

Popular Education and Facilitation Skills



OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, participants will be able to:

- Explain the difference between conventional and popular education
- Identify and apply popular education principles and methods



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Before the session begins, review the Population Education Manual resource. Write on flip chart the phrase “Conventional Education Methods.” Review “Introduction to Popular Education” handout.
2. Welcome participants and review session objectives (slide 2).
3. Conventional vs. popular education discussion.
 - Explain that as CHWs, one of our roles is to educate our community about ways to improve health outcomes. In today’s session we are going to learn about a method called popular education.
 - Before we define popular education, we must first understand how it might be different from other methods.
 - Ask participants: “Describe your experience with education through school or other training programs you have attended. What methods were used? What do you remember about the structure? How did you feel during the process?”
 - Record participants’ responses on a flip chart sheet.
 - Review “Conventional vs. Popular Education” (slide 3). Compare with participant responses on the flip chart.
4. Facilitate Image Theater activity (slides 4–6).
 - Divide participants into groups of five or six.
 - Give each group 10 minutes to create two images: one that represents conventional education and one that represents popular education.
 - Have each group share their images and reflect.
5. Wrap up.
 - Thank participants for their participation.
 - Review some of the principles and methods of popular education using the house metaphor (slide 7).
 - Share reference manual on Popular Education and Introduction to Popular Education handout.



Related C3 Roles

Building individual and community capacity

Related C3 Skills

Communication skills, capacity building skills, education and facilitation skills



Method(s) of Instruction

Image theater, large group discussion



Estimated time

60 minutes



Key Concepts

Popular education, image theater



Materials

- Computer with internet access and projector
- PowerPoint slides
- Flip chart
- Markers

Handouts

- Introduction to Popular Education

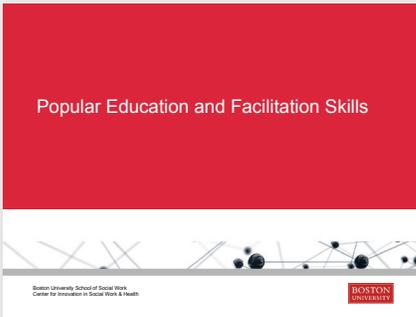


Resources

Popular Education Manual <https://multco.us/file/16372/download>

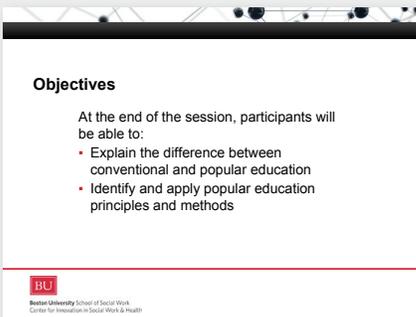
Popular Education and Facilitation Skills

SLIDE 1



SLIDE 2

Read the slide.



SLIDE 3

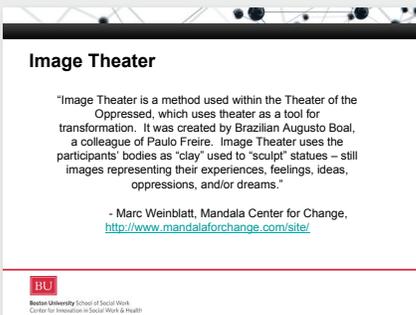
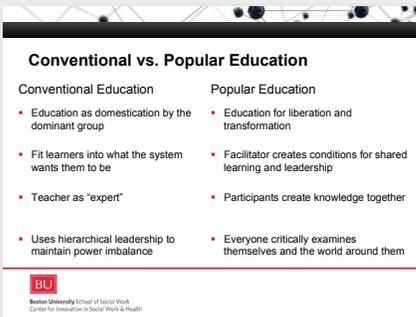
Paolo Freire was a Brazilian educator who is known as one of the first people to write about popular education. He described conventional education as education for domestication by the dominant group. Another way to think of the purpose of conventional education is to fit the learners into what the system wants them to be. Conventional education centers the teacher as "expert" and uses hierarchical leadership to maintain a power imbalance.

By contrast, Freire distinguished popular education as education for liberation and transformation. Popular education uses a facilitator to create the conditions for shared learning and leadership. Participants create knowledge together and critically examine themselves and the world around them.

SLIDE 4

Explain that to help us reflect on these two styles, we will use a method called Image Theater.

Ask for a volunteer to read the slide.



Introduction to Popular Education

What is popular education?

Popular education is a philosophy and methodology of teaching and community organizing. It has many sources. Paulo Freire, a Brazilian, is the person best known for his contribution to popular education.

What are the goals of popular education?

- The creation of a truly democratic society where we all have equal access to the world's resources
- Human liberation, both personal and collective

How does popular education propose to achieve its goals?¹

Step 1: Help each person come to believe that they are capable of changing their world.

Step 2: Connect people's personal problems to national and global realities (develop critical consciousness).

Step 3: Motivate people to organize collectively and take action to resolve their common problems.

What are the principles of popular education?²

- The current distribution of the world's resources is unjust and change is possible.
- We learn with our heads, our hearts, and our bodies.
- It is important to create an atmosphere of trust so that people can share their ideas and experiences.
- We all know a lot. As educators and organizers, we should always start with what people already know and/or do.
- The knowledge we gain through life experience is as important as the knowledge we gain through formal education.
- People should be active participants in their own learning process. They should not be passive recipients.
- Knowledge is constructed in the interaction between people.
- Popular education is an inclusive movement that combines influences from many sources.



- In each situation in which we try to teach or organize, the conditions should reflect the conditions of the society we are trying to construct. This means equality between “teacher” and “student,” and democratic decision-making.
- It is important that educators and organizers share the life experience of those they want to teach and/or organize.
- The arts (music, drama, visual arts, etc.) are important tools for teaching and organizing.
- The purpose of developing a critical consciousness is to be able to take action to change the world. (Critical thinking alone is not enough.)
- The goal of popular education is organized action to change the world.

What are some of the values of popular education?³

- Love for the cause of the people
- Honesty
- Compassion
- Responsibility
- Dedication
- Solidarity
- Humility
- Comradeship/Compañerismo

¹Serrano-García, Irma (1984). The illusion of empowerment: Community development within a colonial context. In J. Rappaport, C. Swift & R. Hess (Eds.) *Studies in empowerment: Steps toward understanding and action* (pp. 173-200). New York: The Haworth Press.

² Many of these principles, although not all, are drawn from: Horton, M. (2003). *The Miles Horton reader: Education for social change*, ed. Dale Jacobs. Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press.

³ Harnacker, Marta (2002). *Sin tierra: Construyendo movimiento social*. (Landless: Constructing a social movement.) Madrid, Spain: Siglo XXI de España Editores

Acknowledgements

This curricula draws from and is adapted from other training curricula for peer educators and community health workers, such as the Building Blocks to Peer Success (<https://ciswh.org/resources/HIV-peer-training-toolkit>) and the Community Capacitation Center, Multnomah County Health Department (<https://multco.us/health/community-health/community-capacitation-center>)

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