Dimensions of Diversity

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To learn more about the National Association for Multicultural Education, Georgia Chapter, visit our website or email us.

Website: www.ganame.org
Email: ganame2010@gmail.com

If you know of a PK-12 teacher you would like to nominate for the GA NAME Educator Spotlight, please send a brief email to ganame2010@gmail.com.
Dear educators,

This issue’s opening page provides a “visual” definition of diversity. It’s a series of words suggesting some of the layers of who we are as humans. These characteristics are socially, culturally, and politically constructed and shaped. We give them meaning and they can mean different things in different contexts. Diversity is often identified primarily through demographic characteristics (e.g., class, ability, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation/identity, language). However, it can also be defined by other areas such as the roles we have in school, work, and life as well as the ideas we hold. Diversity tends to be relegated to a count of “how many” (different) individuals or groups are in a mixture of people. Legally, this can be useful to address historic and contemporary inequities; however, dimensions of diversity can be much more expansive and dynamic, as we more often than not experience in school, at home, within our community, at work, and in life.

Diversity is neither just about difference nor an innate condition of deficiency. Despite rhetoric to the contrary, diversity can include differences and similarities and has proven to be a tremendous asset for human living and survival. Diversity engenders creativity and possibility. It can also generate tensions. In my work, I have come to notice a few ways that conversations about diversity can be improved, regardless of whether you are talking with people new or well versed on matters related to diversity. Below I offer some considerations when it comes to defining and discussing diversity, particularly “demographic” diversity.

**Say whom you’re talking about/*Say what you mean.**

Diversity is often used as a “catch all” word that really does not catch specifically who and what people really mean when using the word. Do not assume or take for granted that when using “diversity” everyone is talking about the same groups of people or experiences. Asking, “when you say ‘diversity,’ are you thinking of particular groups of people and if so, who do you mean?” can clarify if someone is really discussing Latinos/Latinas, Arabs, European refugees, African immigrants, and so forth.

**Name the type of diversity you are referencing whenever possible.**

Do not assume or take for granted when using “diversity” that everyone is talking about the same characteristics. Diversity can represent many things to different people. In fact, quite often I’ve heard people tout the benefits and gifts of diversity only to realize they were “ok” with some aspects of diversity and not supportive of other facets. A simple question, “what does diversity mean to you?” or “what type of diversity do you mean?” can illuminate important information as to whether someone is talking about any or all of the possible dimensions of diversity.

**Understanding diversity in one area does not automatically mean one “naturally” understands diversity in another.**

I have seen this happen more than once and not just with classes that focus on diversity. Understanding race and racism, for example, does not transfer to understanding issues related to ability and ableism. Experiencing sexism is not a proxy for understanding racism. Furthermore, an understanding of the African diasporic experience does not translate to an understanding of indigenous/First Nation experiences. We must all continue to be vigilant learners regarding various facets of diversity.

**Just because you are not a member of the status quo does not mean that you have an innate understanding of diversity and can educate others about it.**

Too often we may rely on people who look, sound, and think differently as representatives of all things “different.” It is important to value our individual and collective experiences; however, this work is not solely a function of having various experiences. Whether a member of the status quo or not, facilitating discussions and actions relevant to diversity requires particular knowledge, skills, and dispositions.

**Diversity is not just anyone “other” than white or any homogeneous group.**

Have you ever said or heard the following phrases: “There wasn’t much diversity at my school” or “This place is not diverse. It’s all ______ [fill in the blank with any group e.g., White, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, Black].” In most cases groups that appear homogeneous are anything but when you factor in other aspects of diversity. Diversity is multidimensional.

Vera Stenhouse
GA NAME is planning a “Special Issue” Newsletter, tentatively titled: Education Chatter (Edu-Chat).

What is it about?
This issue will be in a format that allows for concise yet comprehensive responses on key educational issues in Georgia.

Who should contribute? YOU!

What should you do?
- Entries must be “chats” of a maximum of 140 characters.
- Entries must be about education in Georgia and can fall into any of the following possible categories:
  - testing
  - education reform
  - culturally responsive pedagogy
  - social justice
  - educational justice
  - multicultural education
  - diversity
  - Race to the Top
  - Immigration
  - teachers/education in the media/film
  - curriculum
  - charter schools
  - vouchers
  - education scandals
  - students
  - teachers
  - parents
  - families
  - community advocacy
  - hope and possibilities

Send your “chats” to: ganame2010@gmail.com
Subject: CHAT

Check Out the Fall 2011 Issue to Learn More About...

Immigration
- Who qualifies as an immigrant in the US?
- What is a refugee?
- Are migrants and immigrants the same group of people?
- When does one stop being an immigrant or hyphenated American in the US?
- Who “deserves” to be here and why?
- What does HB87 mean for educators in Georgia?

Testing
- What is going on in Georgia regarding testing?
- Who decides what counts as successful learning?
- What are standardized tests?
- What are teacher-made tests?
- What are formative and summative assessments?
- What are alternatives to measuring student learning?
- What are the costs of testing?
Through the expressive arts, **Voices in the Treetops, Inc.** (affiliates in New York and Georgia) networks to create a culture of peace by fostering positive, co-operative, productive artivism. We concentrate on literary and performing arts programs for children, teens, and adults which promote character development, leadership, social and environmental responsibility, wellness, entrepreneurial skills development, social justice, and cultural preservation. Our mission is to teach and/or empower the principles of pro-active communication through the performing and literary arts and to partner with agencies and institutions operating for the good of the community.

We specialize in workshops that challenge the structures of power and control that continue to destroy the fabric and integrity of our society. We mentor young artists, activists and advocates. We help communities use the power of the performing arts to promote peace, facilitating constructive dialogue and collaboration among individuals, families, faith-based organizations, social service agencies, juvenile services, legal and medical professionals, health professionals and institutions of primary through higher education. **Voices in the Treetops, Inc.** is totally committed to creating a culture of peace.

**Happenings**

After its joyously-received performances for World Refugee Day at the Clarkston Community Center, we closed for summer vacation until September.

We are currently interviewing teachers for instructor positions for piano, guitar (advanced) and drums. Contact paula@paulalarke.com or nimoy@voicesinthetreetops.org

We are expanding our outreach for on-going workshops and trainings for health, education and social service professionals, such as, *The Ecology of Community Building*, utilizing the principles and techniques of Freire, Boal, and others.

We are initiating conversations with DeKalb Technical Institute on utilizing music and art in both the ESOL and Counseling Departments – stay tuned!

Visit us at: [www.voicesinthetreetops.org](http://www.voicesinthetreetops.org)

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**Community Focus:**

A Spotlight on a Local Organization

**Voices in the Treetops, Inc.**

*Nationally networking for individual and community integrity through the arts*

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**Learning together: Student teaches Karenni language to Kim Nimoy.**

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**C.U.L.T.U.R.E.**

*Creative unity: Learning together (for) understanding, respect & excellence*

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“The Ancestral wisdom, tossed aside by the desires of forgetful children, is caught in the uppermost branches and leaves of caring trees. The winds of time keep the rhythm of their hearts drumming: keep our spirits dancing.”

-Paula Larke

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Check out the lyrics to the song written by Nay Kaw →
Love peace by Nay Kaw

March 4, 2011
C.U.L.T.U.R.E Member

The peace of we love
We won’t never get
Because of the power
We lose our land
One day we hope
God will prepare for us
He is the one we can believe

CHO/ please give us freedom
Please give us the love
We want to be brother
Cuz we lived the same land

WE THEPEOPLE

©Nay Kaw and Voices in the Treetops, Inc.
Planning to Change the World: A Plan Book for Social Justice Teachers
Edited by Tara Mack and Bree Picower

Planning to Change the World: A plan book for social justice teachers not only offers educators a way to organize their ideas, but also includes details about the real world that add flair to lesson plans. The collection of materials also enhances teachers’ understanding of world issues and will thus contribute to students’ overall world knowledge.

Planning to change the world is a great tool for educators to use when organizing ideas for possible lesson plans. This book includes enough space for daily activities and can be used as a reference during class time. Teachers can organize their units based on personal preference, such as by subject or daily schedule. As a planner, the book allot ample room for essential questions, goals, topics, materials, and procedures.

The book also provides tons of real world details, such as religious and federal holidays, social justice birthdays, and historical events. These important events in American history and the knowledge contained within should be shared with students and fellow teachers alike. As this book is merely a primer on such events, in order for teachers to fully express to others the importance of events in history, they will have to challenge themselves to gather sufficient evidence and conduct further research. Yet, I think this is an awesome tool that will benefit teachers and students alike.

Planning to Change the World is one of the best books I have purchased. Most textbooks are extremely expensive and I feel as if I do not get my money’s worth, but with this book, I get more than expected. This book helps with organizing ideas, offers students real world examples of social justice struggles, and enhances understanding of issues for all. The abundance of information, including resources in the book, online videos and lesson plans, adds to the overall greatness of the planner. The use of information found within this text may be better suited to students in middle school or higher grades. Although the book is for a more mature audience, it does offer quotations, dates, and important events that elementary students will also find relatable and important.

I would highly recommend this book to other educators. As a teacher, having the special features, essential questions, and historical events at my fingertips is wonderful. Overall, I believe audiences will appreciate the abundance of knowledge found in the text. The material provided on the pages of this book proves that knowledge is power.
Doing the Work: Georgia Educator Spotlight

Ms. Fahima Ife

Though the air smells of barbecues, sunscreen, and watermelon—and the days of grading papers, creating seating charts, and planning field trips seem eons away—Ms. Fahima Ife is already preparing for her second year as a middle school English educator. A graduate of California State University-San Bernadino and Emory University, she spent last year as an eighth grade teacher at the DeKalb Academy of Technology and Environment. In the fall, she will begin a new school year teaching Humanities (integrated English/Language Arts and Social Studies) at Atlanta Charter Middle School.

Ms. Ife took some time from her summer vacation to share details of her “compelling, unrelenting, and powerful” first year in the classroom with us. In particular, we discussed a unique classroom project co-constructed by Ms. Ife and her students: an anthology of their written work.

How did you get the idea for a student anthology?
The idea for the anthology project was born out of a desire to empower students through writing. I introduced students to writers from the Black Arts Movement to introduce the concept of writing for power and to establish a tone for the type of writing they were expected to contribute. I wanted to provide an opportunity for students to use creative writing because too many students thought it was acceptable to say they did not enjoy writing or see the need for writing. I wanted to bridge that area between what is discussed and written in the classroom and what happens when students go home. I thought it would be a start in initiating a lifelong love of writing for power.

Why did you decide to undertake such a big task?
As an adult, I have realized that the silencing of adolescent voices mirrors the historical and contemporary silencing of nonwhite voices in general. Because students were given voice in my classroom, they were able to freely express themselves without judgment, but I was aware that this was not always the case in other settings. Since the silence of youth can feel debilitating, I wanted to provide an opportunity for all students to be heard and to have full command of an audience's attention for a sustained period of time. I thought the importance of encouraging nonwhite students to write for power far surpassed the amount of time I invested with editing and designing. I hoped that this project would instill within students a desire for change.

How did your students respond to the assignment?
When I assigned the project, students were given the choice to either simply turn in the assignment for a grade or submit their writing for publication. Initially, a few students thought they would not be able to write something that was anthology quality. Along the way, I provided several mini poetry lessons* to prompt reluctant writers, which helped encourage students. In the end, 90% of my students submitted their work for publication.

How did your students respond when they saw the final product?
My best moment as a teacher happened during the last week of school when I showed the finished anthology to my students and saw the excitement on their faces and heard their sounds of approval. They were ecstatic. All of my students were extremely excited to see their work in an actual book. Many students expressed their gratitude and said how much they enjoyed the project. I was satisfied that I had provided an opportunity for my students to truly appreciate literature and celebrate writing.

GA NAME appreciates the time Ms. Ife took to share her experience with us and we hope that her commitment to giving students voice through writing will inspire other educators to continue their own quest for social justice and student empowerment.

*For mini-lessons, Ms. Ife referenced Linda Christensen’s Reading, Writing, Rising Up and Teaching for Joy and Justice.
National & International Education: An Introduction to International Teacher Recruitment for U.S. Schools

By Alyssa Hadley Dunn

In 2010, 350 Filipino teachers in Louisiana sued a recruitment agency for indentured servitude and human trafficking and, with the help of the American Federation of Teachers and the Southern Poverty Law Center, won over $1.8 million. In March 2011, a recruiter based in Atlanta was fined $78,000 for failure to pay Indian teachers the appropriate wages. Last April, a recruiter in Prince George’s County, Maryland, was investigated by the Department of Labor for owing teachers more than $5.9 million in back wages and penalties. Similar cases are pending in other metropolitan districts around the country. What is happening in our public schools? Where are these teachers coming from and why are they being exploited? And, other than the occasional media story, why is no one talking about it?

These teachers are part of one response to the supposed national teacher shortage. This is despite the fact that research has continuously shown that enough teachers are, in fact, being prepared, but those teachers are misdistributed or leave shortly after hire, especially in urban areas. Amongst the variety of proposed solutions is the recruitment of teachers from abroad to work in hard-to-staff schools and subjects. In 2009, there were almost 20,000 international teachers working in the United States on temporary visas, the majority hired from developing countries like the Philippines, India, Mexico, and Jamaica. Georgia was sixth on the list of states recruiting the most international teachers in 2009-2010.

For-profit agencies typically charge placement and training fees to either teachers or districts, or both; teachers may pay between $5,000-$6,500 each. Districts may pay as much as $11,500 per teacher. These teachers are literally sold as both a solution to the staffing shortage and as “cultural ambassadors” who bring global perspectives to inner-city youth, all the while saving districts money because, in most circumstances, the teachers are not given benefits, social security, or retirement. All too often, their orientations and professional development are minimal or non-existent.

Yet, with all the other policies and reforms being hurled at urban schools—including increased testing, performance and merit pay schemes, and privatization—it is inevitable that some policies will not make the news all the time. Some efforts at saving districts money, though they may jeopardize the well-being of teachers and students, will not be seen as “important” when there are other, more immediate problems to solve. But the issue of international teacher recruitment is not going away. Indeed, as the economy continues to falter and districts search for ways to save money, recruited teachers may become even more in demand. It is time that we who care about public schools—fellow teachers, teacher educators, concerned parents and citizens, workers’ rights advocates—start paying attention.

References


*This is only a brief introduction to a very complex issue. If you would like more information, please contact the author, Alyssa Hadley Dunn, at ganame2010@gmail.com.
Recipe for International Teacher Recruitment in the U.S.

By Ana T. Solano-Campos

Probably many of you have heard about international teacher recruitment (See Hadley Dunn this issue). As a former international teacher, I would like to share with you the not-so-secret recipe for this phenomenon. This recipe has been proven to create a barely digestible outcome for students in schools with systemic inequities. It matters because as we seek ways to respond to the call of quality teaching, we are clearly concocting an unhealthy recipe for schools.

### Ingredients:
- 1 cup of neoliberal rhetoric
- 1 liter of globalization
- 1 box of capitalist discourse
- 2 cups of a history of slavery
- 1 spoonful of linguistic imperialism (the hegemony of English kind)
- 1 liter of education “crisis”
- 1 box of blame
- As many U.S. teachers as you can get
- As many English speaking foreign teachers as you can
- 5 pounds of increasing immigration trends
- 1 pound of lack of awareness about U.S. historical, economic and sociocultural processes
- 3 spoons of educational tourism
- 5 cups of amnesia
- 3 spoons of economic appeal
- All the under-resourced and overcrowded schools you can find
- 2 cups of shredded competitive educational initiatives and standardized tests

### Directions:

**First**, combine globalization, neoliberal rhetoric, and capitalist discourse in one big bowl. In a separate container dilute the history of slavery in the 5 cups of amnesia to create a nice smooth mixture of educational inequality. Bake at 250 degrees for hundreds of years until it is spongy but firm.

**In another bowl**, whip all the foreign teachers with the lack of awareness about U.S. historical, economic and sociocultural processes, the 3 spoons of educational tourism, and sprinkle the linguistic imperialism to produce a creamy frosting of brain drain.

**Next**, place the U.S. teachers at the bottom of a large Pyrex; place under-resourced, understaffed, and overcrowded schools on top of the teachers. Then, cover with a layer of shredded competitive education policies and standardized tests, and a layer of increasing immigration trends. Finally, top with a whole box of blame. Bake at 500 degrees until the blame melts and acquires a golden shine, about 10 minutes. You now have a steamy education “crisis.”

Finally, when your guests arrive, hide the education crisis under the table and serve some educational inequality with a topping of brain drain.

**Enjoy!**
“[E]ducation is not an affair of ‘telling’ and being told, but an active and constructive process...” (Dewey, 1916, p. 38)

Scripted literacy programs, such as Direct Instruction (DI) and Success for All© (SFA), are externally developed prescriptive lesson plans that specifically dictate what, when, and how an educator teaches reading, writing, and language arts. This decontextualized curriculum and pedagogy rooted in behaviorism and found in predominately high poverty schools is antithetical to the tenets of culturally relevant teaching, which uses the local context, teacher, and whole child as a source of curriculum.

As a professor and supervisor of student teacher interns, it became clear that the culturally relevant teaching philosophy of our education programs were contradictory to the prescriptive pedagogy and curriculum used in many of our local schools that serve low-income students who are culturally and linguistically diverse. I wanted to know if and how alternatively prepared educators, who purported to be committed culturally relevant pedagogues, were negotiating their beliefs with the constraints of scripted lessons.

My research showed these educators negotiating what they had to do and what they wanted to do in regards to pedagogy and curriculum in various ways. They implemented the script to fidelity when administrators or SFA facilitators were watching, but when on their own, they altered the program according to their students’ needs. For instance, they found the scripted lessons were not rigorous enough for their students, so they altered and supplemented the scripts by:

- asking higher level thinking questions,
- changing required assignments to be more challenging and relevant,
- linking material to the students’ lives, and
- skipping many parts of the scripted lesson.

In addition, they included culturally relevant lessons and critical literacy activities throughout all of their content areas. These important findings are great examples as we teach and supervise students who are caught in this dichotomy between theory in teacher preparation and practice in local schools.

While my two participants were successfully subversive in implementing aspects of culturally relevant teaching despite the constraints of their scripted programs, we must remember that these are two educators out of thousands who are forced to use these prescriptive programs. What about the millions of students who are not lucky enough to have educators who teach beyond the scripts and challenge the status quo? Disparate educational access and low-level curriculum for African American students and low socio-economic status students contributes to the stratification of society. Consequently, this is a major civil rights and social justice issue that must be addressed by educators, researchers, parents/families, and policymakers.

References
Voices in the Treetops
Theatre and Pedagogy of the Oppressed


Influenced by the work of world renowned Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, who wrote Pedagogy of Oppressed, Augusto Boal (also Brazilian) innovated Theatre of the Oppressed using familiar forms of theatre games. On the surface, it seems as if you are participating in theatre games. However, the games are really an orchestrated forum for individuals from dispossessed, disenfranchised, and privileged populations to critique and transform their lived realities. The work is intended to inform and empower people to make their social conditions better. As Shelia Kerrigan emphasized, the techniques and activities of Theatre of the Oppressed are “not just theatre games” but activities that specifically tackle issues of power and address issues of oppression.

Past Highlights
Fostering the Collective and the Collaborative

Project South and GA NAME
Presented:
What is (y)our vision for educational justice in Georgia?

On June 30th, 2011 from 6-8pm, a collection of concerned and committed educators convened at the first Midnite School. Project South (www.projectsouth.com) and GA NAME co-hosted Teachers at the Center of Education Justice. This event was created as a direct response to the attack on teachers and the breakdown of education reform occurring in Georgia. According to Project South, “Midnite Schools were first organized by enslaved Africans to share critical literacies and successfully flee enslavement. We proudly lift up and reclaim this history, and we celebrate the teachers and community educators developing new literacies of liberation.”

The quest for educational justice has deep historic roots that continue to feed current day efforts. During this contemporary Midnite School, attendees were given a chance to examine, dream, and build. Attendees examined: What is educational justice, historically and currently? They shared their visions for educational justice and offered their perceptions on what they wanted and needed for our youth. In the last phase of the evening, we built strategies in the form of short and long term action steps to achieve educational justice.

The next Midnite School will be held on July 30, 2011 from 12:00-1:00 pm at Project South, 9 Gammon Avenue, Atlanta, GA 30315. Teachers, students, organizers, parents, family members, educators of all types, come let us know your vision for educational justice in Georgia.
TECHNOLOGY
Awesome Library—An organized collection of various types of resources available in 24 languages for all levels of students, parents, school administrators. www.awesomelibrary.org/Classroom/Social_Studies/Multicultural/Multicultural.html

Diversity Council—Designed to educate people to embrace diversity as a foundation for building a healthy, prosperous, and inclusive community. www.diversitycouncil.org

Kids Around the World—Uses Internet to connect US children with other children around the world geared towards developing sensitivity and understanding. www.katw.org/index.cfm

Teaching Tolerance—Tackles a variety of matters related to diversity across grade levels; provides school-wide focused resources; and offers free curricula to educators. www.tolerance.org

ARTICLE

BOOKS


“PoetTrees” of music, dance, drama, and community peace-building. Performances held by Voices in the Treetops, Inc. at the Clarkston Community Center. www.voicesinthetreetops.org

October 14-15, 2011 ➤ Georgia Association on Young Children (GAYC) Conference—2011 Together for Children, at the Gwinnett Center. 404-222-0014 or email, Serah Ashley Bailey at gaycconference@algxmail.com

Superman”. Savannah, GA, Contact: Dr. Gwendolyn Middlebrooks, ghmiddlebrooks@bellsouth.net or www.srate.org.


Submission Guidelines for
What’s the IDEA?
GA NAME Newsletter

Submission Guidelines and Considerations
GA NAME welcomes and encourages submissions from our readers and those interested in and dedicated to social justice and critical multicultural education.

Please let us know how you are “doing the work” and/or your great ideas on social justice and multicultural education.

Sections for Submissions:
Submission should relate to one of the following categories:

News Watch: Features commentary on current/timeless educational issues. Commentary must include the various perspectives on the issues followed by the author’s position and supporting arguments.

Doing the Work: “Spotlight” individuals, teachers, organizations, or researchers doing critical educational work on matters related to education (locally, nationally, and/or internationally.

The Arts: Features arts-based commentary and/or events supporting topics of multicultural education through various modes of creative expression—visual (graphic art/cartoons, etc.), movement, poetry, monologues, written music/lyrics, etc.

Book Reviews: Reviews books to inform and supplement under standing of ideas, concepts, and issues. Reviews should connect practice and theory.

Resource Highlights: This section will provides articles, books, technological and other resources for educators, students, families, and individuals interested in social justice and multicultural education.

International/Global: Addresses issues in global/international education that affect local and national education trends in the US.

Content:
Submissions should address the following considerations:

- Must speak to excellence and equity in education.
- May offer issues, concerns, or problems, but must include solutions and problem solving ideas/initiatives or critical questions for further inquiry.
- Links to the genres of multicultural education within or across your content area/sphere of influence.

Format:
Submissions should follow the following format:

- Include title of article, name of author(s), any affiliation(s), and contact info for lead contact person (email/phone);
- Indicate section of newsletter for submission
- 250-300 words (for written submissions);
- Typed in 12-point, Calibri font;
- Include a reference list of all citations/references where appropriate, and

Provide documented permission for the use of:

- any individual’s name and/or photos otherwise not cited in references, and/or
- any copyrighted material/visual images included in your submission.

Submit to:
ganame2010@gmail.com, or rmeeler@gsc.edu
Subject line: GA NAME Newsletter Submission.

A peer-review process is used for all submissions to be considered for the newsletter. The content will be vetted by several factors including alignment with chapter/national mission, quality of the representation of ideas, language bias, and length. Submissions are subject to editorial edits by the Newsletter Team members.

Submission Due Dates by Midnight EST:

Fall, 2011 Issue: August 5
Winter, 2012 Issue: October 5
Spring, 2012 Issue: January 5
Summer, 2012 Issue: April 5
"[T]he more radical the person is, the more fully he or she enters into reality so that, knowing it better, he or she can transform it. This individual is not afraid to confront, to listen, to see the world unveiled. This person is not afraid to meet the people or to enter into a dialogue with them. This person does not consider himself or herself the proprietor of history or of all people, or the liberator of the oppressed; but he or she does commit himself or herself, within history, to fight at their side."

~ Paulo Freire

The Pedagogy of the Oppressed

www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/41108.paulo_freire