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EDUCATIONAL POLICY ANALYSIS AND STRATEGIC RESEARCH

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ARTICLES

Finding Clarity in Teaching: One Teacher's Struggle

Sam Roberson *
Plano Independent School District, Texas

Abstract

Teaching and learning are interdependent terms, and the work of the teacher is to ensure that students learn. Teachers need to be clear on what they mean by *learning*. Learning is often judged by what students accumulate in content or is based on a student's mastery of content as revealed by grades. However, for the author, there is more to learning—specifically, the behaviors of the learner. The author proposes a *Rubric for Learning Behavior* to augment the concept of *learning* with a concept of the engagement of the *learner*. In doing so, the author clarified his own struggle to make sense of the relationship between teaching and learning.

*Keywords***:** Teaching, Rubric for Learning Behavior, teacher struggle, Dewey

* Sam Roberson is currently serving as a 10th grade English teacher in a 9-10 high school setting. He has served previously as an assistant principal, principal, and associate professor in a graduate level Educational Administration program. He has also taught teacher preparation courses in an alternative certification program.

Correspondence: samlr@tx.rr.com

Introduction

For some teaching is a calling. For others, teaching is a vocation. For everyone else, teaching is something in between. For those who are called, the act of teaching is as much a part of themselves as breathing. It is the lifeblood and passion of a fulfilled life. For those of the vocation, the act of teaching is a means to an end; though perhaps for some, at least, a means composed of substance to enhance those ends. For everyone else, the act of teaching lies somewhere between the two perspectives, but certainly, teaching is a time honored work on any scale, important both to the individual who sits in any given class and the teacher who stands in front of the class, as well as important for the continued existence of cultures and societies, if not the human race.

Regardless of how one comes to teaching, the realization quickly materializes that the act of teaching is, contrary to popular notions, a daunting exercise. For the teacher of conscience and passion, the act of teaching is challenging and requires commitment and dedication. Time and effort go into preparing, presenting, and evaluating each act of teaching. Teaching is not for the fainthearted or the flippant. It is best seen in a personal comment made to my teacher-wife and colleague after our first full week of teaching in a public junior high school: "This is the hardest damn job I have ever had."

The challenge for every teacher, regardless of the level of students being taught, is to decide not only *what* to teach, but *how* to teach. The *what to teach* aspect is often defined contextually by the institution, the department, and/or discipline. On occasion it is at the whim and discretion of the teacher. Most often it is not discretionary and is at least specified to some degree by core competencies, academic or subject standards, or time honored points of canon. The *how to teach* aspect, more often than not, is determined by the teacher, though some districts (and state departments of education) are becoming more actively involved in these decisions. Still, in public education, the teacher is often left alone to his/her own devices, understandings, and proclivities to decide how best to teach the subject to which they have been assigned, content standards notwithstanding.

As such, teaching is a purposeful act. Understanding that purpose is the stuff which challenges the beliefs, attitudes, understandings, skills, competencies, and abilities of the teacher. Within the purposeful act is the realization that teaching is in fact a two sided coin: one side, *teaching*; the other side, *learning*. The intent of teaching, most commonly, is that a student will learn that which the teacher has specified, designed, organized, imparted or facilitated for the student within the context of some learning environment (Eryaman & Genc, 2010). That when an act of teaching has occurred, it often is assumed and taken for granted that learning has occurred as well. However, teaching and its counterpart, learning, are, as Dewey (1910/1997) specified, interdependent terms, both in actions and in outcomes: "Teaching and learning are correlative and corresponding processes, as much so as selling and buying. One might as well say he has sold when no one has bought, as to say he has taught when no one has learned," (p. 29). More recently, Fink (1993) notes a similar paradigm shift in attitudes about teaching and learning occurring in colleges and universities. He says, "This change is a paradigm shift in which institutions are thinking less about providing instruction (the teaching paradigm) and more about producing learning (the learning paradigm)," (p. 17). Fink not only endorses the idea that

learning is now the focal point of instructional efforts, rather he asserts the point is to "produce *significant* learning," (p. 18).

It is with this realization and at this point when teaching becomes a complicated affair (or perhaps, a more complicated affair), one that lacks clarity, at least for this author in finding his roles as an effective teacher in secondary public education (and also as a former assistant professor in a university setting). If Dewey is correct, and I believe wholeheartedly his assertion is correct, then the teacher must not only be concerned with the act of teaching, but also the act of learning—and all the outcomes that ensue therein (Bruce & Eryaman, 2015).

Facing the Dilemma

The act of teaching and the act of learning are two sides of the same coin. The teaching side has been a challenge, certainly, particularly with the stressful demands of the current high stakes testing environment which is focused more on scores than learning. Still, standing confidently in front of a classroom full of students with a well stocked supply of teaching strategies, techniques, lesson plans, and resources, where every learner is an individual with individual needs, wants, abilities, capabilities, and levels of commitment is only half the battle, only half of the coin. The major challenge in my teaching comes from the learning side of the coin. Despite my performance in the act of teaching, student learning is not as clear a picture. And this is where my journey to find clarity in teaching (as the whole coin) has embarked.

The beginning point to seek clarity in teaching, I have come to realize, is to come to grips with what one means by *learning*. If the act of learning is just as important as the act of teaching, then one must delineate the concept of learning as it relates to the teacher's own beliefs, and one must have some kind of conceptualization of what that learning looks like in action, particularly in relationship to the learning objectives or outcomes of the course of study.

Within the act of teaching lie markers or targets which the teacher strives to accomplish and which are to be displayed in the thoughts and behaviors of the students in the classroom or course. Through the demarcation of the topics, concepts, or ideas for a given topic of study or course, the teacher identifies what is to be presented and consequently what is to be learned by the students present in the course. These learning targets are the objectives or the learning outcomes of the course and identify for the student in advance what is expected to be learned or accomplished as a result of their experience and interaction with the course. For teachers, knowing exactly what one wants students to learn gives life, direction, and shape to the course. For students, knowing exactly what one must learn gives, life, direction, and shape to one's learning.

The obvious reality to framing an understanding of learning is that there must be some method to determine how students will be evaluated—how they will be judged as to the quality or depth of learning—as students journey through a course encountering the course content and for describing and summarizing their performance in the course as a whole. The typical measure of learning is found in *assessment* and its constituent, *grades*. The problem, of course, as any self-respecting teacher will acknowledge, is that one's approach to this seemingly straightforward, simple task of assessment and assigning a grade is that it is neither straightforward nor simple. Instead, the conclusion to which one arrives regarding the adequacy

of assessment and grading is dependent upon a variety of factors and decisions, among which are these: what to assess, how often to assess, what does assessment look like, what scale should be used to convey the results of assessment, and perhaps most importantly, what does the assessment (and its complicit grading scale) actually *mean* in terms of a larger concept of *learning*. While assessment may be necessary to find confirmation that learning has occurred, the difficulty for any teacher in finding clarity in teaching is to find answers to these three questions: if learning is the objective (and the result of effective teaching per Dewey's formulation), then how will the teacher know (1) if students have actually learned what was intended, (2) if the grade they have earned is truly reflective of their learning, and (3) if students are changed in any way by their interaction with the teaching that has occurred during their time participating in the course?

Searching for Clarity

Though I have posed these three questions as discrete questions, they are really variations on a single idea to which one must find an answer if one is to find clarity in teaching. Nonetheless, all three questions will be addressed individually in an effort to shed some light or find some insight on a search to find some clarity in teaching.

If Students Have Actually Learned What Was Intended

On the one hand, learning must mean that students have actually learned what was intended for the course of study as designed by the teacher. I would postulate that in every course there is content that must be learned—certain facts, concepts, ideas, principles, theories, processes, procedures, etc.—in order for students to become knowledgeable in that course of study or discipline. The guiding idea is that students enter a course of study or program as novices with little or no knowledge or competence and make their way through a progressive course of study acquiring essential knowledge, skills, competencies, resources, and understanding all the while building and adding to their accumulated knowledge and competence until they reach the end of their course of study and graduate with some level of expertise. For this sequence to work as planned teachers along the way must assess students in each course of study to make sure they have learned what was intended.

As voiced earlier, the critical question here is "What does one mean by *learned*?" Typically, if an assessment is given, and students pass the assessment with at least a nominal score, one can reason that students have learned. (It could be argued that even a non-passing score can indicate some amount of learning.) Assuming that the assessment reflects the content being assessed and is an appropriate assessment tool or strategy, then one can assert that learning has indeed occurred. But, realistically, what can be truly be asserted about student learning from an assessment, particularly a paper and pencil test typical of so many classrooms and which characteristically has limited interpretive power as to the actual *depth of understanding* held by any given student?

If our expectation of learning is reflected simplistically, then an adequate demonstration of knowledge in an oral response or on a paper and pencil test is sufficient. Students on these types of assessments are demonstrating the abilities of "remembering/knowledge" or "understanding/comprehension" or perhaps "applying/application" (Anderson & Krathwohl,

2001; Bloom, 1956) as delineated in Bloom's Taxonomy (revised term/original term). If our expectation of learning is more complex, then students might be demonstrating the abilities of "analyzing/analysis", "evaluating/synthesis", or "creating/evaluation" (Anderson & Krathwohl; Bloom) at the very least on essays, lab situations, projects, or the like. But is mimicry of content—whether demonstrated in a simple or deep formulation as indicated by Bloom—an adequate exemplification of learning? Is it sufficient to hold the perspective that students entering in a given academic program should master the content (i.e., have regurgitated said content in a conspicuous way) as an adequate testament to their learning? Surely, one may challenge, learning content is important—an accounting major should have command of accounting principles and concepts in order to demonstrate their understanding of accounting. The same could be said of most any other discipline as well. However, to move learning to the level of expertise expected of students by the real world, the *depth of understanding* in learning should be questioned as well as the amount of content accumulated along the way.

Bloom's Taxonomy (1956) presents a hierarchy of thinking skills and demonstration of knowledge which has been useful for many years in conceptualizing the presentation of content (teaching) and the demonstration of performance (learning), particularly the revised version designed by Anderson & Krathwohl (2001) which is more expansive and descriptive than the original. However, Bloom's configuration has fallen short in reinforcing a key idea regarding deep learning which Perkins (1998) calls "understanding performances." Perkins defines understanding performances as "activities that go beyond the rote and the routine," (p. 42). In a more expansive definition, Perkins notes,

> To understand a topic means no more or less than to be able to perform flexibly with the topic—to explain, justify, extrapolate, relate, and apply in ways that go beyond knowledge and routine skill. Understanding is a matter of being able to think and act flexibly with what you know. The flexible performance capacity *is* the understanding. (p. 42)

If learning is the objective of teaching, then one must ask: Do Perkin's arguments for understanding performances better describe the type of learning reflected in effective teaching demanded by Dewey than the mimicry of regurgitating content described earlier? Surely one would have to agree that learning at a deeper level of understanding ("going beyond") is superior to the mere accumulation and regurgitation of bits of knowledge ("rote and routine"). But there is within Perkin's formulation an idea that has confounded my thinking with regard to focusing on the delivery and accumulation of content as a focal point of learning: "being able to think and act." Perkins (1998) reiterates this idea when he says, "developing understanding should be thought of as attaining a repertoire of complex performances. Attaining understanding is less like *acquiring something* and more like *learning to act* flexibly," (p. 52, italics added for emphasis).

In answering this first question, learning typically and traditionally has seemed to me to be centered on "acquiring something" (i.e., content) whether at shallow or deep levels, but *acquiring* content is still the focal point of teaching efforts. But, I must ask myself, "Is amassing content all there is to learning?" Is there nothing more? What about "learning to act"? What exactly does that mean and how does that impact learning? Let me address this in a moment.

If the Grade Students Have Earned Is Truly Reflective of Their Learning

On another hand, learning must mean that students have earned grades that are truly reflective of their learning. Students enroll in courses of study to learn and prepare themselves for future vocations, careers, advanced study, or perhaps for personal satisfaction and edification. Universal in education at any level is the "grade" that students receive for their performance in the course or classroom. Grades reflected on traditional "report cards" inform students and others of the quantity and quality of the student's academic work in a given educational setting. Grades are often based on some sort of assessment devised by the teacher—to measure a student's response to assignments of one kind or another, to give credit for attendance or participation, or any number of other criteria—all of them formulated at a teacher's discretion. A grade may be based on just about anything if the teacher believes that something to be important or indicative of or relevant to a student's *learning*.

Student performance is typically evaluated and summarized in either evaluative words (such as *pass, fail, excellent, average, or poor*), a hierarchical sequence of numbers (such as, *100-0, 20-0, 4-0*), or letters of the alphabet (such as, *A, B, C, D, F*) (Juarez, 1994). Regardless of the scale, the point of grading is to label the performance of the student in the course and perhaps to signify the level of *mastery* the student has demonstrated. The problem is, however, that despite one's best efforts, grades are always an arbitrary designation. No matter how objective the criteria might be, from an exact answer or response to a detailed rubric of structured points, ambiguity always manages to creep into the configuration of the grade—how many "right" answers qualify for an "A" or a "B" or a "C"; how many quality points for a well developed thought, sentence, or paragraph; how much for "technical" quality or "creative" quality, or "insightful" quality; etc.—these are all designations and lines of demarcation determined by the teacher. Even a teacher teaching the same exact course, with the same exact syllabus as the teacher next door will have different interpretations of grade application based on personal interpretation, preference, or bias. All these decisions are arbitrary despite one's desire that they not be so. It is just the nature of the game.

Similarly, what exactly does a grade mean? First, a grade is an arbitrary designation, but secondly, a grade lacks universal application or meaning, despite the universal presence of grades in all aspects and levels of the educational world. But really, what does receiving an "A" mean on an assignment—that the student mastered the content and understands it completely, or that the student was tenacious enough to complete the assignment, or that the student has made sufficient progress from the last assignment to the present assignment to warrant a significant reward by way of the grade? Furthermore, does a grade in one class or section of a course meet the same criteria as the same grade in another class or section on a similar assignment? Also, a related aspect of grading is to provide some sort of feedback to students regarding their progress in the course of study. Receiving an "A" would presume that one has done well on a given task or assignment. Receiving a "D" presumes one has not done well. But what does that "D" mean to the student? What does it communicate to the student? Obviously, nothing of importance or significance is communicated, particularly when considering that the student needs to make improvements to his/her work or efforts on the task or assignment. Providing grades does not

help the student in any but the most superficial ways to monitor their own performance or demonstration of their own learning.

Notwithstanding these limitations of grading, we come back to another important issue: deciding the relationship between grades and learning. Two questions come to mind: "How can I be fair to all students?", and "How can I ensure that the best learners get the best grades?" One conundrum I have encountered in all teaching environments regardless of level is that not all students perform at the same level. Students come to a given class with certain attitudes, beliefs, abilities, capabilities, desires, proclivities, and demeanors, and none of them are the same, even when they happen to be identical twins as I have found on several occasions. This disparity plays out in (or more accurately, impacts) their performance. Even with a desire to avoid the "bell curve" with its symmetrical distribution of grades and instead to grade everyone against their individual effort, the challenge to grade consistently without bias is compromised. This is not to say that a teacher cannot be as objective as possible and as fair as possible, which may be a reason that objective tests are so popular—they demand less time to grade and give the appearance of impartiality. It is instead to acknowledge that the color of learning on an individual basis has many shades. As a result the teacher must be clear about what they hold up to be evidence of learning for all students alike.

Another conundrum of grading is that it is possible for some lackluster students to perform well on grading criteria—they have read all the text material, they have done all the assignments, they have passed all the tests, their grades are some shade of good—but as the teacher and resident expert on the content, one may conclude that these students have not learned all they could have learned or applied themselves to their full potential. Is this realization grounds for assigning a lower grade, thus indicating that these students have in fact learned less that their classmates who have applied themselves more diligently, enthusiastically, and/or demonstrably, and in doing so presumably learned more? Moreover, is it fair to award a grade to a student, when it is obvious to the teacher that the student has not performed to the same measure as a more stellar student?

Remember, if learning is the goal, then the quality of that learning is important. It is essential, then, to make sure that a student's grade as accurately as possible reflects that student's learning in the course. Frankly, I am just not sure that is possible given the arbitrary and ambiguous nature of grading. The bright spot in this conundrum of grading can be found in the kind of performance students engage in for a given grade. If one adopts Perkin's idea of performance for understanding and students are assessed based on their "acquiring something" through demonstrations "beyond the rote and routine", then perhaps there is some hope to finding clarity in teaching with respect to grading. More complex demonstrations of learning in practice may counteract the less revealing methods of paper and pencil tests, for example.

If Students Are Changed in Any Way By the Act of Teaching

Finally, learning must mean that students are changed in some way by their encounter with the teacher, the content, and the act of teaching. Recall from basic psychology that learning is characterized as "a relatively permanent change in an organism's behavior due to experience," (Myers, 2004, p. 303). Despite Myers articulating this point in the context of a chapter on conditioning, the point is applicable here as well. The very act of learning implies that some

change has occurred in students at least minimally on a thinking (and hopefully, behavioral) level. If one agrees with Perkins (1998) and holds that deep learning means going beyond the rote and routine to learning to act, then there must be something noticeable in the thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors of students engaged in the learning environment. And these actions of the learner must be more than grades, more than simple demonstrations of learning.

Learning to act would presume that students acquire and demonstrate what they have learned in a conspicuous way both in and out of the classroom (Eryaman, 2006, 2007). There are different ways of seeing learning in evidence and the level to which students demonstrate their learning can be evidence of the quality of the teaching they have experienced in a classroom or course. By way of example to illustrate this point, consider what students learn in math class. It is one thing for a student to solve a simple equation when the equation is presented clearly. The given student simply executes the steps presented by the mathematical notations to solve the equation and obtain the right answer. It is quite another thing for the same student to decode a word problem, particularly of some length and with lots of possibly conflicting information, and create an equation to solve the specifics of the problem (assuming that an equation is called for in that situation). It is still another thing for the student in question to be faced with a problem in the real world, perhaps one that clearly calls for mathematical thinking (say in a construction setting) and to create an equation (or perhaps several) to help solve the problem posed by the demands of the real world setting. It is, finally, still another thing for the student to untangle a messy real world-based problem with little definition or clarity. The student must first to decide what the problem is including its boundaries and parameters (what is relevant to the problem and what is not), or which of several interrelated problems must be solved first to uncover the relevant, key problem. Then, the student must decide if an equation is even relevant to the identified problem or at what point an equation might be relevant. Next, the student must decide which type of equation will best solve a particular step (or steps) toward the solution of the problem(s), one that might require other types of information as well and within which meaningful mathematical data or suggestions are buried. These situations of learning illustrate the concept of depth of understanding in learning advocated by Perkins, each problem situation being deeper than the previous one. But that students *can* solve the more complex of these problem situations demonstrates the change that hopefully occurs as a result of meaningful teaching. The most significant change in students after encountering effective teaching is that they understand, can discriminate, can make sense of, and can do the work of the course at greater level of expertise than when they started the class or course.

Finding Clarity

In struggling with the two previous points—acquiring content and earning a grade—I came to realize that there must be some other basis upon which to assess a student's performance, one which was more meaningful than acquiring content, more substantial than earning a good grade. I came to realize that I wanted students to demonstrate that they were *learners*, actively engaged in their own *learning*. To be an active, engaged *learner* goes beyond the act of *learning* regardless of the quality of the learning taking place (Bruce & Eryaman, 2015). I wanted students "to think and act", as Perkins so aptly put it. I wanted students to think and act in the pursuit of learning, with learning being both the means and the end.

With these thoughts and ideas in mind, I created the *Rubric for Learning Behaviors* (see Figure 1: Rubric for Learning Behaviors below) (Roberson, 2010). I began by identifying the characteristics I believed that excellent learners should possess, characteristics that I wanted to see publicly displayed by students actively engaged in the process and flow of the class. These characteristics are listed in the left hand column of the rubric and include the qualities of *attentiveness*, *engagement*, being *conversant*; of *thinking, analyzing, integrating*, and *synthesizing*; of *application, learning, risk-taking*; of having *passion*, holding a *scholarly orientation*, and possessing an active *work ethic*. These characteristics, at a minimum, if enacted by students to some degree would naturally cause them to be (1) engaged in the activities of the class, (2) engaged in the acquisition of the content being studied, and (3) engaged in the successful processing of that content. By displaying these learning characteristics they would be active and engaged learners well on their way to acquiring a depth of understanding in their learning.

To add dimension to these terms, I identified behaviors that I thought would capture the essence and meaning of each of the characteristics. I tried to allow flexibility in expression for each descriptor by using a general action verb phrase, like "displays attention throughout each class" (attentiveness). I did not want to split hairs or bog down the descriptors with a range of "displays attention" behaviors; rather, I wanted students to know that paying attention in class is an important characteristic of learners. How they display attention or the degree to which they display attention is up to the individual student and respects their individual learning style. Still the listing of descriptors—and they are by no means all inclusive—is meant to create a picture for the teacher as well as the student as to what learner behavior should look like in my classroom.

Table 1: *Rubric for Learner Behavior*

Student Behaviors	An "Excellent" Student:
Attentiveness	• displays attention throughout each class • displays mindfulness throughout each class • senses direction of class and activities and stays connected
Engagement	• generates questions and initiates discussion • displays knowledge of texts and articles assigned • demonstrates familiarity with class materials and handouts
Conversant	• responds actively to questions and discussion • demonstrates ability to add substantively to discussions • ability to converse and reason in scholarly style using language of the discipline
Thinking	• demonstrates high level of thinking skills (critical thinking) • demonstrates ability to abstract and make connections between concepts
Analyzing	• demonstrates ability to analyze course content • makes sense of course content by breaking apart and/or examining constituent parts of content
Integrating	• demonstrates ability to integrate course content where appropriate • makes relevant connections among various points of content, particularly those that are disparate in character

Synthesizing	• demonstrates ability to synthesize course content where appropriate • combines points of content to reveal new ideas or a new understanding
Application	• demonstrates ability to make application of course content to real world of work • able to connect theory to practice
Learning	• demonstrates learning in activities of class or completion of assignments • actively seeks to close the gap between teacher's expectations and the student's demonstrated performance
Risk-taking	• demonstrates willingness to take a risk in composition and completion of assignments and in participating in course activities
Passion	• demonstrates a passion for learning • demonstrates a passion for discipline of education • demonstrates a passion for excellence
Scholarly Orientation	• demonstrates a scholarly orientation toward course and course content • seeks to develop scholarly orientation to discipline and to increase personal knowledge base, including use of language of the discipline • demonstrates command of APA style of writing for compositions, citations, and references
Work Ethic	• accepts responsibility for own learning • engages actively in completion of course requirements without complaint • completes assignments that are of a high quality in timely manner • maintains standards of honesty and integrity in all facets of work for the class, particularly for work submitted as a requirement of the class • maintains the decorum of learning environment and displays respect for all members of the learning community

I had several goals in mind when designing the rubric. First, I wanted to provide a voice to ideas I had about what learners should look like, beyond organisms simply gobbling up content or striving for tangible rewards in grades. This helped to clarify my mental model of learning. For me, learning (what students accumulate) is a richer concept than at first glance and must include the *act* of learning (the thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors of the learner engaged in learning) itself. To not consider the act of learning is to ignore a key ingredient or component on the learning side of the coin. Second, I wanted to prompt students to think about their own learning (meta-cognition)—that learning has a certain "look" and is expressed in identifiable actions and that these characteristics impact the quality and depth of their learning. This is particularly important in a developmental sense. Younger students are not as adept in self-evaluation nor do they have the experience needed for effective self-evaluation. Providing them with criteria and descriptors is essential to their own development as accomplished learners. I also wanted students to realize that learning occurs in situations and localities other than my classroom, but that meaningful learning has similar processes and expressions regardless of locale or subject or teacher. Third, I wanted a way to augment and provide meaning to the act of assessing student performance, thus providing clarity for my teaching efforts. If I could be confident that students were truly acting and performing beyond the rote and routine in a way in which they were changed as a result of my teaching (and I could see that taking place in each

class session), then I would feel as if my teaching was truly effective, that I was capturing both sides of the coin, and as a result I could feel confident that students were indeed learning while in my class.

Displaying Clarity

Teaching and learning are interdependent terms, and the work of the teacher is to ensure that students learn. Unfortunately, even the best teachers cannot ensure exactly what students learn as all students construct their own learning. But effective teachers work to successfully create stimulating, engaging, positive learning environments in which learning can readily take place and in which students can participate actively in their own learning (Riedler & Eryaman, 2016).

In creating a stimulating, engaging, positive learning environment, it is important, I believe, that teachers have a clear understanding of what learning is, what learning looks like, and whether or not learning is occurring. It is to this end that I have sought to find clarity in my teaching, to discover for myself what is meant by *learning* and to identify the characteristics of active and engaged *learners*. I have come to the conclusion, like Perkins, that learning must be deep and to be so it must move beyond the rote and the routine processes of the classroom in which students accumulate content and earn grades to find a learning environment where students are able to think and act in ways that enlighten their own minds to the efforts of their own learning. More than I want students to be learning, I want them to be learners first and foremost. The *Rubric for Learner Behavior* is but one pathway to that end.   But it is one end all teachers need to clarify for their own classrooms, for the learners who sit therein, and for the teaching that takes place, and for the learning that hopefully will occur.

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Changing Society, Changing Humanity: Freirian Goals of Education

Cristobal Madero*
University of California, Berkeley & Universidad Alberto Hurtado, Chile

Abstract

In this paper, the author demonstrates how education is presented by Freire as the key both for changing society and leading people toward true humanity. The author's interest is not to further develop the method that Freire elaborated in the sixties and seventies, but, rather, to show the degree to which his theory is coherent with his vision of what it means to become truly human through social change. Specifically, this article explores whether or not education is the key element to build true humanity through social change. The author first explains how dialogue is a necessary starting point to understand the connection between education and change in the two aforementioned levels. The author presents how Freire considers the way myths in unequal societies play a damaging role due to their crystallization of unfair social structures. Consciousness and conscientization are the key tools to overcome these myths. This awareness at the same time is the essential component of an education for liberation. Finally, the author presents some obstacles to this new kind of liberation.

Keywords: Freire, consciousness, conscientization, dialogue, critical pedagogy, liberation

* Cristobal Madero is a sociologist and a theologian, and currently a Ph.D. Candidate in Educational Policies and Organizations in the Graduate School of Education at the University of California, Berkeley, and a Research Associate at the School of Education in the Universidad Alberto Hurtado in Santiago, Chile. Before coming to his current studies in Berkeley, awarded by a Fulbright Scholarship and sponsored by the Council for the Science and Technology CONICYT, he taught for ten years philosophy, theology, and social sciences in several high schools in Chile. His research is focused in in-service teacher's motivation, incentives, and formation, the sociology of education, and comparative education. He has published in the International Journal of Sociology of Education, the Harvard Review of Latin American Studies, the Journal of Catholic Education, Revista Mexicana de Investigacion en Educación, International Studies in Catholic Education, and Revista Pensamiento Educativo.

Correspondence: cristobalsj@berkeley.edu

Introduction

Paulo Freire is one of the most important Latin American figures of all time. Certainly he made his mark as an educator and as an intellectual of education. Since the second half of the 20th century, he has influenced the world with his thought and has changed the lives of millions of students and teachers up through today. His relentless work as teacher, professor, administrator, author, activist, and politician left a mark not only in his own Brazil, but in the many other places where he was: Chile, the United States, Geneva, and Guinea-Bissau.

He was an expert not only in terms of the contents and practices in education, but also in what it means to be human. The latter is most likely the reason why so many in the educational field and beyond find him an inspiration, why he received more than twenty *doctoris honoris causa* throughout the world, and why many felt he should win the Nobel Peace Prize.

Many scholars have highlighted this humanism of Paulo Freire. They have argued that Freire was looking for more than just a better educational system or for the improvement of teaching and learning techniques (Eryaman, 2009; Riedler & Eryaman, 2010). Freire was proposing a new kind of society rooted in the centrality of a better humankind; men and women who received a call, a vocation to attain true humanity (Eryaman, 2006, 2007).

Here, I will show how education is presented by Freire as the key both for changing society and leading people toward true humanity. My interest is not to further develop the method that Freire elaborated in the sixties and seventies, but, rather, to show the degree to which his theory is coherent with his vision of what it means to become truly human through social change. Specifically, this article explores whether or not education is the key element to build true humanity through social change. I will first explain how dialogue is a necessary starting point to understand the connection between education and change in the two aforementioned levels. I will present how Freire considers the way myths in unequal societies play a damaging role due to their crystallization of unfair social structures. Consciousness and conscientization, I will show, are the key tools to overcome these myths. This awareness at the same time is the essential component of an education for liberation. Finally, I will present some obstacles to this new kind of liberation.

Dialogue as the Starting Point

While Freire was in Chile after his exile from Brazil in 1964, he dedicated his time to two tasks. The first one was the writing of his first two books, *Education as Practice of Freedom* and *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* The second one was to work in the Institute of Agriculture under the Ministry of Agriculture. Freire was asked to develop his literacy method in the rural areas of Chile. During his time in Chile, Freire saw how agrarian reform took place in this country. Assessing how the new technologies were incorporated among the rural population, he developed two concepts to explain two different ways of educating the population in a new way. The first concept is that of *extension* and the second *communication*. Freire (1973) writes,

> … a fundamental task of the extension agent is 'to persuade the rural masses to accept our propaganda.' It is impossible to affirm that persuasion to accept propaganda is an educational activity. I am unable to see how persuasion to accept propaganda can be

squared with education: for true education incarnates the permanent search of people together with others for their becoming more fully human in the world in which they exist. (p.96)

The work of extension that representatives of the Chilean government were doing with the peasants was not education. "Extension cannot be squared with education if the latter is considered the practice of freedom" (p.97). Instead, it was just propaganda that was an actual obstacle to a real education; the one that has for its mission helping people to find their full humanity. "On the contrary, instead of being the transference of knowledge—which more or less 'kills' knowledge—education, is the gnosiological condition in its broadest sense" (p.139).

Due to Freire's work in the state of Pernambuco, Brazil, as the director of the Department of Education and Culture of the Social Service of Industry (SESI), he understood that education is a process of communication where two or more human beings share their lives, not just their knowledge. That is the reason why dialogue plays a crucial role in his theory of education. Dialogue, as will be shown later, is both a necessary concept and a practice to better understand more complex concepts and practices as conscientization, banking education, and problem-posing education, among others.

For Freire, "Only dialogue truly communicates" (p.45). In addition, he believes that "Without dialogue there is no communication, and without communication there can be no true education" (pp.92-93). There is no communication when somebody just delivers a message to another person or group of people. Communication involves the actual presence and exchange between the two. Indeed, as was mentioned in the first chapter, no human being can define him or herself without reference to another social being. The social nature of human beings makes dialogue "an existential necessity" (Freire, 2012, p.88). Freire goes even beyond this crucial statement for his theory when he writes that dialogue "is an act of creation; it must not serve as a crafty instrument for the domination of one person by another… [dialogue] is not possible if it is not infused with love. Love is at the same time the foundation of dialogue and dialogue itself" (p.89).

The content of the dialogue is as important as the aforementioned conditions. Freire (1973) thinks that "Whoever enters into dialogue does so with someone about something; and that something ought to constitute the new content of our proposed education" (p.46). This conceptualization allows us to think about how essential dialogue is for the definition of a task either inside a classroom in a teacher-student relation or outside in the developing of a social process. Freire (1973) writes in relation to the former that,

> Thus, the dialogical character of education as the practice of freedom does not begin when the teacher-student meets with the students-teachers in a pedagogical situation, but rather when the former first asks herself or himself what she or he will dialogue with the latter about. And preoccupation with the content of dialogue is really preoccupation with the program content of education. (p.93)

Related to the latter he thinks that "The only effective instrument is a *humanizing pedagogy* in which the revolutionary leadership establishes a permanent relationship of dialogue with the oppressed" (p.68). As was discussed in the previous chapter, a lack of leadership in these terms is an actual obstacle to social change and therefore, to attain fully humanity.

Freire writes,

In communication when the content is comprised of convictions, there is not only the question of the meaningful comprehension of the signs, but also the question of adhesion or non-adhesion to the conviction expressed by one of the communicating Subjects. For meaningful comprehension of the signs, the communicating Subjects must be able to reconstitute within themselves the dynamic process from which the conviction they express by means of the linguistic signs is developed. (p.142)

Overcoming Myths

There will be no true humanity if there is no social change. There will be no social change without an educational philosophy and practice grounded in an actual dialogue. There will be no true dialogue if those involved in it do not overcome myths in society, which are never neutral. In this context Freire (1985) thinks that it is absolutely crucial to overcome myths created by the dominant class,

the myth of their superiority, of their purity of soul, of their virtues, their wisdom, the myth that they save the poor, the myth of the neutrality of the church, of theology, education, science, technology, the myth of their own impartiality. From these grow the other myths: of the inferiority of other people, of their spiritual and physical impurity, and of the absolute ignorance of the oppressed. (p.123)

The myth of absolute ignorance is probably the most dangerous myth in any society. When a group states the ignorance of another, and society organizes itself around that myth, a tacit permission is given to the so-called non-ignorant group to make the other group a part of them. "This myth implies the existence of someone who decrees the ignorance of someone else" (Freire, 2012, pp.133-134). Thus, this is a problematic doorway whereby someone is educated without taking into consideration what their dreams or actual needs are, but also to violate human rights in the name of an apparent truth.[i]

What Freire is seeking in his educational theory are the skills that the oppressed need to unveil those myths of superiority. He writes, "We wanted to offer the people the means by which they could supersede their magic or naïve perception of reality by one that was predominantly critical, so that they could assume positions appropriate to the dynamic climate of the transition" (Freire, 1973, p.45).[ii] This naïve perception, for instance about the neutrality of science, "is nothing more than a necessary myth of the ruling classes." (Freire, 1985, p.157). Thus, the critical component is crucial in order to achieve the human vocation of every man and woman. Freire thinks that "the critical and dynamic view of the world, strives to unveil reality, unmask its mythicization, and achieve a full realization of the human task: the permanent transformation of reality in favor of the liberation of people" (Freire, 2012, p.102).

It is also crucial to overcome myths because they diminish the chances of the oppressed for thinking in a cohesive way. Freire (2012) thinks that "they must first cut the umbilical cord of magic and myth which binds them to the world of oppression; the unity which links them to each other must be of a different nature. To achieve this indispensable unity the revolutionary process must be, from the beginning, cultural action" (p.175). Otherwise, "at the moment when one is seduced by this falsification of reality, one ceases to be critical" (Freire, 1985, p.158).

Demythologization is a liberating experience that allows both oppressed and oppressors to walk closer to the truth and thus to contribute to the building up of a full humanity. Instead of the violence which imposes the truth of one group over another, Freire thinks that everyone has part of the truth. He writes, "I believe that those who are weak are those who think they possess the truth, and are thus intolerant; those who are strong are those who say: 'Perhaps I have part of the truth, but I don't have the whole truth. You have part of the truth. Let's seek it together'" (Freire & Faundez, 1989, p.20). Again, dialogue and eventually the very process of education need the overcoming of myths in human and social relations.

Consciousness and Conscientization[iii]

After having shown the centrality of the concepts and processes of dialogue and myth for Freire's educational theory, a third pair of concepts will be shown: consciousness and conscientization. Both concepts are critical in Freire's theory. He insists on how the process of having consciousness is what draws the dividing line between animals and human beings. Indeed, Personalism is again present in another stage of his thought; now united with Erich Fromm's school of critical theory. Freire (2012) writes,

> Fromm said of this consciousness that, without such possession, 'it would lose contact with the world.' The oppressor consciousness tends to transform everything surrounding it into an object of its domination. The earth, property, production, the creations of people, people themselves, time—everything is reduced to the status of objects at its disposal. (p.58)

Indeed "Consciousness does not arbitrarily create reality, as they thought in their old naïve days of subjectivist idealism" (Freire, 1989, p.123). It does not do so either for the oppressed or for the oppressors. Class consciousness, according to Marx's definition, is useful for Freire and enables him to explain how reality is defined and sometimes mythicized. Freire himself rejects the presence of people from the dominant class in the struggles of the oppressed. He believes that in belonging to a certain class they are also informed and influenced by that certain class consciousness. Freire (2012) writes,

> Certain members of the oppressor class join the oppressed in their struggle for liberation, thus moving from one pole of the contradiction to the other…. Our converts, on the other hand, truly desire to transform the unjust order; but because of their background they believe that they must be the executors of the transformation. They talk about the people, but they do not trust them; and trusting the people is the indispensable precondition for revolutionary change. (p.60)

The oppressors are not able to envision a process of change in society. They are neither able to overcome the power of myths, nor are they able to provide a model of full humanity. For this reason, the oppressed have to develop a consciousness that enables them to be aware and critical at the same time. In this sense, Freire (1973), thinking in Brazil during the sixties, writes,

> Our traditional curriculum, disconnected from life, centered on words emptied of the reality they are meant to represent, lacking in concrete activity, could never develop a critical consciousness. Indeed, its own naïve dependence on high-sounding phrases, reliance on rote, and tendency toward abstractness actually intensified our naïveté. (p.37)

So often confused, conscientization is not the same as consciousness. Conscientization is not just realizing that one is part of one specific class. Freire (1989) says,

> Conscientization, which is identified with cultural action for freedom, is the process by which in the subject-object relationship (already so often mentioned in this conversation) the subject finds the ability to grasp, in critical terms, the dialectical unity between self and object. That is why we reaffirm that there is no conscientization outside of praxis, outside of the theory-practice, reflection-action unity. (p.161)

Furthermore, Freire (1973) states that conscientization is not simply a socio-economic process that allows one to be more critical. He writes,

> There are certain positions, attitudes, and gestures associated with the awakening of critical awareness, which occur naturally due to economic progress. These should not be confused with an authentically critical position, which a person must make his own by intervention in and integration with his own context. Conscientização represents the development of the awakening of critical awareness. It will not appear as a natural byproduct of even major economic changes, but must grow out of a critical educational effort based on favorable historical conditions. (p.19)

> Nobody can impose onto other people their own conscientization. It is something personal. For instance, in the case of any process designed to generate social change, Freire states "Nor can the leadership merely 'implant' in the oppressed a belief in freedom, thus thinking to win their trust. The correct method lies in dialogue. The conviction of the oppressed that they must fight for their liberation is not a gift bestowed by the revolutionary leadership, but the result of their own [conscientização]" (Freire, 2012, p.67).

It is essential that the oppressed embrace a process of reflection, which is part of an authentic praxis. Freire writes,

> The insistence that the oppressed engage in reflection on their concrete situation is not a call to armchair revolution. On the contrary, reflection—true reflection—leads to action. On the other hand, when the situation calls for action, that action will constitute an authentic praxis only if its consequences become the object of critical reflection. In this sense, the praxis is the new raison d'etre of the oppressed; and the revolution, which inaugurates the historical moment of this raison d'etre, is not viable apart from their concomitant conscious involvement. Otherwise, action is pure activism. To achieve this

praxis, however, it is necessary to trust in the oppressed and in their ability to reason. (p.66)

Education for Liberation

An education for liberation is a formal educational process that gives to both the oppressed and the oppressors the necessary skills to unmask, by means of dialogue and a conscientization process, social oppression. Eventually, thanks to this kind of education, a change in society and a change in every human being will be attained. Freire thinks that, "It would be a contradiction in terms if the oppressors not only defended but actually implemented a liberating education. But if the implementation of a liberating education requires political power and the oppressed have none, how then is it possible to carry out the pedagogy of the oppressed prior to the revolution?" (p.54). One answer to this question is given by Freire in this form: "One aspect of the reply is to be found in the distinction between systematic education, which can only be changed by political power, and educational projects, which should be carried out with the oppressed in the process of organizing them" (p.54).

According to Freire, if the oppressed handle this process of education, the construction of the content of education has to be made in a dialogical way. Freire says that "It is to the reality which mediates men, and to the perception of that reality held by educators and people, that we must go to find the program content of education" (p.96). Once again, Freire observes "Because this view of education starts with the conviction that it cannot present its own program but must search for this program dialogically with the people, it serves to introduce the pedagogy of the oppressed, in the elaboration of which the oppressed must participate" (p.124). It is what Freire understands as liberating dialogue which is "not a technique, a mere technique…" but "a kind of necessary posture to the extent that humans have become more and more critically communicative beings" (Shor & Freire, 1987, p.98).

The fundamental insight is that education is not a process of memorization of contents that do not make any sense for anyone. Freire firmly affirms that "If our option is for man [sic], education is cultural action for freedom and therefore an act of knowing and not of memorization" (Freire, 2000, p.7). Reflecting on the literacy campaigns in Guinea-Bissau in the early seventies, Freire (1983) writes, "One of the most important aspects of the plan, as I remarked earlier, is that it does not reduce the educational system to a funnel between the different levels of instruction. One level is not simply 'preparation' for the other" (p.45). This idea of education against a funnel vision reminds us that the content, besides having been created dialogically, has to be rooted in "concrete historical and cultural reality" (Freire, 2000, p.7).

Freire believes that the liberation of the people, which leads them to attain a true humanity, has to include the perspectives of people who are subjects. He writes, "I am convinced that educational difficulties would diminish if the schools took into consideration the culture of the oppressed, their language, their efficient way of doing math, their knowledge of the world" (Freire, 1996, p.16). There are some trends in education, as much in current days as in Freire's times, that advance the conviction that technical knowledge or high culture knowledge is the only content that belongs in a curriculum. Freire thinks that the "Union between knowledge and commonsense is essential for any understanding of political struggle, education and the

educational process" (Freire & Faundez, 1989, p.47). Indeed, the content of education has to be built with the help of everyone involved in the educational process.

The role of teachers in this model is a major point of reflection for Freire. Probably the best summary in one of his later works, is the following,

> We must scream loudly that, in addition to the activism of unions, the scientific preparation of teachers, a preparation informed by political clarity, by the capacity of teachers, by the teachers' desire to learn, and by their constant and open curiosity, represents the best political tool in the defense of their interests and their rights. (Freire, 1998, p.8)

The teacher is an educator with political skills, who is able to dream and to learn continually. Indeed, "Unhopeful educators contradict their practice. They are men and women without address, and without a destination. They are lost in history" (Freire, 1997, p.107). Besides that, a teacher who is not well prepared to educate in a liberating key, should not be teaching. She or he will eventually serve the interest of the oppressors.

Obstacles to an Education for Liberation

There are four obstacles to an education for liberation:

1. The treatment of students as objects under the banking education model.

2. Bureaucracy and Standardization of banking education.

3. Neoliberalism as a developmental model.

4. The pedagogy of both hitting and permissiveness.

This vision of education as a collaborative process has to struggle against a model of education that emphasizes a vertical relation amongst the participants in the educational process. Freire (2012) interprets the former as the leading model in education. It represents a severe social problem and probably the main obstacle to his educational theory. He thinks that "Education is suffering from narration sickness" where a teacher has "to 'fill' the students with the contents of his narration—contents which are detached from reality, disconnected from the totality that engendered them and could give them significance" (p.71). Students are treated as objects when "it turns them into 'containers,' into 'receptacles' to be 'filled' by the teacher. The more completely she fills the receptacles, the better a teacher she is. The more meekly the receptacles permit themselves to be filled, the better students they are" (p.72). It is the promotion of an adaptive behavior instead of a critical one. It is the perfect recipe to maintain the status quo. This is what banking education is all about.

Such a model of education "reduces the practice of education to a complex of techniques, naively considered to be neutral, by means of which the educational process is standardized in a sterile and bureaucratic operation" (Freire, 2000, p.7). Besides that, in this model "the person is not a conscious being…; he or she is rather the possessor of a consciousness: an empty 'mind'

passively opens to the reception of deposits of reality from the world outside" (Freire, 2012, p. 75). As has been repeated throughout this essay, if the oppressed cannot transform the world, they cannot attain true humanity either.

Banking education depicts "the profile of a man whose consciousness is 'spatialized,' and must be 'filled' or 'fed' in order to know." This is why Freire, quoting Sartre exclaims: "'O philosophia alimentaire!'" (Freire, 2000, p.15). [iv] Therefore a second large obstacle is not just the existence of a model of these characteristics, but also the hereditary cultural aspect of such a model which can be traced back to colonial times. Freire (1983) writes,

> An education that envisages making concrete such values as solidarity, social responsibility, creativity, discipline in the service of the common good, vigilance and a critical spirit… would not be possible if, in that education, the learners continued to be what they were in the colonial educational system, mere recipients of packaged knowledge, transferred to them by their teachers. (p.43) [v]

The weight of the culture, both in the Brazilian northeast and in Lexington, MA, has a significant impact on educational practice, which can be a potential obstacle to the liberation of men and women.

Another obstacle to an education for liberation can be found in the bureaucracy of the banking education. Freire (1989) thinks that "Any educational practice based on standardization, on what is laid down in advance, on routine in which everything is predetermined, is bureaucratizing and thus anti-democratic" (p.41). Freire is not directly criticizing standardization, but the educational practices based on it. Alongside standardization, there are some who criticize the evaluation as an authoritarian practice as well. On this point, Freire (1998) is quite clear. He writes,

> The evaluation of teachers' practice is necessary for a number of reasons. The first is part of the very nature of practice: All practice presents to its subjects, on the one hand, a program of action and, on the other, a continuous evaluation of the program's objectives. However, to program and to evaluate do not represent two separate activities, one preceding the other. They represent activities that are in a permanent relationship. (p.7)

The current socioeconomic model of development is also an obstacle for an education for liberation. For that reason Freire (1989) says "What I am concerned above all to do is to resist, theoretically and practically, two connections which are generally made. The first is the connection made between a democratic style and low academic standards; the second is that made between high academic standards and an authoritarian style" (p.33). Furthermore, he thinks banking education "is reproducing the authoritarianism of the capitalist mode of production. It is deplorable how progressive educators as they analyze and fight against the reproduction of the dominate ideology in the schools, actually reproduce the authoritarian ideology inherent in the capitalist mode of production" (p.42). In other words, schools and classrooms are not impervious to the capitalist model under a neoliberal philosophy. Freire (1998) thinks that the problem with neoliberals is that of "accept only technical and competent discourses. But there is no technical and competent discourse that is not naturally ideological as well" (p.11). In some sense they are blind and they transfer this blindness to the educational field. They also do not believe in the

political nature of education, and that is why Freire (1997) made the following statement as an answer to his neoliberal critics,

> Paulo Freire no longer makes any sense. The education needed today has nothing to do with dreams, utopias, conscientiousness, but rather with the technical, scientific, and professional development of learners. 'Development,' here is understood as training. This is exactly what has always interested the dominant classes: the despolitization of education. In reality, education requires technical, scientific, and professional development as much as it does dreams and utopia. (p.43)

Indeed, this is exactly what the neoliberal philosophy promotes. And there is its great failure: the misunderstanding of human nature.

Finally, Freire also considers that further obstacles to an education for liberation are two kinds of education that do not help in any way to educate anyone. He asks rhetorically in one of his late books, *Pedagogy of Indignation,* "How can one learn democracy within permissiveness devoid of limits, where freedom acts at will, or within an authoritarianism devoid of space, where freedom is never exercised?" (Freire, 2004, p.9). Corporal punishment and laxity as strategies to educate are both counterproductive with the democratic ideal. Indeed, both, even though in different ways, are rooted in a neoliberal philosophy. Freire observes that "By denying both the pedagogy of hitting and of permissiveness, let us hope that a new democratic practice will take root, one where authority does not surpass its limits and drown freedom nor is nullified by hypertrophied freedom. Let us hope, instead, that by limiting freedom we will limit authority" (Freire, 1996, p.57). Otherwise, people will be miseducated instead of educated, in order finally to be domesticated (Freire, 2012, p.51).

All four obstacles represent not only a perfect path for impeding the implementation of an education for liberation, but also a process that leads to the dehumanization of humankind. It is for that reason that an education orientated to the liberation of the person through the change of oppressing structures in society has the duty to fight against these obstacles which are essential parts of the banking model of education. Freire (2012) suggests that,

> Banking education (for obvious reasons) attempts, by mythicizing reality, to conceal certain facts which explain the way human beings exist in the world; problem-posing education sets itself the task of demythologizing. Banking education resists dialogue; problem-posing education regards dialogue as indispensable to the act of cognition which unveils reality. Banking education treats students as objects of assistance; problem-posing education makes them critical thinkers. Banking education inhibits creativity and domesticates (although it cannot completely destroy) the intentionality of consciousness by isolating consciousness from the world, thereby denying people their ontological and historical vocation of becoming more fully human. (pp.83-84)

Notes

[i] It will not be a surprise to find this reflection on myths in the writings of Freire. As a Latin American, he surely was familiar with the book *Facundo* of the Argentinian author Domingo Faustino Sarmiento. In that work from 1845, Sarmiento tells the history of Latin America through two concepts: civilization and barbarism. The Spanish defined the native population under the label of barbarism, while defining themselves under the label of civilization. Of course, they assigned a positive value to the latter and a negative to the former. By doing so, they had the ideological power to oppress everything (culture, institutions, and so on) and everyone who was part of the life system under the label of barbarism.

[ii] Related with the magical perception of the world, it might be interesting to consider the interaction between literature and Freire's theory. At the same time that the Brazilian was developing his theory in the sixties, seventies, and eighties, the Latin American Literature Boom took place in Latin America and beyond. This movement was a literary group of authors who developed Magic Realism. Well-known names are the Colombian Gabriel Garcia Marquez, the Mexican Carlos Fuentes, the Peruvian Mario Vargas Llosa, and the Chilean José Donoso.

[iii] Conscientização is a concept which has been widely attributed to Freire. However it was a concept created by faculties in the Higher Institute of Brazilian Studies, mainly by the philosopher Alvaro Pinto and Alberto Guerreiro. Cf. Ana Cruz, "Paulo Freire's Concept of Conscientização," in *Paulo Freire's Intellectual Roots: Toward Historicity in Praxis* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 172. Freire also writes, "In 1965 I wrote an article for the review *Civilisation et Developpement* entitled "Education and Conscientization." But it was Hélder Câmara who, as I have said, in his wanderings about the world, popularized the word so that it is a commonplace today in the United States, where a great number of articles are being written about conscientization." Paulo Freire, "Conscientizing as a Way of Liberating," in *Liberation Theology: A Documentary History*, ed. Alfred Hennelly (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1990), 6.

[iv] This interpretation led Freire to think about the nature of the literacy campaigns in Latin America, which in terms of philosophy, were similar to humanitarian hunger relief campaigns. If the latter campaigns were designed to fill empty stomachs, the literacy campaigns were designed to fill empty heads. Cf. Freire, *Cultural Action for Freedom*, 16.

[v] Nevertheless, Freire had a perspective and critique influenced by the very experience of Brazil's history of education. He writes, "… in Brazil during the first two hundred years of colonial life, the Jesuits were the only educators, engaged in catechizing the natives. Their activities were aimed mainly at 'conquering souls' for the Catholic faith, to which they added the teaching of Latin. Nevertheless, we must acknowledge the great effort made by these first educators in Brazil and the fact that some, like Nobrega and Anchieta, were the forerunners of valuable pedagogical methods." Cf. Paulo Freire, "Cultural Freedom in Latin America," in *Human Rights and the Liberation of Man in the Americas*, ed. Louis M. Colonnese (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1970), 170.

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Miscellany

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