ALL ABOARD: CHARTING A COMMUNITY-LINKED COURSE IN DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION

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Abstract: In this article, I outline the outcome of a research study into how community-linked learning (CLL) can be integrated into university education to deepen students' experience of development education (DE). DE in this study takes a critical pedagogy, postcolonial, and justice-orientated approach to learning. This critical theoretical foundation is an integral aspect of the research. The article explores how I as an educator, together with university students and local and international community partners, can understand how to make connections between local and global societal challenges and take action for positive change. Through meaningful engagement with communities, this approach provides transformative learning experiences that equip students with critical skills, knowledge, values, and methodologies to tackle global challenges. The article reflects on a study conducted using a critical ethnographic methodology, that involved collecting data from interviews, personal and collective narratives, focus groups, and participant observation. It found that CLL is highly effective in bridging local and global contexts, promoting social justice, and empowering both students and community partners as agents of change. The insights gained from participants highlighted the transformative nature of DE and emphasised its political essence, which has the potential to contribute towards a more just and sustainable world by fostering proactive communities and empowering individuals. Drawing on the works of critical theorists such as Freire, Gramsci, and Bourdieu, the study provides a nuanced understanding of how power, ideology, and social structures influence individuals' perspectives and actions, and how historical, political, and economic forces shape local and global issues. The study also addresses ethical considerations around power imbalances, autonomy, and agency of community partners, and emphasises the importance of moving from the personal to the political in DE practice. It concludes with optimism, showcasing how this methodology can enhance our understanding of global interconnectedness and contribute to a more equitable world.

Introduction

Higher education plays an important role in enabling students to become more socially conscious and globally aware people. DE, as a transformative pedagogy, facilitates students to act on global issues, with CLL as the bridge connecting academic insights to community interactions. By collaborating with communities, particularly those struggling in diverse ways, CLL offers experiential learning, grounding theoretical education in real-world scenarios. This article discusses one aspect of a five-year pedagogical study (including a one-year pilot study) using CLL, namely the use and impact of using storytelling in political activism. It examines the potential of CLL within DE, to understand local and global interconnectedness, foster change-driven narratives and take collection actions towards achieving more just societies.

The study and article take a critical pedagogical approach, involving the researcher as educator and mediator, connecting students and community partners for collective dialogue and action. The emphasis is on storytelling with a global social justice lens, while also addressing the ethical implications of this research model. Using narrative analysis, observation, surveys and interviews, a multi-faceted data collection captures the depth and range of experiences within the CLL-focused DE classroom. The article highlights the importance of moving from personal narratives to collective, political action both locally and internationally. This work aims to enrich discussions on CLL's merits and challenges in DE. It spotlights the perspectives of select community and student partners, showcasing the profound effects of a critical and justice-focused approach. By linking local challenges to global scenarios, the study equips participants with critical tools to challenge systemic disparities.

Literature review

By embracing CLL, DE pedagogy moves beyond a transactional, apolitical approach and encourages students to critically analyse power relations and systemic injustices (Apple, 2012: 138; 2018: 114). Students become active

participants in their own learning, recognising their agency in contributing to global solutions. Incorporating CLL into DE pedagogy raises ethical considerations related to power dynamics, community engagement, and student learning outcomes (Nussbaum, 2016: 13). Collaboration with community partners requires mutual respect, cultural sensitivity, and acknowledgment of differing levels of power and expertise (Gramsci, 1971: 141-142). Ethical challenges may also arise when students confront complex issues that evoke emotional responses and necessitate ongoing reflection on their positions and responsibilities as learners and activists (Titchkosky and Aubrecht, 2015: 79–94). DE's radical roots call for a seamless integration of theory and practice, while CLL provides students with opportunities to apply theoretical concepts in real-world settings, fostering praxis-oriented learning (Freire, 2000). By engaging in meaningful action for social change, learners bridge the gap between academic knowledge and transformative practice.

The 'radical roots' referred to above, refer in part to the foundational belief that impactful understanding and meaningful change stem not from the mere absorption of information, but from an active engagement with pressing global challenges. DE emphasises the importance of a seamless merging of theoretical understanding and its real-world application. Freire's (2000: 34) seminal work highlights this perspective:

> "Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom..."

Likewise, hooks (1994: 167) speaks about the idea of education as a practice of freedom. She calls for an engaged pedagogy that fosters critical thinking, self-examination, and transformation. Education, for hooks, is not just about the acquisition of knowledge but the ability to use that knowledge to challenge and change oppressive structures in society. More recent scholarship has reiterated this call for action-oriented learning. As Biesta (2009: 26) notes, the learnification of education makes it harder to ask questions about the direction and the destination of the educational processes we are engaged in. Biesta's emphasis is

on the necessity of purposeful, directed learning, not learning for the sake of learning.

The radical ethos of DE also highlights the inherent link between knowledge and action, and this has seen continued validation. Reflecting on the value of experiential learning, Dewey (1938: 90) posited that we learn from reflecting on experiences. Noddings (2013: 32) suggests that education, both of children and of adults, is more about the formation of people for a society, rather than about the acquisition of knowledge alone. By grounding learners in a space where theory meets practice, DE not only equips them to critically address complex global issues but empowers them towards tangible, transformative actions. In this continuously evolving educational landscape, DE's approach resonates even more strongly, emphasising that to truly comprehend and effect change, understanding and action must perpetually intertwine. CLL provides a bridge between local and global issues, offering students the opportunity to understand the interconnectedness of global challenges and their local manifestations (Giroux, 2020: 187). Through engagement with community partners and front-line activists, students witness how global systems, such as neoliberalism and colonial legacies, impact communities at the local level (Ogunyankin, 2019: 1). This experiential learning encourages students to critically examine the root causes of global issues and empowers them to take informed action for social justice.

By immersing students in local contexts, CLL promotes a deeper understanding of social issues and the complexities of community-driven development. As students engage in reciprocal partnerships with community members, they build empathy and cultural competence, which are vital attributes for addressing global challenges. Fine and Torre (2021: 3) argue that this integration enables students to analyse local issues from a global perspective and vice versa, fostering a nuanced understanding of the interconnectedness of global challenges. Moreover, it empowers students to develop critical thinking skills and a deep commitment to social and environmental justice. The impact of CLL and front-line activism on students and community partners is multifaceted. Students often experience transformative learning as they witness the realities of social exclusion, poverty, and injustice through personal interactions with community

members (Sen, 2007: 71). Such experiences challenge their assumptions, deepen their understanding of global issues, and motivate them to be proactive advocates for change (Corbett and Guilherme, 2021: 477). Community partners, in turn, benefit from students' involvement by amplifying their voices, gaining access to resources, and building collective narratives for advocacy (McIllrath et al, 2012: 1).

By engaging in advocacy, community partners not only demonstrate their agency in seeking social change but also safeguard against the pitfalls of mere representation without actual empowerment. This shift from personal storytelling to active political engagement ensures community partners are not just given a platform to speak but are empowered to meaningfully influence policy and amplify their voices on wider platforms. Táíwò (2022: 1) warns of the risk of such 'passing the mic' without deeper politicisations or collectivisation. He emphasises how identity politics, once a tool for radical solidarity and social critique, can be co-opted by elites and stripped of their liberatory potential.

As DE grapples with the complexities of global challenges, the need to link local and global issues becomes paramount. The works of Nussbaum (2016: 8-9) and Sen (2007: 1) emphasise the capabilities approach, wherein DE seeks to enhance the capabilities of individuals and communities to address local and global problems. This approach nurtures a sense of interconnectedness, encouraging learners to understand the interdependence of global issues and the potential for localised solutions.

While not emphasised greatly in this article, the study also explored the use of multimedia learning (MML) methodologies in the pedagogical process. In the digital age, technology serves as a powerful tool for global connectivity and knowledge exchange. Digital storytelling and web page creation is used in the study as a pedagogical methodology as are community radio and the creative arts. These various forms of 'telling a story' amplify the voices of communities and foster intercultural dialogue (Simons and Hicks, 2006: 77-90). This multimedia dimension enhances students' understanding of global issues and facilitates collaborations with individuals and communities across borders.

This literature review highlights the significance of incorporating community-linked learning in university education for DE. CLL offers a transformative approach to link local and global issues, foster political consciousness, and empower students as active agents of change. By embracing CLL, DE pedagogy can reconnect with its radical roots and cultivate a new generation of socially conscious, engaged global citizens. As hooks reminds us, 'Education as the practice of freedom... is the means by which we deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of our world' (hooks, 2023: 1).

Methodology

In this section I reflect on the outcomes of a research study conducted using a critical ethnographic approach, aligned with critical pedagogy, critical theory, and DE principles. Critical ethnography is a qualitative method that captures participants' perspectives while critically analysing power dynamics and inequalities. Carspecken (1996: x-xi) views critical ethnography as a form of social 'activism'. This resonates with the study's theoretical framework, facilitating a deep exploration of how CLL enhances DE pedagogy and bridges local-global connections. Embedded within this approach is Critical Participatory Action Research (CPAR), aligned with Freire's praxis concept. CPAR empowers participants as co-researchers, bridging theory and practice. It fosters collaboration among students, community partners, and educators, catalysing collective action for societal change (Fine and Torre, 2021: 3). Critical ethnography, as a qualitative research approach, goes beyond understanding social phenomena from participants' perspectives. It entails critically scrutinising power dynamics and systemic inequities that shape educational contexts (Carspecken, 1996: x-xi; Thomas, 1993: 31). This resonates with the broader theoretical framework of critical pedagogy, critical theory and DE principles.

Over five years, including an initial pilot with a minority ethnic group in Ireland, this study engaged with multiple student and community partnerships. The eventual study was informed greatly by the pilot study, as explained in the sections on 'Ethical Challenges' in the 'Findings' section below. This primary research engaged six student groups who voluntarily attended at least six sessions on DE. Embracing a Freirean-influenced critical pedagogical approach, sessions

covered DE theory, methodologies, skills development, and other student-selected themes like forced migration, climate justice, and gender issues. The study also involved working with community partners in Ireland and in global South countries. A broad range of projects were undertaken by participants, from digital storytelling and radio broadcasting to art exhibitions. The research explores the impact of this work on both partners and students and this article focuses on the 'storytelling' aspects of this work. Notable collaborations are summarised below:

Year 1

Project A. Online Intercultural Exchange (OIE). In collaboration with a Lesotho-based non-governmental organisation (NGO), this involved real-time workshops bringing University College Cork (UCC) students together with Lesotho professionals. Key student participant (KSP) 'Andy', a UCC 'international student' from the United States, collaborated with local community development workers in Lesotho. Ten online sessions covered DE themes, community leadership, and intercultural communications. The main highlight was the development of the NGO's strategic plan, including an intercultural communications strategy, identified as important for this particular organisation. Andy also worked, along with other students, as part of this research, with a local family carers group as well as with a local community radio.

Project B. Global Teacher Award Group (GTA 1). Student teachers at UCC took part in a Global Teacher Award organised with the Galway One World Centre. They designed critical Global Citizenship and Development Education (GCDE)-focused lesson outlines for their second level classrooms. A digital storytelling workshop partnered some of the students with people who were refugees or asylum seekers, living in Cork, mostly also studying at UCC. KSP 'Claire', a student teacher, and key community partner (KCP) 'Obafemi', an asylum seeker living in a Direct Provision Centre (government provision of accommodation and basic needs to those seeking asylum), were the primary research participants in this study.

Year 2

Cross Disciplinary Group (CDG). Fifteen students, including 'Andy', 'Claire', mentioned above, along with KSPs 'Finnuala', and 'Karen', took six, two-hour

DE workshops on a voluntary basis. They partnered with diverse community groups. For example, students working with family carers in Cork crafted digital stories, developed a website, created advocacy toolkits, and produced a radio show addressing global issues care workers face.

Year 3

Mixed Abilities Group (MAG). UCC students partnered with three disability service organisations. Over six workshops, participants explored global issues. Key participants were KSP 'Finnuala', a first year UCC student, and KCP 'Vera', who was moving to her new home after forty years in residential care. They also collaborated internationally with a service in Kerala, India.

Year 4

Professional Master's in Education (PME) students and Digital Humanity Students. These students, collaborating with a Yasidi Community in Northern Iraq, curated a public art exhibition reflecting the DE work in their second level classrooms. Notably, KSP 'Kerry' partnered with KCP 'Arba' a Yasidi representative from the displaced persons' camp. Her second-level students constructed a tent for the exhibition and recorded a radio programme.

This methodology helps to shed light on both the challenges and the transformative aspects of CLL's potential in DE. However, it is not without its limitations. The use of a small sample might pose challenges to generalisation, although the depth of understanding of the impact on individual students and community is deeply revealing. Furthermore, the researcher's dual role as both a participant and an observer can potentially influence data collection and analysis. However, it's worth noting that this dual role, often viewed as a limitation, also emerges as a considerable strength in this specific type of study. Engaging as both a participant and observer ensures a depth of understanding and an intimate connection to the subject matter that might be inaccessible through more detached research methods. This immersive approach fosters nuanced insights and a richer, more comprehensive understanding of CLL's impact in DE. The potential biases introduced by this closeness are mitigated by rigorous reflexivity, ensuring that the research remains both grounded and critically informed.

It should be noted that we worked with communities and not specifically with individuals, but for research purposes we focused on four key students (KSPs) and four key community partners (KCPs) who volunteered to be part of this study.

Results and findings

Of the many findings that emerged from the study regarding the experience of community partners, three important sets of findings are highlighted here. The first is the significance of 'telling my story', the second is the importance of moving from the 'personal' to the 'political', and the third relates to the ethical aspects of doing pedagogy and research using CLL methodologies.

The significance of 'telling my story'

One of the most significant findings of the study is the importance to community partners of 'telling their story', both individually and collectively. The theme highlights the often-overlooked reality that socially excluded individuals and communities frequently feel unheard. Providing a platform for unheard voices emerges as a cathartic experience for all community partners, students, and myself as the educator/researcher. In an era where technology provides the means for amplification, the accessibility to being heard can sometimes be taken for granted within a university setting. This finding cannot be overstated. Family carer Kathleen's powerful story about caring for her husband and not being heard by professionals around her, was of deep importance to her. This importance is encapsulated in a simple statement in her digital story, 'there is no denying it now'. However, months of producing three versions of her story, one for herself, one for advocacy reasons in her community of interest, and one for friends and family, brought a deep appreciation to students and to myself, of what that really meant to her. Somehow the existence of the recorded story on a public platform, meant that nobody could ever again deny that she had something to say but had been marginalised in the story of the husband she loved for fifty years.

Likewise Obafemi, living in the Irish Direct Provision accommodation system for people seeking asylum, echoed a similar sentiment in his digital story:

"I have these and safe forever now...my own story ... my own video in it. It's what it is. It's raw. It's going to pass across more emotions to people that watch it and bring questions to them".

Obafemi was aware that his narrative of life within the Irish Direct Provision system held educational and impact-driven value. He hoped his story would shed light on social injustices and at the same time the word 'dignity' was central to narrative. In the absence of a dignified life, his sense of autonomy over his own story was important to him.

Vera's personal journey out of institutional care after forty years also showcases the transformative potential of personal narratives. Vera's determination to move into her own home defied the scepticism she experienced from professionals, family and friends. She asserted:

"Believe in yourself and ignore the begrudgers because there will be people that will put you down anyway. If you want to do it, you do it. It's worth it to have your own front door".

Her story shows how the personal story can in itself be subversive, as she challenged powerful systems around her. It was an affirmation of self and an inspiration for others to embrace resilience and self-belief.

For Yasidi man, Arba, his desire to tell his story of despair and living in the harsh conditions of a refugee camp, was palpable. He sent copious numbers of images. They illustrate his interest in photojournalism and the power of images to tell a story. The images show the conditions of living in the camp. Some show the aftermath of a particularly harsh flooding event at the camp with images of people wading through the floods or the filth and debris inside tents in the wake of the storm.

Moving from the personal to the political and from the local to the global
A key part of my own learning was understanding how to move, along with participants, from the personal story to the political, both at a local community level and within the global justice contexts. The key community partners wanted

to tell a personal story, but they each also understood the power of the collective stories in relation to their communities of interest, each advocating for changes of various kinds. How community and student participants negotiated the transition from the personal to the political, differed depending on personal and community interests and strengths, but there are some overarching learnings. Wheelchair user Vera was highly aware of the subversive reality of her personal story. It was a story of personal courage but her desire to advocate for people with disabilities was always evident as she often said: 'I want to talk about what life is like for people with disabilities', to anyone who would listen, particularly with professionals she came into contact with. 'Sometimes people want to tell us what's good for us. I know my own mind'. Her advocacy was recognised by the Lord Mayor of Cork, with an arts award celebrating her and others.

Vera's story resonated with Nora, a refugee living and studying in Cork who spoke to the class. Vera identified with Nora's experiences, noting, 'we are on the same page'. Fionnuala, a first year social science student, described this moment as a revelation about power, privilege, and genuine connection, remarking, 'I would never have learned like this in the usual classroom'. For me as the educator, it was also a profound moment. While it seems like a simple exchange, in reality it was a multi-layered and complex 'knowing' by two people who had experienced institutional worlds, and a student who happens to have a particular interest in prisons. Such a comment also comes within a wider context of understanding the background to individual lives. Meanwhile an exchange with a disability service group in Kolkata highlighted the shared global pursuit of dignified lives. The group as a whole made a radio programme about what they had learned in the class. Fortuitously, one participant's sister, working in a Kenyan development agency, spoke to the group about her work in local radio to promote health across rural areas. KSP Finnuala found this 'real-world' learning transformative, boosting her confidence and fuelling her passion for advocating for human rights. The recurring theme of institutionalisation across the study, from asylum seekers to disability services, was of great interest to her. The students examined this through the lens of Gramsci's theory, exploring how institutions maintain dominance over socially excluded groups.

Family carer, Kathleen, also harnessed her personal experiences to fuel a collective advocacy. She and her group, working with some of the students, worked on their collective messaging in a run up to a general election in Ireland. Along with students, they created an advocacy toolkit and made videos about their stories, which are available on a website and engaged with politicians. With regard to their interest in professional formation they also visited UCC's nursing and social science staff and students. In Kathleen's words, 'the personal is political and the political is personal'. Andy, partnering with the carers' group, extended his advocacy to a global scale. In the classroom with other students and on a radio show, he emphasised the importance of care work in economies and how this related to gender inequality. He highlighted Oxfam's campaign on the experiences of Malian women. This international perspective encouraged mutual learning. For the visiting family carer delegation who came to meet the class, global economic realities were clearer and they realised that in fact they were the teachers in this context. The local-global nexus was now much closer and no longer remote or irrelevant.

Claire, a student teacher, believed that CLL could advance DE, viewing it as the ideal space for students to experience engaged citizenship. 'How else can we gain DE skills?', she said. Claire thought of DE as challenging broader global systems, often discussing the impact of neoliberalism. She felt that promoting solidarity and deep dialogue was very important. Her ability to correlate global gender norms with personal experiences was evident as she collaborated with Andy, and her support for younger students was invaluable. She also played a key role in establishing UCC's 'Friends of Refugees' group, along with other students. Claire attended a three-day digital storytelling workshop along with other participants, some of whom were from refugee communities in Cork. Referring to the film-making process, she felt that the group were 'creating something together' and she highlighted in particular the significance of informal learning spaces, in the car, over lunch or simply at the coffee break, where 'deeper', 'authentic', sometimes 'uncomfortable' conversations took place. She was interested in Freire and referred to his ideas about dialogue. In her more formal journal reflection, she wrote about how Freire does not consider dialogue as simply the interaction between people to explore the world together, it is also

a sign of freedom, equality, and responsibility in discovering and transforming the world of every human being.

Obafemi, sharing his journey of living in Direct Provision, emphasised the emotional power of stories but was also interested in the educational impact of the stories of this group. Waleed, a Palestinian-born doctoral student, offered a critical perspective, questioning the real beneficiaries of this type of education. This kind of critical conversation was welcome, as Claire said 'uncomfortable', but necessary. The question of 'who benefits' concerned me greatly as an educator throughout this process to such an extent that I wrote a poem about my dilemma. It seemed the only way to truly express the conflict between 'doing nothing' and the complex questions about 'who benefits'.

Arba, a Yazidi representative, shared the harrowing experience of his community's displacement due to persecution by ISIS in 2014. The subsequent art installation, guided by trainee teacher Kerry, showcased the empathy and understanding of secondary school pupils. Their action included raising awareness at a public exhibition, where they remade the tent they had made in class. They also participated in a radio show and with the help of UCC digital humanities students also contributed to making a website, thus leaving lasting digital footprints.

The educator's role went beyond teaching. It involved identifying learning opportunities and understanding that personal experiences happen in the context of broader societal structures. By transitioning from personal stories to political activism, community partners and students took actions to impact policy or raise their voices on broader platforms. This speaks to DE's action-led origins, which emphasise challenging power hierarchies and advocating for justice. At the heart of this pedagogy is attention to Táíwò's (2022) work on critiquing identity politics and how stories can be coopted by elites. Instead, DE in this study attempts to focus on being a community-led, co-creation, challenging power, advocating justice, and seeking a society where representation translates to genuine change.

Ethical challenges and practical considerations

The study was not without challenges. Some of the most important findings of the research relate to integrity or ethical considerations as the various partnerships progressed. These were great learning moments for all, leading to ongoing discussions and negotiations with individuals, students, and community groups. An important issue was the autonomy of community partners and their ability to lead and benefit from such research. This lesson was learned very well in the pilot year of the study, which deeply informed the approach to the study. I had hoped to work with a particular women's group in a local minority ethnic group for this research. I found that such was the power of local barriers and the 'pre-developmental' stage at which this group found themselves, their willing participation in an autonomous manner was deeply problematic. While I completed my commitments to this group, I learned much about the importance of autonomy and the ability of partners to lead and benefit from this particular type of GCDE research. Organisations like Family Carers or the Lesotho community were much further along their community development or activist journeys. Their prior learnings and engagement with ongoing initiatives enabled them to benefit from what the partnership could offer but also to lead and teach students from their real-world experiences, both personal experiences and their community and activist experiences.

Another ethical challenge related to accreditation, especially in postcolonial contexts like Lesotho or with people who were asylum seekers. Despite efforts to manage expectations, issues of European qualification and privilege persisted. The Lesotho group desired Irish accreditation, demonstrating the complexities of global education dynamics. Additionally, the financial expectations of some participants, including Arba, created ethical dilemmas, raising questions of exploitation, agency, and autonomy. Questions also arose within class and workshop dialogues regarding who benefits from research of this kind. Obafemi, living in Direct Provision, questioned the impact of storytelling on decision-makers. As a member of one of the bigger political parties in Ireland, where he heard much about how happy they were to include him in their party, he was confused to find himself, after nine years, in the Direct Provision system. In our conversations, he emphasised the importance of clarity of purpose and meaningful engagement in educational work of this kind. One critique by

students at the digital storytelling workshop also related to clarity of purpose. While the purpose of the workshop became clearer as the three days unfolded, some earlier scaffolding would have helped. While this relates to my own shortcomings as an educator, it is very helpful in understanding the student experience. Also in this workshop, the external facilitator's influence on stories raised concerns about agency and public representation, with varied and nuanced perspectives on whether decisions should be made for participants.

Practical challenges, such as time, technology access, and support for vulnerable individuals, emerged throughout the research. The resource-intensive nature of the CLL and MML approaches required recording online classes, addressing technical difficulties, and significant time investment in creating digital stories with carers and people with disabilities. Organisational support, both in Cork and Lesotho, was crucial for success, leading to a recognition that normalising this level of support within the education system would be needed in order to align with community needs and also carry out meaningful research of this kind. To conclude, the study's insights highlight the need to go beyond what a standard ethical statement might contain. Ethics and integrity were relational and needed to be negotiated and renegotiated. There also needed to be clearer communication with students at initial stages to clarify purpose, and meaningful institutional alignment with community needs.

Discussion and conclusion

In terms of development education as a field of study, this research highlights the relevance of DE in challenging times and it reaffirms the discipline's radical roots, emphasising the importance of challenging power structures and advocating for justice. It counters the dangers of superficial engagement and underscores the need for substantive change rather than token gestures that serve elite interests. The importance of ethics and integrity in DE cannot be overstated. The study has shown that these principles are not static but dynamic, requiring ongoing negotiation and communication. Clarity of purpose, meaningful institutional alignment with community needs, and ethical considerations are essential for the successful practice of DE. In terms of research in this field, for this particular study critical ethnography very much aligned with the deliberate focus on active citizenship engagement with political and justice frameworks. The

study shows that DE is not confined to the classroom but extends to the heart of society, challenging power structures and advocating for a more just and equitable world. It exemplifies how individual voices, when united, can amplify their impact and drive positive change. DE's radical tradition can and must thrive, ensuring that independent voices within academia and society have the safe spaces they need to challenge injustice.

In summary, the pedagogy involved students, community partners and educator engaging in an intentionally political, critically reflective and action-orientated pedagogy, with a DE lens. We walked from the personal to the political and the global through integrated personal narratives, critical analysis, grounded theory, justice focused intercultural dialogue and transformative pedagogy. This approach allowed for a deep understanding of how local experiences are interconnected with broader political and global issues, fostering transformative learning and empowering participants to become advocates for change.

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Note: All of the names in this article are pseudonyms. The article is dedicated to 'Vera' who has passed away since this research took place. She contributed greatly to our learning and she is deeply missed and appreciated.

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