



Pop Ed for Activators

Popular Education is an inspiring collection of mindsets and tools that has been central to the design of Moving Mountains. It is through the practice of popular education that the confluence will become an active, peer-driven, community centered space for us to move the climate mountain.

Pop Ed (popular education) approaches learning and social change with the belief that meaningful knowledge and problem solving comes through participatory sharing of experience and understanding. Today's complex problems are in part the product of dated modes of teaching and their underlying power structures. Dispensing knowledge and skills from the front of the classroom fails to access the experience and situational understandings of 'students'. Pop ed doesn't separate teachers, students and knowledge. Students aren't empty cups to be filled up from the teacher's water fountain. Instead, pop ed facilitates learning through processes that center the experiences and personal connections of everyone in the room. This can develop problem solutions that are relevant and feasible because they come from the learner's own situation.

Pop ed is based on the idea that we all know a lot as a result of our life experience. It begins with what people already know and builds from there. Consider this simple situation: A person moves to a new city and decides to grow their own food. What would lead to the best success? Planting all the seeds that they brought with them from their last garden? Using the tools and plans that work for wheat farming? Meeting local gardeners and learning what succeeds for them? Planting a number of test plots, while working with others on established gardens to gain local experience?

Activation at Moving Mountains will operate in the space of discovery, peer collaboration, diversity and purposeful actions that create transformational changes. In our case, we intend to inspire, connect and expand the capacity of the confluence to tackle the mountain of climate change action however they are best positioned too. That means, developing problem solutions that are built from personal and community situations and capacities. We believe that engaged actions across the full spectrum of everyone are what is needed to turn the climate crisis into a generative future. Reliance on experts (such as those from science, economics, politics) hasn't reduced the harms of climate change. Experts aren't present in our communities or groups of practice to have the relevant experiences to create solutions that will succeed in ways that will fit the problems.

What will activation look like?

Your session should be structured for the learners all to contribute in active ways. Experiences are to be shared and accepted as valid. Leave is space for emergence, by keeping your learning goals fluid (ie, not an agenda or check list). View the session as the start of learning that will continue as everyone applies their experience of the session. It will overturn mental frames that accept 'this is how it is', and move from problem statements into generative solutions.

Facilitation tools and processes

Processes and tools to support learning might include: story telling, art making, theatre, land based learning, talking circles, living libraries, situation simulations, open space dialog, break out group discussions, participatory action research, walking tours, skills sharing, playing games, etc. If you are not sure how to structure your proposed session, drop us a line (moving-mountains@regenerationsociety.ca) we'd like to brainstorm with you! Basically, most types of learning can be supported by pop ed, the most critical step in doing this is your mindset.

Take a deeper dive

www.afsc.org/resource/popular-education

(a bit academic. Has a systems perspective on pop ed)

trapeze.clearerchannel.org/whatispop.php

(just the landing page works - it describes pop ed quite well)

For a deep dive look into [Paulo Freire](#), the originator of Popular Education.

[Emergent Strategy \(Adrienne Maree Brown\)](#) is a recent book that is deeply rooted in pop ed. It's an easy read, full of creative tools, inspiration and examples. We will have copies of this for sale at the confluence at a great discount.

Activator's instructions

[Webinar slide deck](#)

Checklist to help you Pop Ed-ify your session

- ✓ Who is talking (and for how long)?
- ✓ Will they learn a new thing?
- ✓ Is there a chance to try out the new knowledge? Hands on, test, model, brainstorm, story tell etc.
- ✓ Are the participants engaging with each other?
- ✓ Does the session allow for participants to share and apply their own experiences?
- ✓ Does the learning access a range of learning styles? Visual, written, auditory, physical, introspective (self reflection), verbal etc.

Checking in and checking out

Check ins and check outs are processes for groups to meet each other and share a bit about themselves so that the group can understand something about their fellow participants. It is also a way for the group to gauge their understanding of the session topic, and what the learning expectations might be.

Checkouts are similar, but reflective. The group can acknowledge their thoughts and feelings about the learning, share observations, reflections or what they will do next.

We are using a common process for check ins and checkouts. Each session has 15 minutes set aside at the start and end for checking in and checking out. The prompts for both are in the workbook and on posters in each session room. We will be using a reflect, pair and share process for checking in and out.

Check in

Answer these questions:

- ~ Who are you: Name? Where do you live? Who are your people?
- ~ What about this session topic gives you a sense of curiosity?

1 minute to jot the answers in your workbook.

2 minutes to share what you want of this with 1 person sitting near you.

5 minutes for the group to have a go round, with the neighbour introducing their person (briefly) the group.

Checkout

1 minute individual workbook journalling.

Prompts:

- ~ How did that feel for you?
- ~ Something new for you?
- ~ Something you are going to try out with this new knowledge?

3 minutes to pair and share with a neighbour

8 minutes for the group to debrief as a whole - to Activator. Host could take notes on whiteboard.