There is still scope for a book that takes some criticisms of RPL seriously and deals with the practical application (and theoretical justification) of RPL in higher education—perhaps a book more rooted in adult education knowledge and practitioners' experience than this text. In the meantime, this collection will satisfy those who believe RPL has been under-theorized within the education literature.

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## *TEACHING DEFIANCE: STORIES AND STRATEGIES FOR ACTIVIST EDUCATORS*

Michael Newman. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, 2006, 305 pages.

As I was reading this book, I was approached by a man who wanted to know what I was reading. After I told him, the man called "John," a self-described poet, commented that he had "learned defiance" not through explicit instruction but through books. Michael Newman's book can also be understood as a great teacher, developing our understanding of defiance and facilitating our ability to teach it; it "allows learning to happen," as John, the Vancouver poet, put it.

What, then, do we learn from this book? Throughout the 19 chapters, we learn about the roles and power of defiance through the exploration of rebelliousness, rebellion, revolution, choice, insight, action, emotions, and morality. In talking about "teaching choice," Newman admits that no one explicitly taught him how to make decisions, but rather the "school of hard knocks" (p. 76) led to accidental learning. As Newman later argues, and as everyone in adult education can attest, critical learning can "occur suddenly, by chance, and as a part of another activity altogether" (p. 240). Like John (the poet), Newman has clearly learned defiance, though it was not always obvious. Likewise, some of our learning from this book may not be obvious nor what we had intended to learn, but learn we will.

To respond to the question of how the book teaches, we first need to look at the person who wrote *Teaching Defiance*. Michael Newman is very much an Australian. His writing is rooted in his own cultural context, and many of the experiences he draws on are from his work with the Australian Trade Union Training Authority and as an educator in Australia, the United Kingdom, and South Africa. As is commonly said of Australians, Newman tells it like it is, with humour and without pretension, and this makes for a highly readable book where messages are conveyed through inspirational stories of adult educators and of seemingly everyday events. Newman demonstrates that stories are, indeed, powerful, and comments, "We can tell stories. These stories do not need to be long. Their job is to illustrate a point upon which we can help people reflect and then move on to more learning" (p. 40). While Chapter 17 focuses explicitly on story-telling, it appears that the entire book is a story-telling endeavour.

This book teaches through both theory and practice. It is theoretically rich, drawing on organizational/management theory, adult education theory, and critical theory. We are taught by many great teachers who appear throughout, such as Mezirow, Freire, Habermas, Camus, and Gramsci. The book is especially theoretically strong where Newman lays out the different theorizations of power and explores how power itself can be useful in teaching and learning defiance. As he succinctly explains, "We apply power through ideas. We seek to establish an intellectual hegemony. We try to get the ideas, values and moral code which benefit us accepted as mainstream" (p. 123). Newman continually seeks to make theory useful and to operationalize complex ideas. He poses tough questions: How do we make meaningful choices? How can we channel our anger, rage, rebellion, and defiance to making serious change? And, in exploring these questions and others, Newman offers practical advice. In terms of how to teach, Newman singles out the ideas of dialogue and metaphor. Furthermore, he makes concrete recommendations in regard to "teaching negotiation" (pp. 136–137) and the tools we can use to ignite defiance and critical engagement in our teaching. In this terrain, he identifies theatre, poetry, novels, and non-fiction writings as powerful instruments in teaching us defiance and in giving us ideas on how to teach more critically and effectively. In many regards, this book is worth reading solely for the concrete examples of good adult education theory and practice it provides.

The questions I come away with, having read this book, are to do with its moral framework. It is clear to anyone who either talks to Newman or reads his books that he is a very moral person. Education, for Newman, is a moral activity; yet he evidently grapples with ontological and teleological questions in reflecting on the purposes of teaching. He writes, "Our job is to help people become truly conscious, understand the different worlds we live in, and develop a morality in the face of the evident amorality of our universe" (p. 10). There are obvious dilemmas in relying on Camus to note the amorality of the world and the social construction of morality. I would push Newman to think about what counts as moral conduct in responding to his contention that "defining our own morality becomes an act of defiance" (p. 249). Who is to say what is moral? It is not clear to me that Newman rescues himself from a nihilistic moral relativism in discussing morality. In addition, I also question Newman's belief in the power of hate in teaching and learning defiance. His final paragraph, which amounts to "love your friends and hate your enemies, and let that inspire you," is disappointing and simplistic. I would challenge Newman that hate not only is problematic "in the hands and mouths of bigoted maniacs" (p. 227), which he notes, but also corrupts the best of women and men. While I agree that defiance requires that we take sides, hate has tended not to be the great motivator Newman claims it to be. While all emotions can be catalysts for action and Newman is probably right that Ghandi did hate, I don't think it was hate that resulted in change. Rather, acts of defiance that have changed our world appear to have been sparked by a combination of moral outrage, conviction, and commitment. All three elements appear to be clearly present in Newman's book.

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