

## LE Lab Summer Session 4: Thursday

### Collaborative Writing and Addressing Invalidation

*Objectives: Use theater of the oppressed methodologies to anticipate invalidation that certain positions of power will project on participatory methods and with these methodologies formulate a response and more hopeful possibilities. Participants will become what Boal called Spect-Actors. In this transformation, we can stop the re-enactment of troubling scenes, step in, suggest/act an alternative way to resolve the situation, and offer an end to these patterns of invalidation.. The process of re-enacting such scenes, stopping them, and suggesting/rehearsing alternatives enables us to see the possibility of change. This process allows us to practice taking action and intervening. Participants will also be introduced to a new method of investigating and interrupting power, a new method of listening.*

#### **Draft Agenda:**

*At start of week on the 14<sup>th</sup>:*

Send out an email with instructions. Inviting each person to collect artifacts of responses they have received to delegitimize data gathered through participatory methods. OR alternatively, participants can bring in what they anticipate may be a response, using their imagination. OR alternatively, participants may be invited to express their own fears and concerns about these methods. We will not have to know which of these buckets the examples are coming from.

*The night before on the 16<sup>th</sup>:*

Send out a reminder to bring the artifact and send out the instructions in case anyone would like to review it in advance

**Time keeper for today: Emese**

**Note taker for today:** Lots of note takers in small group sessions, but Emese will take notes during the exhibit of horrors

**Recording: Yes**

9 am-9:05

Meg and Sukti

Energetic start/something humorous

9:05 - 9:15 Sukti to Pair Breakout

Ten Minute Tea Time - breakout rooms for random pairs

Power conversations, one on one.

Prompt:

Share an exciting AHA or "Wow, that makes sense" or "I didn't think of that!" moment you had while working in and with community.

When returned, ask if anyone wants to share? Maybe one or two, others who want to share, in chat.

9:15- 9:50 [ask for Speaker view]

SLIDE when being introduced and then go to whole group.

Do a brief show and tell, gallery style walk through the examples each person brought in.

Emese will start and give instructions on how to best Cheer, jeer, and otherwise respond humorously, as we will all react via chat, or unmuting ourselves, or using the reaction options in zoom. This will take on a more carnivalesque tone to create an atmosphere that equalizes power. We will ask each person to call on someone else... we may not get through all depending on time, and we can ask who ever still remains to feel free to put in chat.

In the background, we will share music to set the absurdist theme:

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/0rqgHfayt3rKY4ceelTPPU?si=acc75901e186443c> [Sukti]

9:50-9:55

Break with music

9:55

Emese introduces activity SLIDE

Briefly about Theater of the Oppressed, how this is adapted. Why this activity is useful to explore agency and power and imagine radical possibilities. Then, go over the steps of the activity.

MELA: Before groups are sent into break out rooms, we will invite each participant to reflect on their artifact, take one minute with their artifact of invalidation in mind and consider what they are thinking, how they are feeling and what they will do.

While, Mela is speaking, Emese will put the file with the instructions in the chatbox.

9:55-

10:45 (BREAKOUT ROOMS) Instructions are shared as a file in chat before groups are sent into rooms.

Participants will be broken up in small groups, small forum theater troupes.

One person is designed as note taker to identify the interventions and strategies used to interrupt invalidation.

Forum theatre: involves the reenactment of a troubling scenario with the opportunity to step in and change the outcome as first observed.

10-10:10 In these small groups, the participants will create a very brief skit with one (or a combination) of the artifacts brought in.

**9:55-10:25** Participants walk through the scenario once. After watching and participating in the action, the group may stop to reflect or may move onto the next step, to alter the scenario, trying different interventions.

The second time through the performance (i.e., starting over in “replay” mode), any Spect-Actor may stop the action. After calling halt, a Spect-Actor steps into a role and changes the script in any way they choose. Other Spect-Actors must adapt, enacting a different course of action. At this point, Spect-Actors playing for instance a community member who was told by a government official that PAR is not science might try different ways of disrupting the talk about objectivity..etc

10:25-10:45 Process what happened, and name observed intervention strategies. After observing and participating in the altered scene, the group reflects together on what worked (and what didn't); who was assumed to have responsibility and agency to make change (and why); and what alternate interventions might be tried. Encourage each group to grapple with the most challenging questions the group needs to reckon with.

**10:45-10:50**

Post reflection: **Mela** will invite each participant to reflect (silently to themselves) on their artifact again, take one minute with their artifact of invalidation in mind and consider what they are thinking, how they are feeling and what they will do.

How has it changed? They can feel free to share in chat.

Share that the notes from the artifacts and the responses that were gathered will be combined and an article will be drafted to share back for edits.

**10:50-11**

Closing exercise - song

**11.**

**Sukti** invites One word from each person.

Learning objectives for the session:

- Strengthen the network of legal empowerment practitioners and scholars committed to participatory learning and action.
- More valid, embodied, and deeper understandings of what works in empowerment practice by engaging in methodologies that require an awareness of embodied power and transformation..
- Legal empowerment practitioners/organizations committed to improving their work have the tools and resources they need to evaluate the impact of their work and to do their work better, improving the sustainability and scalability of proven interventions.

- Consider strategies for engaging in scholarly dialogue about validity in a deeply participatory way.