

The following lists some of the common terms/old words together with their definitions used by Paulo Freire:

**Alienation:** Alienation is the separation of humankind from its labor.

**Banking Education:** In the "banking" method of education passive learners receive deposits of pre-selected, ready-made knowledge. The learner's mind is seen as an empty vault into which the riches of approved knowledge are placed.

**Conscientization:** Conscientization means breaking through prevailing mythologies to reach new levels of awareness - in particular, awareness of oppression, being an "object" in a world where only "subjects" have power. The process of conscientization involves identifying contradictions in experience through dialogue and becoming a "subject" with other oppressed subjects - that is, becoming part of the process of changing the world.

**Critical Consciousness:** This is a level of consciousness characterized by depth in the interpretation of problems, through testing one's own findings with openness to revision, attempting to avoid distortion when perceiving problems and preconceived notions when analyzing them, receptivity to the new without rejecting the old because it is old. In striving toward critical consciousness, the individual rejects passivity, practicing dialogue rather than polemics, and using permeable, interrogative, restless, and dialogical forms of life.

**Culture of Silence:** The "culture of silence" is a characteristic which Freire attributes to oppressed people in colonized countries, with significant parallels in highly developed countries. Alienated and oppressed people are not heard by the dominant members of their society. The dominant members prescribe the words to be spoken by the oppressed through control of the schools and other institutions, thereby effectively silencing the people. This imposed silence does not signify an absence of response, but rather a response which lacks a critical quality. Oppressed people internalize negative images of themselves (images created and imposed by the oppressor) and feel incapable of self-governance. Dialogue and self-government are impossible under such conditions.

**Dialectic:** Dialectic is a term referring to a dynamic tension within any given system and the process by which change occurs on the basis of that tension and resulting conflict. Based on the writings of Hegel, every concept implies its negation; that is, in conceiving anything (thesis), we must be able to imagine its opposite (antithesis).

**Dialogical Method:** The dialogical approach to learning is characterized by co-operation and acceptance of interchangeability and mutuality in the roles of teacher and learner, demanding an atmosphere of mutual acceptance and trust. In this method, all teach and all learn.

**Empowerment:** Empowerment is a consequence of liberatory learning. Power is not given, but created within the emerging praxis in which co-learners are engaged. The theoretical basis for this discovery is provided by critical consciousness; its expression is collective action on behalf of mutually agreed upon goals. Empowerment is distinct from building skills and competencies, these being commonly associated with conventional schooling. Education for empowerment further differs from schooling both in its emphasis on groups (rather than individuals) and in its focus on cultural transformation (rather than social adaptation).

**Humanization:** The central task in any movement toward liberation is to become more fully human through the creation of humanly-enhancing culture - in a word, "humanization." This historical task is countered by the negative forces of dehumanization which, through oppressive manipulation and control, compromise human values for personal gain and power. The task of the oppressed is to liberate themselves and, in the process, liberate their oppressors.

**Liberatory Education:** Education which is liberatory encourages learners to challenge and change the world, not merely uncritically adapt themselves to it. The content and purpose of liberatory education is the collective responsibility of learners, teachers, and the community alike who, through dialogue, seek political, as well as economic and personal empowerment. Programs of liberatory education support and compliment larger social struggles for liberation.

**Mystification:** Mystification is the process by which the alienating and oppressive features of culture are disguised and hidden. False, superficial, and naive interpretations of culture prevent the emergence of critical consciousness. Educational systems are key instruments in the dissemination of mystifications: e.g. unemployment is "mystified" as personal failure rather than as a failure of the economy, thus making it difficult for the unemployed to critically understand their situation.

**Praxis:** Praxis is a complex activity by which individuals create culture and society, and become critically conscious human beings. Praxis comprises a cycle of action-reflection-action which is central to liberatory education. Characteristics of praxis include self-determination (as opposed to coercion), intentionality (as opposed to reaction), creativity (as opposed to homogeneity), and rationality (as opposed to chance).

**Problematization:** Problematization is the antithesis of problem-solving. Problematization recognizes that "solutions" are often difficult because the wrong problems are being addressed.

**Transformation of the World:** To transform the world is to humanize it. All transformations do not result in liberation. Transforming action could dehumanize the world with an oppressor's curious and inventive presence (e.g. the development of the V-2 rocket in World War II).

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