

## **Conceptualizing Critical Human Resource Development (CHRD): Tensions, Dilemmas, and Possibilities**

Tara Fenwick, University of Stirling

In R Poell, T Rocco and G Roth (Eds.), *Routledge Companion to Human Resource Development*. London: Routledge. (forthcoming 2014).

Critical modes of enquiry and practice in human resource development have been taken up relatively recently in the field. It wasn't until 2002-3 that prominent conferences began to feature sessions exploring critical viewpoints. However interest seems to have mobilized quickly in the years immediately following, and by 2007 CHRD scholarship had burgeoned to the point where Callahan (2007) claimed that it represented 'a' future of HRD research. Critical human resource development is by now, argues McGuire and Garavan (2011:5), 'playing an important role in changing how HRD sees itself and identifying whom it serves ... bringing clarity to the field and helping it secure a sustainable future'. Critical HRD also, as evidenced in the collection edited by Stewart, Rigg and Trehan (2006), is a diffuse association of critical perspectives, pedagogies, and declarations of what critical HRD means.

These diverse perspectives may be argued to share two commitments. First, CHRD generally promotes *critical analysis of power relations* in work organizations, particularly in the many taken-for-granted work practices that can reduce human knowledge, relationships and identity to the dictates of productivity. Second, CHRD tends to be *oriented towards action* that aims to address unfair inequities and improve life and well being in work organizations. Naturally tensions and dilemmas about what precisely is 'critical' and how to engage critical learning flourish within CHRD as energetically as they do in the critical social sciences more broadly. This chapter takes up a broad discussion of these tensions, particularly around critiques of 'emancipation' and empowerment leveled at the more zealous, less reflexive enunciations of critical learning and development. The aim is to offer a more diffuse and perhaps less morally strident orientation to CHRD.

The first section of the chapter outlines the tensions embedded in what comprises 'critical' in critical HRD. The second offers three dimensions as a departure point to consider critical human resource development. Section three discusses a series of dilemmas inherent in these principles and in the general project of CHRD, both theoretical and practical. The final section suggests approaches to educating for CHRD that attempt to navigate these dilemmas without losing central critical principles.

### **The beginnings of CHRD: what is 'critical'?**

Although feminist HRD work was being published in the late 1990s, and a groundbreaking volume applying Foucauldian analysis to HRD practices appeared back in 1994 (Barbara Townley's *Reframing Human Resource Management: Power, ethics and the subject at work*), HRD literature in the main avoided the engagement with critical social theory that exploded in the critical management studies movement of the 1990s. In their

review of 600 papers presented to the Academy of Human Resource Development (AHRD) 1996-2000, Bierema and Cseh (2003) concluded that:

HRD focuses little on issues of social justice in the workplace or larger social context. Women's experiences as well as those of other diverse groups is ignored, as are asymmetrical power arrangements. Gender/race/ethnicity is not used as a category of analysis—even when data are collected by gender. Organizational “undiscussables” such as sexism, racism, patriarchy, and violence receive little attention in the literature yet have considerable impact on organizational dynamics. Finally, HRD research has only weakly advocated change. (pp. 23-24)

Bierema and Cseh ended with a call for critical perspectives in HRD practice and research: for greater focus on how HRD might reproduce power relations in organizations, for questions about “who benefits” from HRD, and for strategies that address gender and equity issues. The first explicitly ‘critical’ session at an AHRD conference was held in 2002, with the intent of unpicking assumptions and challenging “the predominantly performative and learning-outcome focus of the HRD field” (Elliott and Turnbull, 2002, p. 971). The UK Critical Management Studies Conference inaugurated a Human Resources Management stream in its 2003 annual conference: the call for papers expressed puzzlement that HRD “has largely slipped outside the gaze of critical management analysts (CMS, 2002). Presenting at that conference, Sambrook (2004) argued the importance of bringing discourses of ‘being critical’ to bear *among* current conflicting eclectic discourses of HRD, without privileging the critical iconoclast pitted against the HRD ‘other’.

But what exactly is it to ‘be critical’? Theoretical notions are wide-ranging in critical studies of management, education, accounting, law, and health care as well as, increasingly, HRD. Common aims in all of these critical professional studies are to challenge taken-for-granted configurations of power and control that determine *de facto* knowledge authorities, limit identities, create exclusions, reinforce repressive practices, and generally conceal their own tactics of consolidating resources for the few. The general goal tends to be organizational and broader societal reform in terms of justice, democracy and equity. What constitutes such reform is broadly debated, of course, and subject to dynamics in particular contexts. Activities of challenging ideology, recognizing hegemony, and unmasking power, figure prominently in critical management as well as CHRD studies.

However, caution is advised to avoid conflating the positional distinctions of various critical views taking up these themes. Most of these assert very different, even incommensurable, views about the nature of organizations, power, and ways forward. For example, some Marxist views (Brookfield and Holst 2010) argue that anything short of revolutionary action for worker control of the means of production is not emancipatory. Others focus on recognition of sexual orientation, race and gender politics beyond class. Poststructural views tend to focus upon understanding how flows of discursive practices produce particular subjects and regimes of knowledge in work.

To show patterns amidst this pluralism, Fournier and Grey (2000) suggest two main “lines of tension” in critical management studies. One concerns the nature of power, with tension between those arguing from a structural Marxist understanding of exploitation and contradiction, and those who understand power as continually circulating among

heterogeneous assemblages of people and things. Another tension concerns critical engagement with practice. Some CMS writers argue that a pragmatic orientation dilutes critical integrity, and others that a purist academic stance is elitist and insular. Meanwhile practitioners juggle uncomfortably with both pragmatism and purism. In any case, a complicating factor in critical management studies is the quick slide that can occur from analysis to prescription for particular practices, sometimes blurring ontological arguments with normative assertions about desirable conditions and virtuous behaviours. Appeals for social justice and liberation can obscure what exactly is the object of inquiry and what assumptions are being made in the selection and analysis of particular organizing processes.

The potential here for problems is neatly summarized by Perriton and Reynolds (2004), whose focus was management development but pertinent to HRD more broadly. They trace the emergence of the ‘critical approach’ in management development, showing that it was mostly influenced by ideas of the educator Paulo Freire who of course was writing for a very different context than 21<sup>st</sup>-century human resource developers: his 1970 book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* was about liberation of poverty-stricken peasants in mid 20<sup>th</sup> century Brazil through collective literacy education. Freirian-based pedagogies were borrowed to ‘conscientize’ students in management schools; that is, to develop students’ political agency to challenge those individual and collective oppressions embedded in conventional managerialist ideologies, such as techno-rational control, unitarism, and worker subjection to profit and productivity. Critical pedagogy developed largely for public school education further influenced the uptake of what became an emancipatory focus in critical management development. That is, not only are the processes of power and ideology foregrounded along with inequalities they produce, but the fundamental aim of critical management education has been to realize “a more just society based on fairness, democracy and ‘empowerment’” (Perriton and Reynolds, 2004, p.63) largely by contesting inequities and by liberating the voices of the marginalized.

The problems of such critical approaches to development and learning have been widely addressed by feminist and poststructural writers, most notably by Ellsworth (1989). The notion of emancipation remains a very hierarchical and presumptive intrusion of the enlightened into the lives of those dupes who are considered less fortunate. The desirable end point is usually determined by the gaze of the critical educator, as argued elsewhere (Fenwick, 2005b). Such essentialist binaries between dominant and oppressed groups hardly reflect the complex blurriness and continual negotiations and subversions of power among multiple networks and sub-groups in contemporary organizations (Fenwick, 2005b). Nor do they map persuasively onto the diversity and hybrid identities of organizational members and groups that are continually produced by complex intersections of gender, race, sexuality, generation and language. Overall, Perriton and Reynolds (2004) call for a general re-envisioning of critical development that presents:

a challenge to the rationalist assumptions that underpin critical reflection as the core pedagogical practice of [CHRD], the charge that it is not only gender blind in its pedagogical practices but that it also lacks reflexivity. (p 69)

In summary, the meanings of ‘critical’ in CHRD are diffuse and contested, emanating as they do from widely different philosophical bases. These histories and purposes of different critical trajectories that influence CHRD need careful analysis to highlight their particular assumptions and obsessions, and to map their fit with HRD. Finally, the problems of

emancipatory intents, and the importance of self-reflexivity, are worth close attention in critical HRD.

### **Dimensions of critical human resource development**

Because of this eclectic terrain of critical ideas associated with CHRD, any argument in this field needs to declare its own particular critical position, particularly when critical treatises can quickly become normative and then prescriptive. For purposes of this chapter, therefore, three dimensions first introduced in Fenwick (2005a) are described as a point of departure for dialogue. These are intended neither to provide a heuristic device for CHRD writers and practitioners, nor to totalize diverse critical positions. Rather, these three dimensions aim to recognize similarities across selected critical perspectives to draw forth certain shared values. They draw largely from critical HRD and management studies (Alvesson and Wilmott 1996, Bierema 2008, McGuire and Garavan 2008, Sambrook 2009, Townley 1994) that focus on questions of interests served by the organization of work, exclusions from the construction of knowledge, effects of economic ideologies, power relations underpinning organizational structures, and discursive practices that regulate individuals within these structures. These dimensions also draw from feminist and anti-racist pedagogies the injunction to engage people in critical analysis of social practices, texts and environments to examine the inequities produced and the possibility for alternate subject positions and more just and generative practices (e.g. Alfred and Chlup 2010, Brookfield and Holst 2010, Metcalfe 2008). This framework is not intended to eliminate the vibrant pluralism now flourishing in the general field of critical human resource development studies, but rather to offer a starting point for investigating their nuances.

As noted in the introduction, two principles appear to underpin these dimensions. First, CHRD promotes *critical analysis of power relations*, commonly focused on inequities. In context of work organizations, this analysis challenges the subjugation of human knowledge, skills, relationships and education to orthodoxies of organizational and management knowledge, goals and practices. Second, CHRD tends to be *oriented towards action* that that will improve life and well being in work organizations. CHRD assumes that HRD practitioners, managers and employees can learn, for example, to notice and question the ways organizational structures can compromise human dignity and health, ethical engagements with stakeholders, and ecological and social responsibility. It assumes that practitioners can learn to envision and help bring about reform of organizations and management practice to enable, in Kincheloe's (1999) words, more just, equitable, life-giving and sustainable workplaces.

Working from these two principles, the following three dimensions are proposed for critical human resource development as a site of practice.

1. *Purposes of critical human resource development* are primarily to promote practitioners' critical awareness of power relations and their effects, as well as their capacity to act towards particular projects within these power relations. That is, CHRD opens spaces and directions for practitioners' critical questioning of key organizational practices and discourses that influence their own and others' thinking, identities, and

behaviors. Opening spaces implies unpicking the complex power relations that hold together what appear to be stable and immutable routines, texts and goals, and questioning the central contradictions embedded within them. Opening spaces is also about making available alternate spaces, which means introducing people to theoretical tools that provide various critical entry points and angles of questioning, while exposing these tools themselves to critical questioning. For example, students can be introduced to projects such as organizational reform in directions aligned with justice, equity, sustainability and democratic participation. But they are also encouraged to examine the internal tensions and the practical difficulties in such projects.

2. *Assumptions of critical human resource development* include understanding both management and human resource knowledge and skill as contested, within the contested relations of organizations. No monolithic body of knowledge and no orthodoxy of procedure can address these contestations adequately. Further, these relations are fluid. Tools, texts, policies and people are brought together and translated into practices, institutions and knowledge in ways that appear stable, and whose construction are concealed by a-historical illusions of homogeneity and alignment. CHRD assumes, however, that the circulations of power and the various negotiations that have created and are holding together all of these practices and identities can in fact be traced and exposed. This exposure reveals important differences in the organizational landscape. This exposure can also dissolve or at least weaken the apparent power of certain orthodoxies, and ultimately can lead to expansion: expansion of possibilities and capacities, of individuals as well as of objectives, processes and structures. CHRD also assumes that when individuals become aware and, ideally, appreciative of difference, a practice of HRD can be devised that acknowledges and even works productively with difference.
3. *Practices of critical human resource development* engage practitioners as well as educators in a critical reading of their worlds. Activities push people to problematize taken-for-granted conditions, representations, practices and policies. Managers are engaged in inquiry about the justice and equity of these conditions, and encouraged to see links between personally-experienced struggles and larger economic, socio-cultural and political forces. CHRD also creates uncomfortable spaces for people to question whose interests are served by their practices, how knowledge is constructed, what knowledge counts and who influences its assessment. CHRD challenges people to truly acknowledge human difference and how difference is treated in organizations. People are encouraged to question their own positionality, their investments and desires, and their (often) contradictory implications in sustaining particular ideologies, interests and power relations in communities of difference – both in organizations and in the classroom. Reflexivity, both philosophical and methodological, is central in CHRD to challenge not only orthodoxies of ‘managerial’ regulation, but also the imposition of emancipatory efforts. The main orientation of CHRD is towards practice: exploring approaches practitioners might adopt in organizations to interrupt unreasonable inequity, promote inclusion, and encourage critical questioning of the way-things-are towards more productive processes.

In this framework, the central purpose and approach of CHRD remains political: engaging new managers in recognizing relations of power, locating undesirable effects of these power

relations for oneself and others touched by the organization's work, and envisioning action that can be taken or encouraged by managers. Determining just what comprises desirable action is rife with moral assumptions. Virtuous ideals like justice, equity and democracy bear a complex relationship to organizational action in a global capitalist economy, leading to tensions in critical human resource development.

### **Tensions and dilemmas of critical human resource development**

As was intimated earlier, some dilemmas emerge when trying to graft ideals of critical theory and pedagogy onto human resource development. These critical principles of justice, democracy, equity and participation take what Perriton and Reynolds (2004) call the moral high ground. But practices of exposure, iconoclasm and reflexivity inevitably produce conflict when inserted into the complex everyday worlds of HRD practice and organizational life.

#### *Critical practice in capitalist structures?*

Some critical theorists (e.g. Brookfield and Holst 2010) might argue that emancipatory educative practice within capitalist institutions, particularly in the hands of HRD or management, is completely untenable: what emerges would always be a domesticated shadow of critical struggles against oppression, exploitation and inequity. It is all very well to say that critical studies and organizational practice should be married. However without further theorizing of fundamental contradictions and their political play in workplace organizations, little may be gained beyond further disillusion or duplicity. Critical human resource development needs to address these very contradictions, perhaps linking itself more explicitly to critical studies already flourishing in professional fields of accounting, law, and medicine as well as education and management. At the same time, an effective CHRD will be grounded in people's actual needs and experiences working in organizations. To disengage from practice is to confine critique to research and theory, risking hermetic scientism or naïve prescriptions.

#### *Sustaining radical purpose amidst managerialism?*

Another dilemma concerns the feasibility of critical practice in organizations. Some argue that human resource development is becoming increasingly aligned with management and managerialism (Bierema 2009). Conventional expectations for managers are held in place by prevailing organizational structures of authority, systems of reward and accountability, and divisions of labour. Critical human resource practice is difficult to sustain without either system change or sophisticated strategies to work through such complexities. Both workers and managers are usually quite constrained in terms of the actions they could take, the decisions they could make and the influence they could have, despite organizational resolves for empowered, self-directed teams and thinking workforce. Further, as argued elsewhere (Fenwick 2003, 2005a), empowerment as a concept has long been co-opted in popular management literature for purposes of promoting productivity and organizational gain rather than organizational reform. There is by now healthy suspicion of management declarations of support for non-hierarchical structures, collaborative

management approaches, and continuous learning. All of these have been used to introduce reengineering efforts that in fact have sedimented inequities and undemocratic power relations.

### *Developing resources critically?*

The contradiction of purporting commitments to human equity and empowerment while calling people 'resources' has been recognized for some time (Stewart et al. 2006). Furthermore, 'development' can often be enacted as a hierarchical rather than cooperative relation, where the 'other' is constituted in the developer's gaze as progressing from incompleteness to wholeness. In the tradition of HRD this process has been driven by organizational performance needs and conducted through 'technologies of control', as Townley (1994) describes HRD practices such as performance appraisal and classification. Radical commitments challenge this hierarchical management of human learning and subjugation of human lives to organizational productivity, and seek to explore a range of more worker-centered definitions of meaningful work and growth. Furthermore, radical educative approaches aim not to increase humans' exchange value, but to liberate human beings and their knowledge from this commodification. Contemporary critical orientations tend to seek a reframing of historic conceptions of production and exchange. This reframing is not conducted through imposed 'technologies' but through participatory dialogues in dialectic with collective action. Thus there appear to be ideological contradictions between the radical orientation of critical dimensions and the performance-development orientation of much mainstream HRD practice.

### *Fallibility of critical perspectives?*

A further dilemma inheres simplistic conceptualizations of domination/oppression presented by certain Marxian critiques. To view managers and workers as separate groups in unitary and fixed positions is to ignore today's shifting and often networked organizations and identities. Similarly, assumptions that singular groups in the workplace intentionally wield domination and control over others are insupportable amidst complex and overlapping interests and power circulations. These dynamics are linked with a host of affiliations and identifications related not just to class but to language, race, gender, sexual orientation, generation, and knowledge in particular cultural contexts. It is difficult to point to clear centers and peripheries in organizations, or to power situated unambiguously in any one position. Too often managers are portrayed as homogenous, or unproblematically as the oppressors. But emancipatory approaches can present an equally unsalubrious rescue. As Alvesson and Deetz (1996) point out, "the irony of an advocate of greater equality pronouncing what others should want or how they should perceive the world 'better' is not lost on either dominant or dominated groups" (p. 195).

### *Diluting critique?*

In critical management studies as well as CHRD, this dilemma is voiced in debate between those advocating for developing a practical critical agenda, and those worried that such engagement dilutes the critical project. Alvesson and Willmott (1996) argued some time ago that engaging critical theory *within* organizations helps avoid replacing 'old'

instrumental management dogma with ‘new’ critical ideology. Critical projects worked through messy organizational realities also avoid, write Alvesson and Willmott, a theoretical tendency towards simplistic iron cage depictions of organizations, or broad utopian visions that ignore micro-problems and possibilities persisting in organizations.

### *Practical difficulties?*

However, the question of *how* to integrate critical theory with workplace practice continues to trouble. As McGuire and Garavan (2011) point out, a key problem dogging critical writings in HRD is their tendency to focus on problematizing what *is* rather than providing alternative practices for what *could be*. Feasible practical strategies are needed perhaps more than extended debates about critical social theories in work. McGuire and Garavan suggest that strategies for change, as well as analysis, be developed simultaneously in a multi-levelled approach: individual, organizational, and community/societal. The next section offers some beginning ideas towards the first two levels.

### **Educating for critical human resource development**

In the dimensions offered earlier, the practice of CHRD is about creating spaces for people to question whose interests are served by their practices, how knowledge is constructed, what knowledge counts and who influences its assessment. The point of these critical spaces is, first, to engage people in recognizing how everyday processes of work organizations generally and HRD specifically shape people’s identities and activities in particular ways. Second, dialogue in these spaces helps people to inquire into the justice and equity of these processes, and to recognize links between their own personal struggles and the larger forces affecting practice. Third, these spaces should help generate strategies, both to create more democratic practices and to engage others in productive critical questioning. As Valentin (2006) has argued, a good starting point is education: using critical pedagogy to promote critical HRD.

Good critical educators have been practicing in the workplace for some decades (Simon, Dippo and Schenke 1991). They often begin by introducing people to critical theoretical perspectives, then design activities where students apply these perspectives to actual cases to identify issues of equity, exclusion, and interests, contradictions embedded within the organization, and so on. Some educators also guide students through critical analyses of popular management texts and media stories fortify a-political management assumptions. But beyond these rational analyses, how are people to be engaged in a critical reading of the world that is sustainable beyond the classroom and even converted into their everyday practices? If a radical view is simply presented alongside other views, argues Brookfield (2004) and others, it is vulnerable to being domesticated or dismissed as irrelevant by students. Therefore, the critical educator is often challenged to take up a clear critical position as an orientation to both organizations and education – while surviving in conservative academies and avoiding the hubris of heroic emancipator.

Reflexivity is one of three core dimensions for critical development of organizations proposed by Fournier and Grey (2000). That is, the reflexive critique of voice, positionality and knowledge is refracted on to the classroom activities and procedures whenever possible.



In particular, the teacher's own authoritarianism is confronted. The assumptions circulating in the classroom about knowledge authority and the power ascribed to procedural norms (such as grades) can be challenged continually. An entire course might be framed within a critical perspective if students are continually encouraged to raise dimensions of voice, positionality, and the politics of knowledge legitimation unfolding in the different texts and perspectives examined throughout the course. The critical perspective thus is not presented solely as ideological content, but more as a tool for exposing and assessing the ideologies implicit in all voices, including those presenting themselves as neutral, as all-inclusive and tolerant, or as empowering – including, perhaps especially, itself.

### *Working from individual experience.*

Personal change begins with learners' own experiences of inequity –naming these and analysing them in ways that link their origins to particular relations of power and positioning. The educator's challenge is to balance deconstructive critique with hopeful reconstruction of alternate visions. These visions need to be formulated as authentic alternatives, not illusory transformations that in effect do nothing to challenge existing conditions and relations except to proclaim empowerment and democratic improvement.

As discussed elsewhere (Fenwick 2005b), students often welcome tools of critical cultural analysis for their own organizational experiences. Many find critical language and concepts useful for examining contradictions, everyday politics, accelerating pressures, disciplinary HRD technologies (e.g. performance appraisals, classification schemes, 'confessional' dialogues, and remediation by training), ineffectual procedures that appear immutable – and various acts of resistance. They can analyse their own stories to examine organizational structures (reward mechanisms, knowledge most valued, activities dependent on perpetual disablers), as well as larger cultural discourses and accepted imperatives (such as performance, measurement, continuous change and innovation). Dialogue in small groups and plenary is useful for analysing personal experience, although it often needs critical mediation to sustain a collective commitment to reflexivity. There are always some voices, sometimes very aggressive, espousing dominant assumptions, discriminatory sentiments, intolerance for others' views, or refusal to recognize experiences outside their own. Some students may have difficulty problematizing their own workplace structures and practices in terms of what *they* do and why, but most can engage critically to analyse what they have experienced as *done to them*. Overall the critical educator keeps moving the analysis outwards, examining the interacting systems of practices, people and objects which constitute power relations. The general movement is towards action, involving students in experiments to devise a critical practice of HRD.

### *Linking individual to organization-based projects*

Action is particularly important for human resource development education where students are preparing not for careers of inquiry, but for the difficult work of enacting change in complex and uncertain situations. If CHRD is to actually help prospective practitioners not only to internalize critical insights but also to enact them in organizations, practice should be integrated with critical analysis. At this theory/practice nexus, all of the

dilemmas emerge that were discussed earlier.

However, serious engagement of CHRD with work-based practitioners can help sidestep this old theory/practice polarity, and avoid dualisms between organizations as simplistic iron cages and broad utopian visions that ignore nuanced actualities. One approach is work-based education, where Boud and Solomon (2002) argue for classroom critical inquiry linked to organizational internships. Critical action learning projects within organizations are another approach that have been widely explored (Alvesson and Willmott, 1996; Fenwick, 2003). Loosely based on a combination of critical problem-posing and ‘action learning’ (AL), groups undertake collaborative problem-solving processes of naming, analysing, exploring action-based solutions, and critically reflecting on an organizational condition or management practice. Critical AL projects can be undertaken by individual students mobilizing employees in their own organizations, or adopted as class field projects conducted by individual or small groups of students in volunteering organizations, supported by discussion back in class. A third approach is organizational narrative, facilitating employees’ construction and critical analysis of a change event. Students can even facilitate the development of alternative scenarios with an organizational group. Finally, Meyerson’s (2001) work on “small wins” and “tempered radicalism” suggests more modest activities that are adaptable for student projects, such as timing the challenge of one exclusionary meeting protocol and analyzing what happens. There are problems in such approaches (Fenwick 2003), although the critical educational environment can help draw forth the complex micropolitics and contradictions that are enacted. Perhaps the key is fostering, as Brookfield (2004) suggests, a flexible and above all, a reflexive approach to critical learning, through experiments and various collaborations.

## **Conclusion**

Critical human resource development sets out to promote critical practice, among HRD practitioners as well as the wider organization. While this is far from well-defined or even feasibly conceptualized, it can be characterized as a fundamentally political project. From the injunctions of Fournier and Grey (2000), CHRD promotes non-performativity, de-naturalization, and reflexivity in organizations by developing managers’ critical insights about organizational power relations, interests and inequity, and by exploring alternative possibilities and opportunities for action. Many dilemmas are inherent in the project itself of critical management development. This chapter discussed tensions between notions of ‘management development’ and critical learning, potential subversion or appropriation of radical purpose, incommensurable assumptions, inadequacies of certain critical conceptualizations, potential dilution of critique in practice, and practical difficulties of implementation. The practical strategies for CMD suggested in this chapter emphasize reflexivity, working from students’ experience, and linking classroom to action: both through organization-based projects and to deep critical consideration of the classroom dynamics themselves, following Reynolds and Trehan’s (2001) argument for a pedagogy of difference. Perriton and Reynolds (2004) remind us of the educator’s complex position in all of this, with their recommendation for a pedagogy of refusal.

Overall, CHRD sets out to negotiate difficult links between the amorphous traditions of critical thought and the complexities of practice in organizations, at a time when both

managing and organizing are highly contested and rapidly shifting domains of activity. To further link all of this with notions of pedagogy and development, particularly within formal institutions, is to invite debate around interests, contradiction and the educative project. These ongoing dilemmas need not be viewed as problems requiring solution, but as open questions to return to again and again as various new models and prescriptions for CHRD to emerge.

Acknowledgements: This chapter draws from material published in Fenwick (2005a,b) which has been substantially modified and updated here.

- Alfred, M.A. and Chlup, D.T. (2010) 'Making the invisible, visible: race matters in human resource development', *Advances in Developing Human Resources* 12: 332-351
- Alvesson, M. and Deetz, C. (1996) 'Critical theory and postmodernism: approaches to organisational studies', in Stewart Clegg, C. Hardy and William Nord (eds.) *Handbook of Organization Studies*, London: New Delhi.
- Alvesson, M. and Willmott, H.S. (1996) *Making Sense of Management: A Critical Introduction*, London: Sage.
- Bierema, L.L. (2008) 'Critical human resource development education: A review of the literature and recommendations for teaching', *Proceedings of the Annual Academy of Human Resource Development Conference*, Panama City, Florida, pp. 538-545.
- Bierema, L. L. (2009) 'Critiquing human resource development's dominant masculine rationality and evaluating its impact', *Human Resource Development Review*, 8(1): 68-96.
- Bierema, L.L. and Cseh, M. (2003) 'Evaluating AHRD research using a feminist research framework', *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 14 (1): 5-26
- Brookfield, S. D. (2004) *The Power of Critical Theory: Liberating Adult Learning and Teaching*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Brookfield, S.D. and Holst, J.D. (2010) *Radicalising Learning: Adult Education for a Just World*, San Francisco: John Wiley/Jossey- Bass.
- Boud, D. and Solomon, N. (2001) *Work-Based Learning: A New Higher Education*, Berkshire: Open University Press.
- Callahan, J.L. (2007) 'Gazing into the crystal ball: Critical HRD as a future of research in the field', *Human Resource Development International* 10 (1): 77-82.
- CMS (2002) Critical Management Studies Conference 2003, Human Resources Stream: Call for Proposals. Available at <http://www.cms3.org>
- Elliott, C. J. and Turnbull, R. S. (2005), *Critical Thinking in Human Resources Development*, London: Routledge.
- Ellsworth, E. (1988) 'Why doesn't this feel empowering? Working through the repressive myths of critical pedagogy', *Harvard Educational Review*, 59: 297-324.

- Fenwick, T. (2003) 'Emancipatory potential of action research: A critical analysis', *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 16 (6): 619-632.
- Fenwick, T. (2005a) 'Conceptions of critical HRD: Dilemmas for theory and practice', *Human Resource Development International*, 8 (2): 225-238.
- Fenwick, T. (2005b) 'Ethical dilemmas of critical management education', *Management Learning*, 36 (1): 31-48.
- Fournier, V. and Grey, C. (2000) 'At the critical moment: Conditions and prospects for critical management studies', *Human Relations*, 53 (1):7-32.
- Kincheloe, J. L. (1999). *How Do We Tell the Workers? The socioeconomic foundations of work and vocational education*, Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.
- McGuire, D. and Garavan, T.N. (2011) 'Critical human resource development: a levels of analysis approach, Paper presented at 12th UFHRD/AHRD Conference on HRD Research and Practice across Europe, University of Gloucestershire, 25th-27th May 2011.
- Metcalf, B.D. (2008) 'A feminist poststructuralist analysis of HRD: why bodies, power and reflexivity matter', *Human Resource Development International* 11 (5): 447-463.
- Meyerson, D. (2001) *Tempered Radicals: How people use difference to inspire change at work*, Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- Perriton, L. and Reynolds, M. (2004) 'Critical management education: from pedagogy of possibility to pedagogy of refusal?' *Management Learning*, 35 (1): 61-77
- Reynolds, M. and Trehan, K. (2001) 'Classroom as real world: propositions for a pedagogy of difference', *Gender and Education*, 13 (4): 91-109
- Sambrook, S. (2004) 'A critical time for HRD', *Journal of European Industrial Training*, 28(8/9): 611-624.
- Sambrook, S. (2009) 'Critical HRD: A concept analysis', *Personnel Review*, 38(1): 61-73.
- Simon, R. I., Dipbo, D., and Schenke, A. (1991) *Learning Work: A critical pedagogy of work education*, Toronto: OISE Press.
- Stewart, J., Rigg, C., and Trehan, K. (2006) *Critical Human Resource Development: Beyond Orthodoxy*, Essex: Financial Times/ Prentice Hall
- Townley B. (1994) *Reframing Human Resource Management: Power, ethics and the subject at work*, London: Sage.
- Valentin, C. (2006) 'How can I teach critical management in this place? A critical pedagogy for HRD: possibilities, contradictions and compromises', in *Critical Human Resource Development: beyond orthodoxy*, ed. Rigg, C., Stewart, J. and Trehan, K., pp. 169-180, Pearson.