

# Thinking Change

## The Critical Mindset

Divya Madhavan

The activities you download for this column will be for your teacher journal/-diary in which you reflect on your practice. Keeping a journal is useful in all sorts of ways, but it can be especially useful for the day you decide to do some action research to improve your practice. Think of these twelve prompts as a framework within which you can articulate and explore your beliefs in relation to Critical Pedagogy. Once you have had twelve sessions of collecting your thoughts, you might make a plan as to how you'd change something in your practice from a critical perspective.

To simplify things, I'm using just one book for this. It's called *Teachers as Intellectuals*, by Henry A. Giroux. You're welcome to buy this and read it in parallel, or you might want to buy it at the end and go on a journey all over again.

### Activity

Based on your reading of this column, consider these questions, and at least one more of your own to each set.

- Am I a teacher or an educator?
- Are the two different? Can I be both?
- What is the 'dominant culture'? -Am I against it? Why or why not?
- What (else) am I against?
- What wider structure does that belong to?
- What sort of ideology dominates my educational setting? -What is my position in relation to this?
- What would I like to reposition?

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In your journal, write a short response to the questions which most interest you.

Now consider these quotes ...

- “In what way can we reposition ourselves as educators against the dominant culture in order to reconstitute our own identities and experiences and those of our students?”
- “How can educators come to recognise injustices which have been perpetrated in the name of education?”
- “Since we don’t know what is historically possible until it has been tried, how can educators begin to empower students to imagine a future in which hope becomes practical?”

(Peter McLaren, Foreword : Critical Theory and the Meaning of Hope in **Teachers as Intellectuals** by Henry A. Giroux)

Take these three big questions and find ‘hooks’ for them in your teaching environment ....

