

How does it feel to be an alternative educator (in the mainstream)?

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This workshop looks at the pain and trials caused by desiring to be an alternative educator in a mainstream system working doggedly in a 'traditional' way. This way is of rules without consultations, curricula without choice and power dynamics that do not respect the voice of the child as equally powerful. Some teachers in mainstream schools suffer on account of not fitting in due to their alternative education beliefs. We consider together how that feels and why it feels this way. The discussion and debate in this workshop also looks, however, at what it means to be different like this and enjoy it. How can pedagogical and vocational 'teacherly difference' be a bonus to one's advantage? Can it be valuable to students that you share with them a democratic and 'exciting' freedoms-based attitude to teaching and learning? Can it help your career progression? The workshop considers these things through theories for alternative education practices to survive and thrive, from personal stories expressed in a welcoming atmosphere and with regard to the potential of such stories and theories to empower.

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