

Protest as Pedagogy: Teaching, Learning and Indigenous Environmental Movements

Gregory Lowan-Trudeau, New York: Peter Lang, 2019.

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Protest as Pedagogy takes the reader on critical journey through the complexities, tensions and pedagogical possibilities of teaching and learning about contemporary Indigenous environmental issues and Indigenous environmental movements. Lowan-Trudeau weaves Indigenous and Western scholarship, with experience and insights from educators and activists to explore what are complex fields of teaching, learning and inquiry. Its strengths are in the richness of the narratives, the theoretical and conceptual depth and breadth, and in the use of multiple methodologies, in particular the literary tradition of 'métissage' (p. 22).

Protest as Pedagogy is presented in three parts. Part one sees Lowan-Trudeau position himself culturally, geographically, politically and professional in relation to teaching, learning, activism and advocacy on Indigenous environmental issues. Section two shares insights from conversations with activists and educators through two interview-based studies of Indigenous environmental social movements. In section three Lowan-Trudeau suggests possible future directions for teaching, learning and research about Indigenous environmental issues.

Lowan-Trudeau introduces himself as a Metis scholar, academic, educator and activist of mixed Indigenous and European (Swiss and Norwegian) ancestry who was born and raised in Moh-kins-tsis (Calgary, Canada). Describing Calgary as a beautiful city with 'sweeping mountain views and clear glacial water flowing in from the south and north west', (p.4), he immediately juxtaposes the beauty of the land with its position as the centre of oil and gas development in Canada. Juxtapositions such as these are used intentionally throughout *Pedagogy as Protest*, as Lowan-Trudeau weaves powerful personal narratives with Indigenous and Western scholarship and insights from his research with educators and activists. Lowan-Trudeau masterfully integrates Indigenous and Western knowledges and scholarship to reflect from his positioning as an educator activist, responding to questions that have surfaced during his teaching, learning and research practice over the previous fifteen years.

Lowan-Trudeau presents narratives to help make sense of personal experiences, cultural and ancestral history, and Indigenous identity while narrating a 'critical Indigenous pedagogy of place', drawing on Gruenewald/Greenwood's (2003) *Critical Pedagogy of Place*. Bringing together insights from Indigenous and Western scholarship, and research around the world, he insightfully explores tensions and complexities involved in place-based teaching, learning and research that draw on Indigenous knowledges. He discusses the need for place-based pedagogies and critical pedagogies to address contemporary cultural and social issues such as colonisation, Indigenous displacement and environmental violence and injustices. He suggests that with skilful facilitation, approaches that embrace critical and place-based Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies might be transformative for Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators alike.

The concluding section of Chapter 2, in which Lowan-Trudeau narrates experiencing a familiarity with ancestral lands that left him with 'deep questions regarding how I might continue reconnecting and supporting this work from afar' (p. 26) resonates with my own experiences of feeling familiarity with particular lands. This sense of familiarity shapes my pedagogy, practice and environmental activism, even as a white woman of European ancestry living on unceded first nations land in Australia.

Narratives such as these are woven throughout *Protest as Pedagogy*, and are a powerful way for Lowan-Trudeau to introduce and reflect on critical issues in teaching and learning practice for

activists, educators and activist educators. He covers Indigenous identity, disconnection and dis-possession, displacement, colonisation and enduring connections to ancestral lands that are felt by Indigenous peoples, linking these with Western and Indigenous scholarship to firstly narrate a critical Indigenous pedagogy of place, then to discuss the pedagogical potential of Indigenous social movements, and then to explore the tensions involved in teaching about Indigenous environmental issues.

Chapter Six may resonate with those who similarly walk the path of activist and environmental educator, with Lowan-Trudeau describing some of the strategies he employs to manage the stresses and tensions that arise. He notes that educator burnout was a helpful concept for thinking through these tensions. Section one concludes with Lowan-Trudeau providing accounts of the political, legal, activist, advocacy and educative potential of a number of key environmental justice issues, including the Northern Gateway pipeline proposal, and Trans Canada's Keystone XL and the protests at Standing Rock. He uses social movement learning to discuss the pedagogical potential of these issues and events, highlighting the ways interactions between and within different contexts act as opportunities for learning.

Lowan-Trudeau uses Part Two to explore teaching and learning in Indigenous environmental movements. He explains a variety of ways Indigenous peoples and allies take up resistance against the types of natural resource developments introduced in earlier parts of the book, discussing Circumstantial Activism (Ollis, 2011), Eisner's (2002) three curricula, social movement leadership (Clover, 2010; Hall, 2009) and Indigenous cultural practices and protocols. He also describes the ways activist educators manage tensions, or avoid, diffuse and reframe conflicts, as they introduce Indigenous environmental issues into their classrooms. Explaining the plurality of protest, and the multitude of forms that activism can take (including the artistic and creative), Lowan-Trudeau reveals possibilities for educators and activists whose ways of protesting might not be as explicit as participating in rallies or resistance. Lowan-Trudeau argues for educator reflexivity around their practices, noting 'the process of moving from self to community awareness . . . shared individual and collective practices of honouring and revitalising Indigenous traditions to reconnect to culture and place as the ultimate form of resistance and learning' (p. 84).

Part Three offers a range of future directions for Indigenous and non-Indigenous environmental educators and activists, with Lowan-Trudeau suggesting there has been a resurgence and re-visioning of Indigenous traditions, alongside the resistance and protests relating to land use for oil and gas projects. He brings us back to the earlier narration of a critical Indigenous pedagogy of place, highlighting the importance of Indigenous ways of knowing and explaining the growth in land-based education programmes across Canada. While these programmes vary depending on their location, he says, they are 'united by an intention to revive, renew, preserve and share traditional environmental knowledges and philosophies through experiential outdoor approaches' (p.131) This is activism which shifts from protest to proposal (Hall, 2009) as a way of resisting environmentally damaging land-use by reinvigorating traditional Indigenous knowledges through alternatives that include community-based renewable energy projects. Taking up the cautious optimism expressed in Chapter three, Lowan-Trudeau explores both the potential for such projects (which are possible with governments who are more supportive of Indigenous and environmental rights) and the challenges, which are related to the political nature of Indigenous environmental activism. Noting there are similar projects occurring internationally, he highlights opportunities for sharing of information between Indigenous communities globally.

Lowan-Trudeau concludes *Protest as Pedagogy* by noticing the slow, steady changes occurring within his own institution, which is now explicitly supporting teaching, learning and research on environmental justice issues, as well as issues of land use, extractivism, capitalism, colonialism, dispossession, Indigenous social and environmental justice and the tensions and challenges inherent in teaching about these. Given this shift and the current context of change, Lowan-Trudeau (p. 66) asks, 'where might we invest our energy as socially and environmentally

concerned educators, activists and researchers? This is a question that those of us working in similarly contested spaces might ask.

Protest as Pedagogy touches on a range of significant contemporary issues that will be familiar to educators and researchers working with, in and at the intersections of Indigenous and environmental education. A key strength of *Protest as Pedagogy* is in the narratives, which have a potent and surprising outcome of highlighting resonances with my own activist, teaching, learning and research experiences. In embracing and modelling métissage, Lowan-Trudeau narrates a powerful work grounded in the experiences of teaching, learning and researching about Indigenous environmental movements and issues that blends Indigenous and Western scholarship. It offers multiple opportunities for Indigenous and non-Indigenous activists, educators and scholars to reflexively consider their own teaching, learning and research practices in relation to these many tensions and issues.

Protest as Pedagogy will have resonances for environmental educators and activist educators who are interested in engaging critically with tensions and challenges in their teaching, learning and research; those working towards Indigenous and environmental justice; those wishing to explore pedagogical possibilities of social movement learning and critical pedagogies of place; and for educators reflecting on how to foster critical engagement in relation to environmental issues with those they teach.

References

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Arts Programming for the Anthropocene

Bill Gilbert & Anicca Cox, Oxfordshire, England, UK: Routledge, 2018.

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The book *Arts Programming for the Anthropocene* shares experiences and insights into field programming where students can learn about art, culture and the environment with others in natural environments or environments of social or cultural significance. The main objectives of the book are to showcase the rich work of those engaged in five field-based art programmes that involve environmental art, collaboration and social practices in transdisciplinary ways, to build a case for field programming in the arts.

Because the field programmes are arts based, this book would be of primary interest to those in art education but it would also be useful for policy makers, those in government or leading