
23 October 2014

Dear Friends,

Paulo Freire, a Brazilian Educator (1921-1997), started his work with a Literacy Program in the rural areas of Brazil. He later became one of the most influential Educators of the 20th Century.

Paulo Freire believes that education is never neutral; it either molds people to fit into the system or gives them the skills to enact change. For him, education should lead to Conscientização/Concientization/Awareness, but consciousness that is understood to have the power to transform reality.

In this edition of Newsflash, we will be discussing Paulo Freire's work and influence around the world.

Sincerely,

The Firelight Team

(Resource) "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" by Paulo Freire
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(Resource) "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" by Paulo Freire

Paulo Freire most influential book is "Pedagogy of the Oppressed." In this book, Paulo Freire was very critical of the prevalent model of education, which he calls "Banking Education." In the Banking Education model, the role of the teacher is to transmit knowledge, depositing information in the students, as they are an empty bank account.

Paulo Freire's education for transformation (also known as popular education) is based on the principle that people come with substantial experience and can be creators and contributors to the learning process. This process assumes that no one has all the answers. Each person has different answers based on his or her own experiences. To discover valid solutions everyone needs to be both a learner and a teacher.

Paulo Freire introduced the concept of Learning/Culture Circles, a space where learners/participants:

- are challenged to think critically about their lives
- analyze the root causes of their problems
- collectively act to change the situation

By continually engaging in a cycle of reflection and action, a group can celebrate their successes, analyze critically their reality, mistakes and failures - and use this information to act again. This allows a group to become more capable of effectively transforming their daily life.

This continuous cycle of listening, dialogue and action, returning to re-listening, dialogue and action creates "praxis".



Key principles of education for transformation/popular education:

- Education does not take place in a vacuum. It's important to understand the context in which it takes place. "In order to read the word you need to understand the world."
- Education either reinforces or challenges the existing social forces that aim to keep people passive.
- The purpose of education should be to teach critical thinking, or the relation between personal experience and society.
- The use of "codes" and the process of "decodification" are a key method for initiating this process.

A codification is some kind of physical expression of a theme which is central to people's lives. Decodification is a process whereby the people in a group begin to identify with aspects of the situation until they feel themselves to be in the situation and so able to

reflect critically upon its various aspects, thus gathering understanding. Codes:

- Seeks to “re-present” people’s own experience through photographs, drawings, role-plays, songs...
- Must represent a situation that is easily recognized by the community because it’s part of their concerns.
- Should be open-ended and not provide solutions; any resolution or strategies for addressing the problem should emerge from the group discussion.

Education, critical thinking and praxis lead to action for social change and the empowerment of people in their own lives and communities. Education should work to transform the quality of each person's life, the environment, the community, and the whole society.

To learn more about Paulo Freire and “Pedagogy of the Oppressed” visit:

<http://bit.ly/1w8TyW3>

(Resource) Concepts Used by Paulo Freire - Freire Institute

PRAXIS (ACTION/REFLECTION)

It is not enough for people to come together in dialogue in order to gain knowledge of their social reality. They must act together upon their environment in order critically to reflect upon their reality and so transform it through further action and critical reflection.

GENERATIVE THEMES

According to Paulo Freire, an epoch “is characterized by a complex of ideas, concepts, hopes, doubts, values and challenges in dialectical interaction with their opposites striving towards their fulfilment”. The concrete representation of these constitute the themes of the epoch. For example, we may say that in our society some of these themes would include the power of bureaucratic control or the social exclusion of the elderly and disabled. In social analysis these themes may be discovered in a concrete representation in which the opposite theme is also revealed (i.e., each theme interacts with its opposite).

EASTER EXPERIENCE

Paulo Freire says that “those who authentically commit themselves to the people must re-examine themselves constantly. This conversion is so radical as not to allow for ambivalent behaviour... Conversion to the people requires a profound rebirth. Those who undergo it must take on a new form of existence; they can no longer remain as they were.”

DIALOGUE

To enter into dialogue presupposes equality amongst participants. Each must trust the others; there must be mutual respect and love (care and commitment). Each one must question what he or she knows and realize that through dialogue existing thoughts will change and new knowledge will be created.

CONSCIENTIZATION

The process of developing a critical awareness of one's social reality through reflection and action. Action is fundamental because it is the process of changing the reality. Paulo Freire says that we all acquire social myths which have a dominant tendency, and so learning is a critical process which depends upon uncovering real problems and actual needs.

CODIFICATION

This is a way of gathering information in order to build up a picture (codify) around real situations and real people. Decodification is a process whereby the people in a group begin to identify with aspects of the situation until they feel themselves to be in the situation and so able to reflect critically upon its various aspects, thus gathering understanding. It is like a photographer bringing a picture into focus.

BANKING CONCEPT OF KNOWLEDGE

The concept of education in which “knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing”.

Visit the Freire Institute website for more information: <http://bit.ly/1DdjXe>

Announcement) The USAID Fighting Ebola Broad Agency Announcement

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) the Global Health Bureau and the US Global Development Lab have jointly announced grant funding entitled USAID Fighting Ebola BAA (Broad Agency Announcement). This Broad Agency Announcement (BAA) seeks opportunities to co-create, co-design, co-invest, and collaborate in the development, testing, and scaling of practical and cost-effective innovations that can help healthcare workers on the front lines provide better care and stop the spread of Ebola.

For more information, visit grants.gov (<http://1.usa.gov/1pFw8Tg>) and search for funding opportunity number BAA-EBOLA-2014

(Call for Applicants) Innovation Prize for Africa (IPA) 2015

The African Innovation Foundation (AIF) is calling on all African innovators to submit their entries for the fourth edition of the Innovation Prize for Africa (IPA) competition. The IPA is presented annually, enabling and encouraging African pioneers to develop creative ideas and techniques to overcome some of the challenges faced by the continent and support sustainable development.

All innovations are evaluated based on the following criteria: originality, marketability, scalability, social impact and Scientific/technical aspects. The best submission will be awarded a grand prize of USD 100 000. The second prize of USD 25 000 will be awarded to an innovator with an innovation which has the best commercial and business potential. An additional award is a special prize granted to the innovator whose innovation has the best social impact in the community.

The IPA encourages entries in five key categories:

- Agriculture and Agribusiness
- Environment, Energy, and Water
- Health and Wellbeing
- ICT applications
- Manufacturing and Services Industries.

Recognising homegrown innovative ingenuity, the prize contributes to increased funding of start-ups, adoption of new and emerging technologies and accelerated growth of the private sector. With ever changing economic and social environments, it is critical that proposed solutions tackle issues affecting African lives, and that they are effective and are different from the existing ones.

The deadline for submitting applications for IPA 2015 is **31 October 2014** at 24h00 GMT.

For more information on competition categories, conditions of entry, and submission details, please visit: <http://bit.ly/1sKFmTS>

As part of the Firelight Foundation's Capacity Building Program, Firelight provides "Newsflashes" to share relevant resources and information with our active grantee-partners via weekly emails and via post on a monthly basis. We hope that by facilitating access to information for grassroots, community-focused organizations, programming for children and families, as well as organizational development, is enhanced. Past editions of the Firelight Newsflash can be found on our website:

<http://www.firelightfoundation.org/resources/newsflash>

We welcome your comments, feedback and ideas for upcoming Newsflashes at newsletter@firelightfoundation.org

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