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LIFELONG, LIFE-WIDE AND LIFE-DEEP LEARNING: UTILIZING THE LENS OF HIV/AIDS¹ IN SOUTH AFRICA

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INTRODUCTION

In sub-Saharan Africa none of us is unaffected by HIV/AIDS. It weaves through our personal, political and pedagogical lives. According to Steinberg (2008) about 2.1 million people died of AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa in 2006 while another 25 million are living with HIV. In South Africa, about 13% of the population is HIV positive, with an adult prevalence rate of 18.8%. Some 800 - 1000 die of AIDS on an average day. And the epidemic is spreading at about 1500 new infections a day. (Lees 2008:1) Steinberg, in his excellent, textured, three year study in a South African rural village, pursued the question, why are people dying en masse when they are within a short distance of treatment? Through his book, the complex interplay between politics, culture, economics, gender relations, power, and history, are described as he draws out the intricate realities of the place and people of Lusikisiki. However, his analysis does not stay with the specificities of one rural village as he skillfully shines light on similar social dynamics that exist within all societies in Africa and elsewhere.

Increasingly, more people are recognizing the importance of understanding both academic and non-academic literature to grapple with pedagogy of HIV/AIDS. Lees (2008) in his very useful doctoral study on 'rethinking AIDS education' echoes Freire (1993:25) who states that "Humanization has always been humankind's central problem". Lees' study contends that 're-thinking our understanding of the AIDS pandemic allows us to see that AIDS is about people, not simply about the virus' and he uses critical and post-colonial frames of analysis to question the interventions to date and asks about 'who we would like to become as individuals, communities, a nation, and a species' (Lees:2) He questions how well we understand the lives and behaviors of people - hence the value of turning to literature and other sources to elucidate our understandings. One such book is by Sindiwe Magona (2008) who illustrates the complexities of gender relations amongst a group of 4 middle class black women and their partners, whose close friend, Beauty, has died of AIDS, contracted from her 'unfaithful husband'. The story highlights the deeply gendered nature of HIV/AIDS as each of the main characters struggles to assert their friend, Beauty's gift to them, which is to take control of their sexual relationships with their partners in order 'to live a long life'.

In this presentation, I use a discussion on pedagogies of HIV/AIDS as a lens to sharpen and clarify ways of thinking about adult and lifelong learning, particularly in and for the majority world. HIV/AIDS highlight some of the most difficult social, economic, cultural and personal issues that any adult educators have to confront. I adopt a critical participatory action research methodology to reflect back on the approaches we have developed over several years. From these experiences, our observations are that working with people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS bring into sharp focus the need for pedagogical approaches (i) to include male and female, children and adults across generations, for all ages (i.e. lifelong learning); (ii) to recognize the importance of sustainable livelihoods and systemic issues in a life-wide approach (i.e. life wide learning); and (iii) to work with deeply personal issues relating to death and sexual relations which tap into the cultural, spiritual, and intimate aspects of people's lives (i.e. life deep learning). I use theoretical frameworks from feminist popular education, post-colonial theory and adult and lifelong learning. The paper is a 'work in progress'.

¹ This paper draws on work I am developing with Heather Ferris, who works both in Canada and Southern Africa in relation to HIV/AIDS, and other trauma. She has written a book "Someone I love died" for use by young people.

VIGNETTES FROM ADULT LEARNING IN SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa's position as a land of struggle and hope is fairly well known. Many aspects of its economic, political and social life are strongly framed by the dualities of struggle and hope. In 1994, the country took centre stage internationally when Nelson Mandela became the first president of a democratic state, after decades of sustained popular struggle against divisive and destructive apartheid rule. It entered the global economy as a democratic, free and hopeful country. The peaceful nature of the transition gave South Africa beacon status on the continent, lighting up vistas from struggle to hope. In April 2009, we voted for our third democratic government.

A key observation for adult learning within a lifelong learning framework, in a middle income country like South Africa, is the very large proportion of young people. South Africa's population of 48 million is predominantly young and black with 51% below the age of 25. The demographic profile is diametrically opposite to that of most of the developed economies. In addition, the average life expectancy of the population is falling, compared to its rise in the north. These fundamental demographic differences between countries of the South and of the North are very significant and challenge us from a global perspective to broaden our understandings of adult and lifelong learning. Grappling with these differences, is made all the more difficult because of histories of colonisation and the related practices of deferring to those in the North from where the majority of literature is generated.

In South Africa, the majority black population is still suffering from the inequitable distribution of wealth that is apartheid's legacy, being more likely to be unemployed and receiving less schooling, of a poorer standard, than their White counterparts. Despite that, they are more and better educated at school than their fathers and mothers. The potential and actual adult learners speak many languages (there are 11 official languages); for the majority of them, English, the main language of adult learning, is not their first language. They live in areas that differ widely from one another, some with very high rates of HIV and TB and low life expectancy, robbing South African society of large numbers of skilled people it badly needs, others relatively safe from killer diseases and with a life expectancy comparable with the countries of the North. There is a rapidly growing black middle class which leads to intra-black economic differentials. The needs for adult learning programmes inevitably cross a vast spectrum, from the most basic to the most advanced.

The examples that I will draw on come from experiences of the majority of the population. In highlighting the lives of poor women and men, whose lives have been ravaged by the dual effects of globalization and HIV/AIDS, this presentation embodies no intention to reproduce the images of suffering, passivity and ignorance, and stigma which have dominated the representations of women – especially African women. Rather, like the work of Ida Susser (2009), I would hope that the presentation envisions possibilities that, powerful as it is, globalization has not displaced the ingenuity and agency of people at the local levels. But as Susser (2009: 45) argues, "As we have seen biology, culture, social organization, low incomes and lack of services conspire to render women extraordinarily susceptible to HIV infection". As adult educators we cannot deny these harsh realities but need to work with and against them.

Vignette 1: HIV/AIDS Workshops for Caregivers and Volunteers²

Heather Ferris, the facilitator of a series of HIV/AIDS workshops for training of community based caregivers in rural and urban areas of southern Africa says:

At the first workshop we were told that the rate of infection is very high and people are in denial. Every story involves a number of family members who have died. It becomes the norm and I no longer feel surprised. It is more the question of how many than shock at a family death. The theme for the first day was personal loss so that the participants could understand their own losses. They were reminded to breathe deeply and during sharing, to listen without responding. They started with a personal loss line and then gathered in groups of five to hear stories. N and I circulated reminding people to breathe or to gently place a hand on their shoulders. After sharing their stories we focused on where in their

² These are taken from notes from the facilitator, Heather Ferris

bodies they felt the loss. There were tears and a sense of relief for most people. They were introduced to Capacitar³ holds (healing techniques for trauma release), which they practiced in pairs recognizing which hold had the most benefit.

Some comments from workshop participants:

I agree that culturally men are taught not to cry when they suffer from grief. When I lost my wife, I first cried. Immediately after that I thought that as a man I am not supposed to cry, because I have to keep myself strong irrespective of how painful my heart is. After the funeral I thought about all the good things my wife used to do in taking care of my children and myself and how much love she had for the whole extended family. After that I started to think that there is no-one who will ever replace her in my heart. I felt so heartbroken and immediately felt pains in my whole body. I could not handle the situation I broke into tears and cried bitterly. After that I felt so much relief in my body, not that the pain of loss was gone, but relief of pain in my body. This training will equip me with good skills, this I can see from day one." (40 year old man)

To lose my mom and dad was such a terrible nightmare. I am the oldest child who has to look after three children. I can see from the first day that the workshop is going to help me deal with my grief first and also help me handle the orphans that I am looking after." (28 year old woman)

I am a grandmother of 8 orphans as I lost my two daughters a year ago due to AIDS. It is quite hard for me to cope with the 8 children in terms of comforting them. I think the skills are going to be helpful. (Grandmother)

All generations and genders are infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. The senses of death, loss, trauma, are deeply personal and the facilitators have to confront their own loss and pain as part of learning to help others. The healing processes for the facilitators, adult educators and trainers, are key to them being able to do the work. This resonates with the realization by Freire and many others, that as adult educators we cannot leave ourselves 'at the door'. We have to be fully present with our own humanity. Working with our own and others trauma demands 'life deep learning' for both ourselves as the educators and the learners; working across all generations is necessary from young children, to grandmothers and grand-fathers.

The same necessity of the educator being fully present, owning our own privileges and culpabilities, for oppressive relationships in the world, is explored in detail by Jim Lees (2008), who uses a post-colonial analysis to develop the HIV/AIDS curriculum with students at the University of Western Cape. As a white man from the USA, he describes how he places at the centre, the impact of colonisation on the socio-economic, cultural realities of his black African learners. The persistent racist discourses that permeate the lives and realities of the learners, he argues, is central to an HIV/AIDS curriculum, as learners and their humanity are primary, not the virus.

Vignette 2: Women's Leadership Development course in Masiphumele⁴

A second example of a local programme for the development of women's leadership for working with HIV/AIDS related trauma, demonstrates the importance of a holistic, life-wide, approach to the curriculum. This was a one month full time course for 13 unemployed women, who were working in their community as volunteers. They wanted to help others who were also living in poverty and confronting trauma through the loss of friends and family to AIDS. Heather developed the curriculum through a process of immersion with the community over a six months period - several days a week, listening, engaging, and supporting women and their organizations. It was soon clear that HIV/AIDS is integral to life, and cannot be separated from achieving forms of sustainable livelihoods. The curriculum covered team and personal

³ This refers to methodologies developed by Capacitar and its co-director, Dr Pat Cane. See for example, 'Trauma, healing and Transformation', Capacitar 2000, and other hand books.

⁴ These are taken from notes of the facilitator, Heather Ferris.

development, through a range of participatory approaches, including the setting up of small businesses. Skills building sessions were woven through the course and covered: HIV/AIDS; gender relations; communication skills; English conversation; personal development; financial management; entrepreneurial skills; time management; goal setting; problem solving; team building; healthy life style including bicycle riding skills; and management of meetings.

The course aspired to hold a number of intrinsic values which are well known to adult educators. They included feminist popular education principles of 'seeing with the heart and speaking from the heart'; valuing mind, body and spirit equally in the activities; and encouraging silence, contemplation and reflection as a necessary part of each session. After an intense month together, an external facilitator interacted with the group to hear what it was that they had found most useful - the women made collages to convey their feelings. These were kept by the women and used to decorate the venue when they graduated to show people what they had learned. These included their growing confidence and understanding of gender equality; leadership; helping others and being willing to try different approaches. They spoke of being active and 'going for it'. They were unanimous about the value of financial management. They had never before kept account of their money. The graduation celebration involved all women speaking in front of the crowd. They were very encouraging of one another mostly through songs and dancing. A most telling statement was made by one of the woman, which reinforces Jim Lees' observation of people's sense of de-humanization, "Some people think we are animals. We aren't, you know, we are human beings; in this course we were treated like human beings".

This workshop illustrates holistic approaches to adult learning which are 'life-wide' and 'life deep' which acknowledge the economic and systemic necessities; the personal skills required; the need participants have to belong and experience their humanness; and the need to build solidarity both with one another and also within the broader community. The course recognized the help the women needed to understand how to access state resources, like social welfare grants, use of health clinics services, and so on. The individual was connected to society like a spider in its web.

Vignette 3: Composite profiles of adult learners⁵

Whilst the first two examples are centrally about HIV/AIDS, the following profiles are of adult learners involved in general adult basic education programmes. These demonstrate that the majority of learners are women and they are struggling to make ends meet economically for themselves and their children; violence is rife - caused by alcohol or drug abuse, political violence, poverty, criminality; there is widespread trauma through death of parents or siblings at early ages; the learning experiences are highly gendered - either through pregnancy, being the only man in the class, jealousies from spouses or neighbours; they have strong aspirations for their children's education and some success with this; many adult learners have leadership roles in communities or factories or religious institutions; their lives are complicated as they struggle to survive against many different odds, with many being single parents or still in abusive relationships; for some, involvement in learning has led to improved work situations.

1. Sindi is a married woman with three children. She has earned a living making mud building blocks for her neighbours, selling second hand clothes and doing domestic work. Her husband gets temporary jobs in people's homes. He is unable to earn a regular income because he has a drinking problem; his family sees little of his money. Therefore Sindi is the primary earner and care-giver in her home. She left school in Grade 7 because her friends were all leaving and going to try to find work. Her motivation to attend ABET classes was to get a better job. She believes that her participation in the ABET level 3 certificate has changed her life as this led to employment as a nurse assistant at a hospital. The hospital has promised to assist her in furthering her studies provide she gets a school leaving certificate. She believes

⁵ Composite profiles drawn from Vaughn John "Communities of learning and action?: a case study of the Human Rights, Democracy and Development Project, 1999-2005, submitted for examination, for Doctoral Degree, University of Kwa-Zulu Natal; June Roodt 2007 *An exploration of learning by women in the clothing and textile industry within the context of the national skills development strategy*. A thesis in partial fulfillment of the Masters in Education, University of Western Cape, South Africa

that some of her neighbours were jealous of her when she started working as a nursing assistant as they could not believe she had the background to succeed in life. She plans to study hard to save enough money so that her children can get tertiary education.

2. Thandi could not finish school because she fell pregnant. Her mother was so disappointed but later she allowed her to return to school. However, political violence interrupted her studies and she quit. She describes the political tension in her area and how she was physically assaulted by members of another party when returning from a meeting. She takes leadership roles in her political party. She has got involved in income generating projects. She complains that sometimes educators do not teach for the prescribed time, and if learners complain they get threatened.

3. Rachel spoke about her supportive mother who helped her during her early years in school. Her father died when she was very young. After she had moved to live with relatives, her schooling was affected because of the work that she had to do in their home and because she was sexually abused. She dropped out of school after this incident. When she was older she had her own family and was building a good home for them, which was destroyed through political violence. She is now single and is a member of the development structure and peace committee in her area.

4. Zelpha left school in Grade 2 because her father said that he did not have money to educate her 'for someone else' (i.e. a future husband). She said that their poverty meant she did not have books. After her parents died she looked after her siblings but could not support their education from her meager income from farm work. She married but divorced her husband because of physical abuse. She is active in her church. Her three sisters have died in recent years and left all their children in her care. She is proud that she is a spiritual person and has skills in sewing and gardening which she shares with others. She points to alcohol abuse and fighting as major problems in her community.

5. Zuzile's father passed away when he was young. His mother left him in the care of relatives in order that she could marry again. He says that he had no chance to get education as he had to take care of his uncle's livestock. His uncle sent his own children to school but not him. He left for Johannesburg where he worked as a cook and assistant to a bricklayer. He has also run his own business selling chips and fruit. He says that sometimes he had to turn customers away if they offered him large bank notes. To disguise that he was unable to calculate he would say he had no change. Although he had no schooling he married someone with standard 10 who he met in church. He eventually went back to his home community where he joined ABET classes – his ABET level 2 certificate helped get him a job in a hospital kitchen. When he was offered the job he had to fill out many forms which he would not have done without ABET. As the only man who was attending ABET classes he was accused of being interested in other people's wives.

6. Elizabeth works in a clothing factory. Her mother worked as a cleaner also in a clothing factory and worked overtime every night. Her father was a mechanic and worked as a manager at a garage. She spoke of her mother struggling financially as her father had extra-marital relationships and did not support the family adequately. Her mother was physically abused by her father. Elizabeth is now divorced with 2 sons. Her abusive husband refuses to move out of their house. The eldest child has finished school and is currently working at the same company. The youngest is at school and abuses drugs. She has participated in various training programmes at work.

Knud Illeris (2007) emphasises that central to learning is the interaction between the motivation (or incentive) of a learner and the content (curriculum) – who is the learner, why are they there, what are their life circumstances? Key to successful learning experiences is taking these issues into account. Therefore, learning systems or programmes cannot leave the identities of the learners at the door. Jenny Horsman (1999) highlights the centrality of violence and its impact on learning⁶ and how essential it is to acknowledge this in the ways we design and facilitate learning. In a context like that in South Africa, where violence is endemic for the majority of the population, educators and learners must understand how to work with trauma (their own or others), if they are to overcome the enormous barriers to successful learning which violence of all kinds can cause. This highlights the critical importance of educators who are

⁶ Her very useful website is www.learningandviolence.net

well trained and supported. While these examples come from South Africa, it is important to acknowledge that in the majority world many of issues may vary in some ways but are essentially the same. (Anyone who has seen the Hollywood blockbuster movie, *Slumdog Millionaire*, or read the book, will recognize this!)

Moving from this in depth view of adult learning using a telephoto lens, I now adjust to a wider angle view to help place these experiences in broader historic, political and theoretical perspectives. I will draw particularly on ideas from feminist popular education and post-colonial theory to throw light on some aspects of adult and lifelong learning for the majority world.

FEMINIST POPULAR EDUCATION

The last 12-15 years have seen profound reconfigurations of the global political landscape and related developments in theoretical approaches. Both of these have significant implications for the conceptualisation and practice of feminist popular education. The consolidation of a global feminist movement has ushered in a new legitimacy for gender and sexual politics and novel spaces for local and transnational activism. At the same time, the tendency to institutionalise and professionalise feminist activism through 'gender mainstreaming' has redrawn the field of political engagement with constraining and depoliticising effects.

Neoliberalism has not only exacerbated the poverty and precariousness of the lives of the majority of the world's women, but has also reshaped modes of governance and access to resources in line with the logic of the market. The current global financial crisis compounds the position still further. Emergent issues – such as HIV/AIDS, fundamentalism, and indigenous peoples' struggles – have gained mainstream international attention; culturally-constructed aspects of men and women's subjectivities – such as sexuality, spirituality and emotion – have come into clearer focus; the effects of violence and trauma on learning have increasingly been acknowledged; and new modalities of educating and organising provided by communications technologies and media offer both challenges and exciting possibilities. Current intellectual perspectives on power and knowledge bolster critiques of Eurocentric epistemologies, affirming the importance of contesting dominant discourses and valorising subjugated knowledges. These developments provoke a critical rethinking of local and transnational feminist practice, of solidarity and social justice – in other words, the domain of feminist popular education.

While much has been debated and written about feminist organizing in the context of these changes, there is much less critical reflection on the specifically educational and pedagogical aspects of transformative practices. How is feminist popular education taking cognizance of the shifts in the contexts of women's and men's learning and organising for change? What are the current theoretical rationales for particular pedagogical strategies, workshop design and facilitation? What analytic frameworks give better purchase on our understanding of how popular education "works" to promote individual and collective learning and action? What pedagogies effectively promote self-reflection and encourage the displacement of entrenched ways of understanding social processes? How do non-cognitive approaches and bodywork contribute to knowledge production and learning? How are connections incited between analyses of gender inequality and political organising for change? Feminist popular education is being (re)thought about and elaborated in relation to current shifts in global and local political spaces and is the subject of a book which my colleague, Linzi Manicom and I are working on. We are hopeful that this will bring together some of the leading edge thinking about these matters. This builds on our previous book Walters and Manicom (1996).

POST-COLONIAL THEORY⁷

As Julia Preece (2009 forthcoming) says, for countries of the South to challenge dominant perceptions, we need explanatory theoretical frameworks that make sense of our particular historical contexts. This includes re-narrating the experiences of colonisation from the viewpoints of the colonised, and the implications this has had for current development issues in relation to adult and lifelong learning. It means

⁷ I have been influenced particularly by Jim Lees and Julia Preece's works in this section, for which I am grateful.

recognising the impact that colonization had on people's identities, cultures, their claims to indigenous knowledge, their experiences of racism and sexism and the ongoing effects of a relationship that was built on oppression and violation of basic human dignity. This includes understanding the institutional structures, textual representations and power relations that enabled domination to operate so effectively under a banner of benevolence, manifested through discourses of development.

The process of colonialism was predicated on racism, colonialist discourses, imperialism and an essentialist construction of colonised people as 'the other'. As Chilisa (2005) says, the 'colonizer was constructed as one who knows, while the colonised had to learn from the coloniser'. Said (1978) coined the term 'orientalism' in relation to formal studies of the 'orient'. He explains how knowledge about people and their cultures was represented in opposition to and 'other than' the values, beliefs and culture of the West. Colonial discourses are behaviours, rationales and texts that assume certain truth values about history, literature and language. Racism is integral to this and is an ideology that classifies humans as mentally, culturally and socially inferior according to physical, biological or genetic characteristics. Racism and issues of race can be claimed to form the basis of inequitable power differentials. Racism becomes a common sense thought process that is embedded in Eurocentric learned belief systems and behaviours, mainly of White people. Imperialism is a form of colonialism without the physical settlement of one country into distant territory. It is characterized by economic systems of penetration and control of markets that create relations of dependency – it can be interchanged with the concept of neo-colonialism.

As Preece (2009) elaborates, post-colonialism has become popular since the 1990s with a number of educationists who attempt to move beyond the more economic focus of other critical theories in Third World politics such as dependency theory and neo-Marxism. Post-colonialism also moves beyond, but borrows from neo-Marxist notions of production and control through capitalism. The postcolonial analysis argues, for instance, that capitalism's search for expanded markets is an extension of post colonialisms and a primary feature of current economic exploitations of the South – manifested in trade agreements, the ways raw materials are purchased from the South in order to feed production in the North, and then returned in the form of goods to the South. Post-colonialism focuses on the issues that directly concern the experiences of colonisation and its ongoing effects since the formal process of decolonisation. It particularly aims to re-historicise the story of colonialism, deconstruct texts about the South written by the North and insert new texts that reflect knowledges and world views of the South. The aim is to redress the imbalance of whose voice is heard and also explain how contemporary positions are fluid, contestable, and every changing. The 'post' in post-colonial means 'going beyond' rather than 'superseding' the earlier status of colonialism; or as Chilisa (2005) notes, 'since colonialism' rather than 'after' colonialism.

The postcolonial agenda has also been critiqued for a number of reasons – it is a theory heavily dominated by Western influences; because of the hybridity of cultures and identities, the postcolonial agenda cannot recover the past in any pure sense. The past has already been changed and the present is already a fusion with the past. Post-colonialism has been criticized for being an abstract language of the academic elite diaspora, so the subaltern never really speaks, which raises the question as to whether a White person can speak at all on behalf of the colonized? Spivak (1990) answers this "...if you make it your task not only to learn.....but also through a historical critique of your position as the investigating person, then you will see that you have earned the right to criticize, and you can be heard.....".

TOWARDS CLOSURE

In moving to closure, I summarise what is the relevance of feminist popular education and post-colonial theory for understanding adult and lifelong learning in South Africa and similar countries? How can pedagogies of HIV/AIDS further our understanding?

- The majority of people are poor, black and women, therefore analytical frameworks that are in the interests of supporting poor women individually and collectively, are essential.
- Patriarchy is alive and well with gender violence and abuse being endemic, which emphasizes the importance of understanding oppressive gender relations in their complexity and being encouraged to resist and overcome them.

- Violence is endemic (through poverty, war, criminality, political thuggery, racism etc) – the trauma and the resultant impact on learning must inform approaches to the design and facilitation of all learning; this includes the necessary healing processes to enable learners and facilitators to be ‘fully human’.
- The world is dominated by neo-liberal economics which have led to forms of ‘casino capitalism’ and ‘neo-colonialism’, which need to be understood in order that people are able to begin to imagine other alternatives for sustainable living in a just and caring world.
- While there has been a rapid increase in relative size of the black middle class in South Africa, the economy is dominated by White people and urban, Western views are hegemonic – post-colonial theory is more than anti-racism – it holds before us, much deeper and longer histories of colonisation – which have left deep footprints across the length and breadth of the country and the continent. There is a need for the full humanity of all people to be recognised, including the acknowledgement of the potential value of subjugated knowledges which can help to illuminate the paths ahead for alternative, sustainable ways of being and living. Duran, quoted by Lees, asks the simple but powerful questions, “Where did you learn how to do this?”; “From your family or parents?” And “Where did they learn this from?” In this way learners begin to objectively observe the historical process in which certain behaviors have been instilled, and others have been eradicated.
- Feminist popular education principles and methodologies of ‘seeing with the heart and speaking from the heart’; valuing mind, body and spirit equally in the approaches and methods; and encouraging silence, contemplation and reflection as a necessary part of learning from where individuals and collectives can draw new strength for the struggles ahead, are essential; as are the participatory methods for assisting people understand critically how their local material conditions are shaped by the transnational and global forces – they are like spiders within complex webs.
- With the shifting demographics and the changes in the roles and responsibilities of both the young and old, women and men, through many parents dying from AIDS – cross generational understanding and collaboration is essential to provide support for communities which are under severe strain.
- AIDS in Africa needs to be placed in the historical context of colonialism that continues in new and old forms. As Lees argues, ‘the internalized and oppressive colonial voices that still try to convince people that they are less than they are must be acknowledged as an important factor when looking at protection and self-care’ and cultural practices which are generative of positive self-identities are necessary. As Lees elaborates ‘the real challenge to AIDS education in the continent, is to initiate conversations that do not pathologise African people. The second challenge is to understand that the AIDS pandemic and HIV prevention are about healing more than our bodies’. He continues, “In South Africa, I believe HIV prevention must understand and heal the historical nature of risk in the internal voices of doubt and inferiority colonialism and apartheid have left within many South African people”. He believes the systems within which people work must be places of healing as well.
- Learning which is lifelong, life-wide, and life-deep requires to be re-thought and (re) theorised, to take into account the shifting realities and full humanity of the majority world, and grappling with the complexities of pedagogies of HIV/AIDS can assist this process. These new understandings in turn need to inform policies and practices in the interests of the poor majority whose learning and healing is at the centre.
- A core premise is that good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher, educator, facilitator, who is concerned with the lives of the people involved, and is also concerned with our own life-long, life-wide and life-deep learning in the interests of a more just and caring planet. It is critical for us as adult educators to engage in self-reflection in order to be with students in the fabric of life. As Lees says, “The connections made by good teachers are held not in their methods, but in their hearts” (meaning the place where intellect, emotion and spirit converge in the human self).

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