Chapter 8
Towards a Critical Pedagogy of Engagement

Abstract This chapter has two objectives. The first is to develop proposals for classroom practices based on principles outlined by selected critical theorists. Here I provide living examples of how teachers already practice in a critical pedagogy of engagement to achieve four purposes: exposing ideological dominance, developing critical consciousness, fostering empowered learners and acting to change society. The second objective is to develop proposals for classroom practice beyond the mainstream bringing together suggestions for practice from both critical theory and mainstream student engagement. This merging process changes the purposes outlined for a critical pedagogy to a mixed engagement pedagogy beyond the mainstream built around learner agency, learner success, learner well-being and learning fairness.

Translating theory into practice is challenging. But such a translation is the purpose of this chapter. In the previous chapter, I used ideas from selected critical theorists to sketch a vision for society that would take higher education and student engagement beyond the neoliberal mainstream. In this chapter, I translate this vision into an emergent critical pedagogy of student engagement and ideas for practice. The word *praxis* comes to mind when considering transitions between critical theory and practice (Freire 1972). For Freire praxis is made up of two inseparable parts: critical reflection and action. Critical reflection raises consciousness about the reality of the educative process; about the restraints and opportunities offered by education. According to Cruz (2013) it enables students and teachers alike to obtain a clearer understanding of the forces that shape their lives including learning, teaching and student engagement. Critical reflection offers pathways to action; to methods and processes that help implement findings from critical reflection. Such actions include both learning and teaching in ways not considered by the mainstream. Sutton (2015) suggests that action can result in a pedagogy *in* itself; one that is contained within the neoliberal mode of knowledge production. But praxis leads to a pedagogy *for* itself; one that is committed to unveiling possibilities beyond the mainstream with opportunities for individual and social transformation. According to Barnett and Coate (2005) a pedagogy *for* itself opens up new ways of being, knowing and doing.

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The chapter unfolds in three stages. It first critically reflects on the theories discussed in the previous chapter to sketch directions for practice beyond the mainstream. Second, it translates five critical reflections into actions by developing a pedagogy *for* itself that is focused on engaged learning beyond the mainstream. Finally, it synthesizes the mainstream propositions developed in Chap. 3 with the critical tasks proposed in this Chapter to suggest a pedagogy *for* and *in* itself. This offers ways in which teaching practice can honour mainstream student engagement research and practice while also enabling engagement to move beyond it.

Critical Reflections Leading to Action

Critical reflection does not reveal objective facts. Rather, it harvests insights that can lead to action. In this section, I critically reflect on the content of Chap. 7 and harvest this for potential action. Such insights are of course contestable. Not only is the critical theory in Chap. 7 open to different interpretations, the insights discussed here are not completely discrete. They meet and interweave with others and so lay a complex foundation for the pedagogy that follows. Together though these critical reflections describe an agenda for action to move student engagement beyond the mainstream.

Student Engagement Occurs in a Specific Ideological Climate

This reflection confirms the obvious. In the early twenty-first century, the ideological climate is dominated by neoliberalism which has been depicted as a hegemonic force in daily life; in society, economics, politics and education (Laclau and Mouffe 2001). hooks (2003) thinks this climate is so strong that she recognizes in it a *dominator culture*. According to Jost et al. (2009) *elective affinities* can develop between a dominant political culture and the seemingly unrelated findings of researchers in higher education. Mainstream student engagement's elective affinity with neoliberalism is created by shared understandings of the purpose of higher education: that what is to be learnt is practical and economically useful in the market place; that learning is about performing in certain ways in order to achieve specified outcomes; and that quality is assured by measurable accountability processes. But a critical reflection on this neoliberal ideological climate suggests that it is restrictively narrow and requires reconstruction and opening up to new values, ends and purposes (Brameld 1965). It requires the emergence of a reconstructed ideological climate in which 'dominator culture' is challenged (hooks 2003) and alternative values, ends and purposes adopted into mainstream pedagogy. In this reconstructed ideological climate, student engagement widens its perspective to include critique of what is; analysis of economic and social injustices; and agenda

for creating a more just society. Here student engagement will be active in and contribute to an ideological climate of critique, change and hope.

Student Engagement Visualizes a Pedagogy of Hope

Sutton (2015) follows Freire in identifying the need for a pedagogy of hope in neoliberal times. He argues that neoliberal pedagogy is fatalistic and without hope, a mass production of individual performances. He calls for a utopian strand in pedagogy that enables higher education to achieve individual and social transformations through a sense of hope. His reading of hope synthesizes reason and passion, determinism and freedom. It enables working within 'dominator culture' (hooks 2003) while at the same time transcending it. Sutton cites the work of Halpin (2003) as a valuable resource for reframing teaching, learning and engagement as a pedagogy of critical hope. Halpin (2003, p. 30) argues "teaching is premised on hope—that is, on the possibility that it will realise improvement of one kind or another". Such improvement may be in technical performances or in considering and learning towards alternative values, ends and purpose. Hope then is "a way of living prospectively in and engaging purposefully with the past and present" (Halpin 2003, p. 14). His notion of a pedagogy of critical hope has students and teachers able "to live without certainty and yet without being paralyzed by hesitation" (2003, p. 6). A pedagogy of critical hope is not based in blind opposition, but in a belief that achieving change is possible and alienation avoidable. Students engaging in such learning reframe what and how they learn by donning critical glasses that enable fresh understandings of their past, present and futures.

Student Engagement Has an Emancipatory Sociocultural Ecological Meaning

Chapter 7 showed how critical theorists perceived education as holistic, encompassing technical, communicative and emancipatory cognitive interests (Habermas 1987). Reflecting on this suggests that learning and teaching should not be restricted to technical skills, objective facts and a pedagogy based on what works. It should include the political and be change seeking. Lawson and Lawson's (2013) sociocultural ecological perspective on student engagement provides one framework for how student engagement could become holistic. They place student engagement within an ecology of social relations. "Guided in part by social-ecological analysis and social-cultural theory, engagement is conceptualized as a dynamic system of social and psychological constructs as well as a synergistic process" (Lawson and Lawson 2013, p. 432). With this perspective the focus moves off the individual learner and teacher and their behaviours in classrooms to a much wider social context. But the Lawson and Lawson framework seems more a

forerunner to, than an example of student engagement beyond the mainstream. It shows little awareness of emancipatory cognitive interests and so lacks a coherent approach to reconstructing the future (Brameld 1965). A reconstructive approach broadens the scope of learning from a narrow prescribed curriculum and technical pedagogy to one that engages learners in the cultural and ecological politics that provide the context for higher education (McLaren 2003). Engagement now includes learning about the history, politics and ways of being of indigenous people (Smith 1999) and other minorities (hooks 2003). It also encourages students to expand understandings of social justice by including ecological perspectives when learning (Furman and Gruenewald 2004).

Student Engagement Validates Emancipation

A fourth critical reflection is that mainstream and critical views of engagement have different educational purposes. To elaborate this reflection, I again draw on Habermas' (1987) technical, communicative and emancipatory paradigms of human cognitive interests. The technical paradigm includes rational operational behaviours leading to personal independence. Evidence here is factual, often relying on statistical knowledge. The communicative paradigm offers conceptions that are extra-rational. It engages with emotive, imaginal, spiritual and intuitive knowledge often discovered in or generated by groups. This paradigm offers interpretative qualitative evidence leading to understanding rather than explanation. The emancipatory paradigm encourages learning that is holistic in scope and critical in purpose. It mandates critiques of oppression, power imbalances and undemocratic practices. According to Stuckey et al. (2014) it offers a critical consciousness that encourages social and political action. Student engagement in this paradigm uses critical reflection and action to combat inequities and achieve greater social justice for all including indigenous people (Smith 1999), oppressed minorities (hooks 2003) and other members of disadvantaged groups. Habermas' three human interests and knowledge can be aligned directly with engagement. Mainstream engagement focuses on the discovery of 'fact totems' (de Santos 2009) and fits comfortably into the technical paradigm. Engaging with, integrating into and belonging to the academy and making collective decisions suit the practical paradigm. Engagement in the emancipatory paradigm develops understanding of power, its imbalances and injustices and encourages critical insights into how to create change.

In Student Engagement One Size Does not Fit All

Arguably the critical theorists discussed in Chap. 7 are crisis theorists, Habermas and Brameld explicitly so. But the others too—Freire with banking education,

Hooks with dominator culture and Smith with the way indigenous culture is made invisible—recognized a crisis in mainstream education. Their ways for dealing with crisis were not the same. But each theorist included in their solution an understanding that diversity must be accepted, valued and included. One size does not fit all. Yet, student engagement research and practice by and large build on a one size fits all approach by putting energy into producing generic and often quantified engagement indicators. These give educational administrators, politicians and the public a feeling of certainty, security in knowing that things are going well. Engagement indicators enable performance to be measured, recorded, reported and valued. High achievers on such measures become leaders to be followed on questions of quality teaching and learning. Their success secures conformity to their practices, leading to authoritarian behaviours that put substantial pressures on people to perform in certain approved ways (Fielding 2006). Such measures become a technology of control that limits the way student engagement is conceptualized and practised. Reflection on the work of critical theorists suggests it does not need to be this way. An engagement pedagogy that invests time and effort to identify injustices and restrictive ideologies; that develops agenda to correct them and encourages action to implement change for minorities will help to take student engagement beyond the mainstream.

Four Emancipatory Purposes Characterize Student Engagement

A final reflection concerns the credibility and appropriateness of the 10 *proposals for action* drawn from the work of the five theorists discussed in Chap. 7. These proposals emerged from my personal reading of the writings of these selected critical theorists. Two questions about their selection must be addressed to help in the construction of a believable critical engagement pedagogy. They are: first, when considering the whole body of critical theory, are these proposals credible and representative? And second, to what extent are they appropriate in the construction of a critical pedagogy? There are numerous publications dealing with critical theory and pedagogy (for example Brookfield 2005; Shor 1992). While their ideas do not always map exactly to the 10 *proposals for action*, their intent is similar. Brookfield, for example, sets out seven learning tasks in critical theory: recognize and challenge ideology, counter hegemony, unmask power, overcome alienation, pursue liberation, reclaim reason, practise democracy. Table 8.1 shows how proposals for action distilled from the literature in Chap. 7 match Brookfield's learning tasks.

The second question asks how well the proposals for action sketch a critical engagement pedagogy. The answer to this question is complex. The proposals themselves offer approaches for teaching and learning beyond the neoliberal mainstream as they mirror the reflections on the critical theory literature canvassed in Chap. 7. They picture a distinct ideological climate, offer a pedagogy of critical hope, canvass a critical ecology of social relations, promise emancipation and reject the idea

Table 8.1 Mapping *Proposals for Practice* to Brookfield's *Learning Tasks*

Proposals for action (Chap. 7)	Brookfield's learning tasks
1. Pursuing change at the local level using critique	Recognize and challenge ideology
2. Developing critical consciousness about dominator culture	Counter hegemony Recognize and challenge ideology
3. Introducing a problem posing pedagogy	Recognize and challenge ideology
4. Engaging with feminism, anti-racism and class in curricula	Counter hegemony Unmask power
5. Learning the importance of place in engagement to help counter the one-size fits all mentality	Overcome alienation
6. Engaging in political action in communities to work with social justice issues	Unmask power Pursue liberation
7. Developing a theory of knowledge beyond the instrumental	Reclaim reason
8. Practising discourse ethics based on reason and consensual decision-making	Reclaim reason
9. Valuing emotion and spirituality when thinking about engagement	Overcome alienation
10. Developing visions for challenging and reconstructing current cultural norms and practices	Pursue liberation Practise democracy

that one size fits all. Together they commit to an overarching political goal to help students build a democratic, cooperative and social justice seeking society (Brookfield and Holst 2011). Yet, the 10 proposals seem more like a collection of emergent good ideas than the basis for a coherent emancipatory pedagogy. As they were abstracted from the work of different theorists this is not really surprising. They lack organizing purposes to transform them into a coherent pedagogy like that offered in mainstream education. By drawing on complexity theory and the notion of emergence (Davis and Sumara 2008), a set of critical purposes emerge from the writings discussed in Chap. 7. Together they offer a coherent platform for developing a critical pedagogy of student engagement. Table 8.2 attempts to show this by consolidating the 10 critical tasks for learning and teaching into four critical purposes.

Proposals for Critical Practice

There are many possible practical ideas to implement the four critical purposes—exposing ideological dominance, developing critical consciousness, fostering empowered learners, acting to change society—that would take engagement beyond the mainstream into emancipatory practice. One chapter cannot do justice to them all. So I have selected a number of examples from current critical pedagogy praxis to show how the four emergent critical purposes could be achieved. Some of

Table 8.2 Four purposes for a critical student engagement pedagogy

Critical purposes	Critical proposals for action	Critical theorist source
Exposing ideological dominance	• Develop visions for changing and rebuilding current cultural norms • Develop a theory of knowledge beyond the instrumental	Brameld, Smith, hooks Habermas, Smith
Developing critical consciousness	• Grow critical consciousness about dominator culture • Practice discourse ethics based on reason and consensual decision-making	Habermas, Freire, hooks, Smith, Brameld Habermas
Fostering empowered learners	• Use a problem posing pedagogy • Correct the absence of feminism, racism and class in engagement • Value emotion and spirituality when thinking about engagement	Freire, Brameld hooks, Smith Freire, Hooks, Smith, Brameld
Acting to change society	• Encourage change at the local level using critique • Recognize the importance of place in engagement • Include political action in communities to engage with social justice issues	Habermas, Freire, hooks, Smith Smith, Freire Freire, Hooks, Smith, Brameld

the examples share similarities with progressive and humanistic pedagogies (Brookfield and Holst 2011); others are more radical. A number have been or are currently being practised; some are still ideas. The examples may seem rather utopian, even subversive, but they are at present practised and/or thought about. Later in the chapter, I try to bring together emancipatory practices and mainstream ones into a pedagogy beyond the mainstream. But in this section, I canvas a genuine alternative to mainstream student engagement practice as a critical pedagogy of hope.

Exposing Ideological Dominance

In neoliberal times, the dominant ideological norm in higher education places power in classrooms into the hands of teachers. Even where the intent is to make student learning and engagement the focus of instruction, teachers plan, deliver, assess and therefore control what is learnt. They control the transfer from teachers to students of official knowledge and skills for the workplace (Apple 1993). Teachers are accountable for student success and therefore have a strong stake in controlling the learning process. I do not suggest that the vital role of teaching and teachers should diminish, but that it must change if the task of student engagement is to expose ideological dominance. Brookfield and Holst (2011) suggest five actions to support that change. The first is to enable students to expose power and

hegemony at work in their lives. The second is to support learners to work towards a more democratic classroom and society. The third is to enable students to develop positions based on reason about particular struggles in education and society. The fourth is to help students use critical reflection and action (praxis), to enable them to strive to achieve success that is beyond mere competence. The fifth is to create classrooms that are negotiated spaces so that the voices of students are heard. Clearly, these five actions will not diminish the role of the teacher. They revolutionize it. They will also undermine the dominance of technical knowledge as the need for communicative and emancipatory knowledge grows in importance.

Examples of Practice

We are spoilt for choice when looking for examples of classrooms that expose the ideological dominance of neoliberalism and the role of the teacher within it. Brookfield and Holst (2011) and Shor (1992) provide examples of how such actions can be implemented in higher education classrooms. I will use the work of Neary (2013) on *Student as Producer* to illustrate how a dominant ideology may be exposed and reworked in classrooms. Neary (2013, n.p.) calls his approach "a pedagogy for the avant-garde". It uses avant-garde Marxist theory to change how intellectual labour is seen in the neoliberal notion of *Student as Consumer*. Instead of students being objects of education, *Student as Producer* focuses on them as subjects in the learning-teaching process. It achieves this by re-engineering the relationship between teaching and research. It uses the knowledge teachers bring to enable students to use their creativity in the process of academic research. This results in them learning about the ambiguities, tensions and complexities in academic work. They learn to see themselves as part of, not apart from, the academic production process of knowledge and meaning-making. From being the dominant force in learning, the teacher becomes a partner in academic work. This notion of *Student as Producer* is applied quite widely in the United Kingdom, even if not in Neary's radical guise. It has become part of the student engagement scene and a less radical version has been adopted in some higher education institutions as reported in Nygaard et al. (2013), for example.

Developing Critical Consciousness

If one consequence of dominant neoliberal ideology is to reinforce the position of the teacher in the transfer of technical knowledge, students' (and teachers') often unquestioning acceptance of this ideological dominance is another. All five critical theorists introduced in Chap. 7 made it a priority to change this acceptance by enabling people to develop a critical view of their world, how it is controlled, their place in it, the ways the status quo might be changed and how this might be

achieved consensually using evidence. Freire (1972) called the various stages in this process 'reading the world', the development of a critical consciousness. Allman (2010) describes the conduct of a course based on Freire's work in which she and colleagues engaged learners to read and change their world. The course was based on generative themes chosen to express the everyday existence of participants' lives, particularly their working lives. Themes, supported by teachers' knowledge of resources were chosen through dialogue. Teachers participated in and guided this dialogue but the decision of what theme to study was made by the group consensually based on evidence. It took time to consider the evidence needed to reach a consensus, particularly when negotiating the first theme of the course. But the process of research and dialogue resulted in increased understanding of the context within which each lived and worked. This understanding enabled participants to learn what and how to critique and how to start changing their world.

Examples of Practice

Critical methods as reported by Allman are also central to those discussed by Shor (1996) in his story of teaching and learning about Utopia on a crumbling university campus in New York with some 35 largely white working class students. From the hierarchical arrangement and utilitarian design of desks in his basement room, to facing down a student rebellion when removing himself from the dominator position, he struggled with and eventually persuaded most learners to engage with Utopia and his methods in deep ways, Shor tells a stirring tale of his and his students' growing critical consciousness using power-sharing dialogue and consensual decision-making. Students initially resisted his attempts to share power. The negotiation for a power-sharing contract was quite torturous. While most students finally engaged with this pedagogy; it was not a straight forward process. He summarizes his approach using the work of Elasser and Irvine (1992) who described the classroom as a speech community. Shor developed his speech community using four key methods: he gave students the opportunity to use language they were comfortable with; negotiated learning content and processes with students; generated with students new knowledge for themselves and others; and conjointly with students initiated and supported actions which challenge inequitable power relations in the classroom and wider society. Reading his book left me with the feeling that out of struggle Shor and his students forged a democratic learning community based on dialogue engaged in an ethic of consensual decision-making.

Fostering Empowered Learners

Brookfield (2013) dubs Habermas' ideal speech situation *Powertopia*, a democratic classroom that fashions a rational consensus achieved through open dialogue; a

consensus that enables compassion for diverse viewpoints and behaviours that confronts marginalization. It corrects the avoidance of feminist perspectives, class differences and discussions of racism that is part of the engagement mainstream by involving students with critical social and ecological issues in pursuit of social justice. Brookfield acknowledges that *Powertopia* does not yet exist, but like Shor wants to work towards it. It cannot be achieved without students and teachers being politically conscious and active; engaged with values and practices of diverse cultures including those of working class people; and comfortable with trying to meet the needs of people who by virtue of their physical, emotional and spiritual characteristics are not part of mainstream cultures and behaviours. To advance the ideal of *Powertopia*, Brookfield suggests a range of engaging teaching approaches: teaching critical thinking; using discussion, fostering problem-posing learning using the classroom as a learning community, democratizing the classroom and including the power of communication technologies. Without using the term, Fielding (2006) expands on Brookfield's idea of *Powertopia* by describing a person-centred classroom. This is not a classroom where the student is a consumer of knowledge for the market place. Rather it is a space where students can develop personally by engaging in relational dialogue in learning communities. Here the student's voice is heard, valued and acted on by other students, teachers and institution in formal and informal formal settings.

Examples of Practice

Indeed, the idea of student voice is central to fostering empowering learners. Smyth (2012) and Smyth et al. (2014) go further than merely advising educators that students be given opportunities to speak, to have a voice in the learning process. Smyth (2012) argues that engaged students learn to *speak back* to exclusion, oppression and social injustice. He offers an array of suggestions for teaching that engages students to speak back. Such teaching takes engagement beyond the neoliberal mainstream use of student voice by enabling them to take ownership of what they learn, encouraging them to be courageous, supporting them to participate in the delivery cycle including the assessment process. Smyth (2012) argues that unless students take ownership of their own learning they are not authentically engaged. Taking ownership means addressing real-life intellectual, emotional and social problems experienced in their own contexts. This requires courageous habits of mind that are able and willing to analyze, discuss and act on without fear problems faced not only in the classroom but in the community at large. To understand their learning and to take control of it they are consciously involved in planning how they will engage, when and with whom. They are also partners in designing assessment and evaluation processes. If students are involved in negotiating content and methods, even within often constraining official regulations, they learn to speak back. However, Smyth (2012) warns that unless classrooms are free of fear of failure and 'punishment' for challenging thinking and writing, students will not speak back.

Acting to Change Society

Currently neoliberalism holds the ideological and policy high ground for educational practice. It is difficult to find ways to combat, let alone overcome that advantage. Foucault (2000) offers a glimpse of how higher education generally, and so student engagement specifically, might be prised from its elective affinity with neoliberalism. He agrees that critique can help effect change at the local level. Local critique leads to change in mainstream thinking when students learn to be aware of, analyze and critique social injustices; when students are taught to think globally and act locally in their own spaces (Stucki 2010). Bishop (2003) sees this as asserting the right to determine one's own destiny. Such thinking is widespread among ethnic, cultural and gender minorities and is particularly visible in the work of indigenous educators around the world. Their work is important as it sketches a way out of neoliberal dominance. The work of Māori in Aotearoa New Zealand is an example of a political and cultural movement that seeks to establish its identity as being independent from, but not always in opposition to neoliberalism. For Māori the identity is found in the land once held by ancestors. But it can also be found in educational institutions and classrooms in practices that have a distinct Māori identity (Edwards 2010). A Kaupapa Māori philosophy (way of life) is founded on a number of principles: self-determination; validating cultural identity; a culturally based pedagogy that emphasizes collectivity over individualism; and a shared vision for the future (Bishop 2003).

Examples of Practice

These principles are realized by three Wānanga, post-school institutions established and funded by Government in New Zealand. All are designed to have distinctive Māori features while meeting normal accountability and performativity requirements. The joint requirement to be Māori while being accountable to western authority has led to tensions both for governments and Wānanga resulting in occasional standoffs and crises. But by and large Wānanga have successfully steered between the demands of Kaupapa Māori principles and western rule. This has enabled them to implement a Kaupapa Māori pedagogy at institutional and classroom levels, thereby showing that at the local level concerns for social justice can be actioned. Kaupapa Māori principles are used to reveal priorities at a strategic level. For one of the Wānanga priorities identified by research included quality teaching and learning based on Māori values and practices, second chance education for Māori and other learners, Maori management values and practices that achieve government requirements, a distinctive profile based on kaupapa Māori and social justice principles, and political activism to achieve the priorities (Zepke 2011). These priorities are implemented at the classroom level as illustrated by another research project involving the same Wānanga. Funded to implement a

strategy for developing functional literacy, the Wānanga embarked also on teaching critical literacy to enable students to critique the status quo and cultural literacy to enable its graduates to function in the Māori world (Zepke 2011). Despite considerable debate, the Wānanga was able to implement all three literacies.

Classroom Applications and Experiences

While the critical purposes outlined in Table 8.2 synthesize the findings from Chap. 7, the proposals for action in Table 8.2 only provide a brief sketch of possible classroom activities. They do not pick up on the details of a possible critical engagement pedagogy. Table 8.3 attempts to do this. In the first column, it repeats the critical purposes discussed in the previous section. It translates the critical purposes into emancipatory classroom student engagement attitudes, knowledge and behaviours in the second column. This recognizes that in an emancipatory pedagogy student engagement requires knowledge, values and behaviours that have the potential to change them. In the third column, Table 8.3 provides examples of how students and teachers may experience engaging attitudes, knowledge and behaviours in learning and teaching.

Student Engagement Beyond the Mainstream: A Synthesis

Underpinning the argument in this book is a pessimistic assumption that neoliberal influences in higher education will continue into the foreseeable future. The elective affinity between neoliberalism and student engagement may be diluted but not broken. In short, the critical engagement pedagogy pictured in Table 8.3 is likely to attract opposition in neoliberal times. In a more affirming vein, I have also suggested that under its neoliberal umbrella, student engagement research and practice can exercise a positive influence on learning and teaching in higher education. Neoliberal ideas have already softened an approach to learning and teaching focused on content delivery to include recognition that active and deep involvement in learning is vital to student success. In short, mainstream student engagement cares for the agency of the learner, her success and personal well-being, and if not social justice, then certainly in creating a fairer world. So, mainstream student engagement has a very important part to play in the future of student engagement. The exact nature of its influence compared to emancipatory activity is open to debate. Table 8.4 represents my attempt to synthesize the contributions of mainstream and critical practice to learning and teaching and so give us student engagement beyond the mainstream.

Table 8.3 Classroom practice in a critical student engagement pedagogy

Critical purposes	Emancipatory tasks in student engagement	Applications and experiences
Exposing ideological dominance	Exercising Agency	• Engaging in critical reflection • Asking questions • Taking personal control over learning • Speaking back to injustice • Sharing intellectual labour
Developing critical consciousness	Reading the world	• Participating in planning learning processes including assessment of learning • Conducting discourse analyses and acting on results • Developing multiple frameworks of analysis • Learning in a critical learning community • Understanding that the world is fluid and uncertain • Engaging with troubling ideas • Uncoupling from the stream of cultural givens
Fostering empowered learners	Ensuring subjective well-being	• Building social, cultural and political capital for self and others • Engaging in consensual decision-making • Understanding own and others' positions in the world • Sharing in intellectual labour • Engaging in communicative action • Feeling engaged
Acting to change society	Learning social justice	• Engaging with others including 'the other' • Engaging constructively in cultural and political life • Recognizing and critiquing repressive tolerance • Challenging hegemonic discourses • Understanding and engaging with cultural politics • Recognizing and combating abuses of power • Acting constructively in the world • Acting as a catalyst for auctioning ideas

The first column lists the major tasks for a combined mainstream and critical student engagement practice. These tasks are softened versions for those in the second column in Table 8.3 headed emancipatory tasks. They are softened because the critical 'reading the world', which is largely political in aim, becomes 'learner success', which can be read as political success as well as personal success. 'Learning social justice' becomes 'learning equity' which again adds personal considerations to the sociopolitical. Another change in the first column is a changed focus to individual learners rather than focusing on learning processes. The second

Table 8.4 Combining mainstream and emancipatory engagement practices

Tasks for student engagement beyond the mainstream	Mainstream applications and experiences	Emancipatory applications and experiences
Learner agency	• Experiencing self-belief • Working autonomously • Building relationships • Feeling competent	• Engaging in critical reflection • Asking questions • Taking personal control over learning • Speaking back to injustice • Sharing intellectual labour
Learner success	• Rising to academic challenge • Engaging in deep learning experiences • Being active learners • Engaging in constructive learning interactions • Having constructive peer relationships • Using social skills • Using learning support services • Experiencing social and academic integration • Having success—e.g. completion • Participating in governance • Experiencing service learning • Working in learning communities	• Participating in planning learning processes including assessment of learning • Conducting discourse analyses and acting on results • Developing multiple frameworks of analysis • Learning in a critical learning community • Understanding that the world is fluid and uncertain • Engaging with troubling ideas • Uncoupling from the stream of cultural givens
Learner well-being	• Trusting in self and others • Belonging with others • Understanding emotions	• Building social, cultural and political capital for self and others • Engaging in consensual decision-making • Understanding own and others' positions in the world • Sharing in intellectual labour • Engaging in communicative action • Feeling engaged
Learning equity	• Accepting that rules apply to everyone • Being honest to self and others • Treating others as self wants to be treated • Affording and receiving equal learning opportunities in class	• Engaging with others including 'the other' • Engaging constructively in cultural and political life • Recognizing and critiquing repressive tolerance • Challenging hegemonic discourses • Understanding and engaging with cultural politics • Recognizing and combating abuses of power • Acting constructively in the world • Acting as a catalyst for auctioning ideas

column summarizes how these tasks may be applied in mainstream engagement. Items in column 3 repeat the applications that first appeared in column 3 of Table 8.3. They are intended to act as an organic catalyst: one that "stays attuned to the best of what the mainstream has to offer … yet maintains a grounding for affirming and enabling sub cultures of criticism" (West 1993, p. 27). The column offers both a holistic sociocultural ecological view of engagement based on developing a critical consciousness that encourages an appetite for social and ecological justice. Thinking beyond the mainstream challenges what Brookfield and Holst (2011) call one-dimensional thought which is designed to make sure neoliberal ideas and methods work and that thinking about engagement stays within the present framework of discussion and research.

Discussion

Whether in its mainstream or emancipatory guise, student engagement seeks to enhance learner agency. This enables learners and teachers to look to both mainstream ideas of motivation and agency and to ideas and practices that help develop ideological critique. This requires that students learn to critically reflect on their experiences, ask questions about wider society, take personal control over their learning and speak back to what they consider to be social injustice. Barnett and Coate (2005) offer suggestions how this may be achieved. They, like McMahon and Portelli (2012) and Vandenabeele et al. (2011), want to supplement operational and instrumental aspects of engagement with an ontological view. This has three components. The first is that students learn to make legitimate claims in a world of uncertainty and respond to challenges to such claims. The second is that students engage and act constructively in the world. The third involves students becoming aware of themselves and their potential in a world that is open, fluid, contested and in need of courageous actions. Smyth (2012) goes further. He encourages students to learn to 'speak back'. In the pursuit of social justice they speak back to a lack of respect for the beliefs and practices of people not in the mainstream; to an absence of relational power that prevents achievement of collective group success; and to depleted credentials that condemn people into undervalued courses and occupations.

Achieving learner success is a key task for mainstream engagement. But success does not have to be defined conventionally as readiness for high achievement in formal education or the market place. It can also point to developing a critical consciousness through democratic participation in education such as working in partnership with teachers, institutions and other stakeholders to plan courses, learning activities and assessment of learning. It can lead to reading the world by engaging constructively with troubling ideas such as that the world is fluid, uncertain and unjust as well as questioning and uncoupling from prevailing ideological, political and cultural givens. Success can lead to skill sets fit for the market but also to enabling learners to unmask unfairness in mass and social media. Smyth (2012) offers a critical democratic engagement framework that provides a scaffold

for critical engagement practice. The framework focuses on *learning*, *ideas* and *lives*, each with a number of engaging 'must dos'. In the *learning* element, engagement affords learners' ownership over their learning by involving them in planning learning experiences and developing courageous habits of mind by teaching them to develop analytic and reflective skills. The *ideas* element engages students in 'talking relationships' including in spaces that usually silence them. The *lives* element is about learning to work with others in conventional communities of learning and in emancipatory social movements striving for greater social justice.

It seems self-evident that engaged learning is linked to well-being. However, with the exception perhaps of Bryson and Hardy (2012) the importance of well-being in student engagement is not often discussed in the mainstream engagement literature. Yet, research on both individual and social well-being is full of the importance of engagement with positive emotional feelings, a satisfying life, vitality, resilience and self-esteem, autonomy and competence. Social well-being includes engaging in supportive relationships with family, friends and supporters such as teachers and peers; and trusting other people while enjoying respect and a sense of belonging (Forgeard et al. 2011). Beyond the mainstream engagement is critical learning that involves learners in building social, cultural and political capital for themselves and others, including the 'other'and taking part in consensual decision-making and engaging in communicative action (Stuckey et al. 2014). Forgeard et al. (2011) expects higher education to build a well-being culture that ensures that learners are aware of the world and their and others role in it, have clear goals for living in that world including a belief that their goals are achievable, and retain a sense of personal control over their learning. Beyond the mainstream, well-being encourages engagement in communities of learning seeking greater social justice. Field (2009) affirms that all forms of engagement enhance well-being.

I have labelled the fourth task for engagement 'learning equity'. In its mainstream guise this means to be fair-minded: to accept that rules of engagement apply to everyone equally; to be honest to self and others; to treat others regardless of background as we want to be treated; to afford others and to receive equal learning opportunities. Critical engagement translates equity into social justice. Sanders-Lawson et al. (2006) identify three understandings of social justice: distributive justice determines the equitable distribution of resources; procedural justice determines whose voices are heard and silenced; interactional justice determines how communication between different strata in a hierarchy is organized. Distributive justice involves learning that inequalities exist, requires the will to tackle them and the skills to act constructively in addressing them. Procedural justice asks for active engagement in cultural and political life, particularly engaging with 'the other' on the margins of mainstream society. It also involves engaging in critical active citizenship that challenges hegemonic discourses and combats abuses of power. Interactional justice involves engaged learners as interpreter of different communication methods and messages including repressive tolerance. Brookfield (2007) is particularly intent to warn learners about repressive tolerance. He argues, following Marcuse, that repressive tolerance ensures that learners believing they live in a free and democratic society are in error because

their conditioning "will always predispose them to choose what for them are common sense socially sanctioned understandings" (Brookfield 2007, p. 558).

End Note

In this chapter, I outlined pedagogies *in* and *of* themselves. A pedagogy *in* itself is of the mainstream, aligned to neoliberalism. The ideas presented in Chaps. 2 and 3 provide the practical ideas for such a pedagogy. Chapter 7 introduces important themes of a pedagogy beyond the mainstream for which this chapter introduced practical applications. This is a pedagogy *of* itself. Together, the pedagogies *of* and *in* themselves offer a comprehensive engagement pedagogy that furthers learner agency, success, well-being and learning equity/social justice. But no matter how change is orientated, a pedagogy alone is no guarantor for change. Curriculum, evaluation and leadership must align with such a pedagogy. These will be the focus of Chaps. 9–11.

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