Disaster Education

'Race', Equity and Pedagogy

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Printed on acid-free paper

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

WHAT IS DISASTER EDUCATION?

INTRODUCTION

'Disaster education' is a new area of enquiry in the field of education. At present there are few texts which deal directly with public education for emergencies (Shaw, Shiwaku and Takeuchi, 2011 being a notable exception). However, the pedagogical space for preparing the public for disasters is extensive and includes not only school based initiatives and public information campaigns but also family and community learning, adult education and popular culture (what we might consider to be 'public pedagogies'). Moreover, with technological developments such as social media, citizen journalism and blogging there are increasingly sophisticated ways through which citizens might source information about disasters. These methods of learning are not isolated. New and old media, official discourse and popular culture circulate and feed off each other both in preparing for disasters and as disasters unfold. Such interactions can be considered to be transmedia activities where 'old media' (such as television broadcasting) and 'new media' interact to form new narratives. For example, in the Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami in Japan in 2011 broadcast media adopted a reflexive approach to social media by reporting on what was being reported by users of Twitter. In turn Twitter users 'Tweeted' their own interpretations of what was being broadcast in the media. These reflexive and complex pedagogical relationships mean that disaster education has moved far from simple and didactic relationships between the state and the citizen. The disciplinary boundaries of disaster education are similarly fluid and the literature on the topic can be found within the sociology of disasters, public health and health promotion, humanitarian response, political communication and public relations. In fact there is surprisingly little writing on disaster education in the field of education / pedagogy itself and one of the purposes of this book is to relocate disaster education as a sub-discipline within this field.

Modes of disaster education are broadly related to changes in national policies around citizen preparedness and various terms have been used in the Twentieth and Twenty-first centuries to describe the ways in which citizens were expected to prepare for disasters. 'National Defence' (prior to World War Two in the United Kingdom) emphasized the nation state as being the key category of survival. The emphasis was on the defence of the state as a holistic, unified and unifying entity of which individuals represented component parts. The move beyond World War Two to *civil defence* rearticulated this relationship as the protection of individuals and families as part of 'civil society'. Both national and civil defence, at least in the United Kingdom, were primarily concerned with preparation for war although in some countries (such as the United States and Canada) civil defence became associated with preparation for other forms of disaster such as earthquakes or

tornadoes (this was known as 'dual use'). The spectre of National Defence has been invoked once more by the post 9/11 advent of *Homeland Security*. The term 'Homeland' has a dual meaning representing both the nation and familial and community protection (in its most recent articulation it has been called 'Hometown security') (Preston, 2009). Two terms associated with homeland security are '*resilience*' and '*preparedness*. 'Resilience' is concerned with resources and capabilities to survive a disaster whereas 'preparedness' implies vigilance, planning and anticipatory skills in dealing with a crisis. Preparedness has become a common term used in terms of homeland security and disaster planning documentation. Note that resilience and preparedness only implicitly make reference to notions of the national or the civic and in these terms the emphasis is on atomized individuals or families. The terms used, then, show a shifting emphasis of emergency planning from the nation to the family and the individual. This is part of individuation, certainly, but also shows not only an inversion but also an intertwining of the relationship between the individual and the nation state. In 'National Defence' the individual is in the service of the nation and individuals are patterned on the survival of the state whereas in preparedness and resilience the individual embodies the values of the state, with a covert form of nationalism in evidence.

Defining disaster

Whether the form of 'defence' undertaken is under a system of 'National Defence' or a more individuated 'Civil Defence' it is ultimately a response to a perceived 'threat', or 'disaster' to individuals, community and / or the nation state. There are various taxonomies of these 'threats'. One very simple categorisation is to consider distinctions between 'natural' disasters (such as earthquakes, volcanic activity, floods, solar activity and meteors) and anthropogenic threats from human activity (such as terrorism, war, industrial hazards and CBRNe hazards – Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and explosive threats). These threats are obviously inter-related. Floods resulting from global warming, for example, are obviously 'natural' only in so far as industrial production has interfered with the ozone layer. Another distinction is to consider threats as being differentiated through expectation. 'Relative Risk' (the relative likelihood of an event occurring) and 'Relative Impact' (the damage caused by an event) are two dimensions for locating threats used by the UK government's 'National Risk Register' (Cabinet Office, 2010). Alarmingly, on this scale the UK government locates human pandemic influenza as being both likely and high impact. This taxonomy is perhaps more useful than the natural / anthropogenic distinction in preparing for emergencies as it is orientated towards scale and risk rather than source. However, it somewhat mystifies threats by disengaging with their (frequent) source in human activity. Both the anthropogenic / natural and the risk / impact categorisations are useful policy technologies for categorising and scaling threats but they fail to engage with the social nature of disasters. The definition of disaster for any given society, at any particular historical moment, is a socially constructed, political category rather than a technical one. Whether human or anthropogenic in origin

the designation of 'threat' or 'disaster' implies a *discontinuity* with previous social relations (Clausen, Conlon, Jager, and Metreveli, 1978). For example, mass unemployment is not usually designated as a 'disaster' whereas floods usually are. Moreover, terms associated with disasters such as 'looter' or 'survivor' or 'terrorist' or 'mass murderer' in turn create social categories and pathologies. In this book disasters, and circulating terms around disasters, are treated as predominantly social categories.

Pedagogies of preparedness

'Disaster Education' is delivered to citizens in various ways including leaflets, public information films, notices and warning sirens, television and radio broadcasting, social media, school curricular, family and community learning and cell phone messaging. Through these media messages citizens prepare for various disasters, consider what they would do in a disaster and think about how they would respond. Because the methods used in informing citizens do not, on the surface appear educational the ways in which preparedness for disasters is transmitted to citizens is often conceptualised through advertising or public relations models of information transmission. Although these models provide some purchase on the transfer of preparedness knowledge, a superior model for preparedness is a pedagogical (or andragogical in the case of adults) one. That is, rather than giving instruction they also engage individuals in learning about emergency situations whether in preparation, response or recovery from a disaster. Implicitly, they are based on models of how individuals learn. Preparedness campaigns aim not only to alter individual cognitions concerning emergencies but individual behaviours, the ways in which they make calculations of costs and benefits of following actions or not, their emotions and even their sense of personhood as a citizen. Various pedagogical devices are used in achieving this and there are various methods by which pedagogies can be classed:-

a. Banking and didactic pedagogies

Banking and didactic preparedness pedagogies are constructed on the basis that they are not intended to be used except in the event of an actual emergency. They exist as a series of didactic instructions or images. These can be delivered in a classroom context or in the home. In many cases it is implied that that citizens are not expected to read, or refer to them in advance but simply to be aware that they exist and to store them. There is a degree of subliminal awareness in the banking of these pedagogies as their very existence is to produce an awareness of at least the possibility of a crisis. 'Preparing for Emergencies' (HMSO, 2004), a booklet issued to the entire United Kingdom population to 'prepare' them for multiple types of disaster was an example of this type of pedagogy which was to be kept in a 'safe' place. These 'banking pedagogies' are also found on airline emergency cards which are based around bodily and spatial manipulation. The body is (often schematically) shown in various positions in order to stress the kinds of manipulations which should be followed in the event of an emergency. In the

event of a CBRNe attack this might include ducking, falling to the floor or crouching behind a surface or running in order to reach cover or huddling.

b. Construction kit pedagogies

Construction kit preparedness pedagogies are designed on the basis of DIY (Do it Yourself Instructions) providing guidance which is to be interpreted and acted on by the individual in the event of a crisis. The purpose is not to provide 'banking' information but to aid citizens in constructing their own shelters and equipment for survival. Construction kit pedagogies apply to the physical environment and are concerned with construction of a shelter, the use of duct tape in a chemical or biological incident or the storage of food and water. In these construction exercises, simple schematics are used in order to encourage the following of set procedures in building a shelter. For example, in the booklet 'Protect and Survive' (1980), which would have been issued (in some form, possibly as newspaper inserts) to homes in the United Kingdom in the event of a forthcoming nuclear war instructions are given for the construction of a basic home shelter (a 'fall out room' and 'inner refuge') to be constructed from doors, sandbags and other household furniture.

c. Affective

Affective preparedness pedagogies are not designed to deal with the cognitive processes or behavioural skills necessary for protection but rather are designed around the principle that emotional labour is involved in preparedness. The effects of trauma, acceptance of war and the emotional upheaval for children of disaster are concerned with enabling emotional change or management. Often this means 'facing up' to the 'reality' of what has happened and affective pedagogies are considered to stimulate cognitive and behavioural changes in individuals. For example, the civil defence film 'Let's face it' (FCDA, 1956) was designed to change attitudes towards surviving a possible nuclear attack on the United States away from passivity or fatalism towards a positive emotional attitude to preparedness. This was in turn designed to persuade Americans to actively engage with civil defence efforts.

d. Family and community learning

Family and community learning pedagogies make use of existing societal structures, such as the gendered division of labour, as pedagogical levers. The ways in which families or communities are employed in these pedagogies is complex and rarely is 'group learning' the pedagogical technique employed. To start with families, division of labour is implied which is often formally gendered or age related. Men can be portrayed in a construction role, taking on manual tasks or acting as 'head' of the preparedness activity whereas women are depicted in a caring role or acting in food storage and preparation. Sometimes these gender roles are slightly subverted in a proto-feminist fashion, but this is the exception rather

than the rule. Community learning is a less common strategy as often the family is regarded as the notional unit of preparedness planning at least in the United Kingdom and United States. In the construction and potential habitation of fallout shelters in the cold war family and community learning techniques were employed. The cold war instructional document 'The Family Fallout Shelter' (Office of Civil and Defense Mobilisation, 1959) shows the 'Father' constructing the fallout shelter from concrete blocks in a basement whilst the 'Mother' is responsible for childcare. This reinforces the existing gendered division of labour. Similarly, the short film of a similar era 'Occupying a Public Shelter' (Office of Civil Defense, 1965) shows both gender segregated activities and how a community of shelter inhabitants learns to live together in a shelter during an atomic attack. The emphasis in the film is on 'community activities' (collective singing, exercise classes) and on pro-social behaviour.

e. Performance pedagogies

Certain preparedness pedagogies utilise tacit performance theories and dramaturgical techniques (Davis, 2007). Rehearsal of an actual emergency may have several pedagogical purposes. Rehearsal is used to routinise and familiarise individuals and families with preordained rules of behaviour. This is not only to lock in behaviours so that they become engrained into an individual's habits but also to attempt to remove affective or cognitive processes that may prevent action from being undertaken. Performance also enables individuals or groups to reflect on what has taken place and to consider the ways in which future enactments might be improved, with the aim that the actual 'performance piece' in a disaster is optimal. 'Performance' is additionally an appeal to audiences wider than those taking part in the preparedness enactment. They are designed to make observers reflect upon what is taking part and consider what their own role might be in these exercises. Although these exercises were common in the cold war in contemporary contexts they are increasingly used to rehearse disaster scenarios by the emergency services.

f. Public pedagogies

Public pedagogies take place in '… spaces, sites, and languages of education and learning that exist outside schools' (Sandlin and Burdick, 2010, p. 349) in particular domains of popular culture which are not frequently considered to be an educational arena. In terms of preparedness, popular cultural forms can embody lessons about preparedness in a reflexive manner. As will be discussed later in the book a number of contemporary movies are concerned with a 'zombie apocalypse' where a virus means that the 'undead' overwhelm the living who fight for survival. These films include crude lessons on personal preparedness. However, they have in turn spawned a real group: the 'Zombie Protection Initiative' (ZPI) who not only organise (ironic) 'zombie preparedness' classes and initiatives in the United States but who also support real preparedness education initiatives organised by FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency).