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The Challenge of Teaching for Critical Thinking

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to clarify what is involved in the notion of teaching for critical thinking and identify some of the challenges that this notion faces. The paper is divided into two sections. Section one attempts to clarify the notion of teaching for critical thinking by focusing on and analyzing the assumptions and practical implications of two contrasting teaching situations. Section two identifies and briefly comments on some of the common challenges that face those who take the ideal of critical thinking seriously.

Résumé

Cet article vise à préciser ce qui intervient dans la notion d'enseignement axé sur la pensée critique et à identifier certains des défis auxquels cette notion se heurte. L'article est divisé en deux parties. La première tente de préciser la notion d'enseignement axé sur la pensée critique en examinant de près et en analysant les hypothèses et implications pratiques de deux situations d'enseignement contrastantes. La seconde partie identifie et commente brièvement certains des défis courants auxquels font face ceux qui ont à coeur l'idéal de la pensée critique.

In the dialogue *Charmides,* Socrates says to Critias, who is eager to know what Socrates' view is: "You come to me as though I professed to know about the questions which I ask. . . whereas the fact is that I am inquiring with you into the truth of that which is advanced from time to time, just because I do not know; and when I have inquired, I will say whether I agree with you or not. Please then allow time to reflect." Unlike the Sophists, Socrates was unwilling to rush to conclusions.

Robin Barrow (1981) reminds us that the aim of this kind of reflection is "to rid our minds of hazy generalizations, ambiguous slogans, inarticulate ideas and half-truths. . . to enable us to resist and see through the catch-phrase. . ." (p. 16). We need to take heed of such cautionary remarks since unfortunately "critical thinking" has become yet another slogan in educational discourse. The biggest danger to the ideal of critical thinking arises from (i) misunderstandings of what is involved in the ideal itself and (ii) the variety of things, at times, contradictory ones, that are claimed to be done under the catch-phrase "critical thinking". While it has become quite convenient and common to defend what we do simply by describing it as critical thinking, and while several documents published by government departments of education seem, at face value, to have endorsed the notion, we need to ask: Does our teaching really reflect the ideal?

The aim of this paper is to offer some clarification as to what is involved in the notion of teaching for critical thinking. In section one I clarify the notion of teaching for critical thinking by focusing on and analyzing the assumptions and practical implications of two contrasting teaching situations. In section two I identify and briefly comment on some of the common challenges that face those who take the ideal of critical thinking seriously.[1]

Section 1: Teaching for critical thinking

In the western world – a "eurocentric" world – the ideal of critical thinking (referred to in a variety of terms, such as, rationality, critical judgment, reflective thinking) has been promoted at least since the time of Socrates.[2] References to this ideal are found in the work of almost all of the major educationists. At the end of the 19th century and the beginning of this century, John Dewey revived the ideal by giving it a central role in the sustenance and continuous reshaping of a democracy and education in a democracy. He also linked the ideal with "the problem solving method", "the scientific method", and the disposition of "open-mindedness". Following and developing on Dewey's work, in the 1960s, philosophers of education such as Israel Scheffler, John Passmore, Robert Ennis, and Maxine Greene, explicitly attempted to connect the ideal of critical thinking with the teaching context.

Since the 1960s, interest in critical thinking has developed into a world-wide movement. And hence: (i) differences of interpretation of the ideal became more explicit and controversial; (ii) several programmes aiming to foster critical thinking have been developed; (iii) critiques and

limitations of the ideal based solely on rationality have emerged (see for example, some of the work in "critical pedagogy", "feminist pedagogy", and "postmodernism"); and (iv) more attempts have been made to explore the connection between the ideal of critical thinking and a variety of teaching contexts. And, of course, the questions have increased and have moved beyond those related to the meaning of the term. Some of these questions include: Is critical thinking to be analyzed in terms of various skills and abilities? Can critical thinking be taught? Is critical thinking generalizable or is it directly related to specific subjects? Should it be taught on its own or incorporated throughout the entire curriculum? When should it be taught? Are children capable of dealing with critical thinking situations? How can critical thinking be evaluated? What are some of the justifications for critical thinking? Are critical thinking and teaching critically, the same? What is the relationship between critical thinking, teaching critically and democracy? Should critical thinking be based on problem-**solving** or on problem-**seeking**? Are the critical and creative opposed or two sides of the same coin? Why is critical thinking deemed important for teaching? What practical issues emerge when critical thinking is incorporated into one's own teaching? For example, how will this influence or change the role of the teacher? To what extent can critical thinking help resolve ethical and political issues which arise in teaching?

Scenario one

I will now move to an analysis of a teaching context: the one provided in the first two chapters of *Hard Times* by Charles Dickens.[3] What are some of the assumptions the teacher makes with regard to teaching, his role, and the role of the students? What do the children learn? Why isn't this an example of teaching that fosters critical thinking? The teacher believes that there is a sharp distinction between facts and imagination or "tastes" or values and that teaching is exclusively concerned with facts. Actually his claim is stronger than that. He believes that all one needs is to know facts. Knowledge is reduced exclusively to acquiring facts; teaching is a matter of imparting facts. He also assumes that children are incapable of contributing anything to the learning process since they are "empty vessels". Since they have nothing to contribute, the teacher, the one with all the knowledge, has no consideration at all for the views of the children, no respect for them as individuals. Quite clearly, given these assumptions, there will be no room for imagination, no consideration of subjective views, no discussion of anything (including value issues), no consideration for alternate views. The only view that counts is that of the teacher which is correct since it is allegedly based on facts.

What do the children learn from this situation? The children learn the following: to give the teacher what he wants; that their ideas are not important; that if they voice their ideas they will be crushed; that everything has to be reduced to facts, that there is nothing of worth beyond facts; to accept facts as presented by the teacher or the text; not to question anything; to memorize definitions for the teacher's view of knowing implies that to know something you have to know its definition; that this kind of learning is stressful; to dislike school.

The kind of learning identified above is contrary to the skills and dispositions that teaching for critical thinking ought to foster. One may retort that this is an extreme and outdated case. Although it may be hard to find this very specific kind of situation, one still encounters teaching which seems to operate on the assumptions of the teacher in this case.[4]

Scenario two

I will now focus on another teaching situation – one that exhibits qualities associated with the ideal of critical thinking. A grade 6 class of 26 students in an ordinary public school. As part of the language arts and social studies (and possibly even in other subject areas), the teacher explicitly encourages discussions on topics that are of interest to the students. Sometimes she provides them with a reading that may trigger discussion. On other occasions the students themselves now have learnt to identify issues that they would like to discuss in an organized, civilized manner as a community of inquirers – that is, a community in which a group of individuals share a common aim and commonly accepted procedures of inquiry, one in which individuals of the community exchange and share ideas and information with one another, clarify views, respect each other's views, offer reasons for their views, are willing to consider alternatives, and attempt to construct together a reasonable position.

On one occasion, the teacher provided them with *The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs! By A. Wolf* (Scieszka, 1989). After the reading the teacher asked for the children's reactions and together, as a group, they identified the following "leading ideas": Was the wolf really sick or was he pretending? Had the wolf intended to eat the pigs? How is it possible to know who was telling the truth, who was right? Why did he want to make a cake for his granny? Why didn't the pigs want to give him some sugar? Why didn't he just do a postcard? Why did the third pig tease the wolf about his granny? Why was the wolf imprisoned? Why didn't the wolf buy some sugar? Why did people lie about the wolf? Is this really the true story? Why did the wolf assume that the pig in the straw house is not intelligent? Should we always believe what is reported in newspapers?

The point of the leading ideas is to construct the agenda for the discussion. The teacher is aware that there are different kinds of talk that can take place in a class. In this instance the purpose is to develop a critical discussion (in contrast to a traditional debate or mere "chit chatting" or an exposition of the teacher's interpretation of the issues). This is something the teacher had introduced in the beginning of the year and gradually with her input helped develop further. Initially the teacher asked questions eliciting opinions or views. The teacher was aware that to develop a critical discussion more than a mere expression of an opinion was needed. So gradually she introduced questions that encourage them to clarify and provide reasons for their views, to consider the implications of and alternatives to their views, as well as the appropriateness of their reasons.

The aims of the teacher include (i) developing the class into a community of inquiry and (ii) helping the children to think well for themselves. She believes that the two aims have to develop concurrently. The teacher is aware that in order to fulfill these aims there will be some practical implications for both the classroom and wider level. At the classroom level, the power relation between teacher and students and students themselves ought to be more cooperative, open and less threatening than the one found in traditional classrooms. The role of the teacher will no longer be viewed as the purveyor of all the "truth" and mechanically implement a totally preplanned curriculum irrespective of context. Teaching will no longer be viewed as the execution of a set of reductionist and behaviourist goals. Mere teacher didactic talk will give room to the give-and-take of open yet constructive discussions in which the students' own views will be taken seriously and at times even determine the nature of the curriculum. In a nutshell, an executive/behaviourist approach to teaching will have to be abandoned in favour of an interactive or constructivist approach to teaching which takes democratic procedures in education more seriously; while the teacher retains the ultimate responsibility, the students are realistically and prudently invited to share in this responsibility.

The teacher, therefore, is aware that she will have to assume a different role. She is aware that in the initial phases, as the leader of the group, she will have to model for the students by keeping track of the points made, intervening by asking questions that move the discussion forward, making occasional comments in order to help clarify the difference between a critical perspective from other perspectives with regard to the issue at hand, encouraging them to compare differing points of views, carefully demanding clarifications and reasons when these are lacking. She is also aware that she will have to learn to balance her interventions while allowing and encouraging the students to express

their views, and to question one another's ideas and those of the teacher. This is a very crucial point especially if students are not used to engaging in any form of discussion. Eventually students will get used to this approach and they will ask to lead discussions themselves. In those instances the teacher, as a participant or member of the community of inquiry, will still have the responsibility to guide the discussion as necessary, but not to a predetermined or fixed point. The direction of the inquiry ought to be determined by the nature of the questions asked or the problems posed and by the kind of replies and further questions that arise in the inquiry. If a determinate or pre-established path channels the direction of the discourse in the sense that the teacher will only allow or expect one kind of reply, the one she really wants to hear, then of course, no discussion has really taken place. Part of the role of the teacher is (i) to create a non-threatening environment so the students will comfortably express their views and questions even if these differ from the accepted norm, (ii) to make sure not to hinder the children's thinking, and (iii) to ensure that she does not manipulate the discussion in order to force the students to accept her views. But it is also the role of the teacher to ensure that the critical procedures are being followed: to learn to tease out assumptions of views expressed, to patiently and caringly offer justifications for their views, to examine the plausibility of reasons and examples offered and so on. Obviously, this teacher believes that children are good at doing certain things (which in the past has not been assumed) such as seriously engaging in critical discussions. But she also believes that they need nurturing and that these kinds of discussions will be successful only if the children are provided with a rich context which relates to them, and the children are given the opportunity to discuss issues that interest them.

Section Two: The challenges

In section one I offered a clarification of the notion of teaching for critical thinking by focusing on and briefly analyzing two contrasting teaching contexts. Teaching for critical thinking is a demanding endeavour that faces a variety of challenges. In this section I will consider five challenges that face those who take teaching for critical thinking seriously: (i) the challenge of misunderstanding what is involved in being critical and teaching for critical thinking; (ii) the challenge of the conservative educational ideology; (iii) the challenge of "the soft liberal position"; (iv) the challenge of critical and feminist pedagogy; and (v) the challenge of risk-taking.

Challenge No. 1: The challenge of misunderstanding what is involved in being critical and teaching for critical thinking

". . . the Western habit of critical thinking means that first we must find faults and then seek to put them right, so anything without faults is

impossible to improve." (De Bono, 1990, p.167). De Bono's notion of critical thinking in this instance is very similar, if not identical, to the popular usage of the term **criticism** in the sense of finding a fault or a mistake in something. This usually has negative connotations as this sense of **critical** implies some element of destruction. This usage assumes that one cannot be critical unless one has found a mistake or weakness in something. This is not what **critical** means in the phrase **critical thinking**. This is a crucial point that needs to be emphasized for the major resistance to critical thinking may perhaps rest on this misunderstanding. It is not unusual for parents to misinterpret the intent of developing critical thinking in children, and hence they complain that children will start objecting to anything. This, however, is not the intent or meaning of developing critical thinking. The misunderstanding arises because critical thinkers are seen as "cynical people who often condemn the efforts of others without contributing anything themselves" (Brookfield, 1987, p. 5) Of course, if this were the case then critical thinkers would be rightly seen as being arrogant and antisocial. But, as Brookfield argues, the opposite is really the case. For "when we think critically we become aware of the diversity of values, behaviors, social structures, and artistic forms in the world. Through realizing this diversity, our commitments to our own values, actions, and social structures are informed by a sense of humility. . ." (p.5). There is a difference between (i) finding fault with something and (ii) fair-mindedness. Of course, the latter may at times call for identifying possible problems in a position. This is different from the negative ring associated with being critical just for the sake of being critical. The **manner** and **intention** of the critical element becomes crucial.

Another popular misinterpretation holds that critical thinking is identical to "effective thinking", or "creative thinking", or "imaginative thinking" or "problem solving" or "decision making" or simply thinking. For example, the psychologist Robert Sternberg writes that critical thinking "is the mental processes, strategies and representations people use to solve problems, make decisions and learn new concepts" (quoted in Splitter, 1991, p. 90). While not denying the connection between critical thinking and effectiveness, creativity, imagination, and solving problems, the point that needs to be made is that critical thinking is not just these things. It is not hard to envisage cases where one is effective or solved problems without being critical. And one can foresee situations in which in order to be effective one has to decline questioning anything at all from the status quo position. As Freire (1970) reminds us critical thinking contrasts with naive thinking. One can be very effective and yet be very naive. Likewise one may be excellent at solving specific problems which someone else provides and yet be unable to identify problems or even consider the worthwhileness or appropriateness of the solutions one is providing.

Challenge No. 2: The challenge of the conservative educational ideology

As I mentioned earlier in section one, there are attitudes, beliefs, and practices associated with a conservative or traditional position that are still influential today. In a sense the problem is more dangerous today since those who still adhere to such beliefs have camouflaged or softened the tone of these beliefs by making reference to popular slogans such as, excellence, equality of opportunity, access, self-esteem, problem solving, relevance, needs, and basics. We need to look beneath the surface terminology and ask: What is included as basic? Whose basics? Whose needs? What criteria are used to determine excellence? Does access without support really create equality? Relevant to whom? And in whose interest? When such slogans are analyzed in context several contradictions may emerge. In a recent document published by the Government of Canada (1991), it is stated that prosperity depends on "the willingness of Canadians to develop a renewed sense of partnership" (p. iii) yet the document is entitled *Prosperity through competitiveness*; and the contradiction is more blatant in the document *Learning Well. . . Living Well:*

> Canada's future prosperity, and our ability to provide all citizens with a high quality of life, depends on our ability to compete successfully both at home and abroad. Our ability to compete – to produce and provide high quality goods and services – depends in turn on the willingness of Canadians to cooperate, to develop a renewed sense of partnership. (p. v)

And what about the recent flurry to reintroduce standardized testing in several provinces – all in the name of excellence and quality?! In some provinces the contradictions are more acute since while still promoting holistic learning, in the same breadth traditional modes of evaluation are being reintroduced (Carty, 1993).

Challenge No. 3: The challenge of "the soft liberal position"

I am here referring to the danger arising from the excessive individualism arising from an extreme liberal position (Goodman, 1992). This position, as Fred Inglis (1985) puts it, holds:

> . . . that nobody has any right to tell anybody else what to think, but that, since the central good of human life is individual freedom, which is exercised in the making of choices, the good life is best organized by clearing as large

> a space as may be cleared for the choosing activity, compatible with not infringing the choosing space of others, and validated by more or less optimistic trust in the innate goodness of people. If, however, that trust turns out to be misplaced, liberalism still upholds as a paramount good the freedom of individuals to go to the bad, as long as that is their choice. (p. 156)

When taken to an extreme, as I am claiming it has been done in some educational circles, this position leads to the illusion that freedom has no limits, that individual choice ought not to be influenced by other individual choices, that individual choices do not influence others, that somehow there is the possibility of making choices in a neutral context, and that any individual choice is acceptable. It is exactly this kind of view that leads to extreme relativism or extreme skepticism or an anything goes mentality: open-mindedness becomes empty-mindedness; objectives or plans become unacceptable because they limit the students' choice; suggestions from teachers become non-natural since they do not arise from the students; student participation becomes student domination; sharing on the part of the students turns into a control by the dominant few in the group. Any intervention or correction on the part of the teacher is seen as an imposition of the views of the teacher, or to use the latest catch-phrase, to intervene is to be judgmental. The assumption here is that any judgment is necessarily judgmental or demeaning. But, then, should a teacher not intervene if the students exhibit racist or sexist or classist attitudes? Should they not be made aware of a variety of differing views? The critical spirit calls for a respectful intervention or an attempt to increase one's awareness. Allowing an expression of differing views and respecting other's views is not the same as accepting any view whatsoever. Emphasizing the importance of the process does not imply that the process exists in separation from the content, or that any conclusion one arrives at is acceptable since what we should be concerned about is simply the process. Thinking is always about something, and what that something is makes a big difference. As Douglas Barnes (1988) warns us:

> Schooling must not become merely 'technical' but should help young people to engage in ethical and social issues both at a personal and political level. The idea of substituting 'process' for 'content' is nonsensical: understanding is impossible without knowledge. Academic curricula have been at fault not in celebrating knowledge but in teaching it as if it were monolithic and unquestionable. (p.31)

Challenge No. 4: The challenge of critical and feminist pedagogy[5]

I consider the challenge of the critical and feminist pedagogues to be positive for in essence these pedagogues are concerned about the limitations of the notion of critical thinking associated primarily or exclusively with logic or rationality. This notion, it is argued, does not necessarily lead to the kind of awareness and action that is needed. From this perspective, the dominant view of critical thinking is deemed to encourage a detachment between the agent and the object of investigation: the popular view of critical thinking still assumes that to be fair the critical thinker has to dissociate the emotions from reasons, thought from action, and the researcher from the object of investigation (Martin, 1992; Thayer-Bacon, 1993). How is critical thinking defined from the critical and feminist pedagogy perspective? Let me offer three examples:

> 1. True dialogue cannot exist unless the dialoguers engage in critical thinking – thinking which discerns an indivisible solidarity between the world and men and admits of no dichotomy between them – thinking which perceives reality as process, as transformation, rather than as a static entity – thinking which does not separate itself from action, but constantly immerses itself in temporality without fear of the risks involved. Critical thinking contrasts with naive thinking... only dialogue which requires critical thinking is also capable of generating critical thinking. Without dialogue there is no communication, and without communication there can be no true education. (Freire, 1970)
>
> 2. [A critical inquiry is one that] takes into account how our lives are mediated by systems of inequity such as classism, racism, and sexism. (Patti Lather, 1992, p.87)
>
> 3. All of these current theories presented function under the dominant paradigm that critical thinking is a process based in logic where facts are separated from opinion; the model being used is the scientific method, in which the critical thinker remains objective, distancing herself from what she is examining.... My desire is to encourage self-awareness as a part of the development of critical thinking skills, with the understanding that one cannot divorce oneself from one's own point of view. Instead of viewing the self's contribution (subjective knowing) as something that is distracting or prejudicial to critical thinking, I am arguing that what one contributes is necessary (impossible

> to remove) and adds contextually to the knowing. (Barbara Thayer-Bacon, 1992, pp. 6-7)

These are very serious claims and should not be taken lightly; for in essence, if we do not take heed of them, we may end up making the same kind of assumptions made by the teacher in *Hard Times,* who dissociated facts from opinions, reason from emotions, facts from values, knowledge from imagination and subjectivity. Unless we encourage our students to apply the kind of analysis, investigation, and critique associated with critical thinking to their own contexts and beyond in order to act accordingly when faced with injustices, we will remain at the level of the teacher's concern in *Hard Times* of whether it is all right to imagine flowers on our carpets or horses on our wallpaper! As Jane R. Martin (1992) has eloquently argued, a democratic society is not well served by having merely spectator-citizens: ". . . an education that favors spectatorship over participation – that is devoted almost exclusively to the former – is not an appropriate one for the young of any society, certainly not ours" (p.175). To achieve this kind of participation, however, we will need to do more than merely providing students with choices or feeding them with problems to solve. We need to encourage them also to find alternatives and then choose, and to find problems themselves. And, more importantly, we need to make them more aware of the political and moral dimensions of their choices. As Martin (1992) concludes: "The best thinking in the world is of little avail if a person has not acquired the will, the ability, the skill, the sensitivity, and the courage to act on it" (p. 178).[6]

Challenge No. 5: The challenge of risk-taking

Taking critical thinking in its entirety seriously will make us teachers have to face delicate and controversial situations, which at times, create conflicts and tensions. Critical teaching may at times lead to an "unquiet pedagogy" (Kutz & Roskelly, 1991). John Passmore (1967) warned us that any teacher who takes critical thinking seriously, as democracy requires, "must expect constantly to be embarrassed. . . to be harassed, by his [her] class, by his [her] headmaster, by parents" (p.219). Are we as teachers and teacher educators prepared to take this needed risk? Or, are we, as Russell (1939) put it "tempted to set ourselves as little gods" (p. 532) within the haven of institutional bureaucracy?

Concluding remarks

The aim of this paper has been to clarify the notion of "teaching for critical thinking" by inquiring into (i) what is implied by this concept, (ii) some of the common misinterpretations and the kind of practices,

policies and visions that hinder the realization of this kind of teaching, and (iii) current educational positions that urge us to go beyond traditional perspectives of critical thinking. The aim has **not** been to offer a succinct, precise definition of critical thinking. I have argued elsewhere that attempting to do so with certain concepts will create further myths and illusions (Portelli, 1987). The same, I contend, applies to the notion of critical thinking. However, my discussion does indicate (i) some qualities (such as those identified in the brief analysis of scenario one) that are inconsistent with teaching for critical thinking, and (ii) some qualities (such as those identified in my analysis of scenario two and the criticisms of popular views dealt with in section two) that are consistent with critical thinking and ought to be encouraged if the notion of teaching for critical thinking is taken seriously.

NOTES

1. At this stage I should note that I do not mean to propose the ideal and practice of critical thinking as a panacea to all the educational ills. To do so would assume that there is only **one** direct way to resolve educational problems. Such an approach would also assume that if we make changes here and there within the educational institution itself, irrespective of what happens outside schools and in other institutions, we would be able to achieve the educational aims in a democracy. Education is a political activity – that is, one that involves power relations between individuals such as teachers and students, parents and administrators, curriculum supervisors and teachers and so on. ("Power" is not used interchangeably with force. I am here referring to a certain relationship which arises from the inescapable nature of human beings as social beings. Siegel (1988) makes a similar point when he argues that "educational institutions and practices which are informed by ideals, **being social**, inevitably impact the body politic in multifarious ways and are in that sense inevitably political" [p.69]). As Paulo Freire (1985a, 1985b, 1987, 1990) has argued, educational activities are either for humanization or dehumanization. There is no neutral stance in between. Educational activities within educational institutions are, of course, influenced by, and hopefully influence, activities in other institutions. It would be naive for me, therefore, to argue that all we need to do is make sure that we attempt to follow the ideal of critical thinking. Yet, on the other hand, I equally believe that taking critical thinking and the practices that flow from it seriously, is necessary for the sustenance and reconstruction of the democratic way of life – a way of life, which as Russell put it, requires that we "encourage independence, initiative, thinking for [oneself], and the realization that anybody may be mistaken" (1939, p.533). Or as Dewey put it, a way of life whose foundation depends on the "faith in human intelligence and in the power of pooled and cooperative experience" (1958, p.59) – an experience that fosters certain attitudes, dispositions and skills, such as, the development of "intelligent judgment and action", free discussions and inquiry, the trust and support that is needed for self-correction, "allowing differences a chance to show them-

selves because of the belief that the expression of difference is not only a right of the other persons but is a means of enriching one's own life-experience. . ." (1951, p.393).

2. Molefi Kete Asante (1990) argues quite convincingly by providing evidence that the notion of rationality in ancient Greek philosophy was inherited from the Egyptians.
3. I am assuming that the reader is familiar with the scenario in these two chapters.
4. For examples that support this claim, see Baksh and Martin (1986), Smith (1986), Sirotnik (1988), McLaren (1989), Shannon (1989), Willinsky (1990), Lipman (1991), Taylor (1991), Osborne (1991), Apple (1993), and Macedo (1993).
5. Although critical pedagogy and feminist pedagogy are not identical, they will be treated as representing a common perspective since their concerns about critical thinking are very similar. Moreover, their major thrust as a pedagogy is very similar if not identical. Peter Mclaren (1989), for example, writes that "critical pedagogy examines schools both in their historical context as part of the existing social and political fabric that characterize the dominant society. ... Critical pedagogy does not ... constitute a homogenous set of ideas. It is more accurate to say that critical theorists are united in their *objectives:* to empower the powerless and transform existing social inequalities and injustices" (pp. 159-160). And Linda Briskin (1990), a feminist pedagogue, writes: "[The] emphasis on social change recognizes feminist pedagogy as a form of feminist practice having its roots in the women's movement, and firmly situates feminist pedagogy in the traditions of critical and radical pedagogies that see education as a form of empowerment and a tool in social change" (p.33).
6. For other examples of this kind of challenge, see Shor (1992), Goodman (1992), and Fernandez-Balboa (1993).

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