

Dear Teachers,

In Pedagogy of Freedom, Freire says,

“It’s important that students perceive the teacher’s struggle to be coherent. And, it is necessary that this struggle be the subject of discussion in the classroom from time to time.”

I would like to share my struggle in our course. It is very difficult to be so far away from Dadaab. As I said in one of my letters to you in November, I wanted the course to try possibilities for uncertain times, and for the future. How could I teach the course there (as I did before) if Dadaab Camps closed? How could other courses be taught so you could finish university degrees? I decided to try to do it from Canada, with the UBC Team, who you have now met. Let me say how grateful I am to this wonderful team! They trusted me and my plan (even though I am not so good at technology!).

In the course I had a vision for the afternoon Dialogue Circles; I wanted them to be like Freire described. But... there was no technology (to speak of) back then, in the 1960s. And after Freire was exiled, the Circles stopped. What if he could have continued them from afar? What if people could have continued on phones?

It has been difficult for those of you who do not have Whatsapp. Accessibility is always an issue for technology. So, we have to be open and curious about this process we are going through together; we are making history you know: a university diploma in a refugee camp and the supporting host community. It is history indeed.

In my worry about this today, I imagined sitting with Freire and telling him about this difficulty (explaining a smart phone to him was hilarious of course; did he believe me?). How would you describe it to him?

But, I *imagined* him saying back to me,

“Dr. Karen, you have done the best you could in an ethical way. Find your inner security and confidence. And I like that you have introduced my writing. But, Karen, my ideas must be re interpreted for *your* time, and place, and situation. Trust the teachers in Dadaab; they will know what to do with my ideas, even if those smartphone things you have described to me don’t work for all. The teachers will share. Good ideas spread like fire!” You still have fire don’t you?” lol (we both laughed)

Our UBC Team had a 2-hour Whatsapp dialogue today about using Whatsapp in the course. Weird! We realized its awkwardness! I have asked Nickson to put Whatsapp on some lab computers. Perhaps those of you who don’t have Whatsapp can tell the others what to write, and you can look on the computer screen at what is written during the Dialogue. We love hearing from you, all of you.

Perhaps what matters most here is that you are able to express yourselves to us, and us to you. You can email me your ideas as well, or post on the Course blog. We also hope that you discuss things among yourselves before posting; that is a good practice for teachers and leaders. So let’s try again, on our last afternoon of Dialogues and see how we can share, participate, and listen to each other as the Teachers in EDUC 170 Principles of Teaching!

Your teacher always,

Dr. Karen