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8502 Platform

In describing Paulo Freire's philosophy of Education, professor and author Gerald Gutek says that the late Brazilian born teacher and theorist developed his beliefs after realizing that education "meant not only learning to read and write, but also helping people to form a social consciousness" (Gutek, 2005, p.423). For Freire, the concept of "social consciousness" implied a well-grounded understanding of oneself in relation to others, nurtured through an academically empowered process of introspection. Indeed, Freire believed that education has the power to illuminate injustice, irradiate inequality, and engender the empathy needed for change (Freire, 2000). Additionally, Freire was quick to demand much of those who had been educated into the formation of a social consciousness, saying, "To affirm that men and women are persons and as persons should be free, and yet to do nothing tangible to make this affirmation a reality, is a farce" (Freire, 2000, p.50). As a teacher, I desire to embrace this very same maxim. In doing so, I hope to enact paradigm shifts in students' lives, wherein their thoughts move from those that are egocentric to those that embody the other-centric nature of the "social consciousness" philosophy described above. This is the highest purpose and aim of schooling, as I see it. Unfortunately, this quixotic vision for the aims of academia does not often enjoy parity in my classroom.

Author and poet Robert Bly suggests that this particular disparity between idealism and reality exists because the necessity of forming an empathetic social consciousness has been hidden from many of us (Bly, 2004). Bly explains the reason for this quite clearly:

How can we get a look at the [dirty] side of things when the society is determined to create a world of shopping malls and entertainment complexes in which we are made to

believe that there is no death, disfigurement, illness, insanity, poverty, lethargy, or

misery? (Bly, 2004, p.81)

Bly's statement points a finger of conviction at teachers, like myself, who dare give lip service to

the promotion of social consciousness, yet only observe from a distance that which necessitates

the forming of such empathy in the first place. Concrete examples of this disparity abound in my

personal practice. Each spring, I readily lead students on cultural field experiences, encouraging

them to *observe* the inequality, inequity and poverty of the locale. Each semester, I *teach* my

students about the disgusting nature of discrimination and racism and the means by which both

have led to war and terror. Yet our hands do not get dirty pursuing solutions to these problems;

we study them from afar in the most passive way possible. In that sense, we are content to allow

the forming of a social consciousness to be an academic endeavor, not a personal one. This

passivity is the epitome of Freire's previously described "farce".

The truth seems to be that the aforementioned disparity demands that I myself develop,

and proactively employ, empathy in an effort to encourage students to form a social

consciousness, insofar as teachers must model that which they are trying to instill in students. In

that sense, teachers must themselves be selfless if they desire to develop selflessness in others.

Teachers must themselves be compassionate if they desire to develop compassion in others.

Teachers must themselves possess a social consciousness if they desire to see it manifest in the

lives of students. This is the only means by which Freire's vision for the purpose and aim of

schooling will truly become my own. And unfortunately, I do not yet embody the selflessness,

compassion and empathy that Freire's vision demands of me.

References

Bly, R. (2004). *Iron John: A book about men*. Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press.

Freire, P. (2000). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (30th anniversary ed.). New York:

Continuum.

Gutek, G. L. (2005). *Historical and philosophical foundations of education: A biographical

introduction* (4th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

TRSL B: Rubric for Education Platform, Part 2

Strong	shows control and skill; many strengths present
Maturing	strengths outweigh weaknesses; small amount of revision needed
Developing	strengths and weaknesses are about equal; first-draft stage
Emerging	isolated moments begin to show what writer intends; need for revision outweighs strengths
Not Yet	getting started, but the result is unclear, struggling, tentative; writer is searching and exploring

CRITERION	Not Yet	Emerging	Developing	Maturing	Strong
Ideas and Content					
Clearly identifies espoused theory(ies) about EITHER purposes or aims of schooling (formal education, including its social function) OR your foundational beliefs and knowledge base about education and they developed.					
Provides concrete, relevant examples and descriptions that illuminate the platform's ideas about EITHER purposes or aims of schooling (formal education, including its social function) OR your foundational beliefs and knowledge base about education and they developed. .					
Cites (paraphrased or verbatim) specific authors, theorists, researchers that support platform ideas.					
Comments:					

Organization	Not Yet	Emerging	Developing	Maturing	Strong
Composes a platform that is logically sequenced and well-organized so that the reader may move easily through text.					
Provides an obvious and inviting introduction that draw the reader in.					
Provides a synthesizing or summarizing conclusion that gives closure and resolution.					
Includes thoughtful transitions between sentences and paragraphs.					
Comments:					

Voice	Not Yet	Emerging	Developing	Maturing	Strong
Connects with audience through interesting topic focus and relevant details that reveal the writer's ideas or points of view.					
Comments:					

Conventions/Citations/Format	Not Yet	Emerging	Developing	Maturing	Strong
Demonstrates standard spelling, punctuation and grammar.					
Cites sources accurately in the platform.					
Cites sources accurately in Bibliography or Reference List.					
Formats platform according to requirements.					
Comments:					