept differently a second time.

In this way exploring how to represent a situation or context is also a process of learning. Some peer educators saw themselves as continually learning about the content, aligning their learning with the participants. An unexpected reflection with this component was a description of facilitators as “waking up” leaders among the participants. By opening and modeling the facilitator as guide and learner of the content, peer educators are clearing a path and inspiring other learners to want to take on this role as well (for quotes related to the FOI elements please see Table 3).

Egalitarian relations are central to the values of the workers' centers and this ethic translates well to promoting democratic interactions in the small group learning sessions and the larger group report backs. Facilitators will clearly present ground rules for the sessions where these values are presented and supported throughout the events. One important language practice is to level the terms and vocabulary used as a way to be inclusive and to honor the ways that all participants speak. This is a distinctive decolonizing move in that the colonizing culture promotes the distinction and merit of using advanced vocabulary and jargon that only the expert class or those aspiring to this class may use. Instead of reifying the technical terms or processes, the peer educators make a conscious choice to describe content in multiple and common ways to expand the knowledge and discussion collectively. One peer

educator used a great metaphor: we are all building the same building, so we need to look out for one another. Through respect and generosity in the learning sessions, the peer facilitators encourage the exchange of dialogue and experiences.

Once the ground is set and confidence in the learning approach is established, the art of facilitation is to keep the flow of the conversation and movement going toward the learning objectives of the session. Peer educators shared the skillful balance they use in listening and allowing participants to share long stories related to health and safety challenges they experienced on the job with knowing when to interrupt or close a story. The facilitators want to promote the confidence in learners to share their viewpoints and to provide reassurance that the stories have significance; the value peer educators bring is properly closing and reflecting on the story so that the themes and content principles may be clear. One peer educator stated that it is hard to shorten a long learner story.

Peer educators described that they were responsible to take control of the dialogue to promote learning. Unexpectedly, some of the peer educators stated that they took their cues for action from the body language of the participants. By reading the non-verbal communication of the participants, they could tell who was following and engaged in the dialogue and when to move the discussion. It was also unexpected that one of the educators stated that the participants learned and accommodated to “workers centers speak” meaning that the discourse and expectations of the workers' centers values was

expressed in language and that part of the sessions was for the participants to hear and use these practices in this context. It may be important or a counter leveling move for the peer educators to notice how they respond to participants and how strongly they encourage or promote the group norms expressed in language.

Risk taking is an important experience in work and also a reflection of how well the leaning session is moving to counter dominating practices. Workers' centers are providing the social context of supporting protective health and safety practices at work, in order to contrast the dominant view that solely knowing what is legally expected for protection is enough to support worker agency around changing workplace conditions. The peer educators stated that learners know the risks of working and that they are in a continual process of asking questions and balancing the costs and benefits of actions. The facilitators stated that the learners raised their doubts and are not afraid to present a situation in a way that is different from others or the facilitator.

The peer educators know how workers learn and stated that they often have to see how something works or that it is viable or practical before they will consider acting that way. Inversely, workers may not know the consequences of the risks they are taking on so that a priority of the learning session is for the workers to learn to prepare themselves for the consequences of what they are doing. This process takes patience, reserve and respect for all participants. An unexpected reflection is the frank acknowledgment

of allowing the space for doubt in the punch lines of the training. By presenting options for safer work then saying, “you can do what you like,” the peer educators turned the power of the learning back to the participants for their evaluation.

The peer educators are ultimately leading the participants to learn how to assess and evaluate the options available to them. This competency is the most complex but also necessary in the open decolonizing approach to learning. Some of the peer educators used replies such as “Your question is this?” to re-voice what the peer educator heard to encourage a learner to bring forth just what the issue is for consideration or reflection. Peer educators knew the process was working when they recognized that the participants were working out their problems or cases for themselves. They stated that learners could hear their views or the answers to their questions coming from others and this was a validation that the method was working to further collaboration and social support.

There is a danger that facilitators could slip into the expert or validator role that is played by the teacher in dominant learning practices. The peer educators described that they talked and reflected on using their power for problem posing and not to sanction a specific solution. If the time came for evaluation, peer educators may go so far as to say that some workers are right but that the trainers are right too, reflecting that diverse approaches may be equally useful.

One unexpected reflection on evaluation came

from a stance described by a peer educator stating that the participants often listened to see if the teacher would give them a good answer. This shows the power of experiential learning and also the wariness that learners may have when engaged in traditional learning. This stance shows that the learners are conserving their power to judge and will wait to see and validate what the facilitator may say based on their collective knowledge and skills.

This runs counter to a traditional discourse pattern called initiate, respond and evaluate (IRE) often found in learning discourse in classrooms; teachers ask a question, students respond, and teachers evaluate the response to establish if it is true or false. The adult participants in the workers’ centers sessions are showing that they are holding off responding, to see if the facilitator will give them a good answer or rationale that they can then evaluate. This tension may show the stakes for learning and also the strong positions of the participants who want to consider all aspects of a situation, before they commit to a course of action.

Table 3: Quotes Related to the FOI Elements

Structural-Educative (Facilitator Content Knowledge)	
“We live this experience.”	Exchange of knowledge and practices.
Position in front of the room, “You should know, you are in front.”-explaining differently	“I never stop to learning—I am learning with the people.”

the second time.	
(unexpected—"Waking up" leaders.)	

Instructional-Pedagogical (Facilitating/Relations)	
Respect and generosity: "Got to watch out for each other—we are building the same building."	Using common language and finding the commonalities in participants.
Enabling the flow of the session to continue.	Personal stories: balancing reassurance of participant confidence and skill in closing; "Make it a little short, sometimes a little hard."
"Sometimes we learn more from workers, sometimes we are supposed to get control."	
(unexpected—Paying attention, looking at expressions, "You can tell who is invested in workers' centers 'speak.'")	

Instructional-Pedagogical (Risk Taking)	
Participants raising doubt and describing different approaches to work.	Not afraid to ask questions about risks and considering costs; "We know the risk of working."
Participants need to see something before they can do something.	Workers need to prepare themselves—sharing consequences as prevention.
(unexpected-- Presenting options, then "You can do what you like.")	

Instructional-Pedagogical (Assessment/Evaluation)	
"Your question is this?"	"You are right, but we are

	right too.”
Participants worked it out themselves.	Self reflection on language use to level power.
Hear their answers from others.	
(unexpected—“If the teacher gives me a good answer.”—counters discourse of initiate, response and evaluate (IRE) (in Cazden, 2001).	

Results and Significance

Peer educators of the workers' center used their role in the OSHA training to adapt and express in Spanish the notion of acculturation through hybridizing disciplinary and experiential knowledge (Franzini and Fernandez-Esquer, 2009; Hunt, Schneider and Comer, 2004; Viruell-Fuentes, 2007).

Trust and dialogue manifest in the process of the sessions was the result of how the peer educators enacted the experiential function in the sessions, viewed through the FOI framework. While not limited to these functions, the narratives of the inquiry participants showed that they began by recognizing the co-creation and hybridization of both disciplinary and experiential knowledge. They did this by establishing relations of equality between the participants and encouraged them to take risks in sharing the knowledge and practices that they gained from any source and promoted and extended these funds of knowledge by developing the participants' capacities to assess and evaluate the source and utility

of the knowledge or practices promoted in the sessions.

Peer educators describing how they used their experiential functions of hybridizing disciplinary content knowledge with personal/social narratives are working the boundaries of knowledge in unique and practical ways. By learning with the participants and honoring their processes of learning content grounded in their practical needs of work, they are discovering emerging praxis through the exchanges interactions.

Through the images of building the building together and waking up leaders, the peer educators are guiding the process of risk taking and evaluation that considers the questions: if we are learning this together then what should we do and who is going to do it? Contrasted with disciplinary knowledge enforcement expectations, the problem posing popular education opens a range of possibilities that foregrounds the subsequent potential reconsideration of work practices and gathering resources for participants and peer educators alike.

The FOI approach as an evaluation framework shows that typical disciplinary teaching, learning and curriculum concerns are met through the problem-posing approach used in *More than Training*. While the funders may have accepted the role of the peer educators as a way to “translate” the construction safety training for Spanish-speaking immigrant workers, I showed through considering their interviews and that of training partners, that the experiential function of the peer educators prioritized their agency as teachers in co-learning and providing a space for

participants to take risks and evaluate knowledge. This ongoing process of teaching and learning strengthened their roles as they continued to orient new trainers to their roles and interact with participants through worker center sessions.

Bakhtin's (1981) notion of heteroglossia, the idea that each person utilizes multiple languages and voices for meaning takes on new significance when considering that the source of the voice may be experiential or disciplinary. By hearing disciplinary knowledge in a discussion from the voice of peer educators who honor and are humble regarding experiential knowledge, participants may reflect on this content through considering the source.

Bhabha (1994) offers a possibility for understanding this process when he states: "In the restless drive for cultural translation, hybrid sites of meaning open up a cleavage in the language of culture which suggests that the similitude of the *symbol* as it plays across cultural sites must not obscure the fact that repetition of the *sign* is, in each specific social practice, both different and differential" (emphasis in original, p. 234).

In other words, a workers' center participant is hearing the content of the discussion from a trusted person, who is honoring their ability to create and use experiential knowledge, and engaging them in a process of considering and expressing how new content from any source may be used and applied. By hearing from peer educators that workers center participants have a right to a healthy and safe workplace does not mean that the workers must act on

this right in any specific way. While the dominant culture may want to document that workers know specific content at the end of the session through correct answers on a true and false test, peer educators working postcolonial experiential functions allow space for the differential praxis of participants to manifest and for them to document their learning and potential actions in their own ways.

Worker leaders, workers' center organizers, authorized trainers, and researchers reflected on the dialogue created in the construction safety sessions and showed that as facilitators they are providing content knowledge and practices, learning from participants, and managing the discourse of engaged participants. The facilitators create a space for critique in the ways they establish relations, offer risk taking, and encourage participant assessment (Borg and Mayo, 2006; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). Curriculum studies can expand to encompass the post-structural approaches reflected in this project.

The flow of the small group activity method can be understood as follows: in opening, facilitators establish order (regulate); in small group chats or *charlas*, participants control of turn taking and experience trust (resonate, relations); in the report back, participants, and facilitators hear responses to problem posing (recursion); in evaluation of responses, the group matches and contrasts responses using voice from disciplinary and experiential knowledge (reduce, rigor); and in closing, the facilitators integrate discussion with the take home messages of the activity, called summary points (richness) (Bakhtin,

1981; de Oliveira , 2011; Doll, 1993; Schubert, 1986; Zanoni, 2008). The culturally relevant curriculum processes presented here provide an evidence base for methods that can be developed and described in future participatory inquiry, to address occupational health inequities of immigrant construction workers in the US and for immigrant communities anywhere struggling to gain skills to survive and thrive.

Mishra Tarc (2005) suggests "to infuse one's theory of subjectivity with ethicality, one might carefully calculate subjectivity (write the subject intentionally), but also base subjectivity in elements of calculability (as a subject/textile open to being re-written upon) which must first pass through incalculability (which cannot be fully determined)" (p. 844). Her insight applies to this example of peer educators working the experiential function, in that peers teaching each other show that both participants and educators are in the process of developing and expressing subjectivities and are using sources of disciplinary and experiential knowledge in the process.

Calculability can relate to both expression and validity of disciplinary knowledge and evaluation. What is incalculable is how the peer educators establish egalitarian relations to engender trust and how risk taking may be modeled and encouraged. In a postcolonial way, ethicality is shown in the priority of this approach for engaging and promoting peers to teach each other, honoring their ability to work the experiential functions and holding the disciplinary power at bay for the potential participation and authentic praxis of immigrant workers.

Acknowledgments

I am grateful for the time and efforts that my collaborators provided for these interviews particularly from the Workforce Development Institute, ARISE Chicago, Latino Union of Chicago, Workers Interfaith Network, and the University of Illinois at Chicago, School of Public Health. I am grateful for the support and collaboration of Dr. Rosemary Sokas and Dr. Linda Forst who were the principal investigators of the The More than Training: Workers' Rights Centers Empowering Hazard Awareness and Response project funded by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (Grant #R18 OH009574).

References

- Ahonen, E. Q., Benavides, F. G. and Benach, J. (2007). Immigrant populations, work and health-- a systematic literature review. *Scandinavian Journal of Work, Environment & Health*, 33(2): 96-104.
- Alim, H. S. (2005). Critical language awareness in the United States: Revisiting issues and revising pedagogies in a reseggregated society. *Educational Researcher*, 34(7): 24-31.
- Asher, N. (2007). Made in the (multicultural) U.S.A.: Unpacking tensions of race, culture, gender, and sexuality in education. *Educational Researcher*, 36(2): 65-73.
- Asher, N. (2009). Writing home/decolonizing text(s). *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 30(1): 1-13.
- Ayers, W. (2010). Doublespeak at the University of Wyoming. University of Illinois at Chicago: William

Ayers.

Bakhtin, M. M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination*. Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press.

Baltodano, C, Choudry, A, Hanley, J, Jordan, S,

Shragge, E and Stiegman, M (2007). Becoming an immigrant worker: Learning in everyday life. *The Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult Education/La Revue canadienne pour l'étude de l'éducation des adultes*, 20(2): 99-113.

Bhabha, H. K (2004). *The location of culture*. New York: Routledge.

Bobo, K (2009). *Wage theft in America: Why millions of working Americans are not getting paid--and what we can do about it*. New York: The New Press.

Borg, C and Mayo, P (2006) Challenges for critical pedagogy: A southern European perspective. *Cultural Studies - Critical Methodologies*, 6(1): 143-154.

Burke, M. J, Sarpy, S. A, Smith-Crowe, K, Chan-Serafin, S, Salvador, R. O and Islam, G (2006). Relative effectiveness of worker safety and health training methods. *American Journal of Public Health*, 96(2), 315-324.

Cazden, C. B (2001). *Classroom discourse: The language of teaching and learning*. Westport, CT: Heinemann.

Century, J, Rudnick, M and Freeman, C (2010). A framework for measuring fidelity of implementation: A foundation for shared language and accumulation of knowledge. *American Journal of Evaluation*, 31(2): 199-218.

Charmaz, K. (2003). Grounded theory: Objectivist and constructivist methods. In Denzin, N. K and Lincoln, Y.S (eds.). *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry*. (pp. 249-291). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.

Cho, C. C, Oliva, J, Sweitzer, E, Nevarez, J, Zanoni, J., and Sokas, R. K. (2007). An interfaith workers' center approach to workplace rights: Implications for workplace safety and health. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine / American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 49(3): 275-281.

Choudry, A, Hanley, J, Jordan, S, Shragge, E and Stiegman, M. (2009). *Fight back: Workplace justice for immigrants*. Blackpoint, Nova Scotia, Canada: Fernwood Publishing.

Coloma, R. S. (2011). Who's afraid of Foucault? History, theory and becoming subjects. *History of Education Quarterly*, 51(2): 184-210.

Darder, A. (2009). Decolonizing the flesh: The body, pedagogy and inequality. In Coloma, R. S (ed.). *Postcolonial Challenges in Education*. New York: Peter Lang.

Darder, A. (2011). *A dissident voice: Essays on culture, pedagogy and power*. New York: Peter Lang.

- Darder, A, Baltodano, M and Torres, R. D. (2003).
 Critical Pedagogy: An introduction. In Darder, A, M.
 Baltodano, M and Torres, R.D (eds.). *The Critical
 Pedagogy Reader*. New York: Routledge/Falmer.
- Daza, S. L. (2009). The noninnocence of recognition:
 Subjects and agency in education. In Coloma, R.S
 (ed.). *Postcolonial Challenges in Education*. New
 York: Peter Lang.
- de Oliveira (Andreotti), V. (2011). *Actionable
 postcolonial theory in education*. New York: Palgrave
 Macmillan.
- De Genova, N. (2005). *Working the boundaries: Race,
 space, and "illegality" in Mexican Chicago*. Durham,
 NC: Duke University Press.
- Doll, W. E. (1993). *A post-modern perspective on
 curriculum*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Fine, J. (2006). *Worker centers: Organizing
 communities at the edge of the dream*. Ithaca, NY:
 ILR Press.
- Franzini, L and Frenandez-Esquer, M. E (2006). The
 association of subjective social status and health in
 Mexican-origin individuals in Texas. *Social Science
 and Medicine*, 63 (3): 788-804.
- Forst, L., Ahonen, E., Zanoni, J., Holloway-Beth, A.,
 Oschner, M., Kimmel, L., Martino, C., Rodriguez, E.,
 Kader, A., Ringholm, E. and Sokas, R. (2013). More
 than training: Community-based participatory
 research to reduce injuries among hispanic

construction workers. *American Journal of Industrial Medicine*. doi: 10.1002/ajim.22187

Foucault, M. (1977). What is an author? In Bouchard, D.F (ed.). *Language, counter-memory, practice*. Bouchard, D.F and Simon, S (Trans.). Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.

Foucault, M. (1980a). The deployment of sexuality: Method. *The history of sexuality, volume I: An introduction*. New York: Vintage Books.

Foucault, M. (1980b). Truth and power. In Gordon C. (ed.). *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings, 1972-1977*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Foucault, M. (1991). Governmentality. In Burchell, G, Gordon, C and Miller, P (eds.). *The Foucault effect: Studies in governmentality: With two lectures by and an interview with Michel Foucault*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. M. B. Ramos (Trans.). New York: Continuum.

Glaser, B. G (1965). The constant comparative method of qualitative analysis. *Social Problems*, 12 (4): 436-445.

González, N and Moll, L. C (2002). *Cruzando el puente: Building bridges to funds of knowledge*. *Educational Policy*, 16(4): 623-641.

Gutiérrez, K. D (2008). Developing a sociocritical

literacy in the third space. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 43(2):148–164.

Gutiérrez, K. D and Rogoff, B. (2003). Cultural ways of learning: Individual traits or repertoires of practice. *Educational Researcher*, 32(5): 19.

Heller, M. (2003). Globalization, the new economy, and the commodification of language and identity. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 7(4): 473-493.

Hickling-Hudson, A., (2011). Teaching to disrupt preconceptions: Education for social justice in the imperial aftermath. *Compare*, 41(4): 453-465.

Hoff, L. and Hickling-Hudson, A. (2011). The role of international non-governmental organizations in promoting adult education for social change: A research agenda. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 31: 187-195.

Hornberger, N. H. (2004). The continua of biliteracy and the bilingual educator: Educational linguistics in practice. *Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 7 (2 and 3): 155-171.

Hunt, L. M., Schneider, S and Comer, B. (2004). Should “acculturation” be a variable in health research? A critical review of research on US Hispanics. *Social Science & Medicine*, 59 (5): 973-986.

Hurtig, J. (2009). *Coming of age in times of crisis: Youth, schooling, and patriarchy in a Venezuelan town*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Krieger, N. (2011). *Epidemiology and the people's health*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Leavitt, D.R. (2010). "Meek, but not weak!" A resilient black female mathematics teacher composes a purposeful life. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Illinois at Chicago.
- Lightfoot, T. (1999). Metaphor, imagery and the immigrant as "other." In Lundahl, L. and Popkewitz, T. (eds.). *Education, Research and Society: Critical perspectives from American and Swedish graduate students* (Monographs of Teacher Education and Research, Umeå University). Umeå, Sweden: Office for Teacher Education.
- Luke, A. (2011). Generalizing across borders: Policy and the limits of educational science. *Educational Researcher*, 40(8): 367-377.
- Lyotard, J. F. (1984). *The postmodern condition: A report on knowledge*. Bennington, G and Massumi, B (trans.). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Mayo, P. (1999). *Gramsci, Freire and adult education: Possibilities for transformative action*. London: Zed Books.
- Mishra Tarc, A. (2005). Education as humanism of the other. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 37(6): 833-849.
- New London Group. (1996). A pedagogy of multiliteracies: Designing social futures. *Harvard*

Educational Review, 66 (1): 60-92.

Ochsner, M., Marshall, E. G., Martino, C., Casillas Pabelón, M., Kimmel, L and Rostran, D. (2012) Beyond the classroom—a case study of immigrant liaisons in residential construction. *New Solutions*, 22(3): 365-386.

Pascale, C-M. (2008). Talking about race: Shifting the analytic paradigm. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 14(5): 723-741.

Philips, S. U. (2004). Language and social inequality. In A. Duranti, (ed.). *A companion to linguistic anthropology*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Portelli, A (1991). *The death of Luigi Trastulli, and other stories: Form and meaning in oral history*. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press.

Quinlan, M, Mayhew, C and Bohle, P (2001). The global expansion of precarious employment, work disorganization, and consequences for occupational health: A review of recent research. *International Journal of Health Services*, 31(2): 335-414.

Rhee, J. (2008). Risking to be wounded again: Performing open eye/I. *Race, Ethnicity and Education*, 11(1): 29-40.

Rizvi, F., Lingard, B and Lavia, J. (2006). Postcolonialism and education: Negotiating a contested terrain. *Pedagogy, Culture & Society*,

14(3): 249-262.

Robson, L, Stephenson, C, Schulte, P, Amick, B, Chan, S, Bielecky, A, Wang, A., Heidotting, T, Irvin, E, Eggerth, D., Peters, R, Clarke, J, Cullen, K, Boldt, L, Rotunda, C and Grubb, P. (2010). *A systematic review of the effectiveness of training and education for the protection of workers*. Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Institute for Work and Health.

Schubert, W. H. (1986). *Curriculum: Perspective, paradigm, and possibility*. New York: Collier Macmillan Publishers.

Scott, J. W. (1991). The evidence of experience, *Critical Inquiry*, 17 (4): 773-797.

Smith, K. (2010). Gramsci at the margins: Subjectivity and subalternity in a theory of hegemony. *International Gramsci Journal*, 2: 39-50.

Solorzano, D. G and Yosso, T. J. (2002). A critical race counterstory of race, racism, and affirmative action. *Equity & Excellence in Education: University of Massachusetts School of Education Journal*, 35(2): 155-168.

Street, B. V. (1995). *Social literacies: Critical approaches to literacy in development, ethnography and education*. Harlow, England: Pearson.

Suarez-Balcazar, Y., Harper, G. W., and Lewis, R. (2005). An interactive and contextual model of

community-university collaborations for research and action. *Health Education & Behavior*, 32(1): 84-101.

Subedi, B. (2009). The contradictions of negotiating legitimacy at home/field. In Coloma, R. S (ed.). *Postcolonial Challenges in Education*. New York: Peter Lang.

Subedi, B and Daza, S. L. (2008). The possibilities of postcolonial praxis in education, *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 11(1): 1-10.

Tuhiwai Smith, L. (1999). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples*. London: Zed Books, Ltd.

Tuhiwai Smith, L. (2006). Introduction. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 19(5): 549-552.

University of Illinois at Chicago, School of Public Health. (2010). *More than Training: Workers' Rights Centers Empowering Hazard Awareness and Response--Project Summary*. Chicago, IL: Linda Forst, PI.

Viruell-Fuentes, E. A. (2007). Beyond acculturation: Immigration, discrimination, and health research among Mexicans in the United States. *Social Science and Medicine*, 65: 1524-1535.

Williams, Q., Ochsner, M., Marshall, E., Kimmel, L and Martino, C. (2010). The impact of a peer-led

participatory health and safety training program for Latino day laborers in construction. *Journal of Safety Research*, 41(3): 253-261.

Zanoni, J. (2008). Dialogue and hegemony: Sociolinguistic analysis of “charlas” for critique and praxis. *Mediterranean Journal of Educational Studies*, 13(1): 39-58.

Zanoni, J. (2013). Confronting inequity: Participatory education impacting health at work. *Journal of Critical Thought and Praxis*. 2(1): 18-39.