

Toward an Inquiry-Oriented Approach to Teacher Education: A Critical Pedagogy

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ABSTRACT: *Following advances in educational practice and theory, such as the action-research movement and critical curriculum inquiry, there has been increasing support for an inquiry-oriented approach to teacher education. According to the inquiry-oriented approach, teacher education cannot be neutral; rather, it must recognize the fundamentally political and ethical aspects of teaching. The problem of developing a program for an inquiry-oriented approach is addressed in this paper, which suggests that teacher education should focus on knowledge that begins with and supports the teaching act, and depicts teacher education as a process of critical reflection on the teaching act itself.*

KEYWORDS: *Critical Pedagogy, Education, Ethical Education, Government Finance, Inquiry Oriented.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In the last decade, two significant developments in the curriculum field have influenced teacher educators: first, the publication of Knowledge, and more recently, a loosely aligned group of writers known as the "reconceptualists." Both the reconceptualists and the "new directions" sociology of education have sought to politicize notions of knowledge and schooling by highlighting the roles that schools play in capital accumulation by sifting and sorting students for the labor market, in legitimizing power relations and social inequality, and in the production of technically utilizable knowledge essential to a modern economy. Because schools "exist within a constellation of economic, social, and political institutions that make them a fundamental part of the power structure," this research is important for teacher education. As a result, teaching can never be a neutral activity; it is always linked to "legitimizing the dominant society's categories and social practices." Giroux, on the other hand, claims that teacher education programs have tended to depoliticize the nature of the teaching experience, obscuring the connections between teacher education, schooling, and broader societal interests in the process [1], [2].

Thus, traditional teacher education is caught in a paradox: on the one hand, education is seen as providing a means for all socioeconomic classes to learn about and transform the nature of their existence," but on the other, it provides a depoliticized teacher education that can only produce teachers who work to reproduce and legitimize social inequity. Following this rethinking of curriculum studies, there has been a growing push for a politically conscious, inquiry-based approach to teacher education [3], [4]. While Timing has recently advocated for an inquiry-oriented approach to be used in physical education teacher education, there are currently few guidelines for teacher educators that define what an inquiry-oriented approach entails in practice [5]. This paper tries to sketch out a framework for such a teacher education approach that is relevant to physical education (though not necessarily exclusive). The inquiry-oriented approach aims to create a critical pedagogy by transcending the perceived inadequacies of other teacher education models. have argued that teacher education can never be normatively neutral, but rather that "the dominant forms of teacher education today largely encourage acquiescence and conformity to the status quo, both in schooling and in society [6]. They claim that teacher education programs lead to students developing utilitarian perspectives on their teaching that are "disconnected from their ethical, political, and moral roots."

They believe that customized teacher preparation programs that concentrate on survival and craft- or skill-based courses are mainly to blame. To counteract this prevailing pragmatism, propose that every teacher's education include some kind of social and environmental justice. They argue that a more inquiry-oriented approach is needed, one that focuses less on the technical and instrumental elements of teaching and more on the development of critical skills in students[7]. The focus on the political dimension of schooling distinguishes inquiry-oriented teacher education and the critical pedagogy it implies from other approaches to teacher education. In the next part of this article, I'd want to go further into the concept of critical pedagogy by looking at the most current proponents of this concept in two key areas of development, one primarily in educational

practice and the other in educational theory. This part will also serve as a precursor to an effort to sketch out what an inquiry-based program for critical pedagogy development could look like.

The origins of an inquiry-based approach to teacher education, as well as the concept of critical pedagogy that it includes, may be found in two distinct fields of educational development: action research and critical social and curricular theory [8]. In the 1960s and early 1970s, large-scale initiatives were used to create curriculum in schools, most of which were based on the rational planning paradigm of curriculum design. Despite enormous corporate and governmental financing, it was discovered that all of this effort had resulted in little change in educational practices [9]. Some commentators have been inclined to blame the teacher as the culpable party in the failure of such programs ("unreflective pragmatist"), while others have more reasonably suggested that there are many factors involved in any attempt to innovate that the teacher must. Whether sympathetic or not, much of this research was increasingly recognizing that the teacher plays a key role in any attempt to start innovation in schools [10].

The Humanities Curriculum Project, as well as subsequent work such as were early efforts to act on this understanding by defining a positive and constructive active role for teachers in curriculum creation [11]. As MacDonald and others appear to agree, the action-research movement sprang from the failures of large-scale curricular initiatives, or at least received a boost from them. The concepts of research-based teaching, teacher as researcher, and action-research have become popular in teacher education in service programs as a result of this campaign. A definition of action-research in education that represents something of each of these viewpoints is being undertaken in the United Kingdom, continental Europe, the United States, and in. According to this concept, action-research seeks to enhance educational practice by including, and particularly active participation, of educators in discussion, understanding development, and strategic action.

2. DISCUSSION

The centrality of the teacher in any curriculum development endeavor, as the mediator between educational goals and ultimate results, is the significance of the concept of action-research to critical pedagogy. It also asserts that instructors need a degree of autonomy, competence, and responsibility to manage their own educational practice, in addition to a high level of professional significance. Clearly, this understanding of the teacher's responsibility contrasts sharply with some large-scale curriculum initiatives' efforts to "teacher proof" curriculum packages. Through institutions like Deakin University in Australia and the University of East Anglia in England, research initiatives, and publishing, there is evidence that teachers are getting engaged in action research. However, action-research poses certain challenges in the context of critical pedagogy. There is a problem with restricting teachers' analytical efforts to the classroom, as well as an apparent reluctance to confront some of the larger social and political problems that influence educational activity. Much action research in education has focused on answering technical or "how to" problems, while ignoring social, ethical, and political considerations. Teachers' efforts are almost entirely focused on issues of how to convey information and ideas more effectively, according to a critical assessment of some of the published results of action-research. This aspect of the teacher's job is undeniably essential, and it is not disputed here; nevertheless, most action research has so far lacked genuinely critical insight into some of the most basic issues in education. Recent critical social theorists have started to address this absence.

Traditionalists, conceptual empiricists, and re conceptualists are the three major groups of researchers presently working in the curriculum area. The second group is the most recent, and its authors have applied their views to curriculum and teacher education by drawing on Marxism and other critical traditions in social theory. The "new orientations" in educational sociology, in particular, have had a significant influence on these advances in curricular theory. Knowledge and Control presents two central ideas: (a) the structure of knowledge in school curricula can be seen to reflect and serve particular dominant and self-serving political power; and (b) the curriculum produced by these structures can be seen to be "an historically specific social reality expressing particular production relations b" through phenomenological analysis. This theory was significant, especially in the context of the late 1960s' "universal cultural radicalism," because it suggested to teachers that because their conceptions of worthwhile knowledge and the categories they used to distinguish academic from non-academic, bright from dull, able from stupid were "socially constructed," they could presumably choose to redefine what constituted worthwhile knowledge and avoid labeling working-class students as thick and dull.

Given the institutional limitations inherent in the schooling process, this conception of the connection between knowledge and power wrongly assigns the teacher the duty of social transformation via the curriculum, a goal that teachers can scarcely expect to accomplish. More contemporary critical education theory has attempted to grapple with the absurdities of this Knowledge and Control conflict. For example, has proposed that the answer to this difficulty be the development of a "critical theory of curriculum" that (a) starts with teachers' and students' practice and theorizing about it, and (b) tackles basic problems of how this practice is organized in and by society. This implies that freedom and emancipation are not and should not be limited to the classroom. Similarly, a critical examination of educational practice should begin by making the daily, taken-for-granted reality of schools and classrooms problematic. People will only be able to "see the actual functioning's of institutions in all their positive and negative complexity, to illuminate the contradictions of extant regularities, and, finally, to assist others in 'remembering' the possibilities of spontaneity and choice" if they engage in a process of challenging what he calls "common sense categories of thought."

Young and Apple both refer to a mediation between the constricting impact of social institutions on the potential for change via human agency as a major problem in critical pedagogy debates. Indeed, much of the current discussion in this area has focused on examining how dominance manifests itself in and through education, as well as the potential for resistance by both teachers and students, and the forms that resistance could take. In addition to McNeil's criticism, has claimed that much of the amortizing about domination/resistance suffers from incoherence due to flaws endemic to the frames of reference, and has claimed that the debate surrounding domination/resistance needs to be grounded in empirical studies, and that this debate suffers from a limited vision of possible alternatives in schooling. However, Hargreaves' second point has to be clarified, since it is the "political" character of educational practice and theory that is most often misinterpreted in such debates. To claim that every educational activity is politically motivated, in the sense that we cannot avoid making value judgments in our daily contacts from the classroom to the system level, is nothing more than describing a situation. Whether educational activity and interaction are political or not is an intriguing abstract issue, but there is nothing we can do to change this ontologically. Indeed, this fundamental reality of existence contains significant recommendations for critical social awareness, since, as has been established, systems of power are created and reproduced via action, and therefore become ubiquitous and obdurate. To argue that critical pedagogy should include (a) an understanding that knowledge is socially constructed, and through this see the possibilities for transformative action, (b) an understanding that knowledge is never value-free, (c) an awareness of the importance of concepts like social justice, and (d) an awareness of the potential and limitations of social action, and its possible and (e.g., conservatism, socialism, communism). It's possible that developing the ability to think critically about social life is easier under some political forms, such as democratic rather than dictatorial. I would argue that the politicization of education by the reconceptualists does not imply a specific brand of politics, but rather a certain way of looking at the world.

In summary, action research and critical social and curricular theory are two innovations that are at the heart of the idea of critical pedagogy, which is a fundamental concept within an inquiry-oriented teacher education paradigm. Action-research has emphasized the significance of human knowledge and reflection for the development of educational practice, and has shown the benefit of engaging teachers in research-based instruction, drawing on interpretive social theory. While these advancements have been beneficial to teacher education, the establishment of a methodological foundation for practitioner research has tended to overlook more basic issues about schooling and society that pervade daily classroom life. Recent curriculum theorizing, based mostly on post-Marxist and other critical social theory, has addressed the issue of how human activity and interaction are organized in schools and classrooms as a fundamental problem, correcting this one-sidedness of action-research. Structure/agency is a complicated phenomenon that manifests itself in many areas of social life, as shown by the continuing discussion over teacher and student resistance to dominance. The challenge for teacher education is to design programs that can help instructors go beyond the instrumentalism of a "pedagogy of necessity" to a critical pedagogy, in which ethical, political, and social problems are regarded as problematic rather than unquestioned.

Any such program's main themes or project may therefore be described as an attempt to instill in pupils a sufficient degree of technical competence while also allowing them to transcend beyond conventional categories of thinking in order to acquire critical insight into the education process. One component of structure/agency in teacher education, I would suggest, is the recurrent issue of theory vs practice. This contradiction serves as a

focal point for the last section of this article, since any effort to define the components of a program aimed at developing critical pedagogy must involve an examination of the knowledge that underpins teacher education. Theory, it is widely believed, is only tangentially linked to teaching practice, sometimes to the point of being redundant or even hostile, and instructors frequently value practical expertise above theoretical understanding. Clearly, the ingrained traditions) of teacher education institutions, as well as specific school topics, will have a significant impact on the structure of the theory/practice relationship. For example, a program at a university with a long and illustrious history in teacher education, particularly if the department, school, or faculty is located in an older university, will inevitably be influenced to some degree by previous practices, frequently at a deep and unarticulated level.

Newer institutions may have more flexibility to create more creative approaches to theory and practice since they lack the many years of accumulated tradition to guide their activities. • Similarly, the nature of the subject that students are being prepared to teach, as well as its status in the curriculum as perceived by students, parents, administrators, and the professional community of teachers, will play a key role in defining the theory/practice relationship in subject pedagogy. Physical education, for example, has historically been seen as a practical topic, and students in their early years of teacher education need a wide, practically oriented curriculum that closely resembles the activities they are expected to teach in schools. More recently, and especially as a result of the development of degree courses in the disciplines of human movement studies, considering theoretical topics in the exercise sciences, and sociocultural and philosophical studies, the relationship between what students learn in pre-service and what they are expected to teach in schools has become quite disparate.

This seeming misalignment of theory and practice, on the other hand, is a result of theoretical discourse. As a result, the distinction between "theory" and "practice" as two distinct components of the teaching act is a false dichotomy. As has been shown, theoretical and practical knowledge are intimately linked in every complicated activity or sequence of activities, such as teaching. This isn't to argue that all theoretical knowledge leads to excellent practice, or that good practice necessitates a thorough understanding of relevant theory. Perhaps the problem of theory versus practice in teacher education has been that for far too long, elements of poor theory have been combined with little or no relevant support for the student-lived teacher's experience of teaching, reinforcing the idea that theory and practice in teaching are inherently dysfunctional. As an example. This seeming disconnect between academic knowledge and real teaching practice, I would argue, is quite common in teacher education programs. This is especially true in programs that are discipline-based rather than practice-based, which means that their starting point in the teacher education process is in the various contributing disciplines to educational theory, which is presented in such a way that theory is contrasted with, rather than referenced to, practice.

3. CONCLUSION

As a result, knowledge in teacher education may be centered on emancipating the teacher from tradition and mysticism and providing, as indicated, a language for expressing practical experience. This process of emancipation is at the heart of critical pedagogy, because the teacher can only begin to operate as an intelligent practitioner, capable of reductive self-development and wise to the complexities of the educational process, if he or she can relate the knowledge gained through the teacher education process to his or her own biography. Only when knowledge and experience have a dialectical connection can the teacher begin to make sense of his or her professional life and therefore contribute significantly to an emancipatory educational process via schooling. In certain circumstances, the physical education profession may provide physical educators with a level of autonomy seldom seen in other school disciplines bound by syllabuses, exams, and other accountability processes. Teacher educators may use this liberty to promote an experimental and critical mindset in their students with less fear of retaliation if things don't always go as planned. It's possible that teachers will find a means to improve their standing in the classroom without being co-opted into oppressive examinations/accountability-oriented regimes.

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