



**Institute of Education**

# EDUCATION FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

Professor Douglas Bourn

# Inspirational Words

- *Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world. (Nelson Mandela)*
- *Let us remember: One book, one pen, one child, and one teacher, can change the world. (Malala Yousafzai)*
- *Knowledge is power. Information is liberating. Education is the premise of progress, in every society, in every family. (Kofi Annan)*
- *One of the great liabilities of history is that all too many people fail to remain awake through great periods of social change. .... Today, our very survival depends on our ability to stay awake, to adjust to new ideas, to remain vigilant and to face the challenge of change. (Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.)*

# Aims of Presentation

- What do we mean by education for social change?
- What can we learn from policies, discourses and practices around education for democracy, socialism and liberation?
- In what ways can a pedagogy of global social justice help to frame our thinking on education for social change?
- What does the evidence of research with teachers, young people, academics and NGOs tell us about approaches to education for social change?

# Existing work on Education and Social Change

*As argued by many educationalists, education can either be part of the solution or the problem to world issues.*

*If it wants to be part of the solution, education has to find ways of addressing real social issues and help the learner face new and future challenges with an attitude that values inclusiveness and sustainability and, ultimately, values the individual, society, humanity and the environment at large.*

(Elliott, Fourali and Issler, 2012)

# Education as a Human Right

- promoting economic growth through an educated and skilled labour force
- foster democratic and peaceful societies, by teaching tolerance, mutual respect, and respect for human rights and encouraging participation and inclusion in decision-making processes
- encouraging a rich cultural life, by promoting the learning of languages, the arts, sports
- help build a national identity, by directing the curriculum to teach national values, history, and customs
- promote social justice aims
- overcome persistent and entrenched challenges, such as gender inequality (UNESCO and Right to Education Initiative 2019:35)

# Education as Ideological Arm of the State

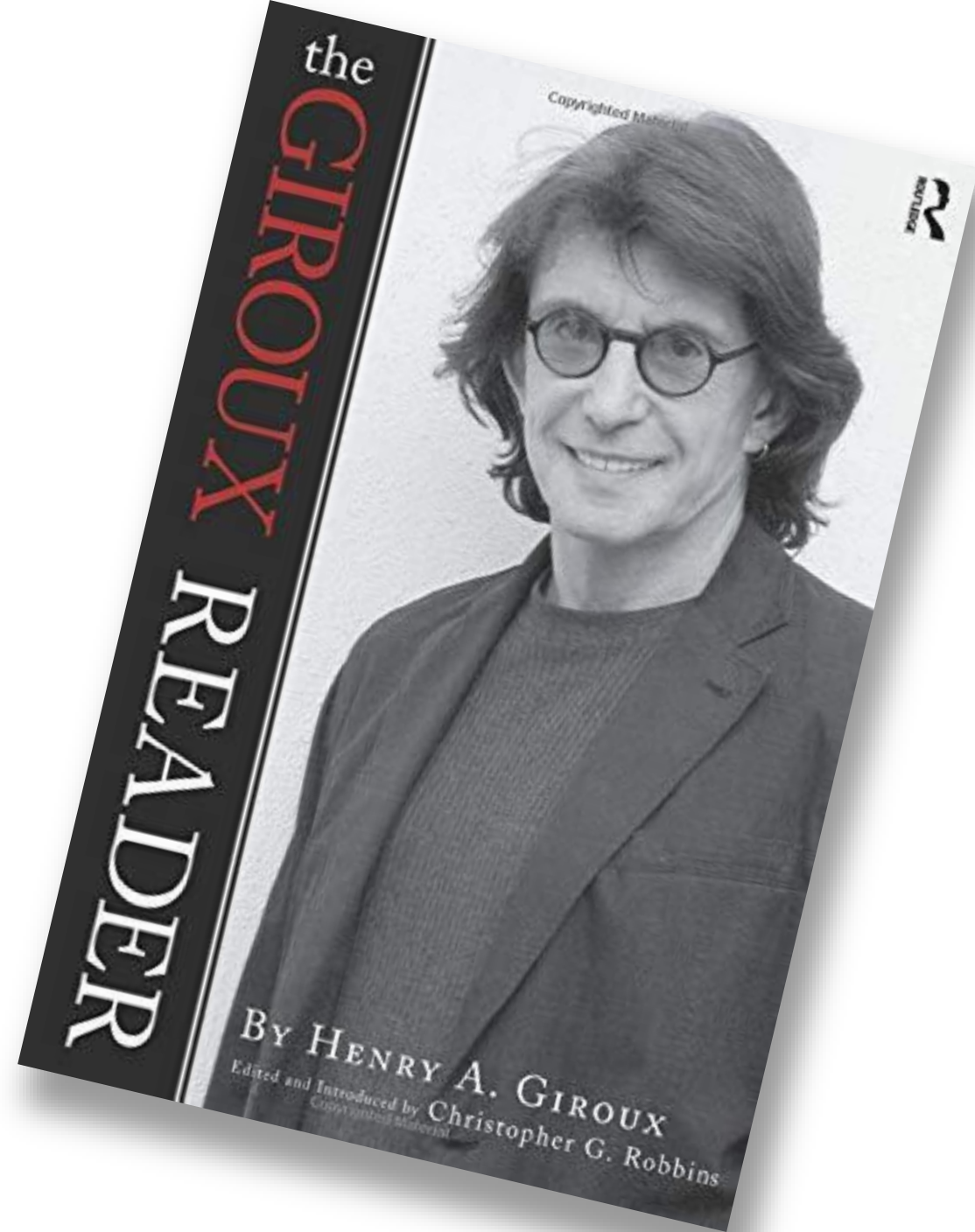
- *Schools served to mould children to fit into the ideological dominance of capitalism and that included conformity, deference to authority, respect for existing order and being technically competent (Althusser, 1971: 126-7)*
- *Schools were still seen as reproducing existing inequalities and they rejected the notion that there are equal opportunities for all. In this way they argue that education justifies and explains social inequality (Bowlis and Gintis, 2002)*
- *The education system reproduces all the more perfectly the structure of the distribution of cultural capital among classes... in that the culture which it transmits is closer to the dominant culture and that the mode of inculcation to which it has recourse is less removed from the mode of inculcation practised by the family (Bourdieu, 1973: 80)*

# Education as a Site of Ideological Struggle, Contestation of Ideas and Counter-Hegemonic Forces

Michael Apple stated (Apple, 1982) that *an education system was not an instrument of the capitalist state but the product of conflict between the dominant and the dominated.*

*Education is at once the result of contradictions and the source of new contradictions. It is an arena of conflict over the production of knowledge, ideology, and employment, a place where social movements try to meet their needs and business attempts to reproduce its hegemony.*

# Henry Giroux





# Hegemony and Resistance

*Gramsci's notion that hegemony represents a pedagogical relationship through which the legitimacy of meaning and practice is struggled over makes it imperative that a theory of radical pedagogy takes as its central task an analysis of how both hegemony functions in schools and how various forms of resistance and opposition either challenge or help to sustain it.*

Henry Giroux (1981:26)

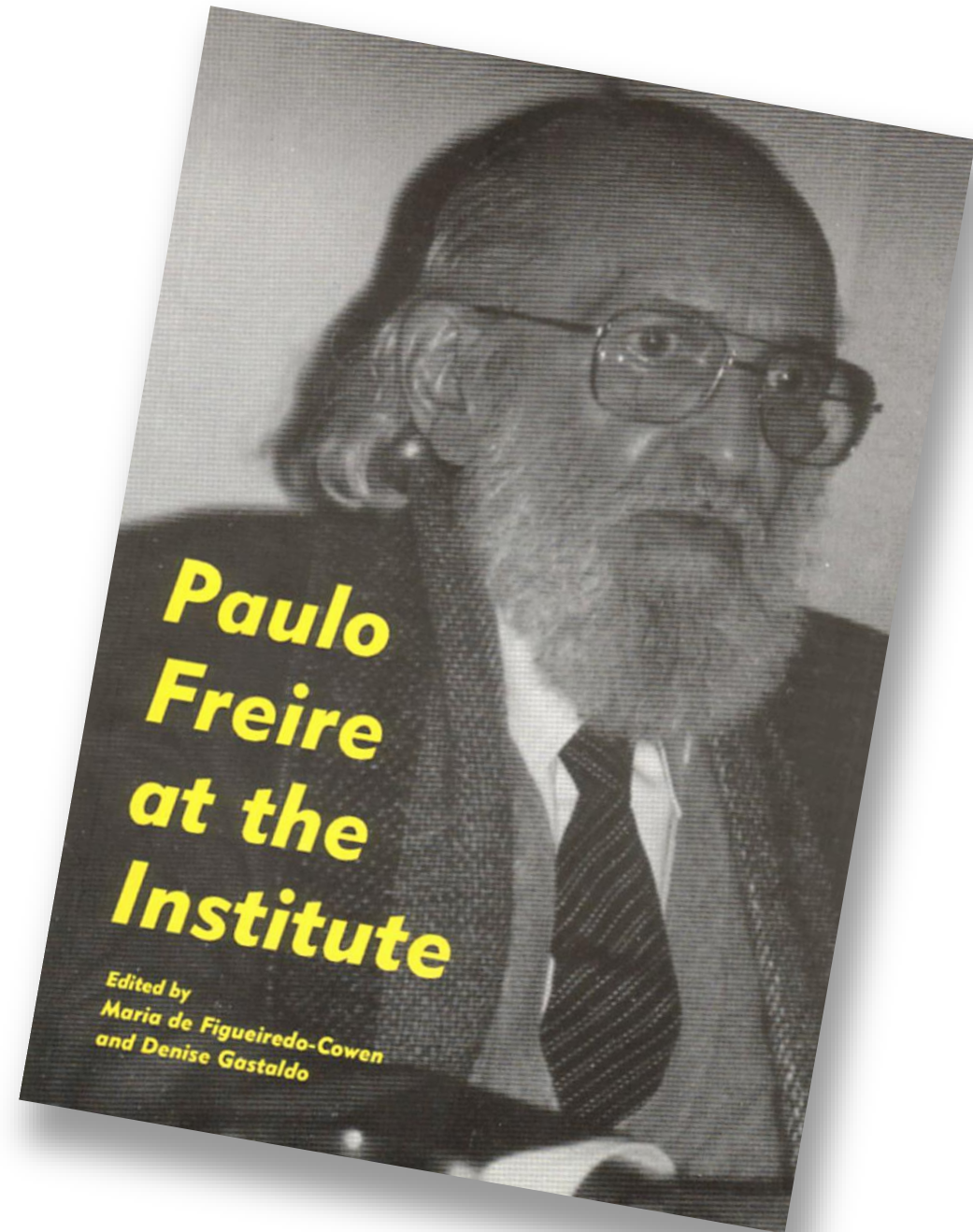
# Education for Democracy

- Knowledge is Power (WEA)
- *The problem of education in its relation to direction of social change is all one with the problem of finding out what democracy means in its total range of concrete applications: economic, domestic, religious, cultural and political.* (Dewey (1937:416))
- *Education for democracy, education within democracy and education as democracy.* (Sant, 2019)

# Education for Socialism

- *Education was seen as the stepping stone towards and the foundation of a socialist state.* (Leeds Weekly Citizen, 1925)
- *...the greatest possible educational equality is one of the conditions indispensable to any socialism which is not the mere rule of a bureaucratic elite or an apathetic mass.*
- *The society based on the free co-operation of citizens, which is the ideal of the socialist, depends in short, on the on the widest possible diffusion of education.* (Tawney 1924: 58)
- *Unless the workers have in their minds the light of proper understanding - unless they possess the knowledge which will be termed the map of class consciousness - they are flotsam, tossed willy-nilly upon the seas of capitalist confusion.* (NCLC, 1931 Education and the World Crisis)

# Paulo Freire



# Education for Liberation: Freire

Freire's concepts of education for liberation passes through 3 phases:

- Awakening awareness, which means to make meaning of personal experience.
- Critical analysis - to understand how the world works and where individual experience fits.
- Changing reality - to actively engage in creating a more equitable society

(Ryan, 2011)

# Education for Liberation: Nyerere

- *The purpose of education is therefore liberation through the development of man as a member of society. (Nyerere, 1976: 6)*
- *The ideas imparted by education, or released in the mind through education, should therefore be liberating ideas; the skills acquired by education should be liberating skills.*
- *Transform Tanzania from a colonial society into an egalitarian society based on equality and justice within the overall framework of Ujamaa. ...a type of education that would prepare the youth to play a constructive role in the development of a Tanzania in which all members shared in all things equally and fairly.*

# Education for Liberation: Gandhi

Gandhi emphasised the more personal and spiritual side. This personal liberation came from increased knowledge, freedom from colonial enslavement and the close interplay of body, mind and soul. He also emphasised moral codes and character -building including areas such as truth, nonviolence and charity.

Gandhi named his educational programme Nai Talim (new system of education). This meant an emphasis on education for preparation for life and not based on textbooks. This meant an emphasis on practical crafts in order to build up ***a non-violent, non-exploiting social order in which the ideals of freedom, equality, and brotherhood can be fully and universally realized.*** (Pyarelal, 1997: 332)

# Education for a Global Society

- *Globalisation does not have a single face, but a plurality of aspects, depending upon where and how one lives. The universal process of globalisation shapes national patterns in different ways. (Scheunpflug, 2011: 30)*
- *Globalisation provokes questions about new dimensions of power as well as the challenges and possibilities for democracy; critical education must analyse and explore these questions. (Lissovoy, 2008: 166)*



# Alternative Globalisation Movement, Social Justice and Education: Chan

- Education as counter analysis - provide evidence to challenge dominant orthodoxies, looking particularly at difference and power.
- Education as possibilities - identifying alternative possibilities including development approaches, global governance reform - there are alternatives to free market approach.
- Education as new subjectivities / citizenships – cosmopolitan / global citizenship.

(Chan, 2009)

# Pedagogy for Global Social Justice

- Critical pedagogy begins with the assumption that knowledge and power should always be subject to debate, held accountable, and critically
- Ayers, Quinn and Stovall (2009) state that social justice education rests on three principles or pillars:
  1. *Equity- principle of fairness, equal access to all educational experiences*
  2. *Activism- participation and engagement to change.*
  3. *Social literacy- able to understand own sense of identity in a complex world*

# Creating Classrooms for Social Justice: Tabitha Dell Angelo

To teach your students about making positive change in the world *you need to enable them to connect with 'real-world problems' and encourage 'multiple perspectives'.*

Key to promoting social justice in the classroom, is *recognizing and acting upon the power that we have for making positive change.* This means exploring *how they can be both actors and leaders in creating change.* This means *making what is taught relevant to what is going on in the world.*

(Tabitha Dell Angelois, College of New Jersey)

# Crystal Belle

To Belle, a social justice pedagogy has to have the following approaches:

- *Acknowledge who is in the room, including where they come from and respect their cultures and communities.*
- *Start with the knowledge your students have and build on their experiences.*
- *Create unit plans and curricular maps for the entire year which means having a vision of the goals of the learning.*
- *Be honest about who you are and your biases which means recognising one's own prejudices and to work through them*
- *Encourage students to question everything, including your teaching*

(Belle, 2019. [www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2019/01/23/what-is-social-justice-education-anyway.html](http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2019/01/23/what-is-social-justice-education-anyway.html))

# Questions for small group discussions

1. What can we learn from various past and present movements around education for social change for our own practice?
2. Do we agree that social justice should be the dominant frame for our educational work?
3. If so, what does this mean in terms of pedagogical approaches?

# Teachers as Agents for Change

*Teachers should see themselves as the agents rather than the objects of change.*  
(Arnetha Ball)

Pantic (2015) develops a framework for teacher agency for social justice based on the following:

- *Purpose - teachers' perceptions of their role and understanding of social justice.*
- *Competence- teachers' engagement in practices towards social justice and understanding of broader social forces that influence schooling.*
- *Autonomy- teachers' own beliefs that they can make a difference, their level of confidence and sense of belief they can make a difference.*
- *Reflexivity- teachers' capacity to be open to critical self-reflection and ability to articulate their own professional practices and approaches.*

# Young People Now Driving the Agendas

Participation also means young people having the opportunities for their voices to be heard and the spaces to air their views. Lundy summarises this as :

- *Space by being given the opportunity to express a view in a safe space, free from the fear of rebuke or reprisal. These spaces should be inclusive and welcoming for all to participate.*
- *Voice: Opportunities to express their views, so long as they are capable of forming their own views..*
- *Audience: Their views must be listened to by those involved in and have ultimate influence over decision making processes. This might involve formalising channels of communication so that they could articulate their views.*
- *Influence: Recognition of the value of their views and acted upon where and when appropriate.*

(Lundy, 2007)

# Young People and Social Action

*Young people are eager to make a difference in society; the vast majority care about making the world a better place; and believe they can make a difference. This sense of agency in relation to society is associated with higher levels of participation in meaningful social action*

(Knibbs, Mollidor, Stack & Stevens, 2018)





LESS MEAT  
=  
LESS HEAT!

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STUDENTS FOR CLIMATE

STUDENTS FOR CLIMATE

STUDENTS FOR CLIMATE

WE ARE ORPHANS

SHOULD I WORRY?

wait

CLIMATE JUSTICE



# Young People and Climate Emergency

Student Climate Network in UK:

Its demands include not only calling to 'save the future', but also to 'teach the future' and 'tell the future'.

# What is the Contribution of Academics?

- Professor Peter Scott from UCL in the UK stated that universities were increasingly *losing their sense of public responsibility and wider social purpose*. (Scott, 2015)
- Marginson suggests using the term 'common good': *providing equal opportunity for as many as possible in the interest of a more rights-based, egalitarian, and cohesive society*. (UNESCO, 2018)
- Ashwin (2019) suggests that academics should: *design curricula that are focused on providing students with access to knowledge that will transform their sense of who they are and what they can do in the world. To do this we need to have a clear sense of who our students are, how the knowledge we will give them access to is powerful, and who it will enable them to become in the wider lives as well as in their careers*.

# What is the role of Civil Society Organisations?

Allen, McAdam and Pellow (2010) question the role of civil society in social change. For them, the goal is *to enable it to act as a force for fairness and justice for all the world's citizens*.

They suggest that as well as providing services to support groups in society, civil society groups can play a major role at the local, regional, national and international levels to *solve problems in a sustainable way*.

# Three Types of Change

1. *Personal transformation that includes respect for others, sense of social and environmental responsibility, sense of belonging, commitment to learning and action.*
2. *Education systems transformation including enabling the learner to acquire interdisciplinary and holistic perspective, learners and educators as contributors to the education process and an 'education that enables learners to practice and improve action-orientated and decision-making skills'*
3. *Community and societal transformation resulting in eradication of poverty and inequality, realisation of human rights, human development that is sustainable and systematic change in decision-making processes.*

(Fricke and Gathercole ,2015)

# Examples of Practice

- UNICEF UK's Rights Respecting Schools Award Programme
- Walden University in USA and its curriculum for social change
- Chicago Freedom Schools Movement
- In the UK, practices and resources of many DEC's - particularly RISC
- CAFOD
- Woodcraft Folk and Global Youth Work

 DELTA



# Teaching as a Subversive Activity

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A no-holds-barred assault on outdated  
teaching methods—with dramatic and  
practical proposals on how education can  
be made relevant to today's world

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“...a healthy dose of Postman and  
Weingartner is a good thing:  
if they make even a dent in the pious...  
American classroom, the book will be worthwhile.”  
—NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW

NEIL POSTMAN & CHARLES WEINGARTNER

# Further Thoughts for Consideration

- Can teaching be a subversive activity?
- Is social justice education a potential framework for taking some of these ideas forward?
- How do we best support educationalists to put into practice what they believe and wish to see changed?
- What can we learn from the recent practices of many young people around the world on the climate emergency?



# Thanks

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