

The Adult Education Teacher: Re-Narrating Forgotten Histories, Developing Future Roles according to Freire, Mezirow, Noyé - Piveteau

THOMAS GEORGAS¹, GEORGIOS GIANNOUKOS², IOANNIS STERGIYOU², VASILIOS HIOCTOUR², SOTIRIA KALLIANTA², MARIA CHALARI¹

1. Institute of Education
University College London
UK

2. Second Chance School
GREECE

Abstract: - The character and role of the adult education teacher is the predominant question of any newcomer in the field of adult education. By studying the relevant literature, the texts of Mezirow, Freire, Noyé - Piveteau some answers began to emerge concerning the question, with common points of reference but also several differences. We will begin by presenting the character and role of the adult education teacher in each of the approaches of the mentioned scholars pointing out their similarities and differences. Concluding, we will present which approach finds us more in agreement with and why.

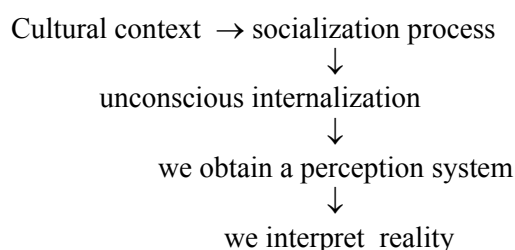
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1 Approach to the issue

1.1 Mezirow

The adult trainers must support and broaden the rules, the social practices, the institutions and the systems that empower a more complete and open participation in intellectual discussion, in transformative learning, contemplative action and to a greater activation of the participants (Mezirow, 2000)

Mezirow's reasoning is based on the following illustration:



Mezirow develops the theory of transforming learning (Mezirow, 2000). According to it, the reference frameworks, by which the trainee understands and interprets his experiences, can be transformed. In the framework of transformative learning, the participants who intend to change their way of socializing and organizing, look for other people to share their ambition to create ways of resisting the unedited cultural norms of the organizations, societies, families and political life; they become active subjects in cultural change (Rogers, 1999).

The primary objective of adult learning, according to the American thinker, is the process of critical thinking and self-mastery, which is considered the most important learning experience in adult life (Jarvis, 2004).

To achieve this goal, the role the instructor will play is:

- Support learners to explore all the dimensions of the reference framework they are studying
- Help adults to become aware of their potential, more emancipated, socially responsible and self-sustaining
- Neutralize the power relations that exist in communication structures

As for the character of the adult trainer, he carries the following elements:

- He is never dogmatic (how could he be after the critique of self-reflection)
- He becomes an example himself
- He believes in participating freely in dialogues, in democratic social and political life
- He is a cultural activist!

1.2 Freire

The theory of social change by P. Freire is based on the questioning of the up-to-now date and through critical thinking which they gain from learning how to understand reality and its problems and then to transform it (Knowles, 1978). Brazil, where Freire grew up, influenced his work catalytically. Surrounded by poverty, abandonment and the various problems of the inhabitants of his region on the one hand and confronted with violent cultural colonial enforcement on the other, Freire was led to the following framework of thoughts for himself and the goal of adult education (Freire, 1998).

dominated people → are aware of the causes of their oppression → political action to overthrow dependence → emancipation

Role: To achieve this goal, instructors are not just teachers but also

- are political fighters
- struggle for the right to state their opinion.
- struggle for the right to judge the authorities of power
- participate with dedication in the fight against social injustice.

What is the character of the trainer with such a multifaceted role? According to Freire's theoretical approach, he needs to express:

- humility
- joy for life
- determination

1.3 Noyé – Piveteau

In the excerpt from Noyé - J. Piveteau's book, the predominant feature of the role and character of the adult educator is to avoid being identified with a single educational approach, because each view only takes into account one aspect of reality. There are intermediate points between the different theoretical approaches, and the stance we will adopt should not be derived from a priori theories, however charming they are.

According to Noyé - J. Piveteau the good trainer (*Noye, Piveteau, 1999*):

- does not adhere to the correct position, but knows how to analyze the situation and chooses the appropriate procedures
- is not disclosed in a privileged metaphoric image, but tries to enrich his representations.

The role of the trainer is presented in five distinct groups, where the trainer can change team depending on the time and the situation. Whichever group he belongs to at the moment, the trainer should

- keep an eye on the team members and their reactions to make sure they understand and remain interested
- draw attention to the content of teaching, its objectives and its course.

2 Similarities – Differences

The greatest difference between Mezirow and Freire is that the former considers the result of critical awareness of trainees to be exhausted in internal changes in personality or in external actions, limited to specific areas of professional and social life without regard to the overall socio-economic system to which Freire aims.

Noyé - J. Piveteau are differentiated from the previous two in that they refer to the teaching and educational process to be followed, and do not develop a comprehensive reasoning about adult education, while they avoid identifying with a particular educational trend. We could state that they do not put limits on the trainer's character and they are distinguished with versatility and adaptability as the case may be.

3 Conclusion

There are points that we agree with and disagree with in all three texts, but we consider the text of Mezirow the one that is the most adaptable to our own perceptual system and is therefore more acceptable.

This is because:

- Transformational learning theory primarily examines emancipation from a psychological point of view rather than as a social action of individuals. We believe that this is one of the advantages of Mezirow's theory, because the change in a personal level precedes social-political change rather than vice versa.

- Freire's approach attributes a role to the adult educator outside the context of the western social system because in western societies the correct directions of social change are not always clear.

- While we are in line with what is stated in Noyé - J. Piveteau's book, it does not match our perception of adult education, because it is more like a formal education approach.

We are reluctant to adopt the views of one of the above thinkers by excluding the elements and clues presented by the others. Gradually turning to adult education, we find that there are no unambiguous and universally accepted conclusions at least until now, and all learning theories are unable to fully cover the phenomenon of adult education.

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