



New York Collective of Radical Educators' Inquiry to Action Groups (ItAGs) 2009

The New York Collective of Radical Educators is pleased to offer an opportunity for teachers to build community and develop as activists. Educators will participate in Inquiry to Action Groups linking social justice issues with classroom practice. Small groups will meet weekly (for a total of six, two-hour sessions plus a kick-off and finale) between January and March to share experiences, respond to readings, exchange ideas and develop plans of action.

I. Social Justice in Teacher Education

In an era where NCATE standards are narrowing teacher education to mechanistic dispositions and have eliminated the social justice language from its conceptual framework, this group will come together to share how teacher educators can navigate the space within radical teaching practices that promote social justice in the world of NCATE requirements. We will explore the different ways teacher educators can include issues of Social Justice in their curricula and we will discuss pedagogical approaches that can enhance student's critical consciousness and empower them to activism. Participants are encouraged to bring their course(s) syllabi to share ideas on how issues of discrimination and privilege can be included in any teacher education course.

Facilitators: Shelly Chin is Assistant Director of the Peace Corps Fellows Program at Teachers College, an alternative teacher certification program preparing teachers to serve in low-income schools. Jolie Medina is an Assistant Professor of Teacher Education at Borough of Manhattan Community College/City University of New York where she teaches Social Foundations of Education.

Location: Teachers College, 525 West 120th St Room TBA

Dates: Tuesdays 6-8PM. Kick off on 1/16th, 1/20, 1/27, 2/3, 2/10, 2/24*, 3/3, and the finale on 3/13.

*tentative date may change depending on group availability.

2. Teachers as Organizers

What organizing lessons can we learn from the labor movement in order to create a collective work ethic in our students and ourselves? This inquiry to action group will provide a setting for educators to reflect on the role that educators play as organizers in their classrooms and as union members. We will explore how power dynamics affect our government, communities, school system, schools and classrooms through analyzing labor organizing strategies and campaigns as a way to break down power dynamics for us as educators and for examples to share with our students. We will discuss readings, ideas, and materials to help us find new ways to bring these ideas into our classrooms and connect our students to current movements. In addition to looking at global and local collective actions and campaigns, we will explore some turning points in the history of the UFT and challenge ourselves to reflect on our own orientation to the union as individuals and as part of a collective of social justice educators.

Facilitators: Rosie Frascella is a former labor organizer, a teacher at the High School for International Business and Finance and a member of NYCoRE working group NYQueer. Seth Rader is a teacher at the James Baldwin School and a core member of NYCoRE.

Location: James Baldwin Academy, 351 West 18th St between

Dates: Thursdays 6-8PM. Kick off on 1/16th, 1/22, 1/29, 2/5, 2/12, 2/26, 3/5, and the finale on 3/13.

3. Revolutionizing the Classroom: Transforming Mainstream Curriculum into Social Justice Teaching

In this study group, participants will explore what social justice in teaching means to them and how to achieve this in the current standards crazed context of NYC. Participants will examine mandated curriculum for opportunities to incorporate cultural relevance and social action. Teachers will work together to transform their own curriculum while still reaching the required standards.

Facilitators: Natalia Ortiz is a born and raised New York City Latina. She currently teaches Social Studies to 16-20 year old students at West Brooklyn Community High School. From Boston to Brown to Brooklyn, Adam Manson Weinstock is in his 6th year at Tompkins Square Middle School, now as co-Dean of Students, exploring restorative justice models of discipline, and formerly as a 7th grade Humanities teacher and Advisory coordinator.

Location: Tompkin Square Middle School: 600 East 6th street

Dates: Mondays 5:30-7:30 PM. Kick off on 1/16th, 1/19, 1/26, 2/2, 2/9, 2/23, 3/2, and the finale on 3/13.



4) What does it Mean to be a Radical Educator? A Space for Beginning Teachers to Explore and Learn



This ITAG is designed to explore and extend the definition of what it means to be a “radical educator” through the perspective of new teachers (yrs 1 – 3). The goal of this ITAG is to empower new teachers with the language, skills, and mindset that it takes to transform classrooms into communities for change. Radical teaching happens not only in the content of our curriculum, but also in the way we speak about, view, and interact with the world, our community, and the students in our classroom. In both theory and practice, we wish to radically re-write the stories that our students hear about the world and tell about themselves.

Facilitators: Marissa Torres works with Elementary students at the Hamilton Heights Academy in Harlem. Annie Schmutz works with Middle and High School students at the Henry Street School for International Studies in LES, as well as being a part-time instructor at City College of New York.

Dates: Thursdays 6-8PM. Kick off on 1/16th, 1/22, 1/29, 2/5, 2/12, 2/26, 3/5, and the finale on 3/13.

Location: Teachers College, Columbia University, 525 W. 120th st. – Room TBA

5) Combating the Banking Mentality: Integrating Media and Youth Culture into the Classroom

This ItAG, so-sponsored by Urban Word, explores the integration of media and youth culture in the classroom to provide educators and activists the tools to create interactive spaces for engaged critical thinking. Participants will create a vision of the kinds of classroom environments they hope to create through the integration of youth culture and will be introduced to a variety of strategies and methods. Participants will gain a better understanding of what resources and strategies they can use to create interactive classrooms that build on students’ interests.

kahlil almustafa is a performance poet currently developing a Multimedia Performance to promote his collection of poetry Growing Up Hip-Hop. www.kahlilalmustafa.com. Charan P. Morris is a poet/performer/educator transplanted from Chicago to New York. She has taught race, class & politics through literature in New York City public schools for the past 5 years. www.charanp.com

Dates: Tuesdays 6-8PM. Kick off on 1/16th, 1/20, 1/27, 2/3, 2/10, 2/24, 3/3, and the finale on 3/13.

Location: Urban Word, 242 W. 27th Street, Suite 3B btwn 7th and 8th <http://www.urbanwordnyc.org>

6) Rethinking Discipline/Building Community

How can we create truly democratic schools that empower young people and give them opportunities to collaborate in making just communities? How do we do this in the face of a reactionary school system that too all too often suspends or criminalizes young people? We can do it but we must rethink our core understanding of discipline. Much evidence shows that suspensions lead students on a downward spiral that forces many to get left back and drop out. This first step often introduces them to the criminal justice system. This ITAG will be to look at the theory and philosophy behind alternative systems of discipline. We will examine whole school systems of discipline that shift the question of what did the student do to what does the student need and consider the value of restorative justice approaches, drawing on examples from schools in or near New York City. These approaches teach moral development, a missing ingredient from most schools. They offer opportunities for students to take responsibility for misbehavior and allow them to address the needs of those harmed. And depending on the interest of the participants, we hope to investigate student centered classroom practices as well.

Facilitators: Daniel Jerome is the Dean at the Banana Kelly School in the Bronx, is a founding member of NYCoRE and board member of Teachers Unite. Josh Heisler teaches at Vanguard High School and is also a board member of Teachers Unite.

Dates: Wednesday (and two Fridays*) 5:30-7:30. Kick off on 1/16th. **Fri. 1/23***, 1/28, 2/4, **Fri. 2/13***, 2/25, 3/4 and finale on 3/13.

Location: Vanguard High School 317 East 67th Street

ItAG Kick Off Meeting

A general kick-off meeting for all ItAG participants will be held **Friday, January 16th, 6:00– 8:00 p.m.** at NYU, 3rd floor Pless Lounge, 82 Washington Sq. East between Greene and Washington Square Park. Dinner provided. (Call 917-686-2733 if you have trouble finding the location). A closing ceremony will be held 3/13 at the same location.

Registration

The registration fee is \$30. Multiple teachers from the same school can register together for the same ItAG for a reduced rate of \$25 each. This will cover the cost of materials and support NYCoRE’s ongoing work.

Payment must be received at the kick-off event. More info available at www.nycore.org

To Register: Visit www.nycore.org Questions? Email info@nycore.org