

Pedagogy of the Oppressed: Fifty Years Later. Implications for Policy and Reforms

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Abstract : The Pedagogy of the Oppressed by Paulo Freire was first published in 1970. Since its publication it has become one of most cited book in the social sciences. Over a million copies have been sold worldwide. The Pedagogy of the Oppressed by Paulo Freire was published in 1970 (New York: Herder and Herder), The book has caused a “revolution” in the education world and his theory has been examined and analysed. It has influenced educational policy, curriculum development and teacher education. The revolution started half a century ago. “Paolo Freire’s Pedagogy of the Oppressed develops a theory of education fitted to the needs of the disenfranchised and marginalized members of capitalist societies. Combining educational and political philosophy, the book offers an analysis of oppression and a theory of liberation. Freire believes that traditional education serves to support the dominance of the powerful within society and thereby maintain the powerful’s social, political, and economic status quo. To overcome the oppression endemic to an exploitative society, education must be remade to inspire and enable the oppressed in their struggle for liberation. This new approach to education focuses on consciousness-raising, dialogue, and collaboration between teacher and student in the effort to achieve greater humanization for all. For Freire, education is political and functions either to preserve the current social order or to transform it. The theories of education and revolutionary action he offers in Pedagogy of the Oppressed are addressed educators committed to the struggle for liberation from oppression. Freire’s own commitment to this struggle developed through years of teaching literacy to Brazilian and Chilean peasants and laborers. His efforts at educational and political reform resulted in a brief period of imprisonment followed exile from his native Brazil for fifteen years. In Pedagogy of the Oppressed begins Freire asserts the importance of consciousness-raising, or conscientização, as the means enabling the oppressed to recognize their oppression and commit to the effort to overcome it, taking full responsibility for themselves in the struggle for liberation. He addresses the “fear of freedom,” which inhibits the oppressed from assuming this responsibility. He also cautions against the dangers of sectarianism, which can undermine the revolutionary purpose as well as serve as a refuge for the committed conservative. Freire provides an alternative view of education by attacking tradition education and knowledge. He is highly critical of how is imparted and how knowledge is structured that limits the learner’s thinking. Hence, education becomes oppressive and school functions as an institution of social control. Since its publication, education has gone through a series of reforms and in some areas total transformation. This paper addresses the following: The role of education in social transformation The teacher/learner relationship :Critical thinking The paper essentially examines what happened in the last fifty years since Freire’s book. It seeks to explain what happened to Freire’s education revolution, and what is the status of the movement that started almost fifty years ago.

Keywords : pedagogy, reform, curriculum, teacher education

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