
Banking Pedagogy Versus Transformative Pedagogy: Application of Paulo Freire's Transformative Learning Theory in Higher Education.

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ABSTRACT

This paper highlights viewpoints of Paulo Freire about education system. He has used the term “banking pedagogy” for traditional system of education and has criticized it for many reasons. He has suggested a new system that is transformative and emancipatory. He has called it transformative pedagogy. His book “Pedagogy of Oppressed” is widely studied and cited in the literature related to empowerment of oppressed classes. The paper is based on reviewed literature available in the form of books and research articles. It compares traditional education system with transformative system of education. It also discusses that how dialogue can lead towards transformation and change. The paper also suggests application of Transformative pedagogy in higher education.

Key words: *Banking pedagogy, transformative pedagogy, praxis, dialogue, critical consciousness*

INTRODUCTION

Transformative learning has emerged as a powerful tool for understanding adult learning. Paulo Freire articulated a theory of transformative learning that he referred to as consciousness-raising. This theory is widely utilized in literacy education, adult education, emancipation and freedom from oppression in Latin America, Africa and North America. Transformative learning develops autonomous thinking. It is used both as a vision and as a conceptual framework for praxis throughout the world. Praxis is always framed as a social process in the context of dialogue. This theory has influenced the development of critical perspectives in adult education. It focuses on fostering critical consciousness among individuals and groups. Critical consciousness refers to a process in which learners develop the ability to analyze, pose questions and take action on the social, political, cultural and economic contexts that influence and shape their lives. Transformative learning focuses on action and reflection. Education advocated by transformative learning focuses on freedom of learners by reflecting on the world and to change it. In simple words it focuses on praxis. Transformative learning leads towards emancipation.

Research questions

The research was conducted to answer following questions.

1. What is meant by banking pedagogy?
2. What is Paulo Freire's transformative learning theory?
3. How transformative pedagogy is different from transformative pedagogy?
4. How can transformative pedagogy be applied in higher education?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Qualitative approach was employed for this research. Data was collected through extensive review of related literature available in the form of books, articles, and text material on websites.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Transformative learning

Transformative learning is defined as the process of inducing far-reaching change in the learner in a frame of reference. Transformative learning helps in developing autonomous thinking. It focuses on experiences of the learner that not only shape the learner but also produce an effective change. It influences learner's subsequent experiences. Experience, critical reflection and rational discourse are three main steps of transformative learning. To be a human is to understand the meaning of our experience. This means that we have to learn to make our own interpretations of the events, situations feeling and judgments rather than sufficing on authority figures.

It involves a paradigm shift from basic premise of thought, feeling and actions towards consciousness. It is a process of understanding not only our own selves but the other selves also. It is our understanding of our relationships, relationship with the natural world and interlocking structure of classes, race and gender. It is to examine the world, analyzing it and thinking the ways that can be changed.

Paulo Freire's transformative learning

For Paulo Freire transformation is consciousness- raising. He believes that transformative learning is emancipatory and liberating. As he believes that education is the process of fostering critical consciousness among individuals.

Paulo Freire believes that there are two views on kinds of humans. One view is that humans are object which are adaptable. Such type of people simply acts upon what is said to them. They do not reflect at all. Freire compares such people with animals. They do not see themselves as "I" against a "Not I". They are those people who are not given the chance to have self-reflection. They do not see themselves separate from this world and are submerged in the world.

The other kinds of humans are those which are considered as subjects who are independent beings. They are able to transcend and modify their world. Such people think and reflect for themselves. Subjects can disassociate from the world. Paulo Freire asserts that action and reflection are two distinguish characteristics which make a man different from the animals. He characterizes only those people at the level of humans which act and reflect. They are considered as subject. Paulo Freire believes that man should be brought at the level of man by making them to act and reflect. They should look at their own problems and should try to find out reasons behind them and then through reflection they should find out the answer to these problems and should go for action that can give a way to get rid of problem.

Levels of consciousness

According to Paulo Freire, consciousness has three levels, which are magical consciousness, naïve consciousness, and critical consciousness. Magical consciousness is the lowest level of consciousness. People with magical consciousness do not question about injustices which are there in lives and adapt themselves passively and defenselessly to the expectations of oppressor within society. Such people are docile and silent. Naïve consciousness is second level of consciousness. People with naïve consciousness have realization that they have some problem but do not make connections with the world outside. Such people perceive their problems as accidents or coincidence. The highest level of consciousness according to Paulo Freire is critical consciousness. People with critical consciousness see their problems as structural problems and not the coincident. It is to look at problems more in relation to socio-economic contradictions that are found in society. Critical consciousness is the process of developing the ability of analyzing, posing questions and taking action on the social, political, cultural and economic contexts. These directly or indirectly influence lives of individuals. For Paulo Freire education is the process of change that is based upon reflection on the world. For him consciousness-raising is to have deeper understanding of the ways the social structures shape our thinking and about the world and ourselves. This is the process which gives a voice to people, an ability to define the world and construct a personal meaning about the world. So transformative learning is a process of consciousness-raising among the individuals to examine the contexts which frame our lives, analyzing those contexts and take actions to change their lives.

Empowerment and conscientização

The concept of empowerment is used by many authors but no one has yet given a universal definition of empowerment and most of the time it is used in broad terms having multi-facets. Some of the authors relate it with NGO's objective of distributing or delegating the power to local level so that the poor can get benefit (Hulme and Turner, 1997). It is a not a process that can be done for people but it is something that has to be experienced by people themselves (Afshar, 1998). In other words empowerment is not something that can be granted to people but it is something people have to strive for it. It is something that needs conscious efforts by the people to understand their oppression and seek solution to get rid of their oppression. Schuler cited in Kalpana kumari (2014) defines empowerment as the capacity to mobilize resources to produce social change. Individual consciousness raising, collective

consciousness development and mobilization are considered as three critical dimensions of empowerment.

A framework is suggested by Friedmann for defining empowerment. It is threefold framework that relates it with accessibility to social power which is considered as a social wealth, political power that is access to decision-making processes and the third aspect of empowerment is access to psychological power that is self- confidence. Empowerment demands praxis. It is a collective identity that leads towards decision making. Praxis is combination of action and reflection and these two activities cannot be separated. Every conscious human activity is theory and reflection.

Paulo Freire has stressed on empowerment of oppressed classes. Rowland (1997) believes that it is rudimentary to first understand that what is meant by empowerment according to Paulo Freire and then become able to find a relationship or linkage between conscientização and empowerment.

A very interesting point in Paulo Freire's philosophy is that improvement can only become when the oppressed himself study himself and not by studying the oppressive reality by other people. The object that is oppressed must study himself and his problem and then take action. In this way he/she can become a subject. People or scientists who do conduct researches on oppressed must give their tools to oppressed so that they can conduct research on their own problem. When the research or reflection is done by other people instead of oppressed no improvement come. Improvement can only come when oppressed reflect on their own problems. It leads them to action for the solution of problem. When this process of conscientization is applied to students, it relates that students should understand their own situations as students.

Freire's concept of consciousness-raising is linked up with creative thinking and it is not only to adapt to reality but it is to transform one self. Paulo Freire states that oppressed internalize oppressor's values and find them unable to think critically about their situation and thus do not want to change their situation through meaningful action or praxis. For him consciousness-raising is an ongoing process that demand reflection on their own experiences and thinking for creative solutions and striving for implementation of solutions for transforming lives.

According to these descriptions of oppressed any person who is not able to think critically about his/her situation, and transform his situation is at the level of object. Anyone who is internalizing the values of powerful in the structure by blindly following his directives and not questioning on any inhumane behavior is at the level of oppressed. Poor, women or students if they cannot think critically, cannot make decisions for themselves, and cannot improve their conditions through action can be regarded as oppressed. This is the reality that oppresses are part of our society. They are not outside the society rather they are found within the structures that have put them to the level of object or "beings for other people".

As Paulo Freire proclaims that no one can bring them out of this oppression, they will remain "beings for others", they will keep on suffering from inequalities and injustice. The only solution is the transformation of those structures that have put them to level of oppressed. This transformation cannot be brought by others but by the oppressed. They have to realize that they are being oppressed; they have to critically analyze the situations and problems, and come to a point of action in the way of becoming "beings for

themselves”. This transformation would surely undermine the purposes of oppressors and increase conscientizacão.

Participatory action research, a participative pedagogy that is an inspiration from Paulo Freire’s theory (Cornwell, 2000). It also calls for an increased emphasis on living and working with people in order to encourage them to define their identities, streamline their priorities and concerns through participatory methods. It focuses primarily on problem-posing methods which give an opportunity to marginalized and oppressed people to speak for their rights and challenge the authorities where normally solutions are sought through conventional methods.

Conscientization, praxis and emancipation of students

This conscientization can be successfully applied for the emancipation of students, by making them active citizens and helping them to challenge injustice not only within and among themselves but in social world around them. Emancipation of students demands reflection and dialogue not only at personal level but at social level. There is the great need that students reflect on their experiences, share them with others, and see their experiences in social, historical, cultural and social contexts and recognize the possibilities for change. In other words critical consciousness demands both the cognitive effort and the praxis. Paulo Freire’s praxis is both interpretation and change. Praxis is an authentic union of action and reflection. Dialogical process is a key to praxis.

Freire claims that dialogue implies use of a language similar to the one the individual is familiar with. Dialogic pedagogy can be used to make students reflective thinkers who take actions against disparities found around them. They are supposed to explore that how their experiences and others’ experiences are common and how they are different, thinking on that and developing theory and then devising the way to solve that problem. This process will bring them closer to each other and as they will be engaged in dialogue. Dialogical relation guarantees equal opportunity for all members to speak, every one respects another person’s right to speak. No one’s idea is rejected rather it is tolerated and considered as important. This is a way of giving voice to students and giving an end to oppressions, enabling them to understand the hidden meanings and power structures in particular context and re-frame the reality. It is a means of creating a mutual acceptance and trust between them.

Banking pedagogy versus transformative pedagogy

The term “pedagogy” has Greek roots which means “to lead a child” (Hudalla, 2005). This term illustrates that, education is inherently directive and must always be transformative” (Freire, 1970, p. 25). Nayestani (2009) highlights Freire’s view point that the trap of ignorance can only be removed through education and awareness. He believes that basic purpose of education is to achieve critical awareness and make people able to pave ground for their own progress (Mahmoudi, 2014). Paulo Freire has observed very critically the traditional system of education and has used the “banking” metaphor for traditional system of educating. Freire explains the framework for “Banking education curriculum delivery” which exists in most of the educational institutions. “Banking pedagogy” is a system of education in which education becomes “an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor” (Freire, 1970). Freire believes that students are treated as patient, listening objects in this system. They are not encouraged to think critically about the world in

which they live. The teachers do not communicate but issue communiqués and make deposits which students patiently receive, memorize and repeat. The teachers are subject which merely ask students to bring up information to them which may have little contribution to their lives (Freire, 1970). They act as a sole distributor or an expert knowledge source, and students are considered as empty receptacle of knowledge. Here the teacher is oppressor as he does not encourage students to think critically. He deposits the knowledge into the student. He proclaims that in such type of education the students are only allowed an extent of action that is receiving, memorizing, and storing the deposits. Freire criticizes the traditional system of education and points to the fact that in this system knowledge is considered as a gift given by those who believe that they are knowledgeable to those whom they believe that they know nothing. Paulo Freire proclaims that this pedagogy does not evoke any critical analyses but stimulates oppressive attitudes and practices in society. Freire asserts that this is not an accident rather it is a deliberate effort on the part of the oppressors to maintain the system of oppression. He says that banking education has the capability to serve the interests of the oppressors of minimizing or eliminating the students' creative power and enhancing their gullibility. Students under this system neither have the opportunity to question nor critically evaluate the world in which they live and therefore have no opportunity to change their lives for the better.

According to Paulo Freire this type of education creates dehumanization in both teacher and learner. He believes that "banking pedagogy" has to be replaced with dialogic pedagogy where knowledge, perspectives and experiences are centered for education process. Freire proposes "liberating education" or "questioning education as an alternative to banking education. He explains that "Liberating education is a process of "humanizing" people who have been oppressed.

Paulo Freire's transformative pedagogy rests on dialogic education that is different from dominating educational practices where teacher is just filling the minds of the learner with the knowledge. Dialogic pedagogy is emancipatory. Dialogue is a process of naming problems and proposing solutions. It is useful as it allows individuals the opportunity of sharing experiences in a conducive and constructive environment. In this situation, students specifically highlight what is oppressive and what one steps one may take to end that oppression. Freire enlists the traits of "profound love for the world and for people," humility, hope, and mutual trust as prerequisite for dialogue (Freire, 1970, p.89-91). Freire asserts that it is essential to couple critical thinking with dialogue in order to help students to become "more fully human,". And thus critical thinking will advance transformation.

Freirean critical enquiry do not suppresses the silenced and subjugated voices but examines those voices and find out the reason of keeping these voices suppressed. Multiple voices and perspectives are entertained in the dialogic education process. These multiple voices and perspectives serve as an input for social interrogation. The analysis of multiple perspectives help to understand them in different contexts and developing theories for solution of many social problems firstly at the individual level, then at group, institution and finally at societal level. Paulo Freire prompts them for active participation. Where they can think for their own problem, critically analyze to problem and then decide by themselves that what is best for them.

Mahmoudi (2014) states that critical pedagogy enriches students' overall life. Here students can challenge others' accepted hypotheses. They can investigate relationship between their

society and content of their educational environment. Such type of opportunities provide a chance to understand their position in the society and initiate constructive steps to improve their society and ultimately get rid of their problems, discriminations and subjugations in their future life. Critical pedagogy helps students to be empowered, and adept of achieving self-awareness and self-actualization to transform their incongruous conditions into a better one.

A very optimistic point in Freire's philosophy is that he believes that state of oppression is not something that cannot be changed, or it is a sort of fixed or permanent reality. It is not such reality where there is no escape from it. There is always a possibility to change their conditions. Freire asserts that a relationship based on dialogue among individuals can enrich a critical and active environment. In this way education becomes a process of stimulating a progressive. (Fredrick et al., 2009). Such type of education system poses a mutual responsibility to teachers and students to do their best to improve and change the situation that is inequitable and unfair (Freire, 1984). Freire considers that Cultural Revolution is only possible when dialogue is encouraged in educational institutions. If students are engaged in dialogue, and reflect upon their problems, this leads them towards praxis, and that praxis leads to cultural revolution. The oppressors' dominations can only be eliminated through gradual revolution, and that is only possible through transformative education system. Freire asserts that first organization that must undergo such transformations is the educational system. Critical dialogue is a way forward for transformation of society (Freire, 1979). The classroom must be a place where students are encouraged to think critically not only about the subject under discussion but about those ideas as well that prevail in society (McLaren et al., 2004).

Poztez (1993) says that praxis is the end point of Freire's viewpoint. Progress and development can be seen through consciousness. This type of progress is the sign of critical education plan where those learners who start with mere submission but reach to critical consciousness.

Application of Paulo Freire's transformative learning in higher education

Paulo Freire's transformative pedagogy can successfully be applied in higher education. There should be student-oriented or people oriented process in institutions. The students' experiences should be prioritized. The interest, desires and wants of students should be considered as a starting point in teaching-learning process. The curriculum should not be planned through top-down approach but it should be planned mutually by students and teachers. There should be no dominance of teacher in knowledge dissemination. Rather she should be act as an instrument for increasing students' consciousness. The education system should address local realities, and interest of common people rather than of elites. The purpose of education should be to develop political consciousness in learners as education is a political activity (Danilova et al., 2004: 39). Cultural segments must be included in teaching-learning process. There should be a direct relationship between curriculum planning and economic production. The higher education should not be separate from factory, chap and workshop.

CONCLUSION

In short, it can be said that banking pedagogy is monologue-based education. It separates teachers and students. It does not provide any opportunities for meaningful dialogue. Students do not have sufficient opportunities to question from teachers. Students are just recipient of knowledge. Teachers consider themselves as sole distributors of knowledge. Whatever teachers deliver, students memorize it sacredly and without questioning. Teachers speak and students passively listen. Teachers make rules and students obey them. Teachers select content and students accept it. Teachers act and students imitate his actions. Such type of education system does not at all develop critical consciousness and just maintain the interest of oppressor or powerful. Instead of that there should be transformative education that is based on interest and needs of students that encourage learners to have dialogue not only with each other but with teachers as well. Teachers should pave path for learners where they can think critically, and take action to solve their problems and move towards transformation.

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