



THE ROLE OF ENVIRONMENT AND SPACE IN THE REGGIO EMILIA APPROACH

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in DEWEY's words the ENVIRONMENT consists of

- **CONDITIONS TO PROMOTE OR HINDER, STIMULATE OR INHIBIT THE CHARACTERISTIC ACTIVITIES OF A LIVING BEING**

- **FIELD WHERE THE NETWORKS OF RELATIONSHIPS, INTERCONNECTIONS, AND INTERACTIONS BETWEEN ENTITIES OCCUR**

in FOULKES's words the ENVIRONMENT consists of

- SYMBOLIC SETTING WHERE ARCHETYPES COME ALIVE

In connection with

the cultural foundation matrix

the here and now of the group
dynamic matrix

My intent today is to analyse REA through the lenses of psychoanalysis (esp. GA)



Look at the **HISTORY** of REA as its **FOUNDATION MATRIX**



Look at REA's educational pillars as its **DYNAMIC MATRIX**



Highlight the **POLITICAL TRANSPERSONAL** of both

In 1945 Malaguzzi visited the VILLA CELLA school...




TAKING AUTHORITY – OWNING - EMPOWERING

- The **SPACE** of a school became that of a **COLLECTIVE BODY**
 - A space **FOR** and **OF** the community

• **ROLE OF PARENTS**
(FIRST TEACHER)

• **ROLE OF EDUCATORS**
(SECOND TEACHER)



desire to provide
children OF WAR with an
enriching environment

**Reggio schools came to emphasize art and the beauty of the classroom.
Children were encouraged to pursue their own projects and to use
materials from nature in their work.**

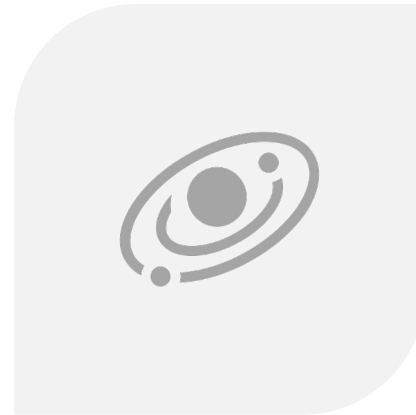
“That a tank, six horses and three trucks generated a children school was an extraordinary event. That it still exists is what it deserved” (LM)



FOUNDATION MATRIX



**SPACE AS COMMON
ENVIRONMENT**



**SPACE AS REVOLUTIONARY
EDUCATION**



SPACE AS POLITICAL

REA EDUCATIONAL PILLARS ₁

Child as an Active Participant



The Hundred Languages of Children



REA EDUCATIONAL PILLARS ₂

Emergent Curriculum



The ATELIER and the aesthetics

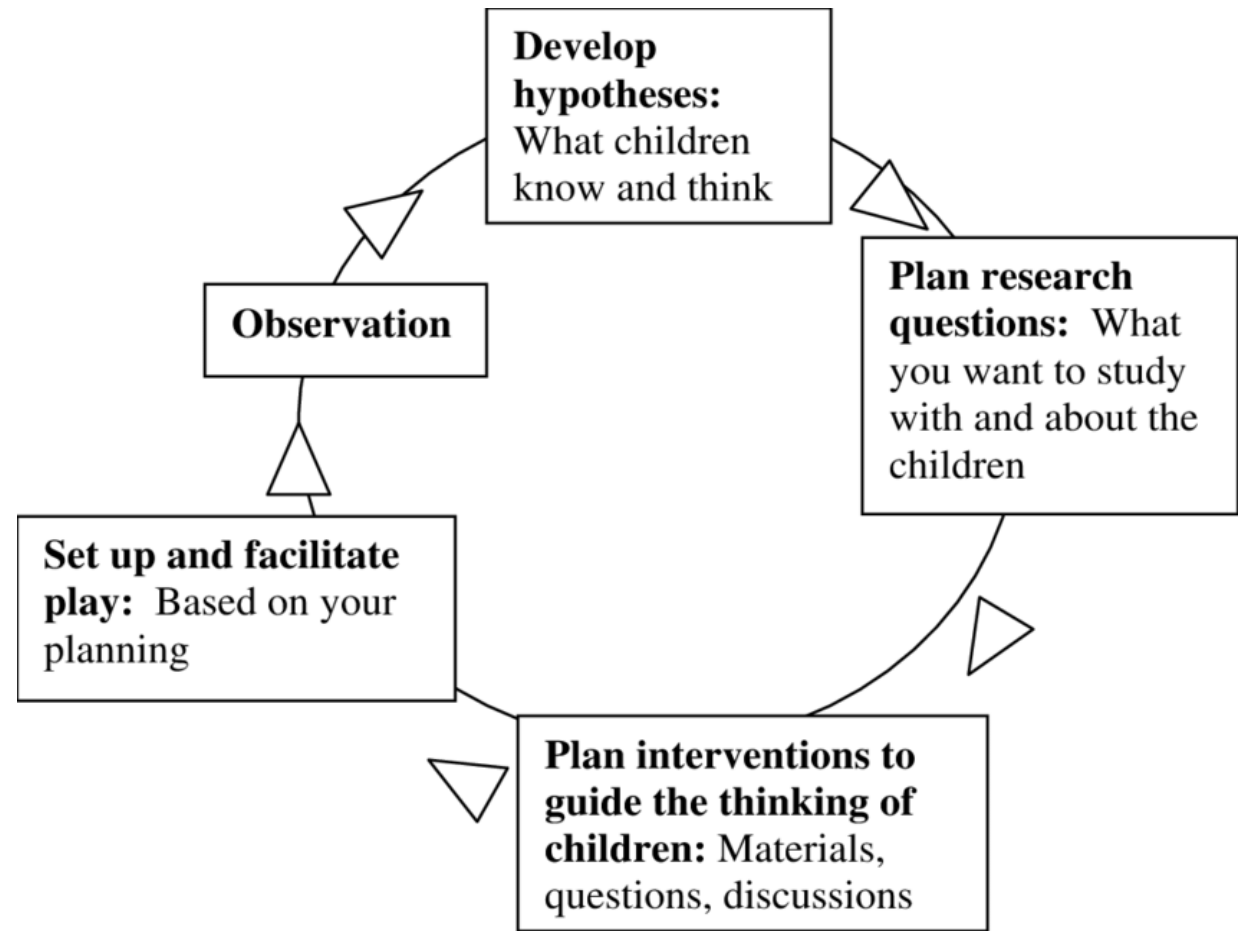


REA EDUCATIONAL PILLARS ₃

Documentation



Co-construction & Designing



REA EDUCATIONAL PILLARS ₄

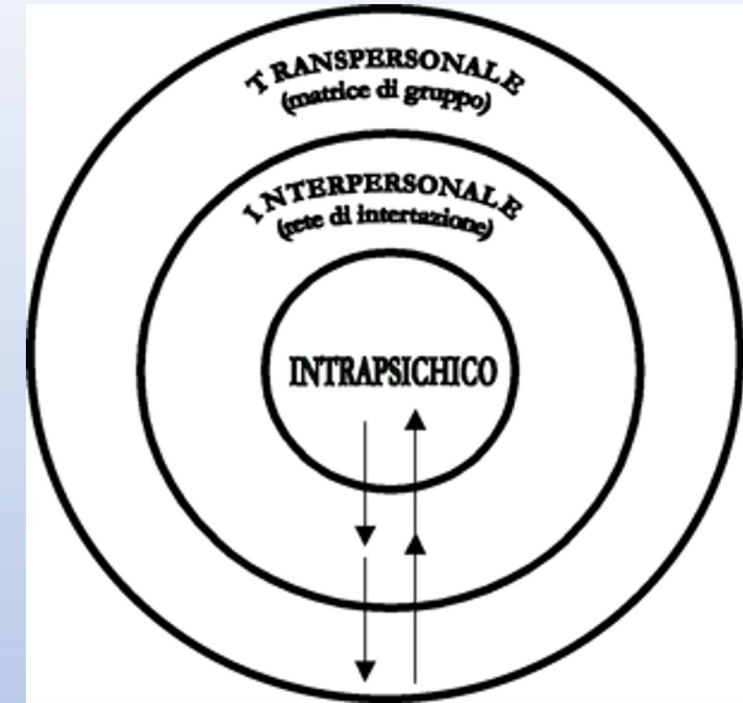
Environment and Spaces: the THIRD TEACHER



let's use GA to interpret such pillars as elements of the DYNAMIC MATRIX of REA

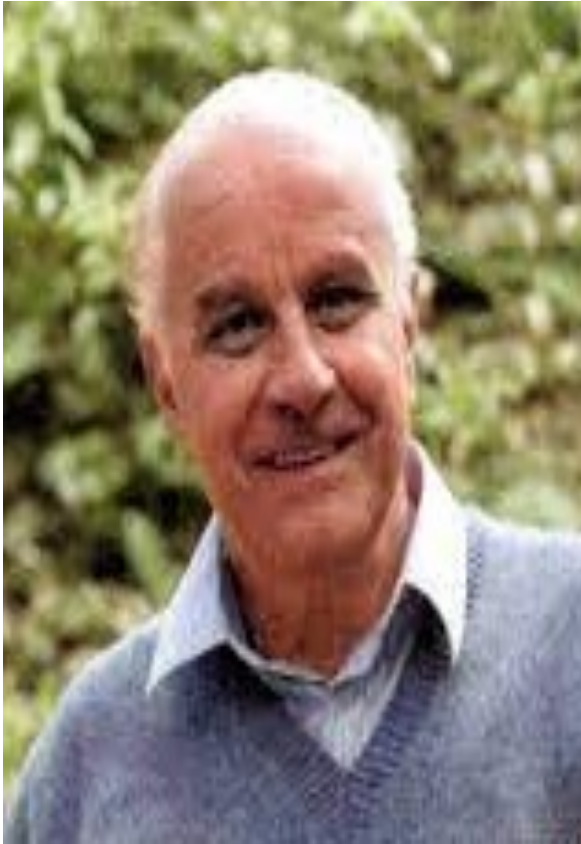
GROUP MATRIX

LEVELS OF COMMUNICATIONS



1. VISIBLE LEVEL: COMMUNITY, SOCIETY, PUBLIC OPINION
2. TRANSFERENCE LEVEL: MATURE OBJECT RELATIONS. GROUP REPRESENTS THE FAMILY (MOTHER, FATHER, SIBLINGS)
3. PROJECTIVE LEVEL: OTHER MEMBERS AS PART OF THE SELF, PART OF BODY
4. PRIMORDIAL LEVEL: SOCIAL UNCONSCIOUS + ARCHETYPES

Please bear in mind that this exercise can be done for each pillar/level of REA



- **IMPORTANCE OF EARLY EXPERIENCES**
- **VALUE OF EXPLORATION AND SELF-EXPRESSION**
- **EMPHASIS ON RELATIONS AND INTERACTIONS**
- **RECOGNITION OF THE UNCONSCIOUS**
- **IMPORTANCE OF REFLECTION**
- **ROLE OF THE ENVIRONMENT**

TRANSITIONAL SPACE & SAFE SPACE

INTRODUCED BY D.W. WINNICOTT

- intermediate area of experience between the subjective inner world and the shared outer world. It's in this space that play, creativity, and cultural experience live.
- The environment can have a crucial role in facilitating or constraining the availability of such transitional spaces.

INTRODUCED BY J. BOWLBY & M. AINSWORTH

- A place that symbolizes roots, sense of stability and protection
- Also a space where to make sense of experiences
- Such space needs to be reliable, free from intrusion, and predictable. This safe space enables children to explore their deepest fears, anxieties, and feelings without being threatened or judged by the adults.

SET

&

SETTING

VISIBLE SPACE

- it includes explicit variables that define the territory, the boundaries, the characteristics and the fundamental rules of the existence of the group situation
- the number of members (children/adults), the presence or absence of tables/shelves/mattresses/lights/kitchen, the venue, the duration of a school day, the type of contract, etc.

PSYCHIC ORGANIZER, A SHARED MENTAL FIELD

- The theoretical, technical and personal framework of the designer of the edu space made by theories, values, emotions, etc.
- A shared mental field that allows all participants to reflect on phenomena and experiences and to give them meaning, in order to create new connections and relationships
- It is something that evolves and transforms.

SET-TING

(Di Maria, Lo Verso)

- It is a the symbolic space where both the personal matrixes of all the members of the field and dynamic matrix of the "here and now" come into play.
- It is connected with the concept of the *countertransference field*
- It unveils how within the group field historical, subjective mental universes are activated and intertwine.

The psychodynamic nature of the
REA ENVIRONMENT is a SPACE SET-TING

A sort of **SPACE-AS IF** that becomes **SPACE-WITH**
through a so-called **SPACE-INFRA**

REA SCHOOL as a
SPACE AS IF

WHERE IN AND OUT
ARE ONE



REA SCHOOL as a
SPACE-INFRA

WHERE PROCESSES
MATTER MORE THAN
OUTCOMES



REA SCHOOL as a
SPACE-WITH

WHERE CONNECTIONS
ARE MADE AND
COMMUNITY IS
NURTURED



IN REA, SPACE IS POLITICAL

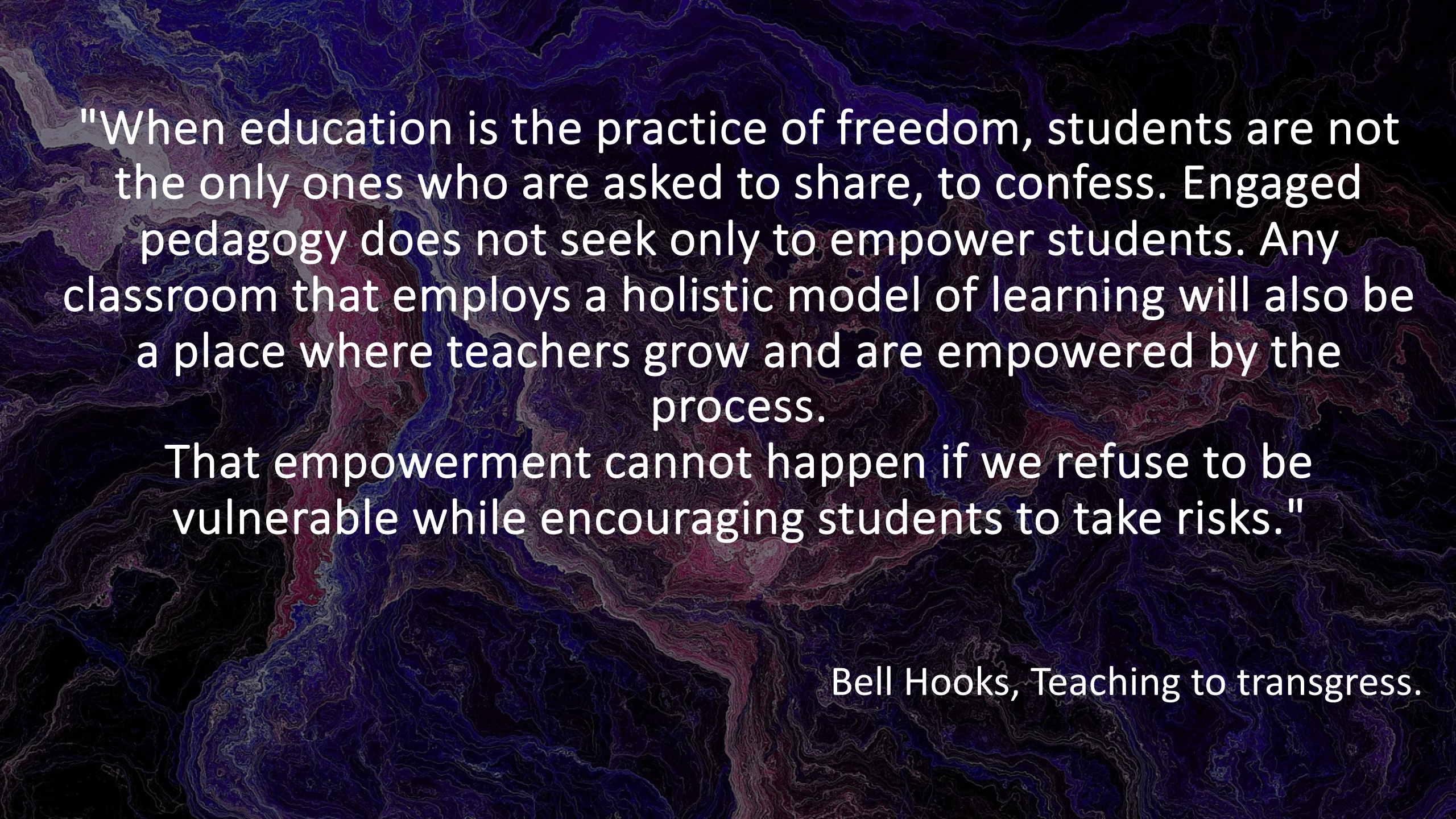
Being TRANSPERSONAL,
based on a REVOLUTIONARY FOUNDATION MATRIX,
promoting DEMOCRATIC VALUES

TO EDUCATE IS A POLITICAL ACT

- IT IS ABOUT CHOOSING WHAT AND HOW TO TEACH
- IT IS ABOUT BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS

(COMMUNITY= *POLIS* → POLITICAL)

- WHEN LEARNING IS AN ACT OF AUTHORITY (A CHOICE TO EXPLORE RESISTANCES, TO CHALLENGE PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE, TO TAKE A ROLE IN THE GROUP AND BE ACCOUNTABLE FOR ITS CONSEQUENCES) IT IS ALSO POLITICAL



"When education is the practice of freedom, students are not the only ones who are asked to share, to confess. Engaged pedagogy does not seek only to empower students. Any classroom that employs a holistic model of learning will also be a place where teachers grow and are empowered by the process.

That empowerment cannot happen if we refuse to be vulnerable while encouraging students to take risks."

Bell Hooks, Teaching to transgress.



Thank you

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