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*Following Paulo Freire:
In Search of Educational Dialogue*

Tropami Paolo Freirego: W poszukiwaniu edukacyjnego dialogu

ABSTRACT

The article is devoted to the transformations of the teacher's roles in the context of the alternative education. The idea of the "pedagogy of the oppressed", presented by Paulo Freire in the book under the same title, has been presented in details. A short outline of the book's history has been given. The social and political roots of the education as the tool of oppression have been shown. The banking concept of education has been criticized as the one that contradicts the idea of freedom and democracy.

The author reinforces the idea that democratic changes of education gave start to different alternative visions of the teacher's role, which were expressed through different approaches to the education that constituted branches of the alternative pedagogy.

As it is shown in the article, antipedagogy, critical pedagogy, Gestalt pedagogy, emancipation pedagogy, transgressive pedagogy questioned the teacher's traditional role of being the only source of knowledge able to pass it to students as objects of teaching.

Different changes in the teacher's roles have been demonstrated: the neglected one (in antipedagogy), the one of the transformational intellectual assisting in criticizing everything (in critical pedagogy), the thoughtful facilitating partner (in Gestalt pedagogy), the child's self-actualization supporter (emancipation pedagogy), the dialogue learning organizer (transgressive pedagogy).

The author draws the conclusion that the teacher's role has been transformed with the stress transferred from teaching to learning; when both the teacher and the student are partners in their reciprocal learning.

Key words: pedagogy of the oppressed; alternative pedagogy; antipedagogy; critical pedagogy; emancipatory pedagogy; transgressive pedagogy; dialogue

The educational dialogue has gone far out of the classroom, the school and even a country nowadays. Dialogues as well as the educational processes and institutions are becoming worldwide. As Joel Spring put it, “»worldwide« is the key word”. This means that the events are happening on a global scale that affects national school systems. Nothing is static in this image. There is a constant dynamic of the interaction: global ideas about school practices interact with local school systems while, through mutual interaction, both the local and the global are changed (Spring 2008, p. 1).

Let us have a closer look at the shift in understanding of the teacher’s role in the European education in the second half of the 20th century when globalization became extremely fast. What gave the start to the global changes that resulted in radical transformations in the teacher’s role, first in the educational theory, and later on – in practice?

Below is the example of how local initiatives and innovative ideas influenced the global education, thus changing the needs from educating young people for the global economy as small parts of the global mechanism to giving them space for boosting creativity and freeing them from the oppression.

Revolutionary idea of the “pedagogy of the oppressed” belongs to the Brazilian scholar Paulo Freire. In 1967, he published *Education: The Practice of Freedom*, later the world was shaken by his famous *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* published in Portugal. In 1970, the book was translated into Spanish and English, while in Brazil it was published only in 1974 when the dictatorship became weaker. The book grew even more for decades, and in 2014, the 30th anniversary edition was published in more than a million printed copies inspiring educators to move ahead. In the foreword, Donaldo Macedo remembers his friends back in Cape Verde who – for that matter in most totalitarian states – risked cruel punishment, including imprisonment, if they were caught reading *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Introduction to the anniversary edition by Donaldo Macedo, 2014).

Why did the idea born in South America conquer the people’s minds worldwide? Why was it born in Brazil? How did it influence the global educational theory and practice?

Let us start with the assumption that an idea of any oppression is more likely to be born under some pressure. Twenty-one years of interrupted democracy in Brazil – the so-called the Years of Lead – lasted between 1964 and 1985. It was the hard time when Brazilian media underwent severe censorship; scholars were publicly let off for free thinking; public demonstrations were broken up. So, there were some objective circumstances for projecting social and political conditions on the educational processes to see that the school itself suffered from the same oppression. The mechanisms were principal in defining the teacher’s role as the agent of pressing students into becoming obedient participants of the state order and market rivalry.

The other reason for spreading Freire's idea of freeing the teacher and the student from the nets of oppression was translating *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* into the "global" English language. Publishing the book in the USA made it popular all over the world. There is a widespread practice of the English translation of the books, the authors of which fell victims of authoritarian regimes. It also concerns literary works expressing antiauthoritarian ideas. This way the American democracy in the aspiration to highlight its own democracy in the education found out the same oppression mechanisms in it. But djinn was already out of the lamp, and against the background of reforming initiatives in the education there appeared some new pedagogies, i.e. the alternative philosophies and social movements.

The alternative pedagogy refers to the educational models cardinally different from the traditional dominating forms. The meaning of the term obliges the teachers to be aware of their distinctive roles, and the necessity to be tolerant and respectful of others. This understanding of pedagogy allows teachers to be dissimilar to the others, and to suggest their own ideas, methods and forms.

The alternative approaches to the education are spontaneous, organic and do not go in line with the traditional ones. The main strength of the alternative pedagogy lies in its endlessness and permanence. Actually, time is the factor that contributes to moving the alternative educational methods and forms to traditional ones, if there are conditions favorable for their use on the mass scale. Nevertheless, it is quite possible that educational alternatives that once cobbled their way by criticizing traditional ones, will, in their turn, be severely criticized by those who are on the other side of the line between the tradition and the alternative.

Thus, some of the alternative pedagogies are: the unschooling, the critical pedagogy, the Gestalt pedagogy, the emancipatory pedagogy, the transgressive pedagogy etc. Practically all of them have *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* among their foundational texts, and all of them are parts of the alternative pedagogy suggesting different approaches to freeing the child from the oppression.

The traditional education is viewed as a means of reaching the economic, social, political and cultural targets. Rapid development and global changes brought about the understanding of the education as an important value and a purpose. As well as economics, politics and culture, education is becoming a principle part of our life. In plain words – the traditional education must teach the student to learn, and the teacher to teach. In its turn, the alternative education stresses on facilitating the student's learning.

What completely differs the alternative schools from the traditional ones is that their students start learning spontaneously if they are in need of cognition. Learning in the alternative schools is transdisciplinary and holistic. Instead of "knowledge for knowledge's sake" educationalists in the alternative schools suggest "learning for life". Instead of outer motivation, the alternative schools pay

more attention to inner motivation, responsibility and self-organization. Thus, they are aimed at creating conditions for inner motivation to the development which leads to a different understanding of the teacher's role in the unschooling, the Gestalt pedagogy, the critical pedagogy, the emancipatory pedagogy, and the transgressive pedagogy.

The unschooling (non-schooling, antipedagogy) first appeared in the 1970s. The term is coined with John Holt (unschooling) (Holt 1967, 1977) or with Heinrich Kupffer (antipedagogy) (Kupffer 1974). The fact of emerging the ideas of the harmful influence of school on the children's natural growth and development brought about a number of questions for discussion, among them: Should children be educated? Is it possible to educate a person? Why are children taught against their will, needs and expectations? How are pedagogical pressure and children's rights correlated? Why aren't most theoretical papers helpful in school practice? How come democratic societies submit children to non-democratic education, pressure and tyranny?

Supporters of the unschooling (antipedagogy) are trying to answer the above asked questions, to bust a lot of cultural and civilizational myths artificially created by the traditional pedagogy. They are pointing to the difference between official educational values and the ones addressed in the public and private education. The unschooling (antipedagogy) does not accept the theory and practice of the conventional education. Its supporters protest against pedagogical omnipotence, inflexibility in teachers' thinking, actions and skills, lack of considering such important values as freedom, equality, friendship, self-expression, as well as lack of relevance to all students irrespective of their age, gender, race and religion.

The critical pedagogy as an educational theory and practice is aimed at enhancing students' critical thinking of social conditions that oppress (*Encyklopedia...*2003, p. 434). As Henry Giroux put it "critical pedagogy is the educational movement guided by both passion and principle to help students develop a consciousness of freedom, recognize authoritarian tendencies, empower the imagination, connect knowledge and truth to power and learn to read both the word and the world as part of a broader struggle for agency, justice and democracy" (Giroux 2011).

In school practice, the critical pedagogy is targeted at changing traditional relationships between the teacher and the student where the latter is an active agent knowing everything and the former is a passive recipient of the teacher's knowledge (the so-called banking educational concept). In the critical pedagogy the classroom should be the place where new knowledge is constructed from the teacher' and the student's experience in the process of meaningful dialogue.

The Gestalt pedagogy is based on the multi-dimensional approach shown in the Ginger's pentagram, or a five-pointed star, which is the traditional, symbolic image of man – with his head, two arms and two legs (Ginger 2007, p. 8).

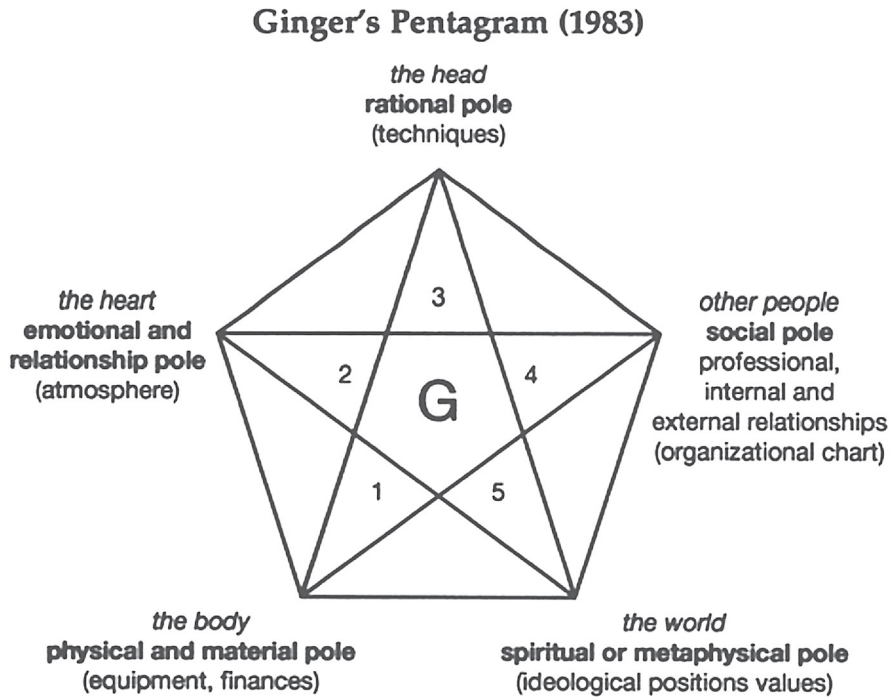


Fig. 1. Ginger's pentagram (S. Ginger, *Gestalt Therapy. The Art of Contact*, Karnac, London 2007, p. 8)

The five branches represent the “five main dimensions of human activity:

1. The physical dimension: body, senses, movement, physical sexuality ...
2. The emotional dimension: “heart”, feelings, love ...
3. The rational dimension: “head” (with both hemispheres!), ideas, creativity, imagination ...
4. The social dimension: other people, human and cultural environments ...
5. The spiritual dimension: man's place in the cosmos and in the global ecosystem ...

The two arms of the pentagram deal with relationship (to our significant other, or to others in general), and the two legs symbolize our roots, which maintain the balance between physical and metaphysical, between matter and spirit (or energy)” (Ginger 2007, p. 8).

According to the Gestalt pedagogy, the teacher-student relationships are to be of subject-subject character, that is taking the student as a partner. The teacher is supposed to be a facilitator who supports, encourages and consults (*Encyklopedia...*2003, pp. 139–141).

In its turn, the emancipatory pedagogy is concerned with the criticism of existing social order and states that it should be changed through introducing freedom and social justice in the education. The emancipatory pedagogy is rooted in analyzing class conflicts and pointing out reasons for social injustice, thus, preventing people from developing freedom. The role of the education is seen as providing anti-oppression forms developing sense of justice and emancipatory rationality. The main purpose of it is providing the education which is free from authoritarian influences and oppression. This alternative pedagogy is grounded on emancipation as “freeing the person from any repression and authoritarianism that restrict autonomy and violate such basic human rights as freedom and self-expression” (*Encyklopedia...* 2003, pp. 139–141).

The emancipatory pedagogy apologists consider any pedagogical influence to be “a symbolic violence as it imposes some cultural wilfulness” (Bourdieu and Passeron 2007, p. 23). The main problem of the education lies in its time-serving character, i.e. adapting to official ideology defined by the people in power. Thus, it kills creativity, autonomy, critical thinking and active position. As a result, the emancipatory pedagogy’s task is to find out and analyze the mechanisms of domination in education.

Coming back to Freire we can see that his ideas are very close to those expressed by the emancipatory educationalists, and he is considered to be the one of the theorists of the emancipatory pedagogy with his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* to be the one of the foundation books.

The main role in forming students’ emancipatory competence is played by the teacher who is an intellectual (Giroux 1988), unlike an obedient technician who submits the curriculum dictate... The language of efficiency and control causes obedience instead of criticism (Giroux 2011). So, the teacher should be concerned with generating in students cultural resistance helping them to control their lives.

The transgressive pedagogy appeared on the educational stage in the 70s of the 20th century from existential psychology and humanistic pedagogy and psychology. Its key notion is the transgression that is “an existential state of people in education which is caused by change of their inner identification determinants, broadening their own experiences by means of introducing the other sociocultural and meaningful fields” (Jenks 2003). Transgressional breakthrough creates new horizons for cognition, provides new opportunities for the choice of different ways for further development. In the transgressional pedagogy the metaphor “border” is used to point out intercultural mechanisms of acquiring sociocultural

experience, and to see the practice of creating intercultural values (Predborska 2007, p. 67).

The transgressional pedagogy develops Abraham H. Maslow's assumption that transgression is an important and natural feature of people's nature, and that they transgress to find themselves and to better self-actualize: "If we define growth as the various processes which bring the person toward ultimate self-actualization, then this conforms better with the observed fact that it is going on all the time in the life history. It discourages also the stepwise, all or none, salutatory conception of motivational progression toward self-actualization in which the basic needs are completely gratified, one by one, before the next higher one emerges into consciousness. Growth is seen then not only as progressive gratification of basic needs to the point where they »disappear«, but also in the form of specific growth motivations over and above these basic needs, e.g., talents, capacities, creative tendencies, constitutional potentialities" (Maslow 1968).

Freire and Giroux are considered to be the founders of the transgressive pedagogy with the appeal to learn to transgress. The existing boundaries should be questioned and redefined: "Transgressional pedagogy (...) stresses the importance of creating conditions for the students to transgress. They become transgressors to see the difference in itself, for creating frontiers where various cultural resources form new identities within the existing power" (Giroux 2006).

Freire's position is that realizing the real situation, people start understanding it as a historical reality which is to be changed. He considered education to be a powerful tool for solving social problems, for reshaping the world and for fighting injustice. He presented education as the practice of freedom (Freire 2014, p. 370).

The main stepping stones of the transgressive pedagogy are dialogism and belief in a student's ability to develop. The purpose of this school philosophy is to make students aware of the situations and events and help them understand their reasons. Dialogism of learning here means that the teacher and the student mutually learn as equal partners in the dialogue. The teacher is not the only one who knows – he or she is the one who learns from the students all the time, all of them being responsible for the learning.

As seen from the abovementioned, the school in alternative pedagogy is not the place for dry learning and absorbing information; it is supposed to be the place where students live developing their creativity. The school is a social organism providing the opportunities to sense and experience something new.

The role of the teacher in the alternative pedagogy is also different from that in the conventional educational theory:

- in the antipedagogy (unschooling) it smoothes over;
- in the critical pedagogy the teacher is a transformation intellectual who helps in criticizing everything;

- in the Gestalt pedagogy the teacher is a sensitive partner who facilitates and supports;
- in the emancipatory pedagogy the teacher is a facilitator of the student's self-actualization;
- in the transgressive pedagogy the teacher is an organizer of dialogic learning.

So, the teacher's role undergoes transformations connected with the shift of stress from teaching to learning, when the dialogue becomes the key factor of partnership.

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STRESZCZENIE

Artykuł poświęcony jest zmianie roli nauczyciela w świetle pedagogiki alternatywnej. Rozpatrzono tu idee pedagogiki uciśnionych, zaproponowanej przez brazylijskiego uczonego Paulo Freirego. Ponadto ukazano społeczny i polityczny wpływ edukacji jako narzędzia ucisku oraz przedstawiono krótką historię powstawania i publikacji książki *Pedagogika uciśnionych* i wpływ idei w niej zawartych na różne rodzaje pedagogiki alternatywnej. Rozpatrzono także krytykę bankowej koncepcji edukacji, która jest sprzeczna z ideami wolności i demokracji.

Autor artykułu uzasadnia tezę, iż demokratyczne zmiany w edukacji stały się podstawą wielu alternatywnych wizji roli nauczyciela, które są specyficzne dla różnych typów pedagogiki alternatywnej.

W artykule wykazano, że antypedagogika, pedagogika krytyczna, pedagogika *Gestalt* i edukacja emancypacyjna kwestionują tradycyjną rolę nauczyciela, która polega na tym, że jest on jedynym źródłem wiedzy, którą przekazuje uczniom. Pokazano różne zmiany roli nauczyciela: od kompletnego jej negowania (w antypedagogice) do roli transformacyjnego intelektualisty, która pomaga krytykować wszystko (w pedagogice krytycznej), wrażliwego partnera-facylitatora (w pedagogice

Gestalt), facylitatora samorealizacji dziecka (w pedagogice emancypacyjnej) i organizatora nauczania opartego na dialogu (w pedagogice transgresyjnej).

Wykazano również konieczność zmian w edukacji mających na celu przezwycięzenie presji wywieranej na ucznia i biernego uczenia się. Podkreślono znaczenie dialogu, w którym nauczyciel i uczniowie działają na zasadach równości.

Słowa kluczowe: pedagogika uciśnionych; pedagogika alternatywna; antypedagogika; pedagogika krytyczna; pedagogika *Gestalt*; pedagogika emancypacyjna; pedagogika transgresyjna; dialog