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**CORRUPTED
PRINCIPLES AND
THE CHALLENGES
OF CRITICALLY
REFLECTIVE
LEADERSHIP**

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Corrupted Principles and the Challenges of Critically Reflective Leadership

As Stephen Brookfield boldly declares in the title page quotation for this chapter, “we teach to change the world.” At least when I started in the profession that was the assumption that inspired me to first stand in front of a class of youth so as to try and find ways to infuse my love of learning to them. In the beginning I was filled with the certainty that only a young adult can feel; I believed teaching was a calling and that my career would help to transform the next generations into ‘better’ citizens of the world.

It took many more years to realise exactly how complex and political is teaching and how different are each school’s needs and dynamics. This became especially obvious as I chose teaching assignments in locations culturally alien to my own upbringing in a white, middle-class, Australian urban setting. As my experiences widened I began to question my naïve embrace of a change-making education philosophy. I wondered what impact I was actually having on my students because I was imparting a Western based knowledge agenda. Was this really changing students’ outlook in a, still undefined, ‘better’ way?

When I began teaching in Bolivia my concerns really came to the fore. Here I was in a Spanish, Quechua and Aymara speaking part of the world, in a country with a 500 year history of suppression of its ancient Indigenous cultures and in effect I had been contracted to continue that suppression through the teaching of Western History and Politics and English Literature and Language. The story underpinning this thesis begins at that point and in the following pages you will read of my journey into Bolivian culture and education and re-live my struggles to find a way to teach and lead with the goal of creating “better” world citizens in a manner that I could live with.