

Funds of Knowledge

For the 21st Century



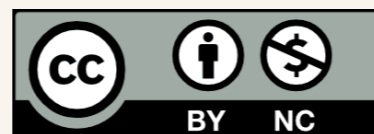
Towards pedagogical justice in diverse societies

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INTRODUCTION

This ToolKit is designed to showcase tangible examples of the funds of knowledge approach, which seeks to validate and celebrate the many ways of knowing (from the embodied and intimate to the communal and cultural) that are too often overlooked or diminished. The hope is that tools presented here will be a spark for practitioners in different realms to encourage adopting, adapting, or creating similar tools.

This resource arises from the one-day conference “Funds of knowledge for the 21st century – towards pedagogical justice in diverse societies” which took place (online) on 12 March 2021, hosted by Liverpool Hope University and funded by the Sociological Review Foundation. The conference benefitted from the insights of speakers from both academia and community organisations who presented conceptual, methodological and practical dimensions of the funds of knowledge approach. The presentations and discussions on the day tackled questions such as: How can we engage with funds of knowledge/identity in schools or informal education settings (such as museums)? How do we (re) think what counts as valuable knowledge? What and whose knowledge do/should we teach in universities?

The discussions of the day made it clear that there is a need to collaborate with, inform and resource educational and community organisations in their work with individuals and groups of diverse backgrounds. This ToolKit is one such attempt. It aims to inspire and equip educators and community professionals to engage with the rich funds of knowledge of the people and communities with whom they work.

The funds of knowledge approach was developed in the USA in the 1980s and 1990s seeking to recognise community knowledge as a valuable resource for improving educational outcomes for children from marginalised communities (Gonzales, Moll and Amanti, 2006). The original method has since inspired researchers and practitioners working in a range of contexts with people from diverse backgrounds.

Each contribution in this booklet includes a ‘Call to Action’, based on certain limitations experienced within the author’s field, and a ‘Method’, indicating how the tool can be enacted in real contexts. We hope the range of practices covered in the toolkit (from teaching within higher education to public art) will reflect the diverse ways in which the funds of knowledge approach can be applied to both challenge and expand the conventional boundaries of knowledge.

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Funds of Knowledge for the 21st Century

Towards pedagogical justice in diverse societies

non-vertical knowledge



Story-telling as collective mourning

Rethinking knowledge in your field

How do we communicate embodied knowledge?



DRAW STAMP SHOUT

Representing Funds of Knowledge in Formal + Informal Settings



unidos.club
¿CUÁLES TU MENSAJE DE ESPERANZA

MESSAGES of HOPE

AMPLIFY VOICES

How Museums can be instruments FOR ACTIVISM

while supporting and supplementing educational settings

ANTI-RACIST EDUCATION



NON-£££ PAYMENT

OWNERSHIP + CO-PRODUCTION

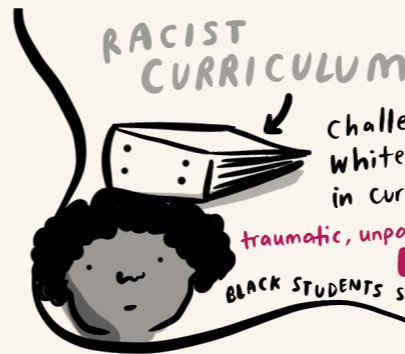
IDENTITY ANTI-NARRATIVES

Lyripentics

- A BRIDGE: PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE TO LEARNING + TEACHING

¡SÍ SE PUEDE!

AMPLIFY VOICES



BLACK excellence

challenge white-supremacy in curriculums

traumatic, unpaid activism BLACK STUDENTS SUFFER

BURN OUT



Womxn

LOIS SOUTH



TRIPLE OPPRESSION

DECOLONISE

Well, you've got trains!

59% think empire = good

POLICY CHANGE

Schools are just the beginning



WIKI

LEGITIMISE NARRATIVES

DISRUPT



SPECIALIST TRAINING

non-extractive Collaboration

DIGNITY

they're only funds if they have



CURRENCY

CONTEXT



LIVE ILLUSTRATION
KATIE CHAPPELL / @katie draws

Katie Chappell produced this live illustration during the 2021 Funds of Knowledge conference at Liverpool Hope University that this ToolKit is based on. Katie illustrated in real-time providing visual representations of the talks that she heard on the day.

This artwork captures the emphasis that funds of knowledge approaches place on diverse knowledges, multimodality, and redistribution of agency in learning, and that you will see featured in the following contributions.

DISMANTLING BABYLON

Lois South



Call To Action | "Dismantle Babylon systems in the classroom"

As the popular Rastafarian saying goes: Fire pon Babylon. Babylon represents systems of oppression and the phrase represents our desire to dismantle these systems. As a black, Asian, disabled womxn I stand at the intersection of many systems of oppression. I believe that as education is the antidote to ignorance, the classroom is the perfect space to acknowledge, explore, and deconstruct Babylon systems.

Method | Identify and Acknowledge

The teacher first needs to acknowledge their own background, power, and privilege. Self-reflexive practice allows for the teacher to form empathic relationships with children based on self-awareness. Having small focus groups with children and also talking to parents/ carers about their feelings about the school and their cultural and social backgrounds to get a sense of the community and allow students to feel included and heard. This can also create an environment of trust and open communication.

Students as Sites of Knowledge

Creating safe spaces for students to share cultural expertise or a piece of information that they find relevant to a particular subject before each lesson starts. Teachers can ask questions that allow for everyone in the classroom to gain a deeper understanding of each other's backgrounds.

Acknowledge and Empower

Lessons can then be tailored to make them more culturally and socially relevant. In this way, students can see themselves as sites of cultural and social knowledge. The environment of trust and open communication can be used to open up honest discussions about compounded oppression and the unrepresentative curriculum. Using tools outside the classroom such as museums or socially active organisations geared at dismantling specific systems of oppression can aid in exploring and understanding the socio-historic and socio-cultural underpinnings of these systems.

However, how do you go about this without othering marginalized students?

Through the sharing of cultural resources, oppressive and othering gazes are now set on them. One way to subvert this is to highlight that otherness has agency by consistently showing empowering images of marginalized people.

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Lois South is an Education demonstrator, graduate of History and Museum Studies, and ambassador of the International Slavery Museum, UK. Lois researches Black British womxn's history.

MUSEUMS & SOCIAL JUSTICE



Adam Duckworth

Call to Action

“Museums must actively contribute to a changing public social agenda, by becoming tools to not only enhance how communities understand the past, but how that past and its legacies impact our day-to-day experiences and aspirations.”

Method | ISM Active Participation Method

Museums as powerful institutions of learning must first acknowledge their role in shaping society and being shaped by society. Then museums can begin actively contributing to a changing public social agenda, by becoming tools to not only enhance how communities understand the past, but how that past and its legacies impact our day-to-day experiences and aspirations. As tools to both reflect and act, museums can more effectively and authentically be held to account and become of, by and for our communities, as well as increase our understanding of the valuable role of community activism in developing and circulating knowledge during movements to achieve positive social change.



Adam Duckworth is Learning and Participation Team Leader, International Slavery Museum, Liverpool, UK. Adam researches on Liverpool's role in the Transatlantic Slave Trade and its Legacies.

AVATARS: A VEHICLE FOR SELF-REPRESENTATION



Adam Poole

Call to Action

“Students bring with them ‘virtual school bags’ of knowledge and identities that are rarely opened by teachers. Now go and open them.”

Method

In my teaching and research, I have developed a multimodal method for investigating students ‘digital funds of identity’. This method involves combining avatars (visual representations of individuals) and written/oral reflections. The avatar is used to facilitate students’ funds of identity. One of the advantages of using avatars is that students are not constrained by linguistic or artistic ability. The reflection is designed to clarify the meaning of the avatar for the teacher and the student. I have found in my research that avatars can be highly ambiguous due to their symbolic and abstract nature, and therefore require clarification. The reflection can be written or spoken. In a bilingual classroom, the reflection can be written or spoken in the students’ mother tongue.



Adam Poole is Director of Research in the Institute of Impact Studies, International Education Group, Beijing Foreign Studies University. Before moving to his current position, he taught in international schools in China. Adam's research explores international school teachers' experiences, the impact of professional development on teacher identity, and the funds of identity and funds of knowledge approaches.

CREATIVE PRACTICES WITH CHILDREN

Pat Thomson



Call to Action

Make alphabet books with children using local references for each letter.

Make a map of the local area using a bedsheet – walk the map, getting each child to point out their local references. (Comber, Thomson, and Wells 2001)

Work with students' concerns and passions – take them seriously. See environmental action projects - (Thomson 2007). This might mean getting a bit political (Thomson, McQuade, and Rochford 2005) !

Use a sketch book as a go-between home and school. Children ask family and other people to draw in it around topics that are important to them. (Hall, Thomson, and Russell 2007)

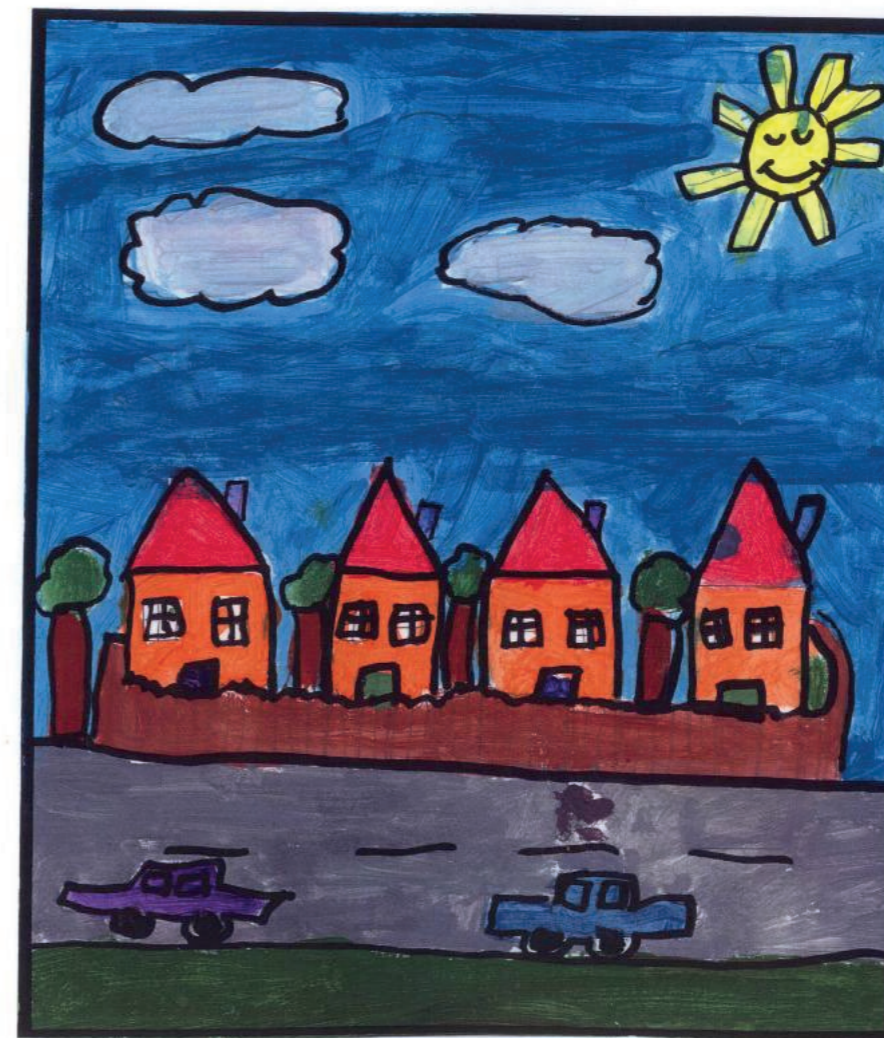
Ask children and their families to come into school to have their family portraits taken. Get children to interview their parents. Make local school readers from their stories. (Thomson and Clifton 2012)

Ask children to interview non-teaching school staff – these tend to be local people – turn these into performed stories of lives or make them into Big Books (Thomson and Hall 2015)

Use arts practices to allow children to develop questions that interest them, that connect their lives to a school topic (ours was water) (Townsend and Thomson 2015)

Artists routinely work with students' interests and knowledges as the basis of practice – other ways of knowing (Hall and Thomson 2017; Thomson et al. 2012).

Get the community through the school gate and kids out of the gates – allotments and school gardens are one place where school classes, families and neighbourhoods can come together (Earl and Thomson 2021).



W

Is for Westwood

Westwood is the name of the new housing area being built near our school. There have been a lot of changes made.

Houses have been knocked down and new ones built. People are moving out and people are moving in. There are lots of new neighbours moved in already.

There's also new trees and flowers growing.

These changes will start closer to our school one day.

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Pat Thomson is Professor of Education, School of Education, The University of Nottingham. She is former headteacher of disadvantaged schools in South Australia. Her research primarily focuses on the arts in school, communities and galleries, as well as school exclusion and school change. She also researches academic writing and doctoral education. Her academic writing and research blog is patthomson.net, twitter @ThomsonPat.

COMMUNITY-ENGAGED LEARNING AND UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS

Lisa Schwartz



Call to Action

“Use Funds of knowledge based program design for community-engaged and social justice oriented arts, humanities and interdisciplinary practice.”

Method

This program design informs programs for participants in both community and university contexts (e.g. the Engaged Arts and Humanities Scholars, Art + Science + Action Partnerships, and Antiracism in the Arts Boulder County Study Group and Initiative.) The principles that guide the design of programs for community and university participants are then shared within these programs to inform the practice of participants who are also designing projects and programs.

Guiding with these principles:

- Everyone should honor and know their own funds of knowledge; these lived experiences formed in networks over time and space should inform one’s own path for learning framed in issues of equity, diversity, access and inclusion. Funds of knowledge should not be viewed as static, but rather as evolving, living practices that shape one’s way of being and being seen in the world.
- Creating contexts where others’ evolving funds of knowledge can be leveraged for learning develops in relationships of mutual trust and confianza. This does not happen overnight; it involves relationship development and developing an “ethnographic” and inventive eye that sees resources rather than deficits.



Lisa Schwartz has a doctorate in education from the University of Arizona, and was a postdoctoral researcher and research director in the CU Boulder School of Education before joining the CU Boulder Office for Outreach and Engagement in 2016. Lisa has longstanding experience as an outreach professional, educator, educational researcher and social scientist. Currently, Lisa leads or co-leads several initiatives, including the Engaged Arts and Humanities Graduate Student Scholars program (EAH scholars) the Art + Science + Community Action cohort program and the Inclusiveness and Equity workshop series.



- Study groups are an integral part of the process of learning, reflection and action on one’s own funds of knowledge and that of other groups. In a Vygostkian perspective, learning is a social process, hence this is a critical part of the process. Study groups also provide a multi-perspective basis from which to share out to others the outcomes of individual and shared learning.
- Acknowledging, expanding and building ways to overlap and create multidirectional flows of networks based in trust and confianza are key for creating sustainable, transformative and consequential change.
- Belonging matters—creating new ways of belonging across individuals and groups is the basis for learning and development and change.

VISUAL METHODS FOR COMPLEX NEEDS

Gabrielle Ivinson

Call to Action

"We need to re-conceptualize challenging behaviour in schools. Let's recognise the ability within [dis]-ability."

Method

Using an Arts based methodology to work with young people with complex needs (excerpts from the report 'Research with young people with SEND who have been in contact with the youth justice system', part of the wider project 'Falling Through the Gaps: Vulnerable Children & Youth Justice')

"We set out to create new channels for expression that might provide different routes into learning that do not rely primarily on talk and texts. We provided a wide range of art materials and objects, and used art-based methods of instruction that ensure a wide degree of autonomy and choice. We worked in the art room with the support of the art teacher. The research method revealed the wide range of ways ontological insecurity manifests in behaviour and gave glimpses of each boy's expressive idiom". A person's idiom includes creative impulses that work beside trauma, experienced as a form of lifting (Bollas 1996/2006, 29).

"We co-created six workshops with the art teacher [...]. The workshops were between one and two hours in length at times when the boys were timetabled for art lessons. The overarching creative approach described above informed the way we offered materials and techniques for making artefacts, with the view that these might or might not enable new forms of expression." (p. 7)



- **Workshop 1:** The task was to create a 'cabinet of curiosity' depicting four emotions. Materials: boxes, cardboard, scissors, paint, tissue paper, magazines, fabric and small plastic and natural objects. Photographs of art works provided stimulus.
 - **Workshop 2:** The task was to choose signs, logos, motifs such as Maori and Celtic symbols, as well as pictures of tattoos and coats of arms as secret languages that express emotion and to create lino-prints. Materials: hot glue gun, knives and cutting boards, coloured paper and cardboard, rollers and paint.
 - **Workshop 3:** Theme: creating a character. Instructions were to use symbols and extracts from song lyrics (provided on printed sheets) and artefacts from workshops 1 and 2 to build a character by sticking pictures onto a body form collage.
 - **Workshop 4:** Theme: filming feelings. Groups of students went around the school buildings and grounds taking pictures of objects and places that caught their interest. The footage was later edited into one or more short films. Materials; video and GoPro cameras.
 - **Workshop 5:** Create a storyboard for a short film depicting a character that reflected on prior workshops.
 - **Workshop 6:** Creating a picture of a fictional character and his/her super power. Materials; crystal paint, water, water-colour paper." (p. 7-8)
- "Approaches need to start by working with these defences and by attuning to them, to help them to become less extreme by enabling other forms of expression. Free expression (primal genera) is the other side of trauma. By building on what young people already express, new expression can grow." (p. 15)



Gabrielle Ivinson, PhD, is Professor of Education and Community at the Education and Social Research Institute, Manchester Metropolitan University. Her scholarly activity involves re-thinking horizontal knowledge as living knowledge that is place-based, sensory, embodied, historically developed, indigenous and class-based. She co-ordinated the Creative Margins AHRC network exploring how to make arts accessible to marginalised young people and chaired the BERA commission on poverty and policy advocacy in education.

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CONNECTING THROUGH PERSONAL ARTIFACTS

Konstanze Spohrer



Call to Action

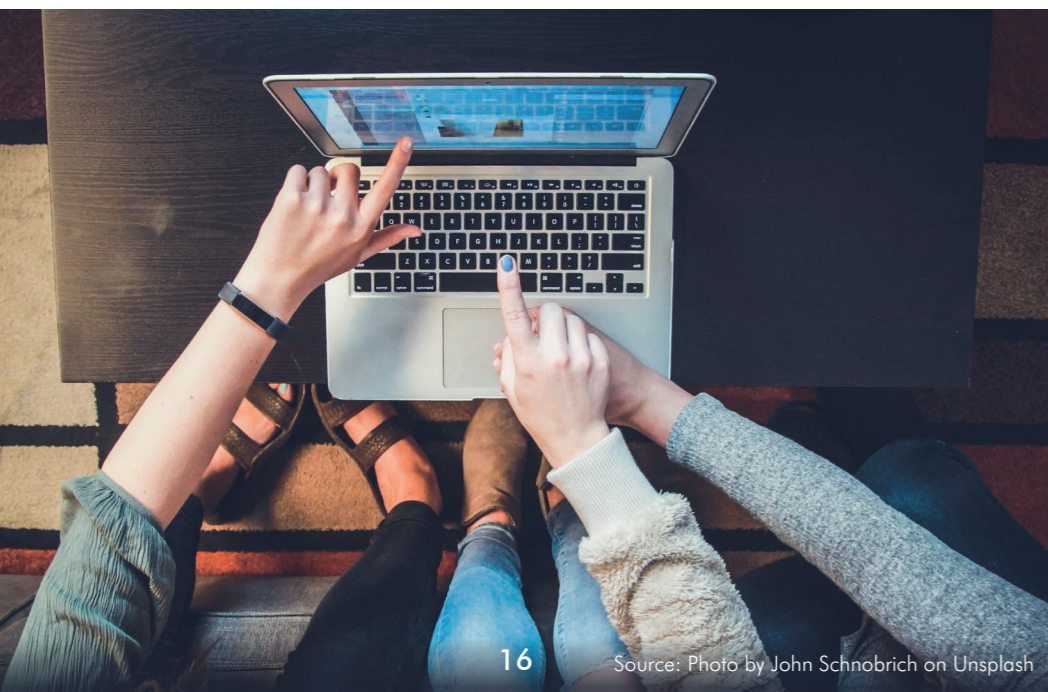
“As educators, let’s share our own story and get to know the people with whom we work.”

Method

As educators, sharing our own story and experience is a powerful way of connecting to the people with whom we work and encourages learners to give us a glimpse into their worlds. It offers an opportunity to make learning and teaching more meaningful but should not be used as a ‘trick’; honesty and the wish to truly engage with others are key here.

Being open about our lives is also a way of ‘positioning’ ourselves and of exploring how our stories are always connected to wider history. Becoming more aware of this relationship allows us to reflect and act more purposefully.

A useful method can be to encourage each member of the group (and this includes ourselves) to bring an artefact that is meaningful to them and gives an insight into an aspect of our life. The personal stories related to the artefacts can then be connected to social and historical developments and be used to examine questions such as: What is my place in the wider world? How are we shaped by history? How can I/we shape it?



WIKIPEDIA AND THE CO-PRODUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE

Carly Bagelman



Source: Wikipedia.org

Call to Action

“Involve students in knowledge production with Wikipedia”

Method

Exploring how knowledge in the academy is constructed, what counts as knowledge, and who is considered a knowledge-holder or expert is key to setting the stage for more critical discussions on who and what this excludes.

In this vein, it can be productive to consider the role of Wikipedia in knowledge production and consumption today, and why it is considered an ‘unacademic’ source. In discussion, students can unpick the possibilities it holds for democratising knowledge production and in so doing, the possibilities it holds for a ‘funds of knowledge’ approach. Alongside these discussions, show students the ‘history’ tab for a contentious and relevant entry to identify how contributors continuously build and alter the text to reflect different facets and understandings of the topic. Emphasise the way in which these are living documents to which anyone can contribute.

Show students the ‘edit’ tab, and indicate how changes can be made to an entry. Students can then be tasked with collaboratively editing a Wikipedia entry relevant to the topics explored on the course (using their assigned and self-selected research articles and infusing their own funds of knowledge).

The opportunity to write for a very large and authentic audience (that is: everyone accessing the Wikipedia entry) rather than simply taking notes or submitting assignments to be read and assessed by the lecturer alone, and to thereby contribute to discourse rather than strictly studying it embodies the concept of horizontal knowledge.

To extend this learning throughout the term, the class can revisit the entry to make further edits, and review new edits from the public. This iterative process of knowledge construction again reflects critical pedagogy.



Konstanze Spohrer is a Senior Lecturer at Liverpool Hope University specialising in the Sociology of Education. Her research interests are in the areas of pedagogy and social justice, social theory, and education policy analysis with recent publications examining discourses and practices of character education in the United Kingdom.



Carly Bagelman is a Lecturer in Education Studies at Liverpool Hope University. Carly grew up in Coast Salish territories on the west coast of Canada. She researches the role of education in colonisation (with a focus on the Canadian context), as well as anti-colonial pedagogy. Her work also explores the educational experiences of forcibly displaced peoples, and ways in which UK schools respond to forced migration.

SELF-REFLECTION THROUGH ARTEFACT DOCUMENTS

Moises Esteban-Guitart



Call to Action

"Identity artefacts to promote meaningful learning and self-reflection."

Method

It consists in using artefacts-documents created by the learners about themselves, in which they try to capture all the things that make sense and are meaningful to them and which, subsequently, can be used by teachers to connect-work on curricular and pedagogical content, or to facilitate reflexive spaces for self-understanding and critical analyze the reality.

Some examples of identity artefacts

Identity drawing. Instruction: "Can you try to draw who you think you are at this moment in your life. If you want you can add the people, things, organizations, and activities that are most important or significant to you."

Meaningful circle. Instruction: "Write down the people, activities, things or places that are most meaningful to you in a big circle. Write inside some smaller circles the most significant people and write inside a small square activities, things or places. Keep in mind that the closer to the center of the big circle you put the small circles and the squares, the more important they are to you."

Artist's book. This is a six-page individual book in which each student can express and reflect themselves through multiple techniques including collage, drawing, comics, painting or even writing. The objective is to create their own narrative of "who I am", "what defines me", or "the most important things in my life."



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Moises Esteban-Guitart is Professor of psychology at the University of Girona, director of the Institute of Educational Research. His research focuses on articulating how the development of identity is closely intertwined with issues of culture and education.

IDENTIFYING CONNECTIONS, CONTEXTS, AND SILENCES IN HISTORY

Rosie Germain



Call to action

“See history as a live practice that can change society, as well as a study of the past.”

Method

A funds of knowledge approach in the teaching of history in schools can be useful to support the subject’s function as a dynamic practice that can change self and society, as well as a process of finding out ‘what happened’ in the past. The discipline stands at the intersection of the past, present, and future and drawing this characteristic into the light alongside other models of history teaching can perform several public functions (Cannadine, 2011; Carr, 1961). Continued emphasis on the ‘doing of history’ when it is taught, can serve to awaken students to the values that dominate in their epoch, and engage them in processes of value definition that might sharpen their understanding of self, society, and the future of both. This can be seen as a funds of knowledge approach within history teaching since it engages the student’s subjectivity in the practice of history in schools.

Some methods of studying, for instance, the American Civil Rights Movement might facilitate important student understandings of how race relations changed in America in the 1960s leading to skills in evidence evaluation, precision, comprehension, and empathy with, i.e, the perspectives of the oppressed and human rights advocates in the past. However, an unintended consequence of this segmental approach might also be student feelings of detachment from what is studied, or the demotion of opportunity to identify the basic underlying pattern in all histories which is that humans (and therefore us) create society.

Enhanced use of three methods, already enacted in a range of educational settings, might expand student understandings of how the world around them, and their own self, relates to processes seemingly far away, either in terms of time or geography. These methods might also further embed anti-colonial practices in education since they build in student participation in curriculum creation, and challenge normative thinking – for instance that all students will/should respond to material in the same way - that can dehumanise.

The principles are illustrated below through an example of how the American Civil Rights Movement might be studied in a British school. Currently, this movement is taught in British schools through the AQA GCSE History option ‘America, 1920-1973: Opportunity and inequality’ (AQA, 2019), as well as by a variety of different options offered by other exam boards.

- **I. Local context:** Even if the subject studied in Britain is, for instance, the American Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s, students can conduct archival research activities to find out about local conditions in relation to civil rights in the same decade, or equally conditions in a geographical area that students feel relates to them. Digitised or hard-copy newspaper archives could offer one such resource. This might result in useful comparisons between what was happening in America, and in the local area/area of interest, and of the significance of such similarities or differences.
- **II. Identify silences:** If sources cannot be found that demonstrate civil rights activity in the local British area, or regional area of a student’s concern, this might be used to prompt critical thought about how the available sources might explain these silences. A low value placed on the rights of minorities or different social groups? Local areas prioritising their own interests over those of the wider country or other countries? A cold disregard for discrimination? Lack of knowledge about, or a denial that, this discrimination existed? Students might be encouraged to consider the significance of these silences.
- **III. Comparison with the present and a path for the future:** It might be useful to incorporate a source finding exercise on concerns with civil rights in the local and international present. What can students see about civil rights in the present world and media around them? Do people understand civil rights now in different ways than was the case in post-war America? What is the significance of this difference? Who benefits from it, and who does not? How can we act in the present to make sure that oppressive patterns are not reproduced? For instance, talking about civil rights in conversation in the present, or challenging instances where these are infringed.

I hope that enhanced use of some of these methods might prove useful in supporting learning about what happened in America during the Civil Rights Movement, or other historical periods. These methods might complement other ways of promoting students’ engagement with what is learnt, its impact on the individual, and their sense of agency in the world around them.

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