Paulo Freire
1921-1997

By Amy Carey
Paulo Freire

Born in Recife, Brazil, 1921.

As a child he experienced first hand the impact that poverty and hunger have on learning. He understood what he later named the “culture of silence.”
Culture of Silence

The poor and dispossessed are not equipped to respond to the world’s realities in a critical fashion.
Culture of Silence

The education system perpetuates their condition as victims of the economic, social and political reality, in which the decision making is made by the dominant classes.
Freire’s Work

Freire devoted himself to working with the poor. He wanted peasants to understand their legal rights which first required that he help them to become literate.
Adult Literacy

He rejected traditional methods of education, believing they were too authoritarian. Illiterate adults were able to gain fundamental literacy skills after 30 hours of working with Freire.
First, Freire showed the peasants pictures that were familiar to them.
Adult Literacy

Then they learned the symbols for the words.
Adult Literacy

They learned that their reality was not fixed. They could transform their world.
In Influences in doctorate studies, Freire was influenced by Sartre and Mounier, Eric Fromm and Lois Althusser, Ortega y Gasset and Mao, Martin Luther King, Che Guevara, Unamuno and Marcuse.
Freire’s educational philosophy didn’t develop fully in his mind, yet from the experiences of working with the dispossessed of Brazil.
Pedagogy of the Oppressed 1972

“Freire’s thought represents the response of a creative mind and sensitive conscience to the extraordinary misery and suffering of the oppressed around him.” ~Richard Shaull
“Banking” vs. “Problem Posing”

Freire critiques what he calls “banking” education. He offers an alternative, which he calls the “problem-posing” approach.
“Banking” Education

“Narration Sickness:” Teacher (narrator) deposits information into the empty minds of students to memorize.
Freire’s words on “Banking” Education

Teacher knows everything and the students know nothing
Freire’s words on “Banking” Education

The teacher thinks and the students are thought about
Freire’s words on

“Banking” Education

The teacher talks and the students listen—meekly
Freire’s words on “Banking” Education

The teacher disciplines and the students are disciplined
Freire’s words on “Banking” Education

The teacher chooses and enforces his choice, and the students comply.

The teacher chooses the program content, and the students (who were not consulted) adapt to it.
Freire’s words on “Banking” Education

The teacher acts and the students have the illusion of acting through the action of the teacher

No Talking
No Laughing
No Smiling
In Fact: No Nothing that induces any kind of pleasure
Freire’s words on “Banking” Education

The teacher confuses the authority of knowledge with his own professional authority, which he sets in opposition to the freedom of the students.
Freire’s words on “Banking” Education

The teacher is the Subject of the learning process, while the pupils are mere objects.
Freire’s Critique on
“Banking” Education

Students’ creative power is minimized. They accept the world the way it is.
Freire’s Critique on “Banking” Education

The capability of banking education to minimize the students’ creative power and to stimulate their credulity serves the interests of the oppressors, who care neither to have the world be revealed nor to see it transformed.
Freire’s Critique on “Banking” Education

The more the oppressed can be led to adapt (to that situation), the more easily they can be dominated.
Freire’s “Problem-Posing/Liberating” Education

Men are conscious beings and learn with the posing of problems and how they relate to the world.
Freire’s “Problem-Posing/Liberating” Education

“Liberating education consists of acts of cognition, not transferrals of information.” (p. 212)
Dialogue is the base of everything!
Freire’s “Problem-Posing/Liberating” Education

Teacher and students dialogue “…and are jointly responsible for a process in which all grow…The students-no longer docile listeners-are now critical co-investigators in dialogue with the teacher (Freire, as cited in Johnson and Reed, p. 213)”
Freire’s “Problem-Posing/Liberating” Education

“Bases itself on creativity and stimulates true reflection and action upon reality...It affirms men as beings in the process of *becoming* (Freire, as cited in Johnson and Reed, p. 215)”
Freire’s “Problem-Posing/Liberating” Education

“...is revolutionary...prophetic...hopeful...it affirms men as beings who transcend themselves, who move forward and look ahead from whom immobility represents a fatal threat,
Freire’s “Problem-Posing/Liberating” Education

...for whom looking at the past must only be a means of understanding more clearly what and who they are so that they can wisely build the future (Freire, as cited in Johnson and Reed, p. 215-216)
“Whoever teaches learns in the act of teaching, and whoever learns teaches in the act of learning.”

~ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of Freedom*
There is no education without love. Love implies a fight against egoism. Whoever isn’t capable of loving humans in their quest of knowledge, can’t educate. There is no education by the book just as there is no love by the book. Whoever doesn’t love doesn’t understand their neighbor nor respect. There is no education with fear. One can’t fear education when there is love.
Washing one's hands of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless means to side with the powerful. Not to be neutral is to be on the side of your oppressor. - Paulo Freire
“To learn it’s crucial to understand that education is a form of intervention in the world” ~Paulo Freire