

ALTERNATE APPROACHES TO EDUCATION

Paulo Freire event, Jan 26, 27, 28 1973

The Metropolitan Learning Center- Emil Abramovik

'MLC') is a distinct learning alternative within the Portland Public School System. It is based on the premise that students can and should make the major decisions in their learning programs. MLC enrolls and integrates students between the ages of 6 and 18. It is presently in the 5th year of operation.

Quincy School- Jerry Conrath

Quincy School is a school-within-a-school at John Adams High School. Quincy has 150 students, one large (60X60) open space classroom, 4 full-time teachers, (including the director), one part-time counselor and a part-time teacher. The students represent an accurate sample of the population of Adams in age, race, sex, and past success in school, and the resources allocated to Quincy represent the ratio granted at Adams. In other words, Quincy is not an elitist school in any way, nor does it operate on any favorable amount of funds. The teachers at Quincy strongly advocate change in the public school system through structural de-centralization which provides a flexibility of time, space and people to give each student the personal counseling necessary to develop experiences that emphasize strengths and create in the student a sense of competence, belonging and participation. The Quincy theoretical framework and plan has been strongly influenced by the works of Art Pearl and Paulo Freire.

Open Community School- Jonathan Mandel

The O.C.S. is composed of 40 kids, 7 teachers and 4 volunteers. Our students range from ages 4 to 18, and are drawn from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds. Our purpose is to encourage self-direction. We are a school committed to mixing freedom with responsibility so that each student develops self-awareness and a social consciousness. To achieve these objectives we provide both intellectual and social skills. We seek to have students meet the world head on and to realize that they can have a meaningful life in it. For this is the challenge...to help to see that they do have power to effect change. It is our belief that only in an environment which develops an individual sensitive to the needs of others.

Willamette Learning Center

The WLC is an alternative for high school aged youth in S.E. Portland. It is located on the 3rd floor of the Centenary Wilbur Metropolitan Church, and has now been in operation for 4 years. The Center's maximum enrollment has been raised this year to 40 students. At present there are 27 students enrolled and 4 in their trial week. The staff consists of 4 full-time and 3 part-time teachers, a part-time secretary and

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general volunteers. The students come to the Center after they have dropped out or have been forced out of the more traditional schools. 80% come from an area composed of the Washington High School area and parts of the Cleveland and Franklin High School areas. 20% come from other parts of the city. Most come from low income families and most come from foster homes. The Center has 4 basic objectives: 1) strengthen the confidence and trust of students in adults 2) to provide a period of reorientation for students coming from unsuccessful and frustrating experiences in other schools 3) to broaden a student's experience 4) to teach students skills they need or to place them where they can learn skills. The Center is financed at present by contributions from local foundations and individuals.

Albina Youth Opportunity School - Dan Robinson

The Albina Youth Opportunity School is a non-profit corporation chartered in the state of Oregon. The primary purpose of the AYOS is to prevent students from totally withdrawing from the educational system. For those students who are unable to or chose not to function in the existing system, the AYOS offers a bicultural and individual education approach as an alternative. The schools program is preventive and rehabilitative in that its services are available in Portland School District #1 and for high school dropouts in the Albina neighborhood.

Open Meadow Learning Community - Mary Cron

The Open Meadow Learning Community is an educational program for high school age youth who have had problems adjusting at home and at school. Students come to Open Meadow from a variety of sources. Many are referred from other runaway programs with the Portland Youth Advocates. Students are also referred by the Juvenile Courts, Children's Services Division and the public schools. There are currently 30 students and 5 staff at Open Meadow providing a combination of basic skill work and special interest projects.

Give an example of a humanized and humanizing society.

Where can the proper infra-structure develop that will, or would overcome oppression and other ugly features of our inhumanity?

When and how do you think such a change in infra-structure might occur in our country?

From several of your remarks, we gather that you do not see any inherent contradiction between Christianity and Marxism--a view that is disputed by many Christians as well as many Marxists. Would you care to elaborate upon the compatibility that you see between Christianity and Marxism.

When living with and observing Brazilian peasants, how did you recognize their generative words and themes. Did you begin basic literacy instruction with words that you observed to be focal in the peasants' lives OR did you simply facilitate dialogue (for example by presenting a picture) so that the generative words/themes naturally emerge in the course of discussion?

Can you discuss the process of codification--decodification in more specific terms? Is a picture the only kind of tool that can be used in this process?

QUESTIONS for PF

- If schools and CISCO are not good enough steps toward the necessary changes, what are! If they don't go far enough, what steps can be taken?
- You mentioned capitalism as our problem. Do you see socialism as the solution or...what?
- If revolution is going to have to be the route, how are people going to make it come about?
- Do you see revolution necessitating the use of violence?
- Do you believe the revolution can be non-violent?
- How do you mobilize people toward non-violent revolution?
- How can there be leadership that is not oppressive?
- What is your interpretation of mission?
- How does one identify with the oppressed?
- Will the capitalistic system self-destruct?
- What are ways we can reach people in the silent majority?
- How do people define themselves when they do not define themselves by property?
- What would a society look like that was a humanizing and humanized Society, in contrast to current economic systems?
- What would a Christian society look like? Could you share your vision?
- How do you raise consciousness among the North American middle class who are simultaneously oppressor and oppressed? Are there analogous methods of conscientization, de-coding, generative words, generative themes?
- Do not CISCO and alternative schools and the like, play into the hands of the oppressors since they make an intolerable system more tolerable?
- What is the difference between your "Generative words" and Sylvia Ashton-Warner's "Key words?"
- What do you think of teaching oppressed people to read by the Labac System.
- Can conscientization work among poor whites in America? Are the lowest 10% of capability (sic).