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It's embedded!? Modeling the Tenets of Critical Pedagogy for Future Teachers Working in Multilingual and Multicultural Learning Environments

ABSTRACT: Abstract: Learning means understanding the positionality of the producers of knowledge and their power since they are those who reproduce a certain world view. If teacher education programs do not reflect issues faced by underrepresented populations, this may leave certain groups of students marginalized and cause higher drop-out rates. Hence, this study aimed to determine whether chosen Education Preparation Programs (EPPs) in Poland and Spain embed principles of critical pedagogy in their curriculum while preparing pre-service teachers for working in diverse educational environments. This study's methodology was replicated from the analysis done by Courville-Mayers & Figueroa-Flores (2020). Content analysis was used to determine the presence of critical pedagogy tenets developed by Giroux (revised in 2020) in the EPPs required courses' syllabi. The findings show that the distribution of the CP principles is uneven, and some of the tenets found no representation in the syllabi.

KEYWORDS: critical pedagogy, pre-service teacher training, curriculum development, linguistic and cultural diversity

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INTRODUCTION

Can the constructs of curricula be seen as doxa? Something that we are used to and never question? Perhaps educational policies are made by those who have an interest in defending doxa and keeping the invisible invisible (Babino & Stewart, 2020). The epistemological principles underlying the preparation of teachers still seem to be what Osborn (2006) named as the main barrier to creating learning environments contributive to social justice.

Higher education plays a great part in tackling Europe's social and democratic challenges. Under the European Area strategic framework, a new Working Group on higher education has been established for the period from 2021 to 2025². The focus of the Working Group is to, as part of the mutual learning, share information about reforms of national education policies and to inspire positive change throughout the European Union. This means ensuring that higher education is inclusive and that its institutions are well connected to their communities. Furthermore, citizens from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds and those with migrant backgrounds remain far less likely to enter and complete higher education. Gender segregation by field of study also remains common. The question is, are future teachers receiving adequate training to become inclusive and equitable educators working with diverse populations? Findings from the United States show that there is a need for Education Preparation Programs (EPPs) to reinforce and model critical pedagogy aspects for pre-service teachers in order to move away from traditional philosophies and implement a curriculum that openly addresses social justice practices and confronts real problems that are impacting our society and schools (Courville-Myers & Figueroa-Flores, 2020, p. 10). The study outlined in this article is a replication study of Courville-Myers and Figueroa-Flores (2020). It was conducted in order to increase the impact of research and to test

¹ Bourdieu (1997: 110) saw doxa as the unanimity effect in social groups that share the similar habituses and trajectories. Doxa is the 'natural attitude' of the dominated groups.

² Working Groups of the EEA strategic framework | European Education Area (europa.eu)

the generalizability of the earlier findings to see whether they can be separated from their original context (Porte, 2012) and be applied in Europe. During our research, it was not our intention to change any variables (but the population), so we have used the same methodological protocol as the previous study. This study analyzed the EPPs required course syllabi at one university in Poland and one in Spain.

The original study sought to determine whether foundation, first, and second-year courses within EPPs at Hispanic Serving Institutes (HSIs) were devoting their curriculum to principles of critical pedagogy. The researchers are both faculty members at an HSI and teacher educators. The study utilized qualitative document analysis and was guided by a research question. "How do EPPs at our local Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) support principles of critical pedagogy?" The data used were from three universities in North Texas. The study furthered understanding of the scale on which students are supported in critical pedagogy practices. The replication study also aimed at advancing understanding of the issues presented above with the research question – How do foundation, first, and second-year courses within EPPs at chosen Teacher Training Institutions in Poland and Spain support principles of critical pedagogy?

The findings show that the EPPs in question largely maintain monolingual and monocultural curricula and need to place social justice at the center of their programmes and engaging in critical pedagogy to support inclusivity and equity. In today's complex world, we need pre-service teachers to receive training that would provide them with critical analysis tools and consider diverse cultural contexts as new spheres for education (Silberman-Keller et al., 2011).

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This study, just like the original one, is rooted in critical pedagogy, which requires us to confront oppression and support an educational system that works towards emancipation (Freire, 1973). Freire (1970) urged us to support our students' emancipation from structural and institutional injustices by consciousness-raising (*conscientização*). However, Freire has never referred to his works as critical pedagogy. It was Giroux (2010) who used this term for educators. Critical pedagogy prompts us to recognize the social context that encompasses our students. It serves us as guidance to redesign our curricula while including the relationship between theory and practice, critical-dialectic rationale, contextualization, collaborative and deliberative action-research, and ethical purpose (Olmos de Montáñez, 2008).

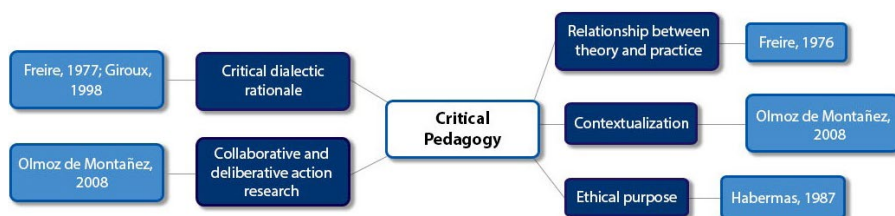


Figure 1. Critical Pedagogy Implications
(Courville-Myers & Figueroa-Flores, 2020, p. 4)

As Figure 1 shows, one of the indications of critical pedagogy is that it finds a direct dialectic relationship between theory and practice through critical reflection and with the aim to transform reality. According to Freire (1976), both reflection and action comprise a dialectic process. Contextualization refers to all elements of students' context: socio-historical, economic, cultural, geographical, and political. Students' knowledge production should be in close relationship with them and their community context (Olmos de Montañez, 2008). Ethical purpose, on the other hand, serves to develop good morale through action. As Habermas (1987) put it, practical science entails the relationship between reason and morale at the time of reflection and action-practice. The critical-dialectic rationale refers to the critical self-reflection of an autonomous teacher who tries to become free from bias and dogmas (Freire, 1997; Giroux, 1997). The last aspect of critical pedagogy in Figure 1 is collaborative and deliberative action-research. This process can be accomplished between teachers and learners, involving their daily pedagogical practices (Olmos de Montañez, 2008). The reason behind using this theoretical framework in this research is that critical pedagogy questions banking education (Freire, 1970) and empowers educators to take action and be responsible for their teaching (McLaren & Kinchloe, 2008).

CONTEXT

The two universities participating in this study were chosen purposefully. The aim was to select universities in two different contexts in Europe with a long tradition of educating pre-service teachers and having an impact on their local education context. For the purposes of this study, the identity of the universities is protected, and the two participating institutions were called as University 1 (from Spain) and University 2 (from Poland). Both of those institutions are teacher training universities providing undergraduate degrees for pre-service teachers, and the required five courses chosen from each of the institutions for this study are the obligatory foundation courses delivered in the first and second year of the B.A. degree in education.

METHODOLOGY

A qualitative, directed content analysis was used to analyze the chosen EPP's required courses syllabi in order to answer the research question: How do EPPs at chosen Teacher Training Institutions in Poland and Spain support principles of critical pedagogy? This type of analysis aims to analyze text data and provide knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon under study (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992). In this research, we have used preconceived categories (See Figure 2 for a detailed schematic) rather than allowing the categories emerge from the data (Potter & Levine-Donnerstein, 1999). A deductive use of theory was executed and coded as a systematic procedure for reviewing documents. Such a process helped us to focus on answering the research question. The chosen syllabi were analyzed with the lens of critical pedagogy and Giroux's (reviewed in 2020) nine principles of critical pedagogy. According to Giroux's synthesis of critical pedagogy work, those should include the following aspects (Courville-Myers & Figueroa-Flores, 2020, p. 3):

- » Education produces political subjectivities
- » Ethics is central to education
- » Need to understand the difference in identity formation
- » Need to understand how different types of knowledge are given priority in schools
- » Should pursue new forms of culture and knowledge
- » Claims to objective knowledge should be challenged
- » Must include a vision of a better world
- » Teachers should be "transformative intellectuals"
- » Students need a critically conscious "voice"

The above tenets of critical pedagogy were given codes for data analysis, as shown in Figure 2.

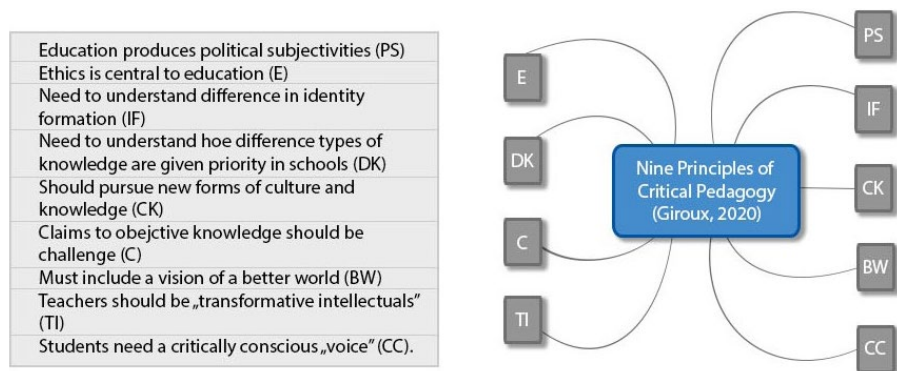


Figure 2. Nine Principles of Critical Pedagogy (Courville-Myers & Figueroa-Flores, 2020, p. 6)

The coding began immediately with the predetermined codes, as researchers felt that the initial coding would not bias the identification of relevant information (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). During the process of coding, the complete document was analyzed, the aims and objectives, the content, skills students were to gain on its completion, and the bibliography. If one of the above principles was found in one part of the syllabus, it was checked against all other parts of the document. We believe that content analysis should lead to conclusions as objectively as possible. Therefore, in order to increase research validity, both researchers involved in this study performed content analysis separately. The results were later cross-examined, and conclusions reached (Burnard, 1991).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis conducted in this study allowed us to gain a greater understanding of the required course content in the foundation, first, and second-year courses within EPPs of the two universities and of how critical pedagogy practices are being supported and reflected in each of the five selected courses. The findings are shown in Tables 1 and 2 for University 1 and 2, respectively. Similarly to the original study (Courville-Myers & Figueroa-Flores, 2020), the chosen universities have some of the tenets of critical pedagogy embedded in them. The distribution of the principles is uneven, as displayed in Figures 1 and 2. However, there are some principles that found no representation. In University 1, this would be TI. Whereas in University 2, the C, BW, and CC. Data show that there is practically no emphasis on CC in University 1, while including it in the EPPs course syllabi might support student understanding and provide strategies for disrupting injustices in education (Lewison, Leland & Harste, 2015). The principle that coded most in both of the courses is PS, which presents education as a means of production of political subjectiveness. This may suggest that the courses devote a substantial amount of time to political and historical education contexts. Giroux (2020) states that ethics is central to education and the foundation of critical pedagogy. Yet, the document analysis did not show a great representation of ethics in the syllabi. Also, none of the courses models all of the tenets of critical pedagogy throughout a given course. The lack of emphasis on DK and CK principles may indicate that pre-service teachers are not getting a strong foundation for culturally sustaining pedagogy (Paris & Alim, 2017). None of the findings showed that the EPPs combine pedagogical content knowledge with students' lived experiences to support sociopolitical consciousness.

Table 1. University 1 Coded Principles

Courses	Coded Principles								
	PS	E	IF	DK	CK	C	BW	TI	CC
University 1									
C1	1								
C2	1		1			1			
C3	1			1			1		1
C4					1				
C5	1	1							

Table 2. University 2 Coded Principles

Courses	Coded Principles								
	PS	E	IF	DK	CK	C	BW	TI	CC
University 2									
C1	1			1				1	
C2	1	1						1	
C3	1			1					
C4	1		1		1				
C5	1	1							

Courville-Myers & Figueroa-Flores (2020) found vast variations of the EPP required courses while analyzing data. This study showed that the tenets of critical pedagogy are addressed differently in Spain and Poland, with Spain having a more even distribution of them than Poland. However, with rather little explicit attention to the critical pedagogy principles, thus to social justice issues, in the selected syllabi, it may be assumed that the programs do not reflect the issues often faced by under-represented populations, which may leave certain groups of students marginalized and cause higher drop-out rates because of the lack of belonging or relevancy for students with migrant backgrounds.

CONCLUSION

Curricula will not work unless students can connect the real world and content (Genova & Stewart, 2019). Seeing required and additional literature list in a syllabus can tell us a lot about the content of a given course but also about the positionality of the producer of knowledge, which in our instance is an academic teacher and their world view and knowledge reproduction. According to Giroux (2019), a learner must function as a border-crosser, as a person moving in and out of physical, cultural, and social borders. How are all different students to feel engaged in the process of learning if they cannot connect to the literature they read in class. Is this not an example of systemic discrimination? We need to revise our curricula and leave

space for being more flexible in our teaching. After all, diversity, inclusiveness, and gender equality in the higher education sector have become more important than ever (European Commission, 2022). Therefore, all teacher education courses should put social justice at the center of their EPP courses, as critical pedagogy contributes to the development of reflective educators who are devoted to supporting democratic values in our society (Nieto, 2000; Courville-Myers & Figueroa-Flores, 2020). With reflexivity, research, pedagogy, and policy purposefully employed, we can confront mono-mainstream thinking (Babino & Stewart 2020, p. 253). What we need is more coherence across theory, policy, and practice in curriculum design and assessment practices (Mickan, 2017, p. 31). Universities today must educate citizens who are critically literate, trust in scientific knowledge and believe in the public good (Olszewska et al., 2021). Research shows that pre-service teachers feel more valued and prepared to teach in schools with diverse populations when pedagogical content knowledge is integrated with their lived experiences, there's a focus on equity, demonstrating cultural competence, and sociopolitical consciousness (Nieto, 2017; Castillo-Montoya, 2019). We agree with Courville-Myers & Figueroa-Flores (2020), who conclude their article by saying that we must be ready to redesign our EPP curricula, move beyond superficial diversity initiatives in education and focus on equity, inclusion, and justice. One of the suggestions that these authors pose is that adding several courses that focus on theory and practice related to critical pedagogy would be a good starting point for education towards democracy, equity, and inclusiveness in society. However, Milner (2010) sees treating cultural diversity issues in isolation and not fully integrating them into the teacher education curriculum as a disadvantage. Being academic teachers, we acknowledge that sometimes, depending on a person who teaches a given group of students, critical pedagogy issues are implemented in the course of study, not necessarily the course on critical pedagogy. Therefore, we believe that it is important that pre-service teachers' curricula openly, not just coincidentally, address social justice practices in all of the required classes in order to confront problems that are impacting our society and schools today.

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**TO JEST ZINTEGROWANE!? MODELOWANIE ZAŁOŻEŃ PEDAGOGIKI
KRYTYCZNEJ DLA PRZYSZŁYCH NAUCZYCIELI. PRACA W WIELOJĘZYCZNYCH
I WIELOKULTUROWYCH ŚRODOWISKACH EDUKACYJNYCH**

ABSTRAKT: Uczenie się oznacza zrozumienie pozycji władzy oraz istoty reprodukcji wiedzy, gdyż są one odzwierciedleniem powielanych społecznie światopoglądów. Jeśli programy kształcenia nauczycieli nie odzwierciedlają problemów, z jakimi borykają się niedostatecznie reprezentowane populacje, może to prowadzić do marginalizacji pewnych grup studentów i powodować wyższy odsetek osób porzucających naukę. Dlatego też niniejsze badanie miało na celu ustalenie, czy wybrane programy przygotowawcze dla nauczycieli w Polsce i Hiszpanii uwzględniają zasady pedagogiki krytycznej w swoich programach kształcenia, przygotowując nauczycieli do pracy w zróżnicowanych środowiskach edukacyjnych. Metodologia tego badania została powielona z analizy przeprowadzonej przez Courville-Mayers & Figueroa-Flores (2020), jako że jest to badanie replikacyjne. Analiza treści została wykorzystana do określenia obecności założeń pedagogiki krytycznej opracowanych przez Giroux (zrewidowanych w 2020 r.) w sylabusach przedmiotów podstawowych. Wyniki badań pokazują, że rozmieszczenie zasad pedagogiki krytycznej w programach kształcenia nauczycieli jest nierównomierne, a niektóre zadania nie znalazły żadnego odzwierciedlenia w sylabusach.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: pedagogika krytyczna, kształcenie wstępne nauczycieli, opracowanie programów nauczania, różnorodność językowa i kulturowa