

CRITICAL-PRAXICAL PEDAGOGY. REFLECTIONS ON THE EXPERIENCE OF THE POSTGRADUATE PROGRAM IN TEACHER EDUCATION OF THE PEDAGOGICAL DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY EDUCATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CRETE¹

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Abstract

The current article attempts to develop a critical proposal for the pedagogical reality and our “frozen” educational practices in the 21st century. The school’s knowledge-centered and examination-centered orientation, along with the imposition of power and authority through the dominant ideology, nurtures social inequalities, creates cultural and gender hierarchies, acting as an outdated/ frozen social image of a commercialized school perception for science, social relations and the expectations of young people. Our reflections are based on the principles of Critical Pedagogy, expanded through the concept of Border Pedagogy, which will allow us to cross the invisible borders of race, class, gender, identity, religion and sexual orientation, to empower individuals and transform schools and society. In this way, learning can become a highly active (practical/ effective) process, based on individual and social self-actualization and democratic understanding. An indispensable methodological tool, in this regard, is the adoption of sophisticated forms of teaching and research that are able to highlight the true lives of the oppressed and socially excluded groups in which concerns Critical Pedagogy. In addition, through our proposal we redefine the current - conventional - framework for academic research and move towards a critico-praxical approach to research and learning, with emphasis on the praxical (in the Foucauldian sense) actions (where praxis, discourse and communication are intertwined) rather than technocratic practices.

Key words

*Critical Pedagogy - Boarder Education - Teaching and Reasearch - Critico-Practical Pedagogy
- Post-graduate Studies.*

1. Critical Pedagogy: the current of dispute

1.1. *The perfect alibi for a premeditated crime*

Nowadays, there are growing voices that speak of the need for a radical change in the field of education. Challenging education as the 'great equalizer' of social and economic inequalities (Therianos, 2019) and the consequent need for a new internationalism in both practice and theory, with the ultimate goal of transforming social, political and educational structures, as well as pedagogical practices, is related to how we redefine the purpose of education in the 21st century and how we identify the current barriers to achieving our new goal.

The experiential approach to knowledge and the development of creativity and imagination in a value-based environment dominated by respect, freedom, participation and autonomy should be at the forefront of modern education in the new century.

The management of the knowledge provided today at various levels and in various ways urgently requires the restructure, reconstruction and redefinition of teacher education, freeing it from isolated and compelling teaching and learning standards.

Trapped in its encyclopedic character, the school strives to respond to the multi-informative environment of the time through the fragmentation of knowledge. It is a Sisyphean task, virtually without end and meaning, as information is multiplied daily in the form of an "avalanche" and becomes useless/ inactive or easily depleted. But at the same time, as a superficial balancing act, the demand for more humanity is emerging. With regard to the latter, and in order to make over-information more manageable and school knowledge in general, in recent decades opinions have been gained on so-called critical teaching and consequently on the 'development of critical thinking' of students which make up the main theme in reports on education bills and texts for the new curricula.

It should be noted in advance that Critical Pedagogy has another theoretical and praxical orientation, which is not identical to the so-called "critical thinking" as it is at least considered by today's dominant - conventional or traditional - pedagogical paradigm (Therianos, 2014). In the current debate on critical thinking, neo-conservative educational policy-makers have "stripped" the term "critical" of all its social, political, and cultural dimensions, conceptualizing it neutral as thinking abilities and eliminating the purposes for which these skills should be applied. The ultimate goal of Critical Pedagogy is to transform society through critical awareness of the existing social structures of exploitation and to acquire a language of opportunity on the part of the oppressed students, so they may take concrete action to overthrow oppressive social structures. On the contrary, the purpose of critical teaching, as expressed in today's school, is to adapt and integrate young people into the technologically evolving productive forces of capitalism, as such a process

serves to increase capital and reproduce the labor force with different abilities and educational capital (Therianos, 2014). Adaptation is not only about the formation of a workforce capable of handling the means of production, but also about the ideological persuasion that the productive forces of the 21st century will be persuasive and “consent” to their exploitation, as in the 19th century, as to reduced rights and reduce salaries. For this reason, today’s traditional teaching does not provide opportunities for thought and reflection, but only provides fragmented and disintegrated knowledge, detached from the different experiences and daily lives of students, alienating them from what they really are. This, however, is how they make learning uniform and “ravaging” for everyone.

The development of critical teaching is therefore the perfect alibi for a deliberate crime. Education is simply designed as a scientific guiding tool for young people and as a mechanism that “kills” creativity, restricts freedom, and sets a priori data and sustainable frameworks that ultimately disrespect the subjectivity of each student as they pre-construct and prepossess their place within unequal and hierarchical social structures and relationships. The state, as a mechanism for (reproducing) power, orchestrates and conceals this crime through enforced rules and norms (standard curricula, school operating regulations and the establishment of competing relationships within it, etc.), but always with the disguised as democratization and equality (equal opportunities for “all”), balancing modernization and humanism in the name of universal progress (Grollios, 2015: 315).

In other words, by cultivating pseudo-critical thinking and teaching method, schools continue to provide knowledge and skills to a workforce, stratified by gender, race (or cultural diversity) and, of course, social class, they legitimize and distribute forms of power, through a particular language, but also values that constitute the dominant culture, and continue to be part of a state mechanism that produces and legitimizes dominant economic and ideological orientations for the purpose of reproducing it (Anyon, 1980: 67-92, Grollios, 2015: 317).

It is, therefore, necessary to have insight into the reality of education to clarify the deliberate - and perfect - crime that is perpetrated on a daily basis at the expense of students:

- Adults (teachers), being historically obsessed, firmly believe that they are the only ones who have the exclusive right to control education and make decisions.
- Students act as depository banks of ‘formal’ knowledge from those they consider to be accredited to know in agreement with the ‘banking education’ model - according to Freire (1977) - and their indisputable right to make decisions is ignored, while “their voices... are absent from all talk of education and educational reform”, because they are regarded as disenfranchised members of an indifferent mass (herd) who simply must obey the shepherd’s whistle (Kozol, 1991: 5).

- Children are thus indifferent to the adult world as it does not fit and express them as they speak a different 'language' from them.
- They cannot concentrate and are unable to reflect on what is happening around them, in school, in their everyday environment - physical and technical - and in society. How could they, after all, since there is no vital time and space between the repeated ringing of the bell and the constant change of classroom and lesson. Even in this, the school looks like a factory, where students (in class, age, body type, etc.) placed in the production line must faithfully execute commands and comply despite any obvious or invisible resistances that show up.
- Curricula "uses salami tactics" and "marginalizes" knowledge on random criteria, symbolizing school and learning "prisons".
- Students do not realize that the past defines and restricts their options.
- They become callous in their relationships with other children, reproducing the real and symbolic violence practiced in school, in the family and in society. They do not sympathize with the misery of others; instead, they laugh and scorn those creatures that need help. The school is daily transformed into a Survivor with winners and losers.
- Children are not sincere and have learned to hide their real selves behind behaviors and masks that they have embraced from the popular culture, from television junk, fooling their fellowmen.
- They become materialistic and value or rather 'cost' everything, with materialistic criteria just like their adult mentors.
- Even though education lasts many years, students are not in a position to deal with their daily issues and they lack communication skills as an element of general education. This happens as the school offers ready/ standardized solutions/ answers to predetermined questions. In this way, it 'molds' their thinking and judgment on their Curriculums in terms of commercial standardization (ISO).
- In essence, the school has managed to silence students as well as teachers. These lost voices would have a lot to say in describing the swamp they are in and suggesting a way out. The world is built with everyone's "voices", it is created with their words and are not naturally like this. Instead, it is constructed through our cultural (and educational) praxical actions. So, we can deconstruct it and build it from scratch.

1.2. Critical Pedagogy as a counter-proposal

Within the context of Critical Theory, Critical Pedagogy examines schools as social constructions (Dragonas, Gergen, McNamee, Tseliou, 2015: ix-xvi), both within their historical context and as part of the existing social, political and especially cultural web that characterizes the dominant society. As a radical stream of science, which moves in contrast to conventional pedagogy, it refers to the diverse educational needs of learners,

highlighting the non-dominant culture of subordinate groups to promote democracy, liberation and participatory learning and it aims at transforming society and schools with social justice as the foundation. This stream challenges the rational, anti-historical and de-politicized approach to education, highlighting the critical role that political power and culture play in understanding the way schools operate, in representing its semiology and the construction of the subject.

Within such a radical perspective, schools (and their leadership) can only be understood through an analysis of the state, the economy and culture. One of the key principles of Critical Pedagogy is that it is addressed to those in the field of education who keep the hope alive and especially to excluded groups which can develop their values and practices by providing them with a historical, cultural, political and moral-social choice, and recognizing the positive/ liberating relationship between knowledge and power (Apple, 2008, Grollios, 2008: 23-24). Devoted to the excluded and oppressed, and without the dreams of students, even prisoners of every kind in education and society, it tries to turn them from “objects” of education into subjects of their autonomy and emancipation.

We will talk about an ideological, philosophical and educational proposition, which becomes radical to the extent that freedom is an authentic purpose, through which another vanished “world” can be activated.

Critical Pedagogy is addressed to all students, regardless of gender, physical shape, special needs, social class, religion, race, ethnicity, culture, and sexual orientation (Vandrick, 1994: 78). It seeks to change the structure of an oppressive society, based on the belief that every human being is worthy of an education, based on an altruistic, collaborative, and humanitarian critical pedagogical foundation (Gadotti, 1994: 17; Kanpol, 1998). It therefore seeks to reveal and challenge the existing role of schools. In P. Bourdieu’s theory of cultural capital, school culture, as constituted by the Curricula, as an extension of the culture of dominant social groups, creates educational inequalities that reproduce inequalities in the social structure (Wexler, 1981: 257- 261). In this context, critical educators generally analyze schools in a twofold way: as classification mechanisms by which certain categories are favored on the basis of race, religion, social class and gender and on the other hand, as agents of personal and social empowerment.

According to radical educators, educators and students need to understand the role that school education has in connecting knowledge with power in order to use it in shaping critical and active citizens. Subjective intervention and experience is now recognized as important for the analysis of the complex relationship between school and society, from the theory of resistance, where the mechanisms of social and cultural reproduction always meet elements of resistance (Apple, 1982: 1-10).

Viewing school learning as a neutral process is not valid. Education has always had a political purpose. It either obscures things or reveals oppressive relationships between people (Freire, 1970). According to Ares (2006: 12-20), learning comes from the critical

examination of the social class that leads to action in the service of social justice. Therefore, effective teaching as a political practice should aim at political transformation for the sake of justice (Joldersma, 1999: 129-148), enabling students to consider the problems of education, to make them aware, to name them and to challenge them through social action (Grollios, 2009).

In the same way, teachers also learn to think and act critically, to develop a critical awareness that helps them improve their living conditions and to take the actions necessary to build a more just and equal society. They perceive school education as both a form of cultural policy and preparation for democratic social life. Within this discourse teachers can be seen not as executors of their teaching, but as intellectuals who take active responsibility for what they teach, how they teach, and what the broader goals are which they fight for.

However, a prerequisite for challenging the role of today's school and liberating it from its bonds and from there on, to emancipation is an understanding of Freire's (1977) distinction between the banking conception of education, on the one hand, and problematic learning, on the other hand. In the traditional sense, teachers are considered to be pillars of knowledge and must know everything, while students are empty containers to fill. In this exact process (one introduces and one produces) that the relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed is established. As an alternative to the banking model, Freire has proposed a problem posing model, or problem-based learning, which can lead to critical awareness and knowledge development from the students themselves, focusing on the problems in their lives. Therefore, once we put students in the process of presenting the problem, we are essentially creating the necessary space for questioning.

School education should be a process of examining how student subjectivity is constructed through the prevailing ideas, values, and cosmos of the dominant culture. Teachers need to encourage their students to be reflective and to help them develop a conceptual framework to begin searching for answers about how society and school validate dreams and the values that some people have over others and at the same time seek processes for building a social imagination that operates within a language of hope.

At this point, the interest of critical educators in curricula and textbooks is shifted towards texts with specific content and form that embody specific perspectives of reality, as well as specific ways of selecting and disseminating existing knowledge. In this context, there is no room for an age-old concept of separation of individuals, on the basis of which curricula are now designed and children are divided into classes. It is a generalized approach that offers standardized solutions to predefined problems for every age, without regard to the particular characteristics, concerns, worries, abilities, and experiences of each child. There is no one methodology that can work for all populations. Also, there cannot be a fully defined curriculum because all decisions related to it and the material to

be studied must be based on the needs and interests of the students (Aliakbari, Faraji, 2011: 79).

Aliakbari and Faraji (op. cit.) point out that the curriculum must be framed by the use of learning experiences and realities of children's lives. Such a curriculum is transformational, that is, it promotes the acquisition of the necessary strategies and skills by students to help them make decisions that affect their social, political and economic reality (Giroux, McLaren, 1992: 7-30). Therefore, the "classes", in this sense, may be multi-age and are not formed on the basis of age or grades, but on the basis of children's interests, development of programs for practical study and individual learning rates.

The role of the teacher is crucial in applying such a concept. Kincheloe and McLaren (1994: 138-157) argue that teachers need to empower their students to constantly increase their awareness of social problems and the provision of social institutions. Thus, teachers, according to Giroux's terms (1985: 736-379), are transformative intellectuals who possess the knowledge and ability to criticize and attempt to transform existing inequalities in society (Darder, 2009: 575). Teachers are therefore called upon to challenge the existing structure by rejecting long-standing cultural expectations, their own (selfish) motives and the system, and to reduce the power they secure through their titles. Critical educators ensure the existence of empirical knowledge that helps students understand how power and privilege relationships distort and manipulate social relationships and help them recognize and fight with them for social change (Aliakbari, Faraji, 2011: 80).

According to the above conclusions, the teacher is called upon to incorporate the missing voices of students into school accomplishment and to incorporate them as suitable, rejecting the exclusive wisdom of adults (Brion-Meisels, 2015: 67-82). This process must be a political and cultural practice, which has duration, method and consistency and is not exhaustive in fragmentary and individual educational activities and practices. It is a Critical Pedagogy that seeks to engage and actively involve young people with actions such as:

1. Gathering useful data on school culture and pedagogy within and outside the classroom. This process should be based on a dialogue that can reveal the day-to-day uncertainties of the entire school community, including primarily marginalized and oppressed students.
2. Assessing the real needs of the school and finding solutions where everyone can participate actively. Therefore, it is necessary to develop a comprehensive school attitude towards the oppressive conditions faced by young people.
3. Activating the institution of student communities on a new basis. Students, as mature people, critically and consciously interact. They communicate equally in the school community.

4. Connecting with children from other schools, as this helps in sharing ideas and develop reflective skills.
5. Participation in inter-school programs and vocational guidance days, where employers and employees are invited to speak on a par with children.
6. Participation in recruitment procedures. Students can explain what they expect from a teacher or a principal and these considerations should be taken seriously into consideration in the selection process.
7. Expanding the lost voices of students in the community as a democratic process, where youth are involved in solving social and political problems.

Through applying the principles of Critical Pedagogy the educator achieves multiple benefits, in relation to the guidelines set out above. The most important are summarized as follows:

1. The promotion of a participatory democratic climate in the school is achieved, whereby the decision-making process and social accountability become a collective matter (students, parents, teachers, school staff). Thus, control does not arise from the political, social, cultural and economic elites, but from all the entities involved, who are now regarded as valuable factors in shaping the knowledge and experience of the school unit.
2. Students are transformed from passive and obedient beings into active, speaking and responsible social subjects - school partners and collaborators, having an intervening role in the learning process and school life. Their informal knowledge is fully utilized in school achievement. In addition, adults cease to treat them as immature and the children themselves gain critical awareness and a new form of metacognition.
3. The design and evaluation of the curriculum and the school culture in general is implemented on the basis of the “bottom-up” logic of all involved.
4. Students participate as creative and active members in a variety of literacy groups, using the spoken, written, visual and aesthetic communication code for experiential learning, criticism, and fun (Bron, Bovill, Veugelers, 2016: 15-27)

1.2.1. Critical Transformational School Leadership

Critical pedagogical perception must transcend the whole school community and in this context we must also redefine the concept of school leadership. The type of school leadership is a key factor in determining the social function, cultural performance and political agenda of a school unit. In our proposal, schools cease to appear as minor forces in the reproduction of dominant culture and ideology, because since they reproduce it, they can also produce it (Brameld, 1965/ 2000: 75-93).

The transformational perception of school leadership heavily concerns research on issues of organizational behavior, school management and leadership ideologies (Stewart, 2006: 1-29).

Utilizing studies by critical educators such as Freire, Kincheloe, McLaren, Apple, Giroux and Macedo, etc. allow for the challenge of standardized and integrated practices in administration, with a new style in school leadership. For Critical Education, knowledge is socially constructed and deeply rooted in power relations. A critical leader has to wonder how and why knowledge is constructed in the way it is constructed and how some structures of reality are legitimized by the dominant culture, while others are rejected. With the main demand for the humanization of education and pedagogy itself, in the context of critical transformational school leadership, the teacher is transformed from a performer into a change agent. Leadership is understood not as a person's individual power, according to the paternalistic, authoritarian, oppressive, leadership model, but as an interactive participatory process between different individuals in a democratic and humanitarian context.

More specifically, a transformational critical leadership demands:

1. Interaction of principals with all the members of the school organization, according to participatory models of educational administration (Bush, 2008: 9-20).
2. Participation in the development of the school unit's culture in order to achieve a common vision. (Eliophotou-Menon, 2011: 1-15).
3. Qualification of the four abilities, according to Robbins: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, spiritual motivation and personal reflection (Susilo, 2018: 126).
4. A new type of leadership that will reveal the complex ways in which schools participate in the contradictory and asymmetric sharing of knowledge and competences.
5. Awareness of the importance of educational reforms beyond the boundaries of existing civic socio-economic interdependencies.
6. Resistance to the rise of any form of fascism and racism, linking them to world capitalism and the new spirit of imperialism (Kirylo, 2013: xix-xxv).

According to Giroux (2001), a critical leadership perception is called upon to reflect the liberating possibilities of a restored democratic public life at the level of language and practice. In particular, it aims to: (a) teach and apply the knowledge, habits and abilities of a critical analysis of citizenship; (b) place ethics at a central level; (c) focus on issues of difference in a politically transformative and morally questionable way; (d) use a language that does not bring the issues of power, justice, struggle and inequality into the great narrative, leaving out unexpected, historical and everyday recordings; (e) create new forms of knowledge and action, moving beyond scientific boundaries and creating new fields of knowledge and experience (g) fostering a sense of alternative solutions, combining criticism

and opportunity, h) development of a theory for educators and cultural workers, as reformative intellectuals and (i) preordain an expression policy that combines a 'postmodern' version with the central importance of the political version.

Aronowitz and Giroux in their theoretical approach to the concept of 'resistance' (1993: 9, 208-210) propose that students be allowed to move on the basis of their own knowledge and experiences, while the institutional framework is called upon to take into account their cultural capital and to allow their voices to be heard, aiming towards their critical awareness and empowerment (Nikoloudis, 2010: 35, 111). In this regard, school leadership plays an important role. Students and teachers are emancipated from any dependencies that make them passive learners and become (co)researchers and (co)contenders.

Critical leadership is related to the role of the teacher-leader as an intellectual, who has the power to challenge authority and refuses to act against his/ her judgment. What characterizes him/ her is the social functioning of his/ her intellectual work. Such school leadership is interested in conditions that promote common teaching, collective research, and democratic planning, against the rooted values of competition, individualism, and patriarchy that transcend all levels of school education (Freire, 1984).

1.3. Border Pedagogy in the context of Critical Pedagogy

1.3.1. General Characteristics

The lost voices mentioned earlier have a lot to tell us, if make an effort to hear them or read them in the light of border pedagogy, which is strongly associated with the Critical Pedagogy movement, border crossings and interconnections in shaping a vision of social justice and border-crossing voice to those groups that have unrecognized borders of race, class, gender, identity, religion and sexual orientation, they separate and label them absolute. In this context, learning remains the key to education through the notion of the 'other',- the familiar and unfamiliar (Giroux, 1992: 28, 73-82).

Border pedagogy focuses on historical issues that have reshaped the world- including decolonization, social democracies, revolutions, terrorism, religious conflicts, labor market competition, as well as globalization and the role of superpowers on a world scale. One of its important aspects is the redefinition of the concept of 'deterritorialization' and 'borders' between different states, cultures and sciences (Ziguras, McBurnie, 2015: xviii). Modern theories of resistance reject the historical discourse that regards the school as a uniform, apolitical, de-ideological, asexual and teleological structure of universal knowledge and learning. Instead, they support a view of education that is decentralized, political, gendered, multimodal, multifocal and open.

Based on the above, the concept of cultural capital acquires new value and attempts a "bottom-up" approach to educational reality. The oppressed are the "nobody", the silent

or the supernumerary on the stage. The “speechlessness” of these children highlights the whole pathogenicity of education, without this meaning that cultural and identity differences should be ignored. Instead, teachers should invoke these differences / distinctions as an integral part of learning.

In this context, Border Pedagogy seeks to help students understand their stories and experiences and eliminate diverse barriers (de-territorialization / adoption of border identities) to achieve greater understanding and acceptance of the human experience (Kaplan, 1987: 188). Border pedagogy, crossing the boundaries of school or non-formal forms of education, considers culture to be an integral element and considers teachers and students as border passers (cultural scavengers) who promote social action within the context of ‘Postmodernism’ of resistance (Hicks, 1998: 47-58). In this way, the expansion of school curriculum is achieved through strong educational values such as self-knowledge, the cultivation of responsibility, combating prejudice, tolerating any cultural distinctiveness, enhancing action and initiative, and the appeal of knowledge and education

The above can only be accomplished through a systematic cycle of critical-praxical actions, in contrast to inclusion, which ultimately defines the different on the basis of predetermined and imposed criteria, so it can be characterized as a “ego-ethnic-central” which fails to take advantage of the benefits of different cultural capital and limits the system itself. The question is ‘who’ includes ‘whom’ and in what context? Is there an invisible hegemonic logic that seeks to reintroduce in the wrong way the proposal for integration/ assimilation? Does inclusion end up ignoring the particular characteristics of these groups? If this is the case, then inclusion can hurt oppressed people more than the conditions that caused their oppression. On the contrary, instead of inclusion we can introduce the concept of two-way social inclusion among the oppressed and non-members of the school community. The concept of social inclusion makes the oppressed visible in society, developing a sense of co-ownership, central to their organic self-determination and to the development of their sociality.

Adopting a cross-border educational approach requires us to develop new methods and tools for promoting and communicating cultural experiences, through which students articulate their voices and construct social identities, challenging the basis on which knowledge and power are built.

In addition, the radicalization mentioned above, cannot remain at a theoretical level. It requires a praxical understanding of our pedagogical interpretations and actions that will result in unlearning and then new learning. In this sense, the existing curricula based on Border Pedagogy should be redefined, highlighting learning as a field of dialogue among a multitude of voices that are distant from or conflict with each other, in asymmetric power relations.

The border region, as a symbolic/ intangible place, is a place where ethnic groups, as well as individuals with different cultural and social characteristics, as well as attitudes of

life, are committed to recognizing and interpreting how their differences can extend the foundation of human life and democratic perceptions. In this regard, teachers should not be exposed to the risk of idealization and romance. Instead, they must help students find a language to critically examine the historically and socially constructed entities with which they live.

1.3.2. Levels of Approach of Border Pedagogy

According to Giroux (1992), there are three levels of approach to cross-border pedagogy, both within and outside school: (a) in the first students, teachers and the public begin to understand the boundaries of their knowledge, the strengthened position from which they speak and the context of the epistemological, political, cultural, and social margins under which they constitute/ compose the language of history, power, and difference. Practicing at this level allows them to move beyond cultural boundaries to understand the reason for the construction of borders and boundaries, and how these constructed borders/ boundaries serve mechanisms of power, based on which formal and informal structures of education were constructed. So students develop a new kind of cultural literacy that allows them to understand the boundaries in the context above. Once these constraints are recognized, it is easier for someone to break free from them.

At a second level (b), students, teachers and the public are invited to and practice at continually “cross” the borders and are encouraged to redefine them to become ‘transboundary’ and to understand the alienation of others and the distortion of social structures. They will thus be able to devise ‘places’ where diverse cultural resources allow for the creation of new identities, voices and knowledge and be able to critically reconsider the notion of the ‘other’.

Finally, on the third level (c), students, teachers and the public need to create a new perspective, a new point of view, to reconsider the historical and social constructions of the ‘borders’ and ‘places’ they have inherited, in order to perceive and understand their limitations and capabilities. Thus, they will be able to appreciate and understand their history and identities by recognizing multiple and different cultural codes, narratives, identities and histories through attractive interpretive paths. This process, which is thinking beyond borders, enables him/ her to perceive contradictions in his/ her own identity.

Through the above levels, a deeper process of self-understanding is formed, which becomes a space of experimentation, love and critical analysis to test our potential and our educational content (Darder, 2009: 571 -573).

1.3.3. Principles of effective teacher education based on Border Pedagogy

Based on what has been said so far, we understand that there are several points in everyday school reality that need to be radically differentiated. In contrast to the technocratic perspective that is embedded in teacher training programs is the border

teacher, who has the perception of decentralized control and the principles of participatory democracy. Specifically, some of the principles for effective teacher education in Border Pedagogy are as follows:

1. To understand how culture affects our worldview.
2. To recognize that immigrant children are undergoing a process of cultural adjustment and that they are likely to undergo a cultural and psychological identity crisis.
3. To promote the importance of developing cultural heritage-related skills so that teachers and students can become culturally competent.
4. To develop greater awareness of cultural taboos and non-verbal communication.
5. To recognize the dangers of labeling.
6. To be empathetic and develop acceptance mechanisms.
7. Understand the intrinsic oppression experienced by particular groups of students in the classroom and the educational policies that cause it.
8. To go through the humanitarian experiential processes to examine in a specific way the social and personal obstacles arising from the new political and economic circumstances of aggressive globalization.
9. To be willing and able to understand and learn how to teach interracial, bilingual, intercultural children as well as manage cultural trauma.
10. Understand the characteristics of a Multiple Identity, choosing what to embrace from native culture and what to embrace from new ones.
11. Understand the global political forces that brought immigrants students to class.

2. Arts-based research methodology and arts-based teaching practices about Border Pedagogy

2.1. Scientific differentiations of arts-based research methodology

Border perception brings to light the need to develop new research and teaching tools and methodologies that will reveal the unseen aspects of social reality. Most of the time, while acknowledging the value of this example, we fail to express it or interpret it in its true dimensions.

This is the case because we refuse to study emotions, physiognomy and, in general, the daily lives of all people. So, even when we recognize the value of the cultural capital of certain oppressed groups, we fail to accept it and use it as equal capital with our own, we simply “include” it. Consequently, we need a research and teaching methodology that is capable of directly ‘speaking’ the language or into the language of these people rather than

treating a conventional pedagogical vocabulary designed to describe conditions that relate to an entirely different historical and social context.

Every research aims to understand why people think, feel, react and behave as they do. This cannot be accomplished unless we proceed to analyze and study the invisible aspects of socio-political phenomena: the symbolic and intangible features of human behavior (emotions, rituals, play, stereotypes/ prejudices, and our innate tendencies). Our scientific single-mindedness often prevents us from doing what we consider to be the requirement of our work. We cast out of scientific and school literature any sense of touch, smell, or movement, that is, the physiognomy of people's daily lives and their traces, perceiving them as anecdotal evidence. We rarely define a separate method of research to study all of which are important research elements for the humanitarian approach of our perceptions, behaviors and experiences, especially in our time, which is characterized by diversity (Glesne, 2018: 13-19).

Border Education can be fruitfully combined with sophisticated research methodology, which allows us to understand and accept the realities of oppressed groups. This proposal is, in essence, the "third way" to reach social transformation. It is a process aimed at enhancing the involvement of marginalized groups/ populations in school and social life and improving their literacy levels. Utilizing arts-based practices as a means of expression highlights the real emotional world as well as the cultural capital of these groups. It is a form of research that "refers to concepts, definitions of concepts, characteristics, metaphors, symbols and descriptions of things" and not to "their measurements or measures".

In this combinatorial research you translate life, make it a text... an inspirational product of the lives you observe and of what we ourselves, as researchers, bring to the scene (Glesne, 2018: 13). This is how methodologies change, with the invention of new ways of studying the educational and social universe and the creation of new knowledge and values (the civil rights movement, feminist activism, critical pedagogy, globalization/ anti-globalization, multiculturalism, arts-based movement, theater of the oppressed, etc.). This shift involves exploiting arts-based ways of engaging the general population in approaching life and the great narratives which shaped the experiences.

The advantage of such a research methodology is that it overthrows the conventional and one-dimensional concept of research in the academic community. Creators from different fields of art can join research groups and, together with social and humanitarian scientists, even natural sciences or health sciences, address not only interdisciplinary but also cross-sectoral specific questions. In this way, the sciences can meet visual arts in a fruitful way. In this sense, the researcher can 'experience' his/ her own research questions and thus gain a more complete and targeted intake of the social reality he or she is studying.

2.2. Learning and teaching as arts-based practices

Art-based learning and teaching can be defined as the systematic use of an arts-based process in understanding and exploring the experiences of both teachers and their informants (students, audience) within or outside of school, who are invited to be educated, to apply and evaluate the above methodology.

In this case the work/ research within the context of even a course can be presented as history, poetry (research poetry, drawing on data from their sources), acting, ethnodramas (illustrative ethnography, especially in interviews, data representation through dramatic expression), illustrative pedagogy, self-ethnography (based on elements of the researcher's personal experience, narratives of the self), fiction (combining researcher's knowledge and imagination with literary techniques), visualization, even as dance or painting (examination of the role of the body, subjectivity and creativity in education and research) (Glesne, 2018: 370-398). Such a methodology leads to deeper elaboration and analysis of the issues that concern us, but also to the design of learning environments that enhance creativity (Leavy, 2009).

Art-based practices such as: storytelling, literary writing, poetry, music, collage, performance, dance and motion, visual arts, visual representation, cinema, documentary, fresco, painting, theater, song, etc., are methodological tools of an alternative research understanding of the world. These are holistic, participatory and inclusive ways of learning and teaching, where the connection between theory and practice is attempted and a new theoretical and epistemological basis for teaching social/ humanitarian sciences in multicultural settings emerges. In such learning situations, the roles between the teacher and the student alternate and break down the traditional dividing lines between teachers and learners.

The expected benefits of an arts-based intake of research and teaching are the following:

- Extended handling of the immigrant/ refugee situation and oppressed groups in general.
- Redefining research and teaching resources, direct communication of all entities involved in teaching and research, as well as achieving a state of empathy.
- The emergence of a new pedagogical tool that goes beyond the linear, formalistic and 'neutral' presentation of our teaching.
- Developing critical historical and social skills to foster collective self-esteem, trust, mutual acceptance and reconciliation.
- Utilization of sophisticated research projects addressing 'difficult' topics such as human rights, diversity, poverty, social inequalities, cultural literacy, immigration, racism, violence, war and traumatic historical events.

It is important, however, not to place more emphasis on form and less on content. This means that we must develop criteria for evaluating arts-based teaching and research

practices, such as: the obvious presence of art, it makes up a tangible/ complete experience, it touches on the essence of things and social issues, it has social gravity, it sparks fresh discussions on issues that are taken for granted, it contributes to the discovery of a subject in a new way and mainly it must invoke local societies / communities to communicate and pursue their transformation.

2.2.1. Representative Pedagogy

An important part of arts-based research methodology is the notion of representation (Sidiropoulou, 2014: 35-42). The discourse of school texts is to place students and teachers in specific areas in the classroom, as is the case in theaters, or in an object-centric museum, previously indicating specific roles (speakers - listeners/ speechless students or visitors). However, the voices of children from different cultural backgrounds are dominated by the existing social power relations and the inequality reproduced between the transmitter-receiver. School texts, through teaching, create the 'difference' regarding the pedagogical/ learning relationship, sometimes projecting it and sometimes controlling the action. That is, the student is dominated by the word of the voice that teaches him/ her.

Critical representational pedagogy, however, forms a new proposal, within the framework of arts-based teaching practices that succeed in releasing the pulsating voice and body of students to break the silence and eventually to make the student the center (Kosmidou-Handy, 2006: 135-148, Kosmidou-Hardy, 2002: 73-80). Refugees and immigrants in schools constitute an oppressed world that does not exist in the curriculum and the contents of school textbooks. However, the Greek school has been multicultural for decades and the education of these children is drowning out their voices. We therefore have to listen to those children who face 'primitive' complex inequalities in Greek public schools and allow their (lost) voices to be heard through school texts, enabling them to participate in planning and evaluation processes for change in curriculum and school culture. According to Cook-Sather (2002:3) we need to "... turn our ears to hear what students are saying and... respond to what we hear. The two challenges... are (a) changing the structures in our minds that made us reluctant to embrace... the students' voices and (b) changing the structures in educational relationships and institutions that have reinforced this reluctance."

Teachers are the ones who need to observe their faces more closely while capturing the atmosphere of the classroom, as photographers, painters or filmmakers would. This is an arts-based activity, as so-called arts-based research is a form of representation that allows for more active participation and involvement of students in the learning process. Teachers need to ask why their lesson is unclear and indifferent, and how they can surround it with vibrant and bright colors to shape a better mental and emotional mood for children to perform better. The colorless, neutral (photographic, painting, directing, museological) depiction of the teaching and learning effort in the classroom can reveal introversion,

seriousness, negativity and oppression. Teachers need to think about how their multicultural students and students will recover their smiles to further illuminate the imaginary scene of the lesson. Do not hesitate to give them a leading role. Get them involved in many roles, the role of teacher, student, author of the book, and author of his / her syllabus.

Representative pedagogy, according to Maxine Greene (1995a: 378-382, 1995b), abandons established intellectual ways of teaching and approaches the educational process as a performance and art. When classroom learning becomes multifaceted, social, and collaborative, students become active, learning expands and understanding deepens. Children and teachers share filmmaking, stage design, sound and speech. Through this rearrangement of roles, students compete through books and texts with themselves. They take up the classroom scene to reshape and change pedagogical communication through their speaking body, they seek out the visual performance of the self, virtually adapting the lesson, even changing positions and roles. Books “talk” less and kids “write” more with their body, expressing and listening to their texts and their voice that has social meanings. They animate, direct, represent tangible objects and “set themselves up” in the classroom (real or metaphorical). They occupy the classroom stage to fill it with authenticity and critical thinking. They are invited to explore through an internal process of photographing themselves/ their surroundings. In this way, their lost voices are found and they gain confidence, seeking the visual performance of themselves in relation to the teacher and the textbook itself. Each lesson is presented as a copy of a scene/ music score, or as the materials of an art form, and the students act as ‘volunteers’, working on its parts.

The teacher becomes a director and actor, while his/ her lesson is a theatrical act. During its time he/ she is excited, frustrated, sad and happy. He/ she watches his/ her spectators and actors/ students and tries to inspire them to experience theatrical action. Like actors, teachers have a message to convey - and this is best achieved by adopting action skills such as fluctuating our voice and body, using anxiety and surprise, roles, sets, free space in the classroom, and certainly humor. In addition, they have to take care of directing, costumes, dialogues and moves. In fact, they should not hesitate to present their forms, so that students can see and evaluate them.

Bakhtin's (1981: 425) concept of a ‘chronotope’ provides an area of meaningful classroom involvement to highlight the importance of multicultural dialogue in shaping identities and in redefining the roles of all students. The time and space of students who come from different cultural backgrounds is relativized. Although the actual design and use of classroom space can be important elements in facilitating a visual pedagogy, spatial analysis directs attention to the foundations of interaction in dynamic and changing time-space contexts that appear within the lesson-scenarios and the teaching practices of the teacher. Students (and teachers) as ‘performers’ in the classroom chronotope create environments that allow for the speaking and listening interaction between students and

teachers, who now orchestrate their voice and discourse in relation to the curriculum and text books. Children define and expand the learning environment, create new media, personalize goals in their critical behavior and school attendance, support self-directed learning, make their own learning choices and support their voice (McKeehen, 2002).

Representative pedagogy proposes to the abandonment of the “chalk and speech” technique. Teachers need to let their students copy the methods of actors, walking around and rehearsing when reading texts from books, instead of sitting at their desks. This is a free, yet targeted, filmmaking process. Targeted as it seeks to exploit the creative potential of children to gain useful knowledge and attitudes of life, and free because it is not implemented within restrictive terms. On the contrary, everyone’s creativity is respected and sought to emerge in a personal mythical context. In this way, students will understand their boundaries and abilities by creating their own, but also in collaboration with their educational, mythical pedagogical situations (Bishop, 2008: 31-52), with their key features being imaginative insight and creativity. In this way, children better understand texts and content as a vital source of inspiration.

The arts-based research methodology, however, cannot be implemented without a plan. Students should reflect on their teaching materials before the presentation. Discover the author’s intention, evaluate it and ultimately represent it in a dramatic way. In the end, the students can describe the role they played, express what they learned about the design of their show and how they perceived themselves.

3. Project development in the context of Critical Pedagogy

Research based on the combination of Critical Pedagogy and arts-based research methodology is a challenge for contemporary research in the field of education sciences, given that new frameworks for postgraduate and doctoral dissertations (Kamler, Thomson 2006) have already begun to emerge and develop a concern on how these texts are evaluated by examiners (Golding, Sharmini, Lazarovitch, 2014: 563-576). This is not an easy task; it requires profound epistemological reflection and, above all, a move away from conventional methods of supervision, which are inconsistent with the philosophical approach of Critical Pedagogy and the free spirit that distinguishes arts-based research methodology. The proposition we make, deriving from the value vision of Critical Pedagogy (its critic-praxical role), can only move away from a conventional structure of research work.

The researcher must practice the principles embodied, that is, apply the deeper meaning of questioning, cross-border perception and widening horizons through visual arts. In other words, Critical Pedagogy should be ‘inhabited’ by students and this is related to the concept of lived science. Experiencing science, we manage to regard it as a place of appeal, reference and a necessary prerequisite for our scientific construction.

Experience can be accomplished in a variety of ways. The theoretical framework as well as the research methodology should be redefined on a basis of utilizing the student's personal experiences and the use of differentiated and alternative research tools. The bibliographic overview can move beyond the boundaries of the known process, where we read papers with almost universally accepted academic expectations about their formulation/ delivery, but also with the expectations of a 'regular' reader. On the contrary, the bibliographic record of the subject under consideration must allow for more complex and "personal" approaches. This will contribute to a fuller understanding of the subject so that we 'approach the examination in a more informed way' (Green, 2009: 42 cf. Johnston, 1997: 333-337).

The research we have learned and which we teach does not allow the student to understand that he/ she/ it himself/ herself/ itself is part of the subject under investigation and to become an empathetic researcher. Students should be able to intervene in the academic methodology of his/ her research, but not before first identifying himself/ herself in the research with the contribution of the supervisor without it meaning that the last one has dominion in this relationship.

On the contrary, we should promote the model of interchanging roles of supervisor-student relationship. It is a concept of interdependence in the roles of these two entities and worldviews, without depriving them of their characteristics and their particularities, without assimilation, just appreciating each other. This notion is based on Freire's view of the separation of banking from problematic learning, which we have previously discussed, and in essence proposes to establish dialogue as a key tool in this relationship, which will lead to critical awareness. This implies that there should be a differentiation in conventional practice, in which the supervisor delineates the theoretical and methodological framework of a project, and the student follows it as self-evident in the logic of establishing of the guider-guided relationship. This 'linear' process confirms a mixture of certainty and fear as to the concept of 'academically acceptable and right'. The two parties should be considered companions. This transforms the student's personal story with that of the supervisor in the process of writing, which transforms not only the text, but also the worldviews in a way that challenges them, critically and in a kind of collective interpretation (McLaren & Lankshear, 1993).

The big problem is to view science as an entity with specific methodology and rules that are inviolable and at the same time inaccessible - incomprehensible - to a wide audience. Therefore, it has not fulfilled its social purpose, since it fulfills itself as science according to conventional scientific standards. To date, we use the tools developed by conventional pedagogy to express critical pedagogical concerns. However, it is very difficult in the current context to extract aspects of Critical Pedagogy, because they have been distorted by traditional pedagogy. Our proposal, therefore, must have its language code, its terms and its universe of speech, which we must devise, and which must express the entity,

identity and representational face of the whole philosophical and research project. One useful suggestion is to make use of the visual arts, through which the student will be able to visualize his or her theory by acquiring a code of expression - a narrative - that best suits his or her reflection.

The crucial issue in this dialogue is the kind of questions (Amundsen, Wilson, 2012: 91) that are raised in projects based on Critical Pedagogy, which cannot be other than the level of social transformation, that is, to take on a praxical rather than just a theoretical dimension (Shrag, 1986: 22-23). To do this, research methodologies as a whole should aim at empathy. Another aspect that Critical Pedagogy poses as a prerequisite for research is the study of that being researched within his/ her/ its historical context. If there is no historical knowledge and analysis, the story of the articulation of the argument and the history of the researcher's field (e.g. family, school, social environment), is contradictory.

The next question concerns the research tools. In our proposal we cannot stick to conventional methods of data collection. Our data in this context departs from simple numerical measurements and aims to map and express the true and deeper intake of our cross-border content. This process establishes a hybrid holistic theoretical and practical framework for more innovative and radical forms of educational research, revealing aspects that are not visible in other types of research. In other words through art learn we learn to do research. The visual arts are not just a visual tool for recording, collecting, analyzing or interpreting data, but at the same time, they are becoming means and tools for the creation and production of research data. In this case, the search shifts from art as a cognitive object to art as a field of interconnecting heterogeneous cognitive objects.

In research methodology we focus on two types of data. Those obtained through a classic form of research method and those derived through the use of arts-based research, which contributes to the researcher's understanding of the material collected. Our arts-based research methodology contributes substantially to enriching our critical and border views. Arts-based practices can be applied to all or some stages of the research process (before, during or at the end of the research). Researchers seek to exploit and adapt the capabilities and tools available to the various creative arts to analyze and represent research questions. For example, if we are to be interviewed, the student should first enter the interviewer's position, otherwise he or she will not be able to understand what the interviewee is answering. Then, from the data that emerges, the deeper meanings, which go through a simple or complex formulation, of the respondent should be highlighted. We could turn these answers into a theatrical act. Through the theatrical practice the student himself/ herself participates as a subject and can more fully understand the subject he/ she is studying in a way that will achieve the desired empathy.

According to Sandra Tan, Freire's claim that education is a "practice of freedom" is reflected in the clarity of his language that resembles the language of common speech. This simplicity adds coherence and clarity to the discussion and contributes to the

assessment of the text from a wider field of readability. The style that characterizes Freire's writing distinguishes him from the flamboyant lingua franca used to articulate theoretical and academic texts that make them accessible only to a privileged minority.

Often, educators and politicians speak and do not understand why their language is not adapted to the specific situation of the people they are targeting. Freire's belief that language is the key to communication is further indicated through the use of creative methods. Analogy, contrast, place, imaginative and literal dialogues help elucidate complex ideas and critical concepts. Also, incorporating real examples from different contexts and environments that represent the reality of the oppressed, helps the reader gain useful knowledge that reflects oppressive dynamics and how it is practiced or excluded or how the theory is put into action. This approach, undoubtedly, brings the written word closer to the oral. Therefore, Freire's reading gives the feeling that he is in conversation with the author, and that he/ she is involved in his space.

4. Towards a Critical-Praxical Pedagogy

Paulo Freire refers to praxis as the affirmation of human action for a more humane world on two levels, the individual and the social, where simultaneous changes of circumstances and self-change occur. Critical praxis is threefold and includes self-reflection, reflective action, and collective reflective action.

Praxis is a complex mix of theory and experience. The term "praxis" derives from the Ancient Greek language. The practice of praxis in educators reflects practice through dialogue between themselves and students. Teachers and students decide and take action based on reflection and dialogue. Teachers participating in praxis soon realize that their practice requires them to rethink their beliefs and look for alternative teaching and learning practices.

According to Grossberg, Praxical Pedagogy "seeks to provide people with skills that will enable them to understand and intervene in their history." A trap in using this type of practice assumes that people do not already interfere with their story and, most importantly, teachers know the right skills needed to be used in this process each time. Grossberg warns that "there are no universal skills we can offer regardless of the context in which we want to intervene and most importantly the way our students want to intervene" (1994: 17).

Based on the principles of Critical and Border Pedagogy, as well as arts-based teaching and research methodology, an alternative educational and research proposal builds on the genuine and sincere dialogue of all entities and the extension of the concept of boundaries, which have been imposed upon us.

The lost voices that Critical Pedagogy brings to the fore manage to challenge today's oppressive, divisive, and anti-humanistic school and social reality while at the same time

highlighting personal experience/ history as a crucial aspect of teaching and research design. In this context, pedagogy should be understood as a sequence of textual, verbal, and visual practices intended to relate to the processes by which people understand themselves and the ways in which they relate to others and their surroundings. Utilizing arts-based learning practices is capable of providing an important educational and cultural area in this direction. It teaches us how our (disciplined) body works and motivates us to re-evaluate social data, critically and consciously. This way, we can manage to experience each educational and research moment through a re-establishment of the educational and socio-cultural environment.

Creating the foundation of educational content in the knowledge derived from the cultural and social sources of students and teachers, as well as in the choice of content and forms of teaching, enables the latter to redefine their roles by breaking down the school of the past and the present, collaboratively building an open learning center, with no walls, cells or restrictions from classes and ages. A core for learning in neighborhoods, parks, libraries, the theater, the street, on the sidewalk, which proposes, communicates, reflects, counts, but does not impose. A prerequisite for all of the above is the extension of theory and research to everyday situations. That is to say, we must move from mere findings to a critical-praxical view.

This action will result after the adoption of critical awareness and will be part of an ongoing reassessment of our intervention. After all, critical consciousness is accomplished not only through mental effort, but through praxical actions, and in particular the genuine unity of action and reflection. Action is now understood as a social process and action and is what energizes us with strength.

Note

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