

Lecture Sixteen: Critical Literacies

1 Introduction – Literacy Concepts

“The “concept of literacy is and must always be ideologically situated” (Chege, 2009, p. 228).

“Literacy always serves an ideological agenda; it embodies the struggle [for] the control of the whole process of social reproduction” (Chege, 2009, p. 232).

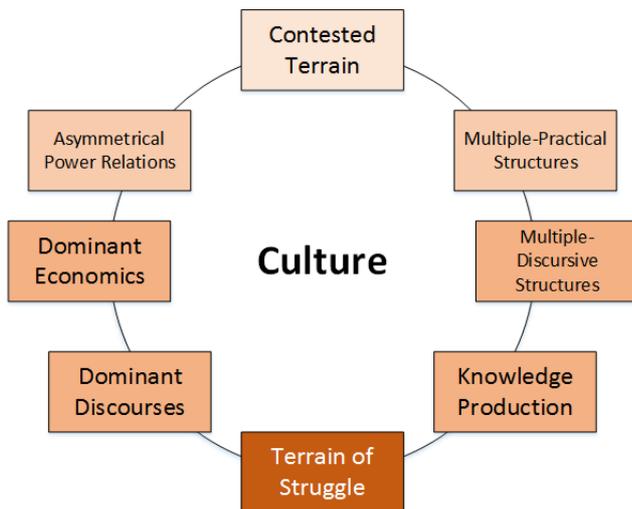
2 School Literacies

<http://www.digilitleic.com/>

The DigilLit Leicester project is a collaboration between Leicester City Council’s Building Schools for the Future Programme, De Montfort University and 23 of the city’s secondary schools. The project focuses on supporting secondary school teaching and teaching support staff in developing their digital literacy knowledge, skills and practice, and their effective use of digital tools, environments and approaches in their work with learners.

The DigilLit Leicester project is designed to ensure school staff and learners are getting the most from the significant investment in technology being made across the city, and that schools are able to make best use of technology to meet their aspirations for transforming educational provision. It will help schools make sure every learner attending a BSF Programme school benefits not only from a school with world-class technology provision, but from an education that is supported and enhanced by the use of technology to raise achievement and aspiration, connect communities and open opportunities.

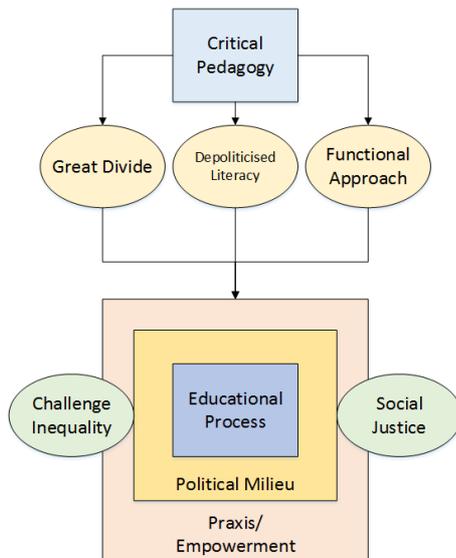
3 Contested Literacies



“Culture is best understood as a terrain of contestation that serves as a locus of multivalent practical and discursive structures and powers;’ [and] that ‘knowledge is construed as a form of discursive production’; that ‘the process of constructing knowledge that takes place within an unevenly occupied terrain of struggle in which the dominative discourse of mainstream research approaches frequently parallel the discursive economies of the larger society, and are reinforced by the asymmetrical relations of power and privilege which accompany them” (Chege, 2009, p. 232).

4 Critical Pedagogy

“Critical pedagogy counters traditional paradigms such as the great divide and the functional approach by exposing and challenging the agenda behind depoliticising literacy. It also over-comes the limitations of poststructural and discourses approaches by adopting an educational theory grounded on situating the educational process in socio-political milieu and most importantly, providing praxis grounded on empowerment of educators and students to challenge inequalities in education and social injustices in society in general” (Chege, 2009, p. 232).



“Critical pedagogy challenges long-held assumptions and leads us to ask new questions, and the questions we ask will determine the answers we get... Critical pedagogy leads us to advocacy and activism on behalf of those who are the most vulnerable in classrooms and in society” (Wink, 2010, p. 165).

## 5 Paulo Freire

‘Whoever teaches learns in the act of teaching, and however learns teaches in the act of learning’ (Freire, 2001).

“No pedagogy which is truly liberating can remain distant from the oppressed by treating them as unfortunates and by presenting for their emulation models from among the oppressors. The oppressed must be their own example in the struggle for their redemption” (Freire, 1996, p. 36).

## 6 Dynamic of Teaching & Learning

“Together, Dewey’s and Freire’s ideas have shaped the current day concept of Critical Pedagogy... The dynamic of teaching and learning, as expressed within the context of Critical Pedagogy, is greatly shaped by our culture’s dynamic of power; whether or not we recognise it” (Bey, 2014).

## 7 Reflective Participation

“Attempting to liberate the oppressed without their reflective participation in the act of liberation is to treat them as objects which must be saved from a burning building; it is to lead them into the populist pitfall and transform them into masses which can be manipulated” (Freire, 1996, p. 47).

## 8 Activism

“It is only when the oppressed find their oppressor out and become involved in the organised struggle for their liberation that they begin to believe in themselves. This discovery cannot be purely intellectual but must involve action; nor can it be limited to mere activism, but must include serious reflection: only then will it be praxis” (Freire, 1996, p. 47)..

## 9 Banking Learning

“The banking concept suggests that students are passive recipients of knowledge, storing information in their minds and saving it until they are required to withdraw it for academic endeavours such as tests and essays. In contrast, the dialogical theory of education encourages learning to emerge through conversations between the educator and student” (Palmer & Emmons, 2004).

“The teacher’s task is to organise a process which already occurs spontaneously to ‘fill’ the students by making deposits of information which he or she considers to constitute true knowledge. And since people ‘receive’ the world as passive entities, education should make them more passive still, and adapt them to the world. The educated individual is the adapted person, because she or he is better ‘fit’ for the world” (Freire, 1996, p. 57) .

## 10 Teaching Roles

“The teacher teaches and the students are taught;

The teacher knows everything and the students know nothing;

The teacher thinks and the students are thought about;

The teacher talks and the students listen – meekly;

The teacher disciplines and the students are disciplined;

The teacher chooses and enforces his choice, and the students comply;

The teacher acts and the students are have the illusion of acting through the action of the teacher;

The teacher chooses the programme content, and the students (who were not consulted) adapt to it;

The teacher confuses the authority of knowledge with his or her own professional authority, which she and he sets in opposition to the freedom of the students;

The teacher is the Subject of the learning process, while the pupils are mere objects” (Freire, 1996, p. 54).

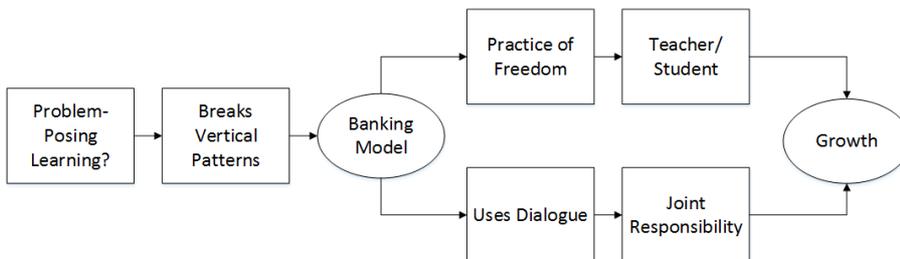
## 11 Banking Teaching

“Narration (with the teacher as narrator) leads the students to memorise mechanically the narrated content. Worse yet, it turns them into ‘containers,’ into ‘receptacle’ to be ‘filled by the teacher. The more completely she fills the receptacles, the better a teacher she is. The more meekly the receptacles permit themselves to be filled, the better students they are. Education this becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor.... This is the ‘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. They do, it is true, have the opportunity to become collectors or cataloguers of the things they store. But in the last analysis, it is the people themselves who are filed away through the lack of creativity, transformation, and knowledge in this (at best) misguided system....

Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other. In the banking concept of education, knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing” (Freire, 1996, p. 52).

## 12 Problem-Posing

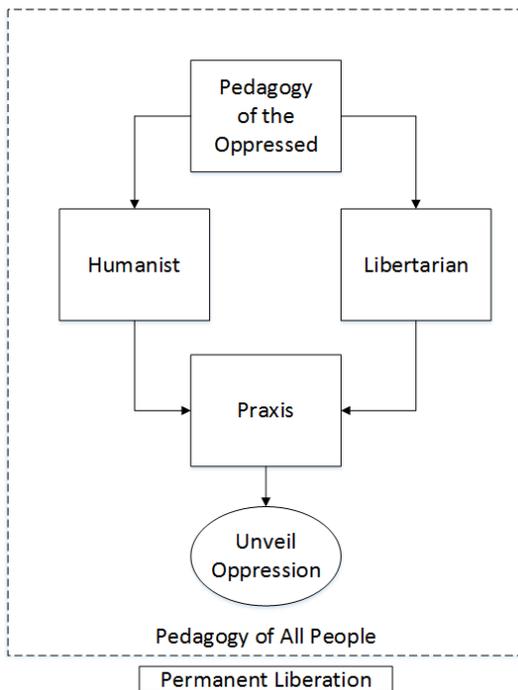
“Abandon the educational goal of deposit-making and replace it with the posing of the problems of human beings in their relations with the world. ‘Problem-posing’ education, responding to the essence of consciousness - intentionality – rejects communiqués and embodies communication” (Freire, 1996, p. 60).



“Problem-posing education, which breaks with the vertical patterns characteristic of banking education, can fulfil its function as the practice of freedom only if it can overcome the above contradiction. Through dialogue, the teacher-of-the-students and the students-of-the-teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-student with student-teachers. The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach. They become jointly responsible in a process in which all grow” (Freire, 1996, p. 61).

## 13 Pedagogy of the Oppressed

“The pedagogy of the oppressed, as a humanist and libertarian pedagogy, has two distinct stages. In the first, the oppressed unveil the world of oppression and through the praxis commit themselves to its transformation. In the second stage, in which the reality of oppression has already been transformed, this pedagogy ceases to belong to the oppressed and becomes a pedagogy of all people in the process of permanent liberation” (Freire, 1996, p. 36).



#### 14 Beyond Clitivism

“There is no such thing as absolute ignorance or absolute wisdom. But men do not perceive those data from pure form. As they apprehend a phenomenon or a problem, they also apprehend its causal links. The more accurately men grasp true causality, the more critical their understanding of reality will be” (Freire, 1996, p. 41).

“The Internet does not create resistance, but it can both encourage it and affect the form it takes. When resistance happens in new ways, elites can be taken by surprise. When communication takes new forms, control over communication can be weakened or broken” (Hill, 2013, p. 28).

“By literally putting themselves in the way of commerce as they challenged media and government narratives, UK Uncut were simultaneously exercising physical counterpower, economic counterpower and idea counterpower. It had been a long time since a UK-wide protest movement had systematically employed all three” (Hill, 2013).

“Campaigns that start on social media tend to become widely known only after they have achieved coverage in mainstream media. But the very fact that social media can lead to mainstream media coverage says a great deal about what online activists can do” (Hill, 2013, p. 110).

“It is... worth remembering that the Internet can be used by hierarchical, corporate and governmental organisations as well as those who resist them. The web is not a magic antidote to hierarchy. Nonetheless, it has helped movements to spread in non-hierarchical ways” (Hill, 2013, p. 138).

#### UK Uncut:

<http://www.ukuncut.org.uk/>

<https://www.facebook.com/ukuncut>

#### Occupy:

<http://occupylondon.org.uk/>

<https://www.facebook.com/occupylondon?fref=ts>

#### Student Activism?

<http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/comment/student-politics-where-are-all-the-activists-making-jokes-in-the-bar-9069562.html>

<http://www.independent.co.uk/student/istudents/liking-isnt-helping-how-facebook-is-killing-student-activism-9041589.html>

<http://www.independent.co.uk/student/istudents/student-politics-in-2014-needs-to-capture-the-spirit-of-paris-in-1968-9049147.html>  
<http://www.theguardian.com/education/2014/jan/17/sussex-university-student-hearing-bias>  
<https://twitter.com/search?q=%23SackFarthing&src=hash>

## 15 Manipulation

“Challenging corporate manipulation of the economy reveals connected forms of cultural domination and social control, and the process leads to deeper questioning. ‘How can we find ways to work together to overcome barriers and tensions and become part of a dedicated, on-going, sustained movement which is going to last a long time?’... ‘How can we be together in a unity that is complex and emancipatory?’ .... How can we get it together?” (Greg Ruggiero in Chomsky, 2012, p. 17).

## 16 Participation

“There is a famous line by Karl Mark, which I am sure many of you know: the task is not just to understand the world, but to change it. And there is a variant of that which should also be kept in mind. If you want to change the world in a constructive direction, you better try to understand it first. And understanding it doesn’t mean just listening to a talk or reading a book, although that’s helpful sometimes. It means learning. And you learn through participation. You learn from others. You learn from the people you are trying to organise. And you have to gain the experience and understanding which will make it possible to maybe implement ideas like that as a tactic” (Chomsky, 2012, p. 44)..

## 17 References

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