

EDUCATION AND SOCIETY: THE LACK OF PEDAGOGICAL PERSPECTIVE IN THE MODERN ERA

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines current trends in education, highlighting the need for a renewed pedagogical perspective that meets societal demands. It analyzes contemporary educational reality, which is dominated by the reproduction of knowledge and the development of technical skills at the expense of promoting values such as critical thinking and active participation. The study emphasizes the importance of recognizing and incorporating social, political, and historical parameters into the educational process. It underscores the necessity of a pedagogical theory that does not passively follow societal trends but instead takes on a guiding role in shaping values. Such an approach fosters democracy, social justice, and critical thinking. Additionally, it addresses skill development, emphasizing that it should go beyond technical competencies to empower students as responsible and critical citizens. Finally, the significance of embedding these principles into pedagogical theory is highlighted, ensuring it responds to the need for active and empowered citizens who contribute meaningfully to social change.

Keywords: History of pedagogy, social justice, critical thinking, educational values, educational renewal

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Education, as an institution, is a critical factor in the evolution of societies. In the modern era, however, it faces significant challenges, such as the ineffectiveness of traditional pedagogical methods and the difficulty of adapting to rapid social changes (Kirk, 2014). These developments highlight the need for developing and implementing new strategies and educational approaches that effectively address the demands of both students and society. The absence of a modern, dynamic, and progressive pedagogical theoretical framework that considers the social, political, and cultural needs of these times raise concerns about the future of education. In an environment where social inequalities and cultural conflicts are intensifying, the educational system often relies on outdated theories that fail to meet the demands of contemporary realities. The need for a new pedagogical approach is becoming increasingly pressing, as the challenges and changes of our time demand a modernization of the educational process. Such modernization could ensure that students are prepared for a constantly evolving world while simultaneously reinforcing the values of social justice, democracy, and equality (Freire, 1998).

Education serves as a medium for shaping the values, skills, and identities of citizens, reflecting the dynamic interaction between society and knowledge (Biesta, 2010). However, the lack of a cohesive pedagogical perspective raises questions about the direction of the educational

system and its connection to the real needs of society (Freire, 1970; Dewey, 1916). How can education respond to the challenges of increasing social inequality, the commodification of knowledge, and rapid technological advancements?

The imposition of measurable objectives and standardized procedures has led to an educational reality that often alienates students and educators (Biesta, 2015). Programs that focus excessively on examinations limit opportunities to cultivate skills necessary for a democratic society, such as collaboration, empathy, and active civic participation. At the same time, increasing reliance on technology creates new forms of inequality, with some students lacking access to essential resources or knowledge to utilize them effectively (Engeström, 1987).

Globalization, on the other hand, offers new opportunities for collaboration and the exchange of best practices in education. However, this should not lead to a one-dimensional approach, as each society has its own cultural, social, and political needs. Pedagogy must combine intercultural understanding with democratic consciousness, supporting diversity, cultural pluralism, and local or national needs (Banks, 2017). Instead of passively responding to external pressures, it must function as a tool for social progress and humanistic development.

Education must be directly connected to society and promote humanistic values, social equality, and democracy. Within this framework, educational policies should focus not only on short-term demands but also on cultivating citizens with critical thinking and social responsibility. The need for a meaningful reflection on the values and goals of education becomes increasingly urgent (Apple, 2004). How can education evolve by integrating a more participatory and critical approach capable of addressing the complex needs of our time?

Knowledge, however, is not merely something transferred from teacher to student; it is created and shaped through active interaction with the environment and others. Students are not passive recipients of information but co-creators of the learning process, forming their own ideas and connections. Through collaboration, their understanding and critical thinking are enhanced, while their ability to think independently and critically evaluate data prepares them to take an active role in society (McLaren, 2015).

2.0 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EDUCATION AND SOCIETY: HISTORICAL AND THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Education in the modern world is undoubtedly the result of a systematic interplay of theoretical and political approaches. While these approaches provide useful tools for understanding and driving change, they often fall short of fully explaining the dynamics of contemporary society. The pedagogical theories of Freire, Bourdieu, Papert, and others offer valuable insights into understanding inequalities and technological challenges in education. However, their application to today's conditions reveals limitations that are difficult to overcome without the continuous redefinition of pedagogical thought (Freire, 1970; Bourdieu, 1977; Papert, 1980).

Freire's concept of "pedagogy of liberation" identified the educational system as both a field of oppression and a tool for social transformation, emphasizing the importance of awareness and critical thinking for social emancipation. However, the complexity of modern society's social and economic structures makes the application of this theory exceedingly challenging. Educational systems, despite undergoing changes, continue to reproduce the same inequalities

Freire described, without yielding an adequate model for social change. While his theory remains iconic, it seems limited to analyzing power structures without offering fully implementable practical solutions for continuously evolving social conditions (Freire, 1970).

Bourdieu's pedagogy, focusing on the reproduction of social inequalities through cultural capital and "symbolic violence," highlights inequality as a fundamental dimension of the educational system. Although his theory has provided profound analyses of how education often serves dominant classes, contemporary phenomena such as digitization, globalization, and social diversification pose questions that this theory alone cannot address (Bourdieu, 1977). New social and cultural developments render the traditional understanding of inequality reproduction insufficient. While recognizing "symbolic violence" remains valuable, it needs renewal to respond to modern challenges.

Papert (1980) argued for the fundamental role of technology in education, viewing computing and technology as tools for enhancing learning and critical thinking. However, the rapid evolution of technology surpasses the capacity of educational theories to keep pace. Issues such as unequal access to technology, the digital divide, and social disparities in education make full integration of these tools difficult and partial. Although Papert's idea of connecting children with technology was pioneering, the challenges of the digital era demand multifaceted theoretical approaches that cannot be exhausted by a single theory.

Similarly, theories emphasizing social justice and the political dimensions of education, such as those of Apple (2004), remain essential for understanding power dynamics within education. However, the intensity and complexity of contemporary society, with its constantly shifting social, political, and economic conditions, render existing analyses inadequate without further development. The relationship between education and social and political inequalities remains crucial, but applying these theories to everyday educational realities must address new forms of oppression arising from globalization and technological advancements.

Although these theories continue to provide valuable tools for analyzing education, a gap persists. This gap is evident in that, despite their exceptional analyses of power structures, social inequalities, and technological changes, they fall short of offering practical solutions to the new challenges of contemporary society. Reassessing and renewing pedagogical theories are necessary to meet today's needs and align with a rapidly changing society (Giroux, 2011; Young, 2013).

3.0 SEEKING A PEDAGOGICAL PERSPECTIVE FOR THE EDUCATION OF THE FUTURE

Education has consistently played a central and unwaveringly important role during critical junctures in Western civilization, serving as a cornerstone of social cohesion, progress, and self-actualization. In today's era of rapid change and uncertainty, the need for a renewed pedagogical approach is more relevant than ever. What is required is not merely an adaptation to new social and cultural demands but the recreation of a society searching for new directions and deeper purpose (Brookfield, 2012).

Modern pedagogical science, drawing from the most significant theories of the 20th century, must focus on the individuality of each student, their social empowerment, and the cultivation

of skills essential for contemporary reality. At the core of this approach is personalized and adaptive learning, which connects the learning process with the interests, needs, and capabilities of each student. Simultaneously, emphasis is placed on linking education to real-life needs through continuous adaptation to social and cultural changes. The student is no longer a passive recipient of knowledge but an active participant who, through discovery and exploration, shapes their future and pursues continuous personal growth (Montessori, 1967).

Modern pedagogy also transcends theoretical approaches to knowledge by highlighting its connection to real life, using experience as a fundamental means of learning. Experiential learning theory remains pivotal, emphasizing that education should encourage students to engage with authentic and real-world problems, cultivating critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration skills. Through experiential activities and collaborative actions, students not only acquire technical competencies but also develop a holistic mindset that integrates the practical application of knowledge with its social and ethical dimensions (Dewey, 1916).

Additionally, sociocultural theory offers a valuable dimension to pedagogy by emphasizing the importance of social interaction and cultural context in the learning process. Learning is not an isolated, individual process but is shaped and evolves through collaboration and communication with others. As members of a broader social community, students develop their ability to understand diversity, enhance their capacity for cooperation, and interact in multicultural and social environments (Vygotsky, 1978).

In today's society, where change is the only constant, developing students' ability to adapt, think creatively, and devise innovative solutions becomes fundamental to enhancing the learning process. Expansive learning theory goes beyond the mere accumulation of knowledge to incorporate students' ability to think outside conventional frameworks and offer new ideas to address contemporary challenges. This theory introduces creativity and innovation as core dimensions of the educational process, highlighting their value in solving complex social issues (Engeström, 1987).

Learning, after all, is not a static process but a dynamic experience that evolves through interaction, discovery, and creativity. Students explore the world through their unique perspectives while simultaneously interacting with their cultural and social environments. Collaboration, cultivation of critical thinking, and deconstruction of stereotypes are fundamental elements of this approach, helping to shape a consciousness capable of recognizing modern challenges and seeking solutions. Specifically, integrating critical thinking and raising awareness about social inequalities position education as a tool for social justice and equality. Embedding these values in educational programs promotes democratic participation and social responsibility, nurturing citizens who contribute to transforming their society (Freire, 1970).

At the same time, contemporary pedagogy must leverage experience as a fundamental learning tool, encouraging students to apply their knowledge in real-world contexts. Through this process, students develop not only their technical skills but also the ethical dimension of their actions, recognizing their responsibility to society. Collective activities and interactions in multicultural environments enhance mutual understanding and foster dialogue, essential components for shaping a just and sustainable world (Dewey, 1938; Freire, 1998).

Achieving educational goals also requires an evolving feedback process. Assessment methods should not merely serve as measurement tools but function as a means for personal development. Systematic monitoring of the learning journey helps students understand their strengths and weaknesses, boosting self-esteem and autonomy. Progress, therefore, is not an instantaneous state but an ongoing and meaningful experience linked to personal and social fulfillment (Tyler, 1949).

In this way, education becomes an entity not only for knowledge but also for values, promoting holistic development that encompasses both individual and societal transformation. Pedagogical science is called upon to rise to this challenge by shaping citizens who can actively engage in a world filled with challenges and opportunities. Education, as a social institution, must address today's challenges while laying the foundation for tomorrow. By synthesizing theories and practices, it fosters not only cognitive development but also the moral, social, and cultural evolution of students (Biesta, 2010).

The critical question remains: how can education combine individual development with collective progress in modern society? The answer may lie in the need for a pedagogical perspective that integrates knowledge, praxis, and vision, creating citizens capable of contributing to a just, inclusive, and sustainable society (Biesta, 2015).

Historically, education has played a catalytic role in societal evolution, deeply influencing values, structures, and social behaviors. However, at present, pedagogy seems to be in a period of profound crisis. The lack of a modern, innovative pedagogical approach that addresses the dynamics of contemporary social, political, and cultural needs raises serious concerns about the future of education. As social inequalities and cultural conflicts intensify, schools, amidst these upheavals, often resort to past pedagogical theories. While these theories were revolutionary in their time, they no longer suffice to meet the growing demands of today's world. The failure of traditional approaches to incorporate social and cultural developments underscores the urgent need for new pedagogical frameworks that will reinforce the fundamental values of social justice and equality (Apple, 2004; Freire, 1998; Giroux, 2011).

Education, as an institution playing a decisive role in social evolution, must tackle the multifaceted social challenges of the 21st century. Yet, in the current era, education often proves inadequate to meet the complex needs of both students and the broader society. Persisting with the reproduction of old theoretical approaches, such as those of Dewey and Freire, while significant, is no longer sufficient to address new social, political, and cultural realities (Dewey, 1916; Freire, 1970). The pace of social change demands a pedagogical renewal that is not merely theoretical but a radical practical revolution in education (Biesta, 2015).

The need for a new pedagogical approach, reflecting today's social realities and addressing the challenges of globalization, social inequalities, and technological advancements, is imperative. A modern democratic pedagogy can provide the theoretical foundation for shaping education that meets the needs of contemporary society while fostering the creation of a sustainable and just future (Dewey, 1938). The role of students must be radically redefined; it should not be limited to one-sided acceptance of knowledge but should focus on forming active citizens capable of co-shaping their social reality through critical thinking, collective action, and creative participation (Biesta, 2010; Ewald, 2013).

It is evident that contemporary educational policy must not be confined to testing and evaluations that measure only students' knowledge while ignoring the need to develop critical thinking and social responsibility essential for addressing societal challenges meaningfully (Piaget, 1952). Modern educational approaches must embrace the idea of participation and active learning, recognizing that students are not merely knowledge recipients but co-creators of social reality. Teachers should not be restricted to the role of instructors but should evolve into guides and facilitators of the learning process, providing the tools and freedom for students to explore their approaches to learning and contribute to shaping society (Dewey, 1938; Freire, 1998).

Education cannot ignore the dynamics of the social and political context in which it operates. According to McLaren (2015), education must confront challenges arising from social inequalities, cultural diversity, and environmental issues. Modern pedagogy must transcend the boundaries of traditional teaching, reflecting the complex and ever-evolving social challenges, and propose educational practices that not only promote justice and sustainability but also support the creation of a society of equal opportunities, collaboration, and collective responsibility.

Criticism of contemporary pedagogical approaches, as implemented in modern educational systems, focuses on their lack of flexibility and their failure to address the real needs of students. The urgent need to reassess educational priorities cannot be overstated. Processes of participation and dialogue are crucial for fostering critical and active citizens. Pedagogical science must play a pivotal role in shaping educational policies, as it defines the approaches and practices that respond to the social needs of our time. In an era of constant change, pedagogy must develop strategies that facilitate the creation of a society that respects the needs and rights of every student, promoting participation, critical thinking, and social justice (Giroux, 2011).

The need for a modern, transformative pedagogical theory is critical, especially in an era where social inequalities, cultural conflicts, and environmental challenges pose pressing questions about the role of education. How can pedagogy meet the complex demands of the modern world? Can education serve as a means of social change, offering solutions that promote justice and equality? The search for a pedagogy that aligns with the needs of our time is not only a theoretical challenge but also a practical necessity for shaping a future that includes everyone (Biesta, 2015).

The modern educational landscape is marked by challenges stemming from globalization, social inequalities, and rapid technological advancements (Selwyn, 2016). The absence of a coherent and innovative pedagogical theory significantly hinders the ability of schools, students, and their social environments to adapt to contemporary demands. Traditional pedagogical approaches prove inadequate to address these modern conditions, and educators often resort to outdated theories that fail to reflect the complexity of the modern world (Kirk, 2014).

The current state of education reveals a deep sense of uncertainty and exposes the system's inability to effectively address contemporary challenges. Dominant pedagogical theories, while evolving through the tools provided by educational systems, often fail to offer a cohesive and effective educational framework. Instead of providing comprehensive solutions, they create

confusion, highlighting the necessity for a reassessment of the theoretical foundations of pedagogy. Biesta (2015) emphasizes that education must promote democracy and justice, fostering the development of critical thinking goals that remain largely unmet.

Education as an institution has failed to grasp the dynamics of modern societies and adapt to students' needs, leading to a dangerous disconnection from reality. This results in a failure to equip students with the necessary tools to understand and address societal challenges (Freire, 1970).

The need for a new pedagogical theory that can recognize and respond to contemporary challenges is urgent. Pedagogical renewal, proposing an approach that incorporates students' experiences and needs, enhances critical thinking and promotes their active participation in the educational process. As Freire (1998) highlights, education must empower students' autonomy, transforming them into active citizens and creators of their own reality.

In a democratic society, the educational system must aim to enhance students' participation in the learning process and decision-making, promoting values of collaboration, mutual respect, and active social engagement. Ewald (2013) underscores the importance of this participation, which is essential not only for developing social skills but also for building a learning environment that embodies the principles of democracy and social justice. Such an educational model could serve as the foundation for a pedagogical renaissance that aligns with the social, political, and cultural conditions of our time.

The pedagogical crisis is inseparable from the social, political, and environmental challenges of the 21st century. In an era of globalization and growing social inequalities, education must respond to demands that surpass traditional pedagogical approaches (McLaren, 2015). According to McLaren (2015), education must address challenges arising from social inequalities, cultural diversity, and environmental crises by incorporating these issues into the curriculum. A pedagogical renaissance must propose that education reflects and tackles these challenges to create a fairer and more sustainable society (Freire, 1998; McLaren, 2015).

Modern educational policies, influenced by an emphasis on efficiency and assessment, should not be confined to preparing students for the labor market, as this reduces them to subjects of market forces (Biesta, 2010). Instead, education must enhance participation, promote critical thinking, and cultivate active citizenship, enabling students to actively shape their social reality (Ewald, 2013). In this context, educators must become guides and facilitators, providing the freedom for students to explore knowledge (Piaget, 1952).

Criticism of the most so-called modern pedagogical approaches, which focus on efficiency and consistency, highlights the need for a new pedagogy that aligns with contemporary social, political, and cultural needs (Biesta, 2010). Education must foster dialogue and participation, creating conditions for developing critical and active citizens capable of addressing the challenges of the modern world (Freire, 1998; McLaren, 2015). Such a new pedagogical theory is an urgent necessity, as education must function as a means of social change, offering solutions that promote justice and equality (Biesta, 2010).

4.0 CONCLUSIONS – A CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE

The need for a modern and timely pedagogical theory is urgent in today's rapidly evolving world, which is constantly changing and adapting. The challenges societies face today require an education system that goes beyond the reproduction of knowledge to focus on critical thinking, social justice, and student empowerment. Pedagogical theory must integrate the social, political, and historical dimensions of education, emphasizing the need for critical analysis and recognizing the structural inequalities that influence the educational process.

In the evolving society of the 21st century, the educational process seems to move at a rapid pace, adapting to the societal demands and changes taking place. However, there is a dangerous trend in which education no longer leads social evolution but instead mirrors societal needs without shaping or guiding the future. The critical nature of this observation lies in the fact that education, while responding to societal demands, should not blindly follow all social changes. Education's role must always be active, cultivating values that promote democracy, social justice, and critical thinking.

It is essential for education to recognize and highlight the contradictions or inequalities that may exist in social conditions. Especially today, when society does not always uphold the values, it ought to defend, education must positively influence the formation of these values instead of passively following societal trends. Social inequalities, cultural conflicts, and the challenges societies face demand a pedagogical approach that drives change and empowers students to think critically and challenge the status quo. Modern pedagogical perspectives must incorporate this critical dimension and promote students' active participation in social issues.

The pedagogical crisis becomes apparent when education is confined to accepting dominant social values without questioning their origins. Modern society requires education to cultivate active, critical citizens capable of participating in and shaping the future of society. If education passively follows social developments instead of shaping them, it risks losing its guiding role and becoming merely an adaptive process. The need for a pedagogy that fosters active citizenship necessitates the creation of a theory that is not only directive but also progressive.

Education must serve as a precursor to social change, connected to values such as democracy and social justice. It should align with the fundamental principles of education and shape citizens who defend human values, democracy, and social justice, even when society does not always embrace these values. Education can and should lead social developments, influencing society rather than passively following its trends. The lack of a modern pedagogical perspective is not merely a weakness but a critical failure to redefine education's role in society and to highlight the values it should support.

Pedagogical theory must promote an approach that not only aligns with contemporary challenges but actively shapes them, fostering critical thinking and the continuous reassessment of social values. Only in this way can education become the tool for social change that paves the way for a fairer and more sustainable future.

Today, there is a clear absence of cohesive pedagogical direction, leading to inadequacies in the design and implementation of educational policies that address modern needs. This detachment from pedagogical theories that once guided the educational system reinforces the notion that education often follows societal data and demands rather than promoting or shaping new pedagogical and social values. Consequently, the lack of a modern pedagogical

perspective is evident in the weakening of the traditional model where pedagogical theory dictated educational policies.

Skill development, beyond the traditional transfer of knowledge, is a critical element of modern pedagogical practice aimed at preparing active and responsible members of society. This process does not merely involve developing technical skills but also encompasses fostering critical thinking, active participation, and social responsibility. It is part of a pedagogical stance that cultivates citizens with moral and social awareness.

Skill cultivation is not merely a technical aspect of the educational process but has a pedagogical dimension as it promotes the development of critical competencies that empower students as autonomous and responsible citizens. This aspect is vital as students must be equipped not only with the knowledge required by the labor market but also with the values and skills that enable them to actively participate in society and contribute to its development.

The need to return to a dynamic and modern pedagogical framework, as well as the discussion around the significance of skill cultivation as a pedagogical stance, are crucial points for enhancing the overall analysis of the topic. These aspects could be integrated into the renewal of pedagogical theories and practices to better prepare students for the challenges posed by contemporary society.

By renewing pedagogical theory and integrating it into modern educational policies, education can act as a catalyst for social change, reinforcing democracy, justice, and citizens' active participation in society.

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