

Radical? Open?

"During my graduate years I heard myself speaking often in the voice of resistance. I cannot say that my speech was welcomed. I cannot say that my speech was heard in such a way that it altered relations between colonizer and colonized. Yet what I have noticed is that those scholars, most especially those who name themselves radical critical thinkers, feminist thinkers, now fully participate in the construction of a discourse about the 'Other.' I was made 'Other' there in that space with them. In that space in the margins, that lived-in segregated world of my past and present. They did not meet me there in that space. They met me at the center. They greeted me as colonizers. I am waiting to learn from them the path of their resistance, of how it came to be that they were able to surrender the power to act as colonizers. I am waiting for them to bear witness, to give testimony. ...

"I am located in the margin. I make a definite distinction between that marginality which is imposed by oppressive structures and that marginality one chooses as site of resistance—as location of radical openness and possibility. This site of resistance is continually formed in that segregated culture of opposition that is our critical response to domination. We come to this space through suffering and pain, through struggle. We know struggle to be that which pleasures, delights, and fulfills desire. We are transformed, individually, collectively, as we make radical creative space which affirms and sustains our subjectivity, which gives us a new location from which to articulate our sense of the world."

—bell hooks, "Choosing the Margin as a Space of Radical Openness", *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics*

The word *syllabus* begins in **misreading or misprinting**: someone (probably in the 17th century) misread the Greek (?) word *sittybas* ("parchment label or title-slip on a book" according to the OED) as *syllabos* or *sillabos*, a word that did not previously exist. Thus, a syllabus is, etymologically speaking, imaginary — or, rather, it is an error.

A revolutionary poem will not tell you who or when to kill, what and when to burn, or even how to theorize. It reminds you (for you have known, somehow, all along, maybe lost track) where and when and how you are living and might live — it is a wick of desire. ...

Any truly revolutionary art is an alchemy through which waste, greed, brutality, frozen indifference, "blind sorrow," and anger are transmuted into some drenching recognition of the *What if* — the possible. *What if* — ? — the first revolutionary question, the question dying forces don't know how to ask.

—Adrienne Rich, *What Is Found There*

Our goal in this article is to remind readers what is unsettling about decolonization. Decolonization brings about the repatriation of Indigenous land and life; it is not a metaphor for other things we want to do to improve our societies and schools. The easy adoption of decolonizing discourse by educational advocacy and scholarship, evidenced by the increasing number of calls to "decolonize our schools," or use "decolonizing methods," or, "decolonize student thinking", turns decolonization into a metaphor. As important as their goals may be, social justice, critical methodologies, or approaches that decenter settler perspectives have objectives that may be incomensurable with decolonization. Because settler colonialism is built upon an entangled triad structure of settler - native - slave, the decolonial desires of white, non - white, immigrant, postcolonial, and oppressed people, can similarly be entangled in resettlement, reoccupation, and reinhabitation that actually further settler colonialism. The metaphorization of decolonization makes possible a set of evasions, or "settler moves to innocence", that problematically attempt to reconcile settler guilt and complicity, and rescue settler futurity. In this article, we analyze multiple settler moves towards innocence in order to forward "an ethic of incommensurability" that recognizes what is distinct and what is sovereign for project(s) of decolonization in relation to human and civil rights based social justice projects. We also point to unsettling themes within transnational/ Third World decolonizations, abolition, and critical space - place pedagogies, which challenge the coalescence of social justice endeavors, making room for more meaningful potential alliances.

—Eve Tuck & K. Wayne Yang, abstract to "Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor", *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2012, pp. 1-40

from How Humans Learn by Joshua R. Eyler

p.12

It stands to reason...that if we notice similar patterns emerging from psychology, evolutionary biology, and neuroscience, then they might together help us understand how human beings learn. The particular patterns I noticed from the literature in these fields turned out to be

curiosity
sociality
emotion
authenticity
failure

FOR CONSIDERATION:

Where in the design of our courses do we make space for the 5 items above?

Consider emotion: One of Eyler's key takeaways is: "Positive emotions such as happiness, joy, and humor are beneficial for student learning, but they are seldom part of our conversation about teaching in higher education." (Also: wonder.)

What is the error climate of your course? (p.208)

1. Error tolerance by the teacher
2. Irrelevance of errors for assessment
3. Teacher support following errors
4. Absences of negative teacher reactions
5. Absence of negative classmate reactions
6. Taking the error risk
7. Analysis of errors
8. Functionality of errors for learning

See Patricia Taylor's syllabus statement about error (in Eyler's book pp.209-210).

"Our brains are adept at learning from failure, and in many ways they evolved for this purpose" (Eyler 216).