

Paulo freires pedagogy of the oppressed literature essay



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The Pedagogy of the Oppressed was written in 1968. The book became widely popular within a few years and was the subject of discussion by many people in the educational world as well as activists. In the teaching realm this book can be seen as something like an icon. It gives an inside view of the relationship triangle involved with education. The book can be seen as a set of guiding principles which Freire admits are skills he's learned through experience.

Freire encourages individuals to use growth through situations from daily life and learned lessons from circumstances as tools to further your learning experiences. Paulo Freire's purpose in writing the Pedagogy of the Oppressed is to help oppressed individuals form themselves and avoid being formed by other people's acts of oppression.

This book has a high level of vocabulary and word scheme that helps in it's own way to educate the reader not just of oppression but in literacy as well, which was one Freire's main works in life. Throughout this book you will find different proposals made by Freire to help individuals form themselves and heighten their own education. One of such examples is for a person to take his own life experiences that are constantly encountered instead of made up occurrences to rationalize problems in the educational aspect.

Paulo Freire was born September 19, 1921 in Recife, Pernambuco, Brazil. His family was one that would be considered " middle class." His father Joaquim Freire was an officer of the Pernambuco military police, while his mother tended to the home. During the Great Depression, the family's economic troubles resulted in them relocating in Jaboatao, which is where most of

Paulo's childhood and early teen years were spent. His mother managed to get him accepted into a private school in Recife, on a scholarship when he entered high school. Later in life Paulo would return to teach Portuguese at the same institution.

At the young age of 13, Freire's father passed away, that was the year of 1934. Paulo had a hard time making his way into the upper class society in his high school, because of his middle class status. School was a very important factor to the young adolescent and he strived to do his best in his studies. At the age of 20, Paulo was in Law school and had already mastered his grammar in Portuguese and was starting his studies in philosophy & Sociology.

In 1943 Paulo Freire married a elementary school teacher names, Elza Oliveira, just a year after he started Law School. Freire's Law career was a short one which ended before he could even put his skills to use with his first client. Freire's wife confided in him that she's hoped he's change his mind to education. Later the majority of his life would be based around his works in education and his strives to make improve the educational system.

In 1946 Freire took over the Pemambuco Department of Education and Culture of the Social Service Industry as the Director. His 10 year term is detailed in the Pedagogy of Hope, another of Freire's great works. The experience helped further Freire's achievements by giving him a basis on which to develop his doctoral dissertation in 1959. This is what led to his first book, Education as the Practice of Freedom, which was completed and published during the premature years of his exile in Chile in during 1965.

During 1957 Paulo was also appointed as the director of SESI's Pernambuco Regional Chapter Division of Research and planning. In 1959 Freire was appointed as the professor of the History and Philosophy of Education at the School of fine arts, after his thesis was accepted and he'd done much traveling and consulting with other SESI programs as well as founding the Capibarbie Institute which is committed to scientific, ethical and moral education.

Freire received many accomplishments and recognitions of honor as well as appointments of honor, many of which were educationally related. However after March 31, 1964 Freire's exceedingly advancing career took a pause. After Freire's participation for education movements and the peasants proved able to read the military came in and took control, throwing Paulo into prison twice and sending him into exile.

To better understand the purpose of the book, it is essential to first know the meaning behind the title. According to Merriam-Webster's online dictionary, the meaning of the word " Pedagogy" is: The art or science of teaching; especially: Education. This is the basis of the book itself; Freire directs our attention to the relationship between that of a teacher and student along with society Another word that it is vital to understand is " Oppressed", I turned once again to Merriam-Webster for this definition which is as follows: To crush or burden by use of power and authority.

Paulo Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed gives us a view into the education system and how it is becoming less of a good learning tool. The education system has become less creative, and the teacher's are sucking the very

supplement of life out of the lessons. The minds of students today resemble that of storage, filled solid with memorized information that is later replaced when the next subject is being taught. We can see evidence in this today as many teachers' focus in the classroom is prepping their students to the state's standards so that they may pass the standardized tests. The teacher's teach specifically to the test continuously replacing information in the students " storage" so that only the test materials remain.

Freire's book clues us in on the relationship between teacher and student, and the method that the teacher's try to instill in the students to produce the perfect student, some of which include: " The teacher is the main subject or model for the students, and the students are objects waiting to be molding into what the teacher perceives to be the perfect student." This relationship refers to Freire's comment in his book " During the

initial stage of their struggle the oppressed find in the oppressor their model of manhood." (Freire 46) This is one of the quotes I selected throughout the book that I believe help the reader to gain insight to the message being delivered through Freire's text.

Oppression of students is much easier the more teachers dominate and control their students. Sometimes they are successful in their endeavors and others times the students notice this and rebel in an attempt to challenge the teachers and dominate over them instead. " Freedom is acquired by conquest, not by gift." (Freire 47) This quote is used not only to give hope but also instruction. Sometimes shedding a previous habit or custom seems near impossible but in Freire's text he uses this statement to show that there

is a way to break free from the overbearing rules so that one may gain his or her freedom.

When reading the book I saw that the main tool of domination when using the “ Oppressor-Oppressed” method in education is the “ banking” approach. The banking method, which is only the act of depositing information into a student, has very little connection to critical thinking skills or creative thought process. The method is set up that way so that there is no room to threaten authority. In this aspect the teacher is superior because they know all the information that they are to instill in the student but it is highly unlikely that through lecture alone the student will understand the importance and application of this new information, which the teacher more than likely will know

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This is another example of the relationships Freire talks about amongst students and teachers, “ the teacher knows everything and the students know nothing.” I find this to be false though, even though the oppressed (students) are more often than not at a great disadvantage to the knowledge of the teacher’s they, being oppressed know in a different sense a far greater importance than their oppressors.

In the Pedagogy of the Oppressed Freire says “ Who are better prepared than the oppressed to understand the terrible significance of an oppressive society? Who suffer the effects of oppression more than the oppressed? Who can better understand the necessity of liberation? They will not gain this liberation by chance but through the praxis of their quest for it, through their

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recognition of the necessity to fight for it. And this fight, because of the purpose given it by the oppressed, will actually constitute an act of love opposing the lovelessness which lies at the heart of the oppressors' violence, lovelessness even when clothed in false generosity." I took this to mean that even though they may be oppressed in the end it is the oppressed who often teach the oppressor a far greater lesson than they would have been able to teach themselves.

Oppression can be the control factor in everything we as a people do. In education there is a " formula" for the success and " Oppression" is the control factor in the experiment. Without oppression students would use their creativity analytical skills to seek out the answers to challenges in everyday life as well as in the classroom. One thing that is very important to understand about education is that there isn't one set method or formula to teach or learn something, there is only what works best for the teacher or learner.

Freire's argument presented in the Pedagogy of the Oppressed is indisputable. He delivers his view not by the over-use of factual information and evidence but by creating a sense of either acceptance or denial of his belief. The author is able to deflect opposing arguments by first establishing his idea of the " Oppressor within." Then throughout reading the book that single idea is able to back Freire in the majority of his statements leaving many critiques unable to ridicule his work.

One of Freire's arguments was that educators needed to have a profound trust in people. Their goal is to be able to understand, accept and connect

with the people so that they may help raise a type of awareness in the people and their actions. However this goal can sometimes back-fire and end with negative results, if done incorrectly and with force, no compromise, disregard for the people's culture and beliefs.

Paulo Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed was a wonderful read and left me insightful to the teacher student relationships, the belief's of Paulo Freire . I believe that Freire put much thought and passion into the writing of this book and more than proficiently backed his opinion and arguments throughout the book in its entirety. Freire's tone and attitude suggest that we are either supporters of the oppressed or oppressors ourselves.

While this is a standard good vs. evil theme there is a more in depth meaning behind Freire forcing you to choose a side. This however can only be taken to a certain level without potentially warping future educators, resulting in an unbalanced structure and behavior. While reading, I got the sense that the author was often using everyday occurrences to help relate to pedagogical situations. The authenticity of my thought pattern here could be very accurate because after doing some research on Paulo Freire I saw in his biography that Pedagogy of the Oppressed was written with influence from some of Freire's very own experiences in the educational career. His method makes a great deal of sense seeing as his approach was to reach and educator the world of the education system.

This book is ideal for educators as well as parents and students. The Pedagogy of the Oppressed explains in great details the education system and the relationship of powers amongst students and teachers. Freire divides

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the world into the oppressed and oppressor, this is the under the assumption that the wielder and submitters to power fall into those categories. Although neither is free from the other, the oppressed are those who take the brunt of the relationship.

Not only are the oppressed being suppressed by their oppressors but they also are conflicted with a “fearfulness of freedom.” (Freire 47) This confliction is what allows the oppressors to maintain and strengthen their superiority and keep the oppressed in a state of inferiority. I believe it was Freire’s hope that in writing this book and sharing his insight with the world he would somehow manage to lend a hand in the oppressed realizing their fate and “perceive the reality of oppression not as a closed world from which there is no exit, but as a limiting situation which they can transform.” (Freire)

Although many educators have analyzed this book along with students, parents, and various people in the political world there are still many who do not grasp the importance of Freire’s work. “The pedagogy of the oppressed is an instrument for their critical discovery.” It is tool of liberation for the oppressed who have not realized their state of oppression. Once a person reads this book, if Freire has accomplished his goal in that individual they will begin to notice topics that Freire mentions throughout the book and realize that they may or may not have been a victim of oppression at some point in their lives.