

Pulled Up Short with Stanton Wortham

Stop teaching?

Featuring Anna Stetsenko with Stanton Wortham (host) and Megan Laverty (commentator)

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Stanton Wortham 0:06

Welcome back to another episode of Pulled Up Short. Thank you very much for being with us. Today we're very pleased to have Anna Stetsenko, from the City University of New York with us, and Megan Laverty from Teachers College at Columbia University. Anna, I think you're going to talk to us about teaching, and why we shouldn't do it.

Anna Stetsenko 0:26

Right. Yes, yes. Moreover, I think we need to *stop* teaching. So that's the title. We need to stop teaching. Yes, and thank you, by the way for having me here. I'm very excited to talk about that. This is a topic that I feel very passionately about. And I'm happy to share some thoughts. Why should we stop teaching? Should we even think this through? I believe we should. There is a very urgent need to come up with new ways of teaching and learning, and new ways of *thinking* about teaching. And one of these ways is to really pause and entertain the possibility that we need to stop teaching. This is a very radical notion: let's stop teaching. If teachers would hear this, they might think that this is a little bit too much, or something along those lines. And yet, I insist it's not too much. It's exactly what we need to do. We need to pause and think about whether our teaching works. I think many would agree that it does not work in the present context where there are too many problems with teaching. And I have some ideas, and some—I am tempted to say—solutions to address this situation.

So I don't mean to stop teaching completely. I mean to pause, and radically think about teaching as the same process as learning. And think about teaching and learning as one. As one-in-two. Sometimes that's the expression we can use. That teaching and learning is one-in-two. It's not two different processes, it's one process. We need one word for this process, which is teaching *and* learning together. So I'm working with students that are in my class, for example, to come up with a new word, even. Like a new word. Because there is *one* word in some languages for this process: teaching and learning. So for example, in Russian, the word is "*Obuchenie*", which is both teaching and learning at once, one word. And also in Chinese. I learned from my colleagues who speak Chinese, there is just one word. It used to be that way, at least in the ancient Chinese, and there was one hieroglyph for teaching and learning at once. So this is the challenge, really. How do we think about teaching, which is learning at the same time? Not teaching *plus* learning, not teaching *and then* learning, or learning *then* teaching, but really

one process. Just one process. So see, I'm repeating this, but this is the message. That's what we have not thought through enough, I think.

Even after reading scholars such as Vygotsky who speaks about that, and some others, of course, who followed in his tradition and spoke also about teaching and learning as interconnected, yet we are not where we need to be, I think, with this. And yeah, I just want to say that, for example, just this one saying, when we say "You can only teach yourself". That's a very deep message right there. There is a deep message you can only teach yourself. Does it mean we cannot have teachers, or teachers are working in vain? Not at all. Teachers are not working in vain. And I do respect teachers and their labor. They're even a kind of hero. I'm quoting someone on this. And yet, we need to rethink and we are in need of radically new approaches. That's the message from me today. And I hope you will share with me this enthusiasm for a new vision of teaching, which is not separate from learning.

Stanton Wortham 4:18

So this certainly is provocative. I'm trying to wrap my head around it. It helped me understand a little better. So you're saying we should stop teaching. There's something wrong with the traditional view of teaching, which is certainly disruptive, because we tend to think that teachers are crucial, not just teachers in classrooms, but others who help people learn things. And you're saying that there's something wrong with that approach to teaching. But it's not that you think that teachers themselves are doing a bad job, or that we shouldn't try to foster the development of young people. It's just that you think if we imagine teaching as a separate process, a set of skills or practices we can do on their own apart from learning, then you think our understanding is misguided and pushing us in an unproductive direction. So it sounds as if you're looking for a radical redesign of teaching and learning. But can you help me understand? What would it mean to stop teaching? Or how do we think about this? You started to talk about the question of teaching and learning is one process. Can you say more about what you mean by that?

Anna Stetsenko 5:21

Yes, thank you for that. When I said we need to think about teaching and learning as one process, I'm thinking in terms of redesigning of course, pedagogy. But I don't mean to say I have all the recipes or formulas right there. I line them up, 10 bullet points of how to do this. I do have ideas about that. But I do want to say this is not a recipe, it's not about the formula. And it's not even yet at the point of being ready to redesign completely. But there are ideas. So I do believe in the power of theory. So I think if we think theoretically in new ways about teaching and learning as one process to learning maybe, or teach learning and trying out new words, as you can see. So then we can also come up with some strategies for redesigning pedagogy. Although I have some ideas, I do have some suggestions. Let me try this out.

One of them is following on on Lisa Delpit who said the best way to teach is to listen to your students. So to quote her—Lisa Delpit—teachers listening to their students is the only way to teach. Just if we pause here to think about that listening is actually the process of teaching. Do we often think this way?

We don't. I think teachers are very often uncomfortable with pausing, with having situations in their classroom when the conversation stops. And sometimes there is no conversation, by the way. And yet, pausing and listening might be the best way to teach. Not to say that, "Oh, if you listen to your students, then you can teach better." No. It's much more than that. If listening itself is the process of teaching, listening to your students. I do want to emphasize that many scholars from the Global South, many scholars of color, many African American scholars—I will mention several here—they have come up with similar ideas. I think we have to learn a lot from them. So I already mentioned Lisa Delpit.

So what is at stake here? Also, for me, as someone who works to conceptualize and theorize teaching and learning—is the need for a new philosophy. New philosophy, which means epistemology, new ways of thinking about what is teaching and learning. And as I said—I think I said it before—that we are in a woeful need for new theories of teaching and learning. That might sound provocative too. Don't we have many theories of teaching and learning? Yes, we do. But we have, of course, Vygotsky and Dewey, and many many others. But we are in a woeful need of new approaches to teaching and learning. This is from Leigh Patel, by the way, also a scholar, working with decolonial approaches to education. So what is at stake first is that we need a philosophy that does not separate us from the world. So this is what's behind the notion of teaching and learning being one. Because we're used to think of ourselves as separate, as individuals. Of course, that's the central mantra of Western philosophy, Western and European worldview, Eurocentric worldview. Maybe Vygotsky was able to make some headway beyond this notion because he was not part of the traditional Western Eurocentric worldview. He was on the margins of Europe. Russia is actually neither Europe nor Asia. It's in between, which is sometimes a very useful situation when you can see both ways: to the West and to the East, and be in neither place. So perhaps that's why there are some useful things there in Vygotsky. Although I never say that Vygotsky gave us all answers. That's very far from the truth. So we need to think of ourselves as not separate from others. And also, we need to think about the processes we are engaging in as not separate from the processes that are acting on us. So that's the deep philosophy here.

So you can think in terms of the metaphor of of a gift. You can only give a gift if someone takes the gift. So giving and taking is one. You cannot think about just first I give someone something, and then this person receives this something. It's one act: gifting. Gifting is one act. So is teaching and learning. You giving something to someone is at the same time taking from them. That's why teaching and learning is again one process. So I insist on not separating the teaching and learning in the same vein, as I insist on not separating giving and taking, holding and being held. We're not doing enough of that, although we can see some pieces of that in various philosophies. But we need to push more with that in a radical vein also, which is I insist important for the post-Eurocentric approaches, which also have a connection then to the goals of having education that is not colonizing, that is not infused with hegemony, hierarchy, and racism. So that has to do also with the challenges we're facing today.

Yeah, so I'm speaking here about philosophies such as dialogical approaches, the collaborative approaches to cognition, the distributed approaches to cognition, dynamic system theory. So there are wonderful developments across the board, I would say. But they're disconnected. They are in little

pieces. We need to collect them better, make a better synopsis of them, and push through with approaches that do not separate us from the world, do not separate what we do in the world from what's *done* to us. That's the other way to express the same idea. So that I'm playing off here on—actually just occurred to me—on Sartre who said, “Freedom is what you do to what's done to you.” So that's this simultaneity here of these two processes: something is done to you, but you are doing to this something that is done to you simultaneously. So there is always action and the back and forth between give and take. So let me pause here and see if you have a question.

Stanton Wortham 12:02

So as I understand it, we have our stereotypical classic conception of teaching and learning, where the teacher knows a lot of stuff, and the teacher tells the student a lot of stuff, and then the student learns it. And a lot of folks have been unhappy with that image, because it leaves the student as passive. And it doesn't seem to accurately reflect what goes on in productive teaching and learning. And you don't like that image either. But the typical response to that image is to say, well, the teachers need to be a little more creative, they need to figure out where the students are what they already understand, they need to tailor their teaching to the students contexts. They need to do lots of assessments or talk to the students and figure out what the students need at any particular moment. So there needs to be more responsive teaching that is tailored to specific situations for the students.

But you're saying that's not what you mean, either. That that still is not radical enough as a reenvisioning of teaching and learning. You're saying that teaching somehow is inextricable from learning. So we can't teach without learning. That there's a mutuality or a double sightedness to it such that we can't separate out what's going on with the teacher and what's going on with the learner. And can you help me a little more to understand what you mean by that? How do we take the step beyond just responsive, engaged, student-centered teaching to what you're calling a more radical vision where teaching really isn't a separate thing at all?

Anna Stetsenko 13:36

Right, exactly. That's where we need to dig deeper, and dig deeper together, of course. So I'm not here to say, “Oh, look, I have all the answers!”. No. I think what I offer is a provocation. What I offer is several points on which we need to think deeper, and to push for more. And yes, that certainly is a collaborative endeavor. So yes, we need to think together. When you said that we need to be more than just student-centered, that's exactly where important things need to come up. So when we talk about student-centered pedagogies, or culturally-sensitive pedagogies, these are great advances, these are great developments. I am very much supportive of many of their ideas. But I think again, there is this metaphor of being responsive there. Even you used the notion of being responsive, I guess, because you were referencing this student-centered pedagogies and so on. But even the notion of being responsive has the legacy of behaviorism. Stimulus response: here, something is acting on us, and then we act on what's acting on us. What I'm saying is that it's more than about being responsive. It's about realizing that when teachers come to the classroom, they're not there to act on anything, or to do anything, even while knowing who the students are better. And that's wonderful, but that's not enough.

It's about engaging in a really collaborative activity. And we need to specify what this activity is. And I'm thinking along the lines of *becoming*. So we need to think of pedagogy as a joint project of becoming. Students are engaged all the time, through and through. From the first days of life, all of us are engaged in the project of becoming, which means finding out who we are, who we are in this world which we share with others—very important. But it's the project. It's the project and pursuit of finding out who we are. And that's a very fundamental quest for all of us. Of course, that's not my idea. That's coming from many philosophers. But I'm asking and inviting all of us to think about the situation in the classroom as having to do profoundly with this way of finding out how do we join our students on a quest to together find out who we are in the world as it is today. And in this quest, we can learn from students—at the same time as teach them—much more than we think. This is also something I can suggest. Well, this is the realisation that we can learn from even very young students much more than we typically think we can. Very young, very small children know much more than we think they do. This is of course, the legacy of a little bit of a developmental psychologist in me speaking about that. But especially children coming from difficult situations, from situations where they face the world as it is, unlike us—very often privileged. I would say most of us are very privileged and sheltered from the world as it is. And teachers, of course not always, but to some extent, can be seen as also more privileged often than children coming from really impoverished conditions. And children can teach us all. Think about Greta Thunberg. After all, she was the one teaching us about what the situation is in the world. She was more sensitive than adults. And we can still learn from that. And actually, people have learned a little bit to become more sensitive to this challenge of ecological crisis. Very young children are on a quest. They are not there to absorb or learn just information, although that could be part of the process. But we are there just listening to what they have to say.

So I would say, let's imagine the classroom where teachers come in, and listen. And just pause and listen for a whole day. Let's have a full day of listening. And of course, we're gonna draw on Gloria Anzaldúa with the notion of testimonial. Students sharing their experiences and telling us as it is—that's a very important notion. Tell us how it is, tell us how it is. We don't know how it is. Very often, we're in an ivory tower. If we are in academia, that's by definition, an ivory tower. And we don't know how things are. I'm very happy to work with students who are teachers in New York City, in Bronx, Harlem, and Queens, of course. And they come and tell me. Because they know from their students. They tell me how it is. And it's not pretty, by the way. So that's where the need for radical rethinking comes from. And yes, let's listen and learn. Especially in the mode of knowing that there are no answers.

Very often we are too much thinking about science as a canon with answers. It's not the case at all. Science is all about mistakes. Science is through and through about mistakes, and about finding out more, and making next steps. So please—I recommend always and often use this example of looking up the book about Einstein, written by a physicist, about how Einstein was actually wrong on most of physical points. So we don't need to treat Einstein as an icon. I'm not saying we shouldn't respect him. Of course, that's not about that. But we need to move forward. Physics has moved forward since

Einstein, and that's true for everything else. Everything else is about new steps, which needs to make us much more humble. As we learn and listen to students, as we teach, learn with them, for them, and especially from them. But really, together, not in a separate additive way. Not in a non-disjunctive way of teaching, learning as one process. So I'm coming back to that. And just, again, hoping that thinking about teaching and learning as *not* separate, could be useful. Yes.

Stanton Wortham 20:20

So I'm starting to understand part of the radical claim that you're making here. So most people want to move beyond traditional teacher-centered pedagogy, where teachers share knowledge with students. And so we have a lot of different kinds of movements, which are more student-centered. They adjust how the teachers communicate information, they allow students to discover information. And you're saying that that is all an advance over the more traditional modes, but it's insufficient. And your claim has to do with your conception of what people are fundamentally like. So even student-centered pedagogy assumes that teachers have knowledge, they know things, and that students don't know certain things. And then the students must be given experiences, or engage in activities where the students develop the relevant knowledge or develop the capacity to do what the teachers need them to learn. And you're saying that that image of what people are like is wrong. That young people and adults are in this process of expanding. We're encountering new experiences, we're expanding our ways of understanding and relating to the world and other people. And throughout life, we're all engaged in this expansive process. And for a teacher and a student to work together means that the two of them have to participate together in this process of expanding. That the teacher has to enter into the space where the student is engaging with new things in the world, formulating new ideas, bouncing them off others, engaging in activities with others, and so forth. And so the teacher isn't "teaching" in the sense that the teacher doesn't have some knowledge or skill, which is imparted. The teacher doesn't draw out in the young person a capacity to do something new, because the teacher knew it and then passes it on or encourages it. That the teacher instead enters into this expansive activity. And in doing so, the teacher changes also. Because of course, the teacher isn't qualitatively different. The teacher is someone who also encounters new things, expands by developing new insights, new ways of reacting, new ways of participating with others. And the teacher may know more, may be able to do more. But still, the process is qualitatively similar.

So if I've got that, right, you have this different vision of what it is to be a human person, what it is to learn, to expand in this way. And that vision underlies your claim that we really don't teach. We shouldn't teach, because teaching presupposes giving something, or drawing out something in a student that you already have. And you're saying that both of us, the teacher and the student, are engaged in this ongoing expansive process. And the right way to think about teaching and learning is joint participation in this process, where the teacher may have good suggestions or good techniques, but the teacher is still expanding herself or himself. So can you help me see how that vision of, "Stop teaching! We're not going to teach in the traditional sense, we're going to participate together in these expansive activities". How would you do that in a classroom? You mentioned the notion of listening to students, which seems a critical thing to do. But just listening to them probably doesn't suffice to

capture the more radical shift you're imagining. So we should listen to them, and we should learn from them, participate with them. What else would you recommend teachers do in order to do this more radical notion of teaching and learning?

Anna Stetsenko 23:58

Right. Well, you said it beautifully, really. And I'm very glad you used the notion of expansive cycles of teaching and learning and all. This is indeed very important to me, too. Because this is about also always moving beyond. Moving beyond what is. It's always about creativity, novelty, and invention. Instead of canons, knowledge as something fixed, and other things traditionally thought of as part of teaching, we need to think about creativity, daring, expansion, novelty. Well, by the way, I do use the notion of pedagogy of daring in my work, because I think the notion of trying out new ways and daring to find out something new is very fundamental and very important. It's understandable to want to see practical steps for us all to move on with these more radical views. At this point in time, I'm suggesting for us to pause, to really not rush to doing things before we think critically and deeply about what it is that we're doing when we are *just* teaching. So what it means to stop teaching. And so that's the title: Let's stop teaching. At least, this is a radical step already. This is a practical step. So I'm suggesting for teachers to take this as at least for—I don't know, a day or two—as their slogan as their guide to action and come to the classroom without an inclination to teach, and just stop teaching and stop being a teacher. So that is a beginning, I think, for me, where many radical new solutions and ideas and practical steps might emerge. And I would love to see them emerge *from* the teachers and *with* the teachers. I don't want this to be imposed on teachers also, in a one way street. Because we as educators, working in academia, of course—and often working with teachers—we also need to stop teaching and stop thinking that we will come up with solutions. I think there needs to be a cautionary note here. That we're not imposing anything and not coming up with solutions. We can problematize, interrogate, call upon teachers and others working in education. For us to *together*, pause, think through, stop. And then work on new things together. And radical things come from classrooms.

So I did have a quote here somewhere from for example, Vivian Paley, who was a elementary classroom teacher, who discovered many ways of how to listen to very young children. These were pre-K students. And she was able to begin to *listen* to them. It's a hard work. It takes a lot of learning to begin to listen to students. So yes, listening is not enough, especially if we think of listening to students as a one-way street. It should not be a one-way street, either. This listening needs to be a teachable moment for us. So we need to *learn* from this listening. And at the same time already, perhaps teach our students—again, not as a one-way street, but as part of that teaching and learning—but teach them that we *can* be different. And we can pause and learn from them. And that's a big step. And let's see what emerges. I mean, I do have *some* solutions and some pedagogical strategies. And I teach, of course, pedagogy class for a whole semester. And this is what is discussed through the semester, but I'm not going to give away everything today. But I do want to invite us all, to pause and to stop teaching. But I do want to note that Stanton, what you formulated was excellent already. So I see movement here for us together to explore, and to inquire, and to find out.

Stanton Wortham 28:26

So thanks very much, Anna. I appreciate that. At this point, I'd like to bring in Megan and invite her to ask a couple of questions and push the conversation forward.

Megan Laverly 28:34

Thanks, Stanton. And thank you for the invitation to be here today and have a conversation with you and Anna. And thank you, Anna, for your provocation. I am very, very sympathetic. The work that we do teaching philosophy to children—we actually refer to the teacher as a *facilitator* of philosophical inquiry, in order to encourage the idea that the adult in the room is a co-inquirer with the other children in the room. And their role is simply to *facilitate* the learning that is going on in the classroom. So I really, yeah, I'm just so excited by your thought that we need to stop teaching.

It does raise for me a couple of questions, though. Particularly in the context of my own work, I suppose. It does seem significant in the context of how we think about education. That the adult is often in the role of the teacher, or the parent, or the person who is responsible for the activity: coaches, mentors. And I think in part, we think of the adult as having the benefit of experience. That there's a certain kind of wisdom that comes with having lived, you know, for 10, 20, 30, 40, 50 years. And I agree with you that that wisdom is not everything, and that children and young people have certain advantages from having *not* lived as long as we have, and can offer us unique insights. But I wonder in your model, if there's any room for the wisdom of experience. And here I'm thinking of practices, traditions, customs, values—many of the things that we internalize as we age, and then see ourselves as passing on in one capacity or another, to the youth. And I'm wondering how that fits in, in this context of mutual engagement in expanding who were becoming.

Anna Stetsenko 31:14

Thank you. Thank you, Megan. Yes, definitely, most definitely. I do write about this in my works, about how the notion of teaching—more traditional notions of teaching and pedagogy—how they figure in this framework, if we approach teaching and learning as one process. By the way, I forgot to give you an example. I do need to give an example of water, actually. Water is composed of, of course we know, of oxygen and hydrogen. H₂O is the formula for water. But we know that neither hydrogen nor oxygen have much in common with water. Actually, they don't have anything in common with water. So when we think about two things coming together, such as teaching and learning, and forming something new, we might then also have something completely different than the two elements that went together to form this new process. So in the teaching and learning as one process, neither teaching nor learning are quite the same. So that's the point.

So is there a place for wisdom and tradition? Look, I think we can definitely talk about that. But since the invention of pedagogy, since it became... Of course, since *very* early times, since the beginnings of culture, there was pedagogy. And it was always based on the notion of tradition, and passing on knowledge, wisdom and tradition. I think now is the time to radically also doubt this. The notion of passing on wisdom. Because we had enough of that. It's not to throw it out completely and forever.

But I think now is the time to radically doubt the value of passing on tradition. We need to do this for a time being, for a while. To understand that perhaps the world is really in such a deep crisis—I believe it is—that there is not much we can be passing on to children in the way of perfect ways of being, living, knowing and doing. There needs to be something radically different, even in the way we are. In the way we relate to nature, and so on. So let's learn from children. Let's pause with a value of knowledge and tradition and wisdom for a while. We can bring it back later on. And of course, we all know that Freire, for example, speaks a lot about teacher as facilitator. And this set of issues is addressed in his critical pedagogy in wonderful ways about teaching while valuing tradition, and yet not resorting to just passing it on. But for now, the claim is radical. Let's try out radical things. Let's try out radical things, because we need them. Especially being in New York City, I feel very much that the schools are in need of changes. And I know it through those I work with. Wonderful students that happen to be at the Graduate Center in the urban education program.

Megan Lavery 34:20

So does that mean—because I often think of tradition being reconstructed by the next generation. But it sounds to me like you're actually—like, an implication of your position is that children and adults, and children and children, and adults and adults can be *all* learning together without anyone assuming the role of an authority or teacher or someone with either knowledge or the wisdom of experience. So that you'd be open in schools to having classrooms in which students were able to engage in, say, projects or discussions where there is no teacher as such.

Anna Stetsenko 35:13

Yes! Something along those lines. See, if we think and talk together, we can come up with interesting things. I think, of course, the notion of teacher needs to be reconsidered, yes. And if teachers come with an idea that they don't need to be just teachers, but to teachers and learners. And again, we need one word, I don't know, I'm calling on the audience here, and you, and others who are listening, perhaps *will* be listening to this, to come up with one word. So far, that learning is not a very perfect way to say it. But it has to be one word for teaching and learning. Yes, I think we need to be humble. At this point in time, I think the value of being humble for us as educators, or being in a position of rather *not* knowing the answers is more important than passing on the tradition. I do use the metaphor of standing on the shoulders of others. This is a very famous expression that we all stand on the shoulders of giants. Actually, Newton said this. And it's used in Google now. If you open Google page, that's what you see, I think. So, standing on the shoulders of others is a good metaphor. But I suggest—that's my suggestion—to think about how difficult it is actually to stand on anybody, someone else's shoulders. I always asked my students in classroom, “Have you tried this? Let's try! Stand on someone's shoulders! Is it easy?”. It takes a lot of work. You just cannot stand on anyone's shoulders, unless you do a lot of work—your own work—of learning how to stand on your own. And that's, by the way, one of the key notions for me: your own stance, your own ability to stand. That's extremely important for pedagogy and for our students who we should not think of in terms of only students but our teachers.

Let's begin by saying—let's enter the classroom and think to ourselves, “These are my teachers right there”, as Vivian Paley did, and Bettina Love, and Lisa Delpit, by saying listening to your students is the best way to teach, just being there as a student. And then of course, we will have two plus two is four. Yes, we might have that as well. Although I'd love to call Dostoevsky here, who said, “Look, two plus two is actually something that needs to be problematized”. He wrote—it's nice to quote sometimes. I don't do it very often, but why not quote Dostoevsky? He wrote, “Once you have mathematical certainty, there is nothing left to do, or to understand. Let's not teach two plus two is four as the only way. Let's teach and learn about what else could it be?” That's what Dostoevsky was saying in the 19th century. Why should we not try out something that would—well, dismantle is too much of a word for two plus two is four. Let's *interrogate*. What does it mean, “two plus two is four”? Is there more to that than just that? It's about being humble again, and about moving past the certainties, especially with mathematics, by the way. So it's from the Notes from Underground. Yes, by Dostoevsky.

Megan Laverty 38:56

Yeah, I love that. And I think of it as like destabilizing accepted truths, opening them up for what the youth can bring to our thinking about them. And I would agree with you, including two plus two equals four. But it seems to me if teachers *really* do that, if teachers go into the classroom, accepting that they don't know everything, being willing to learn from children, students, young adults. Then, if that *is* the act of teaching, like if teaching just *is* being willing to learn, then doesn't it follow from that, that we shouldn't try and theorize *learning*? Like, that as soon as we begin to theorize learning, as soon as we begin to theorize what's going on in the classroom, we open the window, or open the door to becoming complacent about what's happening *in* the classroom. Because we assume we know, based on theorizing. And so if teaching—I'm wondering if you think that if teaching really *is* kind of entering the classroom being willing to learn, then we, we're committed, or we're—an implication of that commitment is, we *refrain* from theorizing what's going on beyond the classroom. Which would be really disruptive to our thinking about education and educational research, because we think of educational research as informing educational practice, as making it better, as ensuring greater success. And it seems to me if we all become like—this isn't the right image—but, we almost become ethnographers, or anthropologists or, or participants in something that's happening in the here and now, that resists—hopefully, maybe—resists theorization. And I wondered if you think that—so it's not just a *pause*, it's actually, you know, kind of a turn in how we're thinking about education and educational research.

Anna Stetsenko 41:13

I think—and thank you for that, Megan. I think if we stop teaching and make this pause, and *really* work on becoming humble—and by the way, we need to tell this to ourselves in the first place. So when I'm here, telling, talking about this, as if I'm in a position to impose this on teachers or anything like that, no. In the first place, I am referencing myself. I'm referring to myself, and hopefully, to you, here. Well, because we are in similar positions and situations. But it's really about us, ourselves in the first place, becoming more humble, more open to learning, and more open to pausing in a radical and critical way. And to us stopping teaching. And it could come across as if I'm a little bit teaching,

because in a way, I am sharing my ideas and some suggestions, and so on. But yeah. That's always the challenge, to then also do a self-reflection, and critically, again, reverse the course of, "Oh, wait a minute, I did too much of that. I'm talking too much about what *I* think needs to be done." And of course, that's the difficulty of us being here together and not being able to learn more from each other. So that would need to be also reflected upon in a very critical vein at some point.

But just for the sake of doing the podcast, I'm just inviting all of us. And that's not just my voice, but the voice of—if you like—of many who work in situations where we see that teaching doesn't work. But this is the voice of saying, let's stop, let's stop doing what we're doing. Because we need—especially when we teach—well, again, when we teach and learn with our students who are future teachers. That's the schools of education throughout the country. There is a lot of space there to change our ways of coming to these classrooms, and telling our students what pedagogy is about and so on. I think a lot of things need to be from the ground up. And we'll find a way for passing on that two plus two is four. We'll find a way for that. There is not much danger there. And it's all about moving beyond what is. It's not just participation. Very quickly, I feel a little bit frustrated that I cannot address it in much detail. But it's not about participating in what is. It's about inventing what *could* be, because that what the students can do better than we can. Because *they* are on the ground, *they* are on the faultlines. I'm again speaking about students in New York City, for example. I assume the same in—of course, in Boston, but where we see communities who are struggling under horrible conditions. And they can come up with better ways of how the world needs to change than we can, I think. That's the humbleness? No, there is no such word. Let me rephrase it. Humility. Yes, sorry. Yeah, let's rephrase it. That's about being humble or humility, really. For us, as privileged, for us as those who know how things are. Tell it how it is. That's Martin Luther King, Jr. who wrote to psychologists. Tell it as it is.

Stanton Wortham 44:56

Great. So, this conversation between the two of you, Megan and Anna, has helped me see that you're recommending, not just that we engage in this process of being open to others, trying to expand together our understandings, positions, ways of engaging in the world. But you're also recommending that we take the same stance at the meta level as we think about teaching and learning. And we think about what we should be doing in our own interventions. That we too should be provisional, open, listening, trying to move forward together. It's helpful to see that. So I really appreciate your contributions. Thank you, Anna, for bringing this provocation to us about stopping teaching and taking a pause. And thank you, Megan, for your insightful questions. It's great to have you with us. Thanks to all of you in the audience for joining us for this episode of Pulled Up Short.