

Critical Pedagogy: Future and Hope

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Abstract

Critical pedagogy is a pedagogical philosophy and social movement founded on the notion of critical social theories and paradigms. Critical pedagogy encompasses a wide range of topics, including future and hope. Whilst developing educational programs, implementing pedagogies, and responding to humanitarian crises, critical pedagogy becomes a basis for examining deep-seated values, beliefs and assumptions that might otherwise challenge empowering, equitable and socially just educational and social systems (Luitel & Dahal, 2020). Such a process is, without doubt, an important component of renewing education and culture. Politics is at the heart of critical pedagogy (McLaren & Leonard, 1993). Hence, in this editorial, we attempt to highlight critical pedagogy: future and hope of the Freirean concepts of critical pedagogy (1921-1997). Education as “banking”, liberatory pedagogy, education is political, critical pedagogy is not Eidos, pedagogy of hope, critical reflection as/for conscientization, critical pedagogy in the classroom and research with people instead of research on people are some of the key ideas that are discussed in this editorial. Our editorial concludes with a brief summary of the original articles that are covered in this issue.

Keywords: *Critical. Pedagogy. Political. Equity. Justice. Future.*

Introduction

Critical pedagogy is an educational philosophy and social movement based on critical social theories and paradigms. It is an integral aspect of education and culture. These perspectives on education are considered as a political act (McLaren & Leonard, 1993). Engaging with critical pedagogical perspectives provide enough possibilities for learners to become active and critical human citizens, with the ethos of re-examining and reconstructing existing curricula and pedagogy. Among numerous theoretical ideologies and perspectives in critical pedagogy,

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this editorial highlights some strategies for developing learners' and teachers' fundamental thinking capacities and eliciting behavioural changes in their ways of doing, being, and becoming that enable educators to view and examine teaching, learning, and researching by questioning monolingualism, caste and ethnicity, and gender discrimination among others.

We aim to communicate the debate and commentary about critical pedagogy's hopeful future to readers, practitioners, and scholars. In response to the question, what is the future of critical pedagogy? In a word, critical pedagogy's hope is an essential force in creating and altering the future. Critical hope represents the capacity to evaluate current behaviours through the lens of equality and justice while also imagining future possibilities.

Education as “Banking”

Freire (1921–1997) coined the term "banking concept" in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, which is one of the most widely read books on education. He has attempted to describe and critique the educational system. The problem-posing method of instruction is a liberation-oriented approach to education that places importance on critical thinking. While describing and criticizing the "banking concept", Freire (1970) refers to the tradition that promotes students as containers of knowledge, and educators' role is to fill those containers. In general, such an approach impairs students' thinking abilities, knowledge, and competencies, reinforcing oppression. The concept is diametrically opposed to ways of excelling at knowledge as a creative process. Similarly, the banking view of education is likely to promote the teacher as the primary source of knowledge as an active resource (i.e., subject) and students as passive receptors (i.e., objects). The practice of accumulating facts and information has devolved into knowledge. Following that, a central tenet of the concept is that it treats students as "comatose" "receptors" and "collectors" of information that has no influence on their lives. Freire (1970) stated that “implicit in the banking concept is the assumption of a dichotomy between human beings and the world: a person exists in the world, not with it or with others; the individual is a spectator, not a creator” (p. 247). According to this view, the individual is not a conscious being; rather he or she is the possessor of a consciousness: an empty "mind" that is passively open to the reception of reality deposits from the external world. Thus, education is viewed as a means of instructing passive students. Teachers serve as epistemic authorities in this system, and students' prior knowledge is ignored except for what has been 'deposited' into them. The more comprehensively they accept their passive position, the more they adapt to the world as it is, and the fragmented image of reality deposited in them. However, in the modern era, the development of Freire's (1970) ideology on critiquing the contemporary pedagogical practice as "banking" and offering critical pedagogy is viewed as a radical idea. In contrast to the banking concept of education, the transformatory approach to education as advocated by Freire (1986) remains oriented around problem-solving and liberating educational practices and/or approaches to teaching, learning, assessment, and research. Autonomous practices do not confine students to being passive listeners but encourage them to be active knowledge creators, assuming that teachers and students engage in critical dialogue in the pursuit of knowledge and learn from one another.

Liberatory Pedagogy

Pedagogy of the Oppressed also seeks to assist students in questioning and challenging domination and dominant beliefs and practices. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire develops an educational theory for disenfranchised and marginalized groups (Gomes, 2022). The book offers an analysis of oppression and a theory of liberation. Education must change to

focus on raising awareness and collaboration between teachers and students in order to achieve greater humanization for all. It proposes a new way of teaching that has a different relationship between the teacher, the student, and society. As someone who has been oppressed himself or herself, Freire writes about the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized in a way that is based on a Marxist approach to class analysis. In the United States and Western Europe, where cities and urban centers are becoming more and more racially and economically segregated, his work has become even more important. Thus, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* is aimed at a radical audience committed to liberation from oppression. In the preface to *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire (1970) emphasizes the importance of raising consciousness, or “conscientização”, in order for oppressed learners and/or people to recognize their oppression and commit to questioning it. Finally, Freire proposes a revolutionary action theory that counters the oppressor's cultural tactics. To dominate the oppressed, oppressors use constant conquest, division, manipulation, and cultural invasion.

Education is Political

Critical pedagogy is the idea that teaching should make students think about how power and inequality work in the world around them (Valls-Carol et al., 2022). Likewise, critical pedagogy is a teaching philosophy that invites teachers to help students think about how power and oppression work in society. In critical theory, people must be aware of and question the way things are in their community. Hence, critical pedagogy views teaching as an inherently political act, rejects neutrality of knowledge, and insists that issues of social justice and democracy itself are not separate from acts of teaching and learning (Giroux, 2019). More so, a critical pedagogy goal is to change the way education and society work, with a focus on liberating the oppressed (Freire, 2018). In addition to changing the way people learn and live, critical pedagogy has made a big difference in how science and citizens work together and how they work together in the future. The idea of social impact is becoming more and more popular with people, especially those who have been oppressed. When oppressed people live in poverty and unemployment or work very hard for many hours a day, scientists and intellectuals are living off of what they have made. Citizens are increasingly demanding proof of the social impact of those scientists and intellectuals. They want to see how their publications have changed the world (Valls-Carol et al., 2022). Next, critical pedagogy has been very successful and has a lot of popularity in the community, which has led to other goals being met that are very different and even against the goal of critical pedagogy.

Critical Pedagogy is not Eidos

Whereas eidos refers to universalized ideas independent of place, people and time, critical pedagogy is aligned with the issues of social justice and democracy that are not separate from teaching and learning, and they are not separate from each other (Giroux, 2019). Critical pedagogy aims to make people aware of oppression by waking them up to their critical minds (i.e., something can be seen or intuited). When critical consciousness is reached, it encourages students, teachers, researchers, and people to make changes in their context through social critique and political action in order to become who they want to be. Hence, critical pedagogy does not prescribe a static model, rather it encompasses practitioner for multimodality as per their contexts.

Next, teaching students to question and analyze the structures of power and oppression is at the heart of critical pedagogy. It has its roots in critical theory, which entails questioning society's current state of affairs. Using critical pedagogy, a teacher encourages students to question and challenge the inequalities that exist in their families, schools, and communities.

This educational philosophy is viewed as progressive or even radical in some circles because of its critique of established structures. We offer these opportunities, so keep reading if this method appeals to you and your students! Freire wants all teachers to set up circles of dialogue, or reflective spaces, where students can have a passionate and critical reflection that is coherent and humane and helps oppressed people in context.

Also, Freire's deep concern is with neoliberal policies' assault on the dispossessed's basic democratic rights, as he argues for people's right and capacity to take power democratically. Freire's critical reflections foreshadowed the revolts and denunciations of autocratic and anti-democratic policies and other courageous demonstrations for social justice around the world in the twenty-first century. Freire's writings, which call for rehumanizing popular education through the use of critical reflection steeped in history and a more critical understanding of how society works and functions are inaccessible, profound, and thought-provoking (Freire, 2015).

Pedagogy of hope

In Paulo Freire's seminal work of critical pedagogy, *Pedagogy of Hope*, hope is a central concept; it serves as a foundation for refusing to accept current realities and pursuing alternative visions of life and society, specifically utopian visions (Ichikawa, 2022). An utopian pedagogy is a hope-driven method of political engagement that is rooted in everyday life, but animated by a utopian desire for something more and something better (Webb, 2013). Critical pedagogy is a teaching philosophy that encourages educators to encourage students to critique power structures and oppression. Fundamental to critical theory is the idea of questioning what is currently accepted in a given society. In critical theory, people have to be aware of and question the way things are in your community. In this way, critical pedagogy is recast as an onto-epistemological praxis in which critical consciousness is thought of as a process of becoming that is made possible by having a relationship with one's land, which includes both humans and non-humans.

Now, it is important for teachers to educate with the goal of improving the learner's knowledge and understanding in mind because education is a long-term project that aims to make things better (Halpin, 2003; Bourn, 2021). Within the literature on hope, ranges of viewpoints on the emphasis on psychological versus educational themes. Another viewpoint is that a transformative approach to learning can be achieved by combining hope with passion and enthusiasm. One way to address what might be considered utopian future visions is to combine hope and transformational learning. In the same way, hope cannot exist without imagination and civic engagement. It is critical in all forms of education to have a clear vision of the possibilities for the future. It emphasizes the contextual nature of learning and the fact that different contexts give rise to various questions, problems, and possibilities in an educated hope (Giroux, 2002). In the context of agency and motivation, hope can be defined as a combination of what we would like to see happen, how we plan to get there, and the need to motivate ourselves. Hope necessitates a thorough understanding of how to deal with difficult situations and emotional responses and the promotion of constructive ways forward. This entails putting forward desirable scenarios. When it comes to helping to operationalize what hope means in a pedagogical sense, Freire is the most appropriate person to consult (Bourn, 2021).

Critical Reflection as/for Conscientization

Critical reflection is the process of identifying, challenging, and evaluating our deeply held assumptions – about our knowledge, our perceptions of events and issues, our beliefs, feelings,

and behaviors (Luitel & Dahal, 2020). A critical reflective process involves challenging social, political, cultural, or professional norms (Brookfield, 1995). The process of critical reflection helps us set goals, use past experiences to inform future actions, and consider the implications of our thinking in real-life. So, a key component of emotional intelligence, self-awareness, is increased through reflective practice. Reflective practice fosters creative thinking and active participation in the workplace (Pant, 2017). The process of critical reflection helps us make changes and improvements to our knowledge and practice as well as our actions, interactions, and learning environment. It is an important part of meaningful learning and improving our skills. Critical reflection makes us better teachers, teacher educators, researchers and helps learners learn more.

Next, in any professional role, critical reflection is an essential element. In order to improve your practice, you must first gain a better understanding of yourself. Then you must engage in continuous learning. Consciousness-building (also known as conscientization) is a central concept in Freire's approach, which refers to the processes by which individuals and communities come to have a critical understanding of their social reality through reflection and action. This entails identifying and addressing the underlying causes of oppression as they are manifested in the present moment.

Critical Pedagogy in the Classroom

Critical pedagogy is a way of teaching that encourages teachers to get students to think critically about structures of power and oppression (Freire, 1970; Hlungwani, 2022). The roots of it can be found in critical theory. In critical pedagogy, a teacher uses his or her own knowledge to get students to look at and question inequality in their families, schools, and communities (Monchinski, 2008). Some people think this educational philosophy is progressive or even radical because it challenges structures that are already in place. We think that the five steps below will help you bring critical pedagogy into your classroom.

Confront Yourself

How can you expect your students to be able to think critically and question social structures if you can't do it yourself? Learn more by reading things that make you question the popular social story. For example, if you teach history, spend a lot of time with scholars who point out the flaws or complicated structures that helped many well-known historical figures succeed. Read about why their "successes" weren't so great when viewed from a different lens. Critical theory is all about turning the social structures and stories that we have been taught to believe into their heads.

Alter the Dynamic in the Classroom

One of the most common power dynamics in a student's life is the relationship between the teacher and the student, which is one of the most common power dynamics in critical pedagogy (Dahal et al., 2019). That needs to be challenged! One practical way to accomplish this is to rearrange the furniture in your classroom. Make students sit in semicircles or circles instead of rows facing you, rather than in a straight line facing the front of the room. This makes it possible to have more meaningful conversations in the classroom. When leading discussions, you might want to consider sitting rather than standing. This position aligns you with the students and helps to balance the power dynamic between the two groups. Transitioning from a lecture-based class in which an all-knowing teacher freely imparts knowledge to humble students to a

discussion-based class in which students are encouraged to think critically and come to their own conclusions in general is a good idea.

Present a Variety of Perspectives

In the first step, you, as a teacher, had to come into contact with views that were at odds with the dominant one. Explain to your students these new perspectives in addition to the old ones. Have them discuss both and encourage them to draw their own conclusions about what they've learned from each. Encourage students who present ideas to dig deeper into it. Asking students "why do you believe that?" or "why is that a good point" will encourage them to question their own beliefs, break free from damaging social narratives, and think independently.

Make a new Determination

In the same way that power structures have historically constrained individuals, traditional assessment structures can do the same. If you don't need them, don't bother! Rather than focusing on finding the right answer, focus on developing students' critical thinking abilities. Make sure students aren't just doing what they need to in order to get a certain grade. By emphasizing the ideas presented rather than the presentation style, you can get students to talk and write more.

Encourage Developing a Sense of Social Responsibility

Critical pedagogy has a cyclical nature. It's a win-win situation for everyone involved: You educate yourself and your students, and they educate their families and communities. There are many ways you can do this, such as letting your students know about local events and organizations fighting oppression. You can encourage students to form groups that advocate for the underrepresented. When teaching students about power and oppression, you can even encourage them to talk about it with their families and friends (Joseph Jeyaraj & Gandolfi, 2022).

As a result, critical pedagogy is a method that can be applied to a wide range of subjects, and what works in one classroom may not work in another. A history teacher, for example, might raise concerns about a traditionally progressive event, while a literature teacher might raise concerns about a common cultural stereotype found in a book. A science teacher, for example, might ask students to consider how scientific progress affects underrepresented groups. The critical approach is not limited to one area of education or culture, so finding associations between different topics is often necessary.

Research with People

The critical theory's guiding tenets are the principle that people should always be seen as means in themselves and never as merely means to an end (Given, 2008). The concept of critical theory is altered by the discourse of research with people and research on people. In general, research with people focuses on research participants as "subjects". In particular, research on people is aligned with the research participants as "objects". In contrast to an objective view based on facts rather than personal interpretation, a subjective point of view emphasizes the importance of the individual's own interpretation of the subject matter. So, critical research is a type of social research that deals with the questioning of knowledge and/or research process. Participatory action research (PAR) can be taken as an example of *research with people* where

participants act as researchers for identifying the needs, planning for interventions, and examining the changes.

Volume 3 Issue 1 Covers

This issue of the Journal includes four original articles aligned with the critical pedagogy of future and hope. Among the original articles:

Wagle exhibits philosophical inquiry on the prospects of a participatory worldview in education and research. Wagle begins inquiry process, reflecting upon his own personal/professional shift from rational (analytical) academician to the transformative educational practitioner. Reflecting upon personal/professional journey, the author makes minute observation at the genealogical progression of participatory thought and practices from philosophy to wisdom traditions to recent developments in quantum science.

Shrestha explores his engagement in transformative research practice to critically investigate the learning practices that he followed in his non/academic journey from childhood education to MPhil research period. He reflected that the learning practices can be inevitable approaches to transformative learning but might not have been given a space in the educational context of Nepal. Keeping this in consideration, as a transformative teacher-researcher he attempts to re-conceptualize learning practices in Nepal by breaking the beliefs taken for granted that learning takes place only within the classroom which is guided by teachers' pedagogical practices.

Pokharel explores the meaningfulness of going beyond textbooks in the English classroom. She aims to explore the limitations of a textbook and the relevance of going beyond textbooks along with learners' achievements, which covers the wide range of the academic pursuit through meaningful action of going beyond textbooks. She gives the scenario of how she identified the problem, developed the action plan and implemented those plans in the English class.

Likewise, Manandhar explores that his journey from brick worker to STEAM educator is characterized by resistance, advocacy, and envisioning. While exploring, his exploration was surrounded by pains, sufferings, hurdles, and economic adversities. Further, he portrays his journey of resisting disempowering educational practices, advocating progressive and empowering practices, and envisioning a transformative educational perspective via autoethnography as a methodology and transformative learning theory as a theoretical referent.

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