

Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy and modern rural education

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ABSTRACT. The article elaborates on the leading theoretical concepts of critical pedagogy in a modern rural school as a new philosophy of education aimed at developing students' critical literacy and reflection. Based on the analysis of the pedagogical ideas of the criticism of the Brazilian education reformer Paulo Freire, the authors emphasize the necessity for their implementation in educational institutions taking into account modern challenges – prevention of discrimination on a wide range of grounds- (cyber) bullying, ethnicity-based humiliation under the conditions of globalization, etc. The following methods were used in the research: bibliographic search, analytical, and historical-logical, making it possible to study scientific resources (philosophical, sociological, pedagogical), media resources on the problems of criticism and critical pedagogy, as well as to present the historical and pedagogical experience of using Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy through the prism of a modern rural school in various aspects – inclusion, intercultural education, gender, and racial equality, etc. The researchers have identified several aspects confirming the outstanding educator's support for rural education, namely: he developed the program for the elimination of illiteracy in Latin America, paid much attention to teaching literacy to Brazilian peasants, and led the campaign for the elimination of illiteracy in rural areas, the "pedagogy of the oppressed" is aimed at the struggle for justice and freedom, which he also tried to cover in rural education; Freire's works trace the role of the teacher in implementing critical pedagogy aimed at active dialogue and cooperation with students, providing quality educational services in rural schools. The dominant thesis of the study is the ideas of Descartes' critical rationalism – "I can doubt everything." Effective methods of developing students' critical consciousness and critical thinking in a modern educational institution are identified. The peculiarities of using critical pedagogy in rural areas to ensure all students' equal rights to receive quality education are emphasized.

Keywords: critical pedagogy, Freire's educational views, a rural school, critical perception of reality.

La pedagogía crítica de Paulo Freire y la educación rural moderna

RESUMEN. El artículo fundamenta los principales conceptos teóricos de la pedagogía crítica en la escuela rural moderna como una nueva filosofía de la educación dirigida a desarrollar la alfabetización crítica y la reflexión en los estudiantes. A partir del análisis de las ideas pedagógicas del reformador educativo brasileño Paulo Freire, los autores enfatizan la necesidad de implementarlas en las instituciones educativas, teniendo en cuenta los desafíos modernos – prevención de la discriminación por diversos motivos, (ciber) bullying, humillación nacional en el contexto de la globalización, etc. En el estudio se utilizaron los siguientes métodos: de búsqueda y bibliográfico, analítico, histórico y lógico, que permitieron estudiar fuentes científicas (filosóficas, sociológicas, pedagógicas), recursos de los medios de comunicación sobre los problemas de la criticidad y la pedagogía crítica, así como presentar la experiencia histórica y pedagógica de la utilización de la pedagogía crítica de Paulo Freire a través del prisma de una escuela rural moderna en diversos aspectos – inclusión, educación intercultural, igualdad de género, etc. Los investigadores identificaron varios aspectos que confirman el notable apoyo del educador a la educación rural, a saber desarrolló el programa para la eliminación del analfabetismo en América Latina, prestó mucha atención a la alfabetización de los campesinos brasileños y lideró la campaña para la eliminación del analfabetismo en las zonas rurales; la “pedagogía del oprimido” tiene como objetivo la lucha por la justicia y la libertad, que también trató de abarcar en la educación rural; las obras de Freire esbozan el papel del profesor en la aplicación de la pedagogía crítica que tiene como objetivo el diálogo activo y la cooperación con los estudiantes, proporcionando servicios educativos de calidad en las escuelas rurales. La tesis dominante del estudio son las ideas del racionalismo crítico de Descartes – “puedo dudar de todo”. Se identifican métodos eficaces para formar la conciencia crítica y desarrollar el pensamiento crítico de los estudiantes en una institución educativa moderna, y se hace hincapié en las peculiaridades del uso de la pedagogía crítica en las zonas rurales para garantizar la igualdad de derechos de todos los estudiantes a recibir una educación de calidad.

Palabras clave: pedagogía crítica, visiones educativas de Freire, escuela rural, comprensión crítica de la realidad, alfabetización crítica.

A pedagogia crítica de Paulo Freire e a educação do campo moderna

RESUMO. O artigo elabora os principais conceitos teóricos da pedagogia crítica em uma escola rural moderna como uma nova filosofia de educação destinada a desenvolver a alfabetização crítica e a reflexão dos alunos. Com base na análise das ideias pedagógicas da crítica do reformador da educação brasileira Paulo Freire, os autores enfatizam a necessidade de sua implementação em instituições educacionais, levando em conta os desafios modernos – prevenção da discriminação em uma ampla gama de motivos - bullying (cibernético), humilhação baseada na etnia sob as condições da globalização, etc. Os seguintes métodos foram usados na pesquisa: pesquisa bibliográfica, analítica e histórico-lógica, possibilitando o estudo de recursos científicos (filosóficos, sociológicos, pedagógicos), recursos da mídia sobre os problemas da crítica e da pedagogia crítica, bem como a apresentação da experiência histórica e pedagógica do uso da pedagogia crítica de Paulo Freire pelo prisma de uma escola rural moderna em vários aspectos – inclusão, educação intercultural, igualdade de gênero e racial etc. Os pesquisadores identificaram vários aspectos que confirmam o apoio do notável educador à educação rural, a saber: ele desenvolveu o programa para a eliminação do analfabetismo na América Latina, deu muita atenção à alfabetização dos camponeses brasileiros e liderou a campanha para a eliminação do analfabetismo nas áreas rurais; a "pedagogia do oprimido" visa à luta pela justiça e pela liberdade, que ele também tentou abranger na educação rural; as obras de Freire traçam o papel do professor na implementação da pedagogia crítica que visa ao diálogo ativo e à cooperação com os alunos, oferecendo serviços educacionais de qualidade nas escolas rurais. A tese dominante do estudo são as ideias do racionalismo crítico de Descartes – “Posso duvidar de tudo”. São identificados métodos eficazes de desenvolvimento da consciência crítica e do pensamento crítico dos alunos em uma instituição educacional moderna. São enfatizadas as peculiaridades do uso da pedagogia crítica em áreas rurais para garantir a todos os alunos direitos iguais de receber educação de qualidade.

Palavras-chave: pedagogia crítica, visões educacionais de Freire, escola rural, compreensão crítica da realidade, alfabetização crítica.

Introduction

“Critical Pedagogy: Critical in Theory, Uncritical in Practice”.
Christina N. Berchini (2017)

“The discussion of critical pedagogy must be critical by nature. And broader than concerning some closed entity”.
Lech Witkowski (2012)

“... extremely important and still unresearched in pedagogical science is discovering a critical discourse by educators and scientists in the recent past of structural and ideological sovietization and totalitarianism”.
Bogusław Śliwerski (2011)

In today's context of the growth of world political and military conflicts, wars due to the rejection of differences, crimes due to the lack of spirituality and justice, the struggle of light against darkness and good against evil, the ideas of the prominent Brazilian educator and psychologist Paulo Freire, professor at the Pontifical Catholic University, are especially relevant. He is the head of the public education department in São Paulo, an honorary professor at 29 universities in Europe and North America, and a reformer of school education in Brazil.

In scientific publications on critical pedagogy (Haydenko, 2006; Smith & Seal, 2021), we often come across opinions about its political direction, identification of “oppressed” social groups, improvement of political education, etc. Of course, “democratic politics requires an audience capable of questioning and criticizing elected officials and their laws – and changing them when necessary” (Giroux, & Searls-Giroux, 2004, p. 4), so young people should be politically aware for expressing their civic position consciously and actively, of considering specific processes critically. However, this is not a direct call to change the political situation in the country or its government, and critical education does not pursue such a goal. It is only essential to bring up active critical thinkers with the help of traditional and innovative pedagogical methods and techniques.

Radionova notes, “... critical pedagogy opposes the global crisis narrative to the program of humanization of education in the 21st century. The concept of perpetual pedagogy corresponds to the existence of youth in complicated socio-cultural settings” (Radionova, 2013). In addition, this is natural because in today's globalized technological world, educated, critical-minded, creative, and socially active young citizens are in demand in every country, regardless of where they study or live – in a city or the countryside.

But, in addition to political oppression, we often face the following problems: (1) unequal access to quality education in different countries around the world, which makes it impossible for these school graduates to study at leading universities; (2) differences in infrastructure, material and technical support, the availability of highly qualified staff and, as a result, the effectiveness of the educational process in educational institutions located in rural or urban areas; (3) developing countries with a colonial past sometimes experience the oppression of students in schools or universities; (4) humiliation in education is often based on religious, cultural, or racial grounds (Paris, 2012); rejection of “otherness” in inclusive education, intolerant attitude towards people with disabilities, etc. (Budnyk, & Rembierz, 2022); gender or sexual stereotypes (Smith, López-Castro, Robinson, & Görzig, 2019); (5) in educational institutions (and not only), the number of young people are suffering from various types of bullying (physical, social, verbal), cyberbullying, cyber grooming, flaming, harassment, denigration, etc. is increasing (Thomas, Connor & Scott, 2015).

This study aims to focus the attention of the world educational community on the best historical and pedagogical experience and its use in rural schools through the prism of the progressive ideas of Paulo Freire’s critical pedagogy. After all, today – even in the highly-developed countries of the world – remote educational institutions in rural areas face various difficulties in providing quality educational services for children. There are problems with the organization of education due to the need for more electronic interaction, low-speed Internet, etc. Moreover, education departments often work on developing strategies to retain teachers in small/rural schools due to the lack of teaching staff in these schools (Lowe, 2006). Therefore, we consider it expedient to consider Freire's experience in more detail in this study to analyze the situation in rural education critically to achieve success in its reform, in particular for the sake of creative understanding and implementation of national and foreign experience in each country, a combination of the classical pedagogical heritage of the past and modern studies.

Research methods

The bibliographic search method has been applied to scientific publications directly or indirectly related to the problem of critical pedagogy and its methodological basis, particularly the characteristics of the cultural approach in critical pedagogy and topical issues of freedom and the formation of a citizen’s national identity.

The analytical method was used to generalize scientific literature (philosophical, psychological, sociological, pedagogical, theological, etc.), media resources on problems of criticism, and critical pedagogy.

The historical-logical method has been applied to studying the historical-pedagogical experience of using Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy through the prism of the modern rural school and its theoretical presentation.

Results of Research

The methodological basis of critical pedagogy is the philosophy of criticism, mainly the Critical Philosophy of Immanuel Kant. Philosophical ideas about the need for the critical perception of reality and the creation of relevant theories are presented in fundamental works "Critique of Pure Reason", "Critique of Practical Reason," and "Critique of Judgement" (Kant, 1788; 1998; 1987). For example, "Critique of Practical Reason" is about a vital antinomy, which "... concerned the 'final purpose' that the moral law of which we are conscious enjoins us to pursue, a purpose we must therefore regard as achievable although obstacles insuperable for us finite beings seem to stand in the way. Solving this antinomy required the assumption that we are immortal souls and that there is a 'moral' God ..." (Kant, 1987, p. 25).

Critical pedagogy was founded on this methodological basis. "Critical Pedagogy developed from Critical Theory as thinkers sought to understand better the existence of social dominance and to give students a voice to challenge oppression" (Uddin, 2019) and referred to in numerous scientific studies (Blackburn, 2020). The emergence of critical pedagogy is most often associated with Paulo Freire, who, in the 60s of the 20th century, proposed his educational strategy based on freedom and the need to develop critical thinking in educational institutions. Critical pedagogy is aimed at problem-oriented education, anthropological interpretation of culture, essential formation of consciousness, etc. "The pedagogy of the oppressed, animated by authentic, humanist (not humanitarian) generosity, presents itself as a pedagogy of humankind" (Freire, 2005).

The concepts of Freirean thought were widely spread in various countries (primarily in South and North America) because, in the middle of the 20th century, an active movement for social equality and liberation from political, economic, or social oppression began in the world. Thus, in European countries, this movement was against the dictatorship of fascism and stalinism, which determined the development of critical currents in science and education.

“Critical knowledge is also helpful for the privileged group, which can use it to realize that they are violating the rights of others.” (Uddin, 2019). It is not by chance that questions on critical perception of reality from an ethical and political point of view, the analysis of social structures, and, thus, promoting the active involvement of young people in active participation in public life through education are getting topical.

Paulo Freire’s critical pedagogical ideas integrate elements of existentialism, phenomenology, Hegelian dialectics, and historical materialism. The scientist's followers are Henry Giroux, Peter McLaren, Donald Macedo, Bell Hooks, Stanley Aronowitz, and others. These ideas are precious in today’s context when fighting against stereotyping approaches to pedagogical education and teaching in an educational institution. After all, the processes of globalization exacerbate the problem of preserving the national identity of each people. More and more countries are becoming multicultural. In this context, Freire calls on ethnic minorities not to forget their native language and to be proud of its beauty, national traditions, and cultural characteristics. For example, McLaren argued for radical approaches to developing culture, identity, and education. “Critical pedagogy as a form of cultural politics attempts to redress the ideological shortcomings of current analyses of schooling and mainstream discussions of pedagogy ...” (1995, p. 35). However, the pedagogical ideas of Freire and his followers still need profound theoretical and practical rethinking through the prism of modern problems at various levels of education.

The essence of critical pedagogy and rural education realities

The “critical pedagogy” category is not new in scientific opinion. However, today, we do not have a generally accepted definition of the essence of critical pedagogy. As noted above, most authors proceed from a classical philosophical (sometimes theological) understanding of the essence of criticism. “Critical pedagogy is an authentic philosophy of education with different modern interpretations. Critical education is designed to help students to liberate themselves from humiliations that bother them. At the same time, based on the research results, it can be argued that critical pedagogy as a branch of scientific knowledge is interdisciplinary, as it integrates the study of philosophy, political science, sociology, psychology, pedagogy, cultural studies, and other sciences in the field of presenting ‘critical’ in social life” (Budnyk, 2023, p. 19).

Lech Witkowski (like his predecessors) reasonably considers critical pedagogy “radical” (2012, p. 13). Olga Plahotnik, who studies the radical approach in education, notes

that the subject of criticism can be various phenomena, such as the political system in the country, didactic teaching methods, bullying (cyberbullying), as well as repression in higher education, transsexuality, transgenderism, etc. (2014, p. 176-177).

In discussions within the critical pedagogy framework, we suggest Bogusław Śliwerski's methodological approach (2021); in particular, the scholar questions E. Bilińska-Suchanek's definition who distinguished three different, relatively independent pedagogies: Pedagogy of Resistance, Critical Pedagogy, and Radical Pedagogy. "... what is the difference between the cognitive attractiveness and the different application approach to the category of resistance in these three trends? How do they relate to the research issues of the new sociology of education, whose representatives took over the research problems of educators and put forward postulates of a non-hierarchical form of school pedagogy?". Thus, the Polish researcher concludes that critical pedagogy, radical pedagogy, and pedagogy of resistance need to be combined. At the same time, he considers the concept of "critical pedagogy" the broadest, including the above-mentioned pedagogical theories (Śliwerski, 2011, p. 229).

In the context of critical pedagogy, we turn to the problems of rural schools, where they most often face the mentioned humiliations. For example, numerous studies have shown insufficient funding for rural schools in Ukraine, a lack of didactic materials for reading, development of sensory skills or construction, inadequate provision of e-learning tools, etc. (Budnyk, Mazur, Kondur et al., 2020). In Canadian provinces, for example, rural schools often face such difficulties as (a) isolation from specialized services; (b) limited access to quality staff, development, and university services; (c) lack of teaching staff; and (d) decreasing enrolment that leads to decreased funding (Wallin & Reimer, 2008). In addition, schools in rural areas are much more likely than those in urban areas in need of help ensuring universal design for inclusive education, etc. These and other factors require critical reflection.

Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed

Freire's educational concept of the pedagogy of the oppressed concerns not only specific situations at work, where injustice against workers, peasants, middle-class representatives, etc., often occurs. The issue is much broader – the liberation from bullying and oppression in general, including the person's spiritual freedom, "ontological vocation, love, dialogue, hope, humility, and sympathy" (Freire, 2005). We consider the scientist's "revolutionism" a call on the educational community not to be passive when violence,

bullying, neglect, and human rights violations occur because excessive obedience creates a sense of inferiority in young people. In developing countries, such contrasting phenomena occur in different formats. This is especially evident regarding education in rural and urban schools. After all, for objective reasons, residents with less developed infrastructure cannot provide high-quality education for their children. Consequently, graduates of these rural schools feel humiliated and sometimes oppressed in the educational institution setting, where they later acquire their respective professional specialties together with their urban (metropolitan) peers.

Pedagogy which begins with the egoistic interests of the oppressors (an egoism cloaked in the false generosity of paternalism) and makes the oppressed the objects of its humanitarianism, itself maintains and embodies oppression. It is an instrument of dehumanization. This is why ... the pedagogy of the oppressed cannot be developed or practiced by the oppressors. It would be contradictory if the oppressors defended and implemented a liberating education. (Freire, 2005, p. 54).

The Canadian researcher McLaren, a Freire's follower, presents a critical aspect of pedagogy in the context of "democratic socialism":

... critical pedagogy has shown itself to be durable and enduring. It will survive and continue to develop in the coming years ... In this, one of the darkest hours of our national life, critical educators take no pleasure in censuring neoliberal administrations' most desperate and loathsome designs, fueled by the political bloodlust of a bourgeoisie in crisis ... Critical educators have come to recognize that we can obtain a new birth of freedom only by sheltering the persecuted and only by creating the conditions of possibility for new and emancipatory forms of praxis in all spaces of human sociability. (McLaren, 2020, p. 1248).

The scholar must consider the future of critical pedagogy as a struggle for all citizens' independence and spiritual freedom.

Paulo Freire was born in a poor family, so he realized from birth how difficult it is to fight poverty. His life experience helped him understand the rural population's problems, including adults. He introduced the concept of education he had developed largely in the poor communities he worked with to teach them to read and write. The teacher was convinced that only literate peasants could properly resist injustice and oppression and critically assess their real living conditions.

In democratic countries of Europe or America, the value context of critical pedagogy is a priority. Of course, isolating ourselves from the current political situation in which a personality and its moral qualities are formed is impossible. The necessity to accept differences between people and prevent intolerance on various grounds is increasingly

emphasized. This primarily concerns the educational sphere, where the foundations for the formation and development of the individual are laid.

Janusz Mariański defines a new direction in education and science – a new spirituality, which “... is primarily individualized, experiential and subjectivist, it is not defined by reference to institutionalized religiosity.” (2021, p. 61). The scholar proves that the new spirituality is pluralistic and, in the educational setting, is regarded in the dimensions of ethics as a desire for moral improvement, value growth, understanding of cultural values, and thus the prevention of various forms of discrimination. “The slogan ‘criticism as an affirmation of values’ expresses the idea that thanks to a critical attitude, one can discover, purify, expose, multiply, and improve positive qualities. Without a proper critique, values are not highlighted, human activities and products languish, and beliefs and attitudes become marked by a degenerating indolence” (Rembierz, 2022, p. 257). Only a free and spiritually strong person can resist various forms of oppression.

Racial and cultural discrimination in (un)critical pedagogy

At the end of the 20th century, when critical pedagogy began to develop, the issue of racial discrimination, including in educational institutions, was still quite acute (Giroux, & Searls-Giroux, 2004). In his book “Critical Pedagogy and Predatory Culture,” McLaren criticizes “conservative multiculturalists” who, in his opinion, only speak about “cognitive equality of all races and charge unsuccessful minorities with having “culturally deprived backgrounds” and a “lack of strong family-oriented values.” The researcher is concerned that many countries are still dominated by “Black cognitive inferiority to Whites as a general premise and provides conservative multiculturalists with a means of rationalizing why some minority groups are successful while others are not” (1995, p. 121).

“Transformative work with teacher candidates relies on a critique of the tenets of Critical Pedagogy and subsequent Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS)” (Berchini, 2017). The American scientist analyzes scientific research and draws a conclusion about “White privilege pedagogies” and the “problem of Whiteness in teacher education,” based on which she states about “uncritical pedagogy of harmful generalizations” (Berchini, 2017).

It is no coincidence that we use the concept of “(Un) Critical Pedagogy” in the research because when we talk about, for example, various forms of discrimination against a person, we take into account not only their active actions but also their inaction (indifference) in situations of “oppression” or “harassment.” This leads to various restrictions on realizing

human rights and freedoms on specific grounds (race, skin color, ethnicity, origin, religious beliefs, etc.) According to supporters of critical pedagogy in the educational process, active steps are in great demand for preventing discrimination against teachers or students.

The reformer Freire is a prominent advocate of the so-called “cultural synthesis” for understanding justice, including the resolution of conflict situations between “oppressors” or “leaders” and the “oppressed.” This is relevant in the context of intercultural education and hybrid information wars in the modern world. “In cultural synthesis – and only in cultural synthesis – it is possible to resolve the contradiction between the world view of the leaders and that of the people, to enrich both. Cultural synthesis does not deny the differences between the two views; it is based on these differences” (Freire, 2005, p. 181). Therefore, the author emphasizes the need to accept and understand the differences between people in a cultural and social environment, particularly in a rural school. This refers to the cultural diversity of the participants in the educational process, as well as the proper perception of different worldviews, opinions, ideals, and spiritual values.

McLaren strongly criticizes a “particularly invidious project of conservative or corporate multiculturalism” – “to construct a common culture – a seamless web of textuality – bent on annulling the concept of the border through the delegitimization of foreign languages and regional and ethnic dialects, a persistent attack on non-standard English ...” (1995, p. 121). Moreover, this explains why the “white cultural elite” still holds dominant positions in the power structures so it can determine the rules for the functioning and development of culture and education. “However, both teachers and students need to realize that justice does not already exist simply because laws exist” (McLaren, 1995, p. 128). Therefore, the teacher encourages us to fight for justice in education on a fair basis, particularly for the rights of ethnic minorities.

Criticizing the dominant culture as a means of oppression in society in general and education in particular, P. Freire proposes the so-called “anti-dialogic theory of action,” when manipulation is carried out for the sake of “conquest and domination”. “Cultural synthesis serves the ends of the organization; organization serves the ends of liberation,” Freire notes and advocates “undeniable truth: just as the oppressor, to oppress, needs a theory of oppressive action, so the oppressed, to become free, also need a theory of action. The oppressor elaborates his theory of action without the people, for he stands against them” (Freire, 2005).

Promoting a cultural approach to education, Django Paris uses the “term ‘culturally sustaining pedagogy’ (CSP) as an alternative that embodies some of the best past and present research and practice in the resource pedagogy tradition and as a term that supports the value of our multiethnic and multilingual present and future” (Paris, 2012). In his works to democratize education, the author supports students’ cultural and linguistic diversity. The American scholar defines CSP not in terms of educational philosophy but in the context of the methodology of critical pedagogy, which, in his opinion, should focus on cultural minorities, students’ backgrounds, national values, language characteristics, etc. In practice, implementing CSP means interaction with the community, criticizing the dominant structures (authorities) in case of oppression or neglect of cultural differences in public life, including education.

In teacher training programs, McLaren emphasizes critical thinking and the appropriate educational environment: “Student teachers often encounter schooling as a set of rules and regulative practices that have been laundered of ambiguity, contradiction, paradox, and resistance” (1995, p. 35). An American scientist researching the issue of “critical or resistance postmodernist perspective to bear on the issue of multiculturalism” suggests to create a “*multicultural curriculum*” for educators and pedagogy focused on taking into account the characteristics and differences between students. (McLaren, 1995, p. 210).

Critical Pedagogy in a rural school with inclusive education

Inclusive education is based on the principles of non-discrimination, respect for diversity, and all students’ proper inclusion in the educational process. However, in practice, many people with disabilities, especially in rural schools, still face various barriers (physical, social, mental, and didactic). Sometimes the dominant factors are soft barriers and their contribution to aspects of school stratification by social class and special educational needs (SEN) (Cahill, 2021), an unwillingness to embrace a philosophy of inclusion or to change existing practices, “an inadequate understanding of general education practices and how students with disabilities can participate in general education instruction while providing specialized instruction in unique education goals” and others (Villegas, 2021). For example, in small rural schools, there are often difficulties in arranging facilities for children with special needs, which means that they feel “rejected” and not like the others.

At the same time, there are difficulties in the attitudes toward people with special needs, especially in developing countries. For example, less than five percent of children with

special educational needs in India are educated in schools (Sanjeev, & Kumar, 2007). In the Middle East, children with disabilities are sometimes deprived of education, and those who receive education are often not provided with adequate educational assistance: “Without any real option to get a quality inclusive education, thousands of children with disabilities are being left behind.” For instance, “few schools in Lebanon are physically accessible, and the government does little to provide accommodations children may need to succeed” (Lebanon, 2018).

In educational institutions, disrespectful attitudes toward students with disabilities usually refer to their academic or physical learning abilities; in society, more generally, intolerance often relates to gender, ethnicity, or race. (Budnyk & Rembierz, 2022). For example, in African countries, girls with disabilities are more likely to be sexually abused than boys with the same health conditions. For instance, in West and East Africa (Guinea, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Zambia, etc.), gender-based attitudes often prevent children from receiving an education because of their mental, intellectual, and physical disabilities. According to the research, boys, as well as girls with disabilities, were more likely than others to experience social exclusion in education. Among students with SEN, girls suffer more emotional trauma due to social prejudice regarding their educational potential. Therefore, to effectively implement inclusive education, it is essential to create a safe school environment for all students and overcome gender stereotypes about the education of children with special educational needs (Hui, Vickery, Njelesani & Cameron, 2018).

Thus, oppression occurs in inclusion. Therefore, it is reasonable to refer to modern publications that substantiate the value context of the educational process and various forms of discrimination at school in the context of the theory of criticism. Indeed, all kinds of negativism affect a child’s upbringing, so enslavement and humiliation are unacceptable. It is no coincidence that scientists emphasize the necessity for “liberating from the shackles of confusion and enslaving dependence, which takes the form of addiction” that threatens human dignity (Rembierz, 2022, p. 250-251). Sometimes (which we consider typical), students realize that resisting the existing educational system is unacceptable because their position will not be justified anyway, so they choose to “restrain” their protest to avoid provoking an external conflict. Marek Rembierz warns educators and students against the so-called “fake” respect or open demonstration of it and “... carefully avoid this misleading (abusive) use of the word ‘dignity’ that can degrade the proper sense of dignity must be carefully avoided so

that the word “dignity” does not turn into an “empty ritual” or, even worse, into hypocrisy” (Rembierz, 2022, p. 257).

In addition to the axiological aspect of the inclusive process in rural schools, it is crucial to create conditions for the development of students’ critical thinking (Wright, 2002), aimed at their freedom, creative personal development, motivation, and stimulation of interest in constructive criticism, adequate response to it and self-criticism for improvement (Budnyk, 2023, p. 15).

In the “Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy”, D. Hitchcock states: “The person engaged in thinking tries to meet the standards of adequacy and accuracy appropriate to reasoning.” The researcher defines critical thinking as “careful goal-directed thinking” (Hitchcock, 2022). Critical thinking includes analysis, synthesis, evaluation of educational information, and verification from various sources for further implementation in educational realities. Critical thinking is based on critical consciousness, which Paulo Freire considers the central characteristic of critical pedagogy, reflecting the ability to recognize and transform the surrounding reality (Freire, 2003). The Brazilian scientist distinguishes three phases of the development of critical consciousness: 1) non-transitional (domination of fatalism and inactivity); 2) semi-transitional (attempts to change something); 3) critical (strong orientation towards social transformation) (Freire, 1982). Thus, Freire’s ideas of critical are valuable in inclusive education in a modern rural school.

(Un) Criticism in Pedagogical Science

In modern science, we often discuss academic integrity, which involves following ethical principles in research, including such values as honesty, trust, justice, respect, responsibility, etc. B. Śliwerski encourages scholars to analyze critically and identify contradictions concerning scientific identity in research, especially in the humanities and social sciences.

Perhaps this is the point of the necessary realization of the bottom, which primarily was of a strictly mono-ideological nature, and now assumes the dissociating from its past in its populist-ethicist focus on instrumental solutions to practical problems, sustaining the impotence of the educational sciences to emerge from the perpetual crisis of the intellectual vacuum, instead of providing society and scholars with promoting the philosophical, theoretical and historical nature of a pedagogy conscious of the need to search for its identity – critical reference points for its further development” (Śliwerski, 2011, p. 233).

In addition, it is relevant for modern pedagogical science to determine the criteria for evaluating the research results, their scientific novelty, and practical significance. Subjective interpretations/evaluations of specific scientific achievements in suitability or value often occur here (for example, this applies to reviewing articles, opposing dissertations, etc.).

Therefore, critical analysis ideas in pedagogy are essential, especially for the results of research and teaching activities. We are talking about the criticality or uncriticality of pedagogy concerning itself. "Pedagogy's concern about itself ... is the manifestation of its egocentrism, rooted in infantilism or neurasthenia" (Schulz, 1994, p. 100). Several pedagogical theories and educational innovations only sometimes consider the regional or national peculiarities of a particular country, and their implementation is only occasionally appropriate and effective. Specific teaching methods and upbringing traditions require modernization, primarily through their critical reflection and orientation to social challenges, the development of science and technology, and market demands. However, of course, the priority belongs to spirituality and moral values. Indeed, another aspect of oppression in science (which is unacceptable!) is the humiliation of postgraduate students ("Ph.D. candidates") by their supervisors or other persons involved in their scientific development. Therefore, critical pedagogy should be aimed at the comprehensive development of the individual, including the formation of "critical literacy". (Hammond & Macken-Horarik, 1999).

"The discussion on critical pedagogy must be critical by nature ... I would not like us to repeat mistakes here, or at least habits with the approach to other labels, such as alternative pedagogy, postmodern pedagogy, emancipatory pedagogy, critical pedagogy wants to be pedagogy as is, and not some marginal or exotic variant, proud of its distinctiveness and generously recognizing the right to equal functioning of currents unaware of their handicap..." (Witkowski, 2012, p. 19). The author, analyzing the existing problems in education and science regarding the implementation of the critical in theory and practice, proposes to analyze the potential of pedagogy in the context of the philosophy of criticism. "In particular, it is an opportunity to reflect on the state of pedagogy as a whole ... and its parts, such as general pedagogy, social pedagogy, comparative pedagogy, and to design tasks for each and recognize their shallows or backwardness..." (Witkowski, 2012, p. 19). Indeed, developing Freire's critical pedagogy in modern realities requires considering new forms of humiliation and discrimination mentioned above, which were not so popular and problematic a few decades ago.

Conclusions

Thus, critical pedagogy in a contemporary rural school is a new philosophy of education aimed at developing students' critical consciousness, critical and reflective skills. The pedagogical theory based on the ideas of criticism was founded in the 1960s by the Brazilian educational transformer Paulo Freire. In our opinion, Descartes' critical rationalism is correctly considered the essential foundation of pedagogy – “I can doubt everything” (“The Search for Truth by Natural Light”).

Freire's critical pedagogy is aimed mainly at challenging oppression in education at various levels, encouraging social and political change, revising ethical strategies, and thus transforming educational values and practices. In today's context, the relevance of Freire's ideas is that criticism in education is not limited to these ideas exclusively but considers the category of critical in a broader context – avoidance of humiliation, prejudice, harassment, bullying (or cyberbullying), etc. in connection to various aspects of life (inclusive education, intercultural education, gender equality, recognition of different religions and ethnicities, etc.). Therefore, the critical pedagogy methods aim to teach from the analytical perspective, criticism, and self-criticism. However, rural education is not restricted to these aspects. After all, most rural schools do not provide quality education to students, unlike urban schools, due to the “depression” of the countryside, lack of adequate financial support, technical equipment, qualified staff, etc. Therefore, in line with criticism, formal and non-formal training of rural school teachers is necessary for the practical application of effective strategies aimed at developing, first, students critical thinking skills, considering national (regional), mental and other characteristics. Freire pointed out that “only dialogue, which requires critical thinking, is also capable of generating critical thinking. Without dialogue, there is no communication; without communication, there can be no true education” (Freire, 2005, p. 92-93). Thus, methods of partner interaction and educational dialogue, improvisation, and active experimentation are crucial for critical pedagogy.

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Article Information

Received on May 12th, 2023
Accepted on May 27th, 2023
Published on July, 19th, 2023

Author Contributions: The author were responsible for the designing, delineating, analyzing and interpreting the data, production of the manuscript, critical revision of the content and approval of the final version published.

Conflict of Interest: None reported.

Article Peer Review

Double review.

Funding

No funding.

How to cite this article

APA

Budnyk, O., Nikolaesku, I., Solovei, Y., Grebeniuk, O., Fomin, K., & Shynkarova, V. (2023). Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy and modern rural education. *Rev. Bras. Educ. Camp.*, 8, e16480. <http://dx.doi.org/10.20873/uft.rbec.e16480>

ABNT

BUDNYK, O.; NIKOLAESKU, I.; SOLOVEI, Y.; GREBENIUK, O.; FOMIN, K.; SHYNKAROVA, V. Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy and modern rural education. **Rev. Bras. Educ. Camp.**, Tocantinópolis, v. 8, e16480, 2023. <http://dx.doi.org/10.20873/uft.rbec.e16480>