

Selected Student Feedbacks on Freire¹

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WHY PARENTS CAN BENEFIT FROM APPLYING FREIRE'S PEDAGOGY AT HOME

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There are two main assumptions concerning children when it comes to their relationship with media and the negative attributes it may have on them. One involves the idea that children cannot protect themselves from what they see; some may think they are very impressionable because they lack maturity to understand the difference between fiction and reality shown on TV. The other assumption involves the notion that children are in fact not weak but very active in processing the images in media; they are able to distinguish fiction from reality portrayed in media through their interactions with other people.

Many argue that the images children are exposed to through the media can shape the way they act and react to certain people and certain situation that they encounter in society. The focus to control the images influencing the children is placed on the parents, and society demands that the parents take a more active role in monitoring what their children are exposed to everyday. An example of parental interference, or lack thereof, would be in the Columbine shootings where the parents took on some blame and negativity from society because they were not aware of their son's situation at school or aware of what they were planning. This pressure by social groups, like the church and government, who wish to censor media continue to push parents to make changes in the patterns in which their children are exposed to the media.

The problem with these pressures on the parents is that they do not take into account the opinion of the children who are at stake and their ability to distinguish among the images that are constantly shoved in their faces. By not stepping back and reevaluating this situation with an open mind the parents and the rest of society will inveterately cause the children to seek out what is forbidden. This forbiddance will cause children to become even more interested in the media outlets that their guardians urge them to refrain from using. By involving the children in the process of monitoring their intake of media, you gain some insight into how the children view and interpret the images placed in front of them. With both sides explaining their views and ideas it becomes possible for children and their parents to feel

1. The following are selected Social Theory Forum 2004 student reaction papers gathered from various courses taught by Professor Jorge Capetillo-Ponce during the Spring 2004 semester at UMass Boston.

connected, while this opens the path to good communication between the two groups, which will be very beneficial in other situations. Having open lines of communication allows more information to be exchanged between the two and exposes both sides to each other's lives and thoughts.

The purpose of the media is to present the values of the elite and/or masses of society. Children are subjected to certain types of media that expose them to what takes place in society. From video games to listening to music, children are subliminally taught how they should act and what they should do. Females and males are given different instruction on how to behave in society. Even the young children who sit and watch cartoons can be subjected to the rules within society. The people in control of the outlets are to blame as much as the parents in these situations. As the media industry grows, it will continue to reach out to all audiences in society, including children. The children are seen as sources of profit and they will give these children what they seek and will continue to feed them by pushing the envelope each time. They take many steps to fight censorship efforts by the social and government groups who they feel will be taking away their profits. This battle for the children will continue in the future and will become more and more controversial. Right now due to the outrage from the Janet Jackson incident, the government and social groups have the upper hand and will take the opportunity to begin censoring anything and everything they feel steps away from the conformity they are trying to maintain.

In his studies, the educator Paulo Freire explained a new way to educate people through more open communication, evaluation of what is being taught, and how it is being related to the social environment surrounding the individuals. He explained how we must question what is being fed to us because we do not question the information we receive; we are like robots in society. He talked about how curiosity among humans needs to be fed with information. This essence of being curious helps humans open their minds to new things and allows them to be wary of what the elites or oppressors have placed in front of them. Many minorities and lower class citizens across the world should use that humanistic instinct to develop a broader sense of education, true education, in order to fight the barriers placed upon them. As an individual, you need to break free from the conformity that is taking place and look at things from all angles.

Freire's idea to transform the education programs into a community based learning experience can be applied to the manner in which parents can regain more control of what their children are watching. By considering facts such as age, how single parents' and parents' working at nights contribute to how much children are exposed to the media, and other factors, they can use them to make an impact on their children. Using each element relating to their particular situation gives them an advantage to better display to their children what the essence of society consists of. I do believe parents can make a difference, even if only slightly, by taking control of what media their children are exposed to.

Freire believes the way to gain freedom is through the education and liberation of the people. By stepping outside of the box that was forced on you, you will begin to gain more knowledge to fight the battle for freedom. He believed in involving all aspects of society that contributed to the state in which people lived including the racism, exploitation and discrimination that takes place. Because children in minority or lower classes deal with different things than whites, by considering those factors, each parent can develop a plan that will help their children understand the implications of influence exerted by television. This is an opportunity for them to teach their children things they have learned as adults. An example would be an African American male teaching his son how to act around cops by watching a certain show that always portrays them as criminals and explaining to his son that he will have to deal with certain barriers set by the police because of his skin. It can also help the other parents relate to their children in ways they would have never been able to. It also allows the child to become a teacher to the parent, opening both to each other's world.

Like Freire, I feel the way we teach our children should be changed and I feel that in order for parents to gain more control is to be less demanding and more compromising. When he made efforts to revamp the school system in Brazil he allowed the community to essentially take control of their schools and implemented programs they felt are important. I feel that each child is different so there is no one-way to gain insight into what they see as a whole. If each parent uses their insight from their life, they may be able to accomplish transformation, which was used in the school programs in Brazil. There is no set model to use to balance the amount of media influence your child takes in but I do feel using the method of being the teacher, listener and student will allow the process you take to be more successful. When Freire said, in his lecture at Harvard University, that teachers need to make the student feel that it is ok to ask any question—that no question is stupid—I feel parents need to display that same faith at home. If the child or students feel free and not afraid to ask the person in charge, whether it is the parent or the teacher, they may be able to explain more often what they think and how they feel. Freire's ideas on education can be and should be used in the home between parent and child.

I do realize many will say giving the child more leeway is what has gotten us to this point where they have no parental supervisor concerning their choice of media. I would explain to those people that having open communication and understanding with the child is the most important factor shaping what your child is watching. If you make the child feel comfortable and you clearly state your reasoning for your actions you may be able to change the things they see or at least help them interpret them in real life. The many studies that have taken place throughout the years have resulted in no clear-cut view of what the media does to the children and how children handle the exposure. As an individual who comes from a “constant television viewing” household, I do feel that because the line of communication was open my mother did, up to a certain age, have control over what we watched. I feel this openness can make it possible to establish some rules and help the children understand the difference between real life and fiction on TV. With an onslaught of so-called reality TV, easily accessible music, and more violent videos games, I feel the parents should take this opportunity to look past the non-sayers and listen to their kids.

Although I do agree that we must become more involved in the media’s connections to our children, I do believe we should refrain from censorship and conformity. The existence of this conformity is what has brought their children to a point of no guidance. Just like illegal drugs, people will find a way to get to it and the negative labeling will cause even more people to want to have it. The control the social groups and government exert is through their never-ending ploy to determine for society what is right and what is wrong. The position of power and control they hold over us not only affects our children but our lives as well. We need to not only protect the children from this mockery but also change the entire presence of it in our society. Kids growing up today, and generations to come, will have to deal with much more things than their parents do. They will be better equipped and better educated, to deal with the dramatic changes in norms and morality in this country. Just because you as an adult cannot handle what you may see or hear does not mean your children will feel the same way.

I believe if Freire was alive today, he would have much to say about the abundance of media influences and their rapidly changing forms. I believe he would see it as another opportunity to educate and to fight in the battle for liberation from both financial and political groups in the country. I agree with his critique of banking education, which is when we are given pre-selected knowledge; media contains some portion of that. If we do not allow our children to be exposed to all facets of media and information given to us, however, we will also be perpetuating a pre-selected vision of society. The media, the social groups and government need to be changed and this might just be the opportunity we need to counteract the knowledge they feed us. This may also be an opportunity for us to teach our children about society. We help teach our children by being open to what they experience thus gaining knowledge at the same time. You must also be open to new forms of education in order to survive in this society.

PAULO FREIRE AND MEDIA EDUCATION

David St.Clair

Although Paulo Freire’s theories on education were not developed with media education for children in mind, I believe that his ideas can still be applied in the field. Being that the media is a major tool of oppression and that Freire’s theories focus on educating the oppressed, it almost seems as if his ideas may be the most appropriate way to educate children on the media. My first question, though, would be: at what age would it be appropriate to implement Freire’s ideas? Or, more so, at what age would children be able to grasp what messages are being conveyed through the media?

I think the problem is that children (and people in general) are constantly taking in information from the media. From the first moment that a child is able to comprehend information, he/she is susceptible to media messages. This includes all messages, stated overtly or implied subtly. That said, the effects of media on children would have taken effect long before a child would be able to understand how to comprehend, breakdown or interpret what messages the media is sending. I think a child would be in their teens before being able to grasp just how oppressive the media can be.

I believe that using Freire’s ideas one could teach children in their teenage years to effectively evaluate the media and recognize the false messages that might be sent through the media. Obviously, though, I don’t think that these lessons should be given solely to children coming from oppressed cultures. I think it would be more effective to have children of all cultures and socioeconomic backgrounds being taught to question the ideas that are expressed in the media. They should likewise be taught to compare the realities that they see in their daily lives with what they see in the media. They should understand how the media oppresses them and/or other people within society. I think it might

also be effective to break children up into their own cultural backgrounds when first discussing the media and its effects. Once these groups of children understand where they fit into the scheme of media messages, then the children should be mixed into heterogeneous groups so that children from different cultures can share their experiences and ideas with each other. This way, children will be able to not only understand where they fit in, but also where other people fit in and how the media affects people from other cultures.

Obviously, the point of media education would be to teach children how oppression results from unfair portrayals of certain cultures in the media. That is, to understand that the constant portrayal of minorities as criminals in television and movies does not mean that this is true in reality. Likewise, they need to realize how such portrayals contribute to the oppression of certain people in society. With this shared knowledge, children can try to alter these perceptions and hopefully influence how the media portrays certain people. This is a key point in Freire's theory. That being the case, education is not simply about teaching people something, but empowering them so that they can change the inequalities that exist within society. By understanding the effects of media on society, I think it makes it very possible to change them.

In regards to reaching children at a young age, I don't think this is necessary. As I wrote before, it would be impossible to reach a child before he/she has been exposed to media's negative effects. Furthermore, it would take a certain level of maturity and sophistication to grasp how powerful the media can be on a person's perceptions. I think another important aspect is to realize that all effects of media are not negative. The media does have many useful purposes in keeping people informed about real issues and can also serve for entertainment purposes. That said, I don't think that media education should serve to teach children to believe that all forms of media or that all portrayals within the media are inaccurate or not useful. The point would be to view the media with a questioning eye. To "read between the lines", so to speak. I don't think, though, that the class should turn children off from all media messages. To change the system of oppression, after all, it is necessary to understand it, to understand how it works, whom it works for, and whom it works against. At the same time, the children should be able to distinguish between what is good and what is bad. Likewise, the children should still be able to enjoy and utilize the good aspects of media and to use it to their advantage. I think that early exposure to media without education would ensure this—although, this point is probably moot because to stop exposure to media would be impossible.

I don't think that the focus of the media education should be on violence as the articles focus on. Obviously, in conjunction with Freire's theories, the focus should be more on the messages conveyed within the media. This would of course include violent activity, but the focus should be on whom the violence is against and what it represents in a social context—or perhaps on what oppression the violence reinforces or does not. I think that media education would also focus quite a bit on news media and the messages that it conveys. This would be most important because of the validity that most would assume that the news media do or should hold.

In the end, I don't know how well this media education would do in reforming the media, as Freire's theories propose. I say this only because the media is something that is very much out of the control of the general public, and to reform it would require a complete overhaul from the inside. I think the focus of media education using Freire's theories should involve more of an understanding of the complexities of the messages that are sent by the media, so that they will not be as much affected by them.

THE EMERGENCE OF A LITERATE, LIBERATED NATION: HUMANIZATION THROUGH EDUCATION

Jessica Santiccioli

Paulo Freire, Brazilian adult educator, was a revolutionary in the field of education. His educational philosophy is tremendously important across all forums involving race and ethnic relations, especially in the United States as a mode to counter the situations of domination and subordination of racial and ethnic groups. Freire holds that education is the engine to political voice, through a dialogical pedagogy in which the teacher and the student both learn, mutually, in a class that teaches concepts such as literacy in the context of political participation. Freire's ideas for an educational system are not wholly successful in the United States; yet, if set up correctly, it would yield a far more even playing field for the oppressed and voiceless masses that are currently subordinate minorities in the country right now.

Education, as it exists at the secondary level in the United States, is extremely oppressive. There are lectures, information is processed at the level of intransitivity (unconsciousness) for many students, who are not interested in the

monological rhetoric of the teacher who is backed by the institution's more than likely closed-minded paradigm for how to teach and view the world. Freire holds that education should never be boring; it should be active, for it is an exciting process, if done correctly. This is certainly not so in many of the high school classrooms of the United States, where kids sleep in the back, skip class, doodle, talk, write notes, and generally find ways in which to get through the insufferable class. Education at this level is often impersonal and boring. For many, this is all they ever know of what education can be, for after suffering through high school, some do not ever want to have to be in a classroom ever again. College classrooms often offer a very different experience in educational and teaching style, where suddenly class time is lively, passionate, and interesting, but sadly, some have had their educational desires squashed by the oppressive system imposed at the level of mandatory education.

Education quality varies greatly from community to community as well. Wealth promotes good education in public schooling, there is enough money for frequent field trips, and interactive teaching tools that make it interesting to learn. Impoverished areas do not often have the money to pay for the luxury of a state of the art computer lab, for example, as a wealthy community might. They certainly do not have the money to update textbooks and other teaching materials as often as wealthy communities do. Classroom time is thus in general not as interesting for children, for it is less interactive, and more impersonal. It is not surprising that under this system it is those who went to schools in wealthy communities have a much better chance statistically of going on to higher education—they have had a pleasant educational experience, why would that change in college? Those who have had an unpleasant educational experience up to the point of a high school education have, in contrast, no reason to expect it to get any better, so why would they spend money to suffer after all of the free, but mandatory, suffering already done in the classroom—their time has been served. This dichotomy of educational experience, which ultimately is a heavy deciding factor in whether or not to pursue higher education, is one of the vehicles in which those who are oppressed continue to be subordinated.

The educational system right now in the United States is a tool for alienation. It is another way in which to keep minorities separate from the political structure and certain labor institutions that are dominated and reserved for those of the dominant group. As it stands right now, minorities live in a “culture of silence” where they are taught from kindergarten how to view the world, and most importantly, how to view themselves. For this reason, minorities do not rise up against the present system of subordination—they believe that they are only suited for certain roles in life. Those who are not in the dominant group feel incapable of functioning without it, incapable of being able to fill those roles reserved for the dominant group for themselves. In this system there is no chance for liberation.

Were the educational system employed by Freire to become employed by the nation's public institutions, the country would be radically changed. If the dialogical method were to be employed, the classroom would become an entirely transformed political vehicle. Rather than continue in its subordination and numbing of the oppressed, it would become a place where people become empowered, and learn that they can have an effect on the world, and that with the solidarity of the group comes the power to affect and change society profoundly. This is where liberatory education begins. Through the new praxis of education, humanization on the educational level would occur. This would affect an entire generation, and would eventually humanize society as well, or at least give the hope for the utopian idea of a humanized society. There would certainly be limitations to Freire's pedagogy, but there is no telling exactly where those limits would be. Imagine hundreds of thousands of formerly oppressed people being told that they can cause a profound change in society, and simultaneously were taught how to do exactly that.

THE UTOPIAN IDEA

Richard Batakis

The works of Paulo Friere are thought to be these great ideas. They are very utopian and unlikely to work in their entirety in advanced countries like the United States. Some of his ideas are currently being used in the United States. For example, virtually every school has a PTA or some form of parent teacher association. These groups meet usually monthly to discuss the schools and what events the parents are going to put on inside the schools. These groups can sometimes influence some of what is taught in schools.

That is where Friere's ideas end. His idea of letting each school set up its own curriculum is an ingenious idea. However it is not very feasible. There would be serious problems when children change schools either because of a family moving to a different part of town or to a different town, or when the children move to middle and high school. All students would have serious deficiencies in different subjects. For example school A could favor history and not

science while school B could favor science and not history. So then when the students from school A get to high school they could know everything about the history of the United States but would have no clue as to the organs of the human body and vice versa with the students from school B. These students would lack a well rounded education and therefore lose out on different aspects of life.

The idea of giving power to each school to dictate its own curriculum does have its upsides. The children attending that school would have an advantage in getting jobs around that school. It would also allow children to learn more about their immediate surroundings. For example locally very few people know about the history of Brockton. Brockton was the shoe capital of the world. The factories in Brockton made every pair of shoes for every soldier from the Civil War up to World War I. Everyone hears about the mills in Lowell. There were over 100 shoe factories in Brockton during the same period.

His ideas do have one major problem, though. When using the democratic system everything slows down considerably. There is a significant amount of debate. What is best for the students is not necessarily what the students receive. Instead what the students receive is a deal that is brokered among people. When using a democracy there is always a power struggle. More often than not one group of people ends up controlling the democracy. Once that happens you lose the total democracy.

I do have to agree with one thing that Friere did. In the article by Tim Sieber read in class, Friere is quoted as not sitting in his office but instead getting out and talking with everyone, from the janitors to the students and everyone in between. Actually coming out of the office and going into the field is something that is not done very often by executives. Virtually all of these visits are little more than photo ops for the executives. Freire went out and sought the opinions of everyone to try to make the schools better. Actually going out and talking to everyone that works for you has many advantages. It creates unity and openness within the company. It also has its disadvantages. Among these is the fact that this is very tedious work. For many companies doing so would take a significant amount of time. Many executives do not have the time needed to do this.

The article by Tim Sieber gives a nice portrayal of what Friere did in Sao Paulo. What he was asked to do was almost impossible. The school district was in shambles. The buildings were in disrepair and there was dissension in the ranks of teachers. Friere worked to rebuild the schools and build unity with the teachers to better educate the children in the schools.

The article also critiques Friere. The one major problem that was brought up was the fact that many of his ideas were utopian in nature. They were not tested outside of Sao Paulo. The one comparison that was made showed what happens when the extreme opposite of Friere's ideas come into practice.

HOW WOULD PAULO FREIRE LIBERATE MEDIA VIOLENCE EDUCATION?

Paul Kane

Almost as soon as Paulo Freire died, the academic world began to appreciate his enormous contributions that Freire's theories and methods liberated education. Paulo Freire, a Marxist educator, wrote about the problems of a unilateral educational system in his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Freire believed in a dual track approach to teaching and student learning methods. In his opinion the teacher should also learn from the student and that the class discussions should be equally divided between teacher and students. This is an important part of the Freire learning process because he valued the potential that a question might possess. According to Umass Boston professor, Martha Montero-Sieburth, Paulo Freire emphasized the importance of the response a student gives and the amount of time that a teacher is willing to provide to answer a question. She explains that the reason why teachers use an unilateral approach is that they are apprehensive that the student may not know the answer. Hence, the teacher in order to protect themselves will answer for the student. Another good point made at the Social Theory Conference was made by Samuel Zalanga, a Sociology Professor at Bethel University; he explained that the curricula in contemporary educational systems avoid critical thinking classes because they might upset the status quo. He made it clear that today's traditional teaching method involves a hierarchical relationship between teacher and student. Professor Zalanga referred to this relationship by what he called, following Freire, the "banking" concept of education. He explained that students are programmed like robots. Teachers program the proper pathways of the curriculum. If students fail to memorize or copy the ideas given by the teacher then they won't advance to the next pathway, which is the next grade level. Paulo Freire envisions a relationship between teacher and student as co-learners. Co-learners share their ideas through dialogue. After reading

Paulo Freire articles, I am convinced that his theories and methods were heavily influenced by Antonio Gramsci and Louis Althusser.

Jonathon Martin, a Sociology Professor at Framingham State College, contrasted Freire's ideas with Marx's views on alienation in his paper, "Freire vs. Marx: The Tension between Liberating Pedagogy and Student Alienation." Martin argued among others that only a Marxist revolution that overturns the hierarchical situation within the school system will liberate student alienation. He illustrated this by referring to the views of a Marxist, Antonio Gramsci—citing his work on hegemony as an example of the problem with a bureaucratized educational system. Martin suggested that the problem is that teachers have the means of production while students don't have anything. Thus, you have alienated students who are manipulated by teachers. According to Louis Althusser, the school is where the social technical division of labor occurs. The school teaches children the norms and rules of society. Professor Martin argued that the organic intellectuals (teachers) are the ones who can transform the status quo of the hierarchical school system.

Sara Bragg's article, "Just What The Doctors Ordered" points out that media education should not be used as a possible solution to censorship. She describes the problem with media education by providing two examples of quantitative research projects that failed. The two projects, "Beyond Blame" and "Critical Viewing" used quantitative research methods in their studies done with children. The main problem with these studies is the practice of placing children in artificial settings. For example, children are placed in front of a television and are told by the researcher to watch the violent films. Afterwards, they are given a questionnaire to fill out that the researcher has picked out for them. These questions are designed in a way to program the child to respond in a certain way. At a later time, the researcher advertises the results for political gain. Additionally, Sara Bragg explains that because of the lack of funding in the United States, anyone can teach media literacy training to children with only a couple of hours' training on the internet. Hence, this illustrates that these media education programs lack the experience to teach or comment on media violence. Moreover, David Buckingham's article, "Electronic Child Abuse" illustrates how the problem with research on media effects is that it uses behaviourist assumptions. The main problem with media effects researchers is that they believe that there is a direct cause from one thing and that there is a direct effect. The media education teachers and researchers believe that there is this violent image and the effect of this image is aggressive behavior. Buckingham demonstrates that children are able to distinguish between fictional and reality television programs. Additionally, Buckingham believes that children are able to make moral judgement not watch.

In contrast to the media effects researchers' quantitative analysis studies is Paulo Freire critical pedagogy methods. Paulo Freire would have used a qualitative research method for studying with children. The reason I say this is because qualitative analysis research engages the child to actively participate in the study. Freire would have been able to find out the historical background of the child. Then he would have been able to learn how the child perceives things. Additionally, he would have emphasized dialogue and critical thinking among his child participants. Freire's lifelong goal was a democratic educational process that gave children a voice to talk about their curiosities and experiences. He would have wanted children to be more critical of the movies they watch. Freire would not have wanted children to copy the ideas of the researcher. Instead, he would have challenged his child participants to reinvent their own understanding and ideas about media violence. Finally, Paulo Freire believed that teacher and students' relationship should be a dual tract learning process, because teachers can not conscientize themselves without the dialogue of the students. This means that learning doesn't work one way, but it is a multi-lateral process that is dependent upon the whole group participating in dialogue.

In summary, I really enjoyed the social theory conference. I found several of the guest speakers entertaining and insightful. Additionally, what I liked most about Paulo Freire's liberating education method was that it challenged the status quo (curriculum). I believe in having equality and justice in society; sometimes you have to challenge the existing state of affairs. I thought Freire's main point was that teachers need to develop an environment so that children can continue to be curious about the world. If teachers fail to provide this condition then children's creativity and critical thinking will disappear. Finally, Paulo Freire felt that the only way to transform the political structures (such as in schools) was to alter the social spaces (such as those occupied by the administration) within the structure that would eventually result in the educational hierarchy pyramid collapsing to the ground.

ON PAULO FREIRE

Karla Rainford

For centuries, education, particularly as applied to youth, was actually viewed as a process of delivering information. Paulo Freire's philosophy and approach to critical thinking have influenced many worldwide. The translation of his philosophy into the very specific design of literacy classes has inspired the innovative approaches of many learning programs.

Freire views education as a mechanism for liberation from the cycle of oppression that limits the freedom of the masses. For Freire, the process of liberation takes place when the oppressed see their situation as a reality that they can affect and transform. Education can hinder or support that process. Thus, Freire defines two forms of education: "banking," which reinforces the system of oppression, and "problem posing," which leads to liberation.

Paulo Freire's notion of "banking" method of education refers to an approach where students are passive recipients of a teacher's "wealth" of knowledge. "The learner's mind is seen as an empty vault into which the riches of approved knowledge are placed." Similarly, Freire's problematization or "problem-posing" approach to education is to "engage a group in the task of codifying reality into symbols which can generate critical consciousness and empower them to alter their relations with nature and oppressive social forces." This approach appeals to many who recognize that collective action and the full participation of learners are very important to the educational process.

In this century, people can learn many facts, process those facts, relate them to existing knowledge, and consciously use the information to develop new skills and attitudes. I have come to realize that learning and experiencing are the keys to education, especially for children. Children have many facts to learn as they grow up. For example, what's nine times twelve or how many ounces make a pound, and so forth. Children need to know basic facts and know how to gain any other information they may need in their lives. They also need to improve the ability to cope with their social roles—at school, at home, and in the community—by developing new perceptions or skills. To achieve this, the methods of Freire can be used to carefully design educational programs on television that provide experiential learning situations through which they can develop and practice new understandings and skills. Since most of the educational programs that are produced on television is intended for adults, our job is to develop educational programs for children that will provide either learning or realistic experience so that children can explore, experience and learn.

Many children of today are self-directed learners. Think about the things you have learned in the past year or two. For example, think about how you learned about the internet. Did anyone force you to learn those things? Probably not. Children tend to learn what they want, or need to learn what they want when they need to learn it. They tend to learn what they perceive to be of immediate value to them in fulfilling their roles as children. To children and adults, education is a process of improving their ability to cope with whatever they may face in life. Educational programs that do not address current, important needs will not attract these learners. Consequently, it is essential to establish programs with potential learners and work with them to identify their educational needs. Programs developed to address identified and validated needs are much more likely to be successful than those based on the educator's own perceptions of the learners needs or statements about what the learners should know.

The format and time schedule of the program must be developed with the recognition that learners have many other responsibilities. These educational programs should be at a certain time to fit the learners' schedule. They should be able to take part in a learning experience at any time throughout the day or evening, wherever access to the television is available—at home, at school, or elsewhere.

For an educational program to attract and retain participants, the educational programs must align closely with those of the learners. Furthermore, the learners must be able to see readily how each element of the program contributes toward reaching educational goals.

Successful programs should be designed to meet the learners' needs. The first step in designing any educational program should be to determine what changes in knowledge, skills, or attitudes will benefit the learner. The most valuable source of information for the educational program designer should be the learners themselves. Adults often know when they need to enhance their learning in specific areas of their lives. On the other hand, sometimes children are not consciously aware of their learning needs, but they can often identify issues of concern in their lives that an educator can translate into educational needs and objectives, which then in turn can often be tested with other potential learners.

Developers of educational programs should be able to survey potential learners and others about educational needs. For example, if we were considering offering a program for children on developing bi-lingual programs, we could easily contact heads of bi-lingual programs and all members of organizations such as bi-lingual communicators in education to determine their level of interest and the specific topics that they would like to see covered in such a program. Interacting with the learners during program design and development not only provides valuable information about learner needs and interests but also publicizes the upcoming television programs. It also increases the probability

that the viewers will participate and learn.

Successful programs should engage the learner in an experiential process. Programs that simply provide information are relatively ineffective in helping people learn. Learners must interact with the information, integrating it into their own lives. What we read, see, or hear we tend to forget quite often unless we relate it in meaningful ways to things we already know or apply it to situations that are meaningful to us. Where skills are to be taught, learners need opportunities to practice the skills until they achieve their goals. School teachers have used many strategies by requiring students to apply certain principles to practical situations. In other words, to work out certain problems by using a strategy.

Educational programs should also offer a multitude of opportunities for experiential learning. For example, in the context of an educational program the learner can interact with a program that simulates a practical situation and allows the learner to observe immediately the results of alternative solutions. These programs can be very valuable interactive teaching tools. Learners can interact with the program to resolve questions and issues that they may face.

Successful programs should provide rapid feedback and reinforcement. Reassurance and positive feedback during the program should be essential to encouraging and sustaining the learners' participation. Good educational programs should be designed to ensure that the learners will definitely learn something from the program. Also that learners will continue to receive encouragement and positive suggestions for improvement throughout the program, and that their achievements will be recognized at the end.

Educational programs need to be suited to the needs and concerns of the learners. The educational interaction should take place strictly between the learner and the educator of the television program. Exchanges between the educator and learner can take place during the program. During the program, the learners might be assigned to do an experiment and the results can be returned at the end of the program, offering feedback on performance and positive suggestions for improvement. These programs should help learners gain information, reducing the likelihood they will abandon their newly developed perceptions and skills they have learned from the program.

To conclude, the television should offer many opportunities for delivering educational programs to individuals who can take advantage of the programs at their own convenience. Also, programs should offer opportunities for learners to engage in the subject matter and to practice newly developed skills so that learning is retained and applied. Successful educational programs, however, should involve more than providing information. Lastly, effective programs should be based on a careful analysis of learner needs. They should provide experiential learning opportunities, and should provide feedback and encouragement to the learner.

FREIRE'S DIALOGICAL LEARNING: A CONCEPT THAT MUST CONTINUE TO BE ADOPTED

Efrain Toledano

Paulo Freire was a Brazilian born adult educator whose philosophy helped reform the way education was viewed in Latin America and across the world. Freire dedicated his life to educating people and especially helping the oppressed people of the world. He mentioned that among the oppressed were not only the obvious racial, gender, and class minorities but also religious minorities, people who are treated differently due to age, and a number of other groups of people who are discriminated against. He stressed that although the first three types of discrimination were most obvious and prevalent in society none of them must be overlooked because they are all subjected to injustice. By advocating for the oppressed Freire introduced many new methods of learning that had not previously been implemented in educational systems. Amongst what he introduced were his ideas on learning through dialogue and the three stages that lead to critical consciousness.

The emphasis on learning through dialogue is one of Freire's important contributions to the educational system. This method of learning emerged from Freire's view that current educational systems treat the student as an individual who is less than his educator. Freire argued that instead of the classroom being set in its format with the teacher doing all the teaching, the teacher and the student should both be viewed as teachers and learners. Freire believed that the teacher could learn just as much from his students as they can learn from him or her, so if the classroom were to be opened up then all involved will be involved in the educational process. Freire also believed that this method of learning through dialogue should not be limited to the classroom. It should be used everywhere because the world is a place

where one must be constantly educated.

Another major Freire idea that impacted was his idea of critical consciousness. Critical consciousness according to Freire had three stages. The first stage of Critical consciousness is “Semi-intransitive consciousness.” This stage is a stage characterized by the individuals limited vision to only see problems that concern their own survival. Individuals in this stage are only concerned with problems such as getting food and other basic necessities. These individuals can not see past this to other larger social issues which may be having and impact on them. Individuals at this stage who open themselves to dialogue are said to enter a “transitive” stage according to Freire. This is a stage where they are still only concerned with the same issues as before but they are now open to hearing others’ perspectives on the same issue instead of just theirs.

The second stage of critical consciousness is “naïve transitivity.” At this stage individuals do not like to investigate to solve problems. Therefore, they tend to over-simplify problems and look for conspiracy theories to answer questions that they may have. People at this stage also tend to want things to be like they were in the past. They tend to look at some part of their past as the place where they want to be. Freire also mentioned that it is important to see that this stage of one’s life is never entirely surpassed. This is because when one enters the world of education there will always be a time when one wants the easy answer because it is much easier and laziness is a human trait which exists in all at some point or another.

The third and final stage of critical consciousness is “critical transitivity.” According to Freire this stage is characterized by a number of different characteristics. Among these is an openness and willingness to look at new findings. Not being afraid of revision or changing what is already in place. Another characteristic is looking at issues deeply and intensely. The most important characteristic of this stage is that once individuals enter this stage they enter into open dialogue. By this it is meant that they not only talk to others but are open to looking at situations and problems through the others’ point of view in order to better understand the situation.

Freire’s ideas of critical consciousness, being achieved through stages and the last stage being a stage where one enters open dialogue, are ideas which are key to educating oneself, These are ideas that we must continue to follow in order to fully educate ourselves. Freire’s idea of open dialogue is one that the world of education must continue to adapt. This is because by open dialogue the students in the classroom receive the best education. This is an education which is not solely based on the teacher’s views but instead an education that has examined many issues through a variety of perspectives so that each student in the class can understand how that issue impacts not only the teacher but also all the students in the class from various age, racial/ethnic, sexual preference, and physical ability backgrounds. It is by seeing how all these people are impacted that one can get a real education and understand issues in their entirety. This as Freire said should not only apply to the classroom but to the outside world as well —since everyone in the world can get some type of education from anyone. So even if one is in the presence of a child they should be able to get into open dialogue because that child can even teach you something, such as how to enjoy life which many people in this world forget to do.