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The Essence of Powerful Teaching

I remember well my first week of teaching. I was employed as a part-time lecturer in liberal studies at Lewisham and Eltham College of Further Education in southeast London. Because the institution I was working for had the word *college* in its title, I assumed my students would be intellectually curious, motivated by a quest for truth and beauty. I also assumed things would be friendly and collegial, as befitted a college environment.

But that first week power came crashing into my world. The students (all apprentice plumbers, builders, or electricians) clearly had no interest in what I had to teach. They were there to learn a trade and any time they spent in being “liberalized” by yours truly was time they resented. So, they found all kinds of ways to disempower me. They would get out of their chairs and move around the room at will, shout at each other, refuse to answer my questions, poke fun at me, swear, and make jokes I didn’t get. I was powerless to do anything about this. I tried to use humor back, tried to show them I was relaxed and “cool,” a friend almost, and tried to appeal to their better nature. Nothing worked. There was no coercive power I could use, since there were no liberal studies exams they needed to pass, and their sponsoring employers resented students wasting their time with me. Soon I was pushed into trying to keep the students quiet and busy by creating classroom activities that left as little opportunity for disruption (and discussion) as was possible.

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I realize now that the students (who were fifteen or sixteen years old) were probably a little giddy with the fact that I had no formal power over them, only the power of persuasion. Maybe they were confused by the lack of boundaries and conspired to push me into acting in a traditional teacherly role. It probably didn't help that I was only five years older than they were and clearly a novice at my craft. One day during that first week a fistfight broke out between a White English boy and an Afro-Caribbean boy that I assumed was racially motivated. As I wrote in *The Skillful Teacher* (Brookfield, 2006) the thought popped into my head "What would John Dewey do?" (it may have been "What would R.S. Peters do?" Or "What would Alfred North Whitehead do?"). Nothing came to mind, and that was when I realized that the most difficult challenge of that first year's teaching was going to be to understand power—what the limits of my power were, how best to use that power, how to head off students' exercise of their own power to disrupt and sabotage, and how to deal with the power differences of racial identity among class members.

Over the years that concern with power has only intensified. If there's one thing I know about teaching adults it's that power is always in the room, constantly surfacing in surprising ways. I've had over four decades of experience since that first eventful week in 1970, but the same questions and dynamics perplex me as much as they did then. How can I ensure that my positional power as the teacher is being exercised responsibly? What do I do when students use the power of silence, negative body language, mockery, verbal hostility or overt noncompliance to sabotage me? How do I deal with power discrepancies among students when I suspect some students are speaking more and dominating the class because of the power they exercise in their roles outside the classroom? How can I teach students about the ways that dominant power and ideology constrain their lives, even as they embrace that power enthusiastically?

This book explores these and other related questions about how power, teaching, and adult learning intersect. I assume power is omnipresent in all adult learning situations in which someone is identified as the designated teacher. From adult higher education to corporate training, religious formation to social movement education, professional development institutes to community college classrooms, power dynamics endure. It doesn't really matter what the subject content is, teachers and learners constantly exercise power. I would argue that a recreational class on local history is as much informed by power dynamics as a critical theory class studying the concepts of hegemony and dominant ideology. You can't understand adult education or teaching without examining power. This is why experienced practitioners "often have sophisticated practical understanding of how power works, enough so that they are able to work effectively" (Wilson and Nesbit, 2005, p. 449).

Much of adult education purports to be about empowerment, about teaching for a particular kind of learning that involves adults developing skills, increasing understanding, and acquiring information that enables them to take all kinds of matters into their own hands (Archibald and Wilson, 2011). This kind of teaching is intended to nurture a sense of agency in people so that they feel confident in their abilities as learners and political actors. Of course empowerment, like power, is not a transparent, monolithic idea. Empowering people to learn the rules of the game so they can succeed in negotiating organizational politics is not the same as empowering people to reject those rules and seek to change the basic way organizations function. The whole notion of empowerment suffers from the confused belief that adult educators can "give" their power to learners. As teachers we can work to remove barriers and to help students develop knowledge, skills, and confidence, but only students can empower themselves. Empowerment, after all, can only be claimed, not given.

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Anyone interested in empowering learners has to acknowledge that they are acting politically—in other words, to make power work on their behalf. The teaching I explore is meant to prepare people to participate in deciding how they will use the resources available to them and how they will act in the world. Because I work from a critical theory perspective (Brookfield, 2004), I am interested in ways learners challenge dominant ideologies such as capitalism, White supremacy, and patriarchy. From this perspective empowered people work to change the fundamental, structural aspects of their lives and communities. This project is described much more fully in my book with John Holst, *Radicalizing Learning* (Brookfield and Holst, 2010). In line with this project I was particularly pleased to be contacted by different groups involved in the 2011 Occupy Wall Street movement who wanted my suggestions on techniques and methods to institute horizontal decision making in their general assemblies.

I am also interested in helping learners feel powerful enough to change significant elements in their lives without necessarily changing the fundamental structures in which they function. So I hope students I teach will get more satisfying jobs, learn how to advocate for themselves and their families, get involved in local community organizations, and so on. We all have to live in this world while dreaming of another possible world (like Powertopia), and it does not seem philosophically contradictory to work in the present, with all its constraints and limitations, while simultaneously working for a radically different future. In fact I'd say this is life as a lot of us know it. Of course, putting elements of an imagined future into practice is the difficult bit.

The Omnipresence of Power

Power is the enduring reality of all kinds of learning settings. From rigidly controlled attempts to ensure that adults learn a skill in a highly precise manner with minimal opportunity for deviation or

creativity, to informal enthusiast groups in which people gather to pursue a shared passion wherever it takes them, power is always there. We see power exercised when teachers move learners to engage with unfamiliar, and sometimes disturbing ideas, or when coaches, therapists, or mentors help people to understand how others see them. We see it when trainers encourage students to experiment with new skills or techniques, or when leaders attempt to change culture by modeling vulnerability, transparency, or risk taking. In all these examples there is a flow of energy, in which people's actions create reactions, people's choices have consequences, and the meanings people intend to communicate are understood in certain ways. But in all these examples there is also an inherent unpredictability. Actions produce unexpected results, choices lead to total surprise, and meanings are ascribed to words and phrases that are opposite to the ones intended. So though it's ever present, power manifests itself in multiple and contradictory ways, and it constantly disturbs any attempts to make teaching and learning fit some prearranged script.

Power is also present when teachers' actions get in the way of learning, as happens when they say they will do one thing (such as encourage all ideas to be expressed) and then do something entirely different (such as using sarcasm, ridicule, or shaming to make it clear which opinions they find noteworthy). My high school headmaster used his power in an overt and physical way when he caned me for entering school premises before classes started one freezing cold winter's morning in 1964. Educators and trainers can create the conditions in which people feel empowered to take chances, challenge authority, disagree, or come up with original analyses. They can also turn learning spaces into dead zones of mind-numbing busywork, in which people's creativity is exercised for the sole purpose of finding new ways to manage the boredom.

Adult learners exercise power when they suggest examples that clarify a concept or illustrate a principle, helping a discussion gather momentum. They support each other in powerful ways—building

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confidence, providing encouragement, and coming up with illustrations that explain complex ideas. Their power can also stop teachers dead in their tracks when they simply refuse to ask or answer questions. Every teacher knows the panic of ending an explanation, asking for questions, and being met by total silence. Does this mean students have understood everything or that they are completely confused? Are they just uninterested or are they intimidated? Is their silence an act of resistance or apathy? Are they initiating a performance strike or are they uncertain of what participation in class looks like? In a meeting leaders can similarly be stymied by a lack of participation. No matter how much positional authority you may enjoy, you can feel your “power” slipping away as you introduce a new agenda item at a meeting only to be met by averted gazes, slumped shoulders, or glazed eyes.

The reality of power is just as present online as in any other setting. Just because courses happen online does not mean that power relations are elided (Pettit, 2002; Jun and Park, 2003). Teachers have the power to set deadlines for student postings, to mandate how many postings constitute an acceptable level of participation, and to encourage or humiliate students through the way they comment on their contributions. In some ways a teacher’s negative comment online has more enduring power than one made in the middle of a classroom discussion. The words are always there, frozen on the screen as a reminder of a teacher’s disapproval. Students, however, have the power to evade and sabotage teacher’s intentions by posting comments that are fabrications and in no way representative of their real opinions. They also have the power that their greater use of, and familiarity with, digital technology may give them.

Efforts to introduce more student-centered, empowering activities sometimes, in a teasing contradiction, underscore teachers’ power. Telling students they have the power to decide when to call a break, how many absences may be taken in a semester, or to grade some assignments seems, on the face of it, to be empowering. But this is still an exercise of teacher power. After all, the teacher is

the one creating the possibility that students can make these decisions. It's a fundamentally different dynamic when learners insist they need more breaks than you are providing because they know their energy level at the end of a hard day better than you do. It's even more striking when they leave a session en masse to get refreshment or to use the toilet, leaving you wondering whether or not to carry on with a classroom activity. In my own workshops, I time a break once an hour simply because if I don't adults will get up and take one anyway.

To take another example, Katherine Frego (2006) includes an Amnesty Coupon (which I have sometimes used) in her syllabus that students can redeem one time during the semester as an amnesty from an assignment deadline. If students never redeem the coupon, they gain extra points on their grade. Adults appreciate this kind of acknowledgment that life gets in the way of academic study. Yet, even a creative device such as the Amnesty Coupon clearly entrenches teacher power since the teacher is the one responsible for its design and implementation. I'm the one who puts the coupon in the syllabus and declares it to be legitimate. It's an entirely different dynamic if the adults I'm teaching come up with the idea and force me to consider it seriously.

Even in recreational adult education classes where enrollment and attendance are wholly voluntary, power moves around the room in unpredictable ways. A university noncredit or extramural course for adults has power present before students even arrive in the room. As Kenkmann (2011) describes, and as my own practice corroborates, teachers in such classes typically arrive early to rearrange the furniture, open windows, adjust thermostats, distribute materials, write on the board and position themselves close to the front desk or computer terminal. Even putting chairs into a circle and explaining to learners that you do this to displace power "in many ways reinforces power structures rather than undermines them, because it suggests that the teacher is the one who has power in the first place that can then be surrendered" (Kenkmann, 2011, p. 284).

As an adult learner, I have felt as foolish, ashamed, or angry in leisure classes as I have in the most rigidly controlled and mandated learning environments. In *Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher* (Brookfield, 1995), I described my experiences in a class for adult nonswimmers where a teacher's inability to understand my fears stopped him from knowing what would help me learn, and where a fellow student's struggles allowed her to sense what would move me forward (wearing goggles). I should admit that recreational teachers have also inspired me to take risks and made me feel proud of my accomplishments. Sometimes it was because of a methodology they used, but more often it was because of who they were. By that I mean the way they exuded a quiet enthusiasm, displayed openness to criticism, or were humble about their accomplishments. I remember these things more vividly than any new skill they taught me. I shall argue throughout this book that modeling is one of the most powerful techniques that teachers use.

How Do Adult Teachers Think About Power?

Not only is the reality of power everywhere, but its rhetoric is everywhere too. One of the most frequently used words in the discourse of adult learning, *power* has three chief connotations. First, and most frequently, a powerful teacher or leader is often characterized as a person with charisma, wisdom, and presence—someone who can hold an auditorium in the palm of their hands or whose personality can fire people with enthusiasm for learning. These are the individuals who win teacher of the year awards and who feature in media portrayals of teachers. The power thought to be exercised here is usually the power to inspire.

In this discourse power flows overwhelmingly in one direction, from teacher to taught. The teacher motivates and inspires others by her presence. A powerful technique is understood in a similar way as a task, exercise, or activity that is so skillfully energizing that

it cannot fail to activate students' enthusiasm, dispelling any resistance to learning they feel. Such a technique is imagined as a kind of elixir that, once drunk, turns apathy into engagement, hostility into eagerness. In *Learning as a Way of Leading* (2008), Stephen Preskill and I argued that this was the prevailing model of leadership in contemporary culture.

A second connotation of power is that it is a force used to intimidate, control, or bully. Whenever I feel I am being made to complete a meaningless task, simply because my teacher has told me I must do this or risk failing the course, I am in his power. I can, of course, exert my own power of noncompliance, but the consequences of doing this are usually worse than the boredom of having to jump through a particular teacher-prescribed "hoop." So many organizational behaviors are determined by edicts and requirements issued from above. In the universities in which I have worked, what I and my colleagues taught, and how we taught it, have been strongly influenced by the dictates of whichever accreditation agency had the power to award or withdraw the university's accreditation. The power here is the power of coercion.

Coercion, by the way, is not always a bad thing. Being coerced into making sure you treat people respectfully, don't privilege research over teaching, try to recruit employees who represent racial diversity, challenge groupthink, and allow learners time to think before they speak are all coercions I would endorse. Sometimes I use my authority as a leader or teacher to coerce my students or colleagues into examining ideas or practices they would much rather ignore. An example of this would be in leadership courses where I insist that the White students I teach explore the concept of racial microaggressions. These are the small behavioral tics and gestures (tone of voice, body language, choice of examples, eye contact, and so on) that Whites display without realizing how these diminish racial minorities. I don't like owning up to my racial microaggressions and my students often don't either. But I force the issue and insist that we cover this ground. Baptiste (2002) describes

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this as ethical coercion and points out that it is usually masked by blander language such as facilitation or encouragement.

The third way power is spoken of is particularly prevalent among trainers and educators of adults. This is the discourse of empowerment, where the point of learning is thought to be the development in learners of a sense of agency—a belief that they can accomplish something that previously had been considered unattainable or that had they had never even imagined. An empowered classroom is usually thought of as one where students decide what they wish to learn and how they are going to learn it. An empowered learner is deemed one who applies the new skills learned in class to take action in the world outside. Time after time in my career I have heard people say they wished to empower students, meaning they wanted them to feel more confident in their abilities and to see themselves as self-directed learners who could take responsibility for planning and conducting their own learning without a teacher's assistance.

These are laudable aims, but they are also complicated. For example, what if my students self-directedly decided to explore White supremacist ideology with a view to spreading racial hatred? What if the soccer teams I have coached decide the best way to avoid defeat is to keep all ten outfield players in the penalty box, pack the goalmouth, and then fake being fouled with a view to getting opponents expelled from the match? What if the staff members I supervise decide to tell students or colleagues who seem to be depressed to “snap out of it” and refuse their requests for help? Would I unequivocally support these aims because they helped students develop a sense of their own agency? Of course not! My own commitments, values, and ethics would stop me. I don't want the most loud-mouthed students or the most bigoted colleagues to feel even *more* confident. On the contrary, I want to disturb them, to force them to be silent sometimes so they have to listen to what others are saying. And I want to require them to show they have striven to understand a view that challenges them before they dismiss it.

As already mentioned, empowerment is not something teachers, professional developers, or leaders can *give* to students, colleagues, or followers; it's something students *claim*. And not everything that students wish to claim is desirable. Sometimes we have to insist and coerce, to stand our ground, and not give in to students' demands. This is one of the hardest lessons I have learned as an adult teacher. I used to think that a proper adult learning environment was one in which I found out what students wished to learn, or how they wished the class to proceed, and then taught that content or ran the class that way. And in certain situations I still feel that's true. But I realize that being adult-centered does *not* absolve me of making value-based choices. Sometimes it means trying to find out as much as I can about how my students are experiencing their learning and then using what I have discovered to help them engage with material I feel is worth the effort.

A Note on Sovereign and Disciplinary Power

Over the past three decades the work of the late French cultural critic Michel Foucault has had a significant influence in shaping how adult teachers think about power. Many practitioners, including yours truly, now concede that power is much more dispersed and slippery than they had previously thought. In particular, Foucault's notion of disciplinary power—the way we exert power on ourselves to make sure we keep within acceptable boundaries—is widely cited. I often hear adult teachers talk of working in the *panopticon* (a system that we can't detect or block in which we feel permanently under surveillance) and of how they make sure they don't cross limits for fear of being reported by students or colleagues who disagree with them. In my own case, I'm very aware that e-mail is not a private form of communication and that out there in cyberspace are watchers who, at some unknown point in the future, can retrieve anything I type on my keyboard.

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Foucault argues that disciplinary power is the quintessential form of power in the information age and that it has replaced what he refers to as *sovereign power*—power exercised from above by an authority figure who doles out rewards and sanctions. Although I am persuaded by Foucault’s notion of disciplinary power, I believe what he called sovereign power still exists everywhere. For me sovereign power is not a kind of power that has been superseded. It’s alive and well in meetings where people disagree with something but don’t want raise their concerns because a powerful administrator is present. There is nothing covert about this. They don’t speak up because they don’t wish to challenge a powerful figure in the room.

Go to any adult literacy center, corporate training session, professional development day, or online adult classroom, and you will see the enormous sovereign power teachers in those settings exercise over students. They make most, and sometimes all, decisions on what is to be learned, how that learning will be arranged, how success in learning will be judged, and what materials will be used to support such learning. They arrange the minutiae of interactions such as how the room will be arranged, when breaks will be called for and for how long, and whether or not the lights will be on or the blinds open. Certainly, students often push back, subvert, challenge, and sabotage this power. But it remains very real.

Of course those same teachers are themselves subject to the sovereign power exercised over them by accreditation agencies, professional codes or expectations, and licensing requirements. They have to deal with supervisors, senior colleagues in their departments, department heads, deans, vice presidents, tenure and promotion committees, and boards of trustees. They also face the sovereign power of institutional habit. As Hunt (2006) outlines, teachers of adults face structural and systemic constraints that limit their ability to teach in ways consistent with their philosophies. For example, a commitment to intensive individual feedback is stymied by being required to teach large lecture classes, a belief in

collaborative work is torpedoed by a system that allows only for individual grading. If teaching authentically means staying true to the values you believe and espouse, then many of us are forced into a “long-term unconscious acceptance of inauthenticity as a condition of employment” (Hunt, 2006, p. 55).

So I believe sovereign power is undeniable and that at times it works in conjunction with disciplinary power in a seemingly unchallenged double-whammy. At other times it flourishes on its own. How many times have you tried to change some aspect of your institution’s or organization’s functioning only to be told, unequivocally and directly, “No!” In my own four-decade-long career I have been told at various times I can’t use pass/fail grading, I can’t have students defend their dissertations as a team even if they have written the document as a team, I can’t deviate from the syllabus, I can’t take students off-site for field trips, I can’t team-teach a course because it’s too expensive, and I can’t dispense with grading on a bell curve.

My understanding of power has been immeasurably enriched by Foucault and his notion that power is complex and multilayered, that it often moves around a room in unpredictable ways, and that those in apparently subordinate positions sometimes have the power to push back and sabotage (as when students stay silent when you pose a question to a group). But I am in no way ready to believe that sovereign power doesn’t exist. After all, when I was thirty-two and was fired, I didn’t internalize a desire to be fired as a pleasurable way to support the institution and I didn’t fire myself! No, it was a board of trustees who decided that in a time of newly imposed financial austerity they had the sovereign power to decide I was the most expendable member of staff.

What Does It Mean to Teach?

Having explored the idea of power at some length, I want now to turn to the other part of the title of this book—techniques

for teaching adults—and say something about how I understand teaching. In popular culture, the image of a good teacher is usually that of a charismatic individual who, through a mixture of dedication, empathy, courage, and genius ignites the fires of learning in students and leaves a mark on their lives that endures over the decades. Think of films like *Mr. Holland's Opus*, *Stand and Deliver*, *Remember the Titans*, *Dead Poets Society*, *The Emperor's Club*, or *Dangerous Minds*, and you'll see what I mean. From my own view as a working teacher, these films have done me more harm than good. As a shy introvert I find media images of supremely heroic, energetic, and accomplished teachers very intimidating. A lot of the time I feel I'm just muddling through the day trying not to create a disaster. I often leave a class thinking I'm an amateur and feeling confused and tired. So I'm continually reminding myself that teaching should not be confused with charismatic performance.

To teach is to help someone learn. This may sound obvious, but for me it's a mantra that bears repeating every day. The point of teaching is to help someone acquire information, develop skills, generate insights, and internalize dispositions they did not know before. The incredible complexity of adult learners—the different ways they learn, the varied purposes they bring to learning, the cultural and political constraints they endure, and the multiple identities and backgrounds they exhibit—means we have to think of teaching in similarly complex terms. I suppose there are some who can stand in front of a group of learners and use their personal charisma to talk brilliantly about a topic or demonstrate a new skill flawlessly and superbly, but this is only one contextually determined act of teaching among endless possibilities.

When I write a syllabus that is designed to help students understand the terrain they are to explore and the resources that will help them in that exploration, I'm teaching. When I write a book like this, I'm teaching. When I draw up a list of discussion questions to provoke students into considering new perspectives, or when I

create a video record of a skill demonstration, I'm teaching. When I call a break to keep energy levels high, I'm teaching. When I ask students to spend a period of class time silently reading a passage, I'm teaching. I could go on and on with this list but I hope you get the point. My favorite question to ask myself when I'm trying to decide among all the different options open to me about how I could spend my time in class is "How does this help learning?"

Thinking of teaching as helping learning implements the Ignation notion of *Tantum Quantum*—that context constantly alters how a practice is put into effect. As a teacher I work in very different ways depending on the context in which I find myself and the pedagogic purposes I'm pursuing. For example, in any particular week I move among the five perspectives Pratt (1998, 2002) identifies as influential in adult teaching. On Monday I may run a faculty development workshop on how to write a scholarly book proposal. Here I'm helping unpublished colleagues learn how to increase their chances of getting a book contract by taking them through the stages of writing a clear and persuasive proposal (what Pratt might call the transmission mode of teaching). On Tuesday I might be a consultant designing an executive development seminar to get business leaders to analyze their practice critically and identify blind spots in their decision making (what Pratt might call the developmental perspective).

Wednesday could see me inviting a colleague into my classroom so that she can observe how I run discussion sessions with the intent of adapting some of my strategies in her own teaching (what Pratt labels apprenticeship). Thursday I may work with a group of students who are on the verge of dropping out of a program and spend much of the session reassuring them that they have the ability to succeed (what Pratt describes as nurturing). The week may end on Friday with me running a session with a group of early childhood supervisors on recognizing racial microaggressions in their leadership practices or advising Occupy Wall Street groups on how to democratize their decision making (the social reform perspective).

It could also be that in the same class I teach informed by each of these five perspectives at different moments. As a recent summary of Pratt's *Teaching Perspectives Inventory* noted (Collins and Pratt, 2011), "effective teaching depends on context" (p. 259).

Now I have to own up and say I've probably never had a week in which all these events happened within the space of five days. But they have all happened within a few months of my writing these words. So how I teach at any moment on any day is strongly influenced by the purposes I'm trying to achieve and what I know about the people I'm working with. Some things do hold true, such as my belief that the most important knowledge I need to do good work is a constant awareness of how people are experiencing their learning, or my belief that I must always try to model whatever I'm asking learners to do. But exactly what I'll do, and the way I'll do it, varies with local circumstances. This is what Fenwick (2006) calls "poor pedagogy" "enacted in microrelations, in our ethical action in the immediate" (p. 21). When I do find myself in practice, some particular event—a provocative and disturbing question or a student's body language—may change radically the way I'm teaching in that particular moment.

So when I talk about teaching in this book I'm talking about any intentional act designed to help someone learn something. This certainly does include standing in front of a group and talking, but much of the time I'm teaching with my mouth shut (Finkel, 2000). At times I'm proactive in pushing students to engage with material that challenges them, while at other times I hang back and allow them to chart the course of learning. Sometimes I intervene to provide clarification and assistance, sometimes I let students struggle for an extended time. My intention always is to work skillfully to arrange the circumstances in which students will learn best. If I think this is most helped by my giving a lecture, then I'm happy to do that. But my starting point is always to ask myself what I want someone to learn and then to think of which approaches and activities will best help that happen.

Although this book is about techniques for teaching, I don't want to imply that teaching is only something that happens in formal educational institutions or something that is only done by people referred to as teachers, lecturers, or professors (Halx, 2012). Teaching happens in intimate relationships, families, recreational groups, communities, social movements, and all kinds of organizations. In fact, two books which I coauthored specifically focus on social movement teaching (Preskill and Brookfield, 2008; Brookfield and Holst, 2010). Teachers are called by many labels—facilitators, leaders, trainers, animateurs, counselors, therapists, or supervisors to name a few. Sometimes, particularly in intimate relationships, they have no special label; they're just friends, partners, siblings, or lovers who help us learn something about life. So I use the term *teacher* in a generic way throughout this book, and I apply it to the multiple contexts in which someone is intentionally helping someone else learn something.

What Makes Teaching Adults Distinctive?

This is a book about teaching adults, as against teaching children or adolescents. So a few words on what it means to work with adults are in order. I think that the methodology of teaching adults is not different in kind from that of teaching children or adolescents. Any differences that do exist in a particular situation are those of degree. Over my career, everything I've seen claimed as quintessential examples of adult teaching—such as emphasizing learner self-directedness, using dialog and discussion, working experientially, having learners construct the curriculum around their pressing concerns, getting students to ask critical questions, or creating classroom democracy—I've observed being done by teachers of children and adolescents. The best dialogic teacher I've ever seen worked exclusively with eight- to eleven-year-olds, and the most democratic classroom I've ever been in was in an American middle school.

When it comes to adult learners, it's plainly ludicrous to talk about teaching adults as if all adults across the planet represent a monolithic, generic category for which we can generate standardized techniques. In the *2010 Handbook of Adult and Continuing Education*, for example, Hansman and Mott (2010) and Boucouvalas and Lawrence (2010) explore the multiple variables present when considering adult learners, nothing less than the full diversity of humanity. Cultural tradition, class membership, racial identity, learning style, personality type, developmental stage, models of cognitive processing, previous experiences, people's particular brain chemistry, current ability level, readiness for learning—all these represent a bewildering set of learner characteristics. Then, add in the range of different settings in which learning happens—from programs to integrate Swaziland inmates into society after a jail term (Biswalo, 2011), to curricula in adult business schools (Love, 2011), online leadership programs for Newfoundland women (Clover, 2007), or peace education for women in Iraqi or Palestinian war zones (Mojab, 2010)—and it's clear that talking about adult learners as a unilateral group sharing similar characteristics is an essentialist absurdity. As English and Mayo (2012) appropriately observe, “an infinite range of disciplines and interdisciplinary studies constitute adult education's oyster” (p. 5).

So is there anything general we can say about teaching adults? I believe so. The first has to do with the reality of experience. As a general rule, the longer the time you spend on the planet, the more things happen to you and the more you interpret and give meaning to these experiences. That means adult students typically have a greater breadth and depth of experiences than younger students. But even this is obviously not a hard and fast truth. After all, a thirteen-year-old dropout who deals drugs and takes responsibility for rearing siblings, or a teenage refugee from a war zone who has had to survive on the streets in an alien culture, has had a much greater range of experience than someone who is forty years old, has lived in the same neighborhood, has smoothly progressed through

schooling and into work in the same community, and has kept their beliefs intact.

One thing that marks adult teaching differently is an intentional focus on the diverse experiences learners bring to the classroom. Teachers of adults keep in mind the importance, wherever possible, of using learners' prior experiences to create connections to the new material being studied or the new skill sets being developed. You can do this with children, of course, but the greater variety and depth of experiences that many adults have had often means there are more opportunities for this to happen.

Second, across multiple learning contexts most teachers of adults try to set a tone of respect towards their learners. One of the most frequent claims I've heard from colleagues in the field is that they try to treat people as adults. When I ask what this looks like they usually reply by saying things such as "I don't talk down to my students," "I take learners' contributions seriously," or "my students teach me far more than I teach them."

Of course, talking about a tone of respect is hugely problematic. For one thing, what counts as respectful conduct varies enormously across cultural and organizational contexts. I grew up with the notion that interrupting someone talking was disrespectful and that good conversation resembled a series of monologues. But Alice Walker describes an African American speech pattern of people constantly interrupting each other in what she calls "gumbo ya ya" (Ampadu, 2004). Here interruption is a sign of attentive listening through making an immediate response in the middle of a comment. It's a respectful way of responding. In a Confucian influenced classroom (Lee, 2011; Sun, 2008; Wang and Farmer, 2008; Zhang, 2008), a respectful way of treating learners is to take pains to ensure that they have learned a skill in exactly the way the teacher intends, so as to ensure they can imitate or replicate this with little individual variation.

Most English language analyses of what curriculum should be taught to adult learners frame this issue in terms of adult roles and

tasks. So an adult curriculum becomes one constructed around what any particular group contends are the distinctive roles and tasks people enact in adulthood. This is clearly culturally dependent. In my own case, I believe that a major task of adulthood is learning to create and sustain systems that encourage people to treat each other compassionately and fairly. So for me an adult curriculum—even if its focus is on helping people learn a very specific skill—in some way links to developing systems that stop an unrepresentative minority from having disproportionate control over resources that should be equally available to all. From this standpoint, a properly adult curriculum would teach skills that in some way allowed people to practice participatory economics (Albert, 2004, 2006) or democratic socialism (Brookfield and Holst, 2010). As Silver and Mojab (2011) document, the chance to teach this perspective has often been snuffed out as somehow being unpatriotic. If you believe, as I do, that a significant part of adult life is coming to understand how power operates, how dominant ideology shapes what seem to you to be “natural,” “commonsense” ways of thinking, and how to subvert this process of ideological manipulation, then much of your curriculum will focus on teaching about power.

Fourth, and connected to the point above, adult teaching for me always has a distinct purpose of helping people learn how to exercise power on their own behalf. This is the tradition that is probably the most venerated in the English-speaking adult educational world, with the work of Myles Horton (Horton, 2003) and the Highlander Folk School in Tennessee, and Paulo Freire’s (Freire, 2011) literacy work in Brazil and Chile being well-cited examples (see for example, McCormack, 2008; McDermott, 2007). Here the intent of teaching is to help learners understand how much they already know and how their experience, critically and collectively analyzed, can suggest responses to the problems they face in their communities, organizations, and movements. In interviews with Highlander participants, for example, Ebert, Burford and Brian (2004) describe how participants pooled their experiences to analyze the causes of community problems and generate

helpful responses in their struggles. Workshop facilitators would occasionally interject with questions, but participants made the decisions on what to explore and how to explore it. Highlander challenges the notion that only professional experts have valid knowledge and explores “forms of knowledge people have that are not recognized or are erased by standard social science such as storytelling, theater, drawing, popular knowledge, so-called folk wisdom” (Hoagland, 2011, p. 97).

This fourth response to the question “What makes teaching adults distinctive?” has particular resonance for this book. Since the focus of the book is on teaching power, one of the themes we will explore is how people learn to exercise power on their own behalf and the role teachers play (if any) in this process. This exercise of student power takes different forms. Sometimes the teacher has deliberately set up the classroom to be an analog of democratic process. Students may respond well to this or view it with suspicion, wondering what game the teacher is playing. Sometimes learners will fight against what they see as an arbitrary use of teacher power and reject teacher authority, no matter how much teachers protest that this is being used for learners’ benefit. Throughout I will try to illuminate the contradictions of this process of empowering learners.

Empowering learners to develop agency through self-directed or collaborative action are the kinds of phrases that spring frequently, but uncritically, from adult teachers’ lips, including my own. Archibald and Wilson (2011) point out that with regard to empowerment in adult education “the concept’s ubiquity is troubling, largely because power has often ironically been omitted from discussions of empowerment” (p. 22). As we shall see, any genuine attempt to live out the philosophy of empowerment quickly brings you up against the realities of external and hierarchical power. Susan Chase’s (1995) classic study of women school superintendents, *Ambiguous Empowerment*, illustrates how the rhetoric of empowerment bumps up against the realities of male power as the freedom that is given with the left hand is quietly taken back with the right.

So What Is a Powerful Technique?

Now that I've argued for the ubiquity and complexity of power I feel a need to be more direct and offer my own understanding of exactly what comprises a powerful technique. As I use the term throughout this book, a powerful technique comprises four possible elements: (1) it takes account of power dynamics; (2) it supports learners claiming empowerment; (3) it illuminates how power works; and (4) it renders teacher power transparent and open to critique.

It Takes Account of Power Dynamics

First, a powerful technique takes into account the power relationships that exist in all adult learning environments. There are struggles over what should be taught, what counts as legitimate knowledge, what processes of learning are allowed, and how learning should be judged. A powerful technique is employed with an awareness of the power dynamics existing between instructors and learners and between learners themselves. From this point of view, it is not the technique that is inherently powerful but the intent of the user. Hence a technique becomes powerful when used with an intentional effort to understand how it intersects with power dynamics.

In this way, something as traditional as a lecture is a powerful technique if it sets out to challenge dominant ideas or explore a subversive body of work. Similarly, a teacher who leaves the stage and walks to the back of the auditorium where students are clustered and then proceeds to lecture from there is employing a traditional technique in a powerful way. Ira Shor (1996) calls this "lecturing from Siberia." He points out that most higher education classrooms contain a Siberia zone that is the point farthest away from the teacher. Students sit there so as to be unobserved and avoid participating. By locating yourself in Siberia, you upset the traditional power relations in the classroom.

A powerful technique always adapts itself to the realities of power dynamics. For example, discussion techniques are only effective when informed by an understanding of how power operates in the classroom and in the relationships between teachers and learners. A teacher who runs a discussion with no awareness of interstudent power dynamics may preside over an disengaged or proforma series of speech acts in which the most confident and extroverted students automatically move front and center and shut others down. Or, a discussion in which the leader consciously or unconsciously moves the conversation in a direction he wishes it to go is a counterfeit discussion in Paterson's (1970) terms. In both these instances, a lack of awareness of power sabotages the effectiveness of the technique.

It Supports Learners' Claiming Empowerment

Second, despite my cautions regarding the term *empowerment* earlier, a powerful technique is understood to be one that prefigures people claiming their own empowerment. By that I mean that it develops in them a sense of their own agency and a heightened self-confidence in their abilities as learners. A powerful technique is powerful not just because it is startling, engaging, or forcefully employed (which is how many texts use the term), but because it increases the learner's perceptions and enactment of being powerful. Kilgore (2004) captures what I mean when she defines powerful knowledge as "knowledge that is personally empowering and socially transforming" (p. 48). So much of adult learning philosophy focuses on the need to empower learners, and this book is one that explicitly ties this focus to specific teaching techniques.

As I've already pointed out, however, this is by no means a simple or unequivocal practice. There are contradictions and tensions in the realization of empowerment, which themselves surface the reality of power. At the root of empowering learners is the fact that this can never be done directly by the teacher. The most a teacher can do is try to remove barriers to learners' claiming their own

empowerment and, as mentioned earlier, try to create the conditions under which learners realize and exert their own power. Using discussion protocols that create an opportunity for everyone to speak is one such approach. Another is to model a self-critical analysis of one's own ideas in front of students.

Sometimes learners claim empowerment in directions the teachers opposes. For example, I have often taught classes in which the students rebel against my using participatory approaches and ask me to lecture. I have also been told to stop asking students to think critically and to tell them the “answer” and the correct way of understanding something. Do I accede to these requests because they are an example of students claiming their own empowerment? No, I don't. But that then raises the question of how I judge what is authentic, desirable empowerment as against inauthentic or counterfeit examples. Throughout this book, I try to address these tensions by exploring when and how trainers, leaders, and teachers need to insist on their agendas, to insert themselves into apparently free-flowing discussions, or to live with being the focus of learner resistance. I will also try to illuminate instances in which attempts to empower learners are done in such a manner as to have precisely the opposite effect.

It Illuminates How Power Works

Third, a powerful technique is one that helps learners understand how power operates both in the microrealities of their daily relationships and practices, and in the broader organizations, communities, and movements in which they live. I wrote a whole book on this called *The Power of Critical Theory* (Brookfield, 2004) where I argued that a critical theory approach to working with adults would help them learn, among other things, how to challenge ideology, unmask power, and practice democracy. That book was intentionally a theoretical analysis with only a final chapter touching on the practice of teaching. In a sense the book you're now reading is the workbook for *The Power of Critical*

Theory, because it explores how to teach adults to understand the constraints and possibilities of power.

As we shall see, it is not just gatekeepers and those who benefit from an unchanged status quo in teaching who mount resistance to learning about how power operates. Learners themselves frequently turn away from the emotional and political tornado involved in studying power. Indeed, one of the most underresearched aspects of this kind of teaching is how teachers maintain sanity and resolve in the face of sustained hostility from students. As Somers (2011) notes, “experiencing personal attacks and having learners direct their emotional responses towards them, feeling inadequate, taking things personally, learning how to detach, feeling excited about the fact that students are learning and the overall need to feel protected are all common and understandable human reactions to the environment that these educators face” (p. 658). The final chapter in this book focuses specifically on how to negotiate the emotional territory of teaching against power.

It Renders Teacher Power Transparent and Open to Critique

Finally, a powerful technique is one where teacher power is transparent and open to critique. By that I mean that the teacher is exercising authority in a way that is clearly communicated and clearly understood by everyone involved. In adult education, this readiness to acknowledge teacher power, and to admit that teachers are pursuing an agenda, is often avoided for fear of seeming disrespectful, undemocratic, or authoritarian. We (and here I include myself) don't want to seem directive. Instead we want to believe we are the same as our students and that it's some sort of historical accident or purely a matter of serendipity that we just happen to be the teacher.

One of the ways we hide from ourselves the fact that we have power is by our use of language. We describe ourselves as facilitators and, as Kilgore (2004) notes, “to honor students we refer to them as *learners*, as if they weren't really subject to the teacher's pedagogical machinations at all” (p. 49). Of course those same

“learners” usually see right through this sham. In a doctoral program emphasizing democratic student governance that I helped create, one of the students got right to the heart of the matter by telling me “your so-called democracy is hypocritical because you can always fail us,” a comment that became the title of a paper that Ian Baptiste and I wrote exploring the contradictions inherent in trying to work democratically in a program within a hierarchical institution (Baptiste and Brookfield, 1997).

It’s interesting that when we examine research documenting what students look for in their teachers, two of the most important behaviors are (1) regular and full disclosure of the expectations, criteria, and agendas that teachers hold, and (2) teachers laying out the rationale behind their actions and decisions. Both of these entail teachers making their power transparent. I have written at some length about this in *The Skillful Teacher* (Brookfield, 2006) so won’t go into great detail here. But it’s clear to me from that research that in most situations adult students are fully aware of the power that teachers exercise and just wish they’d be open and honest about it. We (and here, again, I mean me) can congratulate ourselves on how equally, respectfully, and collegially we’re treating students, but they know full well that to some degree we have their fate in our hands because we decide whether or not they pass the course, and we also judge how smart they are by awarding a particular grade.

In my experience students are very adept at picking up on a teacher’s biases and agendas early on and then feeding back whatever it is they think the teacher will approve of. This is essentially no different than the dynamic I’ve experienced of being a member of a task force or committee led by a powerful figure who opens a meeting by declaring that all views are welcome and that nothing is off the table, and then proceeds by his nonverbal gestures (eye contact, head nodding, grunts) to communicate exactly which contributions are appropriate and which are beyond the pale.

In the past I have often felt queasy about acknowledging that I have an agenda that I want fulfilled, preferring instead to believe

I am there only to help students realize their own learning desires in whatever way feels best to them. Occasionally it's true that I can work in this way. But that's only because I have already decided, on the basis of my knowledge of the group, that I like the directions they are taking and that I support their overall project, whatever that may be. On the whole I concur with Kilgore's (2004) argument that "what unfolds before us in the adult education classroom does so largely at our behest" (p. 48) and that an honest pedagogy (though she frames this as a postmodern pedagogy) "would be concerned with naming what makes us submissive and identifying what grants us power" (p. 48).

Naming and Clarifying Teacher Power

I ended the last section by asserting that a powerful technique is one where teacher power is transparent and open to critique. Given that an open acknowledgment of one's power and an invitation to critique this are not typical components of adult teaching texts, I want to say more about this as I end this chapter. If teachers are honest with students, they must acknowledge that they have considerable power. They have the power to define curricula, set evaluative criteria, and then use these criteria to decide the worth of student work. Teachers cannot pretend this difference doesn't exist and simply be friends with students, though they can treat them in a friendly, respectful, and collegial way.

There will be times in every teacher's practice when their agenda for learning is in direct conflict with that of the students. In such a case, it would be inauthentic for teachers to deny their identities by simply agreeing to do what students want. Being authentic involves staying true to one's agenda, being open and honest about this, and sometimes placing one's power behind this. This raises many complex questions—can a teacher be authentic yet practice ethical coercion? What power do students have to keep the teacher honest? Are authenticity and authority compatible? In this section

I wish to explore a central question—how do we exercise power in an ethical and responsible manner while being authentic, even as we face student hostility? In doing this I will draw on several educators whose work is informed by critical traditions, particularly Ian Baptiste, bell hooks, and Herbert Marcuse.

Grenadian-born adult educator Ian Baptiste (2000, 2001) is one who has considered questions of power and the justifiable use of authority at length. To Baptiste, adult educators often function as persuaders and organizers (in the sense that Gramsci [1971] used those terms) but choose not to acknowledge this. In Baptiste's view it is naïve, and empirically inaccurate, for adult educators to insist that their job is not to take sides, not to force an agenda on learners. Like it or not (and Baptiste believes most of us do not like to acknowledge this), adult teachers cannot help but be directive in their actions, despite avowals of neutrality or noninterference.

One of the most contentious aspects of Baptiste's writings is his insistence on the morality of coercion. He believes that adult educators cannot avoid imposing their preferences and agendas on learners, and that in certain instances it is important that they do this. Sometimes, in furtherance of legitimate agendas or to stop the perpetration of illegitimate ones, Baptiste argues that the adult educator must engage in manipulation, a word most teachers instinctively recoil from. To support his case, he describes a situation in which he worked with a number of community groups on the south side of Chicago to assist them in reviving an area ravaged by pollution and migration. As the neutral, independent facilitator, he was supposed to stay free of forming alliances with any of the groups involved. Citing his liberal humanist sensibilities, he describes how in trying to stay neutral "I succeeded only in playing into the hands of the government officials (and their lackeys in the community). They played me like a fiddle, pretending in public to be conciliatory, but wheeling and dealing in private" (p. 47).

In hindsight, Baptiste argues the experience taught him that in situations where there is a clear imbalance of power adult educators

should take uncompromising stands on the side of those they see as oppressed. An inevitable consequence of doing this will be the necessity for them “to engage in some form of manipulation—some fencing, posturing, concealment, maneuvering, misinformation, and even all-out deception as the case demands” (pp. 47–48). He points out that if adult educators do admit that manipulation is sometimes justified, then an important learning task becomes researching and practicing how to improve one’s manipulative capacities. Through studying ethically justified manipulation, adult educators can “build a theory that can legitimize and guide our use of coercive restraint” (p. 49).

Baptiste’s analysis raises some troubling issues for my earlier assertion that powerful teaching involves a transparent acknowledgment of how I use my power. Most teachers would accept that sometimes one must conceal one’s intentions from one’s employers to ensure one is able to take risks, experiment, and generally work in critical and challenging ways. Much more contentious is the issue of whether it is ever authentic to conceal one’s intentions from students. Yet, for teachers trying to teach critically by raising uncomfortable and challenging viewpoints in class, making full disclosure of their intentions in advance could easily undercut their project. Students who are ideologically predisposed to shut out an alternative perspective may simply decide not to show up for class when they learn that exploring this alternative perspective is an element of a course they are considering. The same could be said for employees told to attend workshops on racism or sexual harassment. So to be educationally effective—that is, to have people be ready to consider an alternative and troubling new perspective—instructors may need to keep concealed the fact that participants will be asked to do this until they (the teachers) judge students to be at a point of learning readiness for this.

Teachers may also wait to introduce new perspectives until they feel they have earned students’ trust. But earning trust is not the end of the story. Even if the trust is earned at an earlier stage in

a course or program, it may be that when teachers start to introduce the new perspective or activity the acquired trust will then be completely destroyed. In introducing previously unannounced and challenging material, teachers may find that students see this as a fundamental and surprising change of direction. In this situation those teachers will be seen as acting in ways that contradict their words, as fundamentally and troublingly incongruent.

Requiring students to engage with new and challenging material is certainly justifiable. In the case of mandatory workshops on racism or sexual harassment, few would openly argue that these are frivolous or unnecessary. Indeed, one could argue that the most valuable learning that people experience often happens when they are forced to consider perspectives, information, and realities they would prefer to avoid. This illustrates a wonderfully contradictory dynamic: attending assiduously to building trust and being transparent by making full disclosure in advance of one's agenda (which is something that is supposed to increase learners' openness to new learning) is often canceled out by the equally justifiable need to conceal significant information about the learning agenda (to avoid learners deciding prematurely to exit the activity). So the requirement that teachers make full disclosure is undercut by the need to keep the agenda concealed until learners are ready to confront difficult tasks.

There is another contradictory dynamic at play here where students' judgment of authenticity is concerned. For students a prime indicator of authenticity is the teacher's clear responsiveness to learners' concerns (Brookfield, 2006). Yet, students' long-term intellectual development sometimes requires that we refuse to do what they ask, thereby risking appearing to be unresponsive to their wishes. For example, I know that when I'm trying to get students to think critically I must sometimes refuse to comply with their requests to tell them what is the correct view to hold on an issue or the right assumptions to follow in a certain situation. My refusal to tell them the "proper" way to think—in effect, to refuse to comply

with their request for the right answer—appears to contradict the condition of responsiveness.

One theorist who has explored this dynamic is Herbert Marcuse (1965). Marcuse argues that it is educationally crucial that learners be exposed to alternative, often dissenting, ideologies and perspectives, even though they do not see the necessity for this. To him this is the practice of liberating rather than repressive tolerance. Marcuse argues that without knowing of the full range of options, viewpoints, or ideologies surrounding an issue, students cannot make a truly informed judgment as to which directions they wish to explore more deeply. One particular problem he identifies occurs when teachers appear to show respect for students by allowing them to determine the direction of learning.

When students have this option, Marcuse argues, they will usually choose curricular directions and learning activities that are familiar and comfortable. These directions and activities will be ones that have, in effect, been ideologically predetermined by students' previous histories and experiences. Students will choose learning projects that support and confirm prevailing ideology and steer clear of anything they sense is "deviant" or "left field." If we accept that learners need exposure to all available information and perspectives so that they can make informed choices about what to learn, then the teacher's duty (according to Marcuse) is to spend a considerable amount of time exposing students *only* to ideas and activities they would otherwise have avoided. This is the only way teachers can ensure students will be availed of the full range of perspectives and opinions that exist on any issue.

The African American feminist bell hooks also has much to say on the way in which a concern for being responsive to students' wishes brushes up against the inevitability of teacher power. For her the exercise of teacher power is often unavoidably, even necessarily, confrontational. In her judgment the teacher's position "is a position of power over others" with the resultant power open to being used "in ways that diminish or in ways that enrich" (hooks, 1989,

p. 52). She freely admits that sometimes the exercise of power to force people to confront their own uncritical acceptance and practice of dominant ideology is fraught with risk. To emphasize the commitment students should have to the learning of others, she lets students know that poor attendance negatively affects their grade. She also requires all to participate in class discussion, often by reading out paragraphs they have already written.

Such practices inevitably lead to negative critical comments by students, a fact that she admits has been difficult for her to accept. Because “many students find this pedagogy difficult, frightening, and very demanding” (hooks, 1994, p. 53), teachers who use it will be resisted, even disliked. Students may also elect not to take their courses. This is why hooks insists that the humanistic emphasis on having students perceive the classroom as a safe, positive, or congenial environment for learning is not always a good criterion to use in assessing teacher competence.

There are, of course, professional consequences to receiving poor evaluations, such as being denied reappointment, losing merit pay, or being refused promotion or tenure. If this is the case, then the institutional pressure is on for teachers to work in ways that students find pleasing and familiar. If, on the other hand, teachers insist on sticking to their guns and require students to engage with activities and ideas they would much rather avoid, they risk being labeled in course evaluations as at best unresponsive, at worst hostile or incompetent. In such a situation, the best a teacher can do is make sure that students are fully aware of why she is insisting on her agenda and refusing to comply with students’ demands. After all, part of being trustworthy is to present as honest a picture as possible of one’s agenda and convictions. So, although in the short term students might disagree strongly with a teacher’s direction, they will believe the teacher to be honest if that teacher makes full disclosure as to why the direction is being pursued in the face of students’ dissent.

The more fundamental and essentially irresolvable contradiction in being both authentic and true to one’s agenda as a critical

teacher arises when you are trying to bring students round to the point where they are willing to consider ideas and activities that previously they would have ignored or derided. As argued earlier, this sometimes involves a “softly, softly” approach in which the full import of your intentions is only gradually revealed. Such an approach may require that there be no early full disclosure of the teacher’s intentions for fear that students would drop out of the course before being required to engage with new and threatening ideas. In such a situation, authenticity (if interpreted as full disclosure) and teaching for intellectual development (if understood as requiring students to stretch themselves in ways they would not themselves have chosen) may be directly at odds. After over forty years trying to resolve this contradiction, I have realized it is irresolvable—one of the ontological and practical contradictions that we have to live with even as our institutions pretend that teaching (defined as the sequenced, orderly managing of student learning to achieve predetermined outcomes) is always free of ambiguity.

Summary

In this chapter I have argued that teachers of adults, even in non-credit classrooms where there is no formal evaluation by teachers and no compulsion for students to attend, need an understanding of how power dynamics constantly intersect with individual and group learning. I have tried to define the terms I will be using throughout this book, and to address how even the most nondirective and low key facilitator always exercises power. In the next chapter, I look at a common adult learning process—learning how to think critically—that often requires the full force of teacher power to be employed before learners will take it seriously. It is also a teaching approach that usually is explicitly tied to learner empowerment.

