

Richard rodriquez's experiencei

[Profession](#), [Teacher](#)



Richard Rodriguez's Experience Education is a topic that can be explored in many ways. Education is looked at in depth by both Richard Rodriguez in his essay, "The Achievement of Desire", and by Paulo Freire in his essay, "The Banking Concept of Education". After reading both essays, one can make some assumptions about different methods of education and exactly by which method Rodriguez was taught. The types of relationships Rodriguez had with his teachers, family and in life were affected by specific styles of education. Freire would interpret Rodriguez is a classic student of the banking system: as a student, to the position he takes, and as the writer of "The Achievement of Desire" As a scholarship boy, Rodriguez conformed to the banking concept in the classroom as well as home. Both of these environments present the student with obstacles he must surmount. Rodriguez vividly describes one distraction of studying at home, "Mother is ironing, the wireless is on, someone is singing a snatch of song or Father says intermittently whatever comes into his head" (Rodriguez 548). Rodriguez decides to evade this learning environment and decides to adapt to another. This environment is that of the classroom in which he tries his hardest to imitate the accents and dictation of the teachers. Rodriguez trusts their every direction and appears to respect them more than his own parents, which is apparent when Rodriguez states, "what mattered to me was that they were not like my teachers" (Rodriguez 658). Rodriguez displayed his indifference and lack of opinion evidently in a list that he created. Rodriguez read a newspaper article about a retired professor who had his own list of the "hundred most important books of Western Civilization" (Rodriguez 558). The professor's list of one hundred books was

also found in the newspaper. Along with the list, the professor claimed that, "More than anything else in my life, these books have made me all that I am" (Rodriguez 558). Rodriguez read the editorial and immediately after dedicated the next few months to reading every single book on the professor's list. This act of desperation exhibited how much influence Rodriguez's teachers and books had on his education. He read the books thinking that the professor's list would define his life as well, he did not realize that each person has their own list of works that reveal individual existences. Rodriguez's reading of the professor's books relates to the banking method because the retired teacher was depositing his thoughts, or in this case his choice books into Rodriguez. According to Freire's speech in the banking concept that "The student records, memorizes, and repeats without perceiving what the significance is" (Freire 244), Rodriguez had a "banking" concept educational experience. The idea that information is "deposited" from a teacher into a student fits the majority of Rodriguez's educational experiences. As a young child, Rodriguez feels that "books were going to make him educated" (Rodriguez 560). He never questioned what he was told by his teachers or what he read in any book. He didn't develop ideas of his own or any critical thinking skills. Rodriguez says that he was "a great mimic; a collector of thoughts, not a thinker; the very last person in class who ever feels obliged to have an opinion of his own" (Rodriguez 560). This type of education helps us to understand the relationships Rodriguez had with his "mentor" Richard Hoggart, as well as his school teachers and parents. After submitting to his teachers and to his books, Rodriguez slowly turned into what Freire would call an "automaton." He detached himself

from his parents and siblings and turned to books for comfort. He submerged himself in reading and studying, and distanced himself from social interaction. Rodriguez became not only removed from his parents; he actually became ashamed and embarrassed of them. Rodriguez only seemed to relate to his teachers. " I came to idolize my grammar school teachers. I began by imitating their accents, using their diction, trusting their every direction. The very first facts they dispensed, I grasped with awe. Any book they told me to read, I read — then waited for them to tell me which books I enjoyed" (Rodriguez 625). Rodriguez allowed his teachers to tell him how to think; he became completely submissive to their every belief. As Freire stated the teacher's task is, " to fill the students with the contents of his narration — contents which are detached from reality, disconnected from the totality that endangered them and could give them significance" (Freire 348). Instead of having his own opinion, Rodriguez permitted his instructors the privilege of reasoning for him. Rodriguez became a receptacle in every way possible. He basically left the fate of his education up to his teachers by allowing them to dump information into his mind. However, unlike the banking concept, his teachers did not dispose of knowledge in the form of narrated harangues. Instead, they used narrated literature in place of diatribes. Rodriguez read important books such as *The Scarlet Letter* and *Great Expectations*. " But I was not a good reader," Rodriguez claims, " merely bookish, I lacked a point of view when I read. Rather, I read in order to acquire a point of view" (Rodriguez 633). Rodriguez was a container in a sense that he retained the ideas of the books he read, but Rodriguez did not have an opinion about the author's content. This exemplifies Rodriguez as a

student of the banking concept. Freire states that, " Projecting an absolute ignorance onto others, a characteristic of the ideology of oppression, negates education and knowledge as processes of inquiry" (Freire 349). Rodriguez did not question or analyze the information; he simply accepted and deposited the knowledge without any doubts. As a professional writer, Rodriguez uses Hoggart's, *The Uses of Literacy*, to explain himself and his " education". He uses Hoggart's words to make readers, who cannot relate to his experience, understand more clearly. He uses it to explain his relationships, or lack of, and also his intensity to become educated. Hoggart explains things very directly, so Rodriguez uses Hoggart's writing to clarify his own. According to Freire's educational theories, Rodriguez only thinks that he has " learned" many lessons about reading, education, language, family, and culture as he works his way through elementary school to college, graduate school, and to his career as a teacher and writer. Rodriguez recalls a time when one of his nuns helped him through remedial reading. She taught him that books had " some possibility of fellowship between a reader and a writer, a communication" (Rodriguez 577). Rodriguez had a relationship with his books and used them as a form of communication. The ideas he read about in his books became the ideas that came out of his mouth. Really, all that Rodriguez has " learned" is just another example of his " banking" education and what he has been told not taught, throughout his life. Finally, Rodriguez was thoroughly dominated and oppressed by his books and by his teachers. He lacked a voice and an opinion as well. Rodriguez illustrates the characteristics of an automaton, thus confirming Freire's views regarding the banking concept. He is a container holding the ideas and thoughts of distant

authors and impersonal teachers. Rodriguez does not have opinions or beliefs of his own. His mind is filled with borrowed information and is missing analysis, examination, and point of view. After reviewing Rodriguez's education, Freire would undoubtedly classify him as a quintessential representation of a banking system pupil because in Freire's words, "banking' concept of education, in which the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filling and storing the deposits" (Freire244). Works Cited Freire, Paulo. The Banking Concept of Education. n. d. Rodriguze, Richard. The Achievement of Desire. n. d.