Awareness Commitments and Understandings

Student’s Name:

Institutional Affiliation:

Course:

Instructor:

Date:

**Introduction**

The world experiences numerous formidable challenges that require subsequent generations of all college graduates to become capable leaders. The challenges need leaders to have a comprehensive understanding of public life, critical thinking skills, and other honed skills and the collaborative abilities of diverse individuals to create changes and solve the challenges. Teaching is good because it allows learners to apply all the skills and knowledge in different sectors for the benefit of other individuals. It enhances the creation of awareness which has a more significant impact in fostering capabilities such as service-learning. Awareness, commitment, and understanding are beneficial in different sectors as it allows individuals to apply their skills and knowledge to benefit other individuals in the society. The paper describes how critical pedagogy enhances the development of awareness, commitment, and understanding.

**Critical Pedagogy**

Critical pedagogy is a philosophy of teaching that invites various educators intending to encourage the learners to critique oppression and power structures. From the article *Inside the Classroom* by William Bigelow, the author indicates the vision to teach is pegged on things in existence and those existing in society (Bigelow, 1950, p.13). Critical pedagogy always involves the ability of individuals to have an awareness of different concepts and to question the status of society at other times. The author indicates that teachers can use their level of enlightenment and understanding to encourage the learners to challenge different forms of inequality or question various aspects that result in inequalities that characterize the societies, families, and schools (Bigelow, 1950 p.13). From the readings, three concepts emerge from the concept of critical pedagogy. One of the concepts is the authority and power among the learners and their teachers. The second aspect involves how education is politicized in different world regions, and the last element is teaching the learners about various social issues within a classroom environment.

**Inequalities in American Classrooms**

Inequalities in education involve the unequal distribution of different academic resources. It is not a new issue in American classrooms because most of the American systems are characterized by greater levels of inequality. Some of the resources are funds for education. Most of the children from ethnic majority groups receive funds and access to education while those from ethnic minority groups are denied the privileges (Sokolower, 2011, p.2). such inequalities result in huge numbers of school dropouts due to inadequate financial resources. Another form of inequality is the distribution of experienced and qualified teachers, technologies, and learning materials within the different communities. All these aspects affect the performance of learners, as indicated in the writings.

**Implementation of Critical Pedagogy in Classrooms**

Critical pedagogy is progressive since it criticizes the structures which are always disregarded in society. That is why most teachers who incorporate critical pedagogy always challenge themselves to think critically (Bigelow, 1950, p.23). The classrooms have students who are from different social classes. That is why teachers need always to think critically and have the courage to challenge the available social structures. Students go to school to receive education and empowerment. Therefore, all the teachers must use the available materials to challenge the public social narratives. For instance, a history teacher could research the scholars who studied character flaws in schools or any complex structures (Bigelow, 1950, p.23). Such actions are beneficial because they allow teachers to understand the reasons for success for various historical figures in society. Alternatively, the teacher may choose to read about the success of different historical figures and try to understand why such leaders may not have been very successful (Bigelow, 1950, p.23). The concept of critical pedagogy will ensure the teacher understands what it takes to challenge the existing social structures which do not fight against inequalities in society. Continuous learning ensures that the teachers are adequately equipped with practical approaches to enlighten their learners.

Agency among learners involves ceding to different forms of authority to have complete power over their individual learning experiences (Sokolower, 2011, p.3). Such can be applied by incorporating active learning techniques like a flipped classroom. The teachers can allow the learners to vote on various outcomes without caring about the product. As a result, the learners will be aware of the significance of being independent in their education. Such understanding will ensure the students are empowered to make individual decisions (Sokolower, 2011, p.3). Teachers may also implement the peer-led approach, requiring learners to reflect on learning activities in different notecards and blogs constantly. Such an approach will ensure that the learners have an independent voice in their grades.

The other aspect is that of social justice. The concept involves ensuring that everyone is handled with respect, equity, and dignity (Sokolower, 2011, p.4). Social justice can be applied in classrooms by reflecting on unique pedagogy and individual values to understand better individual personalities and the learner's importance in their teachers. Social justice is achievable via implementing critical pedagogy approaches like selecting a learner from the underserved groups in society. The chosen student may later form a set of first leaders in a group. Such an approach will ensure equality in learning (Sokolower, 2011, p.4). The teachers may also use the open resources of education which reduces the cost of learning materials. Critical pedagogy, in this case, ensures that students are viewed as human beings who may have or lack. Therefore it nullifies indifference in treatment whenever a learner walks into the classroom.

Critical pedagogy also ensures that the teachers avoid the quick fix approach to punishments. The schools have a management system of wrong behavior that shames the learners (Bigelow, 1950, p.441). The system always affects learners from ethnic minority groups. Sometimes the teachers write their names on their sad faces. In other instances, the children from ethnic minority groups may be asked to leave their classrooms and stand outside while the white learners are given bearable punishments. Such practices are humiliating, affecting an individual's growth and development process (Bigelow, 1950, p.442). The behaviors hardly generate changes in the students. Instead, they cause them to withdraw and have esteem issues. Teachers should therefore incorporate approaches that will ensure the learners conform and change their behaviors.

Privilege and power involve the ever-evolving and highly reflective understanding of an individual's positions in class. In classrooms, one may acknowledge such by decentering authorities and admitting their issues and privileges (Sokolower, 2011, p.5). The problems are misogyny, white rights, colonization, and systematic forms of racism that affect education programs. The use of open resources ensures that individuals check on each other regardless of their differences. In the long run, learners and teachers accept each other and embrace acceptable and non-offensive behaviors towards each other.

Implementing critical pedagogy allows the teachers to challenge the existing structures of power. The leaders in the present-day society are the ones who promote the current inequalities by failing to develop effective policies to prevent imbalances (Bigelow, 1950, p.442). It is common to see a difference in how their teachers treat African American students compared to whites. The typical dynamic of power in the life of students is the relationship between teachers and students, which determines their performance in class. The best way to challenge this concept is via restructuring the layout of the classroom. Instead of having white students sitting on one side of the school or the front and black American students seated at the back, a teacher may change the layout by ensuring the children mix and sit together (Bigelow, 1950, p.442). After doing this, the teacher may encourage discussions by giving out more assignments. Through the meetings, the learners will interact and think critically to make valuable conclusions.

Teachers can implement critical pedagogy since it allows them to present an alternative point of view for the learners. The teacher needs to share her opinions with the learners and the traditional ideas they understand (Bigelow, 1950, p.445). The teacher may later allow the learners to discuss the two different viewpoints and draw meaningful conclusions. Whenever the learner presents a different view, the teacher must encourage them to analyze the new ideas critically. The learner may respond to questions about why they believe in the concept or think the idea is a good thing. Such an approach ensures that the learners are encouraged to continuously challenge their own beliefs while breaking free from any social narratives that may be damaging (Bigelow, 1950, p.445). As a result, the learners end up as individuals with an independent mindset.

Teachers can implement critical pedagogy by changing their approach to the assessment of students. The traditional structures of evaluation may be confined to the learners. Teachers don't have to always stick to such systems (Bigelow, 1950, p.446). Education is not about exams and getting the correct answer. It should be about equipping the learners to think critically through concepts. Teachers should ensure that the learners are diverse because education is not about constant reading to pass exams to be promoted to the next grade. Instead, the learners can focus and write about the ideas which they have thought.

Teachers may also implement critical pedagogy in the classroom by encouraging activism. It is essential to motivate learners always to think because they will be enlightened (Bigelow, 1950, p.446). The learners can later share their newly acquired knowledge with their communities and families. A teacher may achieve this by making the learners aware of any available opportunities within their communities. Also, the teacher may ensure that the learners understand the most effective ways to combat different forms of oppression within the community through peaceful demonstrations, developing organizations, and having marches. Teachers may also assist the learners in starting various clubs that focus on hearing the marginalized voices in the community (Bigelow, 1950, p.446). Teachers may also empower learners to talk about multiple patterns of oppression and power with their peers and family members.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, awareness, commitment, and understanding are vital in permeating the feelings of different individuals. How the institution makes the leaders, students, and every other person in the community feel like they are instrumental yet disregarded is in the close correlation individuals have with the institution's success. The school's culture always influences every aspect of the school and the learners' feelings. A positive culture promotes the development of various professionals and satisfaction at work. Implementation of critical pedagogy may therefore be different among different subjects in society. Whatever may work for a particular class of individuals may not work for another type. For instance, a teacher of history can challenge a given event that is considered progressive in society. On the other hand, the literature teacher may question some common cultural stereotypes available in a particular book. A science teacher may encourage the learners to be keen on the impacts of various scientific discoveries among the marginalized communities. All these aspects involve having a common bond between different subjects, and that is a critical approach that is not confined to a specific part of culture or education.

**References**

Bigelow, W. (1950). Inside the classroom: *Social, Vision and Critical Pedagogy* 13-437

Sokolower, J. (2011). Rethinking Schools; *Michelle Alexander on the New Jim Crow and the School-To-Prison Pipeline*. 1-10. <https://rethinkingschools.org/2011/12/20/michelle-alexander-on-the-new-jim-crow-and-the-school-to-prison-pipeline/>