

# Liberation Summer Semester Atlanta 2012



by  
**University Sin Fronteras & Project South**

## **Pedagogy of oppressed narrative:**

The University Sin Fronteras (UNSIF) Board discussions and decisions at the last meeting in June 2012, to partner with Project South, to under take the 'Liberation Summer Semester" in Atlanta, Georgia starting July 11 to August 15 paid off with a very successful implementation and results. The outstanding features of the partnership are the selection and make up, diversity of the participating students-practitioners in the class, the curriculum content and methodology developed together by UNSIF and PS, the adjunct faculty that came to share the knowledge, and the tight fit with the 4 core curriculum areas of UNSIF, especially because it started with the question of colonialism moreover, the question and process of liberation.

New knowledge created and developed include the OLE pedagogical methodology;

Organization and organizational development,

Liberation and liberating strategies and practices, and finally,

Emanicipatory educational, leadership, and organizing trajectory.

## **Organization**

### **Liberation**

### **Emancipation (theory & practice)**

The core curriculum of the UNSIF composed of four (4) core value areas: liberation and colonialism, emancipation and emancipatory education, economics, capitalism and globalization and social movement and self development. The Liberation Summer Semester course was within the colonialism & liberation curricular area.

#### **LIBERATION & COLONIALISM**

#### **ECONOMICS, CAPITALISM AND GLOBALIZATION**

#### **EDUCATION AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

#### **SOCIAL MOVEMENT AND SELF-DEVELOPMENT**

The course on Liberation and Colonialism was made up of six (6) classes of two (2) hours each meeting once a week on wednesdays evenings 6–8 PM. Participating students filled out an application including a scholarship section if they could not pay the \$200 tuition. Most students received a scholarship. All 29 student–participants came to every class with few exceptions. The on time start at 6 PM help make sure people got there on time and the class got the full 2 hours.

The classes were content driven based on practice–theory–practice, and the core curriculum and the OLE methodology, that focuses on shared knowledge, bringing the voices and stories of the student–participants to the center of the class/table, and building a body of knowledge including new knowledge, as a result.

The class dynamics have included oral presentations, small group discussion and analysis, round robin (around the table) discussions, multi-media presentations, and sharing their compelling stories is part of the synthesis process of the course as a whole in a peer evaluation approach.

The participating students came from diverse backgrounds. A group of them are young between 18 and 28, and another group are older between 40 and 60 and a middle group is in their 30's. The majority of the participants were females, with a majority in their 20's. The class participants were African, European, Asian Americans and Latinos and Indigenous. The class included people from Africa-Americans, Asian-Americans, Latin America, Pacific American Islanders, and Caribbean Americans. The class ranged from a high school student, a retired college professor, and a recent graduate with a PhD. It included directors of social movement organizations and organizers of social movement organizations as well as social movement activists. It included queer, trans, and hetero sexual orientations. All of the participants are poor or working poor and a couple of professionals.

The body of knowledge accumulated include a one page paper each student-participant writes answering a reflection question posed by the faculty for the class subject that night, the compilation of the meaning as written by the student-participant, and a three page paper on their work organizing for decolonization. The student-participants will write up a collective synthesis of what the course of the Liberation Summer meant to them and for their organizing work. At the end of the classes student participants will do a life road map writing on how they got here in terms of their formation for liberation. The adjunct faculty will also write up a one page paper on what they got out of the experience of the Summer Liberation. And the coordinator, has written summary reports and the note taker had recorded the notes of each of the classes. The classes were also video and audio recordings of the classes. All of this body of knowledge will be the course archive and will be made available to the social movements.

### **Lessons learned narrative:**

1. The partnership with the local organization is essential
2. The diversity and make of the student participants (practitioners) is very important
3. Faculty should submit course description and bibliography before class starts so we stay on topic as agreed
4. The local host organization is leading the process as far as developing the curriculum with the UNSIF.
5. UNSIF connects the adjunct faculty for the overall course
6. The 1 pager (writing) is very important reflection by students
7. 3 page paper by student-participants
8. The life road map is essential for relationship building
9. lesson planning has to be down to the minute
10. bibliography for classes at the beginning
11. Establish historiography over arching connection
12. Develop new definitions, re-definitions, and narrative of liberation
13. Documentation a must to build body of knowledge and new knowledge
14. Use of Multi media
15. Participatory dynamics; small groups, round robin discussions, one on one etc.
16. Synthesis process (collective agreement) on class by participants

### **Outcomes:**

Synthesis process (write up)

Class identity as a group (relationship building)

Shared knowledge

New knowledge

Body of knowledge (archive) i.e., materials written

29 student-participants receive certificate of completion

6 classes were implemented successfully as planned  
7 Adjunct faculty came through plus we added Rita Valenti for total of 8 faculty  
Historiography of emancipation established/learned and benchmarked  
Started social movement for liberation (decolonizing)  
organization development, expansion and depth  
Politically educated organizers

### **Evaluation:**

The evaluation process for the Liberation summer semester course is based on the one page reflection papers the student-participants do every class, and the end of the course evaluation questions below:

1. Did we (class and faculty) succeed? How? ID key elements
2. Summarize your experience in Liberation Summer? ID highlights
3. What do you take from this class with you?
4. What now?

The final compilation and synthesis of all materials, stories, experiences and data will constitute the most comprehensive evaluation.